



DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

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

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

First Session

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS:	
Gov't. (N.S.): Malagash Road Section - Ditching & Gravelling Requested, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2673
Gov't. (N.S.): Wentworth Valley - Protection Requested, T. Taggart.....	2674
TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS:	
<i>Action for Health: A Strategic Plan, 2022-2026,</i> Hon. T. Houston (The Premier)	2674
GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 264, Earth Day: Action on Climate Change - Recog., Hon. T. Halman.....	2675
Vote - Affirmative.....	2675
Res. 265, Rule 32(3) Motions - Approval, Hon. K. Masland	2676
Vote - Affirmative.....	2676
Res. 266, Landscape of Grand Pré: 10 th Yr. of UNESCO Desig. - Recog., Hon. C. LeBlanc	2676

Vote - Affirmative.....	2677
Res. 267, Park View Educ. Ctr. - IB Pgm.: 40 th Anniv. - Recog., Hon. B. Druhan	2678
Vote - Affirmative.....	2678
Res. 268, Herschorn, Martin: Retirement - Best Wishes, Hon. B. Johns.....	2678
Vote - Affirmative.....	2679
Res. 269, Temporale, Richard: Retirement - Best Wishes, Hon. B. Johns.....	2679
Vote - Affirmative.....	2680
Res. 270, Bertram, Doug: Death - Tribute, Hon. S. Craig.....	2680
Vote - Affirmative.....	2681
Res. 271, Nursing & CCA Students: COVID Efforts - Thanks, Hon. B. Adams.....	2681
Vote - Affirmative.....	2682
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:	
No. 180, An Act to Establish a Greenhouse Rebate Program, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2682
No. 181, An Act to Provide for a Maritime Clinical Health Service Strategy, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2682
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 272, Emerg. Health Care Svcs.: Action Req'd. - Recog., E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2682
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:	
Marsh, Dr. Lorne: Serv. to Patients - Thanks, Hon. P. Dunn.....	2683
Memb. For Timb.-Prosp.: Party Leadership - Thanks, A. Duale	2683
[GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:]	
Res. 273, Denim Day: Sexual Assault Awar. - Recog., Hon. K. MacFarlane.....	2684
Vote - Affirmative.....	2684
[STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:]	
Leg. Staff: Supp. for Members - Thanks, C. Chender	2685
Passover: Jewish Holiday - Recog., L. Harrison	2685
Negulic, Anna: RBC Olympians Mbr. - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	2686
Pride Fests.: Return - Recog., L. Lachance.....	2686
Turner-Bailey, Marjorie: Athletic Career - Recog., N. Young.....	2686
Lafleur, Guy: Death of - Tribute, Hon. D. Mombourquette	2687

MacLeod, Karen: ECP Treatment Advocacy - Thanks, K. Coombes.....	2687
Truro Jr. A Bearcats: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., D. Ritcey	2688
Cheverie, Kori: 1 st Fem. Cdn. Men's Hock. Coach - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2689
Upshaw-Tynes, Darlene: Com. Serv. - Recog., S. Hansen	2689
Chiasson, E./Swinamer, H.: Educ. Medal Recips. - Congrats., D. Barkhouse.....	2689
Mercator Vineyards: Lt. Gov. Medal Awds. - Congrats., Hon. K. Irving	2690
CBRM Brush Fires: Impact - Recog., K. Coombes.....	2690
Friends of McNab's Island Soc.: Cleanup Efforts - Thanks, Hon. B. Adams.....	2691
Cost of Living Crisis: Need for Support - Recog., Hon. B. Maguire	2691
Beals, Triann - Hair & Eye Heaven: Succ. - Recog., S. Hansen	2692
Daughter, Kennedy - Birthday Wishes, J. White	2692
BLM Golf Init.: Com. Sport Org. of Yr. Sel. - Congrats., Hon. T. Ince	2693
Passover: Jewish Holiday - Recog., L. Lachance.....	2693
Deveau, Ryan: Fabry Disease Adv. - Thanks, Hon. T. Halman.....	2694
Flynn, Jamie: Boston Marathon Partic. - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2694
Leg. Staff: Supp. for Members - Recog., E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2695
QGHF: Contrib. to Hosp. Redev. Proj. - Recog., Hon. K. Masland.....	2695
CBMIC: CB Hall of Fame Est. - Congrats., F. Tilley.....	2696
Landry, Caden: Recov. from Accid. - Best Wishes., Hon. K. MacFarlane.....	2696
Caldwell Place Clinic: Persev. - Recog., L. Nicoll	2697
Samson, Isabella: CFMA Recip. - Congrats., T. Boudreau.....	2697
Env'l. Grps.: Prot. & Cleanup - Thanks, R. DiCostanzo	2697
Hirtle, Brian: Com. Serv. - Thanks, B. Palmer	2698

Simmonds, Angelina: Graduation from MSVU - Congrats., A. Simmonds.....	2699
Inductees: Sack. Sports Her. Hall of Fame - Congrats., Hon. S. Craig.....	2699
ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:	
No. 538, Prem.: Carbon Tax Plan - Inform, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2700
No. 539, DHW: Health Care Shortages - Address, S. Leblanc	2701
No. 540, Prem.: Coal Plant Closure - Delay, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2702
No. 541, Prem.: Intertie Progress - Update, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2703
No. 542, Prem. - Wind Power: Avail. Funding - Apply, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2704
No. 543, Prem. - Renovictions: Process Skirted - Recog., G. Burrill.....	2704
No. 544, DHW: Health Promises Aband. - Explain, Hon. Z. Churchill	2707
No. 545, FTB: Budget Deficit Impact - Comment, A. Simmonds.....	2708
No. 546, FTB: Econ. Recovery Plan - Update, F. Tilley.....	2708
No. 547, Prem.: Island Employment Rehires - Address, K. Coombes.....	2710
No. 548, DHW: Fert. Treatment Wait Times - Address, L. Nicoll	2711
No. 549, OMHA: Univ. Mental Health Care Promise - Address, Hon. P. Arab	2712
No. 550, DPW - Chig. Isthmus: Infr. Work - Timeline, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2713
No. 551, EECD: School Boards Return - Delay, S. Hansen	2714
No. 552, EECD: Child Care Funding Drop - Address, Hon. K. Irving.....	2715
No. 553, EECD: Mental Health Pgm. - Availability, B. Clark.....	2716
No. 554, DAE: Sexual Violence Policy Work - Update, Hon. B. Jessome.....	2717
SPEAKER'S RULINGS:	
Scheduling of Law Amendments Committee at same time as Government Business was not a breach of privilege (Point of Privilege by the Member for Kings South [Hansard p. 2399, April 14, 2022]).....	2718
Refusal to recognize hands, truncation of speeches and ignoring of an appeal by Chair of Law Amendments Committee was not	

a breach of privilege (Point of Privilege by the Member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island [Hansard p.2451, April 19, 2022]).....	2719
Use of heteronormative language by Law Amendments Committee Chair when asking presenters to identify their preferred pronouns was not a breach of privilege (Point of Privilege by the Member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island [Hansard p.2451, April 19, 2022]).....	2720
HOUSE RESOLVED INTO CW ON SUPPLY AT 11:24 A.M.....	2721
HOUSE RECONVENED AT 3:05 P.M.....	2721
REPORT OF CW ON SUPPLY [Rule 62G(1)]:	
Motion to Concur	
Vote - Affirmative.....	2722
POINT OF PRIVILEGE, Hon. K. Regan.....	2722
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2723
Hon. S. Corkum-Greek.....	2723
POINT OF PRIVILEGE, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2724
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2724
Hon. K. Regan.....	2724
C. Chender.....	2725
[INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:]	
No. 182, Appropriations Act	
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2727
PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING:	
No. 182, Appropriations Act	
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2728
Vote - Affirmative.....	2728
PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING:	
No. 182, Appropriations Act	
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2728
Vote - Affirmative.....	2729
No. 120, Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (amended)	
L. Lachance.....	2729
Amendment moved.....	2734
Hon. P. Arab.....	2734
R. DiCostanzo.....	2736
Vote - Negative.....	2737
No. 118, Personal Health Information Act	
Hon. M. Thompson.....	2738
S. Leblanc.....	2740
E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2742
Hon. M. Thompson.....	2744
Vote - Affirmative.....	2744
No. 120, Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (amended)	
Hon. B. Comer.....	2744
R. DiCostanzo.....	2745

L. Lachance.....	2746
Hon. B. Comer.....	2746
Vote - Affirmative.....	2747
No. 123, Liquor Control Act (amended)	
Hon. C. LeBlanc.....	2747
L. Lachance.....	2748
Hon. C. LeBlanc.....	2750
Vote - Affirmative.....	2750
No. 124, Public Trustee Act (amended)	
Hon. B. Johns.....	2750
Hon. I. Rankin.....	2750
C. Chender.....	2751
Hon. B. Johns.....	2751
Vote - Affirmative.....	2751
No. 126, Nova Scotia Wine Authority Act	
Hon. G. Morrow.....	2751
Hon. K. Irving.....	2752
L. Lachance.....	2753
Hon. G. Morrow.....	2754
Vote - Affirmative.....	2754
No. 129, Motor Carrier Act (amended)	
Hon. K. Masland.....	2755
B. Clark.....	2755
S. Leblanc.....	2756
Hon. K. Masland.....	2756
Vote - Affirmative.....	2756
No. 131, Powers of Attorney Act (amended)	
Hon. B. Johns.....	2757
Hon. I. Rankin.....	2757
C. Chender.....	2758
Hon. B. Johns.....	2759
Vote - Affirmative.....	2759
No. 134, Motor Vehicle Act (amended)	
Hon. K. Masland.....	2760
B. Clark.....	2760
S. Leblanc.....	2761
Hon. K. Masland.....	2761
Vote - Affirmative.....	2762
No. 137, Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended)	
Hon. J. Lohr.....	2762
L. Nicoll.....	2764
K. Coombes.....	2764
S. Hansen.....	2765
E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2766
Hon. J. Lohr.....	2766
Vote - Affirmative.....	2767

No. 138, An Act to Permit Virtual Business Meetings	
Hon. C. LeBlanc	2767
Hon. B. Maguire	2768
Hon. B. Jessome.....	2768
Hon. C. LeBlanc	2768
Vote - Affirmative.....	2768
No. 147, Public Utilities Act (amended)	
Hon. T. Rushton.....	2769
C. Kerr.....	2769
C. Chender	2770
Hon. B. Maguire	2773
Hon. T. Rushton.....	2778
Vote - Affirmative.....	2779
No. 148, Mi'kmaw Language Act	
Hon. K. MacFarlane.....	2779
Hon. D. Mombourquette	2781
L. Lachance.....	2782
Hon. B. Adams.....	2783
Hon. K. MacFarlane.....	2784
Vote - Affirmative.....	2784
No. 154, Tourist Accommodations Registration Act (amended)	
Hon. P. Dunn.....	2785
R. DiCostanzo	2785
C. Chender	2786
Hon. P. Dunn.....	2788
Vote - Affirmative.....	2788
No. 155, Public Prosecutions Act (amended)	
Hon. B. Johns	2789
R. DiCostanzo	2789
C. Chender	2790
Hon. B. Johns	2790
Vote - Affirmative.....	2791
No. 112, Holy Heart Seminary Dissolution Act	
Hon. C. LeBlanc	2791
Vote - Affirmative.....	2791
No. 122, Lunenburg Rod and Gun Club Replacement Act	
Hon. S. Corkum-Greek	2792
Vote - Affirmative.....	2792
No. 149, Financial Measures (2022) Act	
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2792
Hon. K. Irving	2793
G. Burrill	2800
Hon. K. Regan.....	2808
L. Lachance.....	2814
E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2820
Hon. A. MacMaster.....	2831

Vote - Affirmative.....	2837
ARRIVAL OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.....	2838
BILLS GIVEN ROYAL ASSENT:	
Nos. 94, 96, 99, 101,102, 104, 106, 107, 109, 112, 114.....	2838
115, 118, 120, 122, 123,124,126, 129, 131, 134, 137, 138.....	2839
43, 145, 147, 148, 149, 154, 155.....	2839
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again at the call of the Speaker	2842
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 274, Muise, Shawn: Boston Marathon Perf. - Congrats., Hon. C. LeBlanc	2843
Res. 275, Milner, R./Kabila, C.: Ice Carving Comp. Partic. - Congrats., Hon. K. Masland	2843
Res. 276, Friends of Blue Mtn.-Birch Cove Lakes: Prot. Efforts - Thanks, Hon. K. Masland.....	2844
Res. 277, MacDonald, Cael: Drafted to QMJHL - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2844
Res. 278, Kempster, Christina: Breakfast Pgm. Launch - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2845
Res. 279, Purcell, Dawn: Org. of Fundraiser for Refugees - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2845
Res. 280, Frittenburg, Hadley: Sledge Hockey Tryout Invit. - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2846
Res. 281, Fletcher, Julia: Paw Pad Retreat and Recov. Opening - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2847
Res. 282: Matthew Family: Meningitis B Campaign - Recog., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2847
Res. 283: Marshall, K./Martell, D.: Xmas Food Baskets - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2848
Res. 284: Hare, L./Goold, A.: Spreading Xmas Spirit - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2848
Res. 285: MacDonald, Mallory: 1 st Fem. Exec. Dir. of HCU - Congrats., Hon. I. Rankin.....	2849
Res. 286: Bignell, Patrick: Beekeeping Efforts - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2849
Res. 287, Morgan Chisholm, Beulah: 75th Birthday - Best Wishes, S. Hansen	2850
Res. 288, Sack. Area Warming Ctr.: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. S. Craig.....	2850
Res. 289, Williams, P./Rusinak, K.: Fundraising for Ukraine - Recog., Hon. S. Craig.....	2851
Res. 290, Sack. Bus. Assoc.: Hosting Sack. Sandwich Wk. - Thanks, Hon. S. Craig.....	2851
Res. 291, Poworoznyk, Mike: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. S. Craig.....	2852
Res. 292, Hibbert, R./Denyes, S.: Makerspace Creation - Recog., Hon. S. Craig.....	2852

Res. 293, Stevens, Corbin: Class II Water Oper. Cert. - Congrats., Hon. T. Houston.....	2853
Res. 294, DeCoff, Keighan: Track & Field Ch'ships. Perf. - Congrats., Hon. T. Houston.....	2853
Res. 295, Foley, Kayleigh: Fundraiser for Ukraine - Thanks, Hon. T. Houston.....	2854
Res. 296, Peterson, Kevin: Chainsaw Carving Skill - Recog., Hon. T. Houston.....	2854
Res. 297, Organizers: Little Hbr. Com. Hall Grand Opening - Recog., Hon. B. Adams.....	2855
Res. 298, Pictou Landing First Nation Fire Dept.: New Truck - Recog., Hon. T. Houston.....	2855
Res. 299, Graham, Samuel: Westville CAO Role - Thanks, Hon. T. Houston.....	2856
Res. 300, Researchers: Thorburn History Study - Recog., Hon. T. Houston.....	2856
Res. 301, Chezz. & Dist. Lions Club: Com. Serv. - Thanks, K. Smith.....	2857
Res. 302, Staff at E. Shore Mem. Hosp. & Harb. Lodge: Fortitude - Recog., K. Smith.....	2857
Res. 303, Hardy, Margaret & Larry: Marmalade Awd. Recips. - Congrats., K. Smith.....	2858
Res. 304, MacKenzie, Jennie: Sov.'s Medal for Voluns. Recip. - Congrats., K. Smith.....	2858
Res. 305, Lever, Marie: Spreading Holiday Cheer - Recog., K. Smith.....	2859
Res. 306, MacKay, Sydnee Lynn: Com. Serv. - Recog., K. Smith.....	2859
Res. 307, Well-Being HUBS: Empowering Indivs. & Families - Recog., K. Smith.....	2860
Res. 308, Vaughn MacKenzie, Wendy: HRM Volun. Awd. Recip. - Congrats., K. Smith.....	2860
Res. 309, YESS Pgm. Grads.: Hard Work - Recog., K. Smith.....	2861
Res. 310, Young, Aiden - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2861
Res. 311, Parsons, Alex: Joining Armed Forces - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2862
Res. 312, George, Andrew - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2862
Res. 313, Blanchard, Justin - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2863
Res. 314, Baillie, Kevin - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2863
Res. 315, King, Austin - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2864

Res. 316, Baxter, Callum: Indy Car Race Wins - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2864
Res. 317, Blanchard, Jason - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2865
Res. 318, Harlow, Colby - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2865
Res. 319, Blanchard, Connor - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2866
Res. 320, Emmerson, Cory: Military Career - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	2866
Res. 321, Hiltz, Cullen - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2867
Res. 322, Deerfield Pub: Success - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2867
Res. 323, Vaughan, Dr. Peter: Order of Canada Recip. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2868
Res. 324, Baillie Abidi, Gian - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2868
Res. 325, Hamm. Plns. Cons. PTA: Read-A-Thon - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2869
Res. 326, Webb, Isaac: Mt. A. Football Team Recruitment - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2869
Res. 327, Oakley, Jacob - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2870
Res. 328, Oliver Harris, Janelle: 2021 Class Valedictorian - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2870
Res. 329, Kingswood Elem. School: Food, Clothing & Toy Drive - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	2871
Res. 330, Eamon, Laura: 8 Yrs. of Sobriety - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2871
Res. 331, Lucas, Leanne: Many Accomplishments - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2872
Res. 332, MacGillivray, Liam - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2873
Res. 333, Bussey, Malcolm: AUS Football Rookie of Yr. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2873
Res. 334, Carey, Karen - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2874
Res. 335, Hui, Nicholas - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2874
Res. 336, Team Mosher: Curling Wins - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2875
Res. 337, Jones, Nico: Leuk. & Lymph. Camp. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2875
Res. 338, Corkum, Nikolas - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2876

Res. 339, Schelleman, Noah - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2876
Res. 340, Ginovker, Olga: New Stars Dance School Opening - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2877
Res. 341, Kennedy, Quinn: QMJHL A Rating - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2877
Res. 342, Tomas, Rafael: Car Servs. - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	2878
Res. 343, Carey, Reese - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2879
Res. 344, Litt, Rory - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2879
Res. 345, Gorman, Ryan - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2880
Res. 346, Murphy, Ryan - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2880
Res. 347, Lucas, D./Riley, I.: Sack. Un. Blk. Bapt. Cem. Her. Des. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2881
Res. 348, Mansfield, Spencer - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2881
Res. 349, St. Marg. Bay Skating Club: Perf. At Nat. Event - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2882
Res. 350, Vydykhan, Talia - Dal. Tigers Voll. Team: Succ. Yr. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2882
Res. 351, Team Blades: Curling Ch'ships Partic. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2883
Res. 352, Baillie, Trevor - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2884
Res. 353, Bentley, Tye - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2884
Res. 354, Harlow, Tyler - TASA Ducks: Ch'ship. Win - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2885
Res. 355, UHPCDA: Arts and Rec. Ctr. - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2885
Res. 356, Hudson, K./Awoyiga, D.: Project 1792 Poem - Thanks, Hon. B. Jessome.....	2886
Res. 357, McCarthy, Megan: Env'l. Work - Congrats., Hon. B. Jessome.....	2886
Res. 358, Sq. Roots Fairv. Clayt. Pk.: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. P. Arab	2887
Res. 359, Fairview Legion Mbrs.: Life Memberships - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2888
Res. 360, Flynn, Jamie: Boston Marathon Perf. - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2888
Res. 361, Metlege Diab, Lena: 1 st Private Members Bill - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2889

Res. 362, Welsh, Matt: Athletic Achievements - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2889
Res. 363, Salah, Father Patrick: Ordination - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2890
Res. 364, Abraham, Ryan: Curling Success - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2890
Res. 365, Saj House: New Location - Best Wishes, Hon. P. Arab	2891
Res. 366, Sq. Roots Fairv. Clayt. Pk.: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. P. Arab	2891
Res. 367, McCarron, Vanessa: Coaching Achievements - Congrats., Hon. P. Arab	2892
Res. 368, Fougere, William: Com. Serv. - Thanks, Hon. P. Arab	2892



HALIFAX, FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Keith Bain

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

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

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I beg leave to table a petition with the operative clause:

“We the citizens call on the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works to ditch and gravel the portion of the Malagash Road between Highway #6 and Highway 307.”

There are 172 signatures and I have affixed my name, as per the Rules of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

TOM TAGGART: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition from the Protect Wentworth Valley citizen's group. The citizen's group collected 565 signatures for the petition with respect to protecting the natural beauty, wilderness, endangered species, and outdoor tourism economy of the Wentworth Valley.

The operative clause of the petition reads:

"We, the undersigned, are calling on the Government of Nova Scotia to enact the three items outlined in this Protect Wentworth Valley petition:

1. Prohibit industrial wind turbines in areas of important moose habitat and connectivity in Colchester/Cumberland, which includes the project areas as described in current proposals.

2. Enact Protection of the mainland moose core habitat designated in Colchester/Cumberland, which includes the proposed project areas, in the Nova Scotia Mainland Moose Recovery Plan.

3. Designate the Colchester-Cumberland core habitat area of the endangered mainland moose, which includes current proposed project areas as wilderness under the Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas Protection Act to connect to the Portapique River and Wentworth Valley wilderness areas. This will help the Nova Scotia Government meet its mandate to protect at least 20 per cent of the total land and water mass of Nova Scotia for nature conservation by 2030."

Mr. Speaker, I have affixed my signature to this petition.

THE SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Health and Wellness, the Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care, the Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, and the incredible staffs in their departments, I'd like to table for the House *Action for Health: A Strategic Plan, 2022-2026*.

THE SPEAKER: The report is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

RESOLUTION NO. 264

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

Whereas April 22nd is Earth Day, an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the health and sustainability of our planet, and to taking action against climate change, the greatest threat to the global community; and

Whereas Nova Scotians want urgent action in response to climate change, and this response brings opportunities to build climate-resilient infrastructure, improve access to clean air and water, leverage jobs and economic benefits of the green economy, increase equity, and improve health outcomes; and

Whereas Nova Scotians care about their environment and planet, and by working together on Earth Day and every day, we can create a future where the people of our province will celebrate Earth Day with optimism and confidence and say that we got it right;

Therefore be it resolved that all Nova Scotians join me in reaffirming our commitment to work together to take action that will benefit us today, while also ensuring that the world we pass on to future generations is healthy, clean, sustainable, and prosperous.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

RESOLUTION NO. 265

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I hereby request that the following motion be adopted without notice, pursuant to Rule No. 32(5) of the House of Assembly *Rules and Forms of Procedure*:

Be it resolved that all the congratulatory motions deposited with the Clerk pursuant to Rule No. 32(3) of the *Rules and Forms of Procedure* of the House of Assembly from March 24, 2022 to the rising of the House today that have not been otherwise considered by the House of Assembly be approved.

THE SPEAKER: There is a motion that the tabling be approved.

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.

RESOLUTION NO. 266

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

Whereas the Landscape of Grand-Pré is a landmark for Nova Scotians, both geographically and historically, and these lands are intimately linked to the history of our province, from the Mi'kmaq to the Acadians and the Planters to the inhabitants of today; and

Whereas on Heritage Day in February 2022, the Landscape of Grand-Pré was honoured for its exceptional testimony to the development of agricultural land reclamation using a system of dikes and aboiteaux by the Acadians in the 17th century and continued by the Planters and the current inhabitants, and as a place of memory for the Acadian diaspora dispersed by the Great Upheaval; and

Whereas this year, in June 2022, the landscape of Grand-Pré will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and many celebrations are planned to pay tribute to this highly important historic site for Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing the past, the ingenuity, and the tragic history that has made and continues to make our province a place where we share and learn together to create a future rich in cultures, traditions, languages, and inclusiveness.

I ask for waiver of notice and passage without debate.

Monsieur le président, à une date ultérieure je demanderai l'adoption de la résolution suivante :

Attendu que le paysage de Grand-Pré est un repère pour les habitants de la Nouvelle-Écosse tant sur le plan géographique pour son importance historique et que ses torts sont intimement liés à l'histoire de notre province, des Mi'kmaq aux Acadiens et aux planteurs jusqu'aux habitants d'aujourd'hui; et

Attendu que lors de la Journée du patrimoine de la Nouvelle-Écosse de février 2022, c'est le paysage de Grand-Pré qui a été mis à l'honneur pour son témoignage exceptionnel du développement de la poldérisation agricole réalisé à base des digues et d'aboiteaux par les Acadiens au 17^{ème} siècle et poursuivi par des planteurs et les habitants actuels, et en tant que le lieu de mémoire par excellence de la diaspora acadienne dispersée par le grand dérangement; et

Attendu que cette année en juin 2022, le paysage de Grand-Pré fêtera ses dix ans de son entrée au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO et que de nombreuses célébrations sont prévues sur place pour rendre hommage à ce lieu historique hautement important pour la Nouvelle-Écosse;

Par conséquent, il est résolu que les députés de l'Assemblée législative se joignent à moi pour reconnaître le passé d'ingéniosité et d'histoire tragique qui a fait et qui continue de faire notre province un endroit où nous partageons et apprenons ensemble afin de créer un avenir riche de culture, de tradition, de langue, et d'inclusivité. Je demande l'adoption de cette résolution sans préavis et sans débat.

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 Education and Early Childhood Development.

RESOLUTION NO. 267

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

Whereas Park View Education Centre in Bridgewater is celebrating the 40th Anniversary of its International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, which is an internationally-recognized curriculum that develops lifelong learners who thrive and make a difference; and

Whereas the IB program is empowering students to take ownership in their learning that helps them develop future-ready skills in an ever-changing world; and

Whereas Park View was the first Canadian public school east of Montréal to offer the program, beginning in 1981; and

Whereas now, 40 years later, there are approximately 5,500 IB programs in schools throughout the world and in 156 countries;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in recognizing the Park View Education Centre's IB Diploma Program on reaching this special milestone.

I ask for 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 Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 268

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

Whereas Martin Herschorn has committed 50 years of his life to serving Nova Scotians; and

Whereas 21 of those years he faithfully served as the head of Nova Scotia's Public Prosecution Service; and

Whereas Mr. Herschorn was the longest-serving head of a national prosecution agency;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly extend its gratitude for his lengthy and exemplary service and best wishes to him on his retirement.

I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

[9:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

RESOLUTION NO. 269

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

Whereas Mr. Richard Temporale was appointed as Chief Electoral Officer at Elections Nova Scotia in June 2012 and had been the Assistant CEO since September 2008; and

Whereas Mr. Temporale has provided independent non-partisan strategic advice on election-related matters and best practices in accordance with the terms of the Elections Act and relevant laws; and

Whereas Mr. Temporale kept voters and candidates aware of their rights and responsibilities, and ensured officers acted with fairness and impartiality and in compliance with election laws;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the professionalism and dedication Mr. Temporale brought to his work and wish him all the best and luck in his retirement.

I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 270

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

Whereas Doug Bertram worked closely with the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture for over 25 years, participated in numerous research and development initiatives with the department, and was a representative on many advisory boards; and

Whereas he was a pivotal partner and driving force behind Innovative Fishery Products Inc., which is now one of the largest shellfish aquaculture operations of the east coast of Canada, and was a member of the Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia, the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council, and the Full Bay Scallop Association; and

Whereas Mr. Bertram, who also founded Zinc Sacrificial Anode Inc. and Shore Cold Storage & Logistics Inc., passed away peacefully at home in Gilberts Cove on February 7, 2022, at age 64;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature recognize the late Doug Bertram for his numerous achievements in aquaculture and marine industries in Nova Scotia.

I ask for waiver of notice and passage without debate.

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care.

RESOLUTION NO. 271

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

Whereas the arrival of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 added to the staffing shortages in home care and long-term care, pushing those who care for our loved ones to work even harder and for longer hours; and

Whereas the government put out an urgent call for help from our nursing and CCA students and they responded with inspirational leadership by doing their practical placements in long-term care facilities; and

Whereas by the end of these placements, health care workers got some relief, and many students called the experience educational, suggesting they might now change their career path to work in continuing care;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature offer these students a very sincere thank you for their compassion and for putting the needs of older Nova Scotians ahead of their own, because we could not have made it through without their support.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 180 - An Act to Establish a Greenhouse Rebate Program. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 181 - An Act to Provide a Maritime Clinical Health Service Strategy. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RESOLUTION NO. 272

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

Whereas 911 emergency services are not available to all Nova Scotians either through telephone services or a lack of emergency responders; and

Whereas the government contracts a private company, Medavie Blue Cross, to provide emergency health care services from one end of our province to another; and

Whereas paramedics have been asking government to improve their working conditions, but sadly, conditions have not been improving, instead worsening; and

Whereas the government has not held the private company, Medavie Blue Cross, accountable to meet performance standards;

Therefore be it resolved that the government take immediate action to improve emergency health care services for Nova Scotians by implementing an increase in the wages of paramedics to be competitive with the rest of Canada, penalizing the private company Medavie Blue Cross when they fail to meet performance standards, instructing dispatchers to inform every person calling 911 of the estimated time of arrival of an ambulance, and immediately developing a website that shows the location of each ambulance in the province of Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

I hear several Noes.

The motion is tabled.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MARSH, DR. LORNE: SERV. TO PATIENTS - THANKS

HON. PAT DUNN: I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Dr. Lorne Marsh, a family physician in Halifax who for decades has served thousands of patients and is known for his excellent clinical care.

He has also worked with the Nova Scotia Boxing Authority for almost 20 years and provided valuable care to many participants in combat sports. Unfortunately, Dr. Marsh had to close his practice in January 2022 due to a serious and unexpected personal illness.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all MLAs to join me in thanking Dr. Lorne Marsh for his dedicated service to his patients and for helping to create healthy communities. We profoundly wish him a full and speedy recovery.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

MEMB. FOR TIMB.-PROSP.: PARTY LEADERSHIP - THANKS

ALI DUALE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if I've said it enough in this House, but I'm going to keep repeating myself. I'd like to recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition, who inspired me through my journey to this seat. I had the privilege to make a speech at his constituency nomination 10 years ago.

Since then, I've watched him as a husband, as a leader of this province, and I'm watching him as a father. I have great gratitude. I'm also grateful that he was given the opportunity to be a leader of this province. I think that he believes in justice and the environment, and he improved both of them.

My friend, you have a future. I've been watching you, and I thank you for your friendship.

THE SPEAKER: Before we move on with Statements by Members, with the unanimous consent of the House, can we go back to Notices of Motion?

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 273

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

Whereas people of all genders, races, sexual orientations, and backgrounds can be subject to sexual violence and some people such as racialized and Indigenous women, women with disabilities, low-income women, women with addictions, young women, and transgender people experience higher rates; and

Whereas government is making investments to raise public awareness and offer supports for survivors, there is still work to be done in expanding education on healthy relationships and consent, challenging stigma and stereotypes about sexual violence, and adjusting policies and systemic responses to better support survivors; and

Whereas April 27th is Denim Day, an opportunity to raise awareness about the prevalence of sexual assault and foster a greater understanding of consent, and began as a protest after an Italian Supreme Court overturned a conviction on a man for sexually assaulting a young woman in 1998, ruling that the woman must have helped the man remove her tight jeans, implying consent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing Denim Day and the role that all of us can play to prevent sexual violence and support survivors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for 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.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

LEG. STAFF: WORK - RECOG.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: On what we hope is the last day of this sitting, I rise to express gratitude, which I think might be a good way to start off the day.

I would like to express gratitude for the Government House Leader and the House Leader of the Official Opposition. There are a lot of people in this Chamber who do a lot of work to just make things go. We're the elected ones that do that, and I appreciate my colleagues and their willingness to work together and to be collegial cooperative. That gratitude obviously extends much further to the Clerks - to Mr. Hastings in particular, who has gone above and beyond this session.

To you, Mr. Speaker, to the House operations staff, to the Pages, to Legislative Television, to Rudy for bringing us food, to the librarians, to the cleaners, and of course the commissionaires, who not only make this a safe space but also, I think we could all agree, set a wonderful tone. Every time we walk in this building, we are greeted in a kind and friendly and welcoming way, and that is so important for the work we do. They set that tone of gratitude for us.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking everyone who has worked so hard this session to allow us to be here.

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

PASSOVER: JEWISH HOLIDAY - RECOG.

LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly echo those comments.

I rise today to recognize the seventh day of Passover. Passover is a Jewish holiday which concludes at nightfall tomorrow. It commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The seventh day honours the day the Israelites reached the Red Sea.

Passover is a holiday of major significance within the Jewish community and since sunset on April 15th, many observers have gathered together to participate in Jewish traditions, including hosting a Seder and retelling the Passover story.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in wishing a Happy Passover to Nova Scotia's Jewish community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

[9:30 a.m.]

NEGULIC, ANNA: RBC OLYMPIANS MBR. - CONGRATS

KELLY REGAN: I would like to congratulate Bedford athlete Anna Negulic on being named a member of the RBC Olympians program.

Anna comes from a pretty athletic family, I have to say, and she hadn't found her sport until she tried kayaking at age 11. She was only 17 when she was accepted into the RBC program for potential Olympians. Now she's 23. She works flex hours with RBC's marketing and communications team while training for the 2024 Olympics, as well as, in her spare time, attending Dalhousie University.

This is not the first time that I've mentioned Anna in this House. She was actually part of a group of students at Charles P. Allen High School who created the Glass Slipper Organization. They would actually collect prom dresses to make sure that all the students at the school would be able to afford to go.

I just wanted to say to Anna, well done, and good luck in 2024.

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

PRIDE FESTS.: RETURN - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, in 1988 in Halifax's very first Pride March, about 75 people marched through Halifax's north end. A handful wore paper bags over their heads, not out of shame but out of the very real fear for their livelihoods and their safety. Since that time the Halifax Pride Festival has grown into a celebration that includes numerous events that highlight the unique character of our diverse community, welcoming upwards of 120 participants every Summer.

Halifax Pride is back this year from July 14th to the 24th, with the Pride parade on July 16th. As well, Nova Scotia is home to vibrant 2SLGBTQ+ communities and over the next few months Prides will be held in many communities - Annapolis Royal, Truro, Lunenburg, Cape Breton, Eskasoni, Digby, Yarmouth, Wolfville, Scots Bay, Pictou, Antigonish, and if I missed anyone, you can shout them out right now. I hope to see all members out with their communities this Summer at Pride festivals.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Shelburne.

TURNER-BAILEY, MARJORIE: ATHLETIC CAREER - RECOG.

NOLAN YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Marjorie Turner-Bailey of Lockeport. A star soccer and basketball player during high school, Marjorie gained

Maritime recognition in 1964 with her sheer speed and strength during events at Mount Allison and Acadia Universities, finishing first in the 100- and 200-yard dash, broad jump, and shot put.

That Summer she tied Olympian sprinter Aileen Meagher's provincial 100-yard dash for a record time of 11.2 seconds. From there, Marjorie gained international prominence competing around the world in the Pan-Am Games, the first World Cup, the Commonwealth Games, and the Montréal Olympics.

Although injuries prevented her from competing in the 1964 and 1978 Olympics during her career, she established four Canadian track and field records and was inducted into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame in 1984.

I respectfully ask all members to join me in acknowledging the remarkable athletic career of Marjorie Turner-Bailey.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

LAFLEUR, GUY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I was looking at doing a local member's statement, but my colleague told me that Canadian hockey legend Guy Lafleur just passed away today. It was announced today.

So anyway I'm rising in my place today because Guy Lafleur was a hero for me and so many of us growing up. Everybody who played street hockey was Guy Lafleur, right? I'm really saddened by that because as we all know, you follow your idols growing up. I know you have yours with the Leafs. For me, and for many of the guys I grew up with, Guy Lafleur was a legend.

It's really some sad news for a lot of hockey fans. He meant a lot to the game of hockey and he meant a lot to a lot of kids growing up. I rise in my place to pass my best on to his family. A legend in Canada, really.

THE SPEAKER: How many times did we always hear "Go, Guy, Go!"?

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

MACLEOD, KAREN: ECP TREATMENT ADVOCACY - THANKS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Karen MacLeod, her family, and friends who have been advocating for the provincial government to bring extracorporeal photopheresis treatment to Nova Scotia. Karen is battling graft-versus-host

disease, which occurs when donated stem cells recognize the recipient's body as foreign and attack the body.

Extracorporeal photopheresis, also known as ECP, is used to treat a variety of conditions including graft-versus-host ...

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. There is a lot of chatter in the House. The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier has the floor.

KENDRA COOMBES: Thank you. And other adverse reactions to donor transplants and auto-immune disorders. Through their advocacy, they are bringing attention to donor transplant rejections, especially graft-versus-host disease and the ECP treatment used to make symptoms manageable.

I thank Karen, her family, and her friends for their advocacy and education.

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

TRURO JR. "A" BEARCATS: CH'SHIP WIN - CONGRATS.

DAVE RITCEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Truro Junior "A" Bearcats on their amazing come-from-behind series win of the provincial championship and the Eastlink South Division final.

The Bearcats defeated the Valley Wildcats 4-2 in Game 7 of the Eastlink South Finals on Wednesday night in front of 2,000 fans at the Rath Eastlink Community Centre in Truro and now move on to the Canadian Tire Cup championship against the Summerside Western Capitals.

The Bearcats, now in their 25th season, have never missed the playoffs and this win marks their eighth provincial banner. I also want to make special mention of head coach and general manager Shawn Evans, who is in his 20th year with the team and thank him for his continued dedication and leadership.

The winner of the final goes directly to the national championship in Saskatchewan next month, where they will be playing against eight other league champions and the host team.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating the Bearcats on their tremendous victory and wish them the very best of luck in the upcoming championship series.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

CHEVERIE, KORI: 1ST FEM. CDN. MEN'S HOCK. COACH - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Kori Cheverie from New Glasgow, who is becoming the first female coach to coach a Canadian men's hockey team. She is coaching the 2022 Men's World U18 Championships, which started yesterday, April 21st, in Landshut and Kaufbeuren, Germany. Kori also helped coach the Canadian women to Olympic gold earlier this year.

Please join me in wishing Kori well in the championships and thank her for being such a strong role model for female athletes here in Canada.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

UPSHAW-TYNES, DARLENE: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a sister, a mom, a grandmother, a dog mom, a community member, and a neighbour. Her name is Darlene Upshaw-Tynes.

Darlene Upshaw-Tynes is a local community educator, volunteer, and community advocate. As program coordinator, Darlene has run the cultural and academic enrichment tutoring program in Halifax Needham since 2008. This free program has had a great impact on the hundreds of youth who are assisted through this tutoring program.

Darlene also has been an integral part of the Black Educators Association Spelling Bee competition for many years and works part-time as the regional educator that services African Nova Scotians to ensure that they have access to equitable learning experiences through our schools and educational programs. Her passion for community continues through her involvement on boards such as the African Nova Scotian Affairs and Council on African Canadian Education.

I would like the House to please join me in recognizing the important work being done by Darlene Upshaw-Tynes, and I wish her many more years of success.

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

CHIASSON, E./SWINAMER, H.: EDUC. MEDAL RECIPS. - CONGRATS

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Emily Chaisson, the 2021-22 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal at Forest Heights Community School in Chester Basin.

Emily leads with a servant's heart. While her main focus is academic, Emily's love for her community and volunteering shines through. She is a member of the school spirit

council, the Forest Heights Falcons badminton team, and volunteers with children and seniors at her church. Emily's dream is to someday work in the film industry, so in the spare time she has, she is busy drawing, video editing, and doing photography.

I would also like to congratulate Hannah Swinamer, the 2021-22 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal at Forest Heights. Hannah excels in her classes and also finds time to devote to numerous activities both in her school and her community. She is junior chief volunteer firefighter at Martin's River volunteer fire department, and ambassador for exchange students in Forest Heights.

I ask all members of this House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Emily Chaisson and Hannah Swinamer on receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Education Medal and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

MERCATOR VINEYARDS: LT. GOV. MEDAL AWDS. - CONGRATS

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, each year an independent panel of experts participates in a blind tasting test of the wines submitted for consideration in the Lieutenant Governor's Gold Medal Awards of Excellence in Nova Scotia wines. In the Annapolis Valley, we are proud of the growth of our wine industry, the exceptional quality of wines being produced, and the international recognition many of our winemakers have received.

It's with great pleasure, therefore, that I acknowledge Mercator Vineyards, the recipient of two 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Gold Medal Awards of Excellence for their 2010 fortified Castel and their MV Passito Muscat.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating winemakers Gina Haverstock and Becca Griffin and everyone at Mercator Vineyards for their continued drive towards excellence in Nova Scotia wines and their recent success in winning two Lieutenant Governor's Gold Medal Awards for Nova Scotia wines.

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

CBRM BRUSH FIRES: IMPACT - RECOG.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, nine brush fires had been reported across the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. The number of grass fires in the CBRM is of great concern. It takes first responders, especially the volunteer fire services, from their other emergency calls. These fires threaten wildlife, homes, and infrastructure, as well as people's lives. The high number of grass fires causes fatigue in firefighters unnecessarily.

Mr. Speaker, Spring burning does not control weeds, nor does it improve the new grass crop. In fact, burning grass actually reduces grass nutrients - nor does grass burning make the grass greener.

I want to thank all the fire departments and the volunteers in Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier, and within all of CBRM, as well as our career service.

THE SPEAKER: Once again I'm going to ask that the chatter in the House be kept to a very low level. If you want to have a chat, just go outside the Chamber. Thank you.

The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

FRIENDS OF MCNABS ISLAND SOC.: CLEANUP EFFORTS - THANKS

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on Earth Day, to bring recognition to the Friends of McNabs Island Society for their dedication and community spirit in keeping McNabs Island clean from debris and safe for visitors to come to the island.

Recently, the society announced the launch of their new film *Ghost Gear of McNabs Island*. The film highlights the amount of large fishing and aquaculture gear abandoned or lost that finds its way to the shores of McNabs Island.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in thanking the hundreds of Friends of McNabs Island Society members, along with many community members and Scotian Shores, for their hard work in keeping the shores of our beloved McNabs Island and surrounding areas free from debris. We hope you continue to inspire others to do the same.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS: NEED FOR SUPPORT - RECOG.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to talk about the large percentage of Nova Scotians who are struggling due to the price of gas, groceries, housing, and inflation. We sit in this Legislature, some of us part of the 1 per cent, and we make decisions every day. We talk about billions of dollars, and we spend billions of taxpayer money. We go home, we spend time with our families, we pay our bills, and we buy groceries.

For a large portion of Nova Scotians, this is not a reality. They worry day to day, moment to moment, and hour to hour about how to get by. They have little faith in elected officials, whom they think are out of touch and, quite frankly, at times this is true. It's

actions, not words, that change lives. I, for one, will continue to unapologetically use this seat to be a voice and fight for all of them, never forgetting where I come from.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

BEALS, TRIANN - HAIR & EYE HEAVEN: SUCC. - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I truly believe we should be unapologetic.

I rise today to recognize Hair & Eye Heaven, created by Triann Beals. Hair & Eye Heaven is a small business located in Halifax Needham.

Small businesses like Hair & Eye Heaven are important to the community, especially at times like now, living through a pandemic when most stores were shut down. Hair & Eye Heaven specializes in ethnic care products - some you love but you just can't find here. Whatever you need, you can get, either with a special order or usually they have exactly what you need in stock.

With over 15 years of experience, Hair & Eye Heaven specializes in hair braiding services and installing extensions. Hair and Eye Heaven sells all of your hair needs, such as handmade silk bonnets and scarves, shampoos and conditioners, creams, custards, moisturizers - anything you're looking for. If she can't find it, she'll order it.

I'd like to ask all the members of the House to help me in recognizing and celebrating Triann Beals for her success through Hair & Eye Heaven.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Glace Bay-Dominion.

DAUGHTER, KENNEDY - BIRTHDAY WISHES

JOHN WHITE: Warning: proud father moment here. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my daughter Robyn and my wife Junie, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our daughter Kennedy a very happy 21st birthday. Kennedy is our younger daughter, but she very much is my voice of reasoning. She says that quite often.

Kennedy is completing her third year of her Bachelor of Arts in psychology at CBU, which suits her just fine because she's such a deep thinker. Although she is busy with university classes and holding down a part-time job, she is still my father's biggest advocate. The two of them are two peas in a pod.

From your Poppy, Happy Birthday, Knuckles.

