



## DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain**

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**First Session**

**TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION:</b>	
Res. 369, Amendments to <i>Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly</i> , Hon. K. Masland.....	2893
Res. 370, Amendments to <i>Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly</i> , Hon. B. Druhan.....	2896
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS:</b>	
No. 183, An Act to Provide Families with Emergency Relief, Hon. B. Maguire .....	2899
No. 184, An Act Respecting Collaborative Care, S. Leblanc .....	2899
No. 185, An Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the House of Assembly Act, Hon. B. Johns (by Hon. B. Druhan).....	2899
No. 186, An Act to Provide Transparency Respecting the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2899
No. 187, An Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes, 1989,	

the Public Utilities Act, Respecting Earnings and Rates, C. Kerr.....	2899
No. 188, An Act to Provide Immediate Relief to Seniors and Nova Scotians Living on Low Incomes, Hon. K. Regan.....	2899
No. 189, An Act to Amend Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Revenue Act, to cut Provincial Gas Taxes, F. Tilley.....	2899
No. 190, An Act to Provide Families with School Supplies Relief, Hon. D. Mombourquette.....	2899
NOTICES OF MOTION:	
Res. 371, Mbr. for C.B. Ctr.-Whit. Pier: Accom. for House Sitting - Authorize, S. Leblanc .....	2899
Vote - Affirmative.....	2900
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS:	
Leefe, Hon. John: Death of - Tribute, Hon. K. Masland.....	2901
Moment of Silence.....	2901
House Colleagues: Recent Milestones - Congrats., Hon. K. Regan.....	2901
Organizers: Pride Party & Drag Show - Thanks, S. Leblanc .....	2902
Saxton, Kaitlyn Mary Paige: Death of - Tribute, E. Smith-McCrossin.....	2902
Moment of Silence.....	2903
Sister, Kimberley: Death of - Tribute, K. Smith .....	2903
Wife, Stephanie: 9 <sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniv. - Congrats., Hon. D. Mombourquette.....	2904
Charlebois, Carol: Death of - Tribute, S. Hansen .....	2904
Wife, Shari: 47 <sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniv. - Congrats., Hon. S. Craig.....	2905
Deveau, Nelson: Com. Serv. - Recog., Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2905
Coombes, Kendra/Brown, Matt: Daughter - Birth Congrats., L. Lachance.....	2906
First Responders: Svc. After Lr. Econ. Collision - Thanks, T. Taggart.....	2906
Daughter, Heidi - Birthday Wishes, B. Clark.....	2906
Grade 5 and 6 Students: Art Contest Partic. - Thanks, S. Leblanc .....	2907
MacNeil, Hon. Chuck: Death of - Tribute, Hon. G. Morrow.....	2907
Moment of Silence.....	2908

Toulany, Abe & Family: Hosting Timberlea Summer Fest - Thanks, Hon. I. Rankin.....	2908
Duffy, Julia Ann: Retirement - Best Wishes, S. Hansen .....	2908
Samson, Al: Death of - Tribute, T. Boudreau.....	2909
ECEs: Raise Needed - Recog., Hon. B. Maguire .....	2909
Sangster, Mike: Death of - Tribute, L. Lachance.....	2910
Organizers & Voluns.: World Sailing Ch'ships - Thanks, D. Barkhouse.....	2910
Husband, Dean: 23 <sup>rd</sup> Wedding Anniv. - Congrats., A. Simmonds.....	2910
The Mellotones: <i>The Coast</i> Awd. & 25 <sup>th</sup> Anniv. - Congrats., Hon. B. Adams.....	2911
Marsman, Devon Sinclair: Missing Child - Recog., A. Duale .....	2912
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS:</b>	
No. 555, Prem. - Cost of Living Crisis: Emerg. Relief - Action, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2913
No. 556, Prem.: Access to Primary Care - Delay, C. Chender .....	2915
No. 557, Prem.: State of Econ. Promises - Update, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2917
No. 558, Prem. - Cost of Living Crisis: Action - Delay, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2918
No. 559, Prem.: Compassion from Govt. - Demonstrate, Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2920
No. 560, DHW - ER Wait Times: Collab. Emerg. Ctrs. - Open, S. Leblanc .....	2921
No. 561, FTB: Cost of Living Crisis - Solution, B. Clark.....	2922
No. 562, FTB: Cost of Living - Supports, B. Clark.....	2923
No. 563, FTB: Better Pay Cheque Guarantee - Shelving, Hon. P. Arab .....	2924
No. 564, LSI - Paid Sick Days: No Access - Explain, K. Coombes.....	2925
No. 565, EECD: ECE Wage Increase - Update, Hon. D. Mombourquette.....	2927
No. 566, FTB: Projected Recession - Acknowledge, Hon. K. Regan.....	2928
No. 567, FTB - Economic Support: Govt. Plan - Address, Hon. K. Regan.....	2929
No. 568, SLTC: Air-Conditioned Facilities - Update,	

G. Burrill .....	2930
No. 569, DCS - Income Assistance: Amount - Justification, A. Simmonds.....	2931
POINT OF ORDER .....	2932
ADJOURNMENT:	
MOTION UNDER RULE 43:	
Gov't (N.S.): Cost of Living Crisis - Action,	
Hon. Z. Churchill .....	2934
L. Lachance.....	2938
Hon. J. Lohr .....	2942
Hon. K. Regan.....	2946
G. Burrill .....	2950
Hon. B. Adams.....	2953
Hon. B. Maguire .....	2957
C. Chender .....	2961
Hon. D. Mombourquette .....	2963
ADJOURNMENT, House rose to meet again on Wed., July 27 <sup>th</sup> at noon.....	2966
NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3):	
Res. 372, Pettipas, Nicholas: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender.....	2968
Res. 373, Smith, Rick: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender .....	2968
Res. 374, Broussard, Jackie: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender .....	2969
Res. 375, Kent, Crystal: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender .....	2969
Res. 376, Webber, Robin: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - C. Chender .....	2970
Res. 377, Roberts, Dave: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender.....	2970
Res. 378, Stephen, Zack: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender .....	2971
Res. 379, Justasson, Gene: Org. and Prom. of Trunk 7 Music Fest. - Congrats., C. Chender.....	2971



**HALIFAX, TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022**

**Sixty-fourth General Assembly**

**First Session**

**2:00 P.M.**

**SPEAKER**

Hon. Keith Bain

**DEPUTY SPEAKERS**

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

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

**PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS**

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

**RESOLUTION NO. 369**

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

Be it resolved that the *Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly* be suspended or amended as follows, for, and only for, the duration of the Summer 2022 sitting of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly:

1. Paragraph 1 of Rule 6 is amended to provide that
  - (a) the physical presence of at least 15 members of the House in the Legislative Chamber, including the Speaker or member presiding on the Speaker's behalf, and the House Leaders of each caucus or their authorized delegates, shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the House for the exercise of its powers; and
  - (b) to the greatest extent possible, the physical quorum at any given meeting of the House shall proportionately reflect the overall standings in the House.
2. Paragraph (2) of Rule 13 is amended to prohibit a member in virtual attendance from exiting virtual proceedings when the Speaker is putting a question.
3. Paragraph (1) of Rule 14 is amended to provide as follows:
  - (a) so as long as the physical quorum of 15 members is maintained, any member may choose to attend the services of the House either physically or virtually;
  - (b) members not physically present in the Legislative Chamber are bound to attend the services of the House virtually from a location within the geographic boundaries of the Province of Nova Scotia, with their faces clearly visible by video; and
  - (c) for greater certainty,
    - i. a diagnosis of COVID-19 is not a precondition for a member to attend the services of the House virtually; and
    - ii. A member who is unable to attend the services of the House during hybrid proceedings by either physical or virtual attendance must request a leave of absence from the Speaker.
4. All references to members standing or rising in their places, including Rule Nos. 22, 43, 47, 59, and 63, are amended to:
  - (a) provide that a member in virtual attendance desiring to speak is not required to rise but shall instead virtually indicate their desire to speak in a manner directed by the Speaker; and
  - (b) permit a member physically present to speak from any seat assigned to the member or the member's caucus in the Legislative Chamber of the House;
5. Paragraph (2) of Rule No. 38 is amended to provide that questions in the House or in Committee of the Whole House shall be decided by a majority of the votes instead of voices; and for greater certainty, votes include virtual votes in a manner indicated as directed by the Speaker or the Chair, as the case may be.

6. Paragraph (3) of Rule No. 38 is amended to provide that members in virtual attendance may demand a division in a manner as directed by the Speaker or Chair, as the case may be.
7. Paragraph (1) of Rule No. 44 is amended to delete the reference to a bill being printed.
8. Rule No. 45 is amended to read as follows:
  - (a) Except by unanimous consent of the House, no bill shall be read a second time unless it has been published on the Legislature's website and has been subsequently marked on the Orders of the Day as published.
9. Rule No. 48 is amended to permit the Clerk of the Committee to which a Bill has been referred to sign in place of the Chair of that Committee.
10. Rule No. 49 is amended to replace printing or reprinting with publishing or republishing.
11. Paragraph (3) of Rule No. 62F is amended to provide that questions in Subcommittee on Supply shall be decided by a majority of votes, including the vote of the Chair, indicated as directed by the Speaker instead of voices, and whenever the votes are equal, the Chair has a second or casting vote.
12. Paragraph (4) of Rule No. 62F is amended to provide that meetings of the Subcommittee on Supply cannot be physically observed in person by the general public, but that the meetings will be broadcasted.
13. Rule No. 62FB is amended to provide, for greater certainty, that a minister may appear before the Committee of the Whole on Supply either virtually or physically with support staff.
14. Rule No. 77 is amended to provide that the Clerk shall cause the Orders of the Day to be sent electronically to all members and shall only provide Orders of the Day in the House for members physically attending the services in this House.
15. Guidelines for the tabling of documents, reports, petitions, papers, notices, and other order of speeches shall be directed by the Speaker.
16. In the event of technical errors, the Speaker is empowered to take all necessary steps to remedy the error and to ensure the integrity of the legislative process.
17. All other rules, customs, traditions, and practices of the House, including *inter alia* decorum and speech apply *mutatis mutandis* to hybrid proceedings.

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.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader presented a resolution to support virtual attendance in this House that is universally accessible and respects and accommodates the Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier MLA and any other MLA who may have personal reasons why they're unable to attend in person, whether they be medical conditions, family situations, or other. It was an approach that's equitable and inclusive and respects the privacy of all of our MLAs.

I am incredibly disappointed that the Opposition doesn't recognize the value of the equity of this, so, Mr. Speaker, we are going to try once again with another resolution.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 370**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

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

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  - (b) to the greatest extent possible, the physical quorum at any given meeting of the House shall proportionately reflect the overall standings in the House.



2. Paragraph (2) of Rule 13 is amended to prohibit a member in virtual attendance from exiting virtual proceedings when the Speaker is putting a question.
3. Paragraph (1) of Rule 14 is amended to provide as follows:
  - (a) so long as the physical quorum of 15 members is maintained, any member may choose to attend the services of the House either physically or virtually;
  - (b) members not physically present in the Legislative Chamber are bound to attend the services of the House virtually from a location within the geographic boundaries of the Province of Nova Scotia, with their faces clearly visible by video; and
  - (c) for greater certainty,
    - (i) a diagnosis of COVID-19 is not a precondition for a member to attend the services of the House virtually; and
    - (ii) A member who is unable to attend the services of the House during hybrid proceedings by either physical or virtual attendance must request a leave of absence from the Speaker.
4. All references to members standing or rising in their places, including Rule Nos. 22, 43, 47, 59, and 63, are amended to:
  - (a) provide that a member in virtual attendance desiring to speak is not required to rise but shall instead virtually indicate their desire to speak in a manner directed by the Speaker; and
  - (b) permit a member physically present to speak from any seat assigned to the member or the member's caucus in the Legislative Chamber of the House;
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16. In the event of technical errors, the Speaker is empowered to take all necessary steps to remedy the error and to ensure the integrity of the legislative process.
17. All other rules, customs, traditions, and practices of the House, including *inter alia* decorum and speech apply *mutatis mutandis* to hybrid proceedings.

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.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill No. 183 - Entitled an Act to Provide Families with Emergency Relief. (Hon. Brendan Maguire)**

**Bill No. 184 - Entitled an Act Respecting Collaborative Care. (Susan Leblanc)**

**Bill No. 185 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 1 (1992 Supplement) of the Revised Statutes, 1989. The House of Assembly Act. (Hon. Brad Johns by Hon. Becky Druhan)**

**Bill No. 186 - Entitled an Act to Provide Transparency Respecting the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. (Hon. Zach Churchill)**

**Bill No. 187 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Public Utilities Act, Respecting Earnings and Rates. (Carman Kerr)**

**Bill No. 188 - Entitled an Act to Provide Immediate Relief to Seniors and Nova Scotians Living on Low Incomes. (Hon. Kelly Regan)**

**Bill No. 189 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Revenue Act, to Cut Provincial Gas Taxes. (Fred Tilley)**

**Bill No. 190 - Entitled an Act to Provide Families With School Supplies Relief. (Hon. Derek Mombourquette)**

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

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**RESOLUTION NO. 371**

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

Whereas the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier gave birth to a child on July 12, 2022; and

Whereas the honourable member is unable to travel between her electoral district and Province House while she recuperates; and

Whereas it is in the best interests of the honourable member and her constituents that the honourable member be accommodated to enable her to continue to represent her electoral district in the House during the Summer sitting;

Therefore be it resolved that the House of Assembly:

1) authorizes the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier to participate virtually in the proceedings of the House using videoconferencing software approved by the Speaker for the duration of the Summer 2022 sitting; and

2) directs that Resolution No. 192 of this first session of the 64<sup>th</sup> General Assembly continues to apply in respect of the honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier for the duration of the Summer 2022 sitting.

