



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Danielle Barkhouse

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First Session

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Danielle Barkhouse

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Lisa Lachance, Nolan Young

THE SPEAKER: Order. Daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads as follows:

We the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia call upon the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to work with parents and other community members directly and through the Halifax Regional Centre for Education to address overcrowding at West Bedford School by purchasing land for immediate use to increase space for learning, the gymnasium, restrooms, cafeteria, and outdoor activities for its students after meaningful consultation with parents, teachers, and students.

The petition contains approximately 300 signatures, and I have affixed my own as per the Rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, I'd like to present a petition, which reads:

Whereas over one quarter of those who are homeless for the first time are over the age of 60; and

Whereas nearly 6,000 people are on the wait-list for public housing, with an average wait time of two years;

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government ban evictions of seniors whose incomes would qualify them for public housing until there's a place in public housing for them to go.

This has been signed by a number of residents of Preston Street and Shirley Street in Halifax Chebucto, and I have signed it also.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honorable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, which reads as follows:

Whereas Nova Scotia has a higher proportion of 2SLGBTQIA+ residents than any other province, according to Statistics Canada; and

Whereas transgender people face an inequitable barrier in the form of a fee schedule for legal name changes; and

Whereas the government has promised to address issues of inequity in the 2SLGBTQIA+ action plan;

Therefore we the undersigned call upon the Minister of Service Nova Scotia to revise the current Vital Statistics fee schedule to not levy a charge for two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, and intersex Nova Scotians seeking a legal name change, and for Service Nova Scotia to waive or cover the cost of fingerprinting.

There have been 449 signatures collected across Nova Scotia on this petition. I've affixed mine as well.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads:

Therefore we the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia call upon the Premier to pause all harvesting and roadbuilding activities in forests over 80 years old on Crown land in Colchester County, Cumberland County, and Pictou County until such time as 20 per cent of Nova Scotia's lands have been permanently protected.

The petition has received 251 signatures, and I have added my own to it as well.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads:

We the undersigned residents of Nova Scotia call upon the Government of Nova Scotia to designate for protection Beals Brook and Goldsmith Lake Wilderness Areas, two areas of 3,900 hectares each of Crown land in Annapolis County. We request that the government place a moratorium on all forestry, roadbuilding, and industrial activities within the proposed wilderness areas while they are in the process of being designated for protection.

I've affixed my signature to the petition, as per the rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

KENDRA COOMBES: Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause of which reads:

We the undersigned residents of Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier request the Executive Council of Nova Scotia to enact an automatic senior's benefit. Nova Scotia has the highest rate of poverty amongst those over 65 of any province in the country. Nova Scotia is one of only two provincial jurisdictions that does not have a program directly supplementing the GIS of low-income seniors. Seniors in the

other provinces automatically receive these supplemental benefits, as opposed to the Nova Scotia Seniors Care Grant, which requires an application and receipts.

There are approximately 376 signatures, and I've proudly affixed my own.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Speaker, as Chair of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 467 - Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act (amended) and Residential Tenancies Act (amended).

Bill No. 471 - Advancing Nova Scotia Opportunities Act.

Bill No. 476 - French-language Services Act (amended).

The committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House without amendments.

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

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Speaker, I beg leave to table - in connection with a member statement to follow later - the summary report of the Nova Scotia Energy Poverty Task Force, *A Way Forward: A Made-in-Nova Scotia Home Energy Affordability Program*.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Speaker, I beg leave to table a document pursuant to a member statement that I'll make. It's a copy of the emergency alert that was sent out by RCMP in New Brunswick last night.

THE SPEAKER: The paper is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,152

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the federal Liberal government move to send nearly 6,000 asylum seekers to Nova Scotia is simply a misguided attempt to shift the problems they created in Ontario and Quebec to other areas instead of actually fixing the problem; and

Whereas this misguided federal scheme ignores Nova Scotia's sustainable, strategic plan of targeted immigration, focused on individuals in health care and the trades; and

Whereas the federal Liberals should work with Nova Scotians and respect our focus on health care professionals and those who would help build much needed homes and infrastructure;

Therefore be it resolved that every member of this House condemn the federal Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister Marc Miller for trying to take advantage of the kindness and compassion of Nova Scotians, and attempting to disrupt Nova Scotia's responsible, strategic plan to attract the professionals like the doctors and nurses our province needs.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver. Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The notice is tabled.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 487 - An Act to Continue Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre as a Society under the Societies Act and to Repeal Chapter 16 of the Acts of 1990, the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre Act. (Chris Palmer)

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that the bill be read a second time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I ask that you please go back to Government Notices of Motion. There are several government notices of motion that haven't been delivered yet.

[1:15 p.m.]

[GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Speaker, I beg leave to make some introductions.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

BARBARA ADAMS: In the East Gallery, I would like to draw everyone's attention to some amazing staff with whom I have the privilege of working with in the Department of Justice. Going left to right, we have my special adviser, Nadine Yuriev; my Department of Justice public safety staff member Hayley Crichton as well as Charcy Marchand; and my deputy minister Jennifer Glennie. Could I ask you all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House? (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: This year marks the 50th anniversary of women police officers in the RCMP. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the Speaker's Gallery. We have three incredible women here today who are in very senior leadership positions promoting public safety for Nova Scotians. I am so proud and honoured that these women have chosen to work in Nova Scotia at careers promoting public safety across the country. I'll ask them to stand as I read their names. We have Superintendent Dustine Rodier, with 24 years of service. We have Inspector Leanne Sample, with 26 years of service. We have Inspector Monica Jodrey, with 29 years of service.

I ask all members of the Legislature to offer a warm welcome to these guests in the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,153

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

Whereas this year marks the 50th anniversary of women police officers in the RCMP; and

Whereas in September 1974, the first ever troop of 37 police officers, known as Troop 17, arrived at the RCMP's training depot; and

Whereas members of Troop 17 demonstrated what is possible for women in the RCMP, despite encountering challenges and systemic barriers, and helped to inspire future generations of women to join the organization, such that now one-fifth of RCMP officers are women, with many in leadership positions;

Therefore be it resolved that I would like to acknowledge the many women leaders in the RCMP who work to protect the safety and security of all Nova Scotians every day, among them Superintendent Dustine Rodier, Inspector Monica Jodrey, and Inspector Leanne Sample.

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 Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

COLTON LEBLANC: J'aimerais diriger l'attention des membres à la tribune de la présidente. I direct the members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we're joined today by Allister Surette, who is a former member of the House. He served the House of Assembly for the District of Argyle from 1993 to 1998. Among many portfolios, he also was the Minister responsible for Acadian Affairs.

C'est un plaisir aujourd'hui d'accueillir Allister Surette, qui est également un ancien membre de l'Assemblée ainsi que président du comité organisateur du Congrès mondial acadien 2024. Bienvenu, Allister. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,154

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: À une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que tous les cinq ans, les Acadiens se rassemblent pour des festivités qui mettent en valeur la vivacité, la résilience, et la fierté du peuple acadien; et

Attendu que du 10 au 18 août, les régions d'Argyle, de Clare, et celles avoisinantes ont offert un accueil chaleureux à des milliers de visiteurs venus d'à travers le monde et de la province et qui ont pu assister à plus de 300 évènements organisés dans le cadre du Congrès mondial acadien 2024; et

Attendu que le succès formidable rentré par cette grande célébration n'aura pas été possible sans le travail et le dévouement du comité organisateur du Congrès mondial acadien 2024 et des nombreux bénévoles présents avant et pendant l'évènement;

Par conséquent, qu'il soit résolu que tous les membres de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour reconnaître le travail exceptionnel des bénévoles, des employées, et des membres du comité et pour les féliciter du succès rencontré par le Congrès mondial acadien 2024.

Madame la présidente, je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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

Whereas every five years, Acadians gather for nine days of festivities and reflection, showcasing the strength, resiliency, and pride of the Acadian people; and

Whereas from August 10th to 18th, Argyle, Clare, and the surrounding regions offered a warm welcome to thousands of visitors from across

the province and around the world who attended over 300 events organized as part of the Congrès mondial acadien 2024; and

Whereas the tremendous success of this major celebration would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Congrès mondial acadien organizing committee and the many volunteers present before and during the event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly join me to recognize the exceptional work done by volunteers, staff, and committee members, and to congratulate them on their success with the Congrès mondial acadien 2024.

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 Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GREG MORROW: Speaker, in your gallery - the Speaker's Gallery - I'd like to introduce you to Harold "Butch" Borden of Truro, who is a student mentor and community liaison with the very important program Black Youth Planting Their Future, which I'll tell you about shortly.

Mr. Borden is also a guest of the member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River. I won't steal his thunder, but if Mr. Borden could stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Welcome.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,155

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

Whereas Harold “Butch” Borden of Truro, working as a student mentor and community liaison, has displayed exemplary dedication to the students of the Black Youth Planting Their Future program, which helps expose Black high school and post-secondary students to future careers in agriculture and the public sector; and

Whereas Mr. Borden, a retired educator who has dedicated his career to young people, was instrumental in the design and success of the program in his community, and his report led to the hiring of 20 African Nova Scotian students this Summer; and

Whereas having an appropriate mentor from the African Nova Scotian community, like Mr. Borden, was essential in supporting the career goals of the students while maintaining essential involvement and collaboration with the African Nova Scotian community;

Therefore be it resolved that this House congratulate and thank Harold “Butch” Borden for generously continuing to encourage and empower the African Nova Scotian youth of Truro and Colchester County.

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.