Kennedy is an amazing young lady, beautiful inside and out because she simply never second-guesses herself when it comes to doing the right thing. Happy Birthday,

Kennedy. We love you and we're so proud of the strong, independent young lady you've grown into.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

BLM GOLF INIT.: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I congratulate the Black Lives Matter Golf initiative on being selected as the Community Sport Organization of the Year for the Nova Scotia Golf Association. Black Lives Matter Golf will be attending the Support4Sports Awards gala on May 28th at the Halifax Convention Centre, where they will be formally recognized for their well-deserved award.

I was lucky enough to attend the Black Lives Matter Golf Tournament that was held at the Eaglequest Grandview Golf & Country Club, and I know first-hand how deserving they are. This award night attracts over 500 sports enthusiasts from across the province. They gather to celebrate the outstanding achievements of athletes, coaches, officials, teams, sponsors, and volunteers - all who have contributed to the sport in Nova Scotia.

The nominees represent the very best of the province through not only virtue of achievements but also their dedication and commitment to sport.

I ask the House to rise and congratulate Black Lives Matter Golf on this great achievement.

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

PASSOVER: JEWISH HOLIDAY - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take a moment to acknowledge an important time this weekend. Tomorrow marks the end of Passover, one of the most important times of year for the Jewish community in Nova Scotia and worldwide.

Passover, also called Pesach, is a major Jewish holiday that celebrates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, which occurs on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, the first month of Aviv, or Spring. It is also a time to celebrate one's family, faith, freedom and culture. Families often celebrate with a Seder dinner, symbolizing the traditional foods dating back to the origins of Passover.

I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing the end of Passover and wishing the Jewish community a weekend filled with food, family, and celebrations.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

DEVEAU, RYAN: FABRY DISEASE ADV. - THANKS

HON. TIMOTHY HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Dartmouth East resident and advocate Ryan Deveau.

For several years now, Ryan has been sharing his journey of living with Fabry disease, a rare inherited disorder that leaves the body unable to produce the correct version of an enzyme that breaks down fat.

In 2018, Ryan became the fourth person in the world to receive a gene replacement therapy that modified his stem cells. Ryan has been a tireless advocate in patient resource for this rare genetic disease that affects roughly 600 Canadians. The disease affects about one in 8,000 in Nova Scotia and Ryan's advocacy work ensures that anyone with a similar diagnosis doesn't feel alone.

I'd like to thank Ryan Deveau for sharing his advocacy and public education of Fabry disease by sharing his personal experience.

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

FLYNN, JAMIE: BOSTON MARATHON PARTIC. - CONGRATS.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate one of our frontline health care workers, Jamie Flynn, pharmacist and owner of the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Fairview-Clayton Park.

This past Monday, Jamie ran in the 126th Boston Marathon with an unofficial time of 3:19:25, requalifying for next year by 35 seconds. His supportive wife, Danielle LeBrun and their daughters were in Boston for the weekend, cheering him on.

Since he started training in December, Jamie has completed two running workouts and three to five other runs almost every day, totalling an impressive 1,200 kilometres. He does, however, admit that there were some runs that got missed during the weekend storms in February.

I want to congratulate Jamie on his recent success at the Boston Marathon and thank him and his team for delivering over 4,000 COVID-19 vaccines doses.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

[9:45 a.m.]

LEG STAFF: SUPP. FOR MEMBERS - RECOG.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, though I certainly hope we're not nearing the end of this important Spring sitting, it is never too early to acknowledge and thank the incredible work ethic of those who are making each sitting possible.

I'd like to acknowledge our Pages, who rarely sit through our long hours; our devoted Sergeant-at-Arms and all the wonderful commissionaires; our talented and dedicated library staff, who turn out research requests and printing requests with such incredible detail and timeliness; our operations staff, who like everyone else work the same hours and then some; Legislative TV and Hansard for continually making proceedings here accessible for Nova Scotians; Legislative Counsel for never questioning last-minute requests and for their expertise; our Committees Office; our cleaning services; media; RCMP; HRM police officers; my own legislative staff, Kait Saxton; and my constituency assistant, Dan Gould.

So many people make everything possible in our Legislature. I certainly hope I did not forget anyone. I want to extend a sincere thank you to all. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

QGHF: CONTRIB. TO HOSP. REDEV. PROJ. - RECOG.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge the Queens General Hospital Foundation's significant contribution to the redevelopment project at the South Shore Regional Hospital.

The Queens General Hospital Foundation has supported health care in Queens County for more than 30 years. When it was approached by the Health Services Foundation of the South Shore for a donation to the redevelopment project, the decision was made to commit \$725,000 to cover the majority of the cost of having an MRI installed at the South Shore Regional Hospital in Bridgewater. Currently, it is the only regional centre without this technology.

I ask all members of this Legislature to please join me in applauding the generosity of the Queens General Hospital Foundation and its donors, and in thanking them for their ongoing commitment to improving the quality and accessibility of health services in Queens and beyond.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

CBMIC: CB HALL OF FAME EST.- CONGRATS.

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative, who this week just announced - well, it was actually announced prior to this week - that they were creating a Music Industry of Cape Breton Hall of Fame. This week at the Savoy Theatre, they announced the first three inductees who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame in May.

The first inductee is Rita MacNeil. Everybody knows who Rita MacNeil is. She was a great ambassador for Cape Breton. The second inductee will be the Men of the Deeps - another iconic Cape Breton group to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Of course, Cape Breton rocker Matt Minglewood will be the third inductee.

One more, Mr. Speaker: They're inducting a song written by Buddy MacDonald. It's entitled "Getting Dark Again."

Congratulations to CBMIC.

THE SPEAKER: Ironically - I must say this - Buddy wrote that song after being at a house party all night and all the next day. That's where that song came from.

The honourable member for Pictou West.

LANDRY, CADEN: RECOV. FROM ACCID. - BEST WISHES

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, March 10th was a day of celebration in Pictou. Caden Landry, a Grade 9 student, returned home after a one-month stay at the IWK Hospital. A procession of fire trucks met him and his family at the Pictou Rotary and took the lead as they made their way along town streets that were lined with family, friends, and well-wishers.

Caden sustained life-threatening injuries after being struck by a vehicle on February 7th. He surprised doctors and family with his quick recovery.

The fire truck procession ended at East End Grocery, where Caden was going that fateful night. This time he made it safely and was able to purchase the treats he had planned to buy.

Caden has a long road to complete his recovery. I am confident that with the support of community and the love of his family, he will get there. I ask the members of the House to join me in wishing Caden well as he continues his journey on the path of recovery.

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

CALDWELL PLACE CLINIC: PERSEV. - RECOG.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Caldwell Place Clinic, a Cole Harbour business specializing in electrolysis. Business owner Shawna Platt is a certified professional electrologist who brings over 35 years of experience to her clients. She is the only electrologist in Dartmouth to have obtained this certification.

As we are all aware, every industry has been impacted by the coronavirus shutdowns, but the pandemic has wreaked havoc and hardships on such businesses that offer personal, hands-on type services that require the customer to be unmasked. The financial and emotional stresses to these businesses have been devastating.

We all want to see our community businesses thrive once again. I commend Caldwell Place for their perseverance through these unprecedented times.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

SAMSON, ISABELLA: CFMA RECIP. - CONGRATS.

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Isabella Samson from Louisdale. Isabella is the daughter of Keith and Crystal, and the sister of Carlin.

Isabella began piano lessons at the age of four, sang in local church choirs, and had her first on-stage performance by Grade 1. Isabella's musical path shifted at the age of 14, when she attended Music Camp on the Canal in St. Peter's and began playing shows with seasoned musicians.

After receiving a grant from the Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative, Isabella began working on her debut album *If It's Not Forever* with her band Barn Bhreagh. Her songs have been rising on radio charts and countdowns and she earned a nomination for a Music Nova Scotia Award this past November.

On April 1, 2022, Isabella was awarded Young Performer of the Year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards in Prince Edward Island. Please join me in wishing Isabella continued success in all aspects of her future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

ENV'L. GRPS.: PROT. & CLEANUP - THANKS

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, on Earth Day I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many groups and organizations that care about the environment and care about Clayton Park West and the richness that we have.

I probably have one of the smallest constituencies in size but one of the richest in so many ways: in diversity, density, and in nature. I would like to especially give thanks to the Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, who do so much to protect the Earth and the beauty and allow our dense population to have a place of nature to enjoy all that it offers.

I also would like to thank the group Halifax North West Trails Association, who do so much to allow us to clean the trails and make sure that kids are enjoying them. They do a lot of programming as well.

Last but not least, I also want to give a shout-out to the Clayton Park West Litter Prevention Committee who are holding our first cleanup tomorrow. I thank the Belchers Marsh group, as well, who have been cleaning it up for 20 years.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

HIRTLE, BRIAN: COM. SERV. - THANKS

CHRIS PALMER: I rise today to recognize my friend and dedicated community volunteer Brian Hirtle.

Brian is well known in Kings County for his huge heart, volunteerism, and dedication to the growth and prosperity of his community. Brian lives in the small community of Viewmount on the North Mountain on a property that has been in his family for nearly a century.

Brian was elected to Kings County council in 2012 and re-elected overwhelmingly in 2016. He remains active in the political world as the President for the Kings West PC Association and through his work with Member of Parliament Chris d'Entremont. He was also very supportive of me and my campaign as my Get Out to Vote Chair.

Brian remains an active member in our community through his volunteer work with the Berwick Fire Commission, the Burlington Community Club, and the Berwick Gala Days committee.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Mr. Brian Hirtle for his many years of service to our community and his continued efforts to go above and beyond for residents in our area to help them receive the support they require.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

SIMMONDS, ANGELINA: GRADUATION FROM MSVU - CONGRATS.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud mom of our daughter, Angelina Simmonds. I want to say congratulations from her dad Dean and her two brothers, Adré and AJ, for graduating from Mount Saint Vincent University and we will be attending the graduation ceremony on May 19th for Women and Gender Studies.

We're extremely proud of her and I just want to say that she continues to motivate me daily. I'm so proud of the voice that she uses as a young woman in this world and society. We know it can be very challenging.

I just want to say congratulations, Angelina, and we adore and love you. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

INDUCTEES: SACK. SPORTS HER. HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to congratulate this year's inductees into the Sackville Sports Heritage Hall of Fame.

The Sackville Sports Heritage Foundation was established in 1981 by local residents with a mandate to honour amateur athletes, teams, and administrators involved in local competition and beyond.

This year, in the category of athlete, Leslie Ann Young was honoured for her canoe and kayak paddling skills, and Hannah Hubley for her dedication to wrestling. Derrick Dempster was recognized for his sprinting abilities as athlete and coach in track and field, while Derrick Brooks was inducted for his leadership in volleyball for builder and coach.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Leslie Ann, Hannah, and both Derricks for sharing their time and talents in the amateur sports community.

[10:00 a.m.]

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY**ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: CARBON TAX PLAN - INFORM

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Back on April 1st, I asked the Premier if he still believed that the cap-and-trade system was a scheme, as he referred to it when he was in Opposition. This is a system that has saved Nova Scotians roughly 11 cents a litre on fuel and power rate costs. My question to the Premier is: Since he didn't answer the question at the time, is a carbon tax coming to Nova Scotia under the Progressive Conservative government?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, Nova Scotians have invested tremendously in protecting our planet, preserving our planet, for sure. We know that's why we have our power bills the way they are, because of the early actions taken by a number of governments, including a previous PC government that introduced it, at that time the most ambitious environmental legislation.

Of course, we've passed that now, with even more ambitious environmental legislation under the current PC government. What I would say to the member is we all have an obligation to protect our planet. There are ongoing discussions about what happens with the arrangement that the prior government made, which we know is expiring and has to be renewed in some way, shape, or form. The minister is active on that file and I'm proud of the work he is doing.

IAIN RANKIN: What's interesting is that his finance minister, just two days ago, said a carbon tax is coming in the next year. That is going to increase the price of fuel. That was in an adjournment debate two days ago in the House, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier is: When is the carbon tax coming to the province that his finance minister said was coming? How much is it going to cost the pocketbooks of Nova Scotians?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, we know there's a law in place. There are ongoing discussions with the federal government and those discussions will continue. One thing is for sure: We will always take the steps necessary to preserve our planet, but we will always stand up for Nova Scotians, and finding that balance is something that we're working on very actively, Mr. Speaker.

IAIN RANKIN: What is undoubtable to ensure that we ease the cost of carbon on Nova Scotians is to close coal plants. That's why I committed to it when I ran for leader. I know the current government is planning to try to get off coal by 2030. After this government came into power, we learned that one of the Lingan coal plants scheduled to close in January of this year is being delayed and missed the target. For every day that our coal plants remain on the grid, Mr. Speaker, we will have increased carbon costs and that's not even including the social costs of continuing to burn coal. My question to the Premier is: When will coal unit Lingan 2 close?

THE PREMIER: Obviously, there are the 2030 targets for - and the targets in the legislation passed before this House. Obviously, we're committed to doing those.

Mr. Speaker, I can't underestimate - on one day the members will stand up and they'll talk about the cost of living and the cost of power and the cost of gas, and the next day they'll talk about, well, just do anything. We're always focused on protecting Nova Scotians and we will remain committed to protecting Nova Scotians and finding that important balance. That's what our goal is, and we're very committed to it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DHW: HEALTH CARE SHORTAGES - ADDRESS

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Premier. The backlog in surgeries in this province is colossal and growing, and the health system and staff are over capacity and overwhelmed. Mandy Grant had surgery at the Halifax Infirmary last week. She was placed in a cubicle and exposed to a janitor. Her pain medication was forgotten on three different occasions. When the pain got so bad that she began to get sick, a nurse gave her towels so she could clean herself up. I can table that.

Mr. Speaker, the health plan repeats a lot of what we've already heard. My question to the Premier is: What relief is the Premier offering to the hundreds of staff and patients trying to give and receive health care in these conditions right now?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We're very concerned with the report in the paper today. Of course, we really encourage that person to reach out to the Nova Scotia Health Authority and talk directly with them about her experience.

We are investing heavily in health care. The *Action for Health* plan is a road map for us to move forward. We've been very clear about our approach. We are speaking with health care workers on a regular basis. We are working in a cross-system approach with the Department of Health and Wellness as well as Nova Scotia Health to address these ongoing concerns. We know this is not new. This is a system under strain. We will continue to work alongside health care workers in order to address the concerns that they have and fix the system.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, most people waiting won't actually get into a hospital anytime soon. We have just learned that only emergency and urgent surgeries will take place in Kentville and Bridgewater. This means even more people will wait in pain. On top of that, acute-care bed capacity is at 106 per cent, and the emergency department at Soldiers Memorial Hospital will be closed for the next two weeks so that staff can be redeployed to the Valley Regional Hospital. People are very concerned about their ability to access care of any kind in Nova Scotia right now.

Can the Premier see that the much-anticipated health plan is empty of anything that will provide comfort to these people right now?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I don't feel it's empty at all. I feel that plan is built on the voices of health care workers in this province. We travelled around and we spoke to them directly, which is something that no other government in this province's history has done.

I appreciate that there has been a crisis. It has been there for a long time. I have felt it. That's why I'm sitting in this chair: to try to make a difference and try to make it better. I don't want to hear from anybody that we don't understand. We have invested over \$5 billion in health care, and we will continue to invest and work alongside health care workers to address a system that hasn't been looked after in a number of years.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: COAL PLANT CLOSURE - DELAY

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I'm concerned that we don't know when the first coal plant will close when we have eight of them and only eight years to get to 2030 to meet that commitment. On top of the 10 per cent Nova Scotia Power is asking for for a rate increase, on top of the carbon tax coming in in Nova Scotia, we have delays in the just transition that needs to take place. In our cap-and-trade system we have right now built in that work that needs to be done right now, so carbon prices will be impacted for sure.

Is the Premier aware that by not working hard to decommission these plants on time, it will cost ratepayers, and of course cost the environment too?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's commitment to this issue, but I want to tell him, he lost me at the phrase "not working hard." I'm not familiar with that phrase. I don't know what he means.

IAIN RANKIN: We have two units that are delayed, Mr. Speaker. The cost of coal has increased. It's at an all-time high worldwide, the highest it has ever been. Wind is now the cheapest price in the province, yet a 300-megawatt plant in Trenton is also facing a one-year delay. I want to ask the Premier: Can we count on that just being a one-year delay, or will ratepayers need to endure more increases because of the \$170-per-tonne cost on carbon?

THE PREMIER: Listen, we know the situation with power rates in this province. We know why we have high power rates: because we have invested as Nova Scotians and as taxpayers in preserving the planet. We'll continue to do that. We'll continue to find the balance. We want to green the grid.

We have before this House - I think it was supported by all members. It might not have been - I don't remember. Certainly, we passed as a government some of the most ambitious targets. The reason we put them forward and the reason we passed them is

because we're committed to them. The member can get alongside with us and help us in that, but I will assure all Nova Scotians that when we pass something in this House, when we say it, we mean it, and we're committed to it.

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

PREM.: INTERTIE PROGRESS - UPDATE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: It's either a climate crisis or it's not. We still have eight units running, and eight months have passed under this new government. We had early action planned, and it's not so early anymore.

Given that we haven't seen any progress at all in upgrading the network or the Atlantic Loop, I'm going to ask: What progress has been made on the very critical intertie between Onslow, Nova Scotia, and Salisbury, New Brunswick, also known as the intertie that we need to upgrade to bring more clean energy capacity into Nova Scotia to protect ratepayers and to protect the environment?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member that there's lots of progress being made, lots of continuous discussions happening, both with the federal government in terms of the Atlantic Loop and the proponents, of course. But also in terms of the incredible amount of entrepreneurs and of businesses that see an opportunity in Nova Scotia, that believe in Nova Scotia to create wind here, to create hydro here, to create green hydro here.

I want to assure Nova Scotians that there is incredible excitement about what is possible in this province despite what they may hear in this Chamber from the members opposite.

IAIN RANKIN: I think Nova Scotians want to hear specifics on the plan to get off coal, Mr. Speaker. If it is hydrogen, then they can accept the bill I proposed in this session for tax credits.

We do know that there are hundreds of millions of dollars available right now in the clean power fund that the federal government has to ensure that we upgrade that line. That line is critical, and this is going to take a concerted effort as we need to make sure that we have a chance of getting off coal by 2030, which I committed to and this government has, too.

We're also going to need to have battery storage, Mr. Speaker. We were working on 200 megawatts before this government came in so that Lingan Unit 1 could close, again saving carbon costs and protecting the environment. When will we have more battery storage capacity to make that happen?

THE PREMIER: Battery storage is obviously another area where we're advancing all kinds of initiatives. Of course, look at the work that's happening at Dalhousie University with Jeff Dahn's group there. It's amazing.

We have every opportunity before us in this province. That's why we're excited about the potential of this province. That's why we believe in Nova Scotia, believe in the potential of this province, and I want to assure the member that we are focused and committed to unleashing the potential of this province, which has never been greater.

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

PREM. - WIND POWER: AVAIL. FUNDING - APPLY

HON. IAIN RANKIN: It's wonderful rhetoric, but there are millions of dollars, again, available - \$100 million to be exact - in the smart renewables fund to make sure we get that battery storage. Here's one component that this government has actually done and continues to do: the 350 megawatts in wind capacity that we started. My understanding is there's also funding available right now in the smart renewables fund for this. Has the government even applied to the federal government to help offset rates for this tenure?

THE PREMIER: I want to take this opportunity to just remind the members of the incredible relationship we have with the federal government. We're very pleased with our relationship with the federal government. We have shared goals on a number of fronts, including health care, including the environment, including just unleashing what's possible for the country, for this province. To answer the member's question directly: We're very pleased with our ongoing discussions and relationship with the federal government. Great mutual respect there, Mr. Speaker.

IAIN RANKIN: We're not questioning the relationship. We're offering ideas to make sure that we are able to get the money that's on the table now - there are multiple programs.

I'll end with one more on funding. The ISIP funding which is going to expire in less than a year - which we're only 50 per cent or so subscribed to when other provinces have used almost all of it - has lots of money on the table, even for community solar gardens, that will cover 50 per cent of the cost. We need to be exploring every single opportunity if we're going to have a chance of getting off coal. This is an economic imperative, and this is an environmental imperative on Earth Day.

I would like to ask the Premier: Is it still in the world of possibilities that he thinks he can close all eight coal plants in eight years and ensure that he protects ratepayers in this province?

THE PREMIER: As my friend the minister says, politics is about the possible. So everything is in the realm of possibility.

I understand the member's concern about not tapping into federal funds. I understand the member's concern about leaving money on the table, because when the member was in government, they left an incredible amount of federal funds on the table that could have been here benefiting Nova Scotians. I want to assure Nova Scotians we will not do that.

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

PREM. - RENOVICATIONS: PROCESS SKIRTED - RECOG.

GARY BURRILL: My question is for the Premier. Renovictions have been an increasing problem ever since the renovictions ban was lifted, and the new rules are not solving the problem.

Colby Bolívar and his roommate, for example: They received a renoviction notice two days after the ban was lifted. In accordance with the rules, the landlord provided them with three months' rent. The difficulty is their current rent in Rockingham for a two-bedroom is \$900 a month, but in Nova Scotia today, the average unoccupied two-bedroom apartment is \$1,950 a month.

Does the Premier recognize that when we're in a 1 per cent vacancy environment, what people need is not compensation for renoviction, but the ability to stay in the homes they have today?

THE PREMIER: This is obviously an important issue. We understand the housing crisis that exists in this province. That's why, under the minister's leadership, we've worked so aggressively, so quickly, so urgently to add supply to the market. That's really the way out of this, Mr. Speaker.

There is a process in place for when people are asked to leave their dwelling for renovations. The member, I think, referenced yesterday some people who had to leave because the house was deemed unsafe. Of course this is going to happen. Of course we are concerned about the ramifications of it, but there is a process in place to protect tenants and also protect landlords. The process is there and I urge everyone to follow that process.

GARY BURRILL: The difficulty, Mr. Speaker, is that in a 1 per cent vacancy environment, landlords very often skirt the process. Brandy McGuire lives with her children in a one-bedroom apartment that she is paying \$1,400 a month for in Bedford. She spoke out this week about how the landlord has turned off the internet, which the tenants pay for, and has failed to repair the plumbing in order to get the tenants to leave so the landlord can take the building down and put up a bigger development.

Mark Culligan, a community legal worker, says of this that landlords are making a financial calculation that it is cheaper to bluff people into leaving or to pay small fines in order to expedite their development project.

Does the Premier understand that in a 1 per cent vacancy rate environment, tenants don't have a lot of cards in their hands, so that if renovictions in fact are permitted, we are going to have these kinds of problems because landlords are going to find ways to get around the rules?

THE PREMIER: Look, these stories of course have an impact on us as humans. Of course nobody likes to hear of these situations, but I want to acknowledge as well that there is a process. The process has been triggered a number of times, and my understanding is in pretty much every one of those situations, the tenant was - I don't know if victorious is the right word or whatever. I believe the process is working to protect tenants - how about I say it that way, Mr. Speaker?

The process is there. I urge people to follow it. We have an advertising campaign. We want to make sure people know about the process so when we talk about getting the word out about the process - advertising the process. Of course the Opposition is not happy with us advertising the process, but I want to say to Nova Scotians we understand the housing crisis and we are focused on it. There is stuff in the budget to address it. I hope the members opposite get behind the budget and get behind solving the housing crisis.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is alarmingly uninformed about what is taking place in concrete situations with renovictions. A single parent in Lunenburg who pays \$550 a month for a two-bedroom - she had a renoviction, followed the process, won her case, and then still saw the demolition crew come to take down the walls and the floors from out of her apartment.

In commenting on the case, the minister said - as the Premier has closely just said - that he thinks there has been some confusion about the new rules. There is no confusion about the fact that these various situations could not happen if we still had the renovictions ban that the government rightly extended on January 28th into March without being an absolute convention of the law. Does the Premier recognize that all of these things that are taking place across the province are happening because a 1 per cent vacancy rate is a very poor time to lift a ban on renovictions?

THE PREMIER: I guess what I would say is alarming is when we have a member who is not concerned about the safety of residents - the safety of the dwelling. So obviously we know if there are times which the member referred to very directly in this House that a dwelling was deemed unsafe, I believe by the Fire Inspector, Mr. Speaker, if the member is suggesting that the government should ever look the other way ... (Interruption)

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

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: If the member is suggesting that in a situation like that the government look the other way and allow Nova Scotians to live in unsafe dwellings, I fundamentally disagree with the member.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

DHW - HEALTH PROMISES ABAND. - EXPLAIN

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the government released their *Action for Health* plan today and while I do think it was heavy in bureaucratic platitudes, it is certainly light on following through with the very specific commitments that this Premier made to Nova Scotians: 24/7 surgeries, meeting the national benchmark on wait times in the first 18 months, 300 doctors a year, 2,000 nurses, 2,500 long-term care beds new to the system.

My question to the Premier is: Why has he abandoned those key commitments that he sold to Nova Scotians during the campaign?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member opposite for highlighting all the great work that we're doing and plan to do in the future. I appreciate that endorsement.

Since the plan we released today is a high-level plan that is built on the voices of health care workers, it's okay that you didn't hear something new. We are consistent, we are committed and we are going to deliver on those promises to Nova Scotians. It's going to take us time, but we're going to put in the work and we're going to put in the money. I'm looking very forward to actioning that plan in the future.

ZACH CHURCHILL: The point of this is that the very specific commitments that were made to Nova Scotians to get their vote - including 24/7 surgeries, 300 doctors a year, 2,500 new long-term care beds, 2,000 new nurses to the system - are not present in this plan. In fact, the Progressive Conservative Party has actually taken their platform off the internet so people can't compare their platform to this action plan.

I do say that while this government did go around and meet with people, they are not the first government or first ministers to do that. Previous governments and ministers just didn't run a marketing campaign around meeting staff in the system and talking to them. Why aren't the platform commitments in this action plan?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, the work that's happened already has shown a very strong commitment to health care. We have done a number of things, but some of these things are going to take some time. We talked about, in a release earlier, a dashboard

that will be up and running in the early Summer that will show some of those key initiatives and how we benchmark them and where we are and how we're going to move forward.

We are very committed to this *Action for Health* plan and I'm very confident in the team's ability to carry this out and deliver it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

FTB: BUDGET DEFICIT IMPACT - COMMENT

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, when running for leadership of the PCs in 2018, the now-Premier was asked: What was the previous government's greatest achievement? The reply was it was the balancing of the budget, further indicating we would be in worse shape if the Province was still running a large deficit. So I ask the Premier: Does the Premier still believe that running large deficits puts the Province in bad shape?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can think of something that puts people, a lot of people, in bad shape and that was the previous government's treatment of health care. We are laser-focused on investments in health care, and that's why you will see in this budget, yes, there is a deficit, but there is an almost 10 per cent increase in the health budget. If you compare the Estimates numbers of the previous government's last budget and this budget, it's almost a 10 per cent increase in improvements in health care.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: I would say there are still large gaps with your approach. But, again, the Premier's opinion in 2018 was that a balanced budget was something to be proud of and an achievement. Considering that this was his position in 2018 and now in government he is committed to runaway deficits throughout the entire mandate, contributing \$6 billion to the provincial debt with no plan to balance the budget, once again I will ask the Premier: Has the Premier stopped thinking that a balanced budget was an achievement?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotians supported this government in the last election. We were very clear with them that we would spend and do what it takes to fix health care. That's what's happening. It's no secret. We're doing what we said we were going to do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FTB: ECON. RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Economic Development stated that the economic recovery plan could be found in the PC platform. I can forgive the minister for confusing her government's budget with the election platform her party ran on. Visually they look identical.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. You're not allowed to use props in the Legislature.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

FRED TILLEY: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Premier and the Speaker disagree once again. The Premier calls it a budget, the Speaker calls it a prop. I would agree with the Speaker on that one. It's an empty document. It's a prop. (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm calling what you displayed a prop.

The honourable member for Northside-Westmount. Your time is running out.

FRED TILLEY: Yes, you are, Mr. Speaker, but I'm calling the budget a prop.

There are many promises missing from this budget that were in the platform. I'll ask the minister: What good are promises in a platform if they can't be found in a budget?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, I'm tired today - partly because we've been through a sitting and we're getting close to the end, but also because we've been working our tails off for eight months. I'm looking forward to seeing my children next week. But I have to say, Mr. Speaker, it's eight months in. It's early on. We've done an awful lot. We started in the Fall. We didn't wait for the budget. There's a pile more in the budget - as was just indicated here, a deficit budget - all the new initiatives in health care. We can't do it all in the first few months of our government.

FRED TILLEY: My understanding is that the platform had been worked on for years prior. It's great to hear that there's a pile of stuff in the budget. For months now, we on this side of the House have been asking for an economic recovery plan to get our businesses and economy moving and thriving once again. When asked where the plan was, and if they had one, the minister indicated that the recovery plan is directly relatable to the plan for growth. Well, that's concerning, Mr. Speaker, as their plan for growth is multiple years of economic decline, actually pulling us into a possible recession in 2024.

My question for the Minister of Economic Development is: With a projected recession on the horizon and no plan for growth, where is the PC Party's economic recovery plan?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I've been at the Department of Finance and Treasury Board for eight months now and nobody has told me about a projected recession. I know the member likes cost-benefit analysis, so maybe he could table some detailed analysis of how he can . . . (Interruptions)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Bank of Canada can predict a recession in four years' time. I'd love to see what that member can put on the floor of this House to suggest that he knows otherwise.

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

PREM. - ISLAND EMPLOYMENT REHIRES - ADDRESS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration. Last Fall, when I asked the minister about the 30 people at Island Employment who lost their jobs after the government pulled its funding, the minister said, "One thing that I really want to be able to say to the employees is that we're listening, and we really do care about the work they were delivering." The minister also said, "We just want the employees to know that we know they were doing good work." I will table that.

According to Máire Neville, former union steward for the employees, of the 30 people laid off five months ago, only eight people have been rehired in their positions. If the minister cared about the work that they were doing and knew that it was good, why did she not guarantee them their jobs?

THE PREMIER: On behalf of the minister, I just want to reiterate, obviously, the concern for the situation, the concern of government to make sure the services are delivered to Nova Scotians. Absolutely, there are a number of fine people across the province, including in this specific situation, providing incredible service to Nova Scotians. That's where the focus needs to be, making sure the services are provided to Nova Scotians. That's our commitment. That's the business we're in, and that's where our focus stays.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern, but concern is not going to get these people back to work. We also know that there was little attempt to even meet with the board and management at Island Employment before pulling funds. I'll table that.

Máire Neville also said: I am one of those 30 people. I am one of the 30 still looking for work, feeling stressed, embarrassed, and ashamed that I'm still unemployed. If the government and the minister are telling themselves that they did a good job in this situation, I'll happily tell them that they did not. Eight people of the 30 secured work, the rest of us are still struggling and they should acknowledge that this is due to their decision and no thought for the staff of Island Employment. I'll table that.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister think this government did good and did enough for the workers in this situation?

[10:30 a.m.]

THE PREMIER: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the situation with the report that was provided to the government - and the decision was made that the funding couldn't continue in that form but continued in another form with another provider.

Obviously, it was our hope that people would be able to find employment, of course, but this is not a situation that was created by the government. This is a situation that the government had to respond to based on independent reporting provided to it. I think the minister, given the situation, did an outstanding job.

Of course, we want people to be able to thrive in this province. But there are certain situations where you just have to accept the report that's in front of you and make the best overall decision that you can on behalf of Nova Scotians.

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

DHW: FERT. TREATMENT WAIT TIMES - ADDRESS

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, one of the big campaign promises of the government was the fertility tax credit, which I'm happy they did make good on - but the credit's only good if you can find treatment. There's only one fertility clinic in Atlantic Canada located here in Nova Scotia. The wait-list is upwards of a year to get in the door, and several more until the next appointment. When trying to conceive, every month matters.

The clinic has only three reproductive endocrinologists and they asked the Province to help hire another clinician. The answer: We don't fund private clinics. I will table that. The statement is incorrect as the clinic is a non-profit. Considering this province is giving a tax credit for fertility treatment and doing nothing to build the capacity to deliver the service here in the province, my question is: Is this policy only going to increase wait-times for Nova Scotians?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Currently, there are no plans other than the fertility tax credit. What we're very hopeful for is that if there is increased demand, it will support that clinic in being able to undertake recruitment efforts in order to expand the service. At this time, there is no plan to support the clinic in that way, but we are very pleased to be able to offer the fertility tax rebate.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, the government is hiring and recruiting many health care professionals like family doctors who will operate private clinics. We also know that this government is outsourcing and planning to pay for surgeries at private clinics. We also know that when Nova Scotians go out-of-province for certain treatments, the government also covers those fees. Yet the government is not prepared to help the only

non-profit fertility clinic in Atlantic Canada obtain another clinician. My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness: Is there a double standard when it comes to fertility treatment in this province?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We have some pretty significant health care issues that are facing us in this province. We don't want to leave anyone out or leave anyone behind. We have some priorities that we do need to meet, which include access to care and surgery wait times, all the things that you outlined. What we did do was offer support for families who are seeking fertility treatment. We will continue to address the priorities in front of us and do the best we can, but right now we need to look at the access and the priorities for Nova Scotians waiting for health care.

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

OMHA: UNIV. MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROMISE - ADDRESS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, last year the Premier campaigned and won the provincial election, in part due to his plan to create universal mental health care, and his pledge for an additional \$102 million to deliver on that promise. The Premier said he would make good on this promise as, "They are investments that we cannot afford not to make." I'll table that. This \$102 million commitment is \$81.4 million short. My question for the Premier is: Why were Nova Scotians short-changed on your promise for universal mental health care?

HON. BRIAN COMER: There's extensive quantitative and qualitative consultation . There's actually funding in this budget allocated towards it specifically. I've had extensive consultations so far with health care professionals across the province. There's much more to come, for sure. I would say that the best is yet to come.

PATRICIA ARAB: I appreciate the minister responding, Mr. Speaker, but my question is a quote that was made by the Premier himself, not the Minister of Addictions and Mental Health. The Premier is the one on record as saying that universal mental health care is an investment too important not to make. All Nova Scotians have mental health and we need to take care of it, just like all other aspects of our health. How do we do that when only a few have access to the supports and services they need?

When a government runs on a commitment to deliver universal mental health care, while also committing to deficit spending and then defaults on that promise, my question to the Premier is: Of all the promises not to keep, why did he choose this one?

BRIAN COMER: This commitment is something I personally care deeply about. I know the Premier does and our entire caucus does. It's the first jurisdiction in North America to do this. We're going to be very proud of how this rolls out. I'm very excited about what is to come.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

DPW - CHIG. ISTHMUS: INFR. WORK - TIMELINE

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I am always proud to stand and talk about the strengths and importance of Cumberland County. We all know that Cumberland County is the corridor and part of the Atlantic Gateway, and it's under a huge, significant threat due to climate change and rising sea levels.

There's \$35 billion worth of goods that travel through the corridor of the Chignecto Isthmus every year - \$35 billion, plus critical infrastructure of utility and telecommunications.

The study that was finally released finally last month spoke to the significant return on investment. Unfortunately, we didn't see any mention of the protection of the Chignecto Isthmus and this \$35 billion transporting of goods in this budget. I'm wondering if the Premier or the minister can speak to why we didn't see any investment in this important infrastructure.

HON. KIM MASLAND: I have been very clear with the member across the aisle that this is a study that has been put out by three levels of government - the government in New Brunswick, the government here in Nova Scotia and the federal government. We will continue to work together until we have the right solution to make sure we're protecting the Chignecto Isthmus and the trade corridor.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I am happy to hear the minister's comment. We'd love to see more action, not just words. The fact is that we do have a \$13 billion budget and not one cent is being put into the protection of the Chignecto Isthmus.

I'm going to read a direct quote from the study that I'm sure the minister has read. It says, "it could be assumed that, if the status quo persists, over the next 30 years there will be an extreme weather event which will result in the closure of the Chignecto Isthmus for two days' duration once every five years. In other words, 6 events or 12 days in total over the period. Based on the annual trade value of \$35 billion the 12-day interruption has a total value of \$1.2 billion (no discounting), or about \$40 million gain from investment on the annualized basis." So there is a significant return on investment and huge disruption.

Can the minister please give a timeline when we expect to see work started on the Chignecto Isthmus?

KIM MASLAND: Once again, the member knows that we in the Department of Public Works understand the importance of that trade corridor to this province. We also have read and understand the study that was released.

I will assure the member - the member for Cumberland South constantly talks to me about what is going on in Cumberland County - I will react to those responses and the member can know that I walk the walk over here, and don't just talk the talk.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

EECD: SCHOOL BOARDS RETURN - DELAY

SUZY HANSEN: I'm so glad I'm on mute most of the time.

My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. The PC platform released during the election included a commitment to re-establish elected school boards so that local decision-making would once again be part of our education system. The platform said that abolishing school boards abolished a critical check and balance in the system. As such, your PC government will return school boards.

But school boards are not mentioned in the minister's mandate letter, and when asked yesterday by reporters if he would be bringing back school boards, the Premier said: "I don't think so, I don't personally think you need a whole board for that."

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: Can the minister confirm if the government plans to deliver on this campaign promise and return school boards?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: This is one of the things that I'm incredibly passionate about: understanding what our communities and our stakeholders' needs are and making sure that they're incorporated into our planning and into the actions that we take. As I have said on a number of occasions when asked about this, we are undertaking dialogue with communities and stakeholders so that we understand what families and educators and staff and communities need in terms of local voice in governance. We're undertaking that work now, and I look forward to it progressing.

SUZY HANSEN: I'm grateful that the minister explained that. I really would like the minister to explain that to the Premier so that the communication is clear for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, another commitment in the PC platform is to revisit, revive, resurrect, and recommit to the report on inclusive education. The platform says that a PC government will not cherry-pick from these recommendations and falsely claim action, and I'm tabling that. The budget includes \$15 million to continue implementing the recommendations from the commission. More funding for inclusive education is definitely welcome. However, when I asked the minister in estimates how this funding would specifically advance the recommendations from the inclusion report, she wasn't able to provide any clarity.

Will the minister explain how the money allocated in this budget will resurrect the recommendations from the inclusion report?

BECKY DRUHAN: Inclusive education is fundamental. The concept of inclusion is fundamental and foundational to the work that we do in the education system. It is vital that our schools are welcoming inclusive spaces where all of our children feel valued, needed, seen, and heard, and the education system responds to that.

That's the foundation of our Inclusive Education Policy and the work that we are doing on inclusive education. The investments that we're making in inclusive education will include additional supports. In that vein, this includes staffing supports in the schools and also include other measures to support inclusive education.

We will be coming back in the near future with a report and an update on the specifics around the inclusive education measures and further steps that we're taking.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

EECD: CHILD CARE FUNDING DROP - ADDRESS

HON. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, the previous government introduced the Universal Child Care Agreement. However, the messaging from this government has been somewhat unclear, especially around the rollout of the 25 per cent reduction in fees.

On the way to the farmers' market on Saturday, I met a very frustrated child care director in Wolfville who's struggling to understand what's happening. The registered non-profit received the regular funding in April, but it was down by almost \$4,000. In total, the provider expects a loss of around \$11,000. This recent release said that centres that accept the 2022-23 annual funding agreement will be provided with full funding to offset the fee reduction. I can table that.

Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development explain the decrease for them?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: We are very proud of the work that is being done to implement our Canada-Nova Scotia Child Care Agreement. That includes the work that we have done recently to engage with this sector, to engage with our non-profits and our for-profits, and to engage additionally with other stakeholders in the sector to understand the needs of the child care system and the needs of families in Nova Scotia.

Very recently, we did issue a renewed funding agreement as well, and I'm very proud to say that we have had a historic over 99 per cent of licensed spaces - operators who have over 99 per cent of licensed spaces have accepted that agreement and are very pleased with it.

I would suggest to the member, if he knows of an individual operator who has concerns, I encourage him to reach out to the office so that we can address that concern.

[10:45 a.m.]

KEITH IRVING: That child care facility has written and gotten no response. I would appreciate the minister looking into that and getting that \$11,000 clarified - \$11,000 is a lot of money for a daycare.

Mr. Speaker, the child care agreement was designed not only to lower child care costs but also to raise the wages of early childhood educators. A government release in January announced the start of reducing child care costs. The minister's quote referenced increasing wages and benefits for hundreds of early childhood educators but gave little detail around those steps. The release from March, which I previously tabled, clarified that the ECE wage changes should come by Fall.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister tell us how many ECEs will see this increase and by how much their wages will be increased by?

BECKY DRUHAN: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member opposite for the question. We are very excited about the work we are doing to increase the wages and the benefits that our early childhood educators receive. We know this is a group that does incredible work, incredibly valuable work because they have the care of our earliest learners and our youngest citizens.

That work is already under way. We have reached out to our operators, so we have a full picture and an understanding of the current compensation structure so that we are on track to deliver an updated and improved compensation structure, including benefits, in the Fall.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

EECD: MENTAL HEALTH PGM. - AVAILABILITY

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, many schoolchildren face struggles related to mental health, and we all know that this issue has only become more acute over the last two years. The government, in its platform, committed to providing access to free online mental health programming to those teachers who want it. My question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is: Has this programming been made available? If not, can the government commit to seeing that it is available by the beginning of the next school year in September?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: This is a really important issue, not only for our educators and our staff but also for our students. Mental health is something that we work across departments to address. I've been working with my colleague as well to address these issues. Planning and work is under way for supports for educators and there are online supports available. I can provide details to the member.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Again, there's quite a bit of chatter going on in the Chamber. I'd ask that it be kept very low.

BRAEDON CLARK: In its platform, the government wrote that the PC government will commit to placing mental wellness kits in every classroom in Nova Scotia. These kits were to contain stress-relieving devices, heating and cooling packs, contact information for mental health services, and anything else a mental health professional deems appropriate for children. My question to the minister is: Can the minister tell us whether this commitment has been fulfilled, and if not, when can we expect it to be completed?

BECKY DRUHAN: I can confirm that work is under way for those kits as well. We will be fulfilling that commitment and the kits will be available in schools to students and educators.

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

DAE: SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY WORK - UPDATE

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, sexual violence is an important issue that we need to continue to work on and find ways to prevent. In the mandate letter of the Minister of Advanced Education there's a note that they would require each university, college, and private career college to develop a sexual violence policy that addresses sexual violence involving any of its students.

Mr. Speaker, this is work that began during our time in government, under the leadership of the former minister and MLA for Bedford Basin. My question to the minister is: Can the minister elaborate on what more his department intends to do to carry on the work that was previously started under our government?

HON. BRIAN WONG: I'd like to commend you on the work that you started. We continue that work, conversations with our post-secondary institutions. There continues to be \$470,000 given to those institutions in order to continue that work. We are expanding that work to our private career colleges as well and we're going to continue working on that file.

BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, 71 per cent of university students have witnessed or experienced unwanted sexual activity in post-secondary settings. I am not happy to table that. My question to the minister is: Can the minister provide any further detail around what they're doing to . . .

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

Before we take a recess, I'm now prepared to deliver three rulings on three separate questions of privilege.

SPEAKER'S RULINGS

For context, the House will remember that all three questions pertained to the examination of Bill No. 149 by the Law Amendments Committee. I've reviewed the facts and surrounding circumstances for each question in light of the usages and precedence of the Rules of the House, and in light of the applicable legal authorities.

I've concluded that all three questions can be resolved by a single unifying principle, and that is that the committees of this House have always and continue to be masters of their own proceedings. The Law Amendments Committee, as the master of its own proceedings, is empowered to hear and determine the procedural issues that arise before it.

The principle has been upheld consistently by many of my predecessors in this Chair across numerous assemblies, and this principle is only departed from on the rarest occasions. One such rare occasion occurred on March 6, 2020. Speaker Murphy heeded prior rulings from both Speaker Gosse and Speaker Scott, all of whom held that the committees are masters of their own domain, and thus the Speaker ought not to intervene except in extraordinary circumstances.

For another domain example, on November 30, 2011, Speaker Gosse considered a question involving a one-minute notice for a Law Amendments Committee meeting. To conclude that there was no valid question of privilege, Speaker Gosse cited the key principle in the following way:

“...problems arising in a committee of the House should be dealt with within that committee and, only after the proper procedures that have been followed in the committee, should a matter come to this House.”