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.

We will now take a brief recess to allow the technological people to bring in the member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier. We'll take a 10-minute break.

[2:22 p.m. The committee recessed.]

[2:32 p.m. the House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We will continue.

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

## **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

**LEEFE, HON. JOHN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, on July 20<sup>th</sup>, I had the honour of delivering words of remembrance for a man who was my mentor, advisor, and most importantly, my very dear friend. The honourable John Leefe was a teacher, historian, and author. He also dedicated more than half of his life to public service, serving as MLA for Queens for over 20 years and as its mayor for 12. He served as a Cabinet Minister, Deputy Speaker, and Government House Leader.

John was a fearless fighter for his constituents. Always at the forefront of his intentions was what was right, what was just, and what was for the public good. Sadly, John passed away on June 25<sup>th</sup> and his loss is felt by many. Our thoughts remain with his wife Nancy, his children Philip, Sarah, and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members join me in a moment of silence in honour of this incredibly dedicated, honourable man.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

**HOUSE COLLEAGUES: RECENT MILESTONES - CONGRATS.**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate some of my colleagues here in the House on some changes that have occurred since last we met. I'd like to congratulate the new Leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Yarmouth, on his election earlier this month. I know he is a person of great ability who cares about people. He is smart, quick on his feet, and a very hard worker. He has handled some very difficult portfolios in government, and I know he will hold this government to account on behalf of all Nova Scotians.

I'd also like to congratulate my colleague, the honourable member for Dartmouth South, on her acclamation as Leader of the New Democratic Party. I know that like the member for Yarmouth, she cares about people, she is a person of great ability, and she's a very hard worker. I know that she, too, will hold this government to account.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville, on marrying the most fantastic woman, Liz Shaw, earlier this month. I am delighted that these two fine young people have decided to commit to a life together.

As the late great Nova Scotian writer Alistair MacLeod said, "All of us are better when we're loved."

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**ORGANIZERS: PRIDE PARTY & DRAG SHOW - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, this past July 13<sup>th</sup>, I was very happy to begin my HRM Pride at a Pride party and drag show on Albro Lake Road in Dartmouth North. The party was put on by the folks from the 107 Albro Health and Housing Hub - that is the North End Community Health Centre and Adsum for Women and Children.

Dartmouth North is home to a vibrant and diverse 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It's one of the things that makes our community so great. It was truly special to celebrate Pride in and with our community with games, face painting, free haircuts, free plant seedlings, and a barbecue. I was especially thrilled to watch drag in broad daylight in the heart of Dartmouth North.

Thank you to the staff from both the North End Community Health Centre and Adsum, particularly Lilian Lope for the invitation, and S.J. Rogers for their planning and delightful drag performances. The event gave us all one more reason to be proud to live in Dartmouth North, and I cannot wait until next year.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**SAXTON, KAITLYN MARY PAIGE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like us all to take some time to honour and remember Kaitlyn Mary Paige Saxton. On June 11, 2022, just nearly six short weeks ago, Kait, as we knew her, was taken suddenly from us due to a catastrophic haemorrhagic stroke.

Kait was the daughter of Cathy and Michael Saxton of Wentworth. She was 33 years old. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Dalhousie University. In her final year of study, she worked right here in this Legislature as a page for two years.

If you knew Kait, you knew that she proudly spoke of her work here as a page. You know that every moment she was taking in every player and every play. This served her well as she became a very important member of the PC research policy team for seven years. She often shared stories of some of her favourites: Gordon Hebb, our very own Speaker, and former MLAs Chris d'Entremont, Alfie MacLeod, and Eddie Orrell.

In 2017, I first met Kait. She was the researcher for Health, and I was the Health Critic. But it wasn't until last October, when she joined my Cumberland North team, that I really came to know her. The last day I saw her, the night before she passed, we worked

until 8:00 p.m. or so in Pugwash. In between work on policy, we shared stories of those old days. We laughed. We laughed a lot.

Kaitlyn Mary Paige, as she often referred to herself, quickly bonded with me - likely from shared experiences of being a woman in politics that some had tried to cast aside, but Kait proved that she had much left to give.

In her final months of life, working with me and Dan Gould for the people of Cumberland North, and all of Nova Scotia, she shined. She thrived. She had a brilliant mind, smart as a whip, sarcastic, strategic. When she would rub her hands together and give me that little smile, I knew she was in her groove. Give her a little research challenge, and she was happy.

She was a gift in my life and today, in this place that she loved, I honour her.

Please join me today in a moment of silence to honour Kaitlyn Mary Paige Saxton.

THE SPEAKER: Please rise.

[A moment of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Please be seated.

The honourable member for Eastern Shore.

### **SISTER, KIMBERLEY: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

KENT SMITH: I rise today with tremendous sadness to acknowledge the passing of my sister, Kimberly Smith. Kimmie passed away on June 19<sup>th</sup> at the age of 46, after battling Crohn's disease and chronic illness for over a decade.

Kimmie was a loving aunt, a loyal friend, and a master esthetician. She adored her two nephews, Ryan and Gregory, as well as her niece, Maia, and constantly spoiled them with whatever treats she could. Her friendship circle was large, and she was loved by many. Her skills as an esthetician were exceptional. She was recognized with local and national awards.

Kimmie was in and out of hospital for several years. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my family to formally acknowledge and thank all the outstanding health care professionals who played a role in her care.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in sending love and strength to my mom, Beverley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**WIFE, STEPHANIE: 9<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I'm really smashing it out of the park on wedding anniversaries the last couple of years. Last year I forgot when I was knocking on doors during the election, and this year - today - we're here in the Legislature. So I want to wish my wife Stephanie a very Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. She's home with our two beautiful girls right now. When we're up here doing our thing, a lot of our significant others are home, looking after the homestead. Nine years later, two beautiful girls.

Usually, we go to Fuzzy's Fries - if anybody knows from Cape Breton, that's kind of our thing when we have our anniversary. I told her I'll buy this time when I get home. So Stephanie, if you're watching, I love you. Happy Anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**CHARLEBOIS, CAROL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

SUZY HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and happy anniversary to you both.

I rise today to recognize I rise today to recognize an amazing person from my community, Carol Charlebois, who passed away December 31, 2021.

Carol passed away peacefully in Halifax. Carol did many things but found her calling working as Executive Director at Metro Non-Profit Housing Association in Halifax for almost 30 years, making a significant impact in the lives of many people experiencing homelessness. She championed the recovery-oriented approach called Housing First, which provides supports, homes, and services for these people. For this work, she received her Degree of Doctor of Canon Law in 2014 from the University of King's College, as well as the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Carol Ann's caring heart and passion for her community helped so many, and Carol always treated others with kindness, respect, and dignity. She never refused a phone call, and she was such a thoughtful person. She was known for choosing the perfect appropriate gift. Carol was an environmentalist before her time, and always made sure things were done right.

I would like the members of this House to join me in recognizing a kind and lovely neighbour who did so much for so many. Rest in power, Carol.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.



**WIFE, SHARI: 47<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. STEVE CRAIG: I rise today to wish the love of my life, my wife, Shari Craig, a Happy Anniversary.

We were married on July 26, 1975, 47 years ago today. Shari, or “Dear Shari Baby” or “Dear” to me, and “The Old Fella” or “Steve” to her, we’ve grown up together, had successful careers, raised our family, and we are now the oldest remaining of our immediate families. Our love for each other continues to grow, and I cannot imagine my life without her. Of our marriage longevity, Shari is fond of saying “it would’ve been too much trouble to train another one.” Well, Mr. Speaker, I tell her I am a willing, able, and committed lifelong learner.

I would like to ask that all members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating Shari for putting up with me for the last 47-plus years as we celebrate this very important milestone, our 47<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. Happy Anniversary, Shari Baby, love, the Old Fella. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**DEVEAU, NELSON: COM. SERV. - RECOG.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I rise to recognize Yarmouth County’s Nelson Deveau. At 17, Nelson enlisted in the Canadian Army and served with distinction in the Korean War with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. He then went on to serve in Europe and abroad. He has been a dedicated member and a volunteer for the Royal Canadian Legion. He has never missed a service or ceremony where Canada’s valiant fallen heroes are being honoured.

Throughout his entire life, Nelson has given so much of himself to serve his country and his community. He was instrumental in the success of the Maple Grove Education Centre’s and Yarmouth High School’s memorial clubs. Today, at the age of 88, he is still active with the Royal Canadian Legion and collects bottles and cans to help with the maintenance and upkeep of the two monuments that honour the fallen at Maple Grove Education Centre.

Nelson Deveau is an example of a true Canadian hero. He has served with valour and distinction both abroad and at home in Canada. I ask this House to join me in recognizing and thanking him for his bravery and selflessness, and for his lifetime of service to his country, his province, and his community.

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

[2:45 p.m.]

**COOMBES, KENDRA/BROWN, MATT: DAUGHTER - BIRTH CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my heartfelt congratulations to MLA Kendra Coombes and her family on the birth of Isla Quinn Brown on July 12<sup>th</sup>. The Coombes-Brown family is now a family of four. Kendra and her partner Matt are a formidable parenting team and they and their extended families are excited for the safe and healthy arrival. Perhaps most importantly, I offer my love and congratulations to Rory, who now undertakes one of the most important roles in life, as a sibling, and wish her and Isla many years of mischief, love, and mutual dedication.

May I ask that all members join me in congratulating Kendra, Matt, Rory, and their families on the birth of Isla Quinn.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Everybody is aware that you are not supposed to use proper names, but we'll certainly allow it on this happy occasion.

The honourable member for Colchester North.

**FIRST RESPONDERS: SVC. AFTER LR. ECON. COLLISION - THANKS**

TOM TAGGART: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of a tragedy that took place in our community this weekend. A head-on collision occurred on a stretch of a rural highway in Lower Economy. Six were critically injured, including two children.

Local volunteer medical first responders from both the Economy and Bass River fire brigades were on the scene within minutes. They were followed by four ambulances, one EHS critical care unit, and EHS LifeFlight, as well as several RCMP officers.

This was a very difficult afternoon for many. I want to publicly thank all first responders, from the very dedicated and well-trained volunteer fire brigade, medical first responders to emergency health services, as well as RCMP, for the services they provided for those in need that day.

I ask for all members of the House to join me in wishing everyone involved a full and speedy recovery.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

**DAUGHTER, HEIDI - BIRTHDAY WISHES**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wish my daughter, Heidi, a very happy birthday. She turned two years old yesterday. I have been a parent for only a little

over five years now, but one of the things I've learned in that time is that watching your kids grow up is one of life's greatest double-edged swords. You want to see them grow up. You want to see what kind of person they become - and I can't wait for that - but there's a very big part of me that wishes that Heidi would be two forever, running around in the back yard in her pigtails. I want to wish her a very happy birthday. Daddy loves you, Heidi.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

### **GRADE 5 AND 6 STUDENTS: ART CONTEST PARTIC. - THANKS**

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, there are many talented artists in Dartmouth North and this Summer my office has been celebrating some of our youngest with a Grade 5 and Grade 6 art contest. Students from both Miranda Bouchard's Grade 6 class at Creighton Park Elementary and Gwen Griffiths's Grade 5 and Grade 6 French immersion class at Shannon Park Elementary participated with beautiful results.

The students were asked to illustrate what community looks like. They responded with depictions of diversity, unity, environmentalism, activism, fun, play, homes, community gardens, parks, the Dartmouth smokestacks, the ferry, and the ocean.

We have been displaying the art in a mini-gallery in my office and have loved being visited by the budding artists and their families. Thank you to Ryan, Max, Gwen, Mark, Romie, Amelia, Kylie, Carson, Eli, Dominic, Sophie, Maud, Jacob, Bree, Abbey and Olivia for brightening our day with your art.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

### **MACNEIL, HON. CHUCK: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. GREG MORROW: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of one of my predecessors, the honourable Chuck MacNeil. Dr. MacNeil was first elected to represent the constituency of Guysborough in the provincial Legislature in 1984. He was re-elected in 1988 and served until 1993. During that time, he held three different Cabinet portfolios. He served as the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mines and Energy, and Finance. He spent two years as a municipal councillor in the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's prior to entering provincial politics.

Dr. MacNeil passed away at the age of 77 last month. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Betty; their children, Timothy, Angela, David, and Andrew; and his faithful dog, Cooper.

I ask all members to join me in a moment of silence to recognize a strong representative for Guysborough and a proud Nova Scotian, Dr. Chuck MacNeil.

THE SPEAKER: Please rise.

[A minute of silence was observed.]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Please be seated.

The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**TOULANY, ABE & FAMILY: COM. SERV. - THANKS**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Abe Toulany and his family, owners of Leo's Donair in Timberlea. Leo's hosted the first annual Summer Fest in Timberlea on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The event featured complimentary food and drinks, a bouncy castle, and face-painting for the kids, with all donated proceeds going to the IWK Foundation.

The Toulany family was eager to host a community event to bring happiness and joy to the community after the long and challenging struggle everyone faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. The family was also inspired to host this event as a way of thanking the Timberlea community for their kindness, compassion, and support when their family home burned down years ago, and the community rallied to help the family recover from this devastating event.

I'd like the members of the House of Assembly to join me in thanking Abe Toulany and his family for their entrepreneurial and community spirit over the years and for his generosity in bringing the community together to celebrate and reconnect.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**DUFFY, JULIA ANN: RETIREMENT - BEST WISHES**

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a highly respected senior from my community, Julia Ann Duffy, fondly known just as Ann Duffy. She has been a community member in Halifax Needham for over 40 years.