[INTRODUCTION OF BILLS]

Bill No. 488 - An Act to Amend Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021, the Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act, and Chapter 401 of the Revised Statutes of 1989, the Residential Tenancies Act. (Braedon Clark)

Bill No. 489 - An Act Respecting Affordable Housing Programs. (Suzy Hansen)

Bill No. 490 - An Act to Reduce Energy Poverty. (Susan Leblanc)

Bill No. 491 – An Act to Amend Chapter 27 of the Acts of 1998, the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (THE PREMIER): Before we begin, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

THE PREMIER: I am pleased to introduce coach Mark Stinson, sitting in the Speaker's Gallery today. Maybe Mark can stand up.

Mark's dedication to basketball has an amazing impact on the youth in our community and I just want to thank him for that. He is joined today by his wife Kelly - a true dynamic power couple in our community. Thank you both. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

STINSON, MARK: BASKETBALL COACHING - THANKS

THE PREMIER: Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to coach Mark Stinson, who has given so much of his time and talent to young athletes in our community. Mark's love of basketball is contagious. He has coached two provincial championship boys and girls high school varsity and U-18 AAA team. Mark also coaches junior high ball and assists with the Pictou County Lightning skills and drills camps. Even as a referee, Mark can't help but encourage and root for all the players in the court. He remembers their names and the details of every player. He leaves a long-lasting, positive impression on each of them.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to please join me in thanking coach Mark Stinson for being such a positive role model for youth in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

YARMOUTH MARINERS: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise today as the proud MLA for Yarmouth to recognize the incredible Yarmouth Mariners on their thrilling overtime victory against the Pictou County Crushers. This exciting win came from a game-winning goal scored by Jared Pitman of Tusket, in Yarmouth County.

Our local talent was on full display with Dawson O'Connell from West Pubnico, contributing an assist, marking his first MHL point. Dawson, the captain of the South Shore Mustangs Under-18 AAA team clearly has a great future in hockey in our community and beyond.

I'd also like to acknowledge Keefe Marshall, Justin Garneau, Alexis Tanguay, and Thomas Larouche for their contributions in this hard-fought win.

Speaker, I am proud to represent such a vibrant and talented community and encourage all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Yarmouth Mariners on their impressive victory.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

[1:30 p.m.]

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

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I draw the members' attention to the gallery opposite where we're joined today by Ann Marie and John Siteman. I ask you to rise. Ann Marie was actually a tour guide of this House, I found out only today. Now they are stalwart members of the Dartmouth Lawn Bowls Club and we are very pleased to have them in the House today. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

SITEMAN, ANN MARIE & JOHN: LAWN BOWLS - RECOG.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of gold medalist Ann Marie Siteman and John Siteman, stalwart members of the Dartmouth Lawn Bowls Club and a remarkable mother and son duo whose dedication and skill in lawn bowls have brought immense pride to Dartmouth and beyond.

In 2024, John and Ann Marie have continued to set a high standard for excellence in the sport. They recently competed in their seventh Australian Open, an event featuring over 5,000 bowlers from around the world. Their participation on this global stage not only showcased their individual talents but also highlighted the unique bond they share as mother and son.

John and Ann Marie's success exemplifies not only their exceptional talent and dedication but also the inspiring relationship they share as a family. Their achievements reflect the strength of their bond and their shared passion for lawn bowls.

Please join me in honouring John and Ann Marie Siteman for their outstanding accomplishments and for embodying the spirit of family and excellence in our community.

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

DAVE RITCEY: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

DAVE RITCEY: Prior to my member statement, today in the Speaker's Gallery we have members of the Apex Invitational Golf Tournament Committee, which celebrated 50 years this past Summer in Truro. The golf tournament is the oldest Black golf tournament in Canada and one of the oldest tournaments in North America.

I do have committee members in the gallery: Harold "Butch" Borden, Kevin Jackson, and Wayne Talbot. Other members who couldn't make it here today are Shelley Borden, Jude Clyde, Jo-Anne Jarvis-Jordan, Trevor Jordan, Foster Paris, and Nolan Borden. I ask all members of the House to stand and offer a warm welcome to these guests.

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

APEX INVIT'L GOLF TOURN.: 50TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

DAVE RITCEY: I am truly honoured to rise today to congratulate the Apex Invitational Golf Tournament Committee and participants on the event's incredible 50th anniversary. This milestone celebrates not only five decades of golfing excellence but also a rich legacy of perseverance, community, and progress.

Apex started from humble beginnings under Darrell Maxwell's vision, a small group of friends playing for bragging rights, to becoming a cornerstone of Black golf history in Nova Scotia and across Canada.

In 1998, the committee established a scholarship fund aimed at providing financial assistance to young Black students from Truro and Colchester County pursuing post-secondary education. To date, the Apex has supported more than 140 scholarships totalling in excess of \$115,000. These scholarships have had a positive impact on so many young people in our community.

In its 50 years, the Apex has grown well beyond a golf tournament to become more of a family reunion. It's an opportunity for friends to reunite and for family to gather from across the country to celebrate community together.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, I'd like to bring the House's attention to the West Gallery to make an introduction, please.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

ZACH CHURCHILL: We are joined today by the 2024 U13 Girls AA Fastpitch Provincial Champions, the Highland Park Heat, from right here in the North End of Halifax.

I'd like to recognize the teammates and coaches by name: Head Coach Matt Boutilier, Assistant Coaches - and please stand as I recognize you - Jennifer Martin-Higgs, John Hope, Jenna Leadbetter, and Steve Boutilier. We're also, of course, joined by the teammates: Addison Burbidge; Aiva Brown, who was Player of the Game in the Championship Game; Allison Hope; Blake DeCoste; Brooklyn Boutilier; Chloe Hunt; Dean Harris, MVP for the tournament; Grace Berrigan; Isabelle Newsome; Lydia Higgs; Quinn Boutilier; and Savannah George.

I ask the House to provide the team a warm welcome.

THE SPEAKER: Welcome and congratulations.

The honourable member for Yarmouth.

GIRLS FASTPITCH TEAM: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: The Highland Park Heat steamrolled through the competition at the 2024 U13 Girls AA Fastpitch Provincials, peaking at the right time this season and going undefeated in the tournament. Even a weekend full of rain and a five-day delay couldn't cool off the Heat's incredible hitting, pitching, or defense.

The Heat took down the Stellarton Stingers 17-3, the Eastern Shore Gold Sox 14-1, and the Dartmouth She Devils 9-4, and then dispatched the Stellarton team again, this time 9-2, in the decisive championship game on September 12th in Brookfield, Nova Scotia. Congratulations to the 2024 U13 AA Girls Fastpitch Provincial Champions and to the entire Highland Park Minor Softball Association, which has a rich history and deep roots in the North End of Halifax, providing opportunities for youth to participate in organized sport within the community for over 50 years.

To the players and coaches: Your hard work, dedication, and teamwork have truly paid off, and we're immensely proud of your achievements. Here's to many more successful and unforgettable moments.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

DART. LAWN BOWLS CLUB: ACHIEVEMENTS - CONGRATS.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I rise to extend heartfelt congratulations to the entire Dartmouth Lawn Bowls Club for their outstanding achievements in 2024.

The club has demonstrated remarkable skills, sportsmanship, and community spirit throughout the year. It was my pleasure to witness first-hand the exceptional warmth and

hospitality of the club during the 2024 Atlantic Bowls Championship. Hosting 80 participants and over 60 volunteers, the event was a great success despite challenging weather, only one draw, with Team Nova Scotia taking the overall title.

In addition to these accolades, Dartmouth bowlers excelled in multiple other tournaments, including the Frank Hamilton Memorial Mixed Triples and the Cobequid Annual Invitational Open Triples. Given their remarkable success this year, there is just no way to detail all of their achievements in the 45 seconds I have, so please join me in celebrating the Dartmouth Lawn Bowl Club's exceptional accomplishments and positive impact they continue to make in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

HON. PAT DUNN: Speaker, before I begin my statement, I'd like to introduce a couple of people.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

PAT DUNN: Joining today in the Speaker's Gallery, I am honoured to introduce Margie Grant-Walsh and Karen Vaughan, who have dedicated decades of their lives to Big Brothers Big Sisters. I would ask Margie and Karen to rise and accept the warm welcome of the Legislature. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

GRANT-WALSH, M./VAUGHAN, K.: COM. SERV. - THANKS

PAT DUNN: I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank two outstanding members of the Big Brothers Big Sisters team: Executive Director Margie Grant-Walsh and Program Manager Karen Vaughan.

Margie, with her incredible 38 years of service, and Karen, with 26 years of dedication, have shown remarkable care and concern for the youth in Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough Counties. Their enthusiasm and commitment to mentoring and supporting young people have made a lasting impact on countless lives. We are deeply grateful for their tireless work and the positive difference they continue to make in our communities.

Thank you, Margie and Karen, along with your dedicated team, for decades of unwavering care and dedication to nurturing the youth in our communities. Your daily efforts have impacted countless lives in a positive way, shaping a brighter future for our community. Your work is truly inspiring, and we deeply appreciate all that your team has done for our youth.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

BUCHANAN, CARL “BUCKY”: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Cape Breton lost a sports icon with the passing of Carl “Bucky” Buchanan who served 32 years as the athletics director at the former Xavier College and Cape Breton University.

Much of the sports success that CBU has seen over the years is the foundation that Bucky built along with his colleagues at CBU. He has a legacy in many of the sports, but I do want to recognize that in 1977 and 1978 as coach, he led the college in the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association in Montreal, and they won the championship. He also won 15 Nova Scotia College Conference Championships and was recognized in 1986 as a Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association Coach of the Year.