Bearing these rulings in mind, I'll now turn to each of the three questions of privilege.

The member for Kings South asserted the question of privilege on the grounds that nine members of the Law Amendments Committee were unable to fully participate in the debate and passage of bills because the committee's meeting in the Red Chamber was simultaneously scheduled during government business in this Chamber.

Upon reviewing the record, five reasons led me to the inevitable conclusion that the Law Amendments Committee meeting on Thursday, April 14, was neither an extraordinary nor exceptional circumstance amounting to a prima facie breach of privilege.

First, the key principle is that the committees are masters of their proceedings. On April 14, not one of the nine committee members who attended the meeting exercised their right to bring a motion to change the timing of the meeting, nor to change the agenda for the meeting, nor did anyone at that meeting rise on a point of order to challenge the simultaneous sitting.

Second, according to Rule 61(2), it is only after a committee has delivered a decision on the matter that an appeal to the House can be made.

Third, as the member for Kings South conceded, it's been a long-standing established practice for meetings of Law Amendments Committee in the Red Chamber to be held simultaneously with government business in the Chamber.

Fourth, when those simultaneous meetings have occurred, the committee has often recessed partway to permit members to represent their constituencies during the daily routine and to participate in Question Period. Those adjournments are simply as a matter of courtesy, not as a matter of any hard-and-fast written rule.

Fifth, the written rules do expressly prohibit simultaneous sittings of the Law Amendments Committee under one circumstance only, namely pursuant to Rule 62FC:

“Neither the Law Amendments Committee nor the Private and Local Bills Committee shall meet while both the Committee of the Whole on Supply and the Subcommittee on Supply are meeting.”

Indeed, members are quite familiar with navigating between simultaneous meetings in the two Chambers during Supply process.

Finally, it's not for me alone to pronounce upon the wisdom of any of these rules, nor is the question of privilege the appropriate mechanism to discard a long-lasting, established practice. If the House collectively wishes to study what other jurisdictions do, or recommend changes to the House's written rules or unwritten practices, then the House may do so by prevailing upon the Internal Affairs Committee, which is the body mandated by Rule 62 to deal with rules, privileges, and procedures.

The second question of privilege: The member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island also raised two questions involving the Committee on Law Amendments on Tuesday, April 19th. First, the member stated that the Chair of the Committee on Law Amendments violated their freedom of speech by refusing to recognize hands, by truncating speeches, and by ignoring an appeal.

After closely watching the video of what transpired at the Committee on Law Amendments during the meeting in question, it appears that the member was attempting to seek advice from legal counsel on the record about whether a question of privilege could

be brought at the committee. Legislative Counsel correctly advised the member that questions of privilege cannot be entertained by the committee, only points of order.

It then appears that the member did not formally bring a point of order but instead asked Legislative Counsel to clarify the necessary conditions for bringing a point of order in committee. It was at that juncture, while the member was still seeking advice from Legislative Counsel, that the Chair suggested that the member ought to approach the Speaker regarding issues with the committee's operations. Technically, the member was attempting to seek advice from Legislative Counsel on how to bring the point of order and had not taken the next procedural step to actually bring a point of order.

As I explained at the outset, the committee is the master of its own proceedings. Although this means there's no valid question of privilege for me to determine, I'd be remiss if I did not observe that the Chair incorrectly redirected the member to take up the committee's operations with the Speaker. It is fully within the committee's powers to hear, debate, and decide points of order involving the committee's own proceedings. Going forward, I fully expect the committee to exercise the powers to do so.

Lastly, Question No. 3: the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island also raised, on a separate concern, that the Chair continually used heteronormative language when asking questioners to identify their preferred pronouns and by calling committee members "ladies and gentlemen." This concern relates to the form of address for committee members and for presenters. The forms of address and language used by members are governed by the rules of decorum and since rules of decorum are by their very nature matters of procedure, the same fundamental principle applies. Objections to the forms of address and language used at the Committee on Law Amendments must first be brought to the Committee on Law Amendments.

Although there is technically no valid question of privilege to determine, I do wish to highlight that the rules of decorum serve to foster respect for each other and to instill dignity in all that we do for Nova Scotians.

With that we will now take a 10-minute recess.

[10:58 a.m. The House recessed.]

[11:22 a.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we begin with Orders of the Day, I have another piece of correspondence here that I would like to read. Although it doesn't take effect until the 30th of June, hopefully we'll be out of here by then. The letter is dated April 7, 2022, to myself as Speaker of the House of Assembly:

"Dear Mr. Speaker,

Pursuant to Section 4(2) of the Ombudsman Act, I write today to advise you of my decision to retire from my position of Ombudsman for the Province of Nova Scotia effective the 30th day of June, 2022. It has been a distinct honour and a pleasure to serve the citizens of our great province as their Ombudsman these last six years.

As I embark on my 44th year of public service with both the Government of Canada, as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Government of Nova Scotia, it has come time to test drive retirement. It is my hope that this advance notice of my retirement plans will assist in the orderly transition of this office to the appointment of a new Ombudsman.

Sincerely,

William A. Smith
Ombudsman for the Province of Nova Scotia.” (Applause)

On behalf of all of us in this Chamber, we want to wish Mr. Smith a very happy and peaceful retirement. Keep doing those test drives because that’s the best thing to do.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader. (Applause)

JOHN WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my audience as well. Awesome.

Mr. Speaker, I move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Supply unto Her Majesty.

THE SPEAKER: Anybody speaking going into debate?

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

[11:24 a.m. The House resolved itself into a CW on Supply with Deputy Speaker Angela Simmonds in the Chair.]

[3:05 p.m. CW on Supply rose and the House reconvened. The Speaker, Hon. Keith Bain, resumed the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: The Chair of the Committee of the Whole on Supply reports:

THE CLERK: That the Committee of the Whole on Supply has met and has come to agreement on 43 estimate resolutions, including votes on business plans and on capital. The chair has been instructed to recommend these estimates to the favourable consideration of the House, each without amendment.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House concurs with the report of the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

JOHN WHITE: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Introduction of Bills.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise on a point of privilege about something that happened last evening. One of our members here in the House was upset and a couple of us went out to comfort her. We were standing by the mailboxes, doing just that, when the Minister of Economic Development walked by us and said, "Coven meeting." I asked her if she had, in fact, just called us witches. She walked back and confirmed that yes, that is exactly what she had done.

I explained to her that that was inappropriate, and she said that so is reading selectively from letters. I explained that that actually was part of our job. Then she acknowledged that I had been here for a long time, I'm not sure that was a compliment.

I felt that the member in question was trying to intimidate me from doing my job. I was going to let this go, Mr. Speaker, until the ruling this morning, where it was clear that we have to get things on the record, and people have to make motions and deal with things at the time that they happen.

I also feel this is part of a pattern and the pattern is being set by the behaviour of the Premier, because that particular event was preceded by something that had happened earlier. I was speaking on an amendment and the Chair was being continuously instructed by the Premier to interject. The member for Cumberland North noticed that that was happening and stood up on a point of order to call the Premier on that.

I was able to finish my remarks, but the Premier left the Chamber and as he left the Chamber, he yelled out something about, "Why don't you go block another highway?" That was a shot at the member who was standing up for me as I was trying to do my job.

I will say that to her credit, the minister just came over and apologized - no doubt because she got word that I was going to do this. I do accept her apology, but what I don't accept is what led up to that, because I do feel that by the continuous actions of the Premier in doing things like directing chairs in their duty, or by doing things like yelling things at a member with whom he has a personal beef, he is trying to intimidate members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like you to rule on that, and I would like his behaviour to change.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I certainly thank the member for raising the issue. She has raised a point of privilege. I presume she's given the proper notice to the Speaker and done it at the earliest point at which she could, but certainly, that is for you to look at.

I'm aware that the member has apologized, which I think is a good thing. It's important that we respect each other in this Chamber. I don't think there was any intent to intimidate, but I wasn't there and I respect the member feeling as she did.

With that, I certainly leave to you to consider this, but I would say that given the member has apologized and that there's an intent to reconcile the matter, I would ask that you take that into consideration.

THE SPEAKER: For the information of the House, the member did come to my office this afternoon to tell me that the intent was to bring forward a point of privilege, so I was made aware that this would be taking place. I will accept the member's point and it will be taken under advisement and reported back at a later date.

The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I am rising with your permission to extend to the entire House my apologies. I did not realize at the time that there was comforting of a member, but I take full responsibility for my actions. My greatest disappointment is in myself to have allowed myself to be caught up in the moment here. Personally, I reject the idea that I was seeking to intimidate, but perception is its own thing, and I will not challenge that.

I will say that the response at the time was "That's what we do in here" and I thought a lot about that last night. It does not in any way excuse. I am most sincere. I have already spoken to two of the three members, and Budget Estimates has, to this point, kept me from speaking to the member for Cumberland North. But I do think I'm very thoughtful on the point of: Is that in fact what we do in here, and is that the best reflection? I know that I did

not conduct myself as my best self and the person whom I wish to be, and for that I am very apologetic.

THE SPEAKER: The member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: This is difficult to do, but I would also like to stand on a point of privilege. Last night I stood on a point of order because I was watching the Premier directing the Chair on numerous occasions. Soon thereafter, the Premier stood loud enough for everyone in the Chamber to hear, and he made a derogatory comment meant to intimidate and meant to embarrass me - and he did. It was very upsetting.

It makes me feel uncomfortable to even come in this Chamber to know that there are things being said and done to purposely intimidate me which I do feel affect my ability to work effectively and confidently to represent the people of Cumberland North.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I didn't want to interrupt the member for Bedford Basin, but just related to the last member's comments: If they're made in this House - I'm not going to speak specifically about the one the member has suggested here, but I know when I saw the Premier, I think he was on his way walking out of the Chamber. I'm not exactly sure what he said or if he was directing it to anybody specifically. I don't know.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable Deputy Premier.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Suffice it say that it would be an assumption for me to assume if he was directing a comment to someone - I respect what the member said. I respect if she felt bad about what was said. I will say that, Mr. Speaker.

I can also say in defence of the Premier that there are remarks said at all times in here. Ideally, nobody should be saying anything but there are comments all the time. It's not clear if this comment, if it was made, was directly at the member. I would just like to put that on the record.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I will say that by the words that were uttered, it was very clearly aimed at one particular person in this House. We all heard it over on this side. I am sure people over on that side heard because we heard and they're closer.

[3:15 p.m.]

I will just say that it was very clearly directed at one particular member. I will also just say to the Minister of Economic Development that if quoting from letters of the minister is considered unfair, then perhaps she should consider what's in those letters.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise with reluctance on this topic and without any interest in rehashing of events, but only to remark on what we've heard in response to these points of privilege.

Perception is something. Did the member give proper notice? Was that directed at the member? The member's feelings may have been hurt. In my submission, these are inappropriate responses to an expression that takes some bravery in this Chamber, of a breach of personal privilege.

Now it's to the Speaker to rule whether that breach has, in fact, occurred but it is being alleged. I do want to say that I would support the members who have spoken, because I believe that when a member speaks in this Chamber, they should always be speaking the truth and that we should make that assumption. I assume that they are speaking the truth. I know that they are speaking the truth because I witnessed the events in question as did the members of our caucus.

Again, what your ruling is we will find out, but I think this is an opportunity, as the member mentioned, to remark on the tenor of - I don't want to say debate, but the remarks and speech and insults, frankly, that have been present on the floor of this Chamber. We all bear, probably, a little bit of responsibility. Having been here for several years, I also have been somewhat stunned by the language and behaviour and frankly inappropriateness that I have heard in this Chamber.

I hope that regardless of the Speaker's rulings that we all take an opportunity to think about the ways that we conduct ourselves inside and outside of this Chamber and to make every effort, notwithstanding the partisanship that is a natural part of our system, to treat each other with respect. There is no reason for any of us not to do that. There is also no reason not to respect someone who comes forward and says that they have experienced a breach of that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Premier.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with the member's comments, particularly about respect for each other in here. I know there are allegations and I'll say one for myself that I wasn't even going to bring up. There was an allegation last night that I disrespected the Clerks, by the member for Cumberland North. That was

in *allNovaScotia* today. I don't like people reading in allNovaScotia saying that I disrespected the Clerks.

Mr. Speaker, I would like you to confer with the Clerks to ask them if they felt disrespected, and please let me know, because I would apologize to them. I know in my heart that I never disrespected the Clerks last night. It's not over . . . (Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order. This is not an argument back and forth. The Deputy Premier has the floor.

ALLAN MACMASTER: We are talking about allegations here. I read that in *allNovaScotia* today, and I thought, gee, there are people out there reading that I was disrespectful to the Clerks. In fact, I had a 20-minute conversation with the Clerks after midnight, just talking about all that happened.

I don't feel that I was disrespectful to the Clerks at all. But that allegation was made in this Chamber, and it was in the media. People are reading it. They're probably thinking - people who don't know me are wondering, I wonder what kind of a guy that guy is? I don't like that, but I didn't bring it up. But I'm bringing it up now.

Mr. Speaker, I know the member who was in the Chair suggested that I had misled her. I had stood up to be recognized at the time, within my right. I was recognized. There was time remaining on the clock. I spoke briefly on the amendment, and then, as was also within the rules, I had the right to suggest, to put a motion forward that we adjourn. That was proper, because the Clerks confirmed it and the vote then happened on it. All of that happened.

What I would say - I fully agree with respecting members. I think it's important for members to apologize if they've done something disrespectful to another. At the end of the day, there's a war going on in Ukraine.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, come on.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Let me finish. People are experiencing horrible things there. Out of respect for what's going on there, the least we can do in this Chamber is to be considerate of each other. Maybe keep that in mind as something - and I'm saying that for everybody, including myself - I'm not pointing the finger at anybody in particular.

I'm saying that we have an ability to keep the peace in here, maybe on a much smaller scale, but it's just as important in our own way here. I'm not saying that to instruct anybody, but I'm saying that as my own feeling. We can all contribute to this, myself included.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I feel I've put on the record some of my experiences in the last 24 hours. I've not stood up and asked for an apology, and I won't ask for an apology. We all have a duty. I'll leave it at that.

THE SPEAKER: Again, I will stress once more that I will take the member for Bedford Basin's point of privilege under advisement. We will be reporting back at a later date. We'll also take the member for Cumberland North's point of privilege into consideration. There will be a ruling.

I think if you do go back to the ruling we had today on some of the circumstances that took place, the words "respect" and such words like that were mentioned in that report. I think it's something that we all have to consider. It may be something that will be coming forward as a recommendation from me as Speaker to all the people gathered here. Time will tell.

I just guarantee both members that the points of privilege they brought forward will be looked at, and a ruling made at a later date.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

JOHN WHITE: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Introduction of Bills.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I'm just clarifying, first of all, that the Deputy Government House Leader called Public Bills for Third Reading.

THE SPEAKER: No. It's Introduction of Bills, and the bill hasn't been introduced as yet.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 182 - Entitled An Act to Provide for Defraying Certain Charges and Expenses of the Public Service of the Province. (Hon. Allan MacMaster)

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the bill is printed, and I believe the Pages have already distributed a copy to each member.

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

[GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]

[PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING]

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

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 182, the Appropriations Act, 2022, now be read a second time.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 182.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

[PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING]

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

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 182, the Appropriations Act, 2022, be now read a third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 182.

A recorded vote has been called for.

We will conduct the recorded vote when the Whips are satisfied.

[3:27 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 182.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[3:47 p.m.]

YEAS

Hon. Brad Johns
Hon. Tory Rushton
Hon. Barbara Adams
Hon. Kim Masland
Hon. Tim Houston
Hon. Allan MacMaster
Hon. Karla MacFarlane
Hon. Michelle Thompson

NAYS

Hon. Patricia Arab
Hon. Tony Ince
Hon. Brendan Maguire
Hon. Keith Irving
Hon. Iain Rankin
Hon. Derek Mombourquette
Hon. Kelly Regan
Claudia Chender

Hon. John Lohr	Gary Burrill
Hon. Pat Dunn	Susan Leblanc
Hon. Timothy Halman	Lisa Lachance
Hon. Steve Craig	Suzy Hansen
Dave Ritcey	Kendra Coombes
Hon. Brian Wong	Rafah DiCostanzo
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek	Hon. Ben Jessome
Hon. Brian Comer	Lorelei Nicoll
Hon. Colton LeBlanc	Braedon Clark
Trevor Boudreau	Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
Hon. Greg Morrow	Carman Kerr
Hon. Becky Druhan	Hon. Zach Churchill
Larry Harrison	Ronnie LeBlanc
Chris Palmer	Angela Simmonds
John A. MacDonald	
Melissa Sheehy-Richard	
John White	
Danielle Barkhouse	
Tom Taggart	
Nolan Young	
Kent Smith	

THE CLERK: For, 29. Against, 22.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

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

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring a motion pursuant to Rule 51, to discharge Bill No. 120 from the order of business, Public Bills for Third Reading, and to thereby recommit Bill No. 120 to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills. Whereas I feel there has been unresolved consultation, unresolved evidence and unresolved consensus, I don't feel this bill is ready to go forward.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to implore members to consider delaying this bill for a few months to ensure that we are all certain that this is the best bill it can be. I am not opposing for opposing's sake. I am very concerned by what I have heard from experts and from stakeholders about this bill, that we simply need to take a deep breath.

Many people were involved in the discussions about this bill over a long time and yet at the end, in the rush to get here, they were not engaged. In fact, even after bringing forward the numerous letters that I have received from psychiatrists regarding the consultation they have been involved in, and the consultation they weren't involved in, at the end it actually even continued.

On April 19, 2022, really recently - Monday or Tuesday - the IPTA advisory group was convened, in fact. What an excellent opportunity, before this bill came to Committee of the Whole House on Bills, to have a chance to ensure that you had representation of some of the leading users of this bill to review the bill. However, they were not presented with the amendments. As I understand it, there was a lot of concern expressed by review board members, but no changes were made and when the government representatives repeated that changes can now be suggested after the bill goes through, it didn't make very much sense to those practitioners. Again, just to repeat, they were not presented with the amendments.

I hope my concerns and worries are misplaced. I hope I am wrong and that, in fact, this bill is ready to become law as it is, and that it will serve to support people's well-being, but at this point, at this period of time, it doesn't seem to be the case.

In addition to consulting further with the psychiatrist group, I have enormous respect, for instance, for the minister's experience as an in-patient psychiatric nurse. That's another group that I don't know if they've been heard from during the consultation on this bill. They also deal day to day trying to keep people well when they arrive often in situations where they are very much not well.

I was also concerned by the minister's comment in the media recently - I'll table that later - where he was quoted as saying that you could ask 10 different psychiatrists, and you would get 10 different answers. I didn't want to let that comment rest because in some ways, maybe that's true. Maybe you might get slightly different opinions. Although honestly, based on the small amount of consultation I've done, I don't think that's the case. I think there is a path forward to a consensus.

Nonetheless, of course we deal with complex issues every day in here. That's actually what evidence-based policy making calls us to deal with: to take the research, the evidence, the practice, and the lived experience, and to set up ways and means by which we can distill public policy that makes sense - and that in this case, keeps people safe and helps them get well.

I just really wanted to talk a bit about this idea too of opposing for opposition's sake. That is not what I'm doing. I'm doing it because I think this process is so close, this bill is close, but so far stakeholders are not happy. They're not convinced that they can implement it without harm to the people that they work with.

I would implore the government to consider what are the evidence-based policy-making tools that you'll put into place so that going forward, you're able to take a hugely complex issue that brings together medicine, psychiatry, legal issues and others, and that you're able to make a decision about what you want to put forward with confidence - and that you're able to provide to us the confidence that we need to be satisfied that the best evidence and best consultation has taken place.

I think we talked a bit about gender-based analysis in this Chamber. That's an example of an evidence-based tool so that each and every time you use the same tool and analyze each policy perspective the same way. You know what? That helps give you an appreciation for the fact that you're making some policy based on the best available evidence.

Canada has been a leader in the development of evidence-based policy-making - and Nova Scotia too. Actually, I'll table this. This is a rapid synthesis on establishing support for evidence-based health system transformation in Nova Scotia. This was produced with government and with practitioners in June 2021.

We actually have done an enormous amount of work regarding health on how we bring evidence forward. Evidence, again, is the research but it's also the practitioners, it's also the medical professionals, it's lived experience.

I'll table this document after. I will quote, that evidence-based policy-making is an approach that “. . . helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programs, and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation.” But, of course, in this role, that's not all that comes forward.

There are ways in which you can then consider the political implications, the policy rationale, the urgency behind issues. Again, given that this bill has been under some kind of consideration, but not actually written up as a draft bill since 2013, I think that waiting until the Fall to bring a resolution between stakeholders together would really be prudent and important for us.

I don't think that I can at this point attest to the credibility of the consultation process or the evidence that's been reviewed. I think it's really important that we take a deep breath with this bill and bring it back to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills. I will be very excited to Chair the Committee of the Whole House on Bills in the Fall session that reviews a revised bill - or maybe not - but a bill where the minister can come

forward and say, you're right, here's who we talked to in the last couple of months. They have seen every word that's being put in front of you and here's what they have to say.

[4:00 p.m.]

One of the things of which we are wealthy in Nova Scotia actually is an important piece of evidence-based policy-making. We have groups of people - we have policy brokers who can help us understand this, so that you don't have to go to this psychiatrist and that psychiatrist. We have a note that I've read to you from a child and youth adolescent psychiatrist of Nova Scotia. They together as a group meet regularly and consider practice issues, including the use of IPTA.

We often hear from municipalities on issues. Again, they provide a way of consolidating the viewpoints of communities. In this case, we also heard from Schulich School of Law. We are incredibly blessed in Nova Scotia to have an enormous amount of publicly engaged researchers, including the Health Law Institute at Dalhousie, who can provide input on this as well.

I think it would be an easy point to revisit the consultation process because I think stakeholders have been consistent in their shared objective. They want to support people becoming well. I think that's our shared objective too.

I'm just going to end by sharing a letter from a parent that was also shared with me. I think it again gives another voice of the stakeholders who are engaged in this process. I also just want to note that one of the things that I don't have is feedback from folks who have actually been under IPTA provisions. I think that's a really important piece too.

I'd like to acknowledge that in my own review of what people are saying about IPTA, I think that's a huge gap. I'm not trying to tell you what should be in IPTA because I'm not actually one of those stakeholders at this point in my life.

I really want to make sure that we have a process we can stand behind and that we don't start taking away people's liberty without being sure this is the best we can do.

I'll finish with this letter:

"I want to take this opportunity to write to you about my concerns about the pending amendments to Bill No. 120, the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act. I'm writing as a parent of a son who has been diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and addiction. He has battled this illness for nearly a decade. In our experience, the available mental health resources are limited, so this amendment would exacerbate an already difficult situation.

In the early years of his illness, prior to an official diagnosis, I was encouraged to sign a community treatment order. I was able to advocate for him and make treatment decisions that he could not possibly have made on his own. He was hallucinating, delusional, and paranoid. How could anyone in that state of mind help themselves? I saw it as my duty as a parent, so I gladly signed the CTO out of a deep love for him, wanting him to be as safe as possible and to have access to whatever supports and treatments were available.

It meant he was required by law to take his medications, and if the medication or therapy routines were not followed, the police would have to step in and enforce them. It was not a perfect system but far better than the alternative of my son's illness going untreated. I could tell you so much more about our tremendously difficult, scary, and sad journey.

On a more positive note, despite police interventions and institutionalization, my son's care team has been very responsive to his concerns about side effects and have modified his treatments accordingly.

I beg you to advocate for us, along with countless others who are going through similar struggles.

Community treatment orders are vital to ensuring treatment of mental illness. In fact, I believe there's far more that could and should be done."

Again, I'm going to pause and insert parentheses, but I'm not saying that I agree with this because, again, I would want to hear from other stakeholders to balance out this viewpoint. She ends in saying:

"I see too many young people right here in my own community who are falling through the cracks in our broken system. One of my best friends is going through this right now with her own son. Her name is Dana Eisner, she lives in Wolfville."

In conclusion, I feel like I have brought a few voices into this Chamber. It was an imperfect process under pressured time. What it speaks to me is that this bill is not ready, and we should reconsider this bill.

I encourage members on the other side to be satisfied that this proposed law is safe and will enhance the well-being of Nova Scotians, their families, and their communities. If you have a smidgen of doubt, let's take a few months and get it right.

Therefore be it resolved pursuant to Rule 51 that this House shall discharge Bill No. 120 from the Orders of the Day dated April 22, 2022, which provides for Bill No. 120 to be read a third time, such that Bill No. 120 shall be instead recommitted to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills for reconsideration on a future day.

THE SPEAKER: The motion pursuant to Rule 51 is to discharge Bill No. 120 from the Orders of the Day under Public Bills for Third Reading and to recommit Bill No. 120 to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills on a future day.

Do any members wish to speak to the motion?

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I will be brief. I would like to stand in support of the member's motion.

I stand here not in my role as an Opposition member to be critical of government decisions, to impart that other side that maybe is sometimes lost, but really out of concern for a bill that I know isn't meant to be ill-intended. I think it's a well-intended bill that could potentially have disastrous ramifications if put forward in the way that it currently stands.

I want to reiterate, too, that I stand here not as an expert. I don't know if that's the case, but I think because there's some doubt to it, and because so many professionals, individuals who use this piece of legislation on a regular basis, have stood up and said that there are concerns with it, it's enough for us to say, okay, let's pause and let's consult with the individuals who use this piece of legislation, and let's make sure that none of the changes that are put forward here are going to have negative impacts.

If it's good, it's good. I'll happily support it when it comes back. I just feel that it's irresponsible of us to be ignoring these clinicians, these physicians, these individuals who are the experts in this field, the consultations that have been done. Things change constantly. You can't look at a consultation from four, five, 10, 20 years ago - you can't look at it from four months ago and say that it's necessarily an accurate consultation. When people who are personally involved with this legislation are telling you here and now, today, that there are things wrong, that there are things that are concerning with these proposed changes, that in and of itself is enough to say that the consultation that has been done has not been good enough.

I truly believe that the outcome will be more suffering for patients and their families. At Law Amendments Committee, in our MLA offices, we've heard from so many family members who are devastated and sad about the possible reduction in treating their loved ones. In a situation where they already feel helpless, where they already feel that they are at the lowest they can be, what we have in front of us is a piece of legislation that could potentially make them feel even worse. The amount of anxiety that is attached to families who suffer, who have family members or loved ones who suffer from mental illness - when you get to this point, this is the lowest point you can get to. This is the most anxiety-inducing point you can get to.

It is our responsibility to make sure that we don't add to that anxiety, that we don't add to that despair. When we hear experts saying to us that this piece of legislation, as it stands right now, could possibly do that, it is so irresponsible of us as legislators to just sign off on it because we have a department that's told us it's good, we have people who've said it's good.

I'm not here to criticize any of those people or their judgements, but why are we not taking into consideration the individuals who are the experts in this matter, who use this piece of legislation every day? Why are we being disrespectful to them?

I believe there will be a relevant increase in the use of forensic correctional systems in this province, because the police and loved ones will have no recourse other than charging patients, since taking them to emergency rooms is going to not be an option anymore. How many individuals will be tied up in our judicial system who should be in hospital receiving treatment? How many people are going to be lost because of the way this piece of legislation is worded, in terms of how they access help and who is able to give them help?

I want to echo the sentiments of the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island when they commented on how talking to 10 psychiatrists will give you 10 different opinions. I feel that that is such a disrespectful statement to make, and it's completely untrue. It's deceiving, and it feels like a clear attempt to conceal the fact that the department clearly heard a very structured presentation from the leadership of the department of psychiatry and the IWK with one voice and one clear message that for some reason is not being adhered to.

The psychiatrists - all of them - made the statement that the process was flawed and did not go through the proper or acceptable reviews, and only asked to delay the passing until further consultations are properly completed. But it appears, since we are here at third reading, that that plea was just dismissed.

Our caucus is very worried that changes open the door to situations where someone is confined to hospital but not allowed to receive treatment. This is the complete opposite of the principle that using the IPTA is there for.

Again, I implore that the minister just hit pause on this piece of legislation. Let us do the proper consultation, come back in the Fall, and if there's nothing to be changed or nothing that comes up, then we'll be good to go. But at least we'll know that we've done that due diligence and it's not going to be something that weights heavily on us if this, indeed, has not been done the proper way.

THE SPEAKER: I'd like to just caution the member that the word "deceiving" is very close to being unparliamentary.

The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I don't know - this is a very difficult thing for me to say because it is very personal and is one of the things that when I was running, I had to tell somebody who was checking me and that I have nothing in my closet, and my husband said to me this is medical, you don't have to say it. At the time I did say it, and she said, Rafah, maybe God put you here so that you can do something about it.

I am almost 60. I will be celebrating 60 in two weeks, but it's because of God's help and a psychiatrist's help that I am still here. At 42 I suffered a very deep depression that is genetic. My mother apparently had it at the same age, and I didn't realize. I had two beautiful kids, I had an amazing husband, I had just bought a beautiful house, but I could not function, I could not leave the house, I could not talk. I wanted to die, that's all I wanted to do, and I didn't know why. There was absolutely no reason in my life, except it's a chemical imbalance and it took me years. It was one of the doctors that she mentioned who saved my life when he said to my husband, she can't make any decisions, you will have to until I tell you when.

I was not able to make the smallest decision, to buy dresses for my daughters for their grandparents' 50th anniversary. I couldn't go outside the house. I'm the most popular, I love chatting. I hid in my closet for a couple of weeks to get over this. It was the psychiatrist who helped me. He knew what to do. We need to listen to them, and one of those doctors she mentioned. Please, taking away what parents can do for their kids or husbands can do for their wives - I would not be standing here. Thank you. Please listen. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The motion pursuant to Rule 51 is to discharge Bill No. 120 from the orders of the day, under Public Bills for Third Reading, and to recommit Bill No. 120 to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills on a future day.

All those in favour of the motion? A recorded vote has been called for.

We will go into recess until the Whips are satisfied.

[The House recessed at 4:15 p.m.]

[The Division bells were rung.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. There has been a request for a recorded vote on Bill No. 120 to recommit.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[4:25 p.m.]

YEAS

Hon. Patricia Arab
Hon. Tony Ince
Hon. Brendan Maguire
Hon. Keith Irving
Hon. Iain Rankin
Hon. Derek Mombourquette
Hon. Kelly Regan
Claudia Chender
Gary Burrill
Susan Leblanc
Lisa Lachance
Suzy Hansen
Kendra Coombes
Rafah DiCostanzo
Hon. Ben Jessome
Lorelei Nicoll
Braedon Clark
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
Carman Kerr
Ronnie LeBlanc
Angela Simmonds
Zach Churchill

NAYS

Brad Johns
Tory Rushton
Hon. Barbara Adams
Hon. Kim Masland
Hon. Allan MacMaster
Hon. Karla MacFarlane
Hon. Michelle Thompson
Hon. John Lohr
Hon. Pat Dunn
Hon. Timothy Halman
Hon. Steve Craig
Dave Ritcey
Hon. Brian Wong
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek
Hon. Brian Comer
Hon. Colton LeBlanc
Trevor Boudreau
Hon. Greg Morrow
Hon. Becky Druhan
Larry Harrison
Chris Palmer
John A. MacDonald
Melissa Sheehy-Richard
John White
Danielle Barkhouse
Tom Taggart
Nolan Young
Kent Smith

THE CLERK: For, 22. Against, 28.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

The honourable Government House Leader.

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

PUBLIC BILLS FOR THIRD READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 118.

Bill No. 118 - Personal Health Information Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 118 - an Act to Amend Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2010, the Personal Health Information Act - be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, the Personal Health Information Act plays an important role to protect the information of patients in our province. It is incumbent upon government to take this Act seriously and ensure that it continues to function as intended. The proposed amendments are intended to strengthen the legislation and address concerns raised during the review of the Act.

I understand that there are concerns about the proposed amendments, however these are not unilateral changes proposed by government in the absence of consultation. Quite the opposite. These are proposed amendments made after an extensive review and consultation with stakeholders.

The Personal Health Information Act came into force in 2013 and with it, a mandatory review after three years. The review was carried out in 2016 and published in 2018. The key point is that the review found that the legislation was working as it was intended to, however, there were several recommendations to further strengthen and modernize the Act for the benefit of patients.

Mr. Speaker, key stakeholders were consulted as part of the review. This included Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry, IWK, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, First Nations Health Directors and more. It also included the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Nova Scotia, whom we had the opportunity to hear from during Law Amendments Committee.

I respect and welcome the feedback we received from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The office is one voice among many we heard from in 2016.

The feedback from the office was taken under consideration at that time and factored into the consultation and review process.

[4:30 p.m.]

If the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has concerns despite the outcome and recommendations as the result of the review, I would welcome the commissioner to meet with department staff and the deputy. We have reached out regarding the concerns and are awaiting a response. The department would be happy to meet to discuss any questions and provide further clarity.

The review identified 35 findings of which 10 required no change. Of the remaining 25 findings, the Province supported 18 for implementation, which resulted in seven legislative changes, the ones before you today. For background, the remaining findings for implementation do not require legislative change and are best addressed through initiatives, future work, or updates to resources such as the accompanying tool kit.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, questions and concerns have been brought forward about the proposed amendments during second reading in Law Amendments Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to address three of the concerns that I felt have been causing the most confusion. The first one is the opinion that there's a missed opportunity to strengthen privacy protection by making it mandatory for custodians of personal health information to report a breach to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner at the same time they report to the patient.

The three-year review told us that the Act was striking the right balance between the protection and disclosure of this information and that the Act was working as it was designed to. When we consider changes to legislation, we also look at the impacts on the people it serves and those who must comply under the regulations, in this case PHIA, both public and private custodians of personal health information.

Typically, the custodian of this information has a close one-on-one relationship with the patient and in the event of a breach they are required to advise the patient directly. We do not need to create an additional burden of work by ensuring dual notification on reporting on the part of the provider.

It is important to note that a patient or individual who is the subject of a breach or has concern regarding their personal health information may bring those concerns directly to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The second item, Mr. Speaker, is adding the provision that would prevent a substitute decision-maker's ability to access the personal health information of the friend or family member they support if accessing that information is not in the best interests of

the patient. PHIA clearly states that an individual does not need to give a reason to access their own personal information.

We are not preventing a person, through their substitute decision-maker, to access their personal health information. Instead, this clause prevents a secondary decision-maker from accessing personal health information when it is not in the best interest of the patient. This is a very important change because it will help further protect seniors and other vulnerable Nova Scotians from serious impacts associated with situations such as elder abuse or domestic violence, as two examples.

While the majority of substitute decision-makers have the best interests of their friend or family member in mind, I know from working in health care and long-term care that this is unfortunately not always the case. Other members in the House who have worked in health care or within the community supporting some of our most vulnerable will know it to be true as well. This amendment is crucial to protect Nova Scotians in extremely vulnerable positions.

Mr. Speaker, the third and final item involves the authority of government to review the Act every five years to ensure that it remains current and reflects modern practices. This amendment is the recommendation from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

To clarify, a review every five years is mandatory. However, the scope of the review, whether a full or partial review is required, will be at the discretion of the minister. If we feel that a review of the Act is warranted sooner, a review will be carried out. Any review would involve consultation with stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I have provided clarity to some of amendments, and if further clarification is required I am happy to provide information moving forward. This is a good piece of legislation. Government has an obligation to Nova Scotians to ensure that legislation is in place to keep health information safe, is up-to-date, and reflects modern practices. It is important that we find the right balance between protecting personal health information and recognizing the needs of those who are required to collect, use, and disclose this information to manage health care.

The changes we are making are in the best interests and needs of Nova Scotians. I'm confident that these amendments will contribute to the operation and overall improvement of the Personal Health Information Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on third reading of this bill. The minister has talked about all of the reasons why this bill is important and that all may be. Well, I'm sure it is all very accurate and true. However, I am disturbed by the fact that

the legislation is moving forward. It has been roundly criticized by the Privacy Commissioner, and the minister herself just said that they've reached out to the Privacy Commissioner.

First of all, that consultation with the Privacy Commissioner happened at the Law Amendments Committee, which, frankly, is not a consultation with the Privacy Commissioner. It's hearing from the Privacy Commissioner in a public forum, which she should not have had to present her thoughts on the bill in. Then the minister said that if the Privacy Commissioner wants to meet and talk about the bill, she's happy to do that. It doesn't make any sense that would happen after the bill is passed. Maybe this is just a waste of time and then we come back again in the Fall and add amendments. Who knows what's going to happen after that conversation?

The legislative changes, as the minister said, came out of a review conducted in 2016. I think it was published in 2018, still four to six years ago, and in the age of information technology and privacy, six years or even four years is a lifetime. We had a different Privacy Commissioner six years ago, and we were working, and she was working in a completely different context. I have to say I'm concerned about a trend from this government that we've seen in this sitting in bringing forward pieces of legislation that are - things that have been sitting on shelves for several years that were consulted on several years ago, or old pieces of legislation - get them passed, get them fixed.

All of that, I think that the spirit of that is important and good, but I really do think that legislation should be consulted on fairly recently. Given what happened in Newfoundland, where hackers targeting weak privacy protections managed to crash the entire Newfoundland health care system, the administrative system, we should be paying much attention to this issue. Newfoundland is now rebuilding their whole health IT system from scratch. Many people saw surgeries cancelled as a result of the interruption, and saw their personal information, including Social Insurance Numbers leaked.

In my opinion, since none of the Privacy Commissioner's recommendations are included in this bill, it really should be sent back to the department for further improvements. The legislation as written is not reflective of best practices, according to the Privacy Commissioner, on privacy across the country.

I just want to reiterate a couple of the things that we heard from the Privacy Commissioner at the Committee on Law Amendments Committee about the bill. If passed, the bill could mean that the Personal Health Information Act would be interpreted as saying that audits of records of user activities to detect and investigate privacy breaches are not mandatory. This is not reflective of current best practices in privacy. The commissioner also pointed out that this is a missed opportunity to strengthen privacy protections as anticipated by the first three-year review of the Personal Health Information Act.

The commissioner's office made a number of recommendations during the review, and although the minister has mentioned that some of them were addressed, obviously not all of them. Notably during the review, the commissioner urged the requirement to notify her office when a breach has occurred, similar to legislation across Canada, and she points out that Nova Scotia is one of only three jurisdictions in Canada that do not have mandatory reporting of health privacy breaches to their commissioner.

Clearly and obviously, this would frustrate the ability of the commissioner to fulfill her mandate. The commissioner also points out that the amendments could also fetter substitute decision-makers' ability to access the personal health information of a subject individual. This means that an extra step is added to accessing personal health information of someone else whom you might be enabled to act on behalf of. This was not put forward in the three-year review.

The commissioner also points out that rules around the disclosure of personal health information for accreditation purposes needs additional clarification and safeguards not provided for in the bill. The rules for five-year reviews of the PHIA require clarification, also not included in the bill.

So we need, as Nova Scotians, to take privacy very seriously. That means, at the very least, working together with the Privacy Commissioner on upgrades to the privacy frameworks, not sidelining her on the day that the bill is introduced.

Just want to put this back into the arena here, folks. This bill was presented, it went to Law Amendments, had a second reading, then it went to Law Amendments, and that's where we heard from the Privacy Commissioner on it. It doesn't make any sense to me.

Obviously, the substance of the bill is important and came out of a very important review, but we do need to make sure that it's sound and of best practice in terms of privacy. We absolutely must offer - sorry, I'm not going to say that part - that's all I'm going to say.

I encourage - I know that we're not going to go backwards from this. I know that's not going to happen. I guess I would encourage the government at this point, as we move forward for the next four years until the next election in whatever year - 2025 - that the government actually take the time to consult with the appointed experts in the field, who can take a look at legislation before it gets to the floor of the House so that the debate can be about the substance of the bill and not about the procedure of the bill or the process. I will sit down.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I'd like to add a few comments in third reading of Bill No. 118, the Personal Health Protection Act. I do echo some of the same

concerns shared from the member from Dartmouth North about the concerns of the Privacy Commissioner.

A lot has changed in the documentation and collection of people's - persons' - personal health information. Today, we heard one of our MLAs share a very personal and private health history, and that is that individual's - her individual right. But she also has the right for privacy, and so does every single person, to ensure that their personal medical history and personal medical information is kept private.

A few years ago, I was at a presentation in Vancouver with the head of RCMP for security for Canada, and he shared that the No. 1 threat to our country is cybersecurity.

With everyone's personal health information available online, that is why we need a Privacy Commissioner. That is why we need to be ensuring that we are consulting with the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that we're doing everything we can to protect people's personal health information.

The one thing that I have concern with the bill is where it says specifically it "allows personal health information to be disclosed without an individual's consent for the purpose of audit or accreditation." Personally, I don't want my personal health information disclosed without my consent, and I think most people would feel the same.

Historically, before everything, before much of medical information went online, if I wanted to get someone else's personal health information, I would have to sneak into a medical records office or a doctor's office and try to find the paper chart and go through it to try to find information.

Now people do have the ability to go online and sometimes seek medical information without people's authorization. We know of several times where people have been charged - criminally charged - for breaching this. But here we have a bill that actually states in the bill that the government is allowing people's personal health information to be disclosed without individuals' consent. I think a lot of Nova Scotians would be very concerned to know this and would not be supportive. I'm not sure of the reasoning for this bill coming forward. One of my concerns is that it might be that One Person One Record is very close to being launched.

I was reading some information this morning back from 2016 about One Person One Record and how it was going to transform health care. And it still hasn't been launched, so I know people are anxious to get it going and to see One Person One Record, but we need to make sure that legislation and everything is in place so that people's personal health information is as confidential as possible. We're proposing passing legislation that actually states that government is allowed to access people's personal health information without their consent.

[4:45 p.m.]

I do not support this bill for that reason. I don't think that anyone should have access to one's personal health information without their consent.

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

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I move to close third reading on Bill No. 118.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 118.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that the bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 120.

Bill No. 120 - Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister Responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

HON. BRIAN COMER: I move that Bill No. 120 be now read a third time and do pass.

Proposed amendments to the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act will enhance the protection of people who have a mental disorder or severe mental illness. We know through formal reviews and extensive consultation that the Act can and should be modernized.

Following extensive consultation, we are proposing amendments to legislation that will increase protection for patients, clarify language, and amend the structure of the review board. The amendments will give the review board greater discretion, including the ability to replace a substitute decision maker who is not acting in the best interest of the patient. We are also proposing the addition of a vice chair position on the review board. This will allow the board to continue its critical role and ensure that the matters continue to move ahead when a Chair is unavailable.

Additional changes will ensure that the patients and their legal representatives have access to their health file in a timely manner without the need to complete additional paperwork. This will increase efficiency and reduce the number of hearings adjourned due to delays in production of these files.

These amendments will protect the best interests and mental health needs of Nova Scotians. We have heard the concerns of those who presented at the Law Amendments Committee. I've also personally heard from stakeholders and understand their desire for an Act that will protect patients.

The information and feedback they provided have been taken into consideration to form additional amendments. One will clarify that the substitute decision maker does not have to follow the patient's prior instructions or wishes if they have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the patient's treatment decisions place them at risk. The other amendment will ensure that patients are informed about significant treatment decisions by the substitute decision maker or the treatment team.

With these changes, we are ensuring that patients continue to receive appropriate mental health treatments while also getting more timely access to legal representation and review board hearings. These changes are based on consultation and input from multiple stakeholders, including psychiatrists, physicians, people with lived experience and their families, patient rights advisory services, and the IPTA review board.

These individuals offer personal and professional consideration on the potential impacts of these legislative changes on patients, families, communities, and key service delivery partners. The changes are also based on capacity-related legislation in Nova Scotia and other provinces across the country on constitutional and human rights considerations, and on direct input I have received since tabling the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure those who have engaged in these changes, and all Nova Scotians, that the law doesn't end with the passing of this bill. Our intention has always been to engage in further consultation on implementation, including the development of regulations. These consultations will provide additional opportunity for stakeholders and others to shape how the Act is applied.

This is a good piece of legislation. The changes we are making will better protect the best interests and mental health needs of Nova Scotians. Without these improvements, we will continue to see unnecessary delays of hearings which most certainly will have a negative impact on those the Act serves to protect the most.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I'm pleading here for the minister to sit with those doctors. Even if this bill passes, you can make corrections.