Ann Duffy worked for Halifax Metro Welfare Rights for close to 20 years. She has volunteered and helped some of our city's most vulnerable people. When the cost of living and the amount of government assistance was defunct, organizations like Halifax Metro Welfare Rights advocated for economically disadvantaged people and contested issues of poverty so that people may live humanely.

Ann's compassion and dedication have not stopped there. She has been volunteering to do people's taxes for the past 55 years, and for those with a modest income, she charged them a very low fee - a fee so low it was almost free.

I'd like to ask the members to celebrate with me and wish Ms. Ann Duffy well in her retirement and success in all of her future endeavours.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

**SAMSON, AL: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, I would like to honour a life well lived. Al Samson was born in Louisdale in 1938. At the age of 16, Al left to work in Ottawa to help provide for his widowed mother and four siblings.

Al worked for the NHL for 49 years as a goal judge and penalty keeper for the Montreal Canadiens. He greeted and escorted fans from all over Richmond County to games. In fact, I was privileged to meet up with Al and have a tour of the Bell Centre several years back.

Al was a supporter of his time and helped fund many organizations in Richmond County and beyond. He was also fiercely proud of his Acadian heritage and culture.

A celebration of life was held earlier today for Al and his brother Paul, who was a friend of everybody in the community in Louisdale, just this morning. I'm sorry I was not able to be there.

I ask all members to join me in honouring Al Samson and his dedication to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**ECEs: RAISE NEEDED - RECOG.**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize all the ECEs in Nova Scotia - an extremely important profession, yet they are underpaid and overworked. As a father of three beautiful children, I understand the trust and faith we put in our ECEs. They deserve well above a living wage. This government needs to step up and support them.

I implore this government to help our ECEs. I spoke to hundreds of ECEs outside, and was asked to table the following: Our ECEs deserve a raise now. I agree one hundred per cent.

THE SPEAKER: I'd like to remind the member about props - no tabling during Members' Statements. You learn something new every day.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

**SANGSTER, MIKE: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

LISA LACHANCE: I rise today to honour the life of Halifax resident Mike Sangster, who passed away on July 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mike grew up in my constituency, attending Queen Elizabeth High School. He helped organize the very first Halifax Pride parade in 1988, and as time went on, Mike's activism never slowed and he remained very active in the volunteer capacity, serving as Treasurer of the Board for the irreplaceable Rumours club and Chair of the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, among other things. In 2010, he helped create the Elderberries, Halifax Pride's contingent of queer seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in honouring Mike Sangster's life and all he did to bring Pride to Nova Scotia.

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

**ORGANIZERS & VOLUNS.: WORLD SAILING CH'SHIPS - THANKS**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that for the first time in history, Canada will be hosting the 49er, 49erFX, and Nacra 17 World Sailing Championships.

These three Olympic classes of the world's best sailors will compete in a 400-strong field representing over 32 countries. This six-day competition will be held from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 5<sup>th</sup> in St. Margaret's Bay, home of Peggy's Cove, which is known as the crown jewel of Nova Scotia and is one of Canada's best-known landmarks.

I look forward to attending this competition and invite all members to join me in thanking all the organizers and many volunteers for all their hard work preparing for this world class event.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**HUSBAND, DEAN: 23<sup>RD</sup> WEDDING ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to - I switched up my member's statement a little bit after hearing some colleagues, but I'd like to say happy 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary to my husband Dean Simmonds, with whom I'm extremely pleased to be celebrating.

We celebrated on Sunday, and I can't imagine a life partner other than the one I have. We have three beautiful children and have been together for over 30 years. It all

started at a track meet, which I'm extremely excited to remind folks - especially on the record - for a 100-metre track star here.

I just want to say thank you so much. Dean, you've given Angelina the exact example of what she needs to look for when she looks for a husband and father. You've given our boys the exact example of what they need to be looking and treating their wives and their children and women in this province. Thank you so much, and I look forward to celebrating another 20 with you, my friend, my love.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I beg leave to make an introduction.

THE SPEAKER: Permission granted.

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: I'd like to draw everyone's attention to the gallery behind me. I have three amazing people with me. I have my wonderful constituency assistant Lisa Rochon. I have my friend Rhonda Vickers, who just recently retired, and IB graduate Evan Colclough, who has been instrumental in working with my team. I ask all members of the Legislature to welcome them to the House. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Indeed, we do welcome visitors to the House. I know it's nice and cool up there. Thank you for joining us.

The honourable member for Eastern Passage.

**THE MELLOTONES: *THE COAST* AWD. & 25TH ANNIV. - CONGRATS.**

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to the band The Mellotones. The Mellotones have been awarded the 2021 Silver Award for Best Cover Artist/Band from the media outlet *The Coast*.

The Mellotones are also celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. I would like to congratulate band members Damien Moynihan on drums, Eric Landry on trombone, Brad Conrad on guitar, Sean Weber on lead saxophone, Mike Farrington Jr. on the bass, Jody Lyne on trumpet and saxophone; lead vocalist Jeffrey Mosher; and keyboard player Ian Mosher - both of Cow Bay - for their excellence in entertainment.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating The Mellotones on their anniversary and this award. We wish you many more years of success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**MARSMAN, DEVON SINCLAIR: MISSING CHILD - RECOG.**

ALI DUALE: I stand today with sadness. I would like to acknowledge that it has been over 140 days since Devon Sinclair Marsman was first reported missing.

I've been in contact with his family, who is agonized over their missing child. I've been raising awareness throughout my constituents and urging my colleagues to raise awareness about this situation as well. I appreciate all the support and help from all my colleagues and the community for coming together and doing what they can do to raise awareness of the search for Devon. I pray for Devon's safe return.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Digby-Annapolis.

HON. JILL BALSER: I'm ready . . .

THE SPEAKER: Yes, sorry. The time for member statements has expired. I got so excited because of all these things coming out.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition. (Applause)

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you kindly, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, under Rule 43-10(b), I move a motion that business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance: the cost of living crisis.

Nova Scotians are facing the highest inflationary costs in over 40 years, and according to the Nova Scotia Treasury Board's own documents, the rate of inflation in Nova Scotia is higher than the national average. While all other provinces have acted to provide relief, this government has provided no meaningful support, leaving Nova Scotians to suffer the impacts of inflation. If MLA pay raises are an emergency, Mr. Speaker, certainly the cost of living crisis is and must be debated in this House.

THE SPEAKER: Prior to the opening of today's sitting - and just so everyone's aware - I actually received two requests for emergency debate, and I am ruling on the one that was received first. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition was the first to come into the office.

Prior to the sitting, I received from the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition a notice of intention, as required by Rule 43(2) to move for an emergency debate. Under Rule 43(4), I'm now required to issue a Speaker's Ruling to decide whether the matter is proper to be discussed for emergency debate.



There are two factors set out in Rule 43(4A). The first factor is the extent to which the matter concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of ministerial action. The second factor is ruling whether the matter is likely to be debated by the House by any other means within a reasonable time frame.

I've considered both of these factors. Under the first factor, it is clear that the cost of living falls within the administrative responsibilities of government and could come within the scope of ministerial action. Under the second factor, there are no items on the Order Paper - be they bills or resolutions - under which the subject of inflation and the cost of living are to come before the House within a reasonable time.

The motion is that the business of the House be set aside for the purpose of dealing with an issue of urgent public importance, and the subject of the issue has been described by the Leader of the Official Opposition as the cost of living crisis. Does the House agree to give leave for the motion to be debated?

As I've heard several Noes, I ask those in support of the motion to rise in their places, pursuant to Rule 43(7).

As more than 10 members have risen, the member has leave under Rule 43(8), and this debate will take place today at the time of adjournment as provided under Rule 43(11). (Applause)

The emergency debate will take place after Question Period for today and any government business that might come forward.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS**

THE SPEAKER: The time is now 3:05 p.m., and we'll finish at 3:55 p.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

### **PREM. - COST OF LIVING CRISIS: EMERG. RELIEF - ACTION**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: According to the Premier's own words, we are here in this House today in an emergency sitting of the Legislature because, I quote, and I'll table these quotes, "when inflation is at a 40-year high, gas prices are at historic levels and many hard-working Nova Scotians are struggling to make ends meet, it is not the time to increase the pay of MLAs."

While I agree with that statement by the Premier, I do think he got confused in terms of which part of that statement was indicative of an actual emergency. Mr. Speaker,

we have Nova Scotians who can't afford to put food on their table, who can't find roofs to live under, who are dealing with overcrowded hospitals, and who are making difficult decisions between paying for their medicine or food for their families.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he take the opportunity during this emergency session of the Legislature to provide emergency relief and support to Nova Scotians?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): I want to thank the former Minister of Health and Wellness, now Leader of the Official Opposition, for his first question as leader. He's coming in hot, Mr. Speaker, too, isn't he? Isn't it great?

I think if we want to be accurate, my own words were that it's an urgent sitting. The reason it's urgent is because the pay recommendations are binding, and in the absence of sitting right now, they would go through. That may be what some members of the Opposition are anxious to have, but it's not in our wishes. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe I'm the first sitting Premier to ever reduce his salary. I ask the Leader of the Official Opposition to follow that type of leadership. It would be a great honour to Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the Premier that the previous government froze MLA salaries for eight years. Not once did it require an emergency sitting of the Legislature to do so. There was plenty of opportunity in previous sittings of the Legislature to take action on this. Also, as we were informed by the Clerk, a simple consensus amongst caucuses would have prevented a pay raise from happening to begin with until the Fall sitting of the Legislature.

That said, there are real emergencies affecting people in this province. Nova Scotians are facing the highest cost of living increase that they have ever seen in living memory for many. We are dealing with rising power rates, an additional 10 per cent that will go up this year heading into the Winter months that this government has refused to act on. Yet we are here in this House doing a dog-and-pony show on MLA salaries, Mr. Speaker.

When will this government actually take action on the emergencies that are facing Nova Scotians, particularly around the cost of living?

THE PREMIER: It is a fact that leadership starts at the top. I think we saw the very first opportunity for the member opposite to show a little bit, and he dodged it, Mr. Speaker. That will not surprise Nova Scotians because for eight years - eight years - Nova Scotians watched as the government did nothing to address the health care message. I want to assure Nova Scotians what we have accomplished on this side in 10 short months during a COVID-19 pandemic is more than what most governments (Interruptions) . . .

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

THE PREMIER: I don't think there's any debate that what this government has accomplished in 10 months would far dwarf what previous governments accomplished in eight years. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? We are not stopping.

I will tell the honourable member that we have taken a number of steps on the cost of living, on affordability issues, but we will only do something that is sustainable in the long term, that is in the best interests of a Nova Scotia looking out past one week.

ZACH CHURCHILL: We have all heard the saying that when the going gets tough, the tough get going, I'm sure. Here in Nova Scotia, it's when the going gets tough, the Premier starts blaming, Mr. Speaker. That's all we have seen from this government. When it comes to the crisis that we're experiencing in health care, a system that has demonstrably gotten worse over the year - close to a year that this government has been in place, and over the severe inaction that this government puts on the cost-of-living crisis that is affecting Nova Scotians everywhere.

Does the Premier not understand that there are social determinants of health as well? How are you going to fix our health care system when people can't afford to put food on their table?

THE PREMIER: Look, we can debate lots of issues on the floor, but what we cannot debate is the number of steps this government has taken, the action, the leadership this government has shown on so many files. If the honourable member wants to have a serious discussion about the steps we have taken on affordability, let's talk about the incredible work the minister has done on housing. Let's talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about the child care benefit that we put forward. Let's talk about the Seniors Care Grant that we put forward. Let's talk about the MOST program, which will give every Nova Scotian under 30 years old the opportunity to start their career in the trades, on their feet.

There's a lot we can talk about, and I welcome it.

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

### **PREM.: ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE - DELAY**

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about Evelyn Hornbeck. I'd like to ask the Premier about Evelyn Hornbeck. She is one of the thousands of Nova Scotians who don't have access to primary care. She relies on a controlled prescription that she can't get at a walk-in or a pharmacy. She needs primary care but she has no idea when she will get it.

Meanwhile, the Premier has provided no details about the future of primary care. What is it going to look like in a global supply shortage of doctors and nurses with over 100,000 Nova Scotians on a list for primary care? The Premier can call doctors all day long but people will still be waiting.

My question is a simple one, Mr. Speaker: How long do Nova Scotians have to wait for access to primary care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I guess what I would say is we inherited a situation that is going to take some time to fix. I have been very, very clear with Nova Scotians on that. But guess what? It will take time and money, which I have always been very open about, which is hard for people to accept from a politician, but I have been very open and clear. What I would tell the member is that we have taken a number of steps: the expansion of virtual care, offering jobs to every nursing graduate, 200 more nursing seats. Ask a CCA if we've addressed the affordability issue.

The steps we have taken in health care will take time but I want to assure the member that we had to get the soil ready and the soil was pretty hard after eight years of neglect. Then we had to plant some seeds. The seeds are being watered and they will grow. We have planted an incredible amount of seeds to improve health care in this province.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: We'll turn away from gardening and back to health care. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask about Vickie Gray. Vickie Gray turned to social media recently to share her frustrations. She had to close her small business while she waits for surgery. Meanwhile her doctor has advised her not to use her wrist. She can't turn a key, grip a doorknob, type, lift. Wait times for her surgery in Antigonish are close to two years. In Halifax she was told it would be closer to three.

There are thousands of people in this province in Vickie's situation, Mr. Speaker, in pain and with their lives on hold. So I will ask the Premier again: How long do Nova Scotians have to wait for decent access to the health care they deserve?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, of course there are challenges. Nobody will deny the challenges. There is a lot of good happening. There is a surgery wait-list, yes, but just yesterday hundreds of surgeries happened across this province. Yes, there are issues in the emergency room, but just yesterday 2,000 people were seen in the emergency. There are things happening and the Opposition wants Nova Scotians to be fearful of what's happening in the health care system.