There are accolades coming in from all over the country for Carl “Bucky” Buchanan’s contribution to sport, but on a personal note, I grew up with his daughter Mary Ellen. He was great. He and Ann were great to the kids in the neighbourhood. We all hung out together. I rise in my place to send Ann and the girls all my love and recognize one of Cape Breton’s sports icons, Carl “Bucky” Buchanan.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction relative to my member’s statement.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

LISA LACHANCE: Joining us in the West Gallery today is HRM’s new Poet Laureate, Anna Quon, and her father, Dr. Charles Quon. I welcome you to the House.

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

QUON, ANNA: NEW HRM POET LAUREATE - CONGRATS.

LISA LACHANCE: I rise to recognize and congratulate Anna Quon, HRM’s ninth Poet Laureate. Anna is not only an exceptionally talented writer with a diverse body of creative work but also a passionate advocate for community, connection, and mental health.

Through her work with the writers’ groups at the Canadian Mental Health Association, Anna nurtures the voices of others while honing her own craft. Self-described as “mad, mobility-challenged, middle-aged, and mixed-race,” Anna’s unique perspective was thought in motion and keen observation, resulting in writing that is both genuine and evocative. It is impossible to experience Anna’s work and not feel something. The way she cares about Halifax inspires me.

May we all strive to care for our communities as deeply as Anna does. May we champion mental well-being and foster connections, and may we find inspiration in Anna's creative versatility over the next three years as she serves as HRM Poet Laureate.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

WHITE, GERALD "GERRY" DUNCAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Speaker, I rise today to honour the life and legacy of Gerald "Gerry" Duncan White, who passed away on September 12, 2024, at the age of 69. Gerry was a man of remarkable service and dedication. Born in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, he began his career with the RCMP on his 19th birthday and later transitioned to the Royal Canadian Navy, where he served with distinction. Gerry's service took him all over Canada and across the globe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean.

Gerry's commitment to our community extended beyond his military service. He was a regular blood donor, making over 150 donations, and volunteered his time for so many causes, including the National Kids Cancer Ride. His larger-than-life personality and positive outlook made him a beloved figure in his community. He was always ready with a joke, a word of encouragement, or a song, and he never missed an opportunity to support his fellow service members.

I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in honouring Gerry and to extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

SURETTE, ALLISTER: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES

RONNIE LEBLANC: Madame la présidente, je voudrais profiter de cette occasion pour féliciter Allister Surette pour sa récente retraite de son poste de recteur et vice-chancelier de l'Université Sainte-Anne.

M. Surette a d'abord été nommé vice-recteur du développement et des partenariats en 2003 avant d'être nommé recteur et vice-chancelier en 2011. Sous sa direction, l'Université Sainte-Anne a connu une forte croissance de ses programmes, de la recherche, et des investissements sur le campus, ce qui a contribué à un nombre record d'inscriptions en 2019. M. Surette est également occupé de ses postes de leadership important dans des organismes d'enseignement post-secondaire et au sein de sa communauté, notamment en tant que président du récent Congrès mondial acadien 2024.

Je demande à tous les membres de se joindre à moi pour remercier Allister Surette pour ses années de leadership à l'Université Sainte-Anne et lui souhaiter plein de succès dans ses projets futurs.

Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Allister Surette on his recent retirement as President and Vice Chancellor of Université Sainte-Anne. Mr. Surette was first appointed Vice President of Development and Partnership in 2003 before being named President and Vice Chancellor in 2011.

Under his leadership, the university saw significant growth in its programs, research, and campus investments, contributing to a record number of enrolments in 2019. Mr. Surette also held key leadership roles in post-secondary organizations and in his community, including as chair of the recent Congrès mondial acadien 2024.

I invite all members to join me in thanking Allister Surette for his years of leadership at the university and wishing him success in his future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SON, AIMÉ - BIRTHDAY WISHES

[1:45 p.m.]

SUSAN LEBLANC: Speaker, I don't usually get a chance to do this, but today I rise to wish my baby boy, Aimé Labelle, a very happy 10th birthday. Aimé came into the world fast and furiously and he hasn't slowed down much since. He is incredibly creative; he loves to dance and paint and draw. He is an actor, he's an athlete, a proud Dartmouth Whaler, a prolific backyard soccer and basketball player. He's a prankster, a joker, and he loves a good riddle, but most of all, Aimé is a kind person. He loves to help around the house, he loves to help and teach younger kids, and he's a loyal friend. He is, honestly, one of my favourite people. I love hanging around with him. His dad and his sister and his dog and I love him so much. Bonne fête, Aimé, on t'aime beaucoup, beaucoup.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

BLOMIDON ESTATE WINERY: MEDAL RECIP. - CONGRATS.

HON. JOHN LOHR: I rise today to congratulate Blomidon Estate Winery of Canning as the recipient of the coveted gold medal for their 2021 Chardonnay at the Decanter World Wine Awards.

The Decanter World Wine Awards are considered to be the world's most prestigious wine competition. It is the biggest global wine competition, where the wines are judged against the best wines around the world.

Simon Rafuse, winemaker at Blomidon Estate Winery, crafted the top award-winning Chardonnay for the 2021 vintage. The result is a testament to the collective commitment, hard work, and dedication of the Blomidon team and an achievement that recognizes Nova Scotia as a top-tier wine producer.

Please join me today to congratulate Blomidon Estate Winery as they celebrate their gold medal award at the Decanter World Wine Awards.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

MASKWA AQUATIC CLUB: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I rise today to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of the Maskwa Aquatic Club, Halifax's premier destination for competitive and recreational paddle sports. This outstanding club has achieved the remarkable feat of winning the national title in Welland, Ontario, for the second consecutive year, solidifying their status as a powerhouse in the world of paddling.

Speaker, the dedication and commitment of the athletes, coaches, and supporters at Maskwa Aquatic Club are truly inspiring. Their success not only brings pride to our community but also showcases Nova Scotia as the leading region for paddling in Canada. This victory, earned away from home, is testament to the hard work and perseverance of everyone involved. I ask the House to join me in celebrating the remarkable achievements of the Maskwa Aquatic Club and their continued contributions to the sport of paddling.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

NDI IGBO CULT. ASSOC. N.S.: IRI JI FESTIVAL - CONGRATS.

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to recognize the Iri Ji (New Yam) Festival and its organizers. The celebration in August is a significant cultural event for the Igbo community. It marks the beginning of the harvest season. The festival is full of energy and richness, and it brings families together to celebrate their culture and mark the harvest season for West Africans with music, dance, food, and fun. I would like all the members of this House to join me in congratulating the Ndi Igbo Cultural Association of Nova Scotia for organizing such an amazing event in August.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

MAYNARD, MUSTAPHA: BRIDGEWATER VOL. OF YR. - RECOG.

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: I wish to recognize Mustapha Maynard, a dedicated volunteer and Bridgewater's representative for the 2024 Provincial Volunteer Awards.

Mustapha is a true Nova Scotia sport athlete ambassador, embodying the program's anchoring seven principles: go for it, play fair, respect others, have fun, stay healthy, include everyone, and give back.

Mustapha grew up playing basketball in Ontario and his career included playing for the UPEI Panthers varsity basketball team. Known to many as Coach Moose, Mustapha has

dedicated over 10 years to coaching basketball and is the founder and head coach of the South Shore Lightning Basketball Association. Above all, he is passionate about paying it forward and strives to provide youth in our small-town communities with the same opportunities that he had playing basketball in Ontario.

Mustapha takes pride in giving back to the younger generation and truly enjoys mentoring youth leaders. He says that, in turn, these kids are willing to give back by volunteering in camps to help others.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating and thanking Mustapha Maynard, a volunteer who supports and inspires our youth in the South Shore and all our communities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

PARTICIPANTS: END OF SUMMER FEST - THANKS

BRAEDON CLARK: Over the weekend, I was happy to host my 3rd annual End of Summer Fest at Tyler Sampson Park in West Bedford. I want to thank everybody who came out. We had 400 hotdogs, and we cooked and sold them all, so we had at least 400 people, probably more like 500 or 600 over the course of three hours.

I want to thank all the local businesses that donated food and water; the small businesses like RoboThink that came out to teach kids about coding and robotics; and Hatfield Farm, of course, with the goats, the cows, and all the animals that are always a big hit. The weather was perfect.

It's always a great event that people in my community look forward to. I'm really happy to play a part in putting it on for everybody and looking forward to next year as well. I want to thank everybody who came out on what was an absolutely beautiful day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

ENERGY POVERTY TASK FORCE: REPORT - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: *A Way Forward: A Made-In-Nova Scotia Home Energy Affordability Program* was the title of the report of the Nova Scotia Energy Poverty Task Force, a coalition of 13 different organizations, including the Affordable Energy Coalition, the Clean Foundation, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and Nova Scotia Power, which was published since the last session of the House.

The report proceeds from the fact that Nova Scotia has one of the highest levels of energy poverty in Canada, at 43 per cent, and it outlines how, for those who report difficulty keeping their homes heated and their power on, 72 per cent have had to delay spending on other essentials, 46 per cent experience late payments, and 8 per cent had their power disconnected.

The task force recommends an energy plan that includes a 50 per cent power bill discount for those with incomes below the low-income measure and an arrears management program, where reduced bill repayment plans are accompanied by power bill debt forgiveness. These are wonderful recommendations, Speaker, and their prompt implementation is badly needed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

RICHARDSON, MEGHAN: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. BRIAN COMER: Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the extraordinary volunteerism of Meghan Richardson. Meghan created a Facebook Group called the CBRM Community Action Team, which now has 884 members and organizes everything from garbage cleanups to the planting of community gardens.

This latest venture has the group focused on painting telecommunications boxes all over Cape Breton. The community has rallied behind this project with monetary donations, paint, and painting supplies.

Thank you to Meghan for her continued leadership and to all the volunteers.