Human beings can reach a point where they can't make that decision, and somebody else has to make it. We all can go through this. What really breaks my heart is the few constituents, parents, who have come to me, and they have struggled in making decisions for their kids.

My situation was one thing. I was an adult, and I had a hard time allowing somebody to tell me, you can't make a decision and your husband has to make it for you until I tell you when. That is a difficult thing to accept. That doctor knew what was right for me and knew what I needed. He saved my life. Many parents are doing the same, trying to help their kids.

Please listen. You have worked in those situations, and you know how difficult that is. If this legislation makes it more difficult for parents and for a husband to help their loved ones, that would be something that we will carry with us.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Evidently, we are deeply disappointed in the government's decision not to take a deep breath and take some additional time, a matter of a few months, to make sure that this bill is sound. I think that the minister must have a different definition of extensive consultation than myself, parents, legal scholars, and psychiatrists that I have heard from over the past couple of weeks. I hope that as the minister goes forward, in future consultations, the minister will have respect for stakeholders and share final products with them.

In our effort to recommit this bill, we did not hear from government that they are fully satisfied with this bill. In fact, I just heard again that the minister intends to do further amendments and more consultations, and assuring stakeholders that further changes are possible. We really have not heard the case for urgency as to why we have to do this now and why, in fact, the government can't present a bill they can fully stand behind and wait for the Fall. With that, I'll take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

HON. BRIAN COMER: I thank the member for Clayton Park West for sharing that story. I know it's not an easy thing to do. I really appreciate that. You do have my word that I will be working closely with practitioners and also people across the province as this goes forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to close third reading on Bill No. 120.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 120.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 123.

Bill No. 123 - Liquor Control Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 123 - an Act to Amend Chapter 260 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Liquor Control Act - be now read for a third time and do pass.

As I have mentioned before, the Liquor Control Act is shared between the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services and the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. The remarks I'm delivering today are on behalf of both myself and my colleague the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

Through these amendments to the Liquor Control Act, we are showing national leadership as it relates to breaking down internal trade barriers within our country. There are ongoing conversations at the national level about removing trade barriers on alcoholic beverages. As a province, we are signalling that Nova Scotia supports and is willing to lead a coordinated approach to allow direct consumer sales of alcohol.

With an agreement, Nova Scotia's alcoholic beverage industry will be able to ship their products directly to consumers outside Nova Scotia, and Nova Scotians will be able to purchase products directly from producers outside of our province as well.

Our vibrant beer, wine, and spirit sector wants to expand the market for their products, and with these amendments, Mr. Speaker, we are showing support for that goal, and are encouraging other provinces to join us in signalling their intent to reduce these internal trade barriers. These amendments will also position us well to be an early adopter of a national direct-to-consumer system.

We have also made an amendment which is the first step to permanently allow third party delivery of alcohol with food. Since May 2021, third party delivery services were temporarily allowed to deliver alcohol with food orders to give struggling businesses during the pandemic another option to earn revenue. The temporary measure was tied to the state of emergency and ended with it.

We would like to now make this a permanent option for our restaurant and third-party delivery industries. This will give them another opportunity to earn money and ensure small businesses that can't afford a dedicated delivery person also have the option to sell alcohol with food orders and are competitive with those that can. This will also give restaurants greater flexibility in managing their businesses, which is more important than ever as many rebuild after the last two years of the pandemic. We are taking the first step in this process, and the amendments we have introduced will give us the regulation-making authority to have this option permanently.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear that we are very well aware of the public safety implications of making alcohol more accessible. We take the health and the safety of Nova Scotians very seriously and will have strict safeguards in place when third party delivery of alcohol becomes legal.

We shall continue the rules introduced with the temporary allowance of third party delivery during the state of emergency. These include that alcohol will only be available for delivery between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The person delivering alcohol will be required to take special training, and they must be 19 years of age or older. Customers will continue to be limited to an alcohol purchase that is three times the value of the food they purchase or a single higher-value bottle of wine.

We're not stopping there. We will also increase the minimum fine for illegally providing liquor to \$3,000 and introduce a special licence specifically for third parties that want to deliver alcohol to ensure those who might break the rules are held accountable.

Again, this is only the first step, Mr. Speaker, to allowing the third party delivery of alcohol with food purchases. Regulations will need to be developed before this will be allowed.

With that, I conclude my remarks and look forward to any comments.

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

LISA LACHANCE: As we have said all along, we're really supportive of measures that find creative ways to support small businesses. While I was in a different sector as a small business owner during the pandemic, I certainly know that we are all looking for new and improved ways to connect with clients and consumers. One of the things we talked about through the pandemic is the increased accessibility of things. Things were more

accessible to folks, and I think about this as well not in a negative way, actually - in a positive way.

[5:00 p.m.]

We are supportive of this. Throughout this, we have definitely had some questions that I still feel haven't been answered. We do have a FOIPOP response here that I wanted to bring forward - just a couple of points - and reflect on the fact that we still have some outstanding questions.

One of our considerations for perhaps next time around - for the next round of amendments - would be to wait to enhance the commitment to link this with Economic Development, so if there's a way for the revenue from this not to go into the general NSLC revenue but actually to reinvest. That would be consistent with remarks from the Premier in 2020 and 2021, where the Premier advocated to give the money back to Nova Scotia bars and restaurants struggling to survive.

We have asked questions. I accept the government's commitment to the public health of Nova Scotians and to be acutely aware of the increased risks with this approach. We have asked for what feedback has been received from Dr. Strang, or if feedback has been received from Dr. Strang. In the FOIPOP I have before me, Dr. Strang's memo to the NSLC from December 4th is redacted, so we still don't quite know what Public Health has had to say about this proposal. I would encourage the government to increase their transparency and to share that.

One of the other issues we talked about is around labour and labour rights. A lot of times, food delivery services have a variety of ways in which they are organized and a variety of labour practices that may or may not be fair and may or may not result in the minimum wage being earned by those employed. It notes that on April 14th, the NSLC awarded the RFP for this work to MBW Courier Inc.

I'm wondering too - perhaps the minister can speak to how safeguards will be put in place around labour because we're moving outside of the NSLC. In the NSLC, folks are unionized . . . (Interruption) Yes, NSGEU. We're now moving this to a non-unionized workforce - so how are we going to make sure that folks are treated well?

It has also been a year. We would love to hear any reflection that folks have that the ministers have access to in terms of increased revenue and any issues that have arisen since this started in May 2021.

With that, I will take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I move to close debate on Bill No. 123.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 123.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 124.

Bill No. 124 - Public Trustee Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, I move that Bill No. 124, amendments to the Anatomy Act, the Public Trustee Act, and the Fatality Investigations Act, be now read a third time.

Not all of us are able to be surrounded by friends and loved ones and family at the end of our lives. Some people's circumstances are such that they do not have someone to be able to make and carry out their final wishes. The proposed amendments to the Anatomy Act, the Public Trustee Act, and the Fatality Investigations Act will give clear legislative authority to the Public Trustee of Nova Scotia to manage un-cremated human remains that are not claimed by next of kin.

With about 60 cases of unclaimed remains each year in Nova Scotia, I'm pleased that our government was able to simplify the process for the Public Trustee's office. Everyone deserves dignity and respect regardless of their circumstances, and these amendments will help to provide this. It is, without a doubt, the right thing to do.

With those remarks, I will look forward to the passage of this bill and to hearing comments from others in the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: We're happy to support the bill. It's essentially enshrining in legislation the policy change that happened in March 2020, giving the authority to the

Public Trustee. Before that, there were multiple departments that had to deal with these cases that were involved in unclaimed remains, and it will definitely help ensure that there will be less unclaimed remains. We're happy to support it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I also rise in support of this bill. This is important modernization of the legislation. It's common sense, and we are glad to see it pass through the House.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the House. I rise to close debate on Bill No. 124.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 124.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That went faster than I thought.

Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 126.

Bill No. 126 - Nova Scotia Wine Authority Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that Bill No. 126, the Nova Scotia Wine Authority Act, be now read a third time.

In Nova Scotia, we are very fortunate to have world-class wines produced from locally grown grapes here in our province. Our winemaking and -growing industry is taking great strides forward in its short history. Nova Scotia is being recognized not only across the country but globally as an exciting new wine region.

We recognize the success of this blossoming Nova Scotia industry. We have brought this bill forward to help Nova Scotia's winegrowing and -making industry advance to even greater levels of success by establishing a Nova Scotia Wine Authority. The Nova Scotia Wine Authority will represent an important new chapter for modern, competitive winegrowing and -making in our province by administering a quality wine standards program. This industry focuses on quality for consumers, and this voluntary program for makers of Nova Scotia wine made from locally-grown grapes will be based on standards of quality that have been developed by industry consultants with input from local wineries.

This wine authority will help our Nova Scotia industry move forward as similar authorities have done in other jurisdictions that have developed this type of program. I've mentioned here in this House the Vintners Quality Alliance program known as the VQA, in place in both Ontario and British Columbia. The Wine Authority in our province will be equivalent to the VQA model. Our winemaking and -growing industry is vibrant in Nova Scotia. That has changed so much in the past decade and we expect that it will continue to grow and develop. That's why a Wine Authority that is equivalent to the VQA model is so important.

It will work with the industry to help bring a modern, focused approach to meeting quality standards. By raising the quality standard level in this way, industry gains a competitive advantage in the market and strengthens its relationship with its consumers.

Members of our winemaking industry are very excited about what this legislation represents for Nova Scotia's winemaking and -growing sector. The industry has been advocating for this authority. This Act will be enabling legislation that will be supported by appropriate regulations. The establishment of a Wine Authority and quality standards is the next step for Nova Scotia's wine industry. We are pleased to be able to bring forward legislation that will help this exciting industry take that next step. With those few words, I will take my seat and welcome comments from members opposite.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

HON. KEITH IRVING: I'm pleased to rise on Bill No. 126. As the minister stated, the wine industry has been a tremendous success in Nova Scotia, particularly the region that I represent. It has created hundreds of rural jobs, brought young people back to the province and enhanced our tourism product. The industry has seen tremendous growth over the last number of years. In my constituency alone, from 2006 to 2022 the number of wineries in Kings South has gone from two to seven wineries. We have the Magic Winery Bus, which has also created a successful tourism product.

Entrepreneurs have made significant investments. Pete Lockett comes to mind - Hanspeter Stutz, Mike Lightfoot, John McLarty and Lisa Law, Carl Sparks, to name a few. The industry does have challenges - interprovincial trade barriers, the cost of labour, and the challenge of finding people to work in the vineyards, the marketing fee at the NSLC

and most recently the recent World Trade Organization ruling which will phase out the preferential markups for Nova Scotia wines.

[5:15 p.m.]

That is adding a considerable new challenge for the Nova Scotia wine industry. Because of our small scale and high production costs to remain competitive towards imports will be challenging. Government must look for trade-compliant ways to support the industry through this transition.

This bill, which we fully support, is an important step to support that industry. Minister Keith Colwell worked hard over the past number of years to find ways to support the industry and the result of that work is to create a structure to ensure the highest standards of quality.

This is the same way that Minister Colwell pushed the lobster industry to increase its quality from the boat to the sales. The importance of quality is that it allows better pricing power. If we do not strive for quality, then we run the risk of one bad product creating a narrative that Nova Scotia wine is bad and hurting the whole industry. This Act will support the industry and create the Wine Authority, whose job is to set the quality standards and to enforce those standards. This is important to continue to improve the industry and to keep quality at the forefront of industry.

With respect to regulations coming up, I do ask the minister, in those regulations, to consider having a significant number, if not a majority, of industry on the Wine Authority Board. That was the one comment I heard from one of the winemakers. I want to thank former Minister Colwell, the Nova Scotia Wine Development Board, and the present minister and his staff for all the work that has gone into bringing this legislation forward.

Finally, I just also want to say a special thank you to three leaders in the industry from Kings South who worked on this bill: Gerry McConnell, Mike Lightfoot, and Bruce Ewert.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Our caucus is pleased to support this initiative to provide further support in our rural parts of Nova Scotia and in the wine industry. I think it's pretty easy to see already the positive impact that wineries, as well as other initiatives such as craft breweries, have brought to regions and towns across the province, though largely concentrated in the Annapolis Valley.

At second reading, I think I did ask some questions around implementation, so I know that the intent is for this program to be ultimately self-sustaining and self-funded, but

it's not clear to me how it will be kicked off and with what seed funding, and where it will sit. I assume that its governance will be sorted out in regulations and I'm looking forward to hearing more about its implementation over the coming years.

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

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. GREG MORROW: Just a couple of comments in reply to the honourable member for Kings South. The Emerging Wine Regions Policy, the replacement for that - those discussions continue with industry, and we'll continue with those, and consultation certainly will. We've made that commitment to industry, so we look forward to their help in developing these regulations as we move forward.

To the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, \$1.65 million was set aside or approved by the previous government to start up and implement this program over five years. I'd echo the comments from the member for Kings South to thank the previous minister, Keith Colwell, for starting this. This was very much asked for by the industry and continues to be, so I appreciate him starting this and I'm happy to continue to bring it forward.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move to close debate on Bill No. 126.

THE CHAIR: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 126.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

Before I recognize the honourable Government House Leader, we'll go into order for about 10 minutes. The computers have to be rebooted, so we'll just have to take a recess. So don't go far, is what I'm being told.

[5:18 p.m. The House recessed.]

[5:27 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 129.

Bill No. 129 - Motor Carrier Act (amended)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 129 be read a third time and do pass.

I want to thank the members opposite for their comments during second reading. As I previously had stated, these amendments will give government more flexibility to respond to the industry's ever-changing needs. They allow government to waive motor carrier fees in challenging times, like during the pandemic, and adopt federal changes to the motor carrier sector.

As I stated previously, the government waived the annual motor carrier fee and principal in 2020 and 2021. However, it does require a change to the Motor Carrier Act for implementation. The amendments will enable the legislative authority to waive fees if needed. The amendments will make it easier for the government to change regulations by referencing other Acts, regulations, or other documents.

Mr. Speaker, this will help ensure consistency and accuracy in the motor carrier industry across jurisdictions, such as with electronic logging devices that are required across the country. The devices have become the standard in logging data across the United States and Canada for interprovincial and cross-border trucking.

Motor carrier employees and employers alike are in favour of using them. They have been asking for mandatory electronic logging devices. These devices have also shown to increase compliance with federal laws.

After the challenging few years due to COVID-19, the motor carrier industry would welcome these changes. With those brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and look forward to hearing from my colleagues across the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her comments. I will be brief, I promise.

As I think I said on second reading - although it's hard to recall - we support these common sense amendments, particularly around electronic logging devices. This is a really important safety measure for the motor carrier trucking industry, safety efficiency of interprovincial and cross-border national movement. That's a really positive step that makes things safer and more efficient.

Then, on the waiving of fees and so on: As we know, bus companies have been among the hardest hit over the last two years. We are getting close to the end of April here, so soon we're going to start seeing tourists arrive in greater numbers. We might see cruise ships soon. I've worked in that tourism industry on the waterfront for many years and have seen thousands of tourists come in in cruise ships, April through to October. It's a wonderful thing, so we want to see all those buses full, people being here and spending lots of money over the next six months or so.

[5:30 p.m.]

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and appreciate the bill and the amendments put forward.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I also want to rise just briefly in support of the bill. It makes sense and I just wanted to take this time to wish the bus companies a very prosperous tourism season.

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

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues across the aisle. I thank the member for Bedford South for his comments and the member for Dartmouth North for the comments provided in second and third reading.

With those few words, I rise to close third reading on Bill No. 129, the Motor Carrier Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 129.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that the bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 131.

Bill No. 131 - Powers of Attorney Act (amended).

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

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 131 be now read a third time. To begin, I want to take an opportunity to thank the members opposite for their comments during second reading of this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in bringing forward this bill, the government is intending to improve existing legislation that enables Nova Scotians to plan ahead and choose someone they trust to make decisions for them about their property and finances in the event that they lose the capacity to make those decisions for themselves. These changes aim to modernize the legislation and add new safeguards to help prevent and address financial abuse to those who create powers of attorney.

This government is concerned with access to justice for all Nova Scotians. We will continue to look at further potential changes to the Powers of Attorney Act and will engage with stakeholders about this legislation in the next phase of the work.

Mr. Speaker, amending this Act to clarify the rights and responsibilities of all parties to this kind of legal document and ensure all parties understand the rights and responsibilities improves the level of protection available to the persons when they are first thinking about creating a power of attorney, when it is in effect, and when the problems may arise.

The proposed amendments are in alignment with the government's mandate to take decisive action to solve problems for people by giving them hope for health, dignity for seniors, and a new opportunity to age well.

With those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, we are supporting this step forward on these amendments to the Powers of Attorney Act in Bill No. 131, but there are concerns raised by advocates about not going far enough and looking at some other jurisdictions being further ahead in Nova Scotia. That's a concern: that we'd like to see more consultation.

I heard the minister's words that this is, I guess, a beginning of a consultation. That they're going to continue to work with groups. I hope they are going to be reaching out to Dal Legal Aid especially, because we did have representation at the Law Amendments Committee from Claire McNeil. I know the minister would have a copy so I'm not going to go through all the concerns she raised. Certainly I think there's some effort on the government's behalf to put more safeguards in place for people, but there still is a long way to go to fulfill the obligations that we have to ensure that we are protecting people with the supports that they need, people with different abilities.

With that, we'll support this. We look forward to more changes and some more fulsome, comprehensive consultation with advocates.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to this bill. I think all members would agree that more clarity around the responsibilities for powers of attorney are important. Abuse of that power is real, and this does take some steps to address it, and we're glad to see that.

However, we were told that the government is making these changes on the way to a more comprehensive set of amendments, and those amendments stem, in our understanding, from recommendations from a 2015 Law Commission report. That report came forward seven years ago in the Liberals' first mandate, and we're still really only picking away at the edges of what that report requests.

There's a lot more information on the table than is being acted on in this bill. If I step back a little bit, I find the legislation that's coming forward this session a bit strange, because there are some pieces that have a whole host of things that they're changing, we would say prematurely, but there's some rush to get it out the door. Then there are pieces of legislation like this that make some good changes but really don't go far enough in everyone's opinion - but there's a reluctance to act. I'm not sure why, but I do want to point to a couple of things.

In February, there were new recommendations from the Statutory Review of the Adult Capacity and Decision-making Act. I'll table that. The first of those reads, "Nova Scotia's capacity laws should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect modern concepts of capacity and a commitment to greater support for persons with cognitive disabilities to enable their equal right to decision-making autonomy as members of the community to the greatest extent possible."

We debated this at length, in fact, when the original Adult Capacity and Decision-making Act came in. We flagged that, we knew it was an issue, it continues to be an issue, and yet, where that could be dealt with in this piece of legislation, it isn't.

I will also point to the letter that Claire McNeil from Dalhousie Legal Aid wrote in her submission to Law Amendments Committee, which I'll table, although I'm sure everyone has it, around the government's failure to take those very rights into consideration when amending this bill. She found that, in her words, "this bill amounts to discrimination by exclusion."

What she said is that these amendments are regressive in the sense that they fail to fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities to meaningful access to supports and services to make their own decisions.

She called this bill a piecemeal approach to the issue of capacity and decision-making - again, a conversation we had years ago. This is not new information. The government has received these criticisms, understands the challenge, and has been informed of it for years, well before this government came in - but certainly when this government came in, would have been briefed on these issues, and find it at odds with the repeated calls for a comprehensive legislative review in order to address the discriminatory impacts of the current legislative framework.

Some of the amendments here are good, but, again, I think - especially today - we're dealing with a number of pieces of legislation that impact very vulnerable people. It feels like the people who work most directly with that legislation and who are in the best position to comment on it are saying that we're either not getting it right or we're not going far enough. In this case, I think that the recommendation is that we're not going far enough.

While I think the changes in the bill are good, what's not in the bill, what doesn't change in the bill is very challenging. I hope that the minister and the government were listening to Ms. McNeil's suggestions, including measures that provide persons with disabilities meaningful access to supports, and for consultation with a diverse group of stakeholders that will examine the option for making that reality, and that those changes will come as soon as possible.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I move to close third reading on Bill No. 131.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 131.

All those in favour? Contrary minded?

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 134.

Bill No. 134 - Motor Vehicle Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Public Works.

KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 134 now be read a third time and do pass.

I am pleased to offer some final remarks on the amendments of the Motor Vehicle Act. As I previously stated, these amendments support and encourage the safe use of alternate transportation options for Nova Scotians, specifically electric kick scooters, or e-scooters. We have seen the use of e-scooters increase in recent years, and these amendments will ensure we have rules to keep users safe.

E-scooters are a low-cost, energy-efficient, and convenient option for getting around our communities. The amendments are permissive in nature, allowing Nova Scotia municipalities to determine if and where e-scooters can be used on municipal roads or sidewalks. The legalisation also provides safety requirements and operation restrictions for users.

The following proposed amendments apply for all users: Minimum age of 14 to operate; maximum speed of 32 kilometres per hour; rider cannot use a cellphone while operating an e-scooter; riders required to wear a helmet; no passengers; no towing; and a rider cannot operate an e-scooter between half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise.

These rules are for the safety of e-scooter users and others using the roads and sidewalks. As I said earlier, the amendments are permissive and will allow municipalities to create by-laws related to where and when scooters can be operated in their community. It also gives municipalities the authority to define offences and penalties as well as enforce the by-law. Municipalities can make changes and be flexible in responding to their residents.

With the growing interest in e-scooters, we recognize the need to have rules in place for their safe use. That is why we brought forward these amendments now rather than wait until the Traffic Safety Act comes into effect. With those few remarks, I will take my seat and look forward to hearing from my colleagues across the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her comments. Again, I'm broadly supportive of the bill here. It's encouraging. I know the minister's department's name has been changed back to Public Works, but it's good to see active transit options still being considered and prioritized within the department and within the legislation for which it is responsible.

As the minister mentioned, safety is of course a key concern at all times when we're dealing with roads and transportation, so I think there are appropriate safety measures in place here for e-scooters. Again, I think it's useful to have the authority to rest with

municipal units to create by-laws and rules that might make sense for Wolfville, might not make sense for Sydney versus Halifax. I know HRM is a prime mover behind this. I think they'll be encouraged by this as well.

[5:45 p.m.]

Then again, just in slightly broader terms - I mentioned this in Estimates earlier today - it's exciting to see the department moving beyond a strict focus on just roads and highways per se, and thinking about all kinds of different transit means. I think we'll see that going forward through the Joint Regional Transportation Authority, which we're all interested in, and to see the various modes of getting around that are critical for our province moving forward. With those few words I will take my place.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I also will just offer a few words. I echo my colleague from Bedford South, who is excited about the department looking at alternate transportation, active transportation. I think it's a really good sign and a really good direction to be going in, obviously.

I guess I would just reiterate my comments based directly on the minister's comments herself. She mentioned the importance of safety for e-scooter users. I would say that exact same thing goes for cyclists and other vulnerable road users. Instead of waiting for the Traffic Safety Act to come into effect in three years, why do we not make those amendments so that cyclists can also be safe on our roads?

It is a matter of safety. I know the minister heard me today in Estimates, and I hope that she will go back and take a look at the options that might be available for keeping cyclists safe as well.

I had another point, Mr. Speaker, but I didn't write it down. I guess I just want to say thank you. That's it.

THE SPEAKER: Not remembering the other point sounds like something I would do, not somebody as young as you. (Laughter)

If I recognize the minister, it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Again, thank you to my colleagues across the aisle for the comments. I've heard you loud and clear in second and third reading.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to close third reading on Bill No. 134.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 134.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that the bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 137.

Bill No. 137 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended).

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

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 137 be now read for a third time.

Today I'd like to offer some clarity on the seven things that this bill does to improve and streamline the development approval process. First of all, this amendment removes the requirement that HRM post all public notices of proposed bylaw amendments and changes to the municipal planning strategy in a newspaper. The requirement was at least once a week for two weeks. Instead, HRM can now post these notices on their website for seven days.

Mr. Speaker, publishing notices in a newspaper for two weeks can cause delays of many months. If the council decides to make amendments to a proposed bylaw after a public hearing - and it is absolutely council's right to do so - HRM must republish the amendments again, once a week for two weeks. This cycle can occur multiple times, and if that happens it can also delay the development approval process.

This change will allow HRM to change planning documents such as the municipal planning strategy and land-use bylaws within a 30-day time frame. It recognizes how most citizens get their information in today's world, and HRM can still choose to publish notice in a newspaper if it decides that is necessary.

The second change in these amendments will allow digital submission of planning documents and land-use bylaws. Right now, the Charter requires that certified paper copies be filed with my department for review. I'm sure we're all aware that these can be long, bulky documents that must be printed - multiple copies - and sent by mail or courier. This takes time. Amendments to a planning strategy must be submitted to the Province for our review. Until that process is complete, HRM cannot sign off on development agreements

and permits can't be issued. Over time, a few delays of a few days can add up. This change makes sense. It modernizes and streamlines how HRM does business with us.

These amendments also shorten the timeline for provincial review of submitted planning documents. Right now, the provincial director of planning has 30 days to notify HRM when their planning documents must be approved by me, the minister. We've cut that time in half to 15 days. If a ministerial review is required, we've also cut that timeline in half from 60 days to 30 days. Together, these changes cut our own process down from 90 days to 45 days, and will streamline the development approval process for HRM.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, is a temporary three-year stay on the ability of HRM Council to refer planning documents to community councils if they also require the consideration and approval of HRM Council. These changes will also temporarily stay community councils' ability to refer planning decisions to advisory committees. This change is time-limited to three years only. HRM has a strong and vigorous consultation process for proposed developments. This will continue under these amendments. Whether it is Council or Community Council making a decision, that body will still hold public consultations on developments. This change will clarify that the body charged with making a decision must actually make the decision.

The fifth change refers to the timing of fees that HRM charges for development. Right now, HRM requires bonus zoning and fees for services like Halifax Water to be paid when the development permit is issued at the beginning of the process. These can be substantial fees and they are charged long before a development is ready for occupancy. This can cause cash flow issues for both for-profit and not-for-profit developers, which can make it harder to get housing built. This change will allow HRM to put a lien on a property when the development permit is issued. This ensures they have security for payment but allows that payment to be made later, when properties are ready for occupancy.

The sixth change is an improved development agreement authority for HRM. The municipality will now be able to require off-site improvements or cash in lieu for some developments, such as transportation upgrades, park improvements, or undergrounding of power. Right now, HRM can only require that the development site itself, which may not be practical or be the area most in need of improvement.

Other changes in this section allow the CAO to discharge a development agreement if zoning is in place. A development officer could approve non-substantive amendments if the development agreement itself has already been approved by council. These changes would see the development agreement become effective when it is signed by the municipality and the property owner rather than waiting for up to five days to be filed with the Land Registry. This will allow the municipality to issue permits more quickly.

The last amendment will see a streamlined development agreement approval process. Currently, if the municipal planning strategy or land use bylaw has to be amended

in order to allow development to take place, there must be two separate votes of HRM Council. One vote is required to amend the municipal planning strategy, or land use bylaw, then a second vote on the development agreement. This amendment would allow Council to hold one public hearing on the proposed development agreement and provisionally approve the development agreement, if it chooses, when the municipal planning strategy is changed.

There will still be a public hearing here, a vote of Council and there will still be a 14-day appeal period. We believe this will save about a month from the planning development approval process.

I believe these amendments will streamline processes, both HRM's and our own, and make the development approval process faster while still allowing the public to have its say.

I know that some of my colleagues have expressed concerns about this bill. I hope today's brief explanation of these changes has helped with some of those concerns.

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

LORELEI NICOLL: Thank you, minister, for all that information. That's great to hear. Since this is third reading, there's not much more to add. It is a streamlined process and I know from being on Council that much of the approvals required by the province did slow a lot of the development applications.

I want to say I sat at the Law Amendments Committee when discussing this bill and I got to hear from community members, and I heard from HRM councillors, the CAO, and the mayor himself. At that time, he did say he still didn't see the need for the task force on housing.

Also during Law Amendments Committee, I asked in reality how much time skipping over some of these initial provincial legal approvals would really provide in terms of saving time or speeding up the development application process. The CAO responded that in some cases these steps would speed it up by either a couple of weeks or a couple of months. The minister also said that here tonight, so I'm glad to streamline but I look forward to a time when this government will truly look to find ways to respond urgently to the housing crisis in this province.

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

KENDRA COOMBES: I too want to thank the minister for providing more details on this bill along with the streamlined process. But I still do want to register the concerns that I have that this bill and the bill from last Fall still don't seem to really deal with the housing crisis that we are in.

Yes, it's great that things can be streamlined, but as my colleague across from me said, it's only going to be shortened by a few weeks, maybe a month or two. We are still in a housing crisis. There are too many people who are struggling to find affordable, accessible homes across Nova Scotia. It is important for the government to take real action on this.

Unfortunately, the action here does not solve the problem. This bill does not solve our problem for housing. It streamlines, it cuts down maybe a really small timeline, but it doesn't really solve the problem that we're trying to solve here.

I know HRM has expressed immense concerns for the housing crisis in the HRM. The plan, as the minister had said prior, the 22,000 new homes, that does not guarantee affordable housing. Nor have we received a government definition of affordable housing. Even this bill doesn't really address the crisis that we're in of affordable housing.

However, we did hear the minister reference that in his estimation, \$1,700 a month was affordable, and I still don't know anyone who can afford that.

I will say this: Yes, streamlining can be a good thing if done right, if the proper scrutinies are in place, if the public consultation is done and is done well and is done with real intent to actually get the public's opinion and to listen. But, like I said, it only cuts things down a little bit and it really does not help solve the actual housing crisis that we are in. By saying that, I mean the affordable housing crisis. I thank the minister and with that, I'll take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SUZY HANSEN: We've been through this for other reasons before, so I am going to keep it as short as I possibly can but to the point. I will say that I appreciate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the clarity because amongst the many questions that were asked through Estimates, this is probably the clearest point that I've gotten, and I appreciate that.

What I heard from the clarity that you mentioned on the seven points is that - this is what I heard - is community's voices are lost because of paper. And streamlining is great, absolutely, that's what we want, we want to make sure that we get more supply because that's needed. We understand that. But not at the loss of voices in community and council voices.

I want to say a few other pieces for us to keep in mind moving forward with this particular bill. We did hear a number of voices across the table and not just from city councillors but as well from environmentalists who are worried about the process being so quick that the assessments wouldn't be properly done. The Minister of Environment and

Climate Change had spoken that that would be the process that happens; they will make sure that it gets done properly. We will be hopeful that will be happening at the same time.

[6:00 p.m.]

I also want to point out that with this particular bill coming forward, the councillors spoke of how their voices were lost as well and how there was a “father knows best” approach in how decisions were made, and it seemed like it wasn’t a democratic approach.

I do want to say that we need to have many layers in order for us to approach this housing crisis and hoping that this will be one that will be something that might make a difference. We do welcome the government action to address this housing crisis, 100 per cent. But in the way in which this government is moving very quickly without a lot of consultation is quite troubling for me, because I am a community person and engagement is key. That was all that I needed to say. I just wanted to make sure you knew.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I will just add a couple of comments here to the HRM Charter amendment. Really, I don’t have any critical feedback on the bill at all, and my only real comments are around the fact that it’s only the HRM Charter and that it is not the MGA as well, which historically we always saw - usually they mirrored each other - MGA and HRM amendments were made at the same time.

Specifically, Clause 1 is just an example, where it replaces the requirement to advertise the adoption of planning documents in a newspaper with the requirement to advertise on the Halifax Regional Municipality’s website. It was probably about three years ago I had brought this concern to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing because a lot of rural communities in Nova Scotia no longer have rural newspapers, and so it is interesting. HRM is one of the only places that still has a daily paper, so the fact that the government saw a need to change it here, I would just implore you to see that there is even a greater need in the rural communities that no longer even have weekly papers. So just encourage the minister and his department to consider the other 48 municipalities in the province.

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

The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to thank my colleagues for their comments and I move that this conclude third reading of Bill No. 137.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 137.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 138.

Bill No. 138 - An Act to Permit Virtual Business Meetings.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: I move that Bill No. 138, An Act to Permit Virtual Business Meetings, be now read for a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation I have introduced will give provincially regulated companies, co-operatives, societies, and condominium corporations the option to continue to meet virtually or with a mix of in-person and virtual participants. It will do this by amending the Companies Act, the Co-operative Associations Act, the Societies Act, and the Condominium Act. The pandemic has made us rethink the way we do business. It caused us to pivot and find new ways to continue doing the necessary functions we need to keep doing essential business.

Since April 2020, provincially regulated entities were allowed to hold virtual and hybrid meetings while the state of emergency was in place to allow important business to continue while protecting the health and the safety of Nova Scotians. They did this effectively and responsibly and have called on government to make it a permanent option. I am pleased to respond to them with this bill, as we have heard what a big difference this can make for organizations.

We have heard from Sport Nova Scotia. We received their support for this bill and they spoke of the positive impact it will have for non-profits. It will not only give them more flexibility, but it will allow them to engage more with their membership in their meetings and reduce travel time and financial costs for volunteers. We also heard from the Co-operative Housing Federation that was also supportive of this bill and excited for the impact it will have on their organization.

This legislation will impact many Nova Scotians in a positive way. It will give the option to meet virtually to over 55,000 provincially regulated companies, co-operatives, societies, and condominium corporations.

I'm also very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to say that the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness estimates that these changes will have a major savings for businesses. They estimate that about \$4 million will be saved annually. It will also save volunteers and others involved in non-profits 460,000 hours in time that would have previously been required for travel.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks and look forward to any comments from the members opposite.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Virtual meetings are great. They connect people. We like this.

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

HON. BEN JESSOME: I'm proud to be part of an institution that can enshrine meeting in suit jackets and jogging shorts. Thank you to the minister for introducing this. In all seriousness, though, it is a great step. It's an opportunity for 55,000 institutions and organizations throughout the province to be more efficient and create, at times, a safer space to meet.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the overwhelming level of support from the members opposite. It's greatly appreciated. Some of the best speeches I've heard all sitting were made on this bill tonight. (Laughter) With that, I close third reading of Bill No. 138.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 138.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 147.

Bill No. 147 - Public Utilities Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 147, amendments to the Public Utilities Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

Mr. Speaker, affordability is an issue for far too many Nova Scotians. This is something we continuously heard for the last several months. That's why we're making some amendments to the Public Utilities Act today. Amendments that we've introduced with this legislation focus on strengthening performance standards for Nova Scotia Power.

They will increase both the number and scope of standards that they will be required to meet. The additional performance standards will keep Nova Scotia Power accountable for things that ratepayers care about the most: reliability, outage response times, power quality, environmental performance, transparency - and these are just a few.

These amendments will ensure that ratepayers have reliable, affordable power, ensure that Nova Scotia Power is accountable to the customer, and ensure that we reach our green energy goals. But we're not doing this alone, Mr. Speaker. Ratepayers get a voice as well. We're creating a partnership table with Nova Scotians and industry stakeholders.

Affordability has also been an issue for our farmers' markets for far too long, Mr. Speaker. We're helping them by keeping the lights on and by giving them domestic power rates to lower their electricity bills. This is a relatively simple step that we can take to support them.

I'm thankful for my colleagues in the House who brought this to my attention earlier this year and late last year - especially to the Minister of Agriculture for bringing this to my attention late last Fall, when it was brought to him by the chair of the Farmers' Market Group and put this on the radar to get this rectified right away.

Mr. Speaker, our efforts will not end with this legislation and I look forward to hearing the comments from colleagues opposite.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

CARMAN KERR: I'm happy to learn that the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables has taken these steps to make Nova Scotia Power more accountable and to ensure their performance standards are met and offer Nova Scotians a more reliable service. While in the middle of a 10 per cent rate increase request, it's more important now than ever to ensure that ratepayers are receiving the best customer service and reliability that they can receive.

We support the minister and the department as they align Nova Scotia Power profits to their performance. We support the farmers' markets paying their domestic electricity rate. We support an expert advisory round table being introduced to keep Nova Scotia Power accountable to its ratepayers.

Things we would have hoped would have been supported and were voted down: some strengthening of the language used in the initial amendments and the increase in penalties beyond the \$1 million mark. As we all can imagine, it's too low to really effect change and better performance. I did appreciate my colleague from the NDP suggesting a consumer advocate. I thought that was a solid suggestion, but unfortunately, these weren't supported. They were voted down.

I do hope the minister and his department have listened to these ideas and will consider them in future.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'm happy to rise and speak to this bill one last time. We will be supporting this bill.

We're pleased to see, as has now been spoken about by the minister and by my colleague, the amendment to include the Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia in the group of community and grassroots organizations that are not charged commercial rates.

I think it's important to note on that point that when we spoke with that organization, its executive director, Justin Cantafio, made a very compelling plea which we echoed here in the House: to follow up this amendment with emergency support for markets that are on the brink of closure.

I urge the minister to take this under advisement and other ministers who would have a hand in this file. It sounds like we are in agreement in this House on the importance of local food and growing our local food supply, and farmers' markets are the current hub for that. I would urge the government to do everything they can to continue that support, but we're very glad to see that move.

Not surprisingly, our support is tinged with a fair amount of disappointment that none of the amendments that we put forward - all of which I think were quite common sense - were accepted.

We suggested an amendment that would have strengthened the UARB's mandate to align it with EGCCRA. To us, that would have been a common sense friendly amendment. The government has made much of passing the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act; they are proud of it, rightly. We supported it. We are

perplexed that the minister wouldn't act to make the mandate of the UARB and their regulatory system more closely aligned with that Act.

[6:15 p.m.]

They also voted down an amendment to require the creation of a sustainability advocate. We have a consumer advocate. There are some in this House who have said that what young people wake up in the night about is the debt that future generations may be facing. I would suggest that there are more young people who wake up in the middle of the night wondering if they're going to have a world to live in that looks anything like the one that their parents did.

I think as important as thinking about consumers - and we do have a consumer advocate, which is good - we don't have a sustainability advocate. We don't have someone there making sure that our energy system is responsible to future generations. We think that's very important.

We also put forward an amendment that would have removed the \$1 million per year cap on penalties for Nova Scotia Power when they fail performance standards. We've discussed at length in this House just how profitable Nova Scotia Power and Emera are, and yet there is a \$1 million cap on the contravention of any penalties. You can put as many penalties or performance indicators as you want, but if the company isn't concerned about breaching them based on a financial penalty, it doesn't really matter.

In fact, as I tabled earlier in this House, the Premier himself argued when he was in Opposition that this million-dollar cap would essentially mean that the bill was toothless. We think there was an opportunity to change that here, to show that the minister meant business, so to speak, with these new performance indicators, but that opportunity was missed.

Last, we put forward an amendment that would have removed the clause in the legislation that prevents Nova Scotia Power from creating a program to assist low-income Nova Scotians who struggle to pay their power bills.

I want to pause on this for a moment because it's really important. This was one of two bills that was introduced under the headline of a response to the general rate application from Nova Scotia Power helping to deal with rates. This amendment would have done that. Without this amendment, this bill does not do that. It does not do anything to impact the rates that Nova Scotians pay and it especially doesn't do anything to remove the barrier, which has been upheld by the courts, that prevents the UARB in fact from addressing the needs of low-income energy users, which is any low-income person because you can't avoid using energy here in Nova Scotia or in most other places.

We've failed to make this change. Our amendment did not require this change. It didn't require any specific change at all. All it did, and we had some very compelling presentations about this at Law Amendments Committee, was to remove the barrier to creating this kind of a program. We respect the independence and the expertise of the UARB. We also recognize that in this House, in this province, our leverage over our energy rates is through the way in which the UARB is regulated. This, in particular - Section 67 of this Act - prevents the UARB from addressing the disproportionate burden of energy poverty on low-income Nova Scotians.

We are very disappointed that this was not passed. It would have been a very significant step forward. It would have cost the government nothing. I think this is a really important point. There are a lot of times that a government won't want to take legislation because there are unintended consequences, there are costs. We recognize that. There's Finance and Treasury Board, there's a budgeting process, of course. This doesn't fall into that category. This is a regulatory change. This just says that we are going to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak, and we are going to actually address the needs of Nova Scotians. We're going to actually address the rates. We're going to actually address energy poverty. The government missed an opportunity to do that here.

As I said before, we welcome the move to expand and improve performance standards, but it's actually unclear what impact much of the changed wording in this bill would have, so our amendment to have a sustainability advocate was to put some teeth in the idea that actually this performance standard would be met, that there would be some expertise, some advocacy, to help the UARB to meet that new performance standard.

Our amendment to Section 67 about low-income energy users - it says the word "low-income" in the new performance standards, but we already know that the UARB is unable to address their needs, so I'm not really sure what that language actually means.

This Act does nothing for Nova Scotians facing an increase of 10 per cent on their energy bills in just over two years. The government could have at the very least, with these amendments, removed the cap on penalties for Nova Scotia Power. It would have sent a signal to Nova Scotia Power that if they don't deliver on their current performance standards - and I don't need to reiterate to anyone in this Chamber the number of days that there are unplanned outages in this province because it is every day, Mr. Speaker. We don't have the stats for this year but the last time we had statistics, when the CBC ran a story, which has been tabled previously, it was every single day. It was yesterday we heard about unplanned outages, the day before, but clearly the performance standards we have now are not working.

In conclusion I will reiterate that while I support expanding and improving performance standards, we feel that this approach is insufficient. We've entered a new era of energy systems, and our old regulatory model is not working. I will continue to argue and advocate that we need a more robust form of performance-based regulation, one that

ties Nova Scotia Power's profits to its performance on the goals that we set, goals on decarbonization, reducing power bills, increasing energy efficiency, and expanding community-generated power. We need an energy utility that works for us.

I will support this bill knowing that the conversations at the advisory table and in the public will very likely take us in that direction, but in the meantime, I urge the government to do more.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I wanted to stand up and talk about this particular bill for a few minutes because I think there are a lot of good things in this bill, but not too long ago, I would say at the beginning of this House session, Nova Scotians were hit with news from Emera/Nova Scotia Power of huge rate increases, the potential crippling of the solar industry, and there are a few other things.

Right now my mind is a little foggy. I'm tired from a couple of long sittings, but the truth is there are a lot of things that Nova Scotia Power was asking for, and this bill and the other bill were in reaction to the request from Nova Scotia Power. In fact, what I remember is the Premier of Nova Scotia standing in this Chamber and also doing interviews saying that we'll see, we're going to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia, and you'll see. These aren't words - we're going to do actions, and you'll see. They don't have to worry about that 10 per cent increase because he's here.

In fact, in Question Period, the honourable member for Dartmouth South, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Leader of the NDP did ask questions about power rates, and if I recall correctly, the Premier said there is legislation coming this session that will protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. The truth is, nothing in this bill protects Nova Scotians from the 10 per cent power increase that they're going to get. Nothing.

They could have done something in this bill. What they said was, we're going to intervene, but the truth is, so is the New Democratic Party. So is the Liberal Party. So is a whole host of experts. They're going to go to the UARB and intervene on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia. I'm going to tell you something. I've said it in this House before. It doesn't matter that the minister or the Premier will intervene on behalf. Their word carries no more weight than the Leader of the NDP, the Leader of the Official Opposition, or anyone else who wants to intervene at the UARB.

The UARB will make a decision based on the information that is given. There will be information from both sides. There's a history here in Nova Scotia on how these things go. N.S. Power asks for 15 per cent, they get 12. Nova Scotians are going to get some of the largest power rate increases over the next few years. While I applaud the minister - I've said it before, I've stood in my place and I've publicly stated that I think the minister has

done a fantastic job. I have a ton of respect for the minister, but this bill just doesn't go far enough to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. None of the members on the government side can say that.

If they believe that this bill is going to stop power rates, then the day of the UARB hearing, when the decision is made, I want each and every one of you to take to social media and respond on how those ratepayers were protected. The government has introduced two separate bills around power and infrastructure in this province. None of them addresses the power rate.

I know they're going to say there's more work to come, because that seems to be a common theme in this session - that a bill is introduced, the Opposition, which is our job, we bring forward amendments from the public, and the opposition will say, well, there's going to be more work done. We'll go into the regulations, or we'll do it at a later date. It's no different than what the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board said on the Financial Measures (2022) Act with the impact on the military. He said, you know what? We're not going to burden military members with this tax, but the truth is, those are just words because the other night they voted against an amendment to prevent that from happening.