I will assure you, Nova Scotians know one thing and they have confidence in one thing: This is the government that is getting things done.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, health care for Nova Scotians has become less accountable, less accessible and more precarious by every measure over the past year.

Spencer Thomas's four-year old recently became ill with a fever and a rash. The family tried six different walk-ins to try to see a doctor. They failed. They then went to six different pharmacies to try to find medication. They never did see a doctor in Nova Scotia, but they finally got a diagnosis at a walk-in in Ontario, where they went on a pre-planned family trip.

[3:15 p.m.]

Vickie, Evelyn, Spencer and his family, and thousands of other Nova Scotians are quite literally getting sick of waiting for things to get better. I would like to ask the Premier one last time: How long will they have to wait until they have access to basic health care?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, these tragic stories touch us all, for sure. They are what drive us as a government, the reason we are pushing forward.

I guess what I would say to the member and to the Nova Scotians she referenced, I want them to know how much work is happening, how hard the government is working. There's no overnight solution. There's no magic wand. We've always been very honest with that, and the direct answer to the question of how long is that it's shorter than if that government was still in power.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### **PREM.: STATE OF ECON. PROMISES - UPDATE**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: On the cost of living crisis that's affecting nearly every single family in Nova Scotia, that's setting our province on a course to a recession after close to 10 years of growth, the Premier has listed several things that he says he's doing to support people in this time of need. One was the Seniors Care Grant. I'll point out to the House that there is still over half of those dedicated funds that are sitting idle in the Treasury Board's coffers while Nova Scotians starve during this period of time. And, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned the \$150 one-time payout to individuals. What he didn't mention was the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee that he promised people in the last election, or the Buy Local project, which would be of great use to Nova Scotians right now who are struggling to make ends meet, particularly as we head toward a recession.

What is the state of these two key platform promises?

THE PREMIER: First off, I want to say that's incredible progress. We went from at 3:10 saying we've done nothing, to at 3:16 acknowledging at least a number of things we've done, Mr. Speaker. I like that type of optimism. That's what we're about on this side. We're optimistic about the future of this province. We believe in Nova Scotians. We believe in their ability to move this province forward with the support of the government. That's what we're focused on.

I will tell the member that the Nova Scotia Loyal program, which is off to an incredible start under the prototyping stage under the minister's guidance, has the excitement generated across this province that it warrants, and I'm glad to see that the member shares that excitement in that program.

ZACH CHURCHILL: If the Premier - just to make sure the House doesn't misunderstand my comments - but if the Premier thinks a piddly one-time \$150 cheque to individuals, when that doesn't even cover the cost of one individual's grocery bill for the week, is adequate support during a cost of living crisis, if he believes it's acceptable that half of the Seniors Care Grants that were promised to Nova Scotians are sitting idle in the Treasury and not being given out, I think we've got a major problem on our hands here, Mr. Speaker. This is not real action to address the cost of living crisis, and it will not prevent a recession in this province.

When are we going to see an actual vision, a strategy, and plans to tackle this cost of living crisis, and help prevent Nova Scotia from hitting a recession after eight years of growth?

THE PREMIER: I completely disagree with the member's characterization. We need to keep things - Nova Scotians expect a level of truthfulness on the floor of this House, and that's where I'd ask we stand, but what I would say: Inflation is a world-wide situation. It is happening world-wide, Mr. Speaker. We have taken steps in this province to support Nova Scotians, but I want to assure the member that we will only take steps as a government that are sustainable, that support Nova Scotians for the long term. Yes, there are problems today. Yes, we have taken some steps to address them, but the main goal of a government concerned about growing the province is to look a little farther than just the length of their nose.

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

#### **PREM. - COST OF LIVING CRISIS: ACTION - DELAY**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: We do need the Premier to take a long-term view on this. In his own budgetary documents, the Department of Finance and Treasury Board are saying we're heading toward a recession, yet we see nothing happening on the cost of living crisis that is driving us toward that. We have a Premier who says he's going to fix health care. Well, we almost have more than double the people in Nova Scotia without a family doctor, while our ICUs are overrun like never before, while we have more people out on sick leave with COVID-19 than in our province's history - 350, I think, during this week - and a government that is very focused on blaming past governments instead of looking to the future.

Every single province has taken an action on the cost of living crisis with the exception of Nova Scotia. When will we see real action that will tackle the cost of living for individuals and help prevent Nova Scotia from heading toward a recession?

THE PREMIER: We're back where we started: Now we've taken no action. But, Mr. Speaker, this will be the theme of an Opposition that's focused on the politics of fear, focused on the politics of negativity. On this side, we're focused on what's possible in this province, and the optimism. We share the optimism of Nova Scotians. I know it's going to be difficult for the Leader of the Official Opposition to try to convince Nova Scotians that the sky is falling when they know full well it's not.

I want to assure the member that we will take steps that are sustainable in the long term. That includes growing the population. We have incredible population growth in this province. People drive economies. That's the power of the MOST program, to right-size our demographics. We need to get going in growing this province in a positive way. Nova Scotians can feel the energy, and so can I.

ZACH CHURCHILL: Nova Scotians can feel hunger pangs in their bellies. Nova Scotians are feeling fear of not having a house to live in. Nova Scotians are fearful of a looming recession that's going to impact our small businesses and large corporations alike. Nova Scotians are fearful of a labour shortage that's impacting health care delivery, that's impacting restaurants, that's impacting fish plants.

Yet we have a Premier who prioritizes coming into this House on an emergency basis to deal with an MLA salary increase that might impact Nova Scotians' pocketbooks by 75 cents each.

When will this government get their priorities straight and take meaningful action that's going to not just improve the lives of people in this province, but protect our economy from a recession which, according to their own documents, we're heading towards?

THE PREMIER: The work of government is in no way restricted and limited to what happens in this Chamber. In many ways, what happens in this Chamber is a distraction from the work of government. There is incredible work happening on behalf of Nova Scotians.

As much as the Leader of the Opposition can try to paint a different picture, Nova Scotians know that this government is getting it done. I have some news for them: We will continue to get it done on their behalf, because that's the only thing we're focused on.

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

**PREM.: COMPASSION FROM GOV'T. - DEMONSTRATE**

ZACH CHURCHILL: This government ran on a platform of being compassionate. We see a quote directly from their platform, which has mysteriously disappeared from the internet, I might add: Too frequently, we see signs that the government simply isn't listening to the needs of Nova Scotians. I'll table that.

Too frequently the government isn't compassionate enough. We are not seeing real-life compassion from this government on the issues that matter to Nova Scotians - that are impacting their anxiety levels each and every day, that are impacting their mental health, that are impacting their social determinants of health.

When will we see real compassion from this government on the issues that matter to Nova Scotians: the cost of their drugs, cost of their food, cost of their gas, cost of their power rates? When will we see definitive actual action to help these individuals and protect our province from a recession?

THE PREMIER: What I would say is that Nova Scotians will continue to see action on behalf of this government. If the Leader of the Opposition thinks that this government is not compassionate, that this government doesn't listen, maybe he wants to talk to a CCA. Maybe he wants to talk to a nursing student at Dalhousie who had so many issues with their tuition support, but fell on deaf ears of the former health minister, who looked the other way when nursing students were saying we need help.

This government listens very carefully. If the former Minister of Health and Wellness wants to talk about the actions that we're doing, we're happy to have that discussion with him, because Nova Scotians know we'll continue to listen.

ZACH CHURCHILL: This Premier ran as the solutionist, a word he reminded everyone wasn't a real word, but it was a mindset. Imagine the shift in mindset from one of solving problems to one of blaming all the problems on previous governments. What a shift in mindset that has been for the leadership of this province.

The Premier says support must be sustainable to deal with the cost of living crisis - that providing inflationary support, we could damage our ability to fix health care or provide social services.

You cannot fix health care if you do not help people be healthier. There are social determinants of health - income being the top one amongst them. When will the Premier identify that social determinants of health, particularly income, are one of the biggest issues that are affecting health outcomes in this province, and do something about it?

THE PREMIER: What I say is that a basic requirement of being a solutionist is to accept the reality of what's in front of you. We have to accept the reality.



I know the former Minister of Health and Wellness is embarrassed about his tenure in health care. I accept that from him, and he should be, because he looked the other way when Nova Scotians were looking for help.

We have accepted the reality. The soil was awful hard, Mr. Speaker, but it's tilled up now, and the seeds are planted. We'll continue to water them. We'll continue to plant more seeds.

I assure Nova Scotians that what is happening worldwide, and is happening here in this province, is fully understood by this compassionate government. That's why we will continue to do the good work that's required on their behalf.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

**DHW - ER WAIT TIMES: COLLAB. EMERG. CTRS. - OPEN**

SUSAN LEBLANC: My question is for the Premier. Since this government was elected, the IWK emergency department has had some of its busiest weeks ever. May 2022 was the busiest on record for the department, and June was set to outpace it. Families are waiting hours and hours, and then leaving with sick children before being seen by a doctor.

Mr. Speaker, for the family without a doctor on their eighth hour in the ER with a sick child - acknowledging that the soil is tilled, but that's not going to help these people - where does the Premier suggest that these people go?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: We know that there are a number of reasons why the emergency rooms are very busy. First of all, there has been a number of children who haven't experienced illness as a result of the public health measures which we now need to try and live with under COVID. We know that there are a number of people who have never experienced a child being sick because they have toddlers who were born during COVID who haven't been exposed to anything.

We have been working with IWK around the surge capacity that's there, and we have been working to advance primary care in the Central Zone specifically. We're also looking at access to virtual care. We're working with test-and-try models like nurse practitioner models as well as working with pharmacists. There's a lot of stuff happening in this province, Mr. Speaker. I feel confident that it will continue to get better every day.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Since this government was elected, there has been a 60 per cent jump in the number of people who left an emergency room without being seen at all. On top of that, people are waiting longer in more serious conditions. There was a 34 per cent jump in the number of people with the most severe acuity scores - that's 1, 2, and 3 - who stayed in an emergency room for more than eight hours.

Dr. Gregory Hirsch, the senior medical director of the surgical services network for NSHA, has said that the current situation is leaving doctors morally distressed about the consequences for patients and their families who are waiting for care, getting sicker as they wait.

Mr. Speaker, there is a solution. When will this government open new collaborative emergency centres so that people can get the care they deserve?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: I can open all the collaborative care centres I want, but if we don't have people to staff them, I can't give anybody any extra care. That is why we opened the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment. We have hired 90 nurse practitioners. We have (Interruption). Oh, everybody has ideas now. What I would say, Mr. Speaker (Interruption) . . .

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

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We have been steadfast in our commitment to recruit and to train more people. We're also working with our partners in the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, as well as the colleges, to make sure that we can recruit more health care professionals. This is not a magic wand moment. We have been working very hard, and things will continue to improve.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

### **FTB: COST OF LIVING CRISIS - SOLUTION**

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Premier travelled to British Columbia to meet with the other premiers from across Canada. I'm sure at this conference the Premier heard a number of great solutions that fellow premiers across the country have outlined to deal with the cost of living crisis.

I would like to ask the Premier: Did he hear any solutions at the conference that he plans to implement here in Nova Scotia to help people struggling with the cost of living crisis?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the times we are experiencing, we are seeing people facing the impacts of inflation. It is a worldwide problem. It is something that all governments are coping with - trying to provide their citizens with supports. We want our supports to be sustainable. It's not just us, either. I know the federal government is making efforts. They increased the worker benefit in their recent budget. All governments are trying to do their part, and we are no exception.

[3:30 p.m.]

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, I think the concept of government sustainability is cold comfort to people who can't pay their rent, can't fill their gas tank, and can't feed their families on a weekly basis.

To the minister and the Premier, I would like to remind them of a few things that have been happening across the country. In Alberta, Premier Kenney has cut the gas tax and provided an electricity rebate. In Saskatchewan, Premier Moe has provided rent relief. In Manitoba, Premier Stefanson has introduced a renters' tax credit. In Ontario, Premier Ford has cut the gas tax and provided a new ultra-low overnight electricity rate.

With all of these cost of living solutions out there to see here in Canada, why is the Premier still providing nothing to struggling Nova Scotians?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, to say "nothing" is ridiculous. We had measures before the last provincial budget. We had additional measures in the budget.

The member talked about rent. There are rent caps in the province right now, and we know that that's a challenge for landlords. We also know that we are trying to be mindful of people who are dealing with the costs that they're facing at this point in time.

This government cares, and we are doing things - concrete things. I think about the announcement made earlier this week: \$13 million for co-op housing. These are real investments that will make a real difference for people.

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

### **FTB: COST OF LIVING - SUPPORTS**

BRAEDON CLARK: As the minister knows, some of the measures that have been put forward, while useful, apply to a very small percentage of Nova Scotians - and all Nova Scotians are struggling to varying degrees. Working-class folks, middle-class people - everyone is struggling. To sit there and say that \$150 one time several months ago is enough is just not enough.

Again, Mr. Speaker, a few other provinces - we haven't gotten through Canada yet. In Quebec, Premier Legault has provided a \$500 rebate to Quebecers. Next door in New Brunswick, Premier Higgs has reduced income tax. Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Furey has cut the fuel tax and eliminated the sales tax on home insurance. Last, but not least, on Prince Edward Island, Premier King has provided free school supplies for all students, and all low-income seniors a \$100 grocery card.

My question to the minister: Why is every other premier in the country responding except for this one?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we have been responding. We have a Seniors Care Grant. I'm not aware of any other province offering that. We've increased the Nova Scotia Child Benefit.

Another thing I want to mention too, Mr. Speaker - it's not like our economy is in a period of stagnation. We've heard from members opposite about the labour shortages today. There are opportunities for people. We want our economy to be firing on all cylinders. We want to help people who might want to get employment, as an example, because we need them. That's also a solution in all of this.