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

WHITE, GERALD DUNCAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

LORELEI NICOLL: It is with a very heavy heart that I stand today to pay tribute to an incredible Nova Scotian who passed away last week. Gerald Duncan White was a former RCMP officer and retired Royal Canadian Naval Lieutenant Commander. Gerry's deployments during his naval career are too numerous to mention. He was a member of the RCMP Veterans' Association, UN-NATO Canada military group, the Blue Knights International Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club, the Nova Scotia Mass Choir, and the Order of St. George.

Gerry was a friend of mine and a friend to all. He had the gift to build strong lasting and cherished relationships throughout his life. He never wanted to shy away from lending a helping hand. He seized any opportunity to grab a microphone and sing "O Canada" or to recite a blessing.

Speaker, please join me in honouring the life of Gerry White and expressing our sympathies to his loved ones, especially his dear wife Jane, who told me Gerry would be bursting at the seams to know his service to others was recognized in the Nova Scotia Legislature. Fair winds and following seas, my friend.

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

FIREFIGHTERS MEM. PARADE: FAMILIES - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: On Saturday, I had the privilege to attend and speak at the Firefighter Memorial Parade and ceremony hosted by the Reserve Mines Fire Department. It was truly a privilege to pay tribute to CBRM leaders who have answered the call of their community. The parade and ceremony were a beautiful sight to see. Firefighters from across CBRM and a family from Halifax who lost their son paid tribute to their friends and their family by the laying of the helmets. On Saturday, it was so beautiful, and one firefighter during their speech said: These firefighters whom we honour today answered their last alarm. For that, I thank those firefighters, and I thank their families.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

SHELBURNE: NEW BUSINESSES - BEST WISHES

NOLAN YOUNG: I rise today to recognize a few new businesses that have chosen to open in the beautiful Town of Shelburne which are broadening and enhancing our shopping opportunities.

Harbourside Mercantile carries an ever-increasing variety of organic options from baked goods to fresh produce. Next door is Studio 135, where you will find the work of many amazing artists including fine handcrafted jewelry, paintings, pottery, and silversmithing. Across the street, for your reading delight, is Shorebound Books, which includes works by local authors and where you can also meet and find Leonard the Bookstore Cat.

Around the corner is Dirt to Dishes Pottery, where you can purchase beautiful, unique pottery and learn how to make it yourself. Last but not least, EOH Leathercraft features fine hand-stitched leather goods. Speaker, I respectfully ask all members to join me in wishing them continued success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

FREEMAN, MURRAY: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

CARMAN KERR: It's an honour to rise today to acknowledge the contributions of my friend and constituent Murray Freeman. Murray is one of those people who seems to be involved in everything. He gives 100 per cent to anything that he takes on.

You can count on Murray to be smiling as he tackles everything with a positive attitude. He is thoughtful and efficient in how he approaches a problem, and he always just gets things done. He's been involved with the Annapolis County Outdoor Sports Society, the Clean Annapolis River Project, the Valley Credit Union board, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union local, the Bridgetown Lions Club breakfasts, kayak tours on the Annapolis River, the Keji Loon Count, Annapolis County Athletics, and the list goes on and on.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention his involvement with the Campbell Corner Community College, the Rum Hole Society, and the Upper Granville Rod & Gun Club, but I've been sworn to secrecy to not talk about those activities. I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Murray Freeman for everything that he does for our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RCMP: EMERG. ALERT FAILURE - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Last night at about 8:15, the New Brunswick RCMP issued an emergency alert, also referred to as Alert Ready in New Brunswick, and they issued that for the region of Moncton and Salisbury. Police were searching for a person reported to be carrying a firearm with dangerous intent in the southeast area of the province. Police are actively searching for a person who would be driving a silver Ford F-150 pickup covered in mud and possibly having a Nova Scotia licence plate.

Nova Scotia RCMP never issued an alert to the people in northern Nova Scotia, despite the danger being 40 minutes away. Some people in our border community received the alert, if their phone bounced off towers in local New Brunswick. In 2020, a similar situation happened where a gunman in Moncton was on the loose. He was arrested one block from my MLA office in downtown Amherst.

In light of today's announcement from the Minister of Justice, I'm encouraging her and the government to work together with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to ensure all Nova Scotians are protected in the event of a dangerous situation in our neighbouring province.

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

FRIENDS OF PUBLIC GARDENS: 40TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

LISA LACHANCE: The Halifax Public Gardens have been a jewel of the downtown for over 150 years, but for the past 40, they have been looked after by the dedicated board and volunteer members of the Friends of the Public Gardens.

In June, I was honoured to attend the 40th anniversary celebration for the Friends, under the shade of the Gardens' beautiful gazebo. It was a culmination of decades of commitment, perseverance, and genuine love for a green space that we need to see more of in our communities. We also celebrated Board Chair Judith Cabrita who, as a founding member, has been taking care of the Gardens as long as the Friends have been around.

I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in celebrating the Friends of the Public Gardens' 40th Anniversary and giving them the recognition they deserve for making Halifax Citadel-Sable Island a greener, more beautiful place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

CA, ASHLEE FEENER - BIRTH CONGRATS.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Given the hour, I will rise with some happy news to congratulate my constituency assistant, Ashlee Feener, on the birth of her second child. (Applause) Don't clap so long. Jackson Lee was born on June 27th weighing 7 pounds and 13 ounces. A very big promotion for her eldest, Jay, who is now a big brother.

[2:00 p.m.]

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The time is now 2:00 p.m. We will finish at 2:50 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: SKILLED TRADE WORKERS - ATTRACT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: While the Premier's plan to double the population is making it much easier to move to Nova Scotia, it is making it much more challenging to afford to build a life here. The Premier has told this House and Nova Scotians that he has a plan to double the population which targets skilled trade workers to build more housing. However, the numbers in his own department say otherwise. Trades and equipment workers who have the skills to build housing account for less than 5 per cent of the provincial nominees. How can the Premier say his plan is working to bring more skilled trade workers here when such a small fraction of the people the province is even nominating are from this category of worker?

THE PREMIER: I guess we're back to too many people now, are we? Last week, the member opposite called on the government to slow population growth. Then this week, his federal cousins asked us to take up to 6,000 asylum seekers, and the member's tone changed just overnight. He thought we should definitely do that, if his federal cousins are asking us to do that. The big question in this Chamber for Nova Scotians is: Why is the member's party - the Nova Scotia Liberal Party - simply just following the lead of the federal Liberals instead of standing up for Nova Scotians?

ZACH CHURCHILL: This is what the Premier does when he can't answer a question and when his own policies are failing. He points a finger, and he lays blame. Unfortunately, the scapegoats he has chosen this time are some of the most vulnerable people in the world who are fleeing war and persecution, who, by the way, aren't even in this province. He tells

us that his plan to double the population is by bringing in more skilled trade workers when we know that's not the case. Less than 5 per cent of people he is bringing into this province are going to be able to help build more houses. Why can't he just take responsibility for his own failures, instead of taking every opportunity he can to pass the buck, lay the blame, and point the finger?

THE PREMIER: We're back to more people now. On September 9th, the member opposite told CBC that he didn't know why we were sticking to our strategic growth plan. I'll table that for the House. Then on September 13th, just four days later, he told The Canadian Press that we should accept more people. I ask: What changed in those four days? Well, I'll tell you what changed. The leader opposite found out that the Trudeau government wanted to send us 6,000 asylum seekers. He's letting the Trudeau government set the policies of his caucus when he should be standing up for Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The smoke and mirrors of this government are clear to anybody who's watching. Let's talk about the Premier's targeted plan. His own Housing Needs Assessment Report gave an overview of the shortage of skilled labourers we would need to build more housing. His own report said we'll be 85 bricklayers short by 2030. Last year, the Province nominated zero bricklayers to come here. We need 250 pipefitters. Last year, the Premier nominated zero. We need 92 crane operators. Last year, there was a big improvement here. They nominated one. Why can't the Premier just be honest with Nova Scotians? He doesn't have a plan to double our population based on skilled trade workers.

THE PREMIER: In their 2021 budget speech, the then-Liberal government boasted: "Since we were first elected, immigration to Nova Scotia has tripled." Back then, they believed in immigration. They boasted, but they didn't build. They averaged just 4,500 housing starts per year. In 2023 alone, we saw housing starts of over 7,000. The reality is very simple, and Nova Scotians can see it. From the carbon tax to asylum seekers, the member wants to import Trudeau policies to Nova Scotia. I remember when he ran on a platform of Nova Scotia first. Now it's Liberals first.

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

PREM.: HELP FOR RENTERS - PROVIDE

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Speaker, in the past couple of years, I have visited one particular sixplex in Dartmouth many times. The residents have now twice fallen victim to the flaws in the Premier's rent cap - first accepting increases above the cap, and second being forced to sign fixed-term leases and end their periodic ones. These tenants have information. They know it's illegal. They're working with our office. They're working with Dalhousie Legal Aid, but they won't pursue a claim. Why? Because the building manager representing the owner in Ontario threatens them mercilessly with eviction. This is one example of the imbalance faced by renters. What does the Premier say to the people being victimized by this legislation?

THE PREMIER: Nobody wants any Nova Scotian to be victimized. There's a process. There's a law that people can follow. I urge the member to engage in that process. The reason we have the housing crisis today is quite simple. The Liberals didn't invest when they were in power. The NDP also had an opportunity. They sat on tens of millions of federal dollars that could have been allocated to housing. It was allocated by the federal government for housing. The NDP just sat on it. They absolutely did nothing.