I know on this side of the floor, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party both put forward amendments to this bill that protect ratepayers from this increase that we know is coming. We talk about power poverty, we've been through this already, the number of people in Nova Scotia who are either living in poverty or on the edge, working-class and middle-class individuals. Power poverty does not just impact people who make the least amount of money.

Power poverty impacts everybody. The member for Dartmouth South has said - and it's something that she had mentioned during this session that really clicked in my brain - we need to stop talking about rates and start talking about power bills. We're not talking about power bills in this session, we're talking about rates.

Every single MLA in this Legislature has people they represent right now who are struggling to pay their power bill, or can't pay their power bill, and as we all know, we're about a month away from power being shut off. It's cut-off season, it's coming. Every single person across and on this side represents people who are struggling with power bills. So for the life of me, when we get into a topic that's so impactful and meaningful to Nova Scotians, I don't know why we just don't do it correctly. We've put those safeguards in place.

When it comes to power rates and power bills, this 8 to 9 to 10 per cent increase - which they're going to get, no doubt, they're going to get it, and everybody knows this and that's the unfortunate part about it. There are even bigger power rates coming down the pipeline. People are going to look back three to four years from now and they're going to say, I wish I had the power rates of 2022.

I've had this discussion with the minister, and I've had this discussion with former ministers: We are pushing from a federal level and provincial level right across this province for the electrification of our vehicles and the impact that will have on our power grid. Right now our grid does not have the capability for 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 per cent of our vehicles to be electrified.

If you want to see what happens when your grid doesn't have the capacity, you need to look at California, which has roaming blackouts, whose grid is over capacity. What did they do? They doubled and tripled and quadrupled power rates at nighttime, the most common time that people are charging their electric vehicles, to discourage them from using so much power at night.

I don't know if the government knows the true cost of upgrading the power system, but I suspect it's going to be in the billions of dollars. If we know Nova Scotia Power, and we know Emera, we know that they're not going to pay that. We know that when they are spending hundreds of millions and billions of dollars on infrastructure, they are going to download it on the backs of Nova Scotians.

[6:30 p.m.]

Again, when we make legislation, we can't just make it for the now. We have to make it for the future. If we want a greener future, if we want a future where we get off carbon, we have to figure out the now and the future. The now in this bill today would be to protect power ratepayers from excessive and large power rates that are being put forward by the UARB and will continue to be put forward. I know people may not be - it's late at night - not late at night. It's 6:30. I mean, usually I've already had supper two and a half hours ago, when I'm home. At 6:30, I'm usually sitting down with the kids and we're watching a little bit of Netflix.

The truth is - I know it's late at night. I know it's been a long sitting. I know people want to get out of here. But you know what? The power is on. The heat is on in this building. There are a lot of people in Nova Scotia right now who don't have the power on, who don't have the heat, who are on the verge of having their power shut off, and on the verge of their heat being shut off. If people don't think this is serious, you just need to look towards the NDP government. (Interruption)

This is not a jab at the NDP government. I'm saying . . . (Interruption) No, it's not. It truly isn't. I'll be the first to say I don't think they did a bad job. I don't think they did. Right? I don't. If the number one issue - I know, everybody is shaking their heads now.

The number one issue during that election was what? It was power rates, and it will be a major issue over the next few years for this government. It's one now, and it's going to continue to be as prices rise. We need to get to a greener economy but at the same time we need to be protecting the ratepayers of Nova Scotia from having these costs downloaded

on them by billionaire companies, by individuals who are making tens of millions of dollars in bonuses every year. I hope this is taken seriously.

I heard the member for Dartmouth South talk about outages. We had an outage last Summer in my community because it was too hot. That was the official reason on Nova Scotia Power's website: excessive heat. It was 28 degrees in Herring Cove, and the power went out. On the same section of that grid, we have had power go out because of birds. We've had power go out because of excessive rain. We have had power go out because of tree branches. That is one of the biggest annoyances in the entire world for me because they should be cleaning their lines. Cut the branches.

I have contacted Nova Scotia Power on behalf of the residents of Halifax Atlantic more times than I have contacted any government entity or any private entity and asked them to do some research on the grid in my community, to look at it, to figure out where the weaknesses are and why we continue to lose power. If a dog runs by the line too fast, the power goes out. They came back after about a year and a half of me continuously emailing and calling them, and they said, well, your section of the grid is old, and it needs to be upgraded. The truth is, they haven't upgraded it.

How many times have you driven down a street in the middle of HRM or rural Nova Scotia, and you look at a lamp pole and you say, holy smokes, that thing's about to fall apart. Jumpin' Jehoshaphat, if someone leans on that lamp pole, it's gone. I saw some of the members across the way shake their head. Yes, it's true. That's the service we're paying for. They're a de facto government service. That's what I call it, because they're a monopoly. There's nowhere else for us to go.

As we watch the infrastructure rot and get older and not be updated and barriers be put in the way, and thank goodness - I'll give the minister credit where credit is due for his reaction to the solar part. A huge round of applause. I have told people that - send him a thank you card. I have literally said that to people, send him a thank you card. I truly believe you saved the solar industry. I don't know what the rest of your career is going to look like, but that's something you should be extremely proud of. You really should, no matter what else you do. I'm sure you're going to do many great things. I'm sure of it.

This is a massive issue, and I implore the government. We saw stabilized power rates under the Liberal government. I felt like the moment a new government came in, they tested you. They tested you to see what they could get away with, and you reacted correctly to the solar part of it. I do have some issues with giving them the excess solar power, and we have discussed that. It has been grandfathered in for previous customers, but for new customers, no. The performance-based - I think it's a great idea.

But they still have a guaranteed rate of return. No other company in Nova Scotia has that. No other business has that. They still get oodles and oodles and massive amounts of money and tax breaks from all levels of government, and they have in the past. They

received billions of dollars for Muskrat Falls and other projects - all tax dollars. They're taking from my left pocket, and they're taking from my right pocket. As power rates are going up, they're grabbing from my back pocket too.

The people of Nova Scotia are tired of it. They're tired of government saying we're going to do something. I'm not just putting this on the Progressive Conservative Government. I'm putting it on everybody. It's enough. People always say, if you're going to complain, at least give some solutions. Well, what's your solution?

My solution is to say inflation is going through the roof, the cost of fuel is going through the roof, the cost of food is going through the roof, we're in the middle of a housing crisis, and paycheques are shrinking. The ability to purchase is shrinking. We have control over several things, and one of the things we - I say "we," but you, the government - have control over is the monopoly of Nova Scotia Power. You can implement legislation that will guarantee a sustainability advocate in the NSUARB who will fight tooth and nail for the climate but also for the people of Nova Scotia. You have the ability to control rate increases. Just having a conversation with a judicial entity that you have no control over is bupkis. It's going to do very little.

I ask that this government - we know it's going to pass. We know that there's nothing we can do on this side of the House. I am very supportive of a lot of things in this bill. I just think it's a very incomplete bill.

I'm very disappointed that, when the Premier of Nova Scotia stood in this Legislature after it was announced, he couldn't run fast enough to the cameras to say, we're going to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. We're going to make sure that the ratepayers of Nova Scotia get a fair deal, and there is legislation coming that's going to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. He literally said that there is legislation coming that's going to protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

If this is the two pieces of legislation - unless in the next five hours, you're going to drop one and we're going to get unanimous consent from the House - this does not protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. It does not protect the ratepayers of Nova Scotia from increases now and into the future. It does some really good things, but it's an incomplete bill.

I appreciate all the effort that the minister's put into this, but I'll say again - and I've said it before - that there's a difference between words and actions. This bill is kind of in between. There are a lot of pretty words in the beginning before this bill was introduced. There are some really good actions in this bill, but when it comes to protecting the ratepayers of Nova Scotia from the Premier of Nova Scotia, those were just words.

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

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: It must be nice to have a crystal ball. I have to say to the member opposite that it's a little bit broken. In 2013, who remembers a campaign promise, "We will break the monopoly"? Now he's asking us to do the same thing. I just had to get that in there.

In all honesty, he talked about how the campaign went about electricity. It did. It certainly did. The government of the day did a very good job. Let's face it. We did not break the monopoly as government. We didn't break it as a province yet.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that I was never done work here. I was never done work here. I was not even out of high school when that was created. We can point fingers and say we all agree on something in this House and that something needs done.

There are different paths that we can take. I want to give credit where credit is due. The staff are guiding myself and government in three different ways. One of my predecessors spoke the other night of how great that staff is. He's 100 per cent right. I have most of the same staff that that member had. They're a fantastic staff. They're assisting us on how to get there, how to pull the right levers at the right time.

I never once indicated that I was willing to close the book on this bill and walk away from it. My commitment is staying true to the ratepayers of Nova Scotia. My commitment is staying true to ensure - most of the things of what I've heard across the floor, we're going to make sure we take care of it.

I've indicated through conversations with my colleagues, look, I've been here for six or seven months, sitting in this chair. There's a lot to learn in that short time. Yes, we had a rate increase application go through to the NSUARB sitting right at the time when we're getting our feet wet, so to speak. I get that.

Would everybody like to see everything in this bill all at once? Yes, but I don't want to be accused of things that we've heard of already today. You're going too fast. There's been no consultation. Well, I put it in the bill. There's going to be a round table that assists us in that consultation. I look forward to seeing the support over the next few months from the members opposite as we move forward for the ratepayers of Nova Scotia.

I move closing of Bill No. 147. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Can somebody please check that broken blood vessel? (Laughter)

Order, please. The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 147.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 148.

Bill No. 148 - the Mi'kmaw Language Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of L'nu Affairs.

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move that Bill No. 148 - an Act to Recognize, Promote and Support the Revitalization and Reclamation of the Mi'kmaw Language - now be read for a third time.

It is an honour to be standing here today with members of this House to talk about the legislation that will enshrine Mi'kmaq as the first language of our province. This Act is truly historic and unique. The legislation is unique because it was developed side by side with the Mi'kmaw. In fact, having a plan to move forward makes this Act the first of its kind amongst provinces in Canada. While Manitoba has legislation that recognizes seven Indigenous languages spoken in that province, our proposed Act is more extensive in that it commits the province to work in partnership to create a language revitalization strategy.

In addition, our legislation is historic in that it strengthens government's commitment to support the efforts of the Mi'kmaw to preserve and promote their language while ensuring that the language continues to exist, is vital to Mi'kmaw communities and identity, and is also significant for all Nova Scotians.

Mi'kmaw language connects us to the past, a history that we are learning about now through initiatives like treaty education. Collectively, Mr. Speaker, we need to do what we can to preserve the language as the number of people who can speak Mi'kmaq is in rapid decline and the language is at risk. This bill is a step in the right direction.

Blaire Gould, Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey or MK, a dedicated promoter of the language, shared with us words of the late Kji-keptin Alexander Denny of Eskasoni, who was also a passionate speaker and language protector. He said that "when the French lose their language they can go to France; when the Chinese lose their language they can go to China; when the Mi'kmaq lose their language, they have nowhere to go."

The Mi'kmaq language is rooted here in Nova Scotia. It is part of this place. It deserves our collected energy and efforts to recognize, promote, and support it. With this in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again outline key aspects of the Act. This legislation

will establish a language committee to create and implement a multi-year revitalization strategy. This strategy will identify priorities and include specific actions that should be taken. The joint committee will be co-chaired by the Province and MK. The group will include representatives of each of the 13 Mi'kmaw communities and other communities and organizations.

[6:45 p.m.]

It is important to note that the joint committee will consider funding options as part of its work to develop the multi-year strategy. The group's efforts will include putting in place tools to measure and assess progress on the plan. Over the longer term, the committee will also periodically review the strategy and make any updates that may be needed.

The legislation will be proclaimed on a mutually agreeable date with Mi'kmaw leadership, and it will take effect on October 1st. This means there will be even more reason to celebrate Treaty Day and acknowledge the peace and friendship treaty this year.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing Mi'kmaq as the original language of Nova Scotia is a critical step to advance reconciliation in our province. This collective work to protect and reclaim the language responds to the National Inquiry's Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I remind this House that the calls for justice speak to ensuring meaningful access to language, culture and identity as a foundation for resilience and safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals who work collaboratively to shape this legislation and in the true spirit of working together this list is long so please bear with me. To the committee co-chairs, Blaire Gould, Executive Director of MK, and Ian Bower, Executive Director at OLA, wela'liq for your leadership.

I am grateful for all the contributions from Chief Leroy Denny, Chair of MK, whom I consider now a friend - a real great spirit of a person; G Kempton Denny; Janice Maloney, Executive Director of KMKNO; Michelle Marshall-Johnson, Director of Language and Culture at MK; Tim Bernard, Executive Director of Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre; Paul Prosper, Atlantic Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations; Sarah Toole, KMKNO; Angie Gillis, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq; Doug Brown, Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq; Tyler Sack, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq; Carola Knockwood, Executive Director, Mi'kmaq Services, Education and Treaty, Childhood Development; Bree Reagan, Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; Heather Goodfellow, Department of Justice; and recently retired Calum Ewing, the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

Many thanks to the entire team at the Department of L'nu Affairs for their hard work co-developing this legislation. I would also like to recognize the wonderful, incredible leadership of Deputy Minister Justin Huston, CEO of the Department of L'nu

Affairs, for his constant commitment to the department; and Celeste Sulliman, Director of Treaty Education, for her work supporting the creation of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, Mi'kmaw language and heritage is woven into the fabric of our province, making it more diverse and stronger. I do believe this legislation stands as a powerful example of a relationship and partnership with the First Peoples of Nova Scotia.

I will leave with you something that Blaire Gould of MK shared with us at the Law Amendments Committee: "We know that creating an action plan outlines a path, a collective path that supports a collective vision, and we know investments are required, but we need to determine what the action plan says mutually with the communities involved." Wela'lioq. I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'll just speak briefly to this. There are a lot of people who have been involved to get to this point whom the minister mentioned in her comments. I want to reiterate my congratulations to all of them. I do want to recognize my friend Chief Leroy, who is just really an excellent guy. He has been such a champion for this - a great ambassador for his community, but also for the Island.

It is something for me when I see these bills come through, and the opportunity to be in education when I was, and to learn about the work around treaty education, and to deal with some of the challenges that we dealt with in the department at the time when it came to some of the old curriculum that was there. I grew up next to Membertou. I was across the street, so I never really put much thought into it as a kid. We all played hockey together, and my buddies were from there and we went to school together. As I got older, I started to realize some of the very significant challenges that the Mi'kmaw community faced, not only in Membertou but in communities across the province.

I learned the Donald Marshall story, and I learned about residential schools and the trauma and the terror that that created for families. I learned how families lost their language as a result of a lot of that. These were my friends that - their parents, their grandparents were the ones who were experiencing this. Really, what we are beginning to see - and what I am beginning to see at home with my friends and some of my extended family who are very close to me, my wife and kids in Membertou - is that this is really rejuvenating the conversation around the language.

I just think this is an excellent piece of legislation. Congratulations to the minister, congratulations to everyone involved in her department, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of L'nu Affairs, and everybody within government for making this happen. Ultimately, I really want to get up again to congratulate my friend, Chief Leroy, who has been fighting for this for a long time.

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

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and speak in support of this bill. As I spoke about a little earlier, language is at the heart of culture. This Act is an important step in overcoming our ongoing colonization and a legacy of colonization, racism, and ongoing stigma and discrimination.

I always like the chance to go back and have a look at the TRC Calls to Action. I'm actually going to read through the Calls to Action that are relevant to language, as well as the Calls for Justice and then from UNDRIP, if folks will indulge me.

The TRC Call to Action 13 calls "upon the federal government to acknowledge the Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights." Calls to Action 14 and 15 address the creation of federal languages legislation and an Indigenous Languages Commission, which was enacted in Parliament in June 2019 as Bill C-91, an Act respecting Indigenous Languages.

Although the Calls to Action addressing language are not directed specifically at provincial governments, people have interpreted it this way because of the constitutional nature of Aboriginal rights and the constitutional jurisdiction of both provincial and federal governments over language rights.

In the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, Section 2.3 directs governments to support a variety of actions meant to provide all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people with "safe, no-barrier, permanent, and meaningful access to their cultures and languages in order to restore, reclaim, and revitalize their cultures" and identities.

In addition, the Calls for Justice "call upon all governments to recognize Indigenous languages as official languages, with the same status, recognition, and protection provided to French and English. This includes the directives that:

"i Federal, provincial, and territorial governments must legislate Indigenous languages in the respective territory as official languages.

"ii All governments must make funds available to Indigenous Peoples to support the work required to revitalize and restore Indigenous cultures and languages."

Other Calls for Justice appeal to governments to uphold Indigenous children's rights to be educated in their Indigenous languages by calling on government to ensure "access to immersion programs for children from pre-school to post-secondary education," "to provide the necessary resources and permanent funds required to preserve knowledge by digitizing interviews with Knowledge Keepers and language speakers," and to provide services in Indigenous languages.

Finally, UNDRIP, in Article 13 states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

As I noted before, I also think that an increased use of Mi’kmaq in Nova Scotia will help us learn more about Mi’kma’ki, about where we live, and will enhance our understanding of our own communities.

I shared a couple of stanzas from Rita Joe’s poem “I Lost My Talk.” I thought I would end with a stanza from Rebecca Thomas’s *I’m Finding My Talk*:

“I’m finding my talk
And it may take some time,
But I’m learning to speak
In the language that’s mine.”

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to rise and say a few words on Bill No. 148, the Mi’kmaw Language Act. One of the things that hasn’t really been mentioned, so I just wanted to put it on the record, is that we’re talking about making sure that our young people retain the languages that they are inheriting from their elders, but we forget that the elders, sometimes as they age, lose some of their language as well.

One of the things that I learned as a health professional, and many others would know this, is that as you age, sometimes you develop dementia, and you actually revert to your original language. So even if you have learned English, you no longer recognize it as a language, or it’s more difficult. When we were having conversations about our long-term care facilities, it was made very clear to me that those who speak other languages need to have health care professionals who understand and can speak those languages back.

In the spirit of us all agreeing on this legislation and how important it is, I just wanted to remind everyone that on August 14, 2019, the Eskasoni First Nation in Nova Scotia learned that they would have a new long-term care facility. This new infrastructure investment was announced by the federal government, the former provincial government, and First Nation leaders in the Mi’kmaw community. Once built, the new care facility will house up to 48 elderly and disabled residents. It will be called Kiknu, the Mi’kmaw word for “our house.”

Eskasoni Chief Leroy Denny joined then-Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil and federal Minister of Rural Economic Development Bernadette Jordan for the announcement. He said the facility will embrace the Mi’kmaw language and culture from design to the delivery of services. The new elder care facility will allow the Mi’kmaq to

carry on the tradition of caring for their own within our own community. Denny said that Kiknu will be a place where our elders will feel at home and continue to have community and cultural connections.

[7:00 p.m.]

Premier McNeil said his government wants to ensure culture is an integral part of delivering services. Mr. Speaker, the current government is also committed to that same commitment. I just wanted to thank all the previous governments and all the members for supporting this legislation.

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

The honourable Minister of L'nu Affairs.

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: I want to thank my colleagues for their eloquent and sincere comments. I feel very privileged that this is the first bill that I have introduced here on the government side, and that there is equal support from everyone. What we have to remember - I'm just lucky that I was in the right place at the right time and that it was something that I discussed immediately with Chief Leroy Denny. I'm like, we're going to do it, we're just going to do it. Enough time waiting. You've been waiting decades for this. I'm just going to go for it, and we're going to do it.

I think everyone in the Chamber should be taking credit. This is a great step forward, and this is something you're all going to remember. It's very meaningful to me, but you have no idea what your words and your support mean to our First Nations communities. It really means a lot to them. I just want to thank you on behalf of myself, but from them as well. Wela'liq.

Mr. Speaker, I kindly move to close debate on Bill No. 148.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 148.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried. (Standing Ovation)

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 154.

Bill No. 154 - Tourist Accommodations Registration Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I'd prepared a big speech about what a great job you've been doing through this session here. You remind me of a couple of former teachers I had back in elementary, cracking the whip. Great job. (Laughter)

I move that Bill No. 154 now be read a third time and do pass.

I want to offer a few brief words to reiterate that these changes to the Tourist Accommodations Registration Act incorporate feedback that we've heard from both the tourism sector and the municipalities, and they allow us to take further steps through the regulations.

With these amendments, all short-term rentals will be required to register, removing an extension for short-term rentals attached to a private residence. We will have a fuller picture of short-term rentals in the province which will help both the tourism sector and municipalities as they look at issues like zoning and bylaw enforcement.

Some municipalities were considering setting up their own registration systems and this will simplify the process and help create a clearer picture for everyone. Some of the members opposite raised questions around enforcement and ensuring that rentals are displaying their registration numbers. I want to assure all members that we will be addressing that issue in the regulations to come. We want to ensure that any short-term rental operator who is using a platform like Airbnb is required to display their registration number. These amendments and the regulations to come will also support municipalities as they make decisions and set policies on issues like zoning and bylaw enforcement.

We know that short-term rentals are a complex issue and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for every community in Nova Scotia. In some rural communities, short-term rentals are a huge boon to the tourism industry and local businesses but municipalities may also want to regulate where and how short-term rentals can operate in their jurisdictions and enhancing the registry will help them make and enforce these decisions. What works in Wolfville may not be the same approach needed in Halifax, or Inverness, or Queens County. We will continue to work across government and with municipalities and tourism partners to support a healthy balance that is good for our communities and the economy.

I look forward to seeing these amendments receive the support of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I thank the minister for bringing this bill. It is the continuation to a bill that was brought in by our government in 2019. As per the bill

briefing, this was an addition to it to include the private residences as well if people are renting a room or two or three rooms in their house, which is wonderful, to add to the list. But what is important is the original list of which units or houses or apartment buildings are being used.

We were a little bit disappointed that since 2019 the list has not really filled up, or we don't know. It has taken almost three years and we still don't have a list. It shouldn't be that difficult because it's online. Everybody who puts their house or their apartment or their unit that they are renting, it's there. It's very easy access and it can be controlled easily.

I'm hoping - and as the minister said that what we suggested in second reading - that the registration will be there on Airbnb, that government has - well, it is approved by the government, this unit is approved to be used for short-term rental and also to entice - there was another suggestion that we brought in, in second reading, is to entice people to register. If they are not forced by either a penalty, of which we haven't collected one penny of penalty in three years - you need to have a penalty and a deadline - you have to register by such and such date and you will not have to pay this penalty. That will encourage people to register. If I have five or six units, why would I register? There is absolutely no incentive right now for people to register.

I'm looking forward to the regulations that this will be in it, a deadline for registration, so that we can move on this. It's a wonderful thing, it's a great thing that we support but we need to move on it and be serious in our regulations to put penalties and deadlines for the registration so that next year, maybe in the next session, we have that list and you can update us on it. With that, I take my seat.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: This bill is fine. We will support it but I think it's important that - this is the second bill I have gotten up on tonight where a piece of legislation gets opened up that could make a big difference, and then something gets done that makes not much of a difference at all.

I would echo the comments of my colleague. I made similar comments when the Act was first passed by this government to say it's great that we're starting to talk about registration for Airbnbs, but there is no enforcement, there is no penalty, and therefore why would anyone do it?

Similarly, it's good for the sake of knowledge to know where people are renting Airbnbs in their own homes, but with respect, I would say that that is the least important issue pertaining to Airbnbs in the province right now. In fact, housing prices are rising so quickly that I suspect that for many Nova Scotians, particularly new homeowners, this may be a very important way to defray their costs of homeownership. I think it's great that way.

I think in the original conception, the notion of the sharing economy, that you could rent a room in your home, and someone could come stay there and that could help you pay your costs, and you can help provide a home - particularly in rural areas of the province where there may be fewer hotel rooms, I think that makes a lot of sense.

I think what we've seen, particularly in HRM, which I can speak to more cogently I think, is what I would say is probably an abuse of that concept. What we see are multiple, what we might call ghost hotels, owned by single individuals or companies that are using up what was once very important long-term rental stock and converting it into short-term accommodation.

The reality is, as I think my colleague alluded to, at the moment, it's a financial no-brainer. You can rent an apartment, even at the inflated rates right now, for \$1,500 or \$1,900 or \$2,000 a month, but if you can rent that same unit for \$200 or \$300 or \$400 a night, it becomes difficult to choose to rent it long-term. And there is nothing that defrays that basic financial reality.

This government has now - has had for a very long time - an opportunity to influence that. If you look at these maps that have been produced - they've been tabled in the House in previous sessions, I don't have one right now - of the number of properties in HRM that are Airbnbs, whole houses, it is astonishing.

We have seen from this government, in the name of action on housing, a housing task force that takes powers away from the municipality, Special Planning Areas that allow them to make their own decisions about development in HRM.

What we continue to ask this session but have literally gotten no answer on is: What are we doing about existing housing? What are we doing about existing rentals?

One of the ways that they are disappearing is through renovictions, which we've talked about. Another way that they are disappearing is through conversion to short-term rental. This is a real problem. Again, this bill - it's good to have knowledge. It's good that we know where all the Airbnbs are. We support this bill, but we need more action.

We need to understand the implications of all the properties that are being converted. Again, with this skyrocketing cost of property, in my riding in Dartmouth South, in the neighbourhood of the flower streets, which is where I used to live, there are currently five properties for sale. They're all multi-unit rentals and they're all going to go for \$1 million, which is just absurd to me. Even in the space of a few years. They would have sold for a fraction of that five years ago, but they're going to sell for a lot of money.

It is likely that at least some of those will immediately turn into short-term rentals because that's the financial equation. That's how people can make a return on their investment if they're not going to live in them. Usually, people who are buying multi-unit

rentals, sometimes it's an owner-occupied situation, not often in the heart of downtown in that kind of situation.

[7:15 p.m.]

I feel like at this point in the session, when we've been talking about housing, this bill is really an opportunity to point out what I think is another missed opportunity, where we could have looked at the ways in which short-term rentals are impacting our precious and incredibly rare rental housing market, but we haven't. I hope, as other ministers have said about other bills, that this is just one step and that we will see a closer look, particularly not at this category - I think this category's not that big of a deal - but at the category of entire homes that are being converted into short-term rentals that may or may not be registered. Again, we're still not going to know, as my colleague pointed out, because there's no penalty or particular encouragement for people to register.

I hope the government takes that to heart. I hope that they do look at this, that they do ensure in some way that people do register so that we have this information and that we can then act on it. I really think this is a missing piece in terms of dealing with rentals, particularly in HRM. There is opportunity to act, and for that action to be really impactful.

With those few words, I'll take my seat.

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

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their comments and suggestions. I move closure of third reading of Bill No. 154, the Tourist Accommodations Registration Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 154.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 155.

Bill No. 155 - Public Prosecutions Act (amended).

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Speaker, I move that Bill No. 155 - amendments to the Public Prosecutions Act - be now read a third time.

The measures proposed in this bill will establish a new appointment process for the two senior leaders in Nova Scotia's Public Prosecution Service. The amendments will set fixed terms for both the director and the deputy director positions. The purpose of these changes is twofold: They provide an opportunity for ongoing renewal, new ideas, and more diversity in senior leadership roles within the Public Prosecution Service. The changes also ensure that the requirements for the appointment of the director and deputy director of Public Prosecution are aligned with current and best practices while also being consistent with the two other Canadian jurisdictions that have independent prosecution services.

For the benefit of the House, I will just quickly recap the specific changes. The director will be appointed to a 21-year term - sorry. The director will be appointed to a seven-year term without reappointment. The previous one was 21 years. It also clarifies that the director will be appointed by the Governor in Council.

In the case of the deputy director, the amendments will set a five-year term with an opportunity for a one-time extension of up to five years. The proposed amendments also require that the deputy be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendations of the Attorney General. In the past, the director appointed the deputy. The bill also outlines certain requirements for the incoming director.

As I mentioned in second reading, the changes to the deputy director appointment process will not commence until the incumbent is no longer in that position. I also want to take a brief moment to point out that this process will follow the same process as the Public Service Commission and their fair hiring processes to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion will be a priority in the considerations.

In closing, I want to mention how important it is to have renewed and diverse ideas in the senior branches of the justice system. Our goal is that the position of director at PTS will be filled this summer. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise to echo our support for this bill. It's wonderful and we're very happy with it.

The only thing that we had brought in as an amendment was in regard to equity and diversity, to have it actually in the bill. It was added to your amendment but that was not

accepted and that's the only disappointment. Otherwise we are very much in support and we thank the minister for bringing it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'll just speak briefly. We support the bill but we echo the concerns that were originally raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition around some of the ways in which this bill may knowingly or unknowingly impact effort towards diversifying the Public Prosecution Service.

These stem directly from the letter that was previously tabled from the Decade for Persons of African Descent (DPAD) who had very specific recommendations and challenges with some of the ways this bill was being amended. Specifically that because the pool of people who will be able to be considered for senior jobs will come from the existing pool, which is largely white and largely male, and that that will continue. There isn't an opportunity to diversify that because of the narrow parameters put forward in the bill.

Further, the amendment that my colleague brought around a senior leadership position around equity inclusion, we thought was good and should have been, and hopefully will be, considered in the future.

There are also some challenges with the notion that the minister himself will now have a great deal of exclusive jurisdiction over hiring. That may not be an issue now but who knows. We like to have safeguards around those things. It's an independent prosecution service, after all.

We will look and see what these changes bring. We hope it will be positive and we hope that some of those recommendations from DPAD will remain on the minister's desk and will continue to be considered.

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

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Thank you to the members across the way for their comments. I assure them that I am very familiar with the letter from NS DPAD. Although I don't believe that instilling it in legislation is the proper place to do it, I do commit that the concerns that are raised there, we recognize and we know.

I would also let members know that, particularly for the director position, of course that will be a national search. It won't be limited just to here. Eventually, when the deputy director ceases to be in that position, although it is stated that they will promote from within

the organization, the successful candidate at that level has to have 10 years, 5 of which are within Nova Scotia.

There's an opportunity to really try to reach out to other provinces and encourage people who may want to come here who fit certain criteria who would be able to advance and show that advancement. We are certainly aware and we will do the utmost to address any issues.

Mr. Speaker, with that I rise to close debate on Bill No. 155.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 155.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Would you please call Bill No. 112.

Bill No. 112 - Holy Heart Seminary Dissolution Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 112, the Holy Heart Seminary Dissolution Act, be now read for a third time and do pass.

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

The honourable Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: With those few, short words, I move to close debate on Bill No. 112.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 112.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Would you please call Bill No. 122.

Bill No. 122 - Lunenburg Rod and Gun Club Replacement Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I move that Bill No. 122, the Lunenburg Rod and Gun Club Replacement Act, be read a third time.

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

The honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: I rise to close debate on Bill No. 122.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 122.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: I am very pleased to rise and call the last government bill of this session. Would you please call Bill No. 149.

Bill No. 149 - Financial Measures (2022) Act.

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

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I move that Bill No. 149, the Financial Measures Act of 2022, be now read for a third time.

I'd like to offer members a chance to have their final say on it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

[7:30 p.m.]

HON. KEITH IRVING: It's a pleasure to rise and make a few remarks on Bill No. 149. This, of course, is our opportunity to speak to the budget.

I rise today to speak about the first budget of our new government. A budget that my honourable colleague described when it was introduced as a budget that "makes investments in the areas Nova Scotians care about most, including new tax measures to address our housing crisis, strategically grow our population and economy, address labour shortages, and invest in families and communities."

Mr. Speaker, we have seen how unpopular and misplaced the new tax measures to address our housing crisis have been, and I have no idea what measures my colleague has planned to strategically grow our population - certainly Bill No. 149 makes little clear of that. My comments today address a bigger issue, and that's the lack of vision coupled with a rather casual approach to the numbers that characterizes this first budget of our new government.

I had the great privilege of sitting on the Treasury Board for four-plus years, and, during my last year, chairing the board. I also had the opportunity to sit in on many meetings as the Department of Finance and Treasury Board's assistant to the minister. This privilege gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the financial documents of our government, understand how to read them and interpret budget documents for my constituents and the broader public. I am thankful for this experience because it gave me the skills to see beyond the broad speaking points repeated by ministers.

It was my experience as both minister and Chair of the Treasury and Policy Board that prompted my critical remarks earlier in this session to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who decided that his answers to my questions would be to repeat a bland, boilerplate, word salad to every question.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Nova Scotians expect Opposition MLAs to study budget documents and based on our legislative experience, ask questions that give insight to the priorities of the new minister and the logic that lay behind their spending priorities in the budget. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change provided Nova Scotians with minimal insight into his budget when posed with questions about it.

In general, in reviewing the estimates for all departments, my approach has always been to ask four questions on behalf of Nova Scotians: What is the information telling us? What are the assumptions built into the estimates? Does the budget document or the minister adequately explain new budget measures or changes in the budget and whether the larger expenditures will make a difference? And what information is missing?

Mr. Speaker, a budget is the single most important economic tool of a government, so there should be coherence to the budget plan. Does it follow from the election platform and stated priorities of the new government? Is there vision behind the budget plan on where the government wants to take our province? Do the department budgets build towards that vision?

As I said at the outset of my remarks, I found this budget to have a rather casual approach to the numbers - it lacked coherence. Ministers had difficulty explaining to Nova Scotians what their overarching thinking was behind their first budget and struggled to answer questions with any level of detail on the numbers.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to provide a few examples. I want to begin here with the Department of Health and Wellness, because our members opposite made fixing health care their signature platform item in last summer's election. I do acknowledge that the government is spending, it is increasing wages and education opportunities, more money for long-term care. But what is not seen in this budget is the investments in transformation.

The minister wrote in the business plan, transforming the health care system will be the priority of the Department of Health and Wellness in this fiscal year and for several fiscal years to come. It stands to reason, therefore, that this commitment to transforming health care would be reflected in this government's first budget. So it's puzzling to me that as we pass the 2022-23 budget, we do not see any new investments in important areas of the Department of Health and Wellness.

The health plan launched this morning touts transformation, KPIs, and accountability, but the budget tells another story. In the budget area, on strategic direction and accountability, the \$35 million budget is flat. The staff in the Department of Health and Wellness is flat - last year, 253 staff, and this year there will be 253 staff. Who is going to do this new transformational work?

Let's review what the messaging has been from government. The Premier has stated that he will fix health care and spend whatever it takes, but when I asked the Minister of Health and Wellness during Supply why staffing at the Department of Health and Wellness was flat, her response was that they were being fiscally responsible. So what's the government doing - being fiscally responsible or spending whatever it takes?

Today the government released their *Action for Health* plan, which is "the first step in transforming health in Nova Scotia." Transforming, yet the budget reveals that these are only marketing words, and the budget tells a different story.

Let's look at physician services. What does the budget tell us? It tells us that the \$1-billion budget for physicians is barely increasing. The minister confirmed this during questions in Estimates, that the department is budgeting only 1.5 per cent more for physicians. What this is telling Nova Scotians is that the department is not anticipating any

great increase to the number of doctors in the province in the upcoming year. While it's difficult to get exact numbers on doctors, it would appear they are estimating perhaps a couple of dozen doctors. I believe the election promise was 300. These are good examples of the government's first budget not reflecting its promises.

This casualness also extends to the assumptions built into this budget - or not. We find a good example of this in the Department of Agriculture. In questions to the Minister of Agriculture, we learned that the government has no idea how much local food is consumed in Nova Scotia. In other words, there's no baseline. There's no baseline, so how did the PC platform arrive at a target of 20 per cent local food consumption?

The best answer that can be provided was that it was randomly selected. I think it's fair for Nova Scotians to ask, how will this minister measure results of the government's local food initiative when it has no idea where it is beginning and whether their interventions will move the needle? Is it sound policy when a government casually picks a target of 20 per cent without knowing a baseline?

Nova Scotians probably expect more critical thinking behind stated priorities of government. Nowhere in the agriculture budget do we see any investments in local food policy, which we have heard several ministers say lies at the heart of their economic strategy.

Let's move on to economic development. As I mentioned earlier, when my honourable colleague introduced the overall budget, he described it as the budget that, and I quote, "makes investments in the areas Nova Scotians care about most, including . . . measures to . . . strategically grow our . . . economy." If the budget is to strategically grow our economy, I think it's fair for Nova Scotians to ask, why does this first budget of our new government show cuts to the Department of Economic Development? Counting for inflation, it shows cuts in Fisheries and Aquaculture, cuts in Natural Resources and Renewables, and cuts in Agriculture.

Elections can be won on one simple marketing message but governing requires attention to multiple and sometimes competing priorities. Ignoring the economy and those departments that support the private sector developing our economy is dangerous. Economic policy must be thoughtful and strategically implemented.

These budget documents do not reveal any thoughtful new policy approaches or new investments in growing our economy. The Minister of Economic Development has rendered her economic growth plan to three items: population growth, with no plans on how the province would grow by 25,000 people this year to be on track for another casual number thrown out by this government to grow the population by one million by 2060. The second item is the internet. It was initiated and funded by the previous Liberal government, and work is coming to a close. Then, of course, there's local food, which has no investments in this budget and no baseline, as I earlier indicated.

Also absent from this budget is another ill-conceived campaign promise. The signature program of the campaign was called the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee. Why is there absolutely no mention of the program in this budget? During the election I met accountants on doorsteps in my constituency who described the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee as a scheme so full of holes it could never be effectively implemented.

In the Fall sitting, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board told this House that there were many smart people in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. I know there are - I worked with them for four years. The minister said they would figure out how to make it work. Here we are five months later and there's no sign of the signature Better Pay Cheque Guarantee policy.

It seems clear to me that the government is backing away from this, as the hit to the revenues of the Province would be substantial and have little economic benefit to the Province. Nor is there a budget figure for the much-vaunted loyalty program for buying local food to reach the aforementioned 20 per cent target picked out of the air.

I'm asking two questions on behalf of Nova Scotians: Shouldn't the loyalty program be at the heart of the minister's stated commitment to our families and communities, and shouldn't the loyalty program be at the heart of the government's commitment to investing in local communities?

Moving on to the Department of Environment and Climate Change. As a former Minister of Environment and Climate Change, this was a budget I examined with great interest. As a general comment from a policy perspective, it was very disappointing to see that the only items the department is committed to in the business plan to be completed are a climate change plan and a risk assessment this year. That's a modest list of objectives to complete during the upcoming year.

A modest list of objectives undoubtedly explains the funding cut to the Department of Environment and Climate Change, which contrasts with this government's puffed-up marketing of their environmental credentials. There are enormous amounts of work to do, and funding cuts do not provide confidence that this work is accelerating as it needs to.

As the minister stated in his long, 55-minute introductory comments during Estimates, 81 per cent of Nova Scotians want action now on our environmental goals. Despite the extraordinary momentum we're seeing across the country to transition away from fossil fuels, we see no evidence of investments in a transition mandate in this budget document. Our Leader asked several questions in Question Period today to try to find out what the plan was to shut down coal-fired plants, the New Brunswick intertie, and the Atlantic Loop. No answers.

With budget cuts to Environment and Climate Change and the Natural Resources and Renewables Department in this budget, one has to ask how much work is happening

on these critical files. I know there is work happening, but how much? We need to accelerate these items.

I want to go to land protection. Here again, we see a rather casual approach to the numbers in this budget, and there's no better example than the land protection goal of 20 per cent by 2030. It's another election promise; it's now actually a legislated goal. Unfortunately, I was not able to question the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on this issue because the minister chose to filibuster my questions.

To those Nova Scotians who have a deep commitment to seeing our province set and achieve environmental goals, and therefore an interest in the minister's answers to questions, they would have seen a minister confer with staff for two minutes and then provide a 17-minute response to my question without making any attempt to answer it. This deliberate evasiveness was extremely disappointing for a minister with such an important job.

I was able to question the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables about the 20 per cent goal of land protection. To that minister's credit, he did try to respond to my question. My question pointed out that only 29 per cent of Nova Scotia is Crown land. With the many pressures on Crown land, such as recreation, resource development, the implementation of the Lahey report, and places to site renewables, I asked if the 20 per cent target for Nova Scotia was realistic. The response from the minister was this: The legislated goal of 20 per cent would be, in his words, challenging.

That was fair. I appreciated that response. I would submit, though, it's not just challenging; I submit it's unrealistic. For the record, the previous Liberal government moved the needle and committed to protect 61 properties to bring the protected land mass in Nova Scotia to over 13 per cent. The government is now talking about the 2013 Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan to bring us to 14 per cent. I know there are challenges to that plan, as there are properties on that list that we don't even own as a province.

But here's the question: Where do we find another six per cent? That's 3,317 square kilometres. That's eight Kejimikujik Parks. Based on the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's own information, it costs the province over a million dollars to purchase 400 hectares. Reaching a 20 per cent land protection goal would cost about a billion dollars in land. If you can find people to sell it.

The budget has no increases in protected areas staff at the Department of Environment and Climate Change. This department has a full plate of work now. There's significant work needed to get the 61 areas we announced last year across the finish line. The budget reveals in the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, there are two staff cuts in the Land Services Branch. Where are the staff resources and land acquisition budgets to achieve this target?

[7:45 p.m.]

Remember that this land protection target has now been put into law. We'll be watching very closely for the minister's plan, in forthcoming budgets, to achieve this goal due in 2023. Again, this is another example of casual numbers being thrown out in an election campaign that simply were not thought through.

Housing: Mx. Speaker, we have heard in the last two weeks from many Nova Scotians near and far, including many municipal councillors, who question the government's plan to address our housing crisis through a tax grab.

It's interesting. Why is the government launching, now, a public consultation on housing needs in Nova Scotia but introduced the policies before the consultations were complete and data was gathered on where lies the greatest need? Again, a lack of vision and planning. The result is a mix-and-stir insta-policy focusing on helping developers build market housing and secure corporate profits for these companies.

Providing affordable and social housing is the role of government and non-profits. Market housing should be addressed by the market that is already enjoying record-high prices and demand. Any smart businessperson knows that a crisis for government is a time in which you can make money. Spending millions on new market units to allow a developer to rent them at 20 per cent below market for a fixed number of years does not make them affordable.

Let's go back to the Deed Transfer Tax and the Non-resident Property Tax. We've spoken a lot of it. I won't go too long here. I mentioned earlier that in the platform, the number pulled out of the air for this initiative was \$150 million. Now that figure is \$81 million.

It's going to change again now; the government is going to be exempting military families and we obviously support that, but that number will change yet again. It's another example of a very casual approach to budgeting and policy development.

I've spoken to this House of how bad this budget item is. Hundreds of people have weighed in. Journalists from across the country are writing scathing articles about this policy. There's one here and I will table it. It's a very large picture of our Premier in *The Globe and Mail*, a national newspaper: "My fellow Canadians, Nova Scotia doesn't want you." I'll table that.

How did we get here? Eight months ago, the headlines in the newspapers across Canada were about Nova Scotia leading the country in COVID-19. Now the headlines in the articles in the national paper are how bad COVID-19 has gotten in Nova Scotia. Now we have headlines like this turning people away from Nova Scotia. How does that align to

attracting doctors? How does that align to increasing population? What damage does that headline do?

Anyway, we know that lawyers are working on this, their Charter challenge. We know this will hurt the Nova Scotia economy, it will hurt tourism, it will hurt local businesses, it will hurt municipalities, local communities, and we know that this is un-Canadian and this is a terribly poorly thought-out policy once again.

I want to close with a couple of comments on the Department of Finance and Treasury Board because it has such an important role in setting the tone for economic growth and investment in our province. These budget documents show that we are facing headwinds as far as economic growth is concerned. The financial modelling developed by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board used information provided - I am sure they did, this is what they do each year - by economists and financial institutions. It was vetted, reviewed by the Auditor General.

That modelling shows gross domestic product for Nova Scotia trending downward over the next two years, leading to a recession in 2024. Then today the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board dismissed his own staff and budget documents by stating: I have been in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board for eight months and no one has told me about the projected recession. Mx. Speaker, I'd like to table Page 56 of the budget documents with a graph that shows in 2024 a negative 0.2 per cent GDP.

This casual approach to our economic health by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board is deeply concerning. When I asked the minister in Question Period if he was concerned about the debt this government is accumulating and whether there were risks to a credit rating downgrade, his response was to tell stories about a chocolate bar.