BRAEDON CLARK: We're talking about a Seniors Care Grant, as we said earlier, that has millions of dollars left on the table. We're talking about 9.3 per cent inflation here in Nova Scotia - well above the national average of 8.1 percent.

In this Premier's platform, he promised that he would form a government, in his words, that would "never forget you." Yet this is the only Premier in the country who has not provided meaningful support, as we've heard today, in the cost of living crisis, leaving Nova Scotians feeling forgotten and left behind.

When will this Premier and his government join their colleagues across the country - NDP, Liberal, and Progressive Conservatives across the country - in providing meaningful supports to Nova Scotians who are bearing the brunt of this cost of living crisis?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I just reject what the member is trying to put forward, to suggest that we're not doing anything. We've listed many examples many times. But the Opposition has a goal in this House, and it's to try to discredit the government.

They can say what they want to say, but at the end of the day, we've been providing supports.

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

### **FTB: BETTER PAY CHEQUE GUARANTEE - SHELIVING**

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, on top of a complete and total lack of action come broken promises. The Houston government sold Nova Scotians on the idea of bringing home "a better pay cheque" - their key plan for the economy. However, throughout the past year, all Nova Scotians have seen is their paycheque becoming worth less and less due to inflation.

With Nova Scotians struggling with lower paycheques and this plan being shelved, will this government finally admit that the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee is not a real solution?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Liberal Official Opposition that their colleagues in Ottawa, the Liberal government, were concerned in their budget about doing too much. Why? Because if the federal government is doling out sums of money, they could actually make the inflation problem worse.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board has the floor. I am going to ask the member for Halifax Atlantic to stop hollering across. You were also on your cell phone. So, I just ...

The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I think to sum it up, our colleagues opposite should listen to what their colleagues are saying in their own party on the federal scene.

PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, exactly this time last year the Premier was heavily campaigning on a Better Pay Cheque Guarantee - billboards, advertisements. It was even on the cover of their platform which he is now hiding, but you can find it on the Liberal website, if anybody in Nova Scotia is looking.

In fact, during a debate, the Premier even promised that on Day 1 of the Houston government, there would be a better paycheque guaranteed for all Nova Scotians - and I will table that. Well, it is now Day 343 of the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee being shelved and Nova Scotians' paycheques losing their purchasing power.

I would like to ask the Premier: Why has the Premier not provided any sort of wage relief for Nova Scotians in the midst of a cost of living crisis?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot in the last 10 months, and I am glad that the Opposition is holding us to account because I know that this government will be successful. We are committed to working hard for Nova Scotians. So I will readily admit I'm not hiding anything. We are working hard. We can't do it all in the first 10 months. (Applause)

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

### **LSI - PAID SICK DAYS: NO ACCESS - EXPLAIN**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. According to the actions of this government, COVID-19 is over and all previous safety measures are lifted, but parents at home with sick children are going through a different reality as they

bear the brunt of a seventh wave, trying to figure out how to stay home from work and still pay the bills. Meanwhile, the government has shuttered the temporary paid sick time program, leaving parents and workers completely alone if they or their kids get sick.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 is here and it is not going away. People have to work to make ends meet, and in the face of skyrocketing inflation, but have no access to paid sick days. I would like to ask the Premier: What are they supposed to do?

HON. JILL BALSER: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite - I want to thank her for this important question. We know that COVID-19 is still out there in communities and we have been very clear that it is still there. We know that Nova Scotians are struggling during this difficult time, but we also know that we have the tools in place with that temporary sick leave program. We did reintroduce it and then we extended it. It was intended to complement the federal program.

It is important that we continue to monitor. We are going to have conversations with our provincial and territorial partners, and obviously conversations with the federal government. We haven't made the decision at this time, but we know that with this program we have the tools in place that we need.

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, tools in place means paid sick days. Indeed, one of the most important tools as well in protecting Nova Scotians is the COVID-19 vaccines. Very soon thousands of children and babies under 5 and their parents, myself included, will be lining up to get their first doses, and thousands more are due for the second and third doses. We don't have a school-based vaccine program, so parents and caregivers will have to figure out how to fit these appointments around their work schedules.

For many parents who have to miss pay to make this work, it is an impossible puzzle. This government says that people have the tools that they need to protect themselves from COVID-19, but why won't they provide paid sick time to parents and caregivers so they can take their kids to get vaccinated?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Certainly, when we roll out the vaccination program for our youngest Nova Scotians, we will continue to use the model that has been successful throughout the COVID-19 vaccination program. Community pharmacies have extended hours. Pharmacists are prepared to immunize the littlest Nova Scotians who are eligible for vaccine. We will continue with that model and monitor that.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

**EECD: ECE WAGE INCREASE - UPDATE**

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, as we were all coming in today, we all saw the hard-working ECEs who came here to show solidarity and support for one another as they continue to look for a wage increase which has been outlined in the new child care agreement. Our ECEs across Nova Scotia have supported and continue to support and look after our children every day.

My question is to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: Could the minister update the House on those conversations with the local stakeholders on their pay raise?

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Our ECEs are the backbone of child care in Nova Scotia. They care for and educate our youngest learners, and they deserve to be valued. They deserve compensation in line with the incredible value that they provide.

Fair compensation for our ECEs is decades overdue. I am thrilled to be able to report to this House that we are working rapidly to ensure that we rectify that and to be able to deliver a compensation framework for our ECEs this year in line with our commitments to value them and to reflect the value that they provide to Nova Scotians.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: That's the issue, Mr. Speaker. The minister uses "rapidly," but as someone who is involved with that agreement, it is clear that this plan is supposed to be outlined in 2022. What we're hearing from stakeholders and what we're hearing from the sectors is that they can't get information from the government, that they have been left in the dark.

My question to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is: Will she commit to the ECEs in this province today to a date where they will see a pay increase retroactive to what they deserve?

BECKY DRUHAN: One of the other incredibly important things that we have done in the course of implementing this agreement is strike an engagement table. Our engagement table is a sector engagement table that includes participation from people across the province who are involved in the delivery of child care - operators, ECEs, family members and academics as well. They have been involved in our rollout. I have had personal conversations with them, and the conversations with them continue.

We have done more to engage the sector than certainly the prior government ever has and more than the other provinces across the country. I can commit to the Opposition that we will be implementing a wage framework for our ECEs in advance of Fall this year. I look forward to delivering that for our ECEs.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

**FTB: PROJECTED RECESSION - ACKNOWLEDGE**

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, last session we were warning this government about a potential recession, a recession that was projected in their very budget. The Finance and Treasury Board Minister's response was, "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'll table that. Now many economists are warning of a projected recession. Craig Wright, Chief Economist of the Royal Bank of Canada, is forecasting a recession.

Is the Finance and Treasury Board Minister now finally ready to acknowledge that Nova Scotia is likely to be facing a recession?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: I can tell the member one thing. One of the chief drivers of the GDP is population growth. We have seen this province hit one million people in December, and we have added another 7,000 since May. That's just until May. We have labour shortages. There are plenty of jobs in this province.

Recessions happen worldwide. They can happen. But Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this: Our economy is doing very well.

KELLY REGAN: My gosh, I hope those people have a family doctor and a place to live when they get here.

Mr. Speaker, it took the member for Northside-Westmount mere minutes to take a glance at the government's budget documents for him to realize that the Department of Finance and Treasury Board was projecting a recession in Nova Scotia. When asked about it during the last House session, the Finance and Treasury Board Minister denied it.

Now that the Finance and Treasury Board Minister has been at the department for over 11 months, has he actually been briefed by the Department of Finance and Treasury Board on the looming recession and what it will take to help Nova Scotians get through it?

ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, the member made an interesting comment at the start of her question about finding a place for them to live or finding them a family doctor. You'll remember that our budget this past Spring was a deficit budget, a significant deficit because we are choosing to invest in this province, where that member's government failed to do so.

Housing crises don't happen overnight; shortages of doctors don't happen overnight. That member and her past government created the environment we are now in. We are going to invest in it, and we're going to make it a better province for Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.



[3:45 p.m.]

### **FTB - ECONOMIC SUPPORT: GOVT. PLAN - ADDRESS**

HON. KELLY REGAN: This is, in fact, a new question. I would like to ask the minister: If all of those policies were so bad, how come you keep continuing on with them? The fact is, all you keep doing is re-announcing stuff that we started.

Mr. Speaker, now that we now know - and hopefully the Finance and Treasury Board Minister now knows - that there is a real potential for a recession, why haven't Nova Scotians seen an economic recovery plan or any cost of living support this fiscal year - not last year when you gave \$150 to people on income assistance but nobody else - why is there no help from this government?

HON. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, you'd almost think that the Opposition is hoping for the province to fail - all of the questions today, Mr. Speaker.

If recessions happen, I can tell you it's not because of something we're doing in this province. Recessions happen because of worldwide conditions. For me to suggest, as Finance and Treasury Board Minister of this province, that I'm in control of the world finances would be completely ridiculous.

I won't accept responsibility for something I don't have control over, but I can tell you we'll be doing everything we can to invest in this province so that we do have doctors for people when they come to live here, which is something that government failed miserably at.

KELLY REGAN: Well, they're failing much worse because the number's gone up. I just have to say.

We cannot emphasize enough to the Finance and Treasury Board Minister that we know a recession is a real potential, which means even further hardship for Nova Scotians who are already pushed to the brink in this cost of living crisis. Inflation is at almost 10 per cent. Since December 8<sup>th</sup>, the Bank of Canada has increased interest rates 200 basis points, which I'll table, and gas has gone up 60 per cent in the last year - I'll table that too. Yet this government has provided no broad-based support for anybody.

Now, considering this government has a track record of providing no meaningful support to Nova Scotians when they need it the most, why should Nova Scotians trust this government to support them in a recession?

ALLAN MACMASTER: This government is prepared to do things on the fly. I think about before the last budget, Mr. Speaker: \$13.2 million in supports acknowledging

the high cost of living that people have been facing. We did that. We didn't wait for the budget. We acted quickly.

If the world goes into a recession and things change, like every other government in the world, we'll certainly do everything we can to help Nova Scotians.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

### **SLTC: AIR-CONDITIONED FACILITIES - UPDATE**

GARY BURRILL: I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care.

I want simply to ask: Will the minister agree to undertake to bring before this House, at the most reasonable early opportunity, the number of seniors in long-term care in Nova Scotia today who do not have air conditioning in their rooms?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: It is very important to know that. I know it took my government a very short period of time to count the number of single and double beds in long-term care, something the previous government was unable to do.

I will assure the member that we are doing a facility assessment across the province. It's expected to be done within the next couple of months, and I will be able to give the member an exact number.

GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, this is an extremely important question which has come on the screen across the country. We saw that in British Columbia, with the coroner's inquiry into the deaths in the heat wave from last Summer, that of the 600-some people who lost their lives in the heat wave, over 40 of them were people who lived in long-term care. We see in Ontario the matter has been taken so seriously that in fact there has been a legislated deadline by which every long-term care facility in the province must install air conditioning in that facility.

I want to ask the minister what her government's timeline is for seeing that we are following the direction that is being pursued in other parts of the country that we are going to get to a place where we have installed air conditioning facilities in every room in every long-term care facility in the province.

BARBARA ADAMS: The health of our seniors in long-term care is so important that this government created an entire department and ministry devoted to seniors in long-term care. What I will tell the member is that the biggest priority is actually in building more long-term care beds, and this government has committed \$2 billion to do just that, to build or renovate 2,800 long-term care beds.

What I will tell the member is that there are new regulations. The previous two sets of governments did not build any new long-term care beds, which would have dealt with the air conditioning issue had they done so. Under our government, we will make sure that all Nova Scotians in long-term care have the air conditioning and the quality needs that they deserve.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

### **DCS - INCOME ASSISTANCE: AMOUNT - JUSTIFICATION**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, last House session, we spoke about the issue facing those on income assistance who make \$12,165 a year. This has been mentioned before. This government has seen a one-time payment of \$150 as the remedy. We know that this is a band-aid solution for a larger issue. We know that inflation and the cost of living crisis are further pushing not only the most vulnerable Nova Scotians towards unsafe and dire situations but all Nova Scotians.

My question is for the Premier: How can this government justify that the current amount given to those on income assistance is enough to survive in our current cost of living crisis?

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: There's no doubt that Nova Scotians who are low income are facing many challenges. Our government has made significant investments, and we will continue making those investments. We will continue working with Feed Nova Scotia, as we did in the past, just a few months ago, giving them over \$1 million to spread throughout their 140 food banks. We have just recently increased the child tax benefit, which is going to help bring close to 50,000 children out of poverty. There's a number of initiatives that we're taking. There's a number of programs that we actually have in place that are helping the overall Nova Scotians who are finding themselves facing these challenges because of low income.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, we saw no increases in income assistance this budget. We did see over four months ago the one-time payment of \$150. We know that this is ineffective and does not have a lasting impact. Minister, I'm wondering if this government is looking for sustainable solutions to help people through the cost of living crisis and indexing income assistance would be one of them.

My question for the minister is: Will this government do the right thing and tie income assistance to inflation?

KARLA MACFARLANE: What we do know is that it takes all levels of government to face poverty and to ensure that we're all working collectively together to reduce it. In my mandate letter, the Premier has indicated that I am to come up with a five-year plan to reduce poverty in Nova Scotia. That will take all departments in government

working collectively together, which we have. We have had a number of meetings coming up with many ideas. What we know is that . . .

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

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park on a point of order.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, during Question Period the Premier referred to the honorable Leader of the Official Opposition as a title other than that, numerous times. I am rising to have the Speaker, through you, ask the Premier to make sure that when he is addressing the member for Yarmouth that he is addressing him by his current title, which is that of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Premier.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe what the member is referencing is I was referring to him in his capacity as a former Health and Wellness Minister. I know he might not appreciate, and his colleagues might not be proud of their time in government, but the fact of the matter is that the member is a former Health and Wellness Minister, and he can be referred to as such.