We are making historic investments. We are seeing housing starts go up. Our plan will also create enough public housing for up to 700 families. That hasn't happened in a generation. We're getting to work while they sat on their hands when they had the chance.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I would invite the Premier to focus on his government and their policies. One thing is clear: The status quo hasn't been working, not for landlords nor for tenants. The Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia has long advocated for a tenancy enforcement unit to help. Of the current system, one landlord was quoted as saying, "It fails the tenants, it fails the landlords. I would almost go so far as saying it protects the bad apples." I'll table that. The Premier responded to these concerns from landlords by making it easier and faster for them to evict. That fixes the landlords' issues. Can the Premier explain to renters what he has done to help them?

THE PREMIER: This problem didn't start overnight. We didn't break it, but we're fixing it. I'll tell you how we're fixing it: 40,000 more homes, 17,000 more affordable units, and 700 people will have access to new public housing. We're getting to work. That's our plan. Our plan is about investment. Our plan is about action. We have to catch up for years and two successive governments of inaction. We're getting to work. We know the solution to the housing crisis is more housing.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: The Premier was given the solution - a tenancy enforcement unit - but he scrapped it. Okay, fine, but we still have landlords who demand an unlawful security deposit, who wrongfully remove tenants, who shut off their tenants' water, and who face no disincentive about this. Even if their actions are overturned by a hearing - and often they know the rules - they still don't have a punishment or a fine. A landlord can evict or pursue a tenant for lost rent, but as we recently heard from Dal Legal Aid, a tenant can do nothing. The commissioned report called for bringing in penalties and fines for violating the Act. Will the Premier do that?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, there's a bill before the House that's being debated. There's a process, and I encourage the member to make sure that she informs her constituents to make themselves availed of. We'll continue to work through that process. We know that people are struggling. We know that housing is a big part of the cost of living struggles. That's why we're building more homes. We also know that the carbon tax puts a lot of pressure on Nova Scotians. Over \$400 million a year leaves the hands of Nova Scotians because of the carbon tax.

I was interested to see the member's leader, Mr. Singh, talking about maybe frantically trying to find an alternative to the carbon tax. Well, I have some good news for Mr. Singh: We actually created one. I ask that member to take this to her leader. It's still better than a carbon tax. I'll table that for the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MAH: AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICIES - FIX

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, the reason this Premier lays the blame at everybody else but himself - doesn't take any responsibility - is because he can't stand on the merit of his own record as Premier. He can brag about all the housing starts he wants to in this House, but according to his own department's housing assessment, we are going to have a shortfall by 2027 of more than 40,000 houses. That includes the 40 that he says he's going to build. If you look at the Department of Finance's records on this, housing per population has been in free fall since 2021 when this government took over. My question to the Premier is: Does he not see that his policies are failing?

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, when we came into government in 2021, it was clear that things needed to be done in housing. It was clear before that. We had a government before that that did nothing. They sat on their hands, and we have been trying to clean up that mess ever since. We have done unprecedented things that have gotten national attention across this country in the various programs that we are doing. I can tell the member that in 2023, housing starts were up 25 per cent. We're seeing results.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I asked the government to only look at their own housing assessment. The minister can look at this. It was produced by his own department. I asked the government to look at the Department of Finance's data. It wasn't before three years ago that housing per capita started to go into free fall. This government can brag about all the housing starts that other people are building. It is still not keeping up with their rate of population growth. All the data in the department and all the anecdotal experiences by Nova Scotians who are going homeless, who can't afford rents, and who can't afford a place to live are showing that.

My question to the minister is: What is it going to take for this government to take responsibility for their own actions and recognize that their policies are creating homelessness and making housing unaffordable and unavailable for Nova Scotians and newcomers coming here?

JOHN LOHR: We have done an unprecedented job. We have gotten national attention. For example, our Land for Housing Program has been emulated not only by other provinces but now by the federal government. We're making a difference in the lives of ordinary Nova Scotians.

I can tell the member that we receive feedback from individuals all the time about how grateful they are for the things that we are doing, as a government, to help them. One example would be public housing heating costs. We've changed the rent system for public housing. That moved a tenant to tears when she found out that she did not have to pay for heating costs in her public housing because we changed the rent formula. I'll table that.

SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PREM.: POPULATION INCREASE PROBLEMS - ADMIT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Just put that into perspective. The minister stands up and says: Look, I got one email about someone who is paying less for heat in public housing while homelessness has tripled, while housing costs have shot up more here than anywhere else in the country, and where this government is bringing in more people than we have homes to accommodate. That's what this minister is focused on? An email?

This is what's going on here. The government is creating a major problem here. The costs of housing are shooting through the roof because this Premier doesn't have a clue. He's sticking to a plan to double the population that's not bringing in skilled trades workers and that's not bringing in health care workers. My question to the Premier is: Does he not see that it's creating problems for Nova Scotians?

THE SPEAKER: There was a bit of a reaction and disruption of the House. It is the major rule here, so I just ask that the member to keep it clean. I'm not going to ask you to retract it or apologize.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, we have worked as a government on every front in housing. We have seen a budget increase from \$120 million to \$640 million in the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. At the same time, we have not added staff.

I can't tell you how hard our staff have worked in the last three years to pick up the pieces when things were not done. As the member knows, it takes time to build. Those construction starts that we mentioned are critically important. As a government, we are working hard to address the entire housing spectrum - right from homelessness, which I can let my colleague discuss, to all of the different levels of housing. We're working very hard to get that done.

ZACH CHURCHILL: While this government pats itself on the back, in the last quarter Nova Scotia had a net loss of 300 houses to our housing system. While this government pats themselves on the back for having more housing starts, the amount of housing per capita is in free fall, and homelessness has tripled under their watch, not under anybody else's. While this government tells us they're bringing in more skilled trade workers to help build housing, they brought in zero bricklayers, nominated zero pipefitters, nominated

one crane lift operator. Why is this government all talk, no action? If they only took the time to look at their own government statistics, they would see that for themselves.

JOHN LOHR: We've seen a significant increase in housing starts in the past number of years, and we're really up. Since 2020, we're up 47 per cent in housing starts. We've worked hard to achieve that. We're up in completions as well, which is another important stat. We're up in investing. We've invested almost \$240 million in the last three years in affordable housing to make housing more affordable for Nova Scotians. We will continue to invest. We recognize the challenges of ordinary Nova Scotians. We will continue to invest.

[2:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MAH: HOUSING UNIT SHORTAGE - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: According to the minister's own department, if it continues as is, with all the great work that's happening, we are going to be an additional 44,000 housing units short by 2027. That's coming up in just over two years. We are going to be 44,000 housing units short at the time that this minister and his government brag about how much they're doing. We are going to see more homelessness, we are going to see housing costs continue to shoot through the roof for Nova Scotians, we are going to have seniors who continue to struggle, and we are going to have young people who lose hope in building a future here. Why can't this government understand that their current track is failing Nova Scotians?

HON. JOHN LOHR: The reason that we are investing in housing for Nova Scotians - we recognize the challenge. It's a call to action across Nova Scotia for people to step up who can. I can tell you that we have the Secondary and Backyard Suite Incentive Program under which we've seen nearly 200 units approved. Ordinary Nova Scotians stepping up. We are funding that through a program to fund secondary suites. I'm very proud of that program. Right across the spectrum, we see Nova Scotians stepping up across the province, our municipalities, to address this housing crisis. There's no one solution for the housing crisis: It's across the spectrum. We have to work with the homelessness, and we have to work in every other section. We're working hard . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

JOHN LOHR: . . . to make that happen.

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

DHW: FAMILY DOCTOR RETENTION FAILURE - EXPLAIN

LISA LACHANCE: My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I'm sure the minister is aware that yet another family doctor is set to leave the Halifax Citadel riding on November 2nd, just two years after they started practicing. Some residents with a 25- or 30-year history with the clinic in question were told Friday that there was no longer a doctor for them there. They called 811 to join the wait-list, only to be told, only to be reminded, that there are 160,000 ahead of them. Can the minister please explain to my hundreds of constituents who will lose their attachment to primary health care in the next month this failure to retain the family doctors that we need?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: When we do know that physicians are retiring or moving away from their practice, we work very hard to work with the practice in order to stabilize it. I don't have the particular circumstances around this clinic, but the Nova Scotia Health Authority will reach out to the clinic to understand the circumstances.

For people who do put their names on the Need a Family Practice Registry, it's important for them to know that they have immediate access; they will be able to have VirtualCareNS; they will have their recent records on their phone; if they need to be seen in person, they will go to a primary care clinic that is located near them; we have primary care clinics and pharmacies; and there are 840,000 new appointments in this province on an annual basis to support people in access to care.

LISA LACHANCE: I think it's really important in this case to point out that this is not a case of a doctor retiring but is actually a relatively new doctor in practice. The question is: Why aren't they staying?

This isn't an isolated incident in my riding. Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has the highest percentage of residents on the Need a Family Practice wait-list. In June of this past year - which is the most recent data we have - 22.9 per cent of residents were waiting for a family doctor. I'll table that.

Solutions like making a phone call, one-off appointments, and apps are not sufficient to cover the massive gap between the level of primary care that is needed and the level of primary care that is currently available. How much longer is this government going to make the residents of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island wait for actual primary care attachment?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: What I want Nova Scotians to know is that primary care is changing in this province. In the old days, we did have a doctor for every Nova Scotian. Now we will have a health home for Nova Scotians, where people are attached to clinics where they can see a variety of different care providers working to the full scope of their practice. We are building these teams across the province, and when we know that someone is leaving or retiring, we work very hard. There have been over 80,000 people who have been attached to primary care providers since we formed government. There are a number of

individuals who have also been connected to chronic disease care, as an example, or for pre-natal care.

There are a variety of different options for Nova Scotians who are looking for and seeking primary care. I would encourage those patients to call 811 to help with the navigation process.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

DCS: PALLET SHELTER CONSTRUCTION - EXPLAIN

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. I'm honestly just needing some information here.