Mr. Speaker, how can Nova Scotians be confident that this budget has the rigor and analysis that's needed? The recent and much-needed building of hospital infrastructure has added to government debt. It is needed and it is what the former Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Board would call good debt. Taking on debt to fund infrastructure that serves Nova Scotians for decades to come can, and perhaps should, be paid for with debt. Where governments get into fiscal trouble is when they use debt to fund operations - the DM would explain that this is bad debt. It's also sometimes referred to as structural debt.

The expansion of staff and wage increases to provide services by borrowing to create a structural debt - that debt has to stop at some point. It's not sustainable. I'm asking the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to keep an eye on this debt accumulation.

In the course of the government's mandate, the budget documents show an additional \$6 billion in debt. Now this additional debt, again in those budget documents, raises the debt-to-GDP ratio to 40 per cent. That debt-to-GDP ratio is really the metric that determines our ability to afford that debt.

Now at 40 per cent debt-to-GDP ratio in 2025 and 2026, the ratio will be higher than in 2013, where it was 38.1. That's when the Ivany report, the One NS Report, highlighted the economic danger that Nova Scotia was in and advised the government to begin to rein in debt.

In 2024, when the Province is predicted to encounter economic challenges, the Province will not be in a position to weather the storm. We will have amassed so much debt and be dependent on that debt for operations. These are all the more reasons to put in place measures to promote economic growth. But why then in this budget is the Department of Economic Development being cut?

These are a handful of examples that tell a larger story. It speaks to a casualness around this government's approach to its first budget. It speaks to their hope that Nova Scotians wouldn't notice that their election campaign commitments could be quietly dropped from their first budget. It speaks to the importance of how hard it is to manage competing pressures and why committing to a vision is critical to leading a province.

Rather than fooling Nova Scotians with word salads and marketing documents, Nova Scotians should have been told up front what is doable and what is not doable. What new measures link directly to the commitment to strategically grow our population and economy, address the labour shortage, and invest in our families and communities? Nova Scotians need their government to put effort into developing a budget, not just marketing it with words like "bold."

In short, Nova Scotians deserve better work and better answers on this government's commitment to spend \$13.1 billion in 2023. For its casualness around the numbers coupled with a lack of vision, this first budget in our new government deserves no better mark than D-. Thank you, Mx. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: Mx. Speaker, the budget which has provided the framework for so much of our discussions in these recent weeks and which is given a framework and is codified in the Financial Measures (2022) Act itself provides the yardstick by which it ought to be measured. The yardstick by which the budget ought to be measured which the budget itself provides is in the opening paragraph of the Finance and Treasury Board Minister's budget address.

There, there's a claim that in fact immediately after the address was read was then repeated for the media by the Premier. The claim comes from the first paragraph of the budget address. I'll table the report of the Premier's repeating of the sentence. The sentence that appears there is that this budget is a compassionate budget.

Now, this is a very considerable claim to make. It's not the same as saying this is a good budget or a budget with a vision of which we approve, or a budget which is consistent with X, Y, or Z policy position we have. It is a very precise claim with which to lay out the ground on the basis of which the budget may be evaluated.

[8:00 p.m.]

Compassionate doesn't just mean good or efficient or containing some things that are of worth. It has a very precise meaning. Just reflecting on the background of the word: "com" is something from some kind of Latin for "with" and passion, of course, we've just been through the season of Easter and the Christian tradition. You can see where the word comes from. It's precise meaning is to so register the suffering of another as to suffer together with them. That's what compassionate means.

When we say of a government's program that this is a compassionate program, a claim is being stated that this program defined by this budget is a program in which its authors are so moved by the suffering of those to whom the budget is directed, that the authors are suffering together with them, and this suffering is expressed in the work which is given form in the budget itself.

This is not the yardstick that I am putting forward for the budget. This is the yardstick which the Premier laid out for the budget. This is the yardstick which the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board laid out for the budget. It is there for all the province to measure the budget by the sentence: This budget is a compassionate budget.

I want to take a few minutes to examine this claim that compassion is the defining thing, as it has been claimed. Compassion is the defining thing that tells us what we have here in this budget. I would like to begin examining this claim with looking for a second or two at the practical economic context in which the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and the government has made this claim. The context, that is, of the budget as a whole, economically.

The context in which this budget has appeared before the people of the province is a particular economic conjuncture, one that is defined by dramatic increases in the cost of living at a scale that has not, in fact, been experienced in the lifetimes of anybody under the age of 30. So many different dimensions of this economic context throughout this session, throughout the budget debates, have been before us.

We can think just of a couple: furnace oil, a very major matter in a province where 36 per cent of houses are heated by oil. In this situation, it is very significant that the price of a tank of oil has, in a year, more than doubled from \$555 to \$1,178. (Interruption) I stand corrected, Mx. Speaker. It's not since the beginning of the year, it's since the beginning of the pandemic.

We know that parallel increases have taken place certainly with groceries. Item after item has either nearly doubled, as eggs have from just short of \$3 to just short of \$5, or has actually doubled like flour has from a 2.5 kg bag costing the same now at \$5.99 as a 5 kg bag did a year ago. Then there are all kinds of things that have more than doubled, like lots of kinds of meats where - say chicken breasts that were \$6.49 in 2020 are more than twice that now.

So fuel, heat, groceries, food, housing, of course everyone knows is up, gas everyone knows is up, and then we have spoken a great deal throughout the session and the consideration of legislation has been before us as well as the budget, about the parallel increases that are projected for power rates in Nova Scotia Power's present rate increase application.

Now whenever we have set this problem before the government as the context of this current budget, the Premier has always pointed out, repeatedly, through our debates over the last few weeks, that this is a global problem. This is not a Nova Scotia problem. This is a problem which has roots and has expression beyond our borders and certainly that is true.

That's why, when we think about this defining context of the budget, it is important to think about what are some of the measures that have been taken beyond our borders. When we recognize that it's a problem beyond Nova Scotia, and a problem dealt with in many, many jurisdictions at the present moment, we look to some of those other jurisdictions. We see, for example, where the NDP government in British Columbia weighing this, they came to the conclusion that they had to get money in people's hands and the way to do that was in a response to the increase of the price of gas, to get rebates in the hands of everybody who had a driver's license in the province. That was one way to do it.

In Québec they said, well, category after category after category after category is having these dramatic increases. We've got to do something. What we'll do is every household where they are bringing in less than \$100,000, in consideration of the cost of living increases, we will distribute a cheque for \$500.

In New Brunswick, the decision was taken that although programs of that expansiveness couldn't be done, what they could do was go to those who were at the very lowest income rung and attach their cheque to inflation. So New Brunswick, in consideration of the cost of living crisis, indexed income assistance to the cost of living.

One of the striking things about the budget that's been before us - certainly it was striking. The day the budget was put before us, in the midst of this context, a financial situation defined by astronomical cost of living increases, there are in fact in the budget, not any such direct parallel income transfers of the sort that were brought forward in B.C. or New Brunswick or Quebec. We can say anything we may want to say about this. Many

things have been said as we have spoken about this, as I did at a shortcoming over the last number of weeks. But I do not think that anyone can fairly say about this, that it is an example of compassion.

I want to briefly look at another element of the context of this budget, the situation in which the budget was brought forward, and that is that just a few days before the budget was brought forward on the 21st of March, the government just prior to bringing forward its financial program lifted the ban on renovictions. Now this bears thinking about for a moment.

The ban on renovictions, people will remember, was brought about in November 2020 by the previous government. It was done at a particular moment. The ban on renovictions was brought in in November 2020 at the very same time as the first rent cap was introduced. There's a reason for the two things to go together. It made all kinds of sense for the two things to go together at that time because with a 2 per cent across-the-board rent cap for existing tenancies, people knew in government that there was going to be a pressure on landlords to use major renovations as a way to get existing tenancies to wrap up. Thereby to put them in the position where they would have new tenants in which situation they would be able to evade the rent cap.

Therefore, the renovictions ban was a constitutive component for the previous government of the November 2020 bringing in the ban. Did it the same day, did it the same hour. That's why those two policies are conjoined.

I want to say also when we think about the context of this budget, I want to remind the House that the present government did exactly the same thing. I'm quite sure it was on the 28th of January - looking at the fact that the renovation ban was set to expire on the 1st of February - that the present government renewed the renovation ban. What an important thing that was.

The number of people with whom I was interacting with just out of my own constituency office who were facing renovictions to whom I was able to say, good news, the government has extended the renovictions ban. That happened on January 28th, and it made sense for the government to do that.

The government did not do that for a capricious or a one-off reason. The government did it for the same reason that it made sense for the preceding government to do it. Because in the context of a rent cap, if you don't have a renovictions ban, then renovictions are apt to be used by landlords - particularly larger-scale landlords - as a way to get out of existing tenancies, which are capped into new tenancies, which are not capped. Therefore, in order to make the rent cap effective and meaningful to those for whom it was designed, it had to be accompanied by a renovictions ban.

In lifting the ban on the 21st of March, three days before this budget was brought forward, the government opened the door to a torrent of evictions under the guise of renovations - these particular kinds of evictions that have become known as renovations. In my experience it was literally the next morning on March 22nd that we began to hear from people in our constituency office - tenants who had just received notices of renovation and who were in despair, facing the wholesale life disruption that happens when people are forced to move in a situation where they know perfectly well there isn't anywhere for them to move to.

As we have discussed this important context of the budget throughout this session, the minister responsible has responded at various times that, in his view, the harm this has caused is not as great as I or my colleagues in the NDP may have pictured it. He has suggested that the number of cases and documentation related to them that has come before his department doesn't suggest the kind of torrent that I have talked about.

I have said before that I think this is to speak in a way that is not actually engaging with how these things really work in real tenants' real lives because so much of this takes place nowhere near the Residential Tenancies Board's radar. So much of this happens that, as I said the other day, the notice appears on your door on the letterhead of the property management company, or it comes in the mail, or it's on the floor in front of you. The minute you have it, people move into the mode of saying, well, we have been notified, and the time has come for us to pack up and move.

Now the government and the minister have spoken about how there are new rules, and the rules could mitigate some of the problems that are related to renovations. I want to submit that when the government made the judgement on January 28th to extend the renovation ban, the government understood this situation, understood the points that I'm making this evening, and the government did what was right.

The difficulty is that they didn't stand by the right decision that they made. As a consequence, when the ban was lifted on the 21st of March, we have had a tide which has not been stemmed. Numerous instances of it have come forward this week. I spoke about some of them earlier in Question Period. We see this all across the province.

Mr. Speaker, there's a fundamental principle about managing a crisis that, when you're in a cost of living crisis or any kind of crisis, must apply for effective management. In this context in which this budget was brought forward, I think this principle is important for us to set before us, and that is, do not make things worse. The cost of living crisis in Nova Scotia was made worse, in my judgement, by the lifting of the ban on renovations just before the budget was brought in. I think it is very hard, very difficult, to see that as an example of compassion.

I want to consider also a third element of the context of this budget. That is the important context - I think it is a positive thing that we have been talking about this over

the last three or four weeks. I think it's a very important element of the context of the budget is income assistance levels in Nova Scotia. A significant part of the context for budget 2022-23 is income assistance levels in our province that are, for every single household configuration, either the lowest or the second-lowest in all our country. I want to speak some about what that means in actual dollar terms.

[8:15 p.m.]

Nova Scotia's income assistance level for a family of one parent and one child is 10 out of 10. It is the lowest in all of Canada. It provides that family with a living that is just 61 per cent of Canada's official poverty line.

Nova Scotia's income assistance level for a couple with two children is 9 out of 10. It's the second-lowest in Canada. It provides that family with an income level that is only 65 per cent of the poverty line.

Nova Scotia provides income assistance to single people with a disability at an annual income level of \$11,092. The parallel figure for single people who do not have a disability is an annual income of \$7,920. Both of these latter numbers, the \$11,092 for single people with a disability and the \$7,920 for single people without a disability, are the second-lowest in all of Canada.

So it is when we think about a budget brought forward in the midst of the greatest inflationary pressure on prices in 30 years, it is significant that Budget 2022-23 provides for no increases in Income Assistance in Nova Scotia.

It does, however, make a very precise forecast about inflationary pressures. The projected increase in the next 12 months for inflationary pressures, as it's laid out for the upcoming budget year in the budget, is 4.2 per cent.

The effect of this may be calculated as follows. A single adult with a disability will have an inflation-adjusted annual income decrease of \$486, which will lower their real income from the \$11,092 I just mentioned to \$10,606 a year. A single adult who does not have a disability is going to have an inflation-adjusted decrease of \$333, which is going to lower their annual income from \$7,920 to \$7,587.

I want to say about these numbers that I think it's important to understand that these numbers are the sole responsibility of the authors of the budget. These numbers are the sole responsibility of the government that made the decision, in a 30-year inflationary high, not to make any adjustment for Income Assistance in the 2022-23 budget.

We can say many things about that. Many things have been said by the government as we have challenged this decision, as we have questioned it, as we've probed to understand why you would do that. A 30-year high in inflation, a 4.2 per cent inflationary

forecast, Income Assistance where you've got one whole level making an income of under \$8,000 a year, and you don't increase it at all.

A lot of answers have come back. A lot of explanations. A lot of rationales. A lot of background. All of that is well and good, but the one thing that I think you cannot say about it, Mr. Speaker, is that it is a decision defined by compassion.

The government routinely points to various things that they have done. They've pointed to a series of things that they have done to address the inadequacy of household income as we have debated these issues about the budget in the course of this session.

I think a number of the points that the government has made in the course of debating this subject are worth thinking about together for a moment and considering. The government points to improvements that have been made in the Nova Scotia Child Benefit and certainly that's the case. However, here as elsewhere, it increases in the cost of living - it is inflationary pressures - that are the things that really need to be considered and really need to be understood.

In a 4.2 per cent cost of living environment, a two-parent, two-child family receiving Income Assistance, with the \$30-per-child-per-month increase in the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, will in fact receive no real inflation-adjusted income improvement at all. And a one-parent, one-child family will see their real adjusted income decline by \$192 a year, or 1.5 per cent.

Again, there are various things you could say about this. Certainly, many things that you could say in favour of the increase of the Nova Scotia Child Benefit. I do not question that. I do think, however, that adjusting the benefit in a way that is so modest relative to Income Assistance that if a one-parent, one-child family - even counting in the new Nova Scotia Child Benefit - is going to go behind almost \$200 in inflation-adjusted money next year, I do not think that qualifies as compassion.

The government also refers, in these discussions, I think reasonably, to the welcome \$150 that was announced not very long before the budget, to be paid to eligible recipients of the Heating Assistance Rebate Program. Certainly, no one's going to argue about people having \$150 who didn't have \$150 before. A \$150 that a person who needs it receives is a lot better than \$150 that they don't receive. We should be clear that at current oil prices in a standard 900-litre tank, \$150 moves that gauge in the basement by almost exactly one-eighth of a tank.

So when a person does not have the money to put oil in their tank and is not sure what to do for their household and decides, "Well, the thing I've got to do is turn to my government," and they turn to the government and the government receives their need and says, "Here, you can have one-eighth of a tank" - well, I think that's better than no one-eighth of a tank, but I do not think it qualifies as compassion.

I think something parallel is true in housing. It is a striking number that of the 22,600 new housing units announced the day after the budget for the HRM, the number that is guaranteed for permanent, affordable housing is zero, and the money that's being provided for affordable housing in this budget, around \$8 million, is all - that is all, 100 per cent - directed to private developers who will make affordable units available for a period, until the agreement expires, and then at that time the price is going to be set not by compassion. The price is going to be set by something that often doesn't have very much compassion: Mr. Market.

Think about the minimum wage as well. In the course of our budget debates, as we have been thinking daily about the budget, the minimum wage went up 40 cents to \$13.35. Going up to \$13.35 is on a path, the government said, in announcing the increase, to \$15. But in this all-important context of a 30-year high in the cost of living, a path to \$15 surely is yesterday's discussion. Where we need to be in April 2022 is on a path not to \$15. We need to be on a path from \$15 to a real, living wage in Nova Scotia.

This is not a matter that's shrouded in any kind of vagueness. There is real fiscal, economic precision known about this question. We know exactly, in every part of Nova Scotia, how much two people in a household, if they each have a 40-hour a week job - we know exactly now what they need to make in order for that household to make its basic needs. It's all been calculated.

It ranges in different parts of the province. In Cape Breton, it's \$18.65. Here in the HRM, it's \$22.05. I submit that if the government's program does not envision a path to a place where those two people with their two incomes - if it doesn't envision a path where those two people with those two incomes and those two jobs can supply their household's basic needs, then it is not accurate to describe that program with the word "compassion."

Compassion really is, in truth, this wonderful idea of being so moved by the hard time that's being had by another person, that some real dimension of that hard time actually comes upon your own shoulders. It's a powerful, powerful concept at the foundation of many positive things.

Compassion also, like all big and powerful things, has an opposite. The opposite of compassion is being at a certain remove from suffering, being at a certain distance from that suffering, being unmoved, not being shaken by that suffering. Which is to say, relative to that suffering, being at some kind of a level - whatever the reason, being out of touch.

This is exactly, I am submitting, what we have in the program that is set out in the budget that we are voting on this evening - a budget that in its opening sentence, in its opening paragraph, in its opening words, sets a bar which it then fails utterly to meet.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the two previous speakers for outlining a number of the concerns that they have with the budget. They've both done exhaustive looks at the budget in different ways.

I think that every budget tells a story about what's important to a government. With that opening line that my colleague from Halifax Chebucto mentioned about this being a compassionate budget, I think the budget told a story about how the government would like to be seen. It wants to be seen as compassionate.

As we've heard tonight, there's no additional help for seniors, there's no additional help for those who are looking for assistance with rising costs unless you're accessing fertility treatment, unless you have a child under the age of 18 and you get the Nova Scotia Child Benefit. Persons with disabilities have further assistance, and there's a tax credit for children's sports and arts program. All of those are important, but they're not enough.

I guess last year's budget, with \$100 per adult increase is probably difficult to top, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try. We had no idea when we did that \$100 per adult increase that inflation would be as bad as it was this year. We had hoped the \$100 per adult would go a further way along, and I so wish that it had.

We don't have an increase to income assistance, and that's a really big issue, because the people who have lower incomes here in this province are the people for whom the cost of living is squeezing their lives. For them, not having an increase is much more serious than you or I not getting an increase.

We know that rentals have been particularly squeezed at the lower end, because those have suddenly become very attractive to investors, so we're seeing in many different constituencies, and we've heard from the member for Dartmouth North in particular, for Halifax Atlantic, we've heard in particular about landlords moving in, buying up these buildings, and renovating their clients, and suddenly a rental that was affordable on income assistance with a lot of creativity, I suppose, is suddenly coming back on the market at double or more the cost of the rental.

That's why the ban on renovations was so important, and that's why it was coupled with the rent cap, because if you don't have a ban on renovations, that becomes an easy way for a landlord to take in more money, do some renovations, and get some new tenants in.

That part wasn't compassionate. As has been noted, we're now facing the highest rates of inflation that we've seen in three decades. We've just seen the biggest jump in interest rates that we've seen in two decades. A 50-basis point increase has been unheard of for two decades, and yet we have that on top of what was a quarter-percentage increase earlier in the year. For people who don't have a lot of disposable income, unfortunately living on credit cards and other forms of credit is a way of life, and for them, increases of

this nature make it even harder. This budget didn't contain any housing for people living on lower incomes. There are no direct transfers that we heard, there's nothing new for seniors.

[8:30 p.m.]

The story of the budget was supposed to be that it was a health care budget and that on budget day, that's what the headlines were, it's a health care budget. Except for, it turned out, that we actually spent more last year on health care.

So while it was a large investment in health care, it wasn't an historic investment in health care by any stretch of the imagination. Then we got the plan which really doesn't tell us how it's going to be spent or when we can expect things to be achieved or what the outcome should be. It's another marketing document.

You know when we talk about stories, the Premier likes to talk about people who govern by sound bites, and he accused us of doing that a lot. It just seems to me that that's really what we're seeing. I've spoken about this before, how when you have a partner who likes to accuse you of things, and it turns out it's exactly what they're doing. That's what was happening over here, a government by sound bites. When you look for the evidence of what's actually there, there's no there there.

If we look at this health care budget, what I can tell you is our caucus here, we are getting so many reach-outs right now from people in our constituencies or people we know from other constituencies, and they are mad as heck. They are mad as heck because well, they have COVID-19, and it turns out for them, even really fit people. We're hearing from people who have COVID-19, and they are sick, and it has been 11 days and they are a small business person and they can't go to work and they're mad as heck because these were no longer mandated, there are no gathering limits, and people are going to big events and they're coming home and they're sick. They are not just a little bit sick, they're really sick.

I had a text from a former constituent who is really convinced he ought to be suing the province for loss of income because of this. Of course, by the time you hire a lawyer he wouldn't recoup the money so it's not going to happen. The truth of the matter is people are waking up to the fact that there is COVID-19 everywhere and it didn't have to be like this.

Then we hear from people who have taken their sick children to the IWK, and the ER is jammed because there are more sick kids with COVID-19 than we've ever seen before. Again, this was avoidable if the government had, oh, I don't know, continued to leave in place some very basic public health measures that have protected this population all throughout the pandemic. But that didn't happen.

So it's not compassionate and they may have money in the budget for health care but the way they are going now, gosh, we're going to need it because we've got a lot of sick people. By every measure, health care is worse in their short time in office.

We know that long-term care workers aren't showing up for their shifts because they're sick. Again, we didn't take health care measures because we're mean or zealots, we did it because you have to protect the health care system and they are not doing that. People aren't showing up for their shifts, whether it's in long-term care or whether it's in our hospitals, people are not showing up for their shifts because they are sick.

Hospitals are above capacity. ERs are closed. We just got word that one in the riding of Annapolis is closed for weeks again, during COVID-19, during the pandemic, closed the ER. Again. It was closed for months in the Fall and now it's closed again.

We were told, Nova Scotians were told, that every day under this government, health care would get better. But wait times are up. We heard that in long-term care, 400 people got moved out of hospital and into home care. But the problem is, nobody's showing up for their home care. We have seniors waiting for meals, waiting for care, waiting to have their bedding changed or their diapers changed, and that's not happening.

We heard tonight about a woman who had just given birth, and she kept expecting to be admitted to hospital and stay there. She heard from her family doctor that she should be in hospital. They have no place to put her. Surgery wait times aren't any better. They're worse. They're cancelling surgeries all over the place.

The reason is COVID-19. We're up to 178 deaths now - 178 deaths - since Omicron hit in December. This supposed mild illness - and for some people it is mild. For some people it's like a cold, but for an awful lot of people, including healthy people, and for an awful lot of people who are vulnerable either - because of their age or because they have pre-existing conditions, or they live in precarious health - it is not a mild illness.

We are not protecting our elderly. We are not protecting our most vulnerable neighbours. That's the story that we have right now in health care. What we do have in this budget is what was billed to us - again, it's a story - that this was going to be about creating more housing for people who need housing here in Nova Scotia. As we see our population grow, we have a Premier in a campaign saying, come to Nova Scotia. I don't know where the people who are going to come to Nova Scotia - and gosh, we would love to have more health care workers and tradespersons, but where are these people supposed to live? It feels a little cart before the horse here. We're saying to people, move here. What are we going to do, set up tents on the Commons to put them in?

We're having people come to this province or, as I heard about the other day, companies that want to set up here in the province - a financial company wanted to move here, a lot of accountants, an average salary is \$100,000 a year, but they couldn't find

places for their people to live. They're not coming here now. Without housing, they have a problem. There's nothing in here to help with that.

The *Financial Post* had a story yesterday, and I hope my colleagues will indulge me if I quote from it for a bit. It's entitled "William Watson: New Taxes Mean 'Farewell To Nova Scotia.'" I don't think that was the song that the government was hoping to hear coming out of this budget. Maybe it would be "We're in the Money," but it wasn't "Farewell to Nova Scotia." It talks a lot about who this tax is aimed at. Then it goes on to talk about the theory that was behind this, that suddenly people would sell their mansions, and other people would buy them. Really, who's going to buy the expensive ones?

Of course there is the issue of Winterized cottages, and we had quite a conversation about that the other day. I looked up what the average temperatures are in Nova Scotia, and I'm pretty sure we need to have Winterized cottages here if people are going to rent them out. In November, the low is zero; in December, the low is -6; in January, -10; in February, -10; in March, -6; April, zero; and May, 5. Maybe you could be living in there, but it could be a little dicey.

Many of these properties are not Winterized, and they are not going to turn suddenly into desirable, year-round rentals without a fair amount of money going in. The author of this particular story, William Watson, in the *Financial Post* notes:

"Even so, it's hard to believe big numbers would be involved. The provincial minister of finance, bless him, said, 'There is no way to concretely know for sure until this is implemented' what its effects will be. Candour of this purity is rare in politics. Is it too late for [the member for Inverness] to run for federal conservative leader?"

I have to say, to the Finance and Treasury Board Minister, there's somebody who's trying to draft you. He then adds, "I'd add only that even after implementation people will argue about what the taxes' effects were." He very much does doubt about the efficacy of this particular measure, and I will table that particular story.

Then we go to the story that my colleague from Kings South - I'm so used to the federal ridings. It's entitled, "My fellow Canadians, Nova Scotia doesn't want you", written by Noah Richler, who lives in Nova Scotia for part of the year in Sandy Cove. He has a story here and he's not happy about this, I have to say. He notes that, in fact, this is a very different measure than what we have seen in other provinces.

We all heard talk at Law Amendments Committee about a potential Charter-based challenge to the constitutionality of the new taxes, and he goes on to note:

"The challenge is viable because, unlike the B.C. Speculation and Vacancy Tax to which it is sometimes compared, the Nova Scotia

version - with levies that are four times as great - is not a tax on houses but on people. Which is how the Houston government has always intended it: Out-of-province property owners own 3.6 per cent of Nova Scotian homes, but this quotient pales next to the number of individual multiple property owners who are full-time residents - and who are presumably also, and even more significantly, excluding ordinary Nova Scotians from being able to afford a home. But rather than mine this infinitely more remunerative seam - 21.6 per cent of full-time Nova Scotia residents are multiple property owners accounting for 40.9 per cent of properties owned - non-voters are the ones being strong-armed.”

[8:45 p.m.]

He goes on to say that the Premier “would only grudgingly say, ‘I don’t want there to be any kind of misunderstanding of the contribution that I and the government believes [sic] that non-residents make. . . . They do improve their properties, they do eat out.’”

Mr. Richler goes on to note that they also take up space, and then he takes aim at our Minister of Economic Development:

“The appetite of non-residents for property, says [the Minister of Economic Development], ‘moved inland during the pandemic’ with ‘the effect of squeezing out our own.’ Now ‘people from other areas of the country abroad are finally seeing opportunities here for good jobs and a great life’ and room must be made for these permanent, rather than seasonal, residents - turning the tide on generations of Nova Scotia outmigration.”

It goes on to quote the minister as saying, “‘For too long we collectively bought in to the idea that you had to leave Nova Scotia to prove your mettle.’” He goes on to note that that’s not true. “Nova Scotians didn’t lose generations of workers to an ‘idea.’ Nova Scotians . . . moved away because there were no meaningful jobs in the province” for many years. “It’s not going to be an ‘idea’ that changes that, but a policy” and this is not the right policy.

He has some very strong words near the end of it. Some of his Nova Scotia friends, he said, are “sympathetic - and alarmed.” He goes on to say:

“A few, even before the Conservatives’ coercion, suggested my partner and I make Nova Scotia our principal residence. And, truth be told, the trickster in me likes the irony of this idea - that as an aging couple we would in the long run end up costing far more to the province than the Nova Scotia government is able to reap from

us now. But we're not about to be coerced by" - an un-Parliamentary term - "at the border rifling through our pockets and demanding the keys to the house in the name of an ill-conceived, unresearched housing policy that will ultimately backfire, if it is not doing so already."

At the end of the day, we have the story of the budget. The story of the budget was supposed to be that it was a health care budget. But it wasn't a health care budget because we don't even know what it's going to be spent on. We don't know what the timelines are. We didn't see a big increase in staff at the department. We just don't know. There's no "there" there at all.

What there was in here was a tax and it was a tax on a certain group of people. It turns out that that tax wasn't there to raise money for housing, because it's not going, as my colleague for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth suggested, that we in fact direct the money to the municipalities to pay for housing, but it's not going there. It's going into general revenues.

In fact, what we saw was, earlier this week, the Premier admitted that this tax wasn't about housing at all. He said on Wednesday, in *allNovaScotia*, that the demands on government are very significant; we have a \$500 million deficit. That's what this tax is about. It is about bringing down the deficit, which is a worthy goal. We would like to see Nova Scotia with balanced budgets.

The story of this budget is that it's not a health care budget. It's not a compassionate budget. It is a tax grab budget. It's a tax grab budget from people who don't vote, who cannot vote because they are not residents here.

For me, the concern about all of this is that it's not going to result in more affordable housing, which is what we need to help in so many areas. If we look at the plan to bring in health care workers and tradespeople, ensuring that they have a place to live would be a good start. It would make Nova Scotia really attractive.

But if we're not spending money on that key thing - if this money is not going to that particular concern, why would people move here? If we're out there saying, come to Nova Scotia, we have a great lifestyle, but you can live in a tent on the Common, I don't think it's quite as attractive as it was beforehand.

There's nothing in this budget that deals with Airbnbs or Vrbos. There's nothing here to deal with the long-term rentals that have come off the market. In fact, as we now head into what could be a tourism season, unless the health care system is completely overwhelmed, which was always one of our gravest concerns when the pandemic hit. We saw what happens when a health care system gets overwhelmed. We saw what happened

in Québec. They had to call in the military. It does nothing to help deal with the long-term rental situation.

This is an overly broad and not specific tax. It takes a broad brush, it takes a whole group of people and says, we're going to tax you extra. There are families who have come here for generations. They consider themselves Nova Scotians. They may, in fact, be Nova Scotians who did move away to pursue opportunities because at the time there weren't any opportunities here.

There are many families for whom this new tax will be a hardship. Not everybody who owns a vacation house in Nova Scotia is rich or comes from family money. Sometimes the family money has dwindled over generations too. For those families, this is going to be a hardship, and they will sell. They will remember how they felt here, how they were made to feel in Nova Scotia - that they were a cash cow and nothing more.

I do commend the government for a number of the steps that they took that I mentioned off the top. There was some help for families, for persons with disabilities, but for everybody else, for people who want housing now, who need housing now, there's no sign of help. For so many people who live on fixed incomes, whether it's seniors or persons who are on income assistance, the current rate of inflation is so difficult for them to deal with that this budget has to be a disappointment. It's not compassionate. I would argue it's not particularly fair, and we are disappointed with it.

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

LISA LACHANCE: I'd really like to acknowledge my colleagues who have been speaking before me on this final third reading of the FMA (2022). I've appreciated their words, and I'm hoping that in a relatively brief amount of time I will simply highlight a number of the key themes.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. Can we keep the chatter down, please?

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: The first thing I want to do is actually continue on a bit of my theme that we're not sitting here on the Opposition side to oppose for opposing's sake. Actually, what we're interested in is trying to help make a better Nova Scotia in so many ways. I'm going to start by talking a bit about the financial allocation that was made to mental health in this budget.

As we know, there's about \$20.4 million of an increase in mental health spending proposed in this budget - \$12 million of that is going to early intervention for autism and working closely with the IWK mental health centre, as well as Autism Nova Scotia. This

is important work. This is critical work. This is about setting children and families on the right path at an absolute critical time for intervention, so this is important, absolutely.

I also appreciate a productive conversation I had with the Minister of Addictions and Mental Health during Estimates for a commitment to look into supports across the lifespan for folks with autism, with a particular focus on adolescent young people who often fall between the cracks and have a hard time in school and receiving the required services that they need.

In the budget increase, there are significant allocations to data evaluation and analysis, and I know the needs out there. I know people are waiting a year. Young people are waiting a year at CBRM for their mental health treatment, and I know that is having long-term impacts. At the same time, I also know, as someone who has been around the system for a number of years, that we actually don't know enough to effectively make change, so I support this investment.

The recovery centres that are promised to open across the province are currently promising the day hospital. I'm curious about the plan to expand it outside of HRM. I'm curious to look at its evaluation, but again, really interesting, innovative work. However, I think it is important that I point out that it is not what was promised. What was promised was an additional \$80 million and change, as well as universal mental health care.

I think when I go back through these items, I think it's quite reasonable to say okay, great, what's next? I know we're being told to have faith, but it's hard to see where that is. I don't see it in the fiscal plan. I don't see it in the next four years. We gave the minister a lot of chances at Estimates to explain a ramp-up, to explain what was coming, and we didn't get that.

I think a lot of Nova Scotians may look at this and say early intervention for autism is important but it's not universal mental health care. Data evaluations and analysis - I bet a lot of Nova Scotians aren't going to think that was necessarily an important allocation, and they're probably not going to think that it's universal mental health care.

The recovery centres and day hospitals, while important to work with some of the most vulnerable folks in our mental health system, again, that's not the universal mental health care that was promised. Our role is to look at these numbers and try to understand them and especially at the beginning of a four-year mandate look at what government is presenting to bring forward.

We have them relying on the scattered bunch of public documents. When the platform was available online, the Speech from the Throne, the mandate letters, the budget, a really intriguing part of the Speech from the Throne was the development of 90-day plans that each minister was responsible for. Then in the end, those actually haven't been tabled or shared. My understanding from various Estimates conversations is that perhaps they're

not going to be made public. Again, we really feel on this side of the House that we're lacking information.

[9:00 p.m.]

My colleague, the member for Halifax Chebucto, spoke so eloquently on the consideration of this budget as a compassionate budget. I think it's clear that it lacks a real answer for Nova Scotians who are facing a cost of living crisis. Again, as my honourable colleague mentioned, we know there were one-time payouts and \$150 is better than not having \$150, but it doesn't allow for folks to have systemic changes in their lives. It doesn't allow to plan for the future, and that money is gone.

We've also been told, well, that's okay, income assistance is just one program, there are other ways to access support. That is true as well, but I think that's a very exhausting way to live. I think actually the conversation around renovations highlights how challenging this can be.

People talk about there's a process, there's a process, you receive a renovation notice and then there's a process. I think that if I received a renovation notice and I knew that I didn't have the appropriate income to afford the market rate - and not that there's anything out there to rent - I'm not sure I would spend time trying to fight in a process that may not, in fact, deliver. You don't have time for that. If you've got two months to move out, where is your time to go fight in the bureaucracy for a system that you don't know and try to pull things together for your family?

For all of us, I think people end up at our offices when they have run out of options, when pilot programs end, and when it is just too confusing to fill the gaps.

It's true, we do have some answers that we've talked about for the affordability crisis, that we talked about throughout this session: raise the minimum wage; increase all social payments to match the current Consumer Price Index; stop clawing back CERB from income assistance clients; don't renew the rent cap; establish an ongoing rent control regime; build non-market housing, including public housing and truly affordable, rent-geared-to-income units; implement permanent paid sick leave in the Labour Standards Code; fund a universal school food program; cover more drugs and medical devices like birth control, insulin pumps, Shingrix; and advocate with federal counterparts for an expansive, truly universal pharma care program.

Set us on a path to free, public, post-secondary education by eliminating tuition at NSCC. Make the investments to back up the commitment to end poverty: ensuring internet and cell services are actually affordable, funding community transportation, and engaging with stakeholders, including Opposition parties - we are MLAs who represent communities in this province - on the solutions.

I would like to comment on a few of the specific FMA (2022) elements. We have spent an enormous amount of time talking about the proposed non-resident property tax. As a member of Law Amendments, I also spent a lot of time listening to folks there. I have read every letter that has been emailed to us at least once.

I think my colleagues have done a great job of enumerating people's concerns. I think my fundamental concern is that we've also heard from public policy experts who just note this as a failed piece of public policy potentially opening us up to a Charter challenge. I am not going to read anybody else's letters. Well, I am going to be reading a letter, but I'm not going to read any more public policy letters, but they are there.

I hope everyone saw that we have a letter from Kevin Lynch. Kevin Lynch is an economist. He was the federal deputy minister of Industry. He was the federal deputy minister of Finance, and he was the Clerk of the Privy Council and, I will say, under a range of governments, so this is not one perspective. He lives here now, so actually he doesn't have skin in the game. He is not worried about the impact for himself, but he highlights in his two-page letter that this is a failed piece of public policy. I think that when folks like that pronounce on that, those are the types of experts that we need to learn from.

You know, we and so many people are like - well we do, of course, understand that you have a housing crisis. Of course, we want people to have safe, secure, accessible housing in Nova Scotia - except that this isn't actually what this is about. We proposed an amendment - a very simple amendment - that would make that link actually tangible, that would make that link real that people are making in their heads. We proposed that all new revenue from this tax would be set aside to build affordable, non-market housing.

The government didn't support that idea. Yet, at the same time, we know that people are sort of allowing that as part of the rumours around this tax. That it is going to help, it's for housing, so people are safe. That's just not the case.

I will read one more letter from a family affected by this proposed tax . . .
(Interruption)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I am sorry but there is still a lot of idle chatter on both sides of the House. I am just going to ask that you try to control it, please.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE:

"The proposed tax on out-of-province homeowners seems like legislation that has good intentions of reducing housing and security, but in the end will do nothing but hurt rural Nova Scotia communities.

A few years ago, my brothers and their wives bought a small, ramshackle, old fisherman's house in Port Felix near Canso. Most of the locals thought they were crazy, that it was too far gone, the only thing to do was tear it down and build a new house. But they gutted it, rebuilt it, and turned it into a lovely little home that people often stop to take pictures of. They have spent thousands of dollars in the local community hiring tradespeople, buying supplies, and supporting local businesses in both Guysborough and Canso.

Since then, many people have stopped and thanked them for saving and fixing up a part of their community. There are hundreds of houses like this across Guysborough County that sit empty and neglected, a reminder of families who left them behind for a variety of reasons, houses that remain empty, since the work that will be required to make them livable is simply too big of an investment for most.

Over a year ago, my born-and-raised Nova Scotia partner and I bought one of these Guysborough country homes, a 100-year-old farmhouse that had been on and off the market for about two years. It hadn't sold because of the crumbling foundation. Extensive foundation work was going to be needed to save it; however, we fell in love with the area while visiting my brother, and knowing it was the only place in the area we would ever be able to afford, we took a risk that we could save it and bought it.

We had always planned to retire to Nova Scotia in about 10 years' time and hoped to buy then, but the opportunity presented itself. The foundation was in worse shape than we realized; one more year and it would have likely been beyond repair but after a Summer of backbreaking work and countless trips to local businesses, that old house is now standing tall on the hill where it has sat for over 100 years. People stop and thank us for saving it, for coming into the community and spending our money and supporting the local businesses."

I won't continue, but we know this, right? We have actually at this point probably received hundreds of letters and we must be nearing a thousand at this point.

These are very real concerns that folks have raised. Coupled with the advice from public policy experts from within Nova Scotia and outside, this isn't a good tax measure. I truly wish the government had taken time to really think about this, to build the business case. I appreciate the comments and the run-through of the cost-benefit analysis from the

honourable member for Northside-Westmount from yesterday. That's the type of analysis that needs to go into public policy before we put it in place.

Another tax credit that I just want to talk about is the Nova Scotia Children's Sports and Arts Refundable Tax Credit. Obviously, it is hard to argue against music and activities and sports for young people. However, the actual policy goal of this piece of legislation is not clear. Tax credits are a poor way of connecting social policy. They do nothing for families who don't have the upfront ability to pay. We want to make sure all families can take advantage regardless of their financial situation. It's a small cost to the province as being proposed and yet that small cost to the province, if invested in community organizations, would allow communities to work and mobilize young people in their communities across their lifespan.

I have been around the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. I know other honourable members were talking about their time as well. We have very few tax waivers. This one was on a list in 2008 and I can't even remember the whole saga of events, but it comes and it goes, and it comes and it goes because it's actually not very effective about what it's supposed to do but it's also not very expensive. It sounds good but it doesn't do much. But there we go, we have it in this budget this year.

I guess one thing about a budget, as other members have said, is that it allows you to understand folks' priorities and folks' perspectives. We've had conversations about people making choices and making decisions, but I would argue, of course, that many people face limited or non-existent choices, impossible decisions, and nothing that can adapt to or overcome structural barriers or oppression. I'm not asking for folks to be uplifted. In fact, I think public policies based on principles of respect and compassion would be better to guide us in our actions.

In a surprising, surprising move tonight, I'm going to quote the Pope. I have been enjoying trying to work my way through this book by Mark Carney - everyone should probably have a look at it. I thought this was an interesting perspective that actually balances some of what we heard from this side of the Opposition, in terms of working towards economic development and supporting the market, and this side, where we talk about compassion, rights, justice, and dignity. I'll bring those together.

This is the story of Pope Francis joining a lunch with Mark Carney and other policy makers, businesspeople, academics, and labour leaders who are at the Vatican to discuss the future of the market system:

"Pope Francis surprised us by joining the lunch and sharing a parable. He observed that our meal will be accompanied by wine. Now, wine has many things. It has a bouquet, colour, richness of taste that all compliment the food. It has alcohol, which can enliven the mind. Wine enriches all our senses and at the end of the feast,

we will have grappa. Grappa is one thing: alcohol. Grappa is wine, distilled.

Humanity has many things: passionate, curious, rational, altruistic, creative, self-interested. But the market has one thing: self-interest. The market is humanity, distilled. Your job, he said, is to turn grappa back into wine. To turn the market back into humanity.”

I think that’s our challenge: It’s to turn the market back into humanity and support a truly compassionate budget. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Thank you to the member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. That was a great quote. Thank you for sharing that with us. I’d like to add my comments on behalf of the people of Cumberland North on the Financial Measures (2022) Act.

The very first Part 1 of the Financial Measures (2022) Act is repealing the Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. A couple of nights ago, I read the Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act to see what was being repealed. One of the important aspects of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act is to remove interprovincial barriers and to make sure that we can try to empower trade in between provinces.

I’m not sure why that is being repealed. The power is being put in Governor in Council, but hopefully it is not going to put barriers in place when we really need barriers to be removed between provinces. No one knows that better than the people whom I represent in Cumberland North. Really, all of the people of Cumberland County.

The fact is, the members who have been elected at the same time as me know that they’ve heard me say, because I share what the people from Cumberland North want me to say, and that is that they feel that they have been forgotten for quite a long period of time.

When the Cobequid Pass toll was put in place in 1996 or so, that just reinforced that feeling of being divided from the rest of the province. I know I’ve heard people from Cape Breton say the same thing, that they feel like they’re not part of the province. The causeway is there.

I can tell you that I don’t know if anyone feels more isolated from Nova Scotia than the people of Cumberland County in the past. I’m thankful to the Premier and to this government when they did remove the tolls, as promised, for the people of Nova Scotia - for the businesses and the residents - but more work needs to be done.

[9:15 p.m.]

When the pandemic happened and interprovincial border barriers were set up, it was terrible. Probably the worst experience that many people living in Cumberland County have ever had to go through.

You had the tolls on one side keeping you from the rest of Nova Scotia and on the other side, you had border guards keeping you from going in and out of New Brunswick. The fact is, 40 per cent of our health care workers at the hospital live in Sackville. We won't go into all those details, but there is a lot of healing that needs to be done for the people of Cumberland County.

People will say that they don't even feel like they're part of Nova Scotia. We should just join New Brunswick. If I could have a quarter for every time I heard someone in Cumberland County say that, or how many times I've been asked to start a new party and call it the Maritime Party because they think we should be one Maritime region. They're sick and tired of being a region of Nova Scotia that is forgotten.

There's a lot of work to be done to remove barriers. We'll see what happens with this Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act being repealed and what the plan is there.

I think nothing emphasizes it to me - I always thought that yes, we do tend to get the short end of the stick in Cumberland County, but we'll keep making sure that our voices are heard, and I kept working on that. Then one day, the Mayor of the Municipality of Cumberland, the Mayor of Amherst, myself, a couple of other councillors, had a meeting with the deputies from the Department of Environment and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - TIR at the time.

It was about the barriers set up at the Nova Scotia border. It was in January when it was put right on the Trans-Canada Highway, those cement barriers. People were very concerned: There wasn't enough lighting, the speed limit is normally 110 kilometres an hour and people were driving up and almost hitting. There was not enough signage and a former Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is now our mayor and he begged and pleaded for the deputy ministers to listen and remove this from our Trans-Canada Highway to prevent an accident.