He is the Leader of the Official Opposition today; he is a former Minister of Health and Wellness. I am an accountant in a prior life; I am Premier today. I am quite proud of the fact that people want to call me an accountant. If he's not proud of the fact that he is a former Health and Wellness Minister, I get that, but it's still a fact.

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

PATRICIA ARAB: There is no disagreement as to what the member's former title was. There was no disagreement as to what the Premier's former job was. But it's a matter of respect and order and procedure in this House to refer to a member by their current title, which is all I am simply asking. But the Premier - remember, I would never get up here and refer to the Premier as an accountant. He is the Premier. I respect that title; I respect the position more and I am asking that the Premier do the same for the Leader of the Official Opposition.

THE SPEAKER: With no further discussion, I am going to make a ruling right away. As far as I am concerned, this is just a difference of opinion as to classification. The Premier referenced the Leader of the Official Opposition as a politician when he referred to him as the former Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, former Minister of Health and Wellness.

The accounting part is not part of the Legislative Assembly, so I will say that this is nothing but a difference of opinion, but would ask that all members consider these things when going forward.

With the end of Question Period, we will take a 15-minute break for members to have a chance to cool off and then we'll get into the business of the day.

[3:58 p.m. The House recessed.]

[4:22 p.m. The House reconvened.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, that concludes government business for the day. I move that the House do now rise, to meet again on Wednesday, July 27<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Government business will include second reading of Bill No. 185.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask my honourable colleague across the aisle to deliver what Opposition business they will be calling for tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Government House Leader. For Opposition Day tomorrow we will be calling for debate: Bill No. 186 - An Act to Provide Transparency Respecting the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic; Bill No. 187 - An Act to Amend Chapter 380 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Public Utilities Act, Respecting Earnings and Rates; and Bill No. 189 - An Act to Amend Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1995-96, the Revenue Act, to Cut Provincial Gas Taxes.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn the proceedings for today.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We are moving into emergency debate, presented by the Official Opposition.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION UNDER RULE 43**

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: First, let me commend you, Mr. Speaker, on agreeing to move forward with this emergency debate on something that actually is an emergency in many households across this province, that is creating a collective urgent situation with our economy, and which I believe will impact people's mental health and physical health over the long run.

I did question why we were called back on an emergency basis to deal with MLA salaries when I think it's very obvious to everybody in this Chamber - as it would have been after we were briefed by the Clerk on this situation - that this is not an emergency. This session is not even required. Of course, payroll - if they believe that the caucuses are not going to approve of the pay raise - is not going to provide paycheques to us. We could have waited until the Fall.

I've watched with great interest as many members of the governing party have made a really big deal over this freeze of MLA salaries on social media - a lot of backslapping going on. I just want to remind everybody this happened for nine years now. Nine years this has been going on. It was something that was very important to Premier McNeil - he made that very clear - but he never made a big fuss about it. He never made a big show about this.

That's what this is, Mr. Speaker. It's all about making a big show to try to score some political points on an issue that's obviously sensitive to all of us, but where members of the public are going to have very strong opinions on this. Many members of the public are, one way or the other.

The fact that the government caucus voted no on having an emergency debate on this issue, on the cost of living. They voted it down earlier today during an emergency session of the House. An emergency session of the House was called, and the government caucus voted no to have an emergency debate on the cost of living crisis that Nova Scotians are faced with. Does this not give an indication of the priorities of the current government in place? I would argue that it does.

This is a government that has been very big on marketing, on flash. They won a really well-fought campaign in the last election, and I've got no problem saying it. The campaign that the Progressive Conservatives ran was focused, it was strategic, it was on an issue that really mattered to people. But they also built up the chest of promises on health care and on issues like ensuring people got a Better Pay Cheque Guarantee on Day 1 of their government, and they have not followed through on any of those commitments. I think this is another example of our government that's big on flash and low on substance.

We do hear about all the great work that's happening in health care and all the neglect that this government has inherited. I will ask every member of this Chamber to

look at all the government announcements that have come out - particularly around health care - and compare them to announcements that were made by the previous government, even a few months before this government took office. A lot of continuation of projects that were started under the previous government, and they seem to like those ideas now that they're in government, Mr. Speaker.

However, on the key promises that were brought forward, we have not seen any demonstrable movement on them. In fact, we've seen the crisis in our health care system get worse, and I would argue that the crisis in cost of living is going to exacerbate that health care challenge as well.

We have all had calls from constituents, particularly in rural Nova Scotia. I know that for a fact on the housing crisis that people are experiencing right now - on rents that are becoming unaffordable, on access to housing in general. People just can't find spaces in rural Nova Scotia. While we are seeing buildings go up very quickly here in Halifax, we're not seeing that same thing happening in other real estate markets in the province where housing is having an impact on people's lives.

We have seen this government tout all the great work they're doing on the cost of living to support people, like \$150 that was given out to folks on income assistance last year - \$150. These are folks that might be making how much a year below the poverty line? You add on the inflationary pressures that we're experiencing here in Nova Scotia, and these dollars aren't going anywhere at all. For some of these folks, it's \$12,000 a year, and they got a \$150 cheque. I know they would have appreciated it, but the Premier talks about sustainability - that is not a sustainable solution. That doesn't help people deal with this situation which is getting worse.

I'll remind the House that inflation in Nova Scotia is actually higher than the national average. In the government budgetary documents, they planned on an inflation around 2 per cent. We are now over 9 per cent, and many experts are saying this is going to increase.

The only thing that this government has said of substance that they believe will help us on inflation - I watched the scrum that was given by the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board on this, the first I got to participate in or watch after the leadership race. He said rising interest rates are going to sort this out. We are going to rely on the rising interest rates to deal with the problem of inflation.

Do we not see that this is a compounding problem that is setting us on a very precarious course towards a recession? A recession this government themselves are anticipating in their budgetary documents. Okay, so inflation starts coming down because of higher interest rates, theoretically. Hopefully it does have an impact on that.

[4:30 p.m.]

What happens to all the homeowners? What happens to all the people who leveraged themselves over the last three years either on investments or business opportunities, companies, their own homes? What is going to happen when these interest rates go up on people's non-fixed mortgage rates? There is going to be another host of people who are going to be impacted by this. This is why many experts are saying that we are heading toward a recessionary environment.

By the way, this government says there were eight years of neglect. We had eight years of growth under the previous government - eight years of economic growth. The population growth that this government really likes taking credit for began because of changes to our immigration policies under the previous government that this government is continuing with. We can't have it both ways in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

We can't on the one hand say that there were eight years of neglect on all these things that matter and then continue on with all of the policies that have actually contributed to economic prosperity, and that were upholding the health care system during a very difficult period of time.

But we are not called back in this House to discuss any of these issues. We are called back to talk about MLAs' salaries. Again, where are the priorities of this government, Mr. Speaker? It does not make any sense to me. Let's be honest - and I am happy to go on the record - the MLA salary situation should be independent from this House. There is an inherent conflict of interest when we have to debate our own salaries in this Chamber.

There are two conflicts of interest here. One is financial, obviously. The choice will be if you support a pay increase, you benefit financially. That is not a situation that any of us should be in, ever. There is a direct conflict of interest there by any standard. Two, what we are experiencing this week is the political conflict of interest because it is presumed there are votes to be gained by being hard on this issue.

Now, I will say a big difference between when this happened last time under Premier McNeil and what is happening now is a very different set of circumstances. We were also asking the public sector to keep their wages lower to deal with deficits that we inherited, that we also dealt with prudently. We were doing that at a time of low inflation and where wages had gone above the rate of inflation at the time.

This is a completely different situation and one cannot even say this is based on any principles, you know. It is based on a simple tactical thought and that is that people are going to be happy with us if we make a big fuss and show over this. We are going to gain some political capital on it, and that's all it is. If this government were serious about the



emergency situations that real Nova Scotians are facing every day, they would have voted in favour of this debate. I was absolutely shocked, to be honest, that they didn't.

It would have been a great opportunity to show Nova Scotians that this is an area of focus - the cost of living crisis - for this government. That it is something that they do care deeply about. That they are concerned about an impending recession. That they are concerned about spending power in our households and the impact that this is going to have on people's savings and their ability to put money away for their kid's RESPs. This impacts everything.

But the real emergency is the potential 75 per cent cost to taxpayers of looking at MLA salaries. (Interruption) Seventy-five cents. Again, I'm not going to give this government any room to say we are here fighting for a pay increase because we are not. We are supporting the legislation, but I will make the argument that this is exactly why this process needs to be independent and that independence does need to be respected, depending on the situation, obviously, that we are faced with.

We have seen in other provinces real action being taken on the cost of living crisis. This Premier says, well, we can't do anything that's not sustainable. By the way, they've blown all the money that they had in their coffers because of prudent Liberal spending on health care initiatives that are not panning out to result in any major impacts to our health care system. They're blowing that all. This government benefited from actually having good financial footing so that they can be tax-and-spend Tories, which we seem to have in Nova Scotia, just like past governments. They want to spend their way to an election victory.

A lot of these issues can't just be dealt with by spending, either. It's about good policy as well. This government's stated priority being health care is the link between income and health care outcomes in Nova Scotia.

What is going to happen if these pressures are not addressed on people? They are going to experience more anxiety, tougher decisions on where to allocate their household or individual resources. I know we're all getting calls from people who don't know what to do right now under these circumstances, and who are actually looking for mental health support - people who can't access that mental health support right now. That is an ongoing challenge.

We were promised universal mental health care coverage by this government. We have not seen that. The government - the Minister Responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health did indicate that he would continue with the previous government's commitment on the mental health and addictions hubs. He didn't tell this Chamber that he was going to eliminate the hub in Yarmouth, though, or delay that one at a regional hospital. That's something that people are looking for in my community right now.

The bigger issues here that we need to pay attention to are the social determinants of health - primary among them being income - that are going to put additional strain on our health care system.

If this government's priority is health care, people's health really matters. Social determinants of health really matter. People's income really matters. How far their dollar goes really matters. We have not seen this government take any serious action on this - \$150 for people on income support making \$12,000 a year? Give me a break. That's sustainable?

The other issue was the Seniors Care Grant. Half of that money is still in the bank. What is the government doing to actually deploy those resources so that people can get them in their pockets and actually utilize those?

Look at what other provinces are doing. Alberta cut the gas tax, provided electricity rebates. Manitoba introduced a Renters Tax Credit. Saskatchewan provided rent relief. Ontario cut gas tax and provided a new low overnight electricity rate. Quebec cut a \$500 cheque for folks. Newfoundland and Labrador cut fuel tax and eliminated sales tax on house insurance. P.E.I. provided free school supplies for all students in K-9 and gave all low-income seniors a \$100 grocery card. New Brunswick reduced income tax.

We are one of the highest-taxed jurisdictions in this country. We have not had one conversation by this government about what we're going to do to look at our tax regime, how we're going to make it fairer for people, how we're going to keep more money in their pockets, or how we're going to address those in our society who are struggling more than others.

I think this is going to create and continue major problems for this province for individuals. Until we see some real serious action - a solution to this issue - and less blame in this Chamber, less flair and more substance, less hat and a little more cattle, as I've heard others say, I really feel we're not going to get anywhere on this issue.

We're faced with an economic recession that's looming. We have not seen a plan come from this government to even address it as an issue. This will have consequences - not just on our economy and on the daily lives of people - but for our health care system as well, which I know this government at least says they're very focused on.

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

**LISA LACHANCE:** I'm grateful for the chance today to rise and talk about what is truly an emergency in this province. I know we've all been out and about these past few weeks. We've all gotten phone calls and emails. I've been hearing from everyone concerned about the rising cost of everything. Seniors, farmers, students, and everyone in

between are concerned about the rising cost of housing, whether that's as a renter or as a homeowner with increasing interest rates. People are concerned.

[4:45 p.m.]

Everybody's noticing the rising costs of groceries, food and gas. Folks are concerned about the rising cost of running their businesses, the cost of planting fields, the cost of shipping goods. Everyone is feeling the squeeze and feeling quite desperate about what the future might bring.

I know that the government is often fond of accusing the Opposition of only having complaints, so I'm actually going to take a few minutes to walk through some of the solutions that we feel would be important to addressing the current needs. As well, I want to talk about the need for thinking about the other side of the equation. We are optimistic about the future of this province, but we need a plan - an economic development plan - to get there.

First, I'll start with the solutions - solutions that would make this province fundamentally more equitable, pull people out of chronic poverty, and prevent exploitation. The first is to raise income assistance rates. With rising inflation and no increase to income assistance, people who depend on income assistance actually had a 5 per cent cut in their purchasing power at the time the budget was delivered. This obviously continues to erode month over month.

Not only did the government not raise income assistance rates, they effectively cut them, and they continue to cut them. If this government truly wanted to make good on its promise of long-term solutions, raising income assistance rates substantially would be their very first action.

We also need to raise the minimum wage, because the same thing is happening for folks with their wages and salaries. Don't make people wait until 2024. Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour now, and then begin mapping out how to get that minimum wage to the level of a working wage across this province immediately. The Premier has refused to do this, partly in deference to the work of an independent committee. But of course, we're here today because the Premier is intervening to block the recommendations of an independent committee, so his treatment of the results and recommendations from independent committees has been inconsistent to date.

We've also been talking about permanent rent control. I know earlier the government folks raised the issue of a rent cap. That really is a short-term solution that doesn't offer a system for anyone to plan - whether it be people who own properties or people who rent them. We consider it a win that the rent cap is in place - under the pressure from people, the public, and our party - that two governments that previously didn't believe in rent control have actually put something like it in place. But we need a longer-term

solution, a form of rent control that would be in place so that landlords are not incentivized to evict people so that they can raise the rent, and so that landlords can plan ahead for the maintenance and repairs necessary with their rising costs on the properties they own.