I received a call on Sunday from a constituent - that was September 8th - telling me that a construction of Pallet shelters was being prepared behind the Canada Games Centre. I had zero idea. I am the MLA in the riding. I reached out to two councillors. They had no idea.

I'm hoping the minister can give us information to these questions. First, who decides on the location? Is it HRM or the Province? Can the minister also confirm if these are Pallet shelters or tiny homes where people are actually working and paying part of the cost? What kind of . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: The truth is HRM has the ultimate authority where these go. I saw her interview yesterday and the question here today. The fact that they're saying on the record that the councillors didn't know is not true. The councillors would have been informed from the beginning, would have actually voted on it, and would have been part of the process.

There was also some question about consultation. The Canada Games Centre and the BMO Soccer Centre have been consulted all along. In fact, along with councillors and over a hundred people, they were given a tour just a couple of weeks ago of one of the Pallet sites, and they came away impressed.

What I will say is that we understand the fear. I understand the fear. This is not an encampment. This is a place where people are set up for success. We are worried and concerned about their safety but also the safety of the community. There have been no policing issues.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I thank the minister for the answers, and I would love for him to continue to tell us what kind of wraparound services they will be providing. If our community has any issues, who do they contact, and will that person be available seven days a week, 24 hours?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I just want to reiterate that these are not encampments. These are homes. We've had an extremely good success rate with these.

The other Pallets and the other homes that we've built - we've had zero policing issues. I've actually talked to HRCE. They've had zero issues with or complaints to the local schools in the area. If there is an issue, the member can certainly reach out to me personally, but if there is an issue within the community, there is a service provider. We will release the information.

I did tell the member that they are working through some things, and once we have the service provider and the issues that they're working through right now, we'll give her that information.

The truth is that these are people who need a little bit of help. What we've seen in the past with this is that these are the plumbers, these are the seniors, these are skilled tradespeople who for one reason or another fell on some hard times.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

RTA: RENTAL INCREASES - EXPLAIN

BRAEDON CLARK: Recently the Minister of Service Nova Scotia announced an extension of the rent cap, which we were happy to see. Rent control is necessary for the province to keep rents affordable while our vacancy rate is so low. But a big unanswered question that we have not gotten any information on is: Why do we have the highest rental increases in the country at 5 per cent? I'm wondering if the minister could explain his reasoning for that decision.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I think all members of the House will agree that we are in a housing crisis. I think there is a disagreement of facts, a philosophical difference in our strategy to tackle the housing crisis. We are experiencing a very low vacancy rate. It's driving costs for many Nova Scotians. We know that many Nova Scotians are struggling.

The fact is that we're supporting them with a number of different initiatives. On the housing front, I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, other ministers and I have talked about our plan during Question Period. It's working. And we're making historical investments across the spectrum. Investing in public housing; investing in affordable housing; investing in student housing: That's the solution to the housing crisis.

BRAEDON CLARK: I know in the House we use the Socratic method going back and forth, but I wasn't asking a philosophy question, I was asking a question about the rent cap. As the minister would know, in P.E.I. the maximum rent increase is 3 per cent; in Ontario it's 2.5 per cent; in British Columbia it's 3 per cent. In fact, in every Canadian province with a rent control or rent cap system - including our own - all of them, other than Nova Scotia, are significantly lower than 5 per cent.

Again, I would ask the minister: Could he please provide a shred of reasoning as to how this government, this Cabinet, came to the decision that 5 per cent was reasonable for Nova Scotia?

COLTON LEBLANC: The shred of detail, the shred of information that the member opposite fails to understand is that we need all landlords to be part of the solution. That's a fact. We know that many smaller mom and pop landlords have struggled for some time. The cost of everything. We're debating the cost of living in this Chamber right now, but the members opposite are failing to recognize the cost for some of the smaller landlords.

I think far too often there's this political grandstanding - there's painting with the brush of all landlords as being corporate landlords. There are small mom and pop landlords that want to be part of the solution, and we need them to be part of the solution. That's why we're moving forward with this balanced approach.

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

MAH: HOUSING ISSUES - RESOLVE

LORELEI NICOLL: For every day that someone calls my office worried about their housing, I would not want to repeat what I just heard here from the minister. Because every day, including this morning for an hour, I listened to a widow who's in a building full of other widows, paying \$1,900 to \$2,000 - it varies - for a one-bedroom. And they are worried every night because their rents keep increasing for no reason given.

A Nova Scotian called me, a hard-working Nova Scotian who owns a home, and it was made worse currently. My question to the minister: What options are going to be available to everyone to avoid homelessness?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We have made unprecedented investments in many programs, one of them being our rent supplement program, which has gone through - I think it was an \$11 million program when we came into government, and it is now \$69 million. We realize it's difficult for Nova Scotians. I would encourage the member to see if they were eligible for that.

I can tell you that we've had many, many people reach out to us, and I'll table these testimonials: "I'm in tears. If you only knew what this meant to my life. I left a violent relationship with small kids. I did not know how I was going to survive next month. This was life-saving," in terms of rent supplements.

We've had others who have said the same thing. This one: "Bless your heart. It's hard to ask for help at this age, but who knew the world was going to get so expensive?" Not only do we talk about the big numbers here, but this also impacts the lives of . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

LORELEI NICOLL: I look forward to reading that, because sometimes where the highest taxes are, those are the people I'm hearing from. I ask this government if they plan to offer any real support to Nova Scotians so they can stay in their homes - worried about paying their mortgage. The constituent who contacted me worried - is it an oil tank that I can replace, or am I going to have to call and have a second mortgage? Right now, the constituent is weighing his options. As housing becomes more expensive, does the minister know just how many Nova Scotians are one emergency away from homelessness?

[2:30 p.m.]

JOHN LOHR: I agree with the member that high taxes are a problem in our province. I would encourage the Opposition to take a stand with us against the carbon tax. The reason I would say that is that it impacts every aspect of life, every aspect of affordability for individuals. I hope the members understand that. Every item that we have gets trucked in on a truck or comes in on a boat, and the carbon tax is impacting that. It's impacting the cost of construction, it's impacting the cost of everyday goods, it's impacting everything. That cost gets passed on everywhere that we purchase, including rents - everywhere, this cost is getting passed on. I would encourage the Opposition to take a stand with us against that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

NRR: ENERGY POVERTY RATES - ADDRESS

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of energy poverty in the country, with about 43 per cent of households paying more on energy than they can afford. Earlier this year, this department was involved in the development of a report that called for and designed a program to ensure people can afford the electricity they need. I will table that report. Does the minister support the findings of this report? What is the minister's plan to address energy poverty?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: I'm not sure what report got tabled, so I'll have a look at that because there have been a few reports on this. Some were government reports, some were independent reports. I will have a look at the report. What I can say is the Clean Electricity Solutions Task Force did make a recommendation - Recommendation No. 12 - to look at what Ontario is doing for affordability. We have looked at what Ontario is doing. We started that process - task force Recommendation No. 12. We're comparing what's going on in that jurisdiction to what we're doing in our jurisdiction. We're still looking at that.

What I can say is that \$250 million has been invested since we've taken government on energy affordability and different forms of energy. We'll continue that. We'll also look at other alternatives. We have found out from working with other jurisdictions that we're doing a lot that other jurisdictions aren't.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I'll just reiterate the fact that we have one of the highest rates of energy poverty. Whatever we're doing, we're not doing enough: 43 per cent of households are living in energy poverty.

Thank you to the minister for bringing up Recommendation No. 12. This was actually the second report. The report that I just tabled was the second report from last year that called for decisive action on energy affordability. The final report from the Nova Scotia Clean Electricity Solutions Task Force, which I'm sure the minister is familiar with, also directed this government to "determine the best way to deliver a 'Made in Nova Scotia' suite of programs" - Recommendation No. 12 - "to help with residential electricity costs."

Has the government accepted this recommendation? When will Nova Scotians see programs to lower their energy bills in place?

TORY RUSHTON: I just had a look at that report. That's actually an independent report. That wasn't a government report. That was an independent body report. What I can . . . (interruptions).

THE SPEAKER: Order. The honourable member for Dartmouth North asked a question. I'm sure you would appreciate hearing his answer.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

TORY RUSHTON: What I can say is looking back over the last couple of decades, the highest rates actually increased under the NDP government. What we have done is \$250 million investment of this province's money for affordability. We also looked at the fuel adjustment mechanism that was going to be put into place to add nearly a double-digit increase for all ratepayers. Since October, we've been negotiating with the federal government. Yesterday they helped us out: \$500 million so the rates in Nova Scotia won't go up this year.

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

EMO: TAX INCREASE DUE TO WILDFIRES - STOP

HON. BEN JESSOME: The government is asking this party to take a stand against higher taxes. This party has taken a stand. In the Spring, I introduced a bill that would ensure that victims of wildfires didn't see their property taxes increase. I introduced a petition to encourage the government to make the change. What I'm asking is: Will the minister take that statement seriously, take a stand? Will he make a change for the victims of wildfires throughout our province? Will he make a change so that their property taxes are not going to increase?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We certainly recognize the stress that the wildfires have caused on the province and all the different emergency measures that we've had to go through; the

emergency advance. That's why we're setting up the Nova Scotia Guard in the bill. In terms of the victims of wildfires, as the member knows, PVSC, which has responsibility over assessments, has a mechanism to account for that. This is also an area of municipal jurisdiction.

BEN JESSOME: Another classic "place the blame on somebody else" by this government. It's frustrating because I regularly hear from the victims of the wildfires that the government is just not taking their matters seriously. They're facing increased taxes. They're trying to get a meeting with the minister or the Premier, who have yet to make good on a commitment to sit down with this group of victims. They say they understand the stress that these victims are going through, when in fact they will not meet their commitment to sit down with these folks and hear directly from them.