During that conversation the deputy minister made reference to the border and counting people who come into the province and numbers and data and how they do that now at the Cobequid Pass. In that conversation I said, excuse me, can I just clarify something? He said, sure. I said, did you just say that you count the number of people who enter the province of Nova Scotia at the Cobequid Pass? He said yes. And the mayors were - people were in disbelief.

I share that story with you because you need to know that when I bring the voices of the people of Cumberland North and Cumberland County, that it's a lot of frustration because they do not feel like they are part of this province.

When you start counting people who enter the province of Nova Scotia at the Cobequid Pass, that sends a pretty strong message about what the bureaucrats here in offices in Halifax think of Cumberland County. Now it was within a day or two that it got moved back to the border because of the disbelief that myself and the mayors had at that meeting, but that spoke volumes to us.

I'm going to speak about the needs of the people of Cumberland County and what we're seeing in this budget and the first thing that I think needs to be of great importance to all Nova Scotians, including every MLA, is the Chignecto Isthmus. I've brought that up a few times. We all know that there's absolutely no money allocated for the Chignecto Isthmus. I am confident that we will see something in next year's budget. I'm definitely concerned about the lack of interest that our province historically - maybe the new minister will take an interest, but we've kind of left everything up to New Brunswick to lead the Chignecto Isthmus Climate Change Adaptation Engineering and Feasibility Study. Really Nova Scotia hasn't - there's a bit of knowledge in our department but we have definitely not taken a lead.

I had a meeting with CN Rail. They said they haven't heard from anyone from Nova Scotia about the concerns with the CN line for a few years. So we definitely need to make the Chignecto Isthmus a priority so that Nova Scotia does not become an island. It is a real threat from the rising sea levels; it's well-known. In the information that I quoted this morning in Question Period, if there is a disruption to the CN rail line and the Trans-Canada Highway, we're disrupting \$52 million a day or \$35 billion worth of goods in a year. So we're cutting off the goods that would come into the Port of Halifax, the Halifax Stanfield International Airport, from getting to their destinations, which can be anywhere in Canada, anywhere on the Eastern Seaboard.

We need to prioritize the Chignecto Isthmus, the protection of it. We need to rebuild those dikes and we just need to get the work done. When the study was released, the Premier said that he wouldn't commit to a timeline, they're looking at maybe 10 years. I guarantee you there will be damage before 10 years, and we will have a disruption in our critical infrastructure system if that is not repaired. The report states that; I quoted that this morning in the report.

We need to look at the effects of climate change and one of them is the direct impact on rising sea levels that we see right here in Nova Scotia in the Bay of Fundy and the impact on the Chignecto Isthmus. We hear the Premier and the member for Cumberland South talk a lot about the Atlantic Loop, which is very exciting. Well the Atlantic Loop will go right through Cumberland County, right through the Chignecto Isthmus connecting with New Brunswick and Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and then back around. We need

to ensure that we have protection of that Chignecto Isthmus and take care of our Mother Earth.

Health care. I have no idea why we would be having a Spring session and the health plan would be released on the day that we all go home. I haven't had time to read it yet because we've been here in the House since nine o'clock this morning, but it seems a little bit bizarre. From someone who used to be part of a team that used to talk about "What is he hiding?" with McNeil - that was the big tagline - I don't understand what they're hiding. Why would you so lack transparency, rush us out of this Legislature, and table a health plan on the very last day so that none of us would have a chance to take a look at it. It's very bizarre, certainly not transparent, and disappointing to say the least.

I wasn't planning on talking about paramedics a great deal when I first started this Spring session, but within the first week we had a situation in Cumberland County, and this woman is asking me to tell her story. Her husband died - her partner died. There were no ambulances in Cumberland County. One had to come from Antigonish, and if you know that geography, that's about a two-hour drive. The ambulance was probably going as fast as possible, so it took them about an hour and 45 minutes. Her husband did not make it. He was 55 years old. That is the state of our ambulance emergency health care services here.

One week later, we had a youth on the side of the road. Someone came along, found them. They needed emergency health care. The person called 911 three times. No ambulance ever came. An off-duty police officer came along and an off-duty paramedic. They called police and the police ended up taking the person in the back of the police car.

I have another good friend who is a doctor. Her friend called her up and said, "I think I might be having a heart attack. I think I might be dying." The doctor knew there were no ambulances in Cumberland County at that time, and she said, "I'll be there in five minutes." She put her in her car and drove her to the hospital. She would have died. She was having a massive heart attack. She ended up actually needing a pacemaker inserted later that day.

I have another elderly woman who took her husband into the Pugwash hospital. He was having an aortic bleed. Sorry, it was intestinal. He said, your husband needs urgent abdominal surgery right now - ASAP. No ambulance available. This 80-year-old woman drove her husband to the Amherst hospital. He had emergency surgery and he made it. The surgeon told her, if you did not drive your husband, he would not have made it.

That is the state of ambulance services and emergency health care services in Cumberland County. It needs to be a priority. I wasn't planning on making it, but just even in the short couple of weeks that we were here, we had those three situations happen. We need to make an investment. I know that there was some investment in the mechanical beds that they use, so that it's not hard on their backs, but we need much more significant and urgent investment and change. Our private company, Medavie Blue Cross, that are

providing the services, they need to be held accountable. We need to be penalizing them if they can't meet performance standards.

As the government moves to using more private companies like Maple - and when you're dealing with the private company of Nova Scotia Power - there have to be performance standards. There has to be some accountability. If Medavie Blue Cross cannot do it, then we need to make a change. The people deserve better. This woman did not deserve to lose her husband because she had to wait an hour and 45 minutes for an ambulance from Antigonish.

One of my solutions that comes from the people that I represent is we need to work as a Maritime region. We should have a Maritime clinical health care strategy. If there is an ambulance 10 minutes away in Sackville and the next closest one is Antigonish, why shouldn't we be using the one in Sackville, or vice versa? Let's work together as a region.

We're seeing it really since the pandemic again, all of our oncology patients. I've got a woman right now, she's in her early 30s. She and her mother want me to talk about her situation because they know they're not the only ones and they know it's not right. Our oncology patients always went to Moncton. They got their chemo and radiation in Moncton. We're the only regional hospital in the province that does not administer chemotherapy.

The nurse, she was told she's not allowed to talk to the MLA because she's the one who identified to me that there's no chemo in our hospital administered and that we're the only one in the province. So the solution from Nova Scotia Health was to silence her instead of having a good relationship with the MLA to be able to communicate the needs of the people.

People who used to go to Moncton for chemo and radiation right up until the pandemic now have to travel to Halifax. I have a young woman who has two young children, she has breast cancer. To get chemo, instead of driving 40 minutes each day and being able to come home and sleep in her own bed with her partner and be there with her children, she has to come here to Halifax, stay in a hotel, pay those extra expenses, and be away from her family during a very difficult time. The family is very upset.

Because we've had a lack of collaboration and moved away from collaborating with our fellow New Brunswick province, it's impacting patient care. It's impacting health outcomes.

We're seeing the same thing with dialysis. About a month ago - I don't know if you saw it in the news, but the member for Cumberland South, he has a six-bed dialysis unit in Springhill at All Saints Hospital. All the other dialysis patients have to travel to Moncton. They don't mind it because they get to see a nephrologist every day, plus all of their

medications are paid for in New Brunswick. They pay for all of their dialysis unit medications, which can be between \$1,000 and \$1,500 a month.

About a month ago, the nurse at the dialysis unit at George Dumont told the patients that in two weeks' time, you guys are done. We're not providing dialysis to Nova Scotia patients anymore. Nova Scotia needs to take care of you. You can imagine, if you're a dialysis patient who travels three days a week and you're told, sorry, but in two weeks' time.

That caused a lot of anguish and strife and stress. Thankfully, our renal team here in Nova Scotia met with the New Brunswick team, and they put that fire out. They're working on solutions. We need to see more of that. That should never have happened in the first place with those patients.

We need to see more collaboration. The fact is that our IWK serves all of the Maritime Provinces. During the pandemic, we had people traveling from New Brunswick. They'd arrive here and they'd say, oh, sorry, we're not seeing you because you're out of province - during COVID-19. We've had a lot of challenges, so we need to work together more. Mental health, cancer care, dialysis, doctors, family doctors, and psychiatrists.

Nurses - I've spoken with the Minister for Advanced Education. This is something we've been pushing now for three years or more. He's told me that we're getting close to getting there, and that is providing access to LPN education to become a registered nurse regardless of where they did their studies. I don't see anything in the budget for that, but I was assured in order to enable that, we need more placements for the RN program.

Right now, you are only eligible to advance from being an LPN to an RN in that two-year bridge program if you've done your studies at NSCC here in Nova Scotia. The fact is, a lot of LPNs are from Ontario, Alberta, or the LPNs in Amherst, a lot of them studied in New Brunswick because it's 40 minutes away. Well, they're penalized. If they want to become a registered nurse, guess what? You need to start at ground zero. Even if you've been an LPN for 15 or 20 years, none of it is considered.

That is being worked on, I'm really happy to say. (Interruptions) Yes, I know, it's awesome. Yes, we will celebrate. We've got a lot of LPNs waiting. I was really excited to see in the budget the increase of nursing seats throughout the province, but I just have to say there's no registered nursing college in Northern Zone. Pictou, Colchester, and Cumberland County have no training for registered nurses. CBU got an increase of 200 seats - awesome. My daughter is studying to be a nurse at CBU right now. She's actually doing exams today and tomorrow.

We really need a satellite site in Northern Zone. I'm fine, it doesn't have to be Amherst. I would love it to be in Cumberland County, but in Pictou or Truro or

Cumberland, we need to have our share of those registered nurse training seats. Let's bring a satellite site and make that a priority.

[9:30 p.m.]

I didn't have a chance to ask a question to the minister, but when you hear numbers like 106 per cent bed capacity, my question is: Is that including all the beds that are closed? I know that Cumberland Regional is not the only one, but there are a lot of beds closed right now due to lack of nurses. I'm not sure if that 106 per cent is counting that. We need to get our beds open. We need to get all of our acute care beds open in this province and get our nursing home beds filled up. I know that the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care is working on that. I know she is very passionate and loves her seniors.

When we get those nurses and even bring more nurses here - Nova Scotia Health Authority has told me, Elizabeth, we need more housing. We have had nurses who want to come, and they have no place to live. I'm excited that the government has made housing a priority but a little disappointed, as are the people in Cumberland, that we're not seeing more of a rural Nova Scotia focus. We're seeing a big focus on HRM, and it's great for HRM, but half of the population in this province is in rural Nova Scotia. They should have the same equal focus. I don't really understand why (Interruption) Yes, half of the members are definitely from rural Nova Scotia as well.

When I talked to the Business Development Officer in Amherst, he says that housing is the number one barrier right now. It's the number one issue. It's what we're seeing in my office. Many of you are probably seeing the same with people coming in, and they literally have no place to live. It's not just people on low incomes. It's students, it's seniors, and it's people of all socioeconomic levels.

The most heartbreaking situations are the people who are homeless. I know the Minister of Community Services has been working with several groups. The Department of Community Services has done a great job in our community, trying to help fill the gaps. We had a private rooming house with 20 people burn. Twenty people were displaced in the Fall, and they had no place to go, literally. The Department of Community Services came in, worked with our homelessness group, and provided wraparound services and were there for people. It really meant a lot to the people in our community. It was a big help at a time when they really needed it.

We have an incredible society that is working on building - they don't want to call it a shelter. They want to call it emergency transition housing. They are working on that and are very confident that will be coming to fruition soon.

I was really moved by the words of the member for Halifax Chebucto. I'm going to really miss him (Interruption) He's still going to come? He's still going to be here? Good, that's good. When he's talking about compassion, it's true. He speaks, and I feel

like he's such a voice for those people - for all people, but especially those people in need. I know he used to be a United Church minister. Maybe he still is.

When I hear him speak - I do have to share a scripture - it makes me think of James 1:27. "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their time of need." When I hear the member speak, he has such a heart for those people in need, and it's so evident. We need to take care of those in need. We all need to always be focused on that.

My first business was a health clinic, and all of my clients were physicians. I loved them, but some of them really drove me a little crazy when it was contract time and nitpicking dollars. I was so frustrated. I talked to one of my girlfriends at church. She said remember what our mission is, and it's to take care of orphans and widows. They're not orphans and widows, so don't feel so bad for them.

Sometimes it's good just to bring us back and focus on what's really important. There are a lot of people in our province and in our communities who are in desperate need. They are in desperate need of compassion and caring and love, and we need to wrap our arms around them and help them.

One of the first people I met as MLA came to my office, desperate, he said you've got to come to my house with me. I went, and the landlord hadn't paid the bills, there was no heat, there was still electricity but there was no oil and he had his oven open and he was trying to heat his apartment with his oven, his stove. We got him a place to live the very next day and we still stay in close contact. He's one of my favourites - Terry Godfrey, if he's listening. He's one of my favourite constituents.

Bonnie Patton, I want to say she is an incredible woman. She was just diagnosed with ALS and Bonnie wanted me to talk in the Legislature this session about the lack of supports for people with disabilities. The Leader of the NDP spoke so well - I mean, all the members from the NDP did, just about the fact that there was no increase in this budget for people on income assistance. Really, when you look at the rate of inflation, people are seeing a decrease, which is kind of heartbreaking when you think of what people are trying to live on.

Well, Bonnie was just diagnosed with ALS, in a wheelchair. Literally, within six months, she went from being a health care professional to not being able to take care of herself. The one thing that saved her is when she signed her mortgage, she took out that disability. If it wasn't for that, she would not be able to stay in her own home. But we need to do a better job of providing the supports - not just enough but enough that they can live and actually have some dignity, have some dignity and some self-worth.

I do want to just say thank you for all of the words from the member for Halifax Chebucto. A couple of other things I wanted to mention, health-care-related.

I've had a meeting with the Minister of Justice, but we don't see anything significant in this budget around sexual assault, domestic abuse. There are huge deficiencies for Victim Services. I think all people know that in our province but it's very devastating to meet and talk with victims and the Minister of Justice and I have also talked about the challenges right now.

There's definitely a misogynistic culture in the Department of Justice and law enforcement. Victims are coming forward - many times they're not being listened to, many times charges are not being laid when there is evidence there. We've seen cases dropped because of the Jordan rule during this pandemic, sexual assault cases. Let me tell you the message that sends to victims and the message that sends to police who have collected evidence and finally feel like that they're finally going to get a perpetrator behind bars and then to have the sexual assault dismissed or thrown out because of the length of time due to the pandemic.

My understanding of the Jordan rule - you know one person is too many. If you're the sexual assault victim and your case has been thrown out, I don't know the actual numbers, the minister is going to get me that information. I know of one and that one is one too many and that person's life will never be the same. Her perpetrator, the law enforcement had evidence, they said finally, they finally are going to get this person behind bars, that person was known to police, he drugged women and sexually assaulted them, they were never able to get enough evidence, they finally did, and the case ended up getting dropped because of the Jordan rule.

My understanding with the Jordan rule is that if there are extenuating circumstances then cases are not supposed to be dropped. I would consider a pandemic to be extenuating circumstances. I don't know why that was not taken into consideration but there's a lot of work that needs to be done, investment in culture change definitely and that's going to take some work.

The veterans medical clinic had a meeting with Darrell Samson today - member of Parliament. He's the Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and he wants to work with our Premier. I'm really excited about that, to get a veterans medical clinic here in Nova Scotia. I shared a story with him about my grandfather: When he started needing health care, I invited him to come live with my husband and I with four little kids. He said, no, thanks. I think at the time they were 2, 4, 6 and 8. He said if I ever need nursing care, I love you, I know you're a nurse, but I want to go to the veterans wing at High-Crest.

What I said to Member of Parliament Darrell Samson is veterans need to know that care is there for them when they need it. That's the one thing with the nursing homes, that they do know that right now. They need to know it's there for acute care as well. I'm looking forward to seeing our government hold up their commitment to veterans, to open a veterans medical clinic here in the city at the Camp Hill hospital.

The member for Kings North went into great detail, and I also did in my Supply speech, so I won't go into great detail. I did have quite a few comments from people from Cumberland North about their concern about the budget. They assumed that a Progressive Conservative government would have a fiscally responsible budget, so to see six years of projected deficits is quite concerning. They were very surprised to see that. Seeing an increase in the net debt-to-GDP ratio, which is going to be up to 40 per cent, is going to impact our interest rates. Hopefully, we will see a change of heart in future financial planning for this province.

I didn't see anything in the budget about local food. I know that is a priority of the government. Hopefully, we'll see that in next year's budget or have some work done between now and then. Certainly, during the pandemic - and it's continuing with the war in Ukraine and Russia - the supply chains are weak, and that is leading to increased inflation throughout the world, not just Canada and Nova Scotia.

We need to make sure we can feed ourselves as a province. We need to make sure that we have a reduction in food insecurity. Making food a priority is important. I did mention this to the Minister of Agriculture in Supply, that Cumberland County has 30 per cent of the arable farmland in all of Nova Scotia - 30 per cent - yet we don't have a farm rep. I guess there's five in the province, but we don't have any in Cumberland County. We have someone assigned to Cumberland County, but they're not really there very much. I would love to see more support empower our farmers.

Cumberland County has long been strong in the primary industries - forestry and agriculture and mining. Unfortunately, for our forestry industry it has been a really discouraging time for them, the last couple of years. We need more supports in our agriculture industry as well.

The last thing everyone has talked about, and I'll just make a couple more comments about it, and that is of course the non-resident property tax. Most of the MLAs in government, I've had the pleasure of working with in the past. I know there were a lot of complaints over the last four years about the lack of collaboration from the last government. I am a little surprised that people aren't open to listening to the voices of the people with their concerns about the non-resident property tax. That's democracy. Each of us is elected to listen to the voices of the people we represent.

I was reminded by a good friend yesterday - he said there are a couple of cabinet ministers from the Liberal Party who didn't get re-elected. It's because the people that they used to work for didn't feel that they were listened to. It's just a good reminder that it's always important to put the people first. That's why we're here. This non-resident property tax - I won't go into great detail because I think we've all heard loud and clear. I'm still getting emails today.

[9:45 p.m.]

I got one from the president and CEO of Fox Harb'r. He said they were planning a huge construction of a large number of homes, and a lot of them would have been sold to people from out of province to come and vacation here in Nova Scotia, and that is now in question. Also, he said if this non-resident property tax was put in place when Ron Joyce - he has passed away now, but he was co-founder of Tim Hortons - was first thinking about setting up Fox Harb'r - it's a five-star resort, one of the best in Nova Scotia, one of the best in Canada. It's predicted that he would never have invested in his home community of Fox Harbour and Wallace area.

We have a lot to consider about the potential damage that is being done. I would be remiss if I didn't speak on behalf of all of the small coastal communities that I represent, from Malagash, Wallace, Gulf Shore, Pugwash, Port Howe, Linden, Northport, Amherst Shore, Lorneville, Tidnish, Tidnish Bridge - they're all coastal communities. We have 2,150-plus non-resident properties in Cumberland County alone. There's a huge concern.

Out of those 2,150 non-resident property owners, I think I probably got emails from about a thousand of them, and they are not happy. I mentioned this before - as our province is putting property taxes up for those non-residents 200 per cent, New Brunswick just lowered them. Literally two weeks ago, New Brunswick lowered their property rates for their own people, but also for non-resident people, by 15 per cent. We're sending a very different message. Theirs is welcoming; ours is punitive.

I did want to table a document. I didn't table it the other night. It is the article where the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board talks about people who have seasonal cottages, that they could just go ahead and Winterize them. I wanted to make sure that was tabled, as well as this document here, "Farewell to Nova Scotia." I will table that document as well.

I'm pretty sure the government is aware that a former PC government tried to do the same thing and passed a non-resident property tax, and then actually studied it out and made a decision that it was the wrong thing to do. I'm going to table that document as well. It's called *The Non-Resident Land Ownership in Nova Scotia - Final Report*. If the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board and Premier haven't read that, I highly recommend that they do so.

Lastly, I'm going to table a letter from a man, whom I have much admiration and respect for, his name is George Cooper. I try to listen to people who are smarter than me, which most people are. This is a man I admire greatly. I don't know if any of you know him, but he shared very intelligent thoughts on this non-resident property tax. Just for people here, in case you don't know who George is, I'm just going to give you a little history on him, and this is why we should listen to him.

George Cooper is a lifelong full-time resident of Nova Scotia. He's now retired. He worked in Nova Scotia all of his life, practised law for 50 years, was a PC candidate for the Nova Scotia Legislature in 1974 and a PC Member of Parliament from 1979 to 1980. He served as the president of the University of Kings College from 2012 to 2016 and was managing trustee for 23 years of the Killam Trust.

He's got a long CV. I won't read everything, but I will just say that he is a man who is very intelligent and very compassionate. He taught me a lot about Robert Stanfield - some would say one of the best premiers of this province. If you haven't had a chance to read George Cooper's letter, I would encourage you as well.

Keeping in mind that our role in a democratic society is that the people should have the power, not government. In a democracy, the power belongs to the people. We all have a responsibility to listen to the people.

With those few words about some of the priorities in Cumberland North and comments on this provincial budget, I will close my comments on third reading, Mr. Speaker.

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

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I was actually prepared to wait a bit longer. I've been waiting a while, but I'm glad that members have had their chance to speak on this here tonight.

I have a speech - I do have a couple of comments specific to some of the comments made here tonight. I think about one comment made by the Official Opposition that our health budget spending is really not that much different from their spending in the last year of their government. If you actually - and these aren't my numbers, they're Department of Finance and Treasury Board numbers - if you look at estimate to estimate with many of the federal COVID dollar flow-throughs removed, the actual increase in the health budget is close to 10 per cent.

I think it's important that I start out by saying that, because really what this budget has been all about is health care. It's been about many other things too, but I think the takeaway is yes, a deficit, but a significant increase in health care. There are a couple more, but I'm going to save them for later.

I rise to close debate on third reading of Bill No. 149. I'd like to thank everyone who put forward comments and thoughts on this. Through this bill, we are delivering on the commitments made to Nova Scotians to find solutions for our province's most pressing

challenges. We know Nova Scotian employers are struggling to find skilled tradespeople, and other sectors are experiencing labour shortages as well.

This is seen across the province in both urban and rural areas. Labour shortages have a detrimental impact on the ability of our entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and therefore for our provincial economy to grow. There is a lot of excitement about the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades, or MOST program. By amending the income tax through this legislation, we can create new regulations to establish a tax refund for Nova Scotians working in designated skilled occupations such as construction.

Starting for the 2022 tax year, most will return provincial income tax paid on the first \$50,000 of earnings for eligible people under the age of 30 in sectors with labour shortages. We know there's a lot of interest in this program and I look forward to sharing more details in the future. We expect most to have a positive impact on Nova Scotia's ability to attract and retain young people in sectors facing labour shortages. There are tremendous opportunities ahead for our province, and we want to do everything we can to make sure businesses and our people can succeed.

There has been much debate in this House around the new non-resident property tax measures. Our province is experiencing population growth that we haven't seen in decades, and this growth, while helping to grow our economy, has placed tremendous strain on our housing market. We know housing prices have risen upwards of 30 per cent in the last year alone. These new measures, a non-resident property tax of \$2 per \$100 of assessed value and a provincial deed transfer tax of five per cent for property purchased by non-residents of Nova Scotia, are aimed at helping Nova Scotians to find a place to live.

I'd like to address some of the points that have been raised in debate. Some have said these new measures send the wrong message, that Nova Scotia is not a welcoming place. In fact, Nova Scotia is welcoming newcomers in record numbers. Our population reached 1 million at the end of the year 2021, and we celebrated a record year for immigration. More people than ever before want to move here to live, to work, and build a life. Nova Scotians and their government are embracing their arrival with open arms.

The opportunities ahead of us are due in no small part to the tremendous influx of new people to our province who come to work and stay, but we need to ensure there are places for these people to live. A number of my colleagues mentioned the letters and emails they've been receiving about these new measures, but I also know that members of this Chamber have been receiving letters and emails from local businesses who can't grow their business because there are labour shortages or because potential employees cannot find places to live, and letters from constituents who can't find a house or an apartment in such a competitive housing market, or from those who can't afford the options that are available to them right now.

This is no longer an issue confined to the Halifax Regional Municipality. It's an issue being felt in towns and in rural areas. I see it in my constituency of Inverness, and I know that many of you have seen it in your own constituencies. These are very serious issues that we're trying to address. We are trying to make sure people can afford a place to call home and build their lives here.

It was also asked how our province would react if one of our neighbours put forth a similar measure. Well, Mr. Speaker, our two closest provincial neighbours already have such measures. Prince Edward Island has had a program since 1995 that sees non-resident property owners pay more than Islanders. In New Brunswick, everyone - residents, and non-residents - pays more taxes on any property that is not their principal residence.

We recognize that this is a complex situation, and important exemptions must apply. When we looked at doing this, we wanted to make sure there were not unintended consequences on Nova Scotians. When non-resident-owned housing is rented out to someone residing in Nova Scotia, including international students, for 12 months or longer, the new property tax will not apply. They're providing homes for Nova Scotians. When a property has multiple owners, an exemption from this tax is provided if 50 per cent or more of the owners are residents of Nova Scotia. Properties that are not classified as residential, with three or less dwelling units, including commercial properties, are not subject to these measures. Of course, all residents of Nova Scotia who purchase residential properties are exempt from the provincial deed transfer tax.

If you plan to move to Nova Scotia to live and purchase a property or home, there is an exemption from the provincial deed property tax. The individual would typically be expected to move here within six months, but we certainly have flexibility in cases where there may be changes to that, where it might take them a bit longer to get here.

We are working to address a new reality in our housing market in Nova Scotia. We need to take steps to make sure that people can afford a place to call home and build their lives here. Our situation is very, very different from what was seen 20 years ago. Mr. Speaker, it's even different from what we saw two years ago.

Specific to some of the matters that were raised by members here, some questions about how this is going to be done, there is no database built yet. However, declarations over time will be used to help confirm a database with good information. In the meantime, there is information out there that we will use to mail out forms and whatnot, Mr. Speaker.

In the case of the Non-resident Deed Transfer Tax, there is the Land Registry, which already captures transactions and applies the deed transfer tax. In the case of the 2 per cent non-resident property tax, the PVSC has addressed of all resident and non-resident property owners. Mr. Speaker, we have information, and over time, we'll have better information.

[10:00 p.m.]

People have asked about the cost. I know that the Department of Finance and Treasury Board was not up during the Budget Estimates, so some of the detailed questions that might normally have been asked to the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, there was no opportunity for that. I do want to clarify that for this particular measure, the estimate is six full-time equivalent employees and a total cost of approximately \$700,000 to implement this program and to manage it going forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other points put forward was that there should be a detailed cost analysis before this initiative is undertaken. We know that this variable, a non-resident tax, is one of many, many variables that contribute to a decision about whether or not to purchase a property. It's very difficult to be able to drill down with every transaction as to why somebody has chosen to purchase or to sell. I'm a big fan of cost-benefit analysis, but we're dealing with a situation here where we don't know the exact impacts. I want to be honest about that.

One of the things I would point out is the opportunity cost. I know members talked about opportunity costs, but I never hear anybody talk about the opportunity costs of employers who need people to expand their businesses throughout the province and have nowhere for their employees to live, or for Nova Scotians who want to move home but can't because they can't find a property to move home to. I think we must not forget that.

We are hearing from many people now who are upset. To me, this legislation is not about wanting to hurt people. It is wanting to help Nova Scotians, people who have chosen to live here. We are standing for them. We're standing for them, so they have a greater chance to buy a home here when they're competing with people who have not chosen to make their home here. Yes, it causes some pain for non-residents, and we hear them, and we will continue to think about the concerns that they have raised.

There have been very strong feelings, but let us not forget about persons who cannot even find a property to buy when they are trying to live here in Nova Scotia. Let us not forget the employers who have people willing to move into their communities, pay property taxes, pay income taxes, help that business grow to create possibly more jobs, pay more small business taxes or corporate taxes, but the employer knows that there's nowhere in the area for the potential new hire to live, and that progress is stopped before it starts. That is an opportunity cost. Let us not forget the Nova Scotian who lives away, who wants to buy a property here, wants to live here, but cannot find one or must delay their move here.

I want to say a couple of other points. I prefer, generally, to end on a positive note, but I've got to say a couple of things before I close up here. I think the chief message I heard from the NDP tonight was about compassion, and I know the Leader of the NDP talked about the word "compassionate" means suffering with people together. I have a line here, but I'm going to hold back on it tonight. It would be a zinger, but I'm going to hold

back on it because the message I want to give to the NDP is no one has a monopoly on compassion. No political party has a monopoly on compassion.

I think about comments made by the Official Opposition about a recession in four years' time. I want to point out the economists over in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, when we were preparing this budget, one of the major trends of note was the fact that the economy, not just here in Nova Scotia, but, really, in North America and around the world, we're seeing a return to the trend of growth that was seen before the pandemic began. Where is the proof of that? We saw by the end of last year jobs and exports were actually higher than they were before the pandemic in this province.

Our population - what is a greater driver of GDP than population growth? We are seeing significant population growth in this province. In fact, it even increased federal transfer payments. The population growth in this province impacted our federal transfer payments: health transfer, social transfer, and also our equalization transfer. We are seeing an economy that is on the move. Strangely, our greatest challenge - and you see it with a deficit in this budget - is trying to invest it so that we have a health care system.

What is more important than a good health care system for a growing province? What is more important than having infrastructure in place, and members talk about the debt. Well, the largest capital budget in the history of the province, almost \$1.6 billion, much of it started by the previous government. Generational investments in health care, in the QEII, in the Cape Breton Regional Hospital.

Those are things that are critical for the future and for a province that's growing. Talk of the recession - what if the world went into a recession in four years' time, or our country went into a recession? Obviously, that would have an impact on Nova Scotia. I think it would be very strange to think that Nova Scotia could cause a recession for itself all on its own.

The Bank of Canada, you know I don't think they would go out on a limb and be able to predict a recession in four years' time, so I just don't buy those thoughts. I'd rather look at the evidence in the economy and the points I've just made and what we're seeing in the province.

Perhaps instead of talking about chocolate bars tonight and the Caramilk secret, I think I'll try to close on a positive note that's perhaps less volatile. I think people's emotions have been stirred up enough in the last number of weeks. I do think it's important to try to inject a little humour from time to time too, though.

I'll wrap up my remarks by speaking about the new Children's Sports and Arts Refundable Tax Credit. Through this credit, parents will be able to offset costs for their children's registration in sports and arts. It is refundable, so even if you don't owe tax, you can benefit from it, too.

One of my colleagues mentioned that many families struggle to afford these activities and may not be able to wait for their tax refund. Well, we agree and that is why back in March there was an announcement of \$5 million for Sport Nova Scotia. That investment will support Sport Nova Scotia's work to make the sport system more inclusive and accessible. This funding will provide more accessible equipment and programs for athletes with disabilities and address financial barriers to let more children and youth take part in sport and recreation.

I encourage all Nova Scotians to claim that credit when the time comes because in the end, and I think this is maybe a positive note to end on, it's an investment in our children and our children are our future.

Mr. Speaker, I move closing of third reading of Bill No. 149, the Financial Measures (2022) Act.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for third reading of Bill No. 149, the Financial Measures (2022) Act. (Applause)

A recorded vote has been called for.

Ring the bells. Call in the members.

[10:09 p.m.]

We'll take a short recess.

[10:09 p.m. The House recessed.]

[10:14 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. A recorded vote has been called for third reading of Bill No. 149.

[The Clerk calls the roll.]

[10:16 p.m.]

YEAS

Hon. Brad Johns
Hon. Barbara Adams
Hon. Tim Houston
Hon. Kim Masland
Hon. Allan MacMaster

NAYS

Hon. Patricia Arab
Hon. Brendan Maguire
Hon. Keith Irving
Hon. Iain Rankin
Hon. Derek Mombourquette

Hon. Karla MacFarlane	Hon. Kelly Regan
Hon. Michelle Thompson	Claudia Chender
Hon. John Lohr	Susan Leblanc
Hon. Pat Dunn	Lisa Lachance
Hon. Timothy Halman	Kendra Coombes
Hon. Steve Craig	Rafah DiCostanzo
Dave Ritcey	Hon. Ben Jessome
Hon. Brian Wong	Lorelei Nicoll
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek	Braedon Clark
Hon. Brian Comer	Ali Duale
Hon. Colton LeBlanc	Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
Hon. Jill Balsler	Ronnie LeBlanc
Trevor Boudreau	
Hon. Greg Morrow	
Hon. Becky Druhan	
Larry Harrison	
Chris Palmer	
John A. MacDonald	
Melissa Sheehy-Richard	
John White	
Danielle Barkhouse	
Tom Taggart	
Nolan Young	
Kent Smith	

THE CLERK: For, 29. Against, 17.

THE SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill do pass. Ordered that the title be as read by the Clerk. Ordered that the bill be engrossed.

Okay folks. We are just going to wait briefly for His Honour to be with us. Everybody please stay in their seats. I'll put it that way.

[10:20 p.m. The House recessed.]

[10:21 p.m. The House reconvened.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is without.

THE SPEAKER: Let His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be admitted.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

The Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, preceded by his Private Secretary and by Mr. David Fraser, Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, entered the House of Assembly Chamber. The Lieutenant Governor then took his seat on the Throne.

The Sergeant-at-Arms then departed and re-entered the Chamber, followed by the Speaker, the Honourable Keith Bain, Acting Chief Clerk of the House David Hastings, and Assistant Clerk Cara Locke.

The Speaker, with the Clerk on his left and the Sergeant-at-Arms and Assistant Clerk on his right, took up his position at the foot of the Table of the House.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

It is the wish of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor that everyone present be seated.

THE SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the General Assembly of the Province has in its present session passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the General Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's Assent.

THE ACTING CHIEF CLERK:

Bill No. 94 - Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act.

Bill No. 96 - Dismantling Racism and Hate Act.

Bill No. 99 - Quality-improvement Information Protection Act.

Bill No. 101 - Marine Renewable-energy Act.

Bill No. 102 - Wildlife Act.

Bill No. 104 - Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act.

Bill No. 106 - Condominium Act.

Bill No. 107 - Crosbie Memorial Trust Fund Act.

Bill No. 109 - Income Tax Act.

Bill No. 112 - Holy Heart Seminary Dissolution Act.

Bill No. 114 - Hospitals Act.

Bill No. 115 - Prescription Monitoring Act.

Bill No. 118 - Personal Health Information Act.

Bill No. 120 - Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act.

Bill No. 122 - Lunenburg Rod and Gun Club Replacement Act.

Bill No. 123 - Liquor Control Act.

Bill No. 124 - Public Trustee Act.

Bill No. 126 - Nova Scotia Wine Authority Act.

Bill No. 129 - Motor Carrier Act.

Bill No. 131 - Powers of Attorney Act.

Bill No. 134 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 137 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter.

Bill No. 138 - Virtual Business Meetings, An Act to Permit.

Bill No. 143 - Boat Harbour Act.

Bill No. 145 - Electricity Act.

Bill No. 147 - Public Utilities Act.

Bill No. 148 - Mi'kmaw Language Act.

Bill No. 149 - Financial Measures (2022) Act.

Bill No. 154 - Tourist Accommodations Registration Act.

Bill No. 155 - Public Prosecutions Act.

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

THE SPEAKER: Your Honour, having been graciously pleased to give your Assent to the Bills passed during the present session, it becomes my agreeable duty on behalf of Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, her faithful Commons of Nova Scotia, to present

to Your Honour a bill for the Appropriation of Supply granted in the present session for the support of the Public Service and to request your Honour's Assent thereto.

THE ACTING CHIEF CLERK:

Bill No. 182 - Appropriations Act, 2022.

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: In Her Majesty's name, I thank Her loyal subjects. I accept their benevolence and I assent to this bill.

[The Speaker and the Clerks left the Chamber.]

[The Lieutenant Governor left the Chamber.]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: His Honour the Speaker.

[The Speaker took the Chair.]

THE SPEAKER: I would ask the members to please rise and join me in the singing of our national anthem.

[The national anthem was sung by the members.]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Please be seated.

The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we move to adjourn this session, I'd like to thank a number of people who are here in the House with us today, tonight, and people who made this session move along so smoothly.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of the House, I want to acknowledge the Pages . . . (Applause), a very small but mighty group, thank you so much; the folks at Legislative Television, thank you. They asked if we could stop with the renovations. They want to stay right in this Chamber with us, right? No? The Clerks of the House and my goodness, Dave, this guy was . . . (Applause)

SOME HON. MEMBERS: (chanting and clapping) David! David! David!

THE PREMIER: The staff at Legislative Counsel, who worked to draft the bills; House Operations staff, the cleaning staff, everyone who keeps everything going. Thank you. (Applause)

Our Sergeant-at-Arms . . . (Applause) There were times in this session when we thought we might actually need you, too. Thank you, my friend. The Commissionaires - thank you to the Commissionaires. (Applause) And I'm just going to say it: Where would we be without our friends in the media? Thank you. (Applause)

I want to say thank you to the House Leaders. I know this had its moments but thank you. Of course, our constituency assistants and our teams back in our offices who keep everything rolling back in the constituencies. (Applause)

The entire Public Service. The work they put into this budget is remarkable. Some of the most dedicated Nova Scotians, for sure, in terms of the Public Service. They work tirelessly on behalf of Nova Scotians every single day. I thank the Public Service. (Applause)

Our families, for supporting us in every single way possible, including keeping our children's lives going while we're here for long hours sometimes. But to our families, of course, for their continued support. I want to acknowledge them. (Applause)

I want to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, former Premier, MLA for Timberlea-Prospect, Iain Rankin. My friend, thank you. (Applause) Thank you for your dedication to the province. I appreciate your passion for the environment and future generations. Thank you for that.

And of course, I want to acknowledge the MLA for Halifax Chebucto, Leader of the NDP, Gary Burrill. Thank you, Gary, for your dedication. (Applause) I want to thank him for his vigorous advocacy for housing and for supporting Nova Scotians. Thank you, Gary, for your support of Nova Scotians.

Thank you, of course, to Mr. Speaker. As we wind down, thank you to each and every member of this House. It can get tense in here, but we all have the same passion for this province. This is a great province, and we are fortunate to be able to stand in this Legislature and serve Nova Scotians. I thank each and every one of you for your dedication to Nova Scotians and to your constituents.

I want to wish everyone a safe and healthy and prosperous and productive Summer. We will see you back here in the Fall. I can't wait. A little break's going to be good, but I can't wait.

Thank you to everyone. My sincere thank you on that.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I move that this General Assembly be adjourned to meet again at the call of the Speaker. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House now adjourn to meet again at the call of the Speaker.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned. Wishing everyone a happy and peaceful Summer. Enjoy.

[The House rose at 10:39 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 274**

By: Hon. Colton LeBlanc (Argyle)

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

Whereas the Boston Marathon is one of the best known races and is the world's oldest annual marathon first hosted on April 19, 1897; and

Whereas the 126th Boston Marathon was hosted on Monday, April 18, 2022, with 23,314 athletes from 120 countries participating; and

Whereas Mr. Shawn Muise, Bib 10912, of Belleville, Nova Scotia completed the Marathon with a time of 3:45:53, finishing 1,769th in his age category and 14,516th overall;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Mr. Shawn Muise for his outstanding accomplishment of completing the 126th Boston Marathon and wish him continued success in his future races.

RESOLUTION NO. 275

By: Hon. Kim Masland (Queens)

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

Whereas Queens County sculptor Rob Milner, creator of Eternity Chainsaw Carvings, is a familiar figure to many on the South Shore; and

Whereas on February 5th and 6th he partnered with Chandana Kabila to compete in the very popular Winterlude 2022 National Ice Carving Competition, working with 15 blocks of ice in 20 hours to create a work of art based on the theme "Olympic and Paralympic Spirit"; and

Whereas Team Nova Scotia, their masterpiece sculpture was entitled "The Spirit of the Flame", this amazing piece symbolized that all athletes inspire others to do what they do best;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Rob and his partner for competing on the national level, and to applaud his incredible artistic talent and creativity.

RESOLUTION NO. 276

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area is a 1,767 hectare wilderness area at the edge of urban Halifax, considered to be of high ecological value and is one of 40 designated wilderness areas in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas this wilderness area is a mix of protected woodlands, barrens, lakes, watercourses and wetlands; and

Whereas this protected land is a safe refuge for wildlife amid an expanding suburban and urban area and offers a range of outdoor activities including hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing on a vast network of trails.

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the newly elected board members, Mary Ann McGrath, Eleanor Humphries, Diana Whalen, Carol Ann Roberts, Dale Smith, Mary Ellen Donovan, Ray Plourde, Nicholas Buxton, Mel Earley, Catherine McKellar, Debbie McKinnon, and John Bignell for their dedication to protect and maintain the beauty of Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 277

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Cael MacDonald, at the age of 17 was drafted to the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League for his athleticism, concentration, and sharp decision-making skills earning a spot on the Chicoutimi Saguenéens as a right-wing player; and

Whereas since its creation in 1969, the major junior hockey circuit has played a key role in assisting talented players launch professional careers and in fact many players who represented the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League are now a part of the elite players on the National Hockey League (NHL); and

Whereas thanks to the talent, skills and passion for our national sport, players from eastern Canada, have made a significant contribution to the rise and excellence of major junior hockey;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me congratulating Cael for this dedication, commitment, and motivation as an athlete and his ability to utilize his skills and bring them to perfection and achieve this dream.

RESOLUTION NO. 278

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Christina Kempster, a teacher at Five Bridges Junior High school acknowledged the value and importance of students starting off the day with a good breakfast and recognized students who do not have access to breakfast would often arrive at school unhappy and with behavioral issues that make it difficult to concentrate and learn; and

Whereas Christina helped launch the Breakfast Program at her school last year to boost morale and open the discussion on food insecurity in our community and the importance of starting the day by breaking the fast and filling your tummy to help regulate blood sugar which can influence hormones that control mood and influence concentration; and

Whereas a successful and shocking number of over six hundred cereal boxes lined the shelves in the school cafeteria with a variety of tasty and nutritious ways to start the day;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Christina for her creative ways to teach valuable lessons while assisting all students to a good start to the day.

RESOLUTION NO. 279

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Dawn Purcell is a board member of the Route 333 Refugee Family Sponsorship Association, an organization of people living in the Prospect Road communities who bring refugee families to the safety and security of Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the world watches in horror at the atrocities unfolding in Ukraine and recognizes the humanitarian crisis these invasions cause and the overwhelming displacement and heartache of people who become refugees because of events that take place in their own country; and

Whereas to help support a family in our community, Dawn and her team of volunteers set up a Family Christmas Bazaar at the Whites Lake Legion featuring live music from local musicians, a kid's entertainment area, a craft table, a homemade bake table, a "new to you table" and sold chicken burgers, hotdogs, snacks, and beverages to raise money for this worthy cause;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Dawn for her compassion to help others during an unimaginable time and for supporting families in their journey to a new and better life in Nova Scotia.

RESOLUTION NO. 280

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Hadley Frittenburg, a 14-year student born with a condition called Arthrogyrosis that causes her joints to curve resulting in muscle shortness and the inability to flex and extend her legs; and

Whereas Hadley's ankles are pencil thin, she only weighs about 70 pounds, and has never been able to play any sports until she was introduced to para-hockey two years ago; and

Whereas Hadley received the prestigious invitation to try out for our National Para-Hockey team known as sledge hockey, to enable Canadian girls and women with disabilities to achieve long-term participation and sporting excellence in para hockey with a sustainable program nationally;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me congratulating Hadley for her success to be recognized as a candidate for our National Team Program.

RESOLUTION NO. 281

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Julia Fletcher, a veterinary assistant, had always dreamed of opening a dog daycare facility and finally received the opportunity to launch her own business and dream job when she opened The Paw Pad Retreat and Recovery in February of 2022; and

Whereas staffed by certificated professionals, including three vet assistants a groomer, and three part-timers, the facility offers a unique wellness retreat to care for pets recovering from an injury or surgery; and

Whereas for families looking to pamper their pooch, The Paw Pad also offers many services including a dog spa that features baths, massages, pedicures, ear and eye cleaning, blow-outs and brushing in addition to offering an array of social events for your dog;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me congratulating Julia for starting a new business to care for and pamper our best furry friends.