We need 10 permanent paid sick days. Thousands of people, including grocery store workers, cleaners, and some frontline health care workers, don't have permanent paid sick days and can't afford to take off time when they're sick. COVID infection rates are soaring once again, and with enormous cost of living pressures, no one's going to be able to stay home and follow public health advice when they're sick.

We're on the cusp of a seventh wave in this province, but this government has shuttered the temporary paid sick days program, leaving workers unsupported. Low-wage workers - about a quarter of the workforce in Nova Scotia - can seldom afford to take unpaid time off work when they are sick.

People with 10 or more paid sick days per year are more likely to use preventive health services, reducing long-term public health care costs. The evidence from jurisdictions in the U.S. that have legislated paid sick leave shows that legislated paid sick leave has little to no effect on overall business costs and no negative impact on productivity, and that workers very rarely abuse their access to paid sick days and tend to take fewer days than those to which they are entitled.

Paid sick days help businesses reduce turnover and improve worker productivity. When companies respond to the needs of working families, workers are more committed and productive, and workplaces stay healthy. We know that we are actually in a time of a great labour shortage and labour transition. If businesses really want to be able to support people staying in positions, we need to support their well-being on a long-term basis. People need permanent sick days more than ever to weather the crises of a global pandemic and inflation.

Something that weights heavy on my mind is the cost of energy in this province. Nova Scotia Power charges the highest rates of any integrated utility in Canada and yet this government does not consider it an emergency when Nova Scotia Power proposes to raise those rates by 10 per cent within two years. Nothing they tabled in the last session addressed the core issue of what Nova Scotians are paying for electricity.

We have tried to amend the Public Utilities Act so that the UARB could instruct Nova Scotia Power to create a universal service program. This would ensure that no one would have their power disconnected because they can't afford to pay. The government has refused to make this small amendment which would enable a longer-term solution.

We have also said that the reduction of energy poverty should be a performance target that is tied to Nova Scotia Power's ability to make a profit. How does it make sense

that a publicly regulated utility is allowed to rake in profits by impoverishing a large number of Nova Scotians?

Another way to target energy costs is to scale up energy efficiency upgrades in this province. The Affordable Energy Coalition has called for an expansion of the HomeWarming program so that it reaches more modest income-level people, because we know that energy poverty is not confined to low-income households. More people need the opportunity to take part in programs that don't have upfront costs.

In expanding the HomeWarming program, there has to be increased ambition to save people more energy, not 30 per cent but 50 per cent, and there needs to be an emphasis on fuel switching. Fuel switching is so important right now because many people in Nova Scotia heat their homes with furnace oil. The July CPI update showed that these costs have gone up a staggering 71.5 per cent year over year. Expanding the HomeWarming program to allow more people to switch to heat pumps should be an integral part of any cost of living plan.

As well, we've talked in this House before about addressing the exploitation of payday loans. We've put forward a long-term solution multiple times. The government could provide a guarantee for small low-interest loans through the credit union.

The UARB's decision to decrease the amount of interest that payday lenders can charge is welcome, but is not enough. Payday lenders have been allowed to take advantage of Nova Scotians in precarious financial situations for too long. It must be curtailed immediately. As the cost of living rises in Nova Scotia and incomes continue to stagnate, payday lenders will continue to take advantage of Nova Scotians in financial precarity.

The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board remarked several times today that inflation is a worldwide problem - and that is true - and that the forces leading us to see a recession in the future are a worldwide issue. That is true as well. However, we are the Government of Nova Scotia, and Nova Scotians expect us to come up with solutions to address their immediate needs, as well as look to the long term.

One of the issues that I really would like to hear more on from the government is also looking at the sustainability of our economy. We don't have an economic growth plan. We've been told by the Minister of Economic Development, by the Premier, that the election platform is the plan, but obviously large components of that, such as the Better Pay Cheque Guarantee, no longer exist.

Today we had a huge announcement, sort of shifting some of the deck chairs to create Build Nova Scotia and Invest Nova Scotia. Those changes might be important and necessary but at the same time, that's not an economic development strategy. We need to talk about things like what sectors, what opportunities, what risks are there. Where are

advantages in terms of different sectors? We need to know what analysis is going in for us to be able to properly understand if what the government is doing makes sense.

I mentioned before that labour is a huge issue. We need to know how the labour shortage is being addressed. The MOST program has been mentioned several times today. It is an important step, but again, it is not actually tied to an economic plan that has goals and sectors targeted. So we actually don't know how investments in the MOST program will actually support our economic growth.

This year we know that farmers tilled the ground, and they planted their seeds. They face a really uncertain harvest as they look forward to what's coming in the Fall - well, starting now - in terms of labour cost, labour availability, the costs of transportation. Fishers and those in aquaculture are also facing increased costs. We have not heard anything for those sectors as well.

We need to come together to understand what is possible. We have long-term solutions that we have proposed that can help Nova Scotians now. We also need to see an economic development plan from this government that is clear on which sectors and how and why we will support those.

I would also like to note that of course the other issue that has huge economic implications and opportunities is a necessary green transition. We also need to hear from the government about how, in fact, investments in clean energy - how the MOST program, for instance - are supporting the development of that sector. We need to focus on those issues as well.

These are worldwide challenges, but we are the Government of Nova Scotia, and we need to offer Nova Scotians Nova Scotia solutions.

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

HON. JOHN LOHR: It is a privilege to rise in the House and talk a little bit about the impact the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing or Housing Nova Scotia is having on Nova Scotians who need help right now.

I was thinking as we were starting this conversation, and earlier today, how many thousands of Nova Scotians are we helping through Housing Nova Scotia, through public housing. I don't actually have the number. I suspect that as my staff probably hear me raise the question, somebody will help me find it out. It must be somewhere between 25,000 and 100,000 Nova Scotians who are benefiting in some way or another from the programs that we are doing in Housing Nova Scotia.

I do want to take a few moments to unpack that as we have this conversation. Just very recently - yesterday, in fact - we made an announcement for a program called

Community Housing Infrastructure and Repair Program to help raise the boat, so to speak, of six co-ops and one not-for-profit in the province.

In that vein, we want to do more. I believe the number was close to 200 homes that were impacted by that. If you multiply that to - probably, that's close to 500 Nova Scotians who benefit from that raising of the boat that was all over the province. There were two in Sydney. There was a number here right in the city. It is our plan as a government to strengthen the co-op and not-for-profit housing sector. This is a start in doing that.

By helping to maintain existing co-op homes investing in needed repairs, it is enormously beneficial to this sector. We announced not too long ago another \$2.5 million for co-op housing. We want to lift the boat of co-op housing. We know that's one part of the solution to helping Nova Scotians. Through that program, there are at least 500 Nova Scotians who are immediately benefiting from and will benefit as that program unfolds in the coming year.

It was a couple of weeks ago that we announced another program called the Community Housing Acquisition Program, which gave loans to an organization called the Nova Scotia Housing Trust. Through that, five large rental units which are aging but we can consider as existing affordable housing - very affordable housing here in Metro - units that the average rent was \$800 to \$900 a month for two- or three-bedroom homes in those five major units - 300 homes, maybe another 1,000 individuals benefiting from us. Through the work with our partnership with that not-for-profit, the Nova Scotia Housing Trust, benefited from what we are doing as a government to try to help Nova Scotians across the province maintain affordable housing, find more affordable ways to live. We know how important housing is. It's really a massive spectrum. We're working on that part of it.

We're working on the very opposite side of that. Recently, just going back in time, we announced significant changes to the homeownership programs and the Down Payment Assistance Program not that long ago, for people who want to own their own home - and we want to enable home ownership. My personal belief is that the most affordable home you'll ever be in is the one you own, because then you get the opportunity to gain from the increase in value of that home as you pay it off.

I know home ownership is not for everybody. If you're moving too quick, if you don't know if you're really committed to that location, it doesn't pay to own a home, but it's a long-term investment. Not everybody can handle the maintenance of it, and that's a challenge.

We want to enable Nova Scotians not to give up on the dream of home ownership as we see rising costs, so we've raised those homeowner rates - the limits - and we've raised the amount that you can be earning to qualify for home ownership. I believe in home ownership, and I believe that when someone owns a home, they're making a long-term commitment to that community, and we need that. Not that renters aren't, either - I know

that. It's just a long-term commitment to being right there, and, of course, if you own a home, you need to make a long-term commitment to it. We want to enable that, and that program - I don't have any idea of the numbers that that will help, but that's part of what we're doing. It's not the only thing. We're doing a lot more.

If you were to ask me when was the right time to start, we would have said three years ago. A lot of what we've announced is stuff that will be built or is being built right now. That takes time, as everyone knows. It takes a couple of years, in some cases, to build, but we've also done stuff that is quicker through the Rapid Housing Initiative with our partners, the federal government, through the National Housing Strategy.

For example, we've announced Coady's Place in New Glasgow with 36 units; the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax, 21 units; Adsum Women's Centre in Halifax, 25 units; North End Community Health Centre. In just those investments there would be close to \$5 million we've announced in spending to help all of those different partners of ours, that we want to lift their boat, so to speak.

We've given programs to help our municipal partners - inclusionary zoning being one - that the municipalities had asked for since 2016. HRM had been asking for inclusionary zoning, and in our first session, we brought in inclusionary zoning for HRM. I was asked why it hadn't been done sooner. I asked my staff that, actually. The answer was: we don't know. Anyway, it was simply something that was left to be done.

As members know, we reacted in a very strong way to the Affordable Housing Commission Report that came out in May 2021, but in September to October 2021, we acted very strongly. That report called for a quick start program of \$25 million, and we made that \$34.5 million. We've impacted the lives of thousands of Nova Scotians through that program, and some of the things in that will bear fruit in a year or two, as some of those are things that are being constructed, which takes time.

A big part of that was the rental supplements, and we continue to invest in rental supplements. I'm very proud to say that while in the past, rental supplements were what we call non-portable, the rental supplements that we've announced are portable supplements, and I'm very pleased.

What does that distinction mean? If it's non-portable, that means this rent supplement is tied to you at this address, but if it's a portable one, that means that you choose where you want to live - we're giving you a rent supplement. It gives the person receiving the rent supplement much more freedom to move around, to choose where they want to live. If they find a better apartment somewhere else that suits where they're living, maybe is closer to where they need to work, or where they want their children to go to school, or whatever the circumstance, the rent supplement goes with them.



[5:00 p.m.]

I'm very pleased that we are offering portable rent supplements, and it just offers more options, more choices for individuals to choose where they want to live, more freedom for them to move around, and is very helpful. What's the number of that? We're up over 5,000 rent supplements. That's 5,000 households. Multiply that by 2.1, whatever the average number of homeowners there are - I have no idea what that number actually is, but I'm sure we're up over 10,000 individuals who are being benefited through our rent supplements.

We've got our public housing, and I know it's been the subject of much conversation in the House previously. There are approximately 11,500 public housing units. In those public housing units, because we have a very high percentage of seniors in those public housing units, we know the number is about 18,000 individuals, approximately, who are in public housing, and we're making very significant investments in public housing. In the Cape Breton area, we're doing a deep refit across many of the public housing units in CBRM over the next couple of years for greening the public housing so that they're more energy-efficient, so CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from housing will decline.

We're investing in public housing all over the province through our retrofitting and upgrades. I'm very pleased to say that we're doing that. Have we arrived at public housing? No. This Legislature is very well aware of the Auditor General's report that came out a little while ago that says there's a lot of work to be done in public housing, a lot of management. My staff is working very hard on that question of how we better manage our public housing and how we address that, and I know I've said in the Legislature before that we accept the Auditor General's recommendations and we're working hard on them. We'll have more to say about that in the future.

It's not only those spaces that we're involved in, either. We've supported community groups and community organizations across the province, as I know my colleague in the Department of Community Services, the minister does also, but we've made massive support for community housing. We've supported things like, in my own area, the Portal Youth Outreach Association, which works with young people who are couch-surfing. We actually have a big problem with homelessness in the Annapolis Valley, and I know all members here work very closely with homeless individuals through your offices, and I have done that myself through my office. I know every member of this House is very concerned about that.

I had an incident, I have to tell you, last session at about 10 o'clock at night. I had a call from the QEII Health Sciences Centre, and I can tell you your heart stops when you get a call from the QEII at 10 o'clock at night. It was actually a homeless individual who had put me as the substitute decision-maker. I didn't know that. It didn't take the QEII very long to figure out that I was the MLA and I probably wasn't really the substitute decision-maker. I was able to connect those people in the emergency department with the actual

next of kin, fortunately. It was a heart-stopping moment for me to see a 10 o'clock-at-night call from the QEII. It just about buckled my knees to the floor and I thought, oh no. It was a tragedy, but not for my family.

This is what we all do. I know all of you do it. We do it, and we all care very deeply about that, and I'm very pleased to say that we've supported organizations like The Portal - and not just The Portal, organizations across the province like that. We have big homeless issues all across the province.

We made supports to other community groups across the province - the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, we've supported that; the Strait Area Housing Development Society in Port Hawkesbury; Tawaak Housing Association in Halifax; the Housing Trust of Nova Scotia here in HRM; the Preston Area Housing Fund in HRM; DownTheMarsh Community Land Trust; the YWCA in HRM; Cape Breton Community Housing Association; Upper Hammonds Plains Community Land Trust; Queens Care Society in Liverpool; Dartmouth Non-Profit Housing Society; Co-Operative Housing Federation of Canada for Antigonish and Kentville, Alice House in Halifax. We've supported New Ross, Viola's Place Society in New Glasgow, through organizations that are involved in that space of helping individuals across the province with housing.