They are approving developments without egress, like in the case in Fall River. My question is: When will the minister and the government take this seriously?

JOHN LOHR: We take this very seriously and we realize the impact that this and all the events of the past couple of years have had on Nova Scotians. We care deeply. We're working hard on it. In terms of the homes that were impacted by the wildfires, we recognize that PVSC had a mechanism to account for that. We respect that process. As I said, the taxation of properties is an area of municipal jurisdiction. We look to our municipalities and certainly look to PVSC for their solution to this thing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

RTA: FIXED-TERM LEASE ABUSE - CLARIFY

RONNIE LEBLANC: Across the province, as the population grows and rents rise, more landlords are offering tenants fixed-term leases. These are being abused or being used as a tool to get around the rent cap and Residential Tenancies rules. My question to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia is: How many Nova Scotians are currently on a fixed-term lease?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: The simple answer is that we don't know. We do not have a rental registry in this province, nor do we plan to implement one either. I know that data is important. We've heard from both tenant and landlord organizations about the need to improve our data. That's why the department is undergoing a modernization of its landlord and tenant information system. There have been incremental changes, or there will be incremental changes, rolled out.

That said, some of the amendments on the floor of the Legislature relate to making direct sources public and posting them online. We are making changes to the program, but the answer to the member's question is we do not.

RONNIE LEBLANC: The Department of Service Nova Scotia needs to do a better job collecting data so that they can respond to the needs of Nova Scotians. Right now, they don't have a rental registry so they are unable to track fixed-term lease abuse, problem landlords, and problem tenants. The department can make better decisions if they have better data.

My question is: Will the minister commit to implementing a rental registry?

COLTON LEBLANC: I'll just say refer to Answer No. 1, but I guess that for the benefit of the House we are not looking to implement a rental registry. That said, we are moving forward with a number of changes to the program, the modernization of the landlord and tenant information system.

Another change we've rolled out to make it easier for tenants to get back their security deposit is it is online and also a paper-based mechanism, a process. There's no hearing for tenants to get back their security deposits.

There are a number of initiatives to make the program better and fairer for Nova Scotians and the work will never stop regardless of which minister is in this seat and which party is in government.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

MAH: CBRM HOUSING PLAN - IMPLEMENT

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Under this government the vacancy rate in the CBRM has gone from 6.1 per cent to one of the lowest vacancy rates in the country at 0.8 per cent. According to the province's housing needs assessment, in 2023 CBRM was short 1,000 housing units and that number has surely gotten worse as the government pushes ahead with its population goals.

Experts warned us that without serious intervention, that number could more than double in 10 years. The CBRM is the second largest municipality in the province and should be treated as such. This government likes to talk about "More, faster" but I would like to see the plan for housing for the Island.

My question to the minister is: When can Cape Bretoners see the government's plan for housing in Cape Breton?

HON. JOHN LOHR: We recognize that the housing crisis is right across the province, in every municipality across the province. We did a provincial needs assessment. We're reacting to that. We recognize the urgency of housing, not only in CBRM but in many other jurisdictions that have not seen that. In one sense this is good news. Some of our rural jurisdictions were in population decline. We've seen that reversed. They are growing. That's good news.

We're investing in CBRM in many ways. We're investing in considerable new public housing in CBRM. It's a fair number - I don't have the number with me - but quite a number of our new public housing units are in CBRM. That's an important program for that part of the province.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Not only has housing become more difficult to come by in Cape Breton, but if you can find a unit, it's extremely difficult to afford. The housing needs assessment found that 87 per cent of single-person households do not have enough money to afford the average home. Young people who once imagined owning a home are finding it more difficult to have that dream on the Island. What does the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have to say to Cape Bretoners who are being priced out of their community?

JOHN LOHR: This is an area of concern. My personal belief is the most affordable home that you'll be in is the one that you own. Home ownership is a goal for many people. We respect that and we want to enable that. That's why we've made a number of changes to our Down Payment Assistance Program. I'm certainly willing to help the member know more about them and see if they'll fit for the constituents whom he is referring to.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

DCS: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY - IMPLEMENT

SUZY HANSEN: My question is for the Minister of Community Services. The government housing plan released last Fall commits to developing a homelessness prevention strategy. However, a FOIPOP release this month found no records about this development of such a strategy. There is less than one year left in this minister's mandate. I would like to ask the minister: When will we see this strategy released?

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: This government has invested over \$200 million in the last two years. A 360 per cent increase in homelessness gives me an opportunity to thank and appreciate all the hard work that we get from Shelter Nova Scotia, Adsum for Women and Children, and Welcome Housing. They are on the ground every day. We are meeting with them twice a week and we're meeting with our municipal partners at least once a week.

The strategy that we are working on right now is putting people first.

SUZY HANSEN: "Flying by the seat of our pants" is not a strategy.

The Board of Police Commissioners' independent report on the 2021 encampment evictions recommended that the province form a permanent committee on housing and homelessness, with HRM and other key representatives, to assess and address current needs as well as create a long-term plan. Based on the minister's response and all the hard work that is happening, there is not yet a strategy. I'm wondering: Has this committee been established, and if not, when will we see the fruits of that committee?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I know the member thinks this is flying by the seat of the pants. I would say we have a plan. It's working. When we came into power, there were 200 shelters and spaces for homelessness. There are now 800 with another 200 coming online. We're doing everything we can to put the shelters, the spaces, and the homes in place and also invest in resources.

[2:45 p.m.]

One of the issues that we have to deal with is the cost of living that, under the NDP, increased because of a GST increase - zero new housing built, no investment in shelter, no investment in affordable housing, and no investment in public housing. The only thing they did for Nova Scotians is raise taxes.

THE SPEAKER: Order.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

MAH: MULTIPLE ACCESS ROUTES - ENSURE

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has referenced that development approvals under their regime will do so in conjunction with municipal rules and the municipal planning strategy. Ingram Drive in Fall River - the developer's looking to build 120 units of housing. For years, the city has been clear that the project would require two egress routes. I know how important this egress issue is, having experienced last year's wildfire. It's something that folks from my community are concerned about. Approvals like this, that contravene the municipal planning strategy, are a dismissal of that stress and anxiety that the minister seems to know a lot about. Why is he allowing this project in Fall River to go forward?

HON. JOHN LOHR: One of the programs that we have gotten national attention for, frankly, is the special planning area project, which saw some projects that had been in the hopper for eight or nine years, like Mount Hope, go forward. One of them is this area. We have worked hard on that. We recognize the need for housing in Fall River. We know that there's a huge need for this type of housing in that area. We recognize this need, and we are seeing this project go forward. We're proud of that work.

BEN JESSOME: We do understand that there is a housing deficit, but the fact remains that this government seems more concerned with garnering national attention to post in the headlines than putting public safety at the head of their decision-making. When residency decisions like this are made, it's a direct dismissal of everything that happened last year - 16,000 people evacuating my community and more around this province. When decisions like this are made in direct contravention of the city's requirement to build roads in and out, the question is not doing more housing. The question is creating safe communities with multiple access routes. When will the government make this decision?

JOHN LOHR: Frankly, it's a confusing situation because I hear from the other side more housing, and now I hear less housing. That's the reality. The reality is this project was recommended by city planning staff. We recognize that recommendation for these units. There are ways out. It's not far from Highway No. 102. We recognize that, so we are letting this one go ahead, but we hear mixed messages: We want housing/we don't want housing. I ask that the Opposition make up their mind: What do you want?

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: If the Premier's population growth targets are to bring in skilled trade workers and health care workers, how come they represent less than 15 per cent of those being nominated into the province?

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

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Speaker, I want to bring your attention to documents that were presented by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. They were presented in the House as quotations. However, the documents themselves are not presented as quotations. They are presented as briefing note bullets. The words are not attributed to any individuals.

I think that goes against the rules in terms of tabling documents with quotes. I would ask the minister to either table the quotes themselves or retract these words from the House. Right now, we don't know whether they come from real people or whether Peter Harrison's writing these for him up in his office. (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: Order.

I ask that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing please table in the near future those quotes with attributions, or you can withdraw them.

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Speaker, I will withdraw those and be more careful in the future on quotes of individuals who are thankful for the programs that we have.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GREG MORROW: Speaker, despite her objections, in the East Gallery I'd like to introduce you to my wife, Suzanne Morrow. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

GREG MORROW: The only thing else I'd add is that if you enjoyed a delicious cookie or oatcake last week, my wife is to thank.

THE SPEAKER: I didn't receive any, but I'm sure they were delicious. Thank you.

The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

HON. BEN JESSOME: Speaker, during Question Period, the Premier made comments to me after I made my questions, saying that I would not have to worry about the next fire. If that is not what he said, then he should stand in his place and clarify what he said. Under the rules - that it elicited a reaction from this side of the House. It definitely elicits a reaction from this side of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Order. I was listening very intently during this whole session. As most people know, I have incredible hearing. I did not hear that. It did not, from what I saw. I called Order every time I saw a reaction in the House, so I am dismissing that.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Earlier today, Bill No. 487, An Act to Continue Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre as a Society under the Societies Act and to Repeal Chapter 16 of the Acts of 1990, the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre Act, was introduced.

I ask for unanimous consent of the House for it to proceed to second reading.

Bill No. 487 - An Act to Continue Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre as a Society under the Societies Act and to Repeal Chapter 16 of the Acts of 1990, the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre Act.

THE SPEAKER: It is agreed.

The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: Speaker, I'm privileged to rise to restore peace and harmony here in the House. I am very privileged and honoured to stand, and I do move that Bill No. 487 be read a second time.