RESOLUTION NO. 282

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas the Matthews lost their 19-year-old son, Kai, in June of 2021 after he contracted meningitis B after he had just finished his first year of studies in kinesiology at Acadia University; and

Whereas trying to recover from the unimaginable heartbreak of losing a child to a preventable disease, the Matthews started a campaign to educate others about meningitis B, after learning Nova Scotians must ask their primary care providers for meningococcal B vaccine and pay for it out of pocket at the cost of over \$300 for the two-dose vaccine; and

Whereas knowing how quickly it can turn fatal coupled with the high cost of the vaccination, the Matthews set up a fundraising campaign to cover the cost of the vaccine for any student at Acadia University who wanted it and on November 26, 2022, watched students line up to receive the vaccination that could have saved their son's life;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing the important work the Matthew family is doing to educate and provide lifesaving vaccines to our youth and for their courage and strength to make something good out of their own personal tragedy.

RESOLUTION NO. 283

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas for the second year in a row, Kelly Marshall and Darlene Martell have worked their magic by organizing, managing, and delivering Christmas Food Baskets to over 50 families in Beechville, Lakeside, and Timberlea; and

Whereas through their generosity these special ladies took it upon themselves to ensure all families in our community would enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner by setting up a Facebook page, garnered community support and participation, approached local business for donations, and managed the collection and distribution of the food baskets to families all while working under the restrictions of a pandemic; and

Whereas regardless of the strain and burden people have been under for the past two years with the pandemic and the high cost of living, Kelly and Darlene were able to persuade people to dig deep and make significant contributes to care for the members of their community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking these remarkable ladies for their many contributions to our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 284

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Lisa Hare and Anka Goold helped to spread the Christmas spirit through the tightening of the pandemic restrictions with Sarah decorating her front yard and setting up an elaborate outdoor “studio-like” area with beautiful sparkling lights and ornate Christmas decorations to capture family photos in the holiday spirit; and

Whereas Anka, a professional photographer, gave her time and talents to take photos and graciously offered her professional services in exchange for donations to the BLT Christmas Food drive; and

Whereas every time we received a light dusting of snow, the photos became magical, attracting families through the community to stop by with babies, children, and their pets to capture the holiday season in a photo, even capturing the special moment of an engagement;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me thanking Sarah and Anka for capturing the holiday spirit time while at the same time supporting a worthy cause.

RESOLUTION NO. 285

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas Mallory MacDonald is Halifax County United Soccer (HCU) Club's first female executive director, the first female to lead a major Nova Scotia soccer club, and one of the first women in the province with a Canada Soccer (National) B License and Youth License; and

Whereas it's important our female youth players see organizations recognize women leaders in sports as this influence within the club helps to empower women athletes and inspire other girls to take on coaching roles in the future and stay active in soccer for life; and

Whereas Mallory brings high-quality professionalism and the technical, organizational, and developmental skills, that exemplify HCU Club values and helps the club do great things in our community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me congratulating and welcoming Mallory MacDonald to her role as executive director and director of soccer for Halifax County United Soccer Club.

RESOLUTION NO. 286

By: Hon. Iain Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect)

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

Whereas backyard beekeepers are essential to ensuring we have enough bees to pollinate our communities each summer and ensure the bees get extra food in the winter to keep the colony healthy year-round; and

Whereas this past fall proved to be exceptionally hard on honeybees because of the cold fall days mixed in with the unusually warm days creating confusion and the perfect storm for bees to starve before spring arrives and the nectar starts to flow; and

Whereas Patrick Bignell, a resident of Hubley, manages and cares for a backyard beehive making a significant difference to help preserve the honeybee population;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking and recognizing Patrick's important contribution to keeping honeybees alive.

RESOLUTION NO. 287

By: Suzy Hansen (Halifax Needham)

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

Whereas it is my pleasure to send Beulah Morgan Chisholm best wishes and warmest congratulations on the occasion of her 75th birthday; and

Whereas 75 years of life is a milestone birthday that needs recognition, often referred to as the platinum celebration or a diamond jubilee; and

Whereas I hope you have a lifetime of health, love, joy and prosperity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly wish you longevity, may your special day be filled with all the good things that you deserve, and may all your wishes come true!

RESOLUTION NO. 288

By: Hon. Steve Craig (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas following the closure of a local church, the Sackville Area Warming Centre worked in collaboration with Beacon House and the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth to secure a facility, resulting in the relocation of the Sackville Area Warming Centre; and

Whereas the new location can accommodate even more guests who are experiencing homelessness to come to the centre to warm up on cold winter evenings; and

Whereas the centre provides guests the opportunity to charge their devices, get connected, and stock up on supplies;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the staff, volunteers, and the community, for their efforts to provide a comfortable environment, five evenings a week, for those in need in our community.

RESOLUTION NO. 289

By: Hon. Steve Craig (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas Patti Williams and Kathleen Rusinak wanted to do something to support the people of Ukraine, so they decided to purchase supplies and started working diligently on blue and yellow memorial lapel pins; and

Whereas these pins include the Ukrainian flag, Ukrainian flower, which are individually painted, as well as a tiny silver teardrop; and

Whereas they are selling their ribbons at a cost of \$5 each and all funds raised will be donated to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Aid Fund, on behalf of the community of Lower Sackville;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding Patti Williams and Kathleen Rusinak on their efforts to work together to support the people of Ukraine.

RESOLUTION NO. 290

By: Hon. Steve Craig (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas Sackville Sandwich Week, which took place from March 5th - 12th, is a celebration and fundraiser where the community has an opportunity to purchase exclusive sandwiches from participating Sackville restaurants; and

Whereas with every sandwich sold, a donation is made to the food literacy programming at the Sackville Public Library; and

Whereas because of the incredible support from the community this year, \$3,899 was raised and since Sackville Sandwich Week first began in 2019, a total of \$11,610 has been donated to this program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking the Sackville Business Association for hosting this event and for their continued support of the Library's food literacy programming, including the Community Cooking Program.

RESOLUTION NO. 291

By: Hon. Steve Craig (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas Mike Poworoznyk, Director of the Sackville Area Warming Centre, believes that people who are homeless really need three things - a person, a place and a purpose - and providing an opportunity for people to take the next step to improve their lives is something he finds very rewarding; and

Whereas the Sackville Area Warming Centre provides a safe place for those experiencing homelessness during the cold winter evenings; and

Whereas guests are provided with a warm space, beverages, snacks and clothing, as well as the opportunity to talk about life-improving services;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Mike, the volunteers, and the community for continuing to work diligently and respectfully to provide comfort and resources for those in need.

RESOLUTION NO. 292

By: Hon. Steve Craig (Sackville-Cobequid)

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

Whereas Roberta Hibbert, founder and owner of The Sewing Guild Fabric Store, along with her daughter, Sarah Denyes, created a community-based maker space and makers' market in the store; and

Whereas this space allows people of all ages to come together to sew, quilt, make rugs, embroider, felt, or make other art, apparel or home décor; and

Whereas members of this space have access to a variety of sewing machines, large tables, along with free fabric and notion supplies for personal projects, which they are welcome to sell at the on-site makers' market;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in commending Sarah and Roberta for bringing together the youth, and others in the community, to share each other's knowledge and skills to create fabulous projects to take pride in.

RESOLUTION NO. 293

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas Corbin Stevens is the first community-based water operator to complete his Class II certification; and

Whereas Atlantic First Nations Water Authority is proud of the milestone Corbin achieved, as well as Pictou Landing First Nations; and

Whereas Corbin has their full support going forward;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the milestone Corbin Stevens has achieved and wish him much success in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 294

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas Keighan DeCoff from Fraser's Mountain recently earned bronze at the Northeast Conference Indoor Track and Field Championships in Staten Island, N.Y.; and

Whereas she recorded the 4th best shot put throw in her school's history - Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md.; and

Whereas Athletics Nova Scotia named Keighan its 2021, U20 Female award winner on February 24th;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Keighan DeCoff on her excellence in track and field and wish her luck at her upcoming competition in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

RESOLUTION NO. 295

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas Kayleigh Foley thoughtfully raised money for the Canadian Red Cross to support Ukraine; and

Whereas she acted quickly and set up a basket fundraiser draw with the proceeds going to the Canadian Red Cross; and

Whereas after only two days she has raised \$400 and the local radio station, 94.1, advertised for her;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Kayleigh for a heart that wants to find a way to help even when she feels helpless.

RESOLUTION NO. 296

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas Kevin Peterson, a mail carrier in his town, started carving with a chainsaw as a way to spend time outside at his cabin in West River St. Mary's, without being eaten alive by bugs; and

Whereas that was three years ago and, to his own surprise, he is still carving; and

Whereas with better tools and more experience he has carved and sold eagles, owls, bears, a giraffe, and whale but crows have been a more popular request;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge Kevin's unique talent and wish him many years of carving to come.

RESOLUTION NO. 297

By: Hon. Barbara Adams (Eastern Passage)

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

Whereas the Little Harbour Community Hall is planning a grand opening this spring, of their new pickleball courts, and anticipates memberships exceeding 150 players from throughout Pictou County; and

Whereas the provincial Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage assisted with their Recreational Facility Development Grant; and

Whereas they were able to also add to the safety of the venue by illuminating pathways with photo-cell lamps;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the Little Harbour community group for all their time and effort towards building a safe and welcoming place for community members.

RESOLUTION NO. 298

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas the Pictou Landing First Nation Fire Department has been actively growing their department; and

Whereas rather than selling their department's old pumper truck, We'koqma'q First Nation Volunteer Fire Department donated it to Pictou Landing First Nation department; and

Whereas Leonard Cremo said the truck will be great for back roads and hopes it will bring more new firemen into their community and fire hall;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Pictou Landing First Nation and We'koqma'q First Nation on leading by example in working together to build other communities up.

RESOLUTION NO. 299

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas in December 2021 the Town of Westville's CAO had to leave her position unexpectedly due to needs in her family; and

Whereas Samuel Graham, Superintendent of Public Works and water/wastewater services in the Town of Westville stepped into the role; and

Whereas this has allowed things to continue to run smoothly for the workers and residents in Westville;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Sam Graham for being willing to step up to the plate when his community was in need.

RESOLUTION NO. 300

By: Hon. Tim Houston (Pictou East)

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

Whereas the community of Thorburn is preparing to mark 150 years; and

Whereas Gail Jordon, John Ashton, Kathryn Campbell, and Manon Potvin have been researching a variety of records and information connected to the history of Thorburn; and

Whereas there will be panels displayed in a new, historical community kiosk, focusing on unknown history;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize the importance of linking our past to our future and thanking the people involved in this planning for their initiative.

RESOLUTION NO. 301

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club is celebrating 38 years of community service on the Eastern Shore; and

Whereas it may not be known that their popular community dinners, barbecues, and toy bingos are important fundraising events that go towards community projects and improvement funds for families in need; and

Whereas the popular Chezzetfest event will be hosted in June by the dedicated members of the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club and is an important fundraiser and social gathering event for the community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge and thank volunteers for 38 years of invaluable service and wish them many more years of continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 302

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas I resolve to recognize the hard-working and dedicated staff at Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital and Harbourview Lodge in Sheet Harbour; and

Whereas it's no secret that these facilities struggle with maintaining safe staffing levels, but the team consistently rallies to keep the doors open to serve residents and the broader community, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude for their fortitude despite this challenge; and

Whereas our rural hospitals and long-term care facilities provide essential and critical services that wouldn't be possible without the support of staff that work both day and night to provide care to Nova Scotians;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and thank, on behalf of the residents, families, and community members, all staff at both facilities for their ongoing commitment and dedication.

RESOLUTION NO. 303

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Margaret and Larry Hardy, owners of HardyWares operate a home-based business in Necum Teuch that delivers a quality line of small batch jellies, jams, garnishes, relishes, and pickled items, and the owners are committed to using as many local ingredients as possible in their recipes; and

Whereas it may not be known that recently Margaret and Larry entered four of their marmalades in The World's Original Marmalade Awards and Festival held in historic Dalemain Manor, the United Kingdom, this Manor has belonged to the same family for over three centuries and maintains a substantial marmalade archive; and

Whereas the Marmalade Awards had over 3,000 entries this year and each of HardyWares entries were successful, both their English and Maritime Blueberry Marmalade received commendable recognition while their Whisky Marmalade was awarded bronze and their Beer Marmalade took home silver;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate HardyWares Preserves for their sweet victory.

RESOLUTION NO. 304

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas in late April 2022, Jennie MacKenzie of Chezzetcook will travel to Ottawa and receive the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers in Rideau Hall; and

Whereas it may not be known that the medal recognizes the exceptional volunteer achievements of Canadians from across the country in a wide range of fields and pays tribute to the dedication and commitment of volunteers. Volunteers, like Jennie, embody the caring communities that we aspire to build; and

Whereas Jennie makes significant contributions to her community as a volunteer for the Chezzetcook and District Lions Club and recently celebrated 55 years as a Girl Guide leader;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing and congratulating Jennie on receiving this national medal for her extraordinary volunteer efforts. Thank you, Jennie.

RESOLUTION NO. 305

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Marie Lever of Porters Lake is known for her exceptional holiday spirit; and

Whereas each year Marie dresses like a Christmas elf and spreads holiday cheer by elaborately decorating her property, generating interest in her seasonal display; and

Whereas it may not be known that Marie hands out hundreds of candy canes in the month of December, sharing messages of happiness and encouragement to everyone she encounters;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Marie's efforts to bring joy to the heart of her community through her kindness and generosity.

RESOLUTION NO. 306

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Sydnee Lynn McKay is active in contributing to Eastern Shore communities. Sydnee administrates for three active groups that are advocating for the environment, protection for animals, including endangered species, and the preservation of Nova Scotia lands; and

Whereas it may not be known that Sydnee Lynn offers assistance with income tax preparation for those who can't afford such services and has prepared many returns for free over the years; and

Whereas she runs a new non-profit called Women's Tribal Dance Society that offers reiki, yoga, and chakra dance for those looking for a spiritual connection and wanting

help with everyday issues. Additionally, she provides social engagement opportunities for seniors on the Eastern Shore;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize Sydnee Lynn as an individual truly committed to making the Eastern Shore a better place for all its citizens.

RESOLUTION NO. 307

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas this resolution is to bring recognition to the Well-Being HUBs initiative, spearheaded by project coordinator Lesley Magee and the Old School Community Gathering Place team in partnership with Harbourview Lodge in Sheet Harbour and the Braeside Home for Special Care in Middle Musquodoboit; and

Whereas the Well-Being HUBs offers supports for community members receiving home care, those in long term care, those entering the care system in the future, as well as their care partners; and

Whereas the project offers workshops and resources on topics such as diabetes management, advanced care planning, and mental health awareness;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly acknowledge the important role the Well-Being HUBs plays in empowering individuals and families as they move through transitions while aging.

RESOLUTION NO. 308

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas Wendy Vaughan-MacKenzie of Sheet Harbour is the recipient of the Halifax Regional Municipality Volunteer Award for 2022; and

Whereas it may not be known that Wendy is considered to be the heart and soul of MacPhee House, a heritage property and museum in Sheet Harbour. She volunteers six to seven days a week operating the museum, greeting visitors and tourists, explaining MacPhee House artifacts, and sharing history of the area; and

Whereas, in addition, Wendy regularly visits area nursing homes and local seniors to gather history and genealogy that would otherwise be lost;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize and congratulate Wendy for her exceptional commitment to her community; she is much deserving of this acknowledgment for her volunteerism. Thank you, Wendy.

RESOLUTION NO. 309

By: Kent Smith (Eastern Shore)

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

Whereas the YESS program has successfully graduated the first cohort of students from the Eastern Shore's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy program; and

Whereas YESS is a unique program with a commitment to help young people, particularly those who face barriers to employment; and

Whereas it may not be known that each participant entered a 7-week job placement with local employers after receiving training in communication, first aid, interpersonal skills, team building, conflict resolution, WHMIS, food handling, mental health awareness, and much more;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly recognize all YESS program graduates, as well as program coordinators, for their hard work and perseverance in finding meaningful and gainful employment. Congratulations to everyone and continued success in your endeavors.

RESOLUTION NO. 310

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season not only did they win their League Championship, but they also won the Provincial title; and

Whereas Aiden Young was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least one point at the Provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the Provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Aiden Young and the TASA Ducks U 18 AA team on becoming the Provincial Champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 311

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Alex Parsons, the son of William (Bill) and Bernice Parsons of Lucasville where Alex was born and raised, joined the Armed Forces - Air Force Branch in July 2009, a dream of his was to serve his country and it was an honour for him; and

Whereas Alex is the material management tech and is stationed at CFB Halifax, Windsor Park as quartermaster for the Military Police Unit Halifax, a position he is proud of and also the residents of Lucasville are proud of him and his dedication to the military that he serves with dedication and hard work; and

Whereas in March 2022, he was presented with his 12-year medal by his Chief Petty Officer 2nd. Class MacKinnon;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Alex Parsons for joining the Armed Forces - Air Force Branch and his dedication for serving his country.

RESOLUTION NO. 312

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season not only did they win their League Championship but they also won the Provincial title; and

Whereas Andrew George was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least one point at the Provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the Provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Andrew George and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the Provincial Champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 313

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas assistant coach Justin Blanchard was a dedicated and knowledgeable coach, who played a huge part in the team's success; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team, including the coaching staff, not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate assistant coach Justin Blanchard and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 314

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas assistant coach Kevin Baillie was a dedicated and knowledgeable coach who played a huge part in the team's success; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team, including the coaching staff, not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate assistant coach Kevin Baillie and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 315

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Austin King was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Austin King and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 316

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Callum Baxter of Hammonds Plains, who is on his way to realizing his goal of becoming a professional race car driver, was one of 17 kart drivers who represented Canada in a field of 375 drivers from around the world at the Rotax Grand Finals in Bahrain; and

Whereas Callum was racing against an older, more experienced field of drivers and he earned this opportunity to travel to Bahrain after winning both the Canada Day Cup and the Canadian National Karting Championship for the third time; and

Whereas Callum is moving into the Canadian F1600 series with Britain West Motorsport in 2022, and this move to the F1600 is the first step to achieving his goal of becoming an IndyCar driver;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Callum Baxter for his drive and hard work on his way to becoming an IndyCar driver.

RESOLUTION NO. 317

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas head coach Jason Blanchard was a dedicated and knowledgeable coach who played a huge part in the team's success; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team, including the coaching staff, not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate coach Jason Blanchard and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 318

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Colby Harlow was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Colby Harlow and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 319

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Connor Blanchard was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Connor Blanchard and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 320

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Cory Emmerson, born in the historic community of Lucasville, joined the military in 1997 as a member of the Army Reserve, then full-time from 1999 to early 2004 and was deployed to Bosnia on two separate tours with peacekeeping operations during this time; and

Whereas in 2004 Cory graduated from the RCMP Depot training academy and was posted to Cole Harbour, where he spent some of his time working with recruiting, then worked at the Lower Sackville detachment until 2013, when he joined the Halifax Integrated General Investigation Section; and

Whereas in 2017 he was promoted to Corporal at the Depot training academy and he worked there until 2020, when he returned home to Nova Scotia and was promoted to Sergeant as the non-commissioned officer in charge of Nova Scotia divisional training;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking Cory Emmerson for his illustrious career in serving and protecting.

RESOLUTION NO. 321

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Cullen Hiltz was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Cullen Hiltz and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 322

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas in the Fall 2021, Hammonds Plains-Lucasville welcomed the Deerfield Pub to our community, a year-round pub, located at the Glen Arbour Golf course clubhouse, with a Scottish pub feel; and

Whereas Executive Chef Richard Sanford and his team prepare some fine dishes with something to satisfy everyone's appetite whether you are looking for a Sunday Brunch, small plates, or something to share you will find it all at the Deerfield while enjoying weekly live music, food specials and an extensive scotch and wine list plus many beer on tap; and

Whereas the Deerfield Pub has much to offer and is becoming a community gathering point for many residents;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in welcoming the Deerfield Pub to Hammonds Plains-Lucasville and congratulate them on their success.

RESOLUTION NO. 323

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the Order of Canada is one of our country's highest civilian honours, created in 1967 to recognize outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation; and

Whereas Dr. Vaughan from Hammonds Plains-Lucasville who is a retired physician, former Nova Scotia deputy minister of Health and Wellness, former CEO and medical director of South Shore Health, former CEO of the Canadian Medical Association, and also an Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University where he taught Data Access and Flow a foundation course in advanced analytics, and he was the president of WebMD Canada, an RCAF Special Operation flight surgeon and Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Medical Services during the war in Afghanistan; and

Whereas one of Dr. Vaughan's greatest accomplishments was introducing the first province-wide digital personal health record in Canada, and he is considered one of the leading exponents for digital health innovation to improve access to health service, and quality improvement in Canada;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dr. Peter Vaughan on receiving the prestigious Order of Canada a recognition he so deserved.

RESOLUTION NO. 324

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season not only did they win their League Championship, but they also won the Provincial title; and

Whereas Gian Baillie Abidi was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least one point at the Provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the Provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gian Baillie Abidi and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the Provincial Champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 325

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas COVID-19 limited the amount and types of fundraising that schools and PTAs have been able to do, schools have had to think outside the box from their normal fundraisers; and

Whereas Hammonds Plains Consolidated School PTA held a Read-A-Thon called “Great Things Happen When You Read,” a fundraiser that was designed to take the students on an incredible journey of discovery across Canada, inspire a love of reading, awaken their imagination, build their confidence, and enhance their reading skills; and

Whereas Hammonds Plains Consolidated School beat a record with Mind Growth Education, they read the most minutes of any school in just one week, and where monies raised were a great help to the school due to the students, teachers, families, and friends who made this such a successful and enjoyable fundraiser;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the students, staff, family, and friends for their support of this fundraising and for reading the most minutes out of all the schools involved in this fundraiser.

RESOLUTION NO. 326

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Isaac Webb is a Grade12 graduating student from Charles P. Allen High who was recruited by the Mount Allison Mounties football team; and

Whereas Isaac started playing football for the Timberlea Titans at the age of 12 playing on the defensive line where he played for four years, as well as playing on the U16 Provincial team, and C.P. Allen High he was a starter from Day One, playing safety and linebacker, being experienced all over the defensive side of the field, Mount A is looking forward to seeing him fly around the defensive zone; and

Whereas Isaac credits his fantastic coaching staff for the player he has become and sends a big thank you to Nico Jones for all the help he's given him, Isaac is looking forward to playing for Mount A and obtaining his Business/Aviation program;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Isaac Webb on being recruited by the Mount Allison Mounties and wish him success in all his future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 327

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season not only did they win their League Championship, but they also won the Provincial title; and

Whereas Jacob Oakley was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least one point at the Provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the Provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jacob Oakley and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the Provincial Champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 328

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Janelle Oliver Harris of Lucasville attended Millwood High and was the class of 2021 valedictorian, the first Black student from the community of Lucasville to receive such an honour; and

Whereas Janelle is currently a first-year student at Acadia University, where she received a scholarship of \$20,000 over four years to help further her education where she is studying for a political science undergrad degree with a graduation date of 2025, then hopes to pursue a law degree and to become a lawyer; and

Whereas Janelle's ultimate goal is to become Canada's first Black prime minister;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Janelle Oliver Harris on being valedictorian of the class of 2021 and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 329

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Kingswood Elementary staff and students organized and ran a holiday food, clothing, and toy drive, where their message of need was met and then exceeded by the generous nature of the surrounding community of Hammonds Plains and West Bedford through the donation of an impressive amount of food, clothing, and toys for the HRM community and the people that Feed Nova Scotia supports; and

Whereas the main lobby of the school was filled with boxes of non-perishable food, bags of warm clothing, and piles of toys for every age for the upcoming holiday season, and then at week's end, the Hammonds Plains Fire Department picked up the almost countless bags of toys and winter clothing, which they then were able to distribute to appropriate individuals and families, and Feed Nova Scotia's Stuff-A-Bus came to collect a mountain of food; and

Whereas the food, clothing, and toy drive also was able to support many families in the school community that were struggling to make a traditional holiday possible, due to financial constraints;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank the students and staff for this initiative of helping others to have a Merry Christmas.

RESOLUTION NO. 330

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Laura Eamon, formerly of Hammonds Plains-Lucasville is a strong, determined, and brave young woman; and

Whereas Laura has chosen to speak up about her experience with alcohol that she experienced from 2008-2013, and she has now been eight years sober; and

Whereas Laura is back in university where she was one of nine who just landed a prestigious Frank H. Sobey scholarship worth \$35,000, and with part of her application for the scholarship, which included reference letters, written essays, and an interview process, she talked about her sobriety, showing that people can survive substance use disorder and that they can change and grow; and

Whereas Laura is also involved with the Halifax Recovery Society, a non-profit focused on breaking down the stigma of mental health and substance-use disorders and where for their 2021 Recovery Day event, she told her story;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Laura Eamon on being eight years sober and wish her continued success in her future.

RESOLUTION NO. 331

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Leanne Lucas, who was born and raised in Lucasville and received scholarships to attend Dalhousie University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science, Honours, in chemistry (Co-op) and subsequently a Master of Science in physics and atmospheric sciences; and

Whereas while at Dalhousie Leanne was awarded a Faculty of Science Undergraduate Research Prize; and

Whereas Leanne proudly works developing cancer immunotherapies at IMV Inc. and also finds time to volunteer with the Lucasville Greenway Society, and to promote science with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and WISE (Women in Science Education); and

Whereas Leanne was the recipient of the inaugural Ancestral Roots Award for Science and Technology from the Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute, and all her accomplishment have made her community extremely proud of her;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Leanne Lucas for her many accomplishments and to wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 332

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season; not only did they win their league championship, they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Liam MacGillivray was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the Champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Liam MacGillivray and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 333

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Malcolm Bussey, a first-year student at St. Francis Xavier University, was named AUS Football Rookie of the Year, finishing his debut season leading the conference in rushes, total rushing yards, rushing yards per game, and yards per rush, and he ranked third among all U Sports running backs in rush attempts, total rushing yards, and yards per game; and

Whereas Malcolm's success at St. F.X. follows on his 2020 success at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, where he was named MaxPreps New Hampshire High School Football Player of the Year, and he also earned the New Hampshire Gatorade Player of the Year; and

Whereas Malcolm had many offers to play for schools in the U.S. but returned to Canada and St. F.X. brought him back to the school his late grandfather played for in 1963 as a star rookie running back, a year they went undefeated, and Malcolm had an outstanding freshman season while wearing #27, his grandfather's number in his honour;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Malcolm Bussey on being named the AUS Football Rookie of the Year and wish him well in all future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 334

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Karen Carey was the team manager, organizing team fundraising, keeping track of games and practice times, and being a support to the coaches and team; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team, including the coaching staff and manager, not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Karen Carey, team manager, and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 335

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Nicholas Hui was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team, but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nicholas Hui and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 336

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Team Mosher, a team of young 16- and 17-year-old curlers made up of players from Upper Tantallon, Truro, and Halifax, who had a very successful season this year and was chosen by the Nova Scotia Curling Association to represent Nova Scotia at the New Holland Canadian U21 Curling Championship being held in Stratford, Ontario, from March 25th to April 1st, 2022, and

Whereas Nick Mosher, Sean Beland, Evan Hennigar, Aidan MacDonald, and Owen McPherson have been curling together for the past nine years but this was their first time to nationals; and

Whereas the team, which curls out of the CFB Halifax Curling Club, has been practising and working hard to ready themselves for this opportunity; and

Whereas this season Team Mosher won the Centre for Curling Excellence Maritime U21 Spiel, the Truro Invitational Cashspiel, the Canada Winter Games Pre-Trials, qualifying #1 for the Trials in April, and was a finalist in the Nova Scotia provincial for the 2022 World Qualification Event;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Team Mosher on their success this year and wish them well in their future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 337

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Nico Jones from Upper Hammonds Plains is a brilliant young man who was nominated as a candidate in Nova Scotia's 2022 Man and Woman of the Year Campaign in support of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada; and

Whereas the focus of his campaign will be improving blood cancer education for the Black community, from both a patient and a health practitioner standpoint, as Black patients have disproportionately worse outcomes when it comes to blood cancers when compared to other communities; and

Whereas Nico thinks that education is one of the factors that contribute to the outcomes for the Black community and he is pleased to have been given the opportunity to stand up for his community and to participate in this fundraising competition to help accelerate blood cancer cures and support those living with this disease;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nico Jones and wish him well on this wonderful initiative.

RESOLUTION NO. 338

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Nikolas Corkum was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nikolas Corkum and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 339

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Noah Schelleman was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Noah Schelleman and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 340

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas in January 2020, Olga Ginovker launched her business, New Stars Dance School, which due to COVID-19 left her feeling like she was riding a roller coaster with the ups and downs of shutdowns, but she persevered, and the school is becoming a popular dance school located at the Hammonds Plains Community Centre; and

Whereas Olga, building on her own childhood background in Ukraine, in ballet and ballroom dancing, offers a unique program where her dance school has elements of ballet and ballroom, but also elements from rhythmic gymnastics such as hoops and mats; and

Whereas the support of the parents throughout the pandemic shows they believe in what Olga's program has to offer, plus the students always leave happy and tired and anxiously waiting to attend the next class;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Olga Ginovker on opening New Stars Dance School and wish her continued success.

RESOLUTION NO. 341

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Quinn Kennedy of Upper Tantallon was one of seven Nova Scotian hockey players to receive an A rating by the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's scouting service in January; and

Whereas Quinn started his hockey career playing for TASA Minor Hockey at the St. Margaret's Centre and he then spent the past two seasons playing for The Gulls Major Bantam Hockey Club and this 2021-22 season he is playing for the Halifax McDonald's Hockey U18 team; and

Whereas Quinn is a 16-year-old forward, who shoots left-handed and who was chosen for the 2019-20 Team Nova Scotia U14 team, and where his dedication and hard work was obvious to the scouts for the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League which earned him the A rating;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Quinn Kennedy for receiving an A rating and for his hard work and dedication to the sport of hockey.

RESOLUTION NO. 342

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Rapid Wheels mobile automotive was founded by Rafael Tomas, an immigrant from the Philippines; and

Whereas Rafael and his mechanics come to you wherever is convenient for all your auto needs including tire service, oil changes, maintenance, and even repair and recently he expanded his business to include a garage where you can drop off your vehicle for mechanical work that cannot be done on-site also offering drop-off and pickup service to his customers; and

Whereas Rafael has been a wonderful addition to Hammonds Plains-Lucasville as he is committed to providing personalized car care convenient to busy people by hiring trained and qualified personnel who are equally committed to service excellence;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Rafael Tomas for choosing Nova Scotia as his home and congratulate him for his hard work offering his car services to the residents of Hammonds Plains-Lucasville and surrounding areas.

RESOLUTION NO. 343

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Reese Carey was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Reese Carey and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 344

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Rory Litt was a hardworking and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rory Litt and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 345

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Ryan Gorman was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Gorman and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 346

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Ryan Murphy was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Ryan Murphy and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 347

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Sackville United Baptist Cemetery is the final resting place of many ancestors of the descendants and original settlers of the Lucasville community, dating back to 1832; and

Whereas, historically, the Lucasville community buried their loved ones tucked away in the back corner of the cemetery during times when Black Nova Scotians were not permitted to be laid to rest alongside white Nova Scotians; and

Whereas Debra Lucas and Deacon Irma Riley worked with MLA Ben Jessome for over three years, and finally the important milestone was achieved in mid-July 2021, when they received heritage designation which will enable the history of the Black cemetery to remain intact and ensures the legacy of these founding ancestors of Lucasville will be sustained for generations;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Debra Lucas and Deacon Irma Riley for their hard work in securing heritage designation for the Sackville United Black Baptist Cemetery.

RESOLUTION NO. 348

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team had a successful season, not only winning their league championship but also the provincial title; and

Whereas Spencer Mansfield was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team, where each member earned at least one point at the provincials as the team went 5-0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but they became bonded, close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Spencer Mansfield and the TASA Ducks U18 AA hockey team on becoming provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 349

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas in early December, five skaters representing the St. Margaret's Bay Skating Club took part in the 2022 Skate Canada Challenge: Jaxin Wilson, pre-novice men's singles; Alyssa DoCouto and Will Reichheld, pre-novice pairs; and Mylah Simpkin and Luc Dupuis, pre-novice pairs. They were joined on the trip to Regina by one of their coaches, Charleen Cameron; and

Whereas this was the skaters' first time competing at a national competition and they put in many long hours of practice in preparation for the event; and

Whereas these skaters qualified to represent Nova Scotia at the 2022 sectional competition held in October and the Novice to Senior group winners qualified in Regina to skate at the national championships in Ottawa; and

Whereas while all skaters missed qualifying, they did well and left the competition inspired to work hard and represent Nova Scotia again, aiming for the Canada Games next Winter;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the St. Margaret's Bay Skating Club on their first time representing Nova Scotia at a national event and wish them well in their future events.

RESOLUTION NO. 350

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Talia Vydikhan, a resident of Hammonds Plains-Lucasville, is a Dalhousie University student majoring in therapeutic recreation; and

Whereas Talia was a member of the Dalhousie Tigers women's volleyball team that won their ninth consecutive AUS title with a 3-0 win over the Saint Mary's Huskies, which allowed the team to go to nationals in Calgary; and

Whereas as therapeutic recreation is a systematic process that uses recreation-based, leisure-based, and play-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, Talia's involvement in a sport is a great asset to her in her chosen vocation;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Talia Vidykhan and her Dalhousie Tigers volleyball team on their successful year and to wish Talia well in all her future endeavours.

RESOLUTION NO. 351

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Team Blades, from the Chester Curling Club, is a curling team made up of Hammonds Plains resident Sophie Blades as skip, third Kate Weissent, second Stephanie Atherton, and lead Alexis Cluney, who attended the New Holland Canadian Under-21 Junior Curling Championships in Stratford, Ontario, March 25th to April 1st; and

Whereas while playing in the junior program at Lakeshore Curling Club in Lower Sackville, three of the girls, aged 8 years old, got together in 2014 and played in their first spiel, the U11 Little Rocks Provincials, and have played together ever since, with Stephanie Atherton joining the team, along with two-time world champion coach Andrew Atherton, at the end of the 2018 season, and

Whereas the team has also qualified to represent Nova Scotia in the U18 Canadian Championships, as well as competing to represent Nova Scotia at the 2023 Canada Winter Games in Summerside, PEI;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Team Blades on attending the U12 New Holland Canadian Under-21 Junior Curling Championships and wish them well on all there future endeavours on and off the ice.

RESOLUTION NO. 352

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season - not only did they win their league championship but they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Trevor Baillie was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least 1 point at the provincials as the team went 5 to 0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but made them bonded close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Trevor Baillie and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 353

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season - not only did they win their league championship but they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Tye Bentley was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least 1 point at the provincials as the team went 5 to 0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but made them bonded close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tye Bentley and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 354

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas the TASA Ducks U18 AA team had a successful season - not only did they win their league championship but they also won the provincial title; and

Whereas Tyler Harlow was a hard-working and dedicated member of the team where each member earned at least 1 point at the provincials as the team went 5 to 0 at the tournament on their way to becoming the champions at the provincials; and

Whereas the hard work and dedication by the entire team not only made them a top-notch team but made them bonded close friends;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Tyler Harlow and the TASA Ducks U18 AA team on becoming the provincial champions.

RESOLUTION NO. 355

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas in October 2020 the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Development Association reclaimed ownership of the building that had been home to the first all-Black volunteer fire department in Canada; and

Whereas the association is turning the building into a recreation and art centre for youth, something much needed in the community, and the soon-to-be-named Elizabeth Mantley Arts and Recreation Centre is not only a reclaimed piece of history for the community but will now provide a safe place for youth to feel empowered and develop through arts and recreation; and

Whereas members of the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Development Association remember attending many events such as barbeques and fundraisers while growing up in the community, as it was the hub of the community, and so their dream of the Elizabeth Mantley Arts and Recreation Centre will become a reality - as their motto says, "Re-purpose On Purpose With Purpose";

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Development Association on acquiring the former volunteer fire department building and for their vision and passion on turning it into the Elizabeth Mantley Arts and Recreation Centre.

RESOLUTION NO. 356

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas on January 15, 1792, nearly 1,200 people set sail from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in Africa, with the passengers all of African descent who decided to emigrate to Africa after the colonial government didn't keep its promise of land to the Black Loyalists; and

Whereas the principal at Auburn Drive High, Karen Hudson, encouraged students to take part in a project to commemorate the 230th anniversary of the exodus of Black Loyalists, marking its significance, and the project, titled #1792, allowed students to write a letter or poem or to draw a picture to one of the passengers to reflect on how they might have felt - a way to connect students to their roots, and also opening it up to students provincewide; and

Whereas Madeline Symonds Middle School Grade 9 student Damini Awoyiga, a spoken word artist, jumped at the chance to read her poem "Together We Stand," which she tweaked to fit the occasion, and as Damini explained, "Together We Stand" is about the challenges of African Nova Scotians, their roots, and the resilience and strength of her people;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Karen Hudson for encouraging Nova Scotian students to partake in Project 1792 and thank Damini Awoyiga for presenting her poem.

RESOLUTION NO. 357

By: Hon. Ben Jessome (Hammonds Plains-Lucasville)

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

Whereas Megan McCarthy, a resident of Haliburton Hills and president and co-founder of ROCarbon Labs, was featured in the January issue of *CanadaSME Business Magazine*; and

Whereas Megan, from an early age, was dubbed “Captain Planet” by family and friends as she was passionate about environmental sustainability and was always thinking of ways to reduce waste and save money, and would then teach others about ways to reduce as well; and

Whereas Megan completed an engineering degree, and after working away from home for a few years returned and completed a Bachelor of Management, majoring in in Environment, Sustainability and Society; she then worked in collaboration with the electric utility in Summerside, P.E.I., where the overarching goal of the project was to use wind turbines to heat homes using electric thermal storage units for the first time in the world; and after the success of this project Megan returned home and co-founded ROCarbon Labs, which fits perfectly with the passion she had from her youth;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Megan McCarthy on her dedication and hard work in her chosen field and for following her lifelong passion for environmental sustainability and for co-founding ROCarbon.

RESOLUTION NO. 358

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Yvonne Noel and the amazing volunteers with Square Roots Fairview Clayton Park marked the second anniversary of providing free 10lb bundles of vegetables to community members in need; and

Whereas April 23, 2022, will mark their 60th pickup event, which will provide free, fresh, local produce to over 200 families as well as providing a free family meal kit that includes ingredients for a healthy meal and dessert for a family of six; and

Whereas Yvonne’s newest project is a free community closet that allows those in need to shop for new-to-them clothing with dignity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Yvonne and all of the volunteers at Square Roots Fairview Clayton Park for ensuring that our most vulnerable are fed and warm and feel the love of their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 359

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas the Fairview Legion was finally able to have an awards and honours presentation after being postponed twice due to COVID, and nine members received life memberships in recognition of their outstanding service to the Legion; and

Whereas Murray Austin, Barb Boudreau, John Bowser, Philip Burke, Maurice Hatch, Andy Jeffrey, Neil Landry, Hilda Purcell, and Cyril Slade were honoured with life memberships; and

Whereas Philip Burke not only received a life membership but also a pin recognizing his 70 years as a member of the Legion;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating these committed Legionnaires on their life memberships.

RESOLUTION NO. 360

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Jamie Flynn is a front-line health care workers, and the pharmacist/owner of the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Fairview Clayton Park; and

Whereas Jamie ran in the 126th Boston Marathon with an unofficial time of 3:19:25, re-qualifying for next year by 35 seconds; and

Whereas since Jamie started training in December, he has completed two running workouts and three to five other runs almost every day, totalling an impressive 1,200 kilometres;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jamie on his recent success at the Boston Marathon and thank him and his team for delivering over 4,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses.

RESOLUTION NO. 361

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas the honourable Lena Metlege Diab, MP for Halifax West, has hit the ground running, working hard every day since being elected to the House of Commons last September; and

Whereas on April 5, 2022, MP Diab introduced a private member's bill in the House of Commons to establish November as Lebanese Heritage Month nationwide; and

Whereas Nova Scotia designated a Lebanese Heritage Month in 2018, celebrating Lebanese Canadians and the numerous contributions they've made to our country;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating my good friend and office neighbour Lena Metlege Diab on her first private member's bill and hope that Parliament also designates a Lebanese Heritage Day.

RESOLUTION NO. 362

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Matt Welsh has been an elite hockey player for most of his life, playing in net for the Charlottetown Islanders for five years and setting a QMJHL record for most minutes played by a goalie in league history; and

Whereas Matt returned to Halifax during the pandemic to attend Saint Mary's University and is continuing to build his reputation on and off the ice working with the Children's Wish Foundation, organizing blood drives with Canadian Blood Services, coaching youth hockey, and knocking on hundreds of doors during the provincial election; and

Whereas Matt has recently been recognized as an academic All-Canadian and awarded the AUS Student-Athlete Community Service Award in recognition of his volunteer efforts;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Matt on his success, and wish him all the best as he graduates from SMU this spring.

RESOLUTION NO. 363

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Patrick Salah excelled musically from a young age and was the only person in his year at Dalhousie to take a bachelor of music specializing in the pipe organ; and

Whereas after graduating from Dalhousie in 2015, Patrick began attending St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto, continuing to play the organ and offering lessons to his classmates; and

Whereas on August 21, 2021, Father Patrick was ordained as a priest at Saint Mary's Basilica and is now an associate pastor at Christ the King Parish in Dartmouth;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Father Patrick on his ordination.

RESOLUTION NO. 364

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Ryan Abraham is a young curler from Clayton Park who started curling shortly after he learned to crawl dedicating most of his life to the sport; and

Whereas Ryan has represented Nova Scotia at the Canada Games, U18 and U21 national championships, and most recently achieved every curler's dream when he represented Nova Scotia at the 2022 Brier in Lethbridge being the youngest curler in the field; and

Whereas Team Nova Scotia didn't take home any medals but curled well and were recognized for their great sportsmanship, and their friendliness at the bar after games;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in congratulating Ryan on his curling success and wish him all the best for the future. His brother is proud of him.

RESOLUTION NO. 365

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas for 20 years the Saj House team welcomed customers to their Fairview home for traditional Lebanese food; and

Whereas they specialized in mana'eesh, fatayers, shawarmas, salads, baklawa and much more; and

Whereas on January 24, 2022, Saj House closed down their Fairview location moved to Bedford West;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in wishing the Bassel Al Jamil and the Saj House staff all the best at their new location.

RESOLUTION NO. 366

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Yvonne Noel and the amazing volunteers with Square Roots Fairview Clayton Park marked the second anniversary of providing free 10 lb. bundles of vegetables to community members in need; and

Whereas April 23, 2022, will mark their 60th pickup event which will provide free, fresh, local produce to over 200 families as well as providing a free family meal kit which includes ingredients for a healthy meal and dessert for a family of six; and

Whereas Yvonne's newest project is a Free Community Closet that allows those in need to shop for "new to them" clothing with dignity;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly thank Yvonne and all of the volunteers at Square Roots Fairview Clayton Park for ensuring that our most vulnerable are fed, warm and feel the love of their community.

RESOLUTION NO. 367

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas Vanessa McCarron began practicing judo when she was eight years old, and was a very successful competitor, including a bronze medal win in the 1999 Canada Games; and

Whereas since 2003, Vanessa has been a judo coach who has helped many Nova Scotian children begin their judo journey, and will be the coach of Team Nova Scotia at the 2023 Canada Games in judo; and

Whereas recently Vanessa became a competition development coach (Level 3), becoming one of very few people in Nova Scotia to hold this high coaching certification;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Sensei Vanessa McCarron on her trailblazing coaching achievement, and wish her all the best in her future.

RESOLUTION NO. 368

By: Hon. Patricia Arab (Fairview-Clayton Park)

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

Whereas William Fougere was suffering from a disease that obstructed his airways requiring a double lung transplant; and

Whereas Mr. Fougere was given a second chance at life because of the generosity of another, receiving a double lung transplant in 2012, now serves on the board of the Lung Association of Nova Scotia, alongside the doctor who helped him get on the transplant list; and

Whereas Mr. Fougere is now an active member of the community because of the generosity of an organ donor;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly join me in thanking William for his work in the community, and encourage all Nova Scotians to remain registered as organ donors.