It's a good day here, as we're able to put this bill forward. Just a bit of background. I know that the member for Kings South is very aware of the community and stakeholders in the region who have been asking for this change in legislation over a number of years. Just a bit of background on this. The Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre, incorporated under the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre Act, was originally under the Municipal Housing Corporations Act as Kings County Residential Services Corporation in 1981.

The Act basically allows the Municipality of the County of Kings to divest itself of the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre, and allows the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre to apply to become a non-profit society. Two words that will basically be a big part of this bill going forward, for the area and for those involved, are autonomy and stability.

I'll just briefly chat for a minute about the idea for each side. I want to present the stakeholders' positions from the Municipality of the County of Kings and the rehab centre. For the rehab centre, it's to achieve autonomy for decision-making going forward, and for the Municipality of the County of Kings, to divest itself of its affiliation with Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre.

Currently, the Board comprises a number of municipal council members, a community-appointed member, and four provincial appointees. The term of the municipal councillors is determined by elections, and often are only one-year or temporary appointments. Therefore, those individuals may only start to understand the complexities of what's being discussed in the organization, then new members are appointed, and that knowledge gained is unfortunately lost.

Similarly, filling provincial appointment positions can be difficult. Positions can remain vacant for a long period of time. If Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre was an independent non-profit organization, then an independent board could be established that could recruit their own members, therefore assisting in the strategic planning process and better providing governance to the organization.

The KRCC mandate does not align with the core business of the Municipality of the County of Kings and the involvement of the municipality is basically not required. Both organizations are in favour of a divestment for Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre by the municipality. The KRRC staff have identified that this has been a welcome change for about 12 years now.

Speaker, I will just say that the municipality has the land and facilities on its books, and the assets are fully amortized. Municipal council has passed resolutions to convey the land and building to KRRC at their September 3, 2024, meeting. Repeal of the Act is the next step in this transition.

[3:00 p.m.]

I just wanted to rise and say those few words. I'm very thankful for my colleagues on all sides of the House as we continue to move this bill through the legislative process. I want to thank the member for Kings North for his support and the member for Kings South. I think it's a welcome sight for people to see the member who used to represent the Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre - the member for Kings South - and the current member for Kings West, who now has the privilege of having Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre, working together. Hopefully, we can pass a bill that is of benefit to the community and will allow for flexibility in the operations and decision-making, whether that facility is for health care, long-term care, housing - different things. It will be a very welcome thing for many in the community.

With that, I will take my seat. If there are any members from the Opposition who would like to comment on the bill, I'll take my seat now.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: I'll just say a couple of quick words in support of this bill. I would like to thank the honourable member for Kings West for bringing this forward. From my perspective, it seems like this was a loose end that came loose about 30 years ago, when community services were moved from a municipal responsibility to a provincial responsibility. For some reason, the facility has remained in this governance structure far too long. I did reach out and speak with the Chair of the board, Phil Warren, and as well Deputy Mayor Lutz from Kings County, who confirmed to me what was already stated, that the council has made their decision in public on September 3rd and is in full support. In consultation with my caucus colleagues and our leader, we happily support the bill before the House.

THE SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the honourable member for Kings West, it is to close second reading.

The honourable member for Kings West.

CHRIS PALMER: I do want to thank the member for Kings South, and I look forward to hearing from people at the Law Amendments Committee who will be coming in to speak about this bill. With that, I move to close debate on second reading.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is to close second reading of Bill No. 487.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried. We'll take a short recess while we get set up. We're now in recess.

[3:17 p.m. The House resolved into a CWH on Bills with Deputy Speaker Nolan Young in the Chair.]

[4:28 p.m. CWH on Bills rose and the House reconvened with Speaker Danielle Barkhouse in the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: Order. The Committee of the Whole House on Bills reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole has met and considered the following Bill:

Bill No. 455 - Nova Scotia Guard Act.

with certain amendments. The Chair has been instructed to recommend this Bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that this Bill be read a third time on a future day.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to revert to Government Notices of Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Is there unanimous consent? It is agreed.

[GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,163

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

Whereas in accordance with Section 4 for the Conflict of Interest Act, on consultation with leaders of the recognized parties and subject to the approval of the House of Assembly, the Governor in Council shall

appoint a person to be the Conflict of Interest Commissioner on a full-time or part-time basis for a term of not more than five years but with the option of reappointment; and

Whereas in accordance with Section 4 of the Conflict of Interest Act, upon consultation with leaders of the recognized parties and subject to the approval of the House of Assembly, the Governor in Council appointed the Honourable Joseph P. Kennedy as the commissioner on November 12, 2019, on a part-time basis for a term of five years; and

Whereas the appointment of the Honourable Joseph P. Kennedy as commissioner will expire on November 11, 2024, leaving the position of Conflict of Interest Commissioner vacant;

Therefore be it resolved that pursuant to Sections 4 and 6 of Chapter 35 of the Acts of 2010, the Conflict of Interest Act, the Governor in Council shall, as soon as reasonably practical, reappoint the Honourable Joseph P. Kennedy as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, effective November 12, 2024, on a part-time basis for a term of office of five years with such remuneration and allowances as determined by the Governor in Council.

[4:30 p.m.]

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 Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: That concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise to meet again on September 18th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Since tomorrow is Opposition Day, I will turn it over to my honourable colleague to call NDP Opposition business for the day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable NDP House Leader.

SUSAN LEBLANC: We are delighted to announce that tomorrow, after daily business and Question Period, we'll be calling the following bills: Bill No. 479, Bill No. 325, and Bill No. 489.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House rise and meet again on September 18th between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 4:31 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1,156**

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Anna Murphy is part of Team Nova Scotia's 16U Girls Baseball Team; and

Whereas Anna and her team travelled to the 16U Nationals Baseball Championship in Saskatoon this Summer; and

Whereas Anna and Team Nova Scotia had an impressive showing at Nationals and made lifelong friendships and memories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Anna Murphy on being a part of the Nova Scotia 16U Girls Baseball Team and participating in Nationals. She has made our community and province proud and we wish her continued success in baseball.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,157

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Ava Falls is part of team Nova Scotia's 16U Girls Baseball Team; and

Whereas Ava and her team travelled to the 16U Nationals Baseball Championship in Saskatoon this Summer; and

Whereas Ava and Team Nova Scotia had an impressive showing at Nationals and made lifelong friendships and memories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Ava Falls on being a part of the Nova Scotia's 16U Girls Baseball Team and

participating in Nationals. She has made our community and province proud and we wish her continued success in baseball.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,158

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Ellie Pyne is part of Team Nova Scotia's 16U Girls' Baseball team; and

Whereas Ellie and her team travelled to the 16U Nationals Baseball Championship in Saskatoon this Summer; and

Whereas Ellie and Team Nova Scotia had an impressive showing at Nationals and made lifelong friendships and memories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Ellie Pyne on being a part of the Nova Scotia 16U Girls Baseball Team and participating in Nationals. She has made our community and province proud and we wish her continued success in baseball.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,159

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Ever Lou Pyne is part of Team Nova Scotia's 16U Girls Baseball team; and

Whereas Ever Lou and her team travelled to the 16U Nationals Baseball Championship in Saskatoon this Summer; and

Whereas Ever Lou and Team Nova Scotia had an impressive showing at Nationals and made lifelong friendships and memories;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Ever Lou Pyne on being a part of the Nova Scotia's 16U Girls Baseball Team

and participating in Nationals. She has made our community and province proud and we wish her continued success in baseball.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,160

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Jeff Gates is a well-known and respected baseball and softball coach in our community; and

Whereas Jeff was part of the coaching staff for the 14U Nova Scotia Girls Baseball Team; and

Whereas Jeff and Team Nova Scotia travelled to Charlottetown this Summer for the 14U Girls Baseball Atlantic Championships and had an excellent showing, finishing in second place;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Jeff Gates on this accomplishment and thank him for his many years as a supportive and inspirational coach and mentor to countless youth in our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,161

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Kevin Vallillee has recently published a book titled *The Time Has Come: A Book of Poems, Volume One*; and

Whereas Kevin has been writing poems for years and generously shares them on social media, and his poetry has been a great source of humour, kindness, inspiration, hope, and comfort to our community; and

Whereas a copy of Kevin Vallillee's *The Time Has Come: A Book of Poems, Volume One* is available right here in the Legislative Library and I encourage everyone to read it;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Kevin Vallillee on the publication of his book of poetry, thank him for sharing his talents, and wish him continued success as we all eagerly await Volume Two.

RESOLUTION NO. 1,162

By: Hon. Zach Churchill (Yarmouth)

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

Whereas Yarmouth's Maddie Gates is part of the 14U Nova Scotia Girls Baseball Team; and

Whereas Maddie and Team Nova Scotia travelled to Charlottetown this Summer for the 14U Girls Baseball Atlantic Championships; and

Whereas Maddie and Team Nova Scotia had an excellent showing and finished second at Atlantics;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Yarmouth's Maddie Gates on being a part of the Nova Scotia's 14U Girls Baseball Team and participating in Nationals. She has made our community and province proud and we wish her continued success in baseball.

**FILED PETITIONS
(Tabled Sept. 17, 2024)**

**Petition for the Nova Scotia House of Assembly: Sept. 17, 2024 -
Re Shelter Relocation**

By: Hon. S. Craig

Whereas the safety of the greater community is at risk due to the increased criminal activity, open drug use, drug paraphernalia, and associated litter on school grounds and common community spaces since this establishment has opened;

Therefore we, the undersigned residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality of Lower Sackville and Surrounding areas call upon the Government of Nova Scotia to relocate the Beacon House Shelter at 125 Metropolitan Avenue, as well as the 8 pods, and 19 pallet homes also located on the site, to a location better suited for the greater community and the individuals that are housed there.