We are doing an enormous amount there. We are doing a lot to help people stay in their own homes. We have a whole suite of programs to help seniors who are living in their own home and want to stay there and have a problem with a leaking roof or a furnace.

We know there's a lot more we need to do, but I know that somewhere between 25,000 and 100,000 individuals are benefiting directly from this suite of programs that Housing Nova Scotia is offering.

We are very concerned about inflation. We're very concerned about housing. This government and the Premier and all my colleagues are very concerned to help the citizens of Nova Scotia. There's more that we've done.

I see that I'm running out of time, Mx. Speaker, and there's more that I could unpack. I just want to say that I know this is a concern of ours. We are not unaware of the circumstances of the province, how important housing is in the province, fundamentally, to someone's health and well-being.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time allocated for the honourable member has elapsed.

The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Thank you, Mx. Speaker. I'm used to you being down in front here.

Today we're here in this House for an emergency session and now we're having an emergency debate. We're here because the Premier thinks that MLAs' salaries are an emergency that had to be dealt with in this particular way. Could have done it in the last two sessions, could have said I'm not doing it.

I'm still trying to wrap my head around why three people were tasked with going through this exercise if the Premier had no intention of having these increases going forward. For me it would have been really hard to take an increase knowing that this government is not doing anything to help the Nova Scotians we are tasked to make laws for during this particular crisis. All we have to do is start going out in our communities, as we're all doing now that Summer is here and we can go outside. We're talking to people and we're hearing from people.

I spoke to someone the other day, a friend who had filled up his truck, who lives in a rural area - \$150 to fill up his truck. If you live in a rural area and you're trying to get anywhere - let's be clear - if you want to go to work, if you want to go to school, if you want to get your groceries or go to the doctor - if you have a doctor - you have to pay way more than we were paying last year and certainly way more than we were paying in 2020. For doing the simplest things, it is costing Nova Scotians more.

We learned last week that the Consumer Price Index increased 9.3 per cent year over year in Nova Scotia in June. That's a lot of money. People who are living on lower incomes feel everything more intensely. They don't have the kind of choices that people have who have bigger incomes. For people who are living on lower incomes, this 10 per cent increase is brutal.

Instead of calling back this House to deal with MLA increases, the Premier could have taken the money - let's be clear, it costs money to run the House here; there's salaries, there's extra electricity. They could have taken that money and donated it to Feed Nova Scotia or any of the other food banks throughout this province that serve Nova Scotians. That would have helped Nova Scotians more than calling us back for this particular session because we're not seeing anything coming from the government that is actually going to help Nova Scotians in the middle of a cost of living crisis.

Or they could have donated it to schools come this Fall, because I can tell you, I was talking to a teacher the other day who then sent me a picture of what she had to feed her class. I think it was a Grade 4 class in Dartmouth and there is supposed to be school breakfast but there was like a handful of yogurt tubes or cheese or something like that and a juice or two. That's not going to feed four kids, let alone the entire class. So we could have taken that money and put it there. This is an emergency. It is an emergency for Nova Scotians and this is what we should be here talking about.

People are seeing their grocery bills climb. I don't generally do the grocery shopping in our house, but I do it sometimes and the cost of food blows me away; that I

can take three bags out of the store and it is \$150. There's that number again - \$150. The cost of the increase in food stuns me and I don't know how people are making do. As the Leader of the Official Opposition has pointed out, the social determinants of health - if you are not eating healthy food, you are more likely to get sick and that has implications for our province and it has implications for people too, because when you are sick it is hard to do the things that make you feel better. It's hard to work out. It's hard to do all of that stuff. It's hard to go to the grocery store. It's hard to shop around to find the bargains. So for people who don't live in areas that are well-served by grocery stores, and we know where those places are and they are usually places where the incomes are lower, for those folks it is more difficult too.

Now as we noted, Quebec decided to give - I think it was \$500 to everybody who was making \$100,000 or less. Obviously we can't do that here because that would include us and so we could do it for people who make \$89,000 or less, but \$500 would help. I know the Finance and Treasury Board Minister says they don't want to do anything that isn't sustainable but for people who are trying to figure out how they are going to fit - we are hearing from people who are quitting school because they can't afford the gas to get there. Or they've stopped doing the things they love to do - the volunteer work that they do - because they can't afford to put the gas in their car to get there.

God help you if you live in a rural area and you go to your local ER and you discover that this is one of the times when it is actually closed and then you are going to have to drive somewhere else and if you are travelling on fumes, if you don't have enough gas, you may not get there and that is a problem too.

So we've been trying to give the government some options here; some things that they could do that would assist. We tabled a number of bills today that we think would help the Province if they are looking for ideas. It's true, you know: The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board doesn't control the cost of houses. Those have skyrocketed over the past year. So we can't control the winds, but we can adjust our sails and we can respond to Nova Scotians and help them during this difficult time.

I look at the bills that we tabled. I tabled a bill, An Act to Provide Immediate Relief to Seniors and Nova Scotians Living on Low Incomes. We know that less than 50 per cent of the money that was slated for the Seniors Care Grant actually went out the door. Now I have heard, you know, that it was a cumbersome application process. I don't know about that, but what we do know is that that money is still sitting there and that could go to help people and there are simple ways to get that money out to people. There is a Poverty Reduction Credit. You could take the information and just send it out to the people who are getting that.

If you had the political will, if you really wanted to do something to help Nova Scotians right now, you could do that, and you don't have to pay for the whole thing because you have that money sitting there and you haven't used it, so you could. You could

pass our bill, and you could decide that you're going to do something to actually help Nova Scotians who are dealing with that.

[5:15 p.m.]

My colleague, the member for Halifax Atlantic, introduced An Act to Provide Families with Emergency Relief today. Basically what it is, is that the Minister of Community Services "shall establish a temporary grant program to be known as the Emergency Relief Grant for persons in need of emergency relief" and "A person in need of emergency relief may make an application for assistance in accordance with the forms and procedure set out in the *Employment Support and Income Assistance Regulations*."

So here's another way that, if the government really wants to help Nova Scotians, here's another suggestion. They could take this suggestion - we'll give it to you. You can pass it, and then you can help Nova Scotians, and that would be a good thing.

There's another one: An Act to Amend Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1995 . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. It is my understanding that we can't be referring back to other bills that are on the Order Paper.

The honourable member for Bedford Basin has the floor.

KELLY REGAN: We could cut the gas tax. I won't refer to any bills that we would have tabled or had tabled or could table, but you could cut the motive gas tax - we've been saying this for quite a while. That is applied to every single litre of gas or diesel sold in this province, and you could cut it entirely if you wanted to. It's 15.5 per cent, I think, for gas and 15.45 per cent for diesel - something like that.

You could cut that in half if you wanted to, whatever, and it's not like the government won't have any tax revenue coming from that because in addition to the motive gas tax, then there's HST on top of that. With the cost of gas almost doubling, they would still get the 15 - well, the 10 per cent because part of it goes to the feds, but they would still get a significant amount of money coming in while gas is so expensive. They could absolutely do it, right? That would be no problem for them to do it.

They could help people by limiting the increase in power rates if they so chose. I have to say that when we were in government, we had stable rates for the eight years. Amazingly, we were apparently not useless about that. Amazing, but for eight years, we had stable rates and Nova Scotians knew what to expect. It's funny that, wow, as soon as a new government came in, Emera made a charge, looking for new ways to make some money.

There are other things we could do. There are all kinds of things we could do to help Nova Scotians. Kids going back to school - I was surprised when I moved here from Ontario. Growing up, not all of our school supplies were covered, but there were a lot of supplies that were actually covered - notebooks and things like that. Here, nothing was covered. It was always a big surprise to me. We have seen some other provinces recently that have actually decided to bulk-buy the products the children are going to need when they go back to school. I would imagine you'd get a pretty good deal on that, as a province, and it would make such a difference for children.

We've made moves to have school breakfasts. We often talk about a school lunch. We could do those things because it would make a difference for children, and when you have it across the board then nobody feels singled out, because they are getting a free lunch or they are getting free supplies if everybody is getting it.

The other thing I will say is that the government keeps saying, well, we're focusing on health care systems so we can't do anything else, but you have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time when you're in government. You have to do more than one thing. You can't have just one priority.

The fact of the matter is that the reason we're having such a difficult time right now in our hospitals is, in part, because of COVID-19. When you take off all the rules, when the masking comes off, when no one has to think about COVID-19 and you let it run wild, don't be surprised when your nurses are exhausted.

I have a friend who is in the hospital right now. Their parent is dying and they said to me, please talk about the nurses and the staff who are on the floor. They are exhausted, they are tired. We're never going to improve our health care system if they aren't transparent about what is going on in our hospitals right now and what is going on with our case numbers because that is helping to drive core outcomes.

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time allocated for the member has elapsed.

The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto.

GARY BURRILL: There are two or three thoughts, ideas, that the government has returned to continually for months when the question of the cost of living crisis has been raised. Two or three main ideas that they have returned to many times today, as they have previously, that really structure their thinking and approach to the cost of living crisis.

I want to direct a few comments to these two or three central and defining cost of living ideas that the government is structuring their thinking around. I think it is fair to say that these core cost of living ideas that the Premier repeatedly expresses - and are at the root of the thinking of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - are in fact profoundly superficial, in terms of understanding the economic effect. At the same time, they betray a

disturbing lack of economic grasp of a sort that I think does not instill confidence in the strength of the government's reasoning, as they are responsible for responding to the crisis in the province.

The first of these ideas - we've heard this, I would say, almost every single time that the cost of living crisis has been raised here in the House - is that somehow or another, the government's responsibility is diminished or obviated by the fact that this is an international problem.

How many times have we heard the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board open a response to a concern about the cost of living crisis - or the Premier open a response to a concern about the cost of living crisis - by saying that this is not a Nova Scotia problem but an international problem? This is a problem of the western world, as though somehow - the key information being offered here in this repetition - that cancelled out the importance of a distinctive, strong, carefully thought-through, local, jurisdictional, provincial response.

In fact, every major negative economic current that has flown over the western world in our lifetime is responded to in different ways in various jurisdictions. Some localities do a good job of reading the situation and in providing economic leadership within their jurisdiction. Some provide a poor interpretation of the situation and do a poor job of leading that jurisdiction through those economic clouds.

But the notion that somehow because a problem is international in its genesis and its effect, that therefore the responsibility for the local provincial government of Nova Scotia is somehow ought to be set aside and is diminished - that is, in fact, a profoundly superficial thought. It betrays a disturbingly weak economic understanding of a sort that does not instill confidence in the government's grasp of the situation.

The second core thought we hear repeated many, many times - we heard it repeatedly this afternoon from the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board - is, well, don't say we haven't done things. We have done things. Then we hear often about rent, often about housing, often about the \$150.

But no one has suggested that the government has not done things. That is not the issue. No one has suggested that the government has not done things that have had an impact on people's incomes. Of course, the government does things that have an impact on people's incomes. Every government in every jurisdiction in history, if it's breathing in and out, has an impact on the incomes of the people in its jurisdiction. That is not the issue, whether or not the government has done things. We accept that the government has done things.

What was being said, rather, is that there are two categories of jurisdictions in Canada today on the cost of living crisis. This has been enumerated numerous times this

afternoon. On the one hand, we see in B.C. and Newfoundland and Labrador the initiatives taken on with fuel tax. We see in Quebec and P.E.I. the initiatives taken on direct financial transfers to large sections of the population. We see in New Brunswick the indexing of inflation. That's one category.

A second category is a jurisdiction like Nova Scotia, which has made the judgment that it will be in fact, a better way to deal with the inflationary crisis if we do not engage in any of those direct financial transfers. The disturbing thing about the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's discourse on this is that, in fact, he provides no evidence that he actually even understands that these two categories exist. When he says, no, no, no, we've done things, let me tell you stuff we did in departments, this is to miss the question entirely.

The question is, if you had an argument in favour of being in that category of Canadian jurisdictions that have opted not to provide direct financial transfers in the context of the cost of living crisis - if you've got some reasoning about that, let's hear it. But let's not hear, oh, we've done things. The fact that we've done things is superficial. It portrays a weak economic grasp, and it does not instill confidence in the capacity of the government to deal with the present very serious cost of living situation.

The third thing that is continually being referred to is this notion that whatever we do as a government, we're going to make sure that it's not like all these things that are being proposed in Quebec, P.E.I., New Brunswick, and so on. We're going to do things that are - the key word that's often used is, of course, "sustainable."

I want to unpack a little what's actually being said here. What is being put forward here is exactly the kind of austerity economics with which the Conservative movement in Canada has deeply been identified now for over the course of a generation. I will also say that this is also precisely the kind of austerity economics that, oddly, defined the work of the Liberal Party when it was the government of Nova Scotia under Mr. McNeil.

At its root, this approach in economics says - and this is spoken of in many different ways by the Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, as was spoken of many times by the previous Liberal Premiers. It says that somehow, the economic crisis will be dealt with more effectively, the government will be able to do a better job for its society, for its people, for its economy, if it protects the general budgetary strength of the government's situation, and that this will impart more good than if there are direct financial transfers made to support the purchasing power of the working population.

So this is an actual economic thought which governed a previous administration, which is the defining idea behind conservative economics in general, but which has been largely rejected throughout the western world ever since the 2009 recession. So whenever this point is brought up - it has been brought up by my Liberal friends here this afternoon a number of times about this - and the point is made that there is, in fact, danger in the



present situation of purchasing power being so constrained that we move toward a recession.

[5:30 p.m.]

Then as soon as that is mentioned, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board says, no, no, no, you don't understand. Look at our budget. Our budget had a deficit. This demonstrates a profoundly weak grasp, because there's nothing about the existence of a government's deficit that indicates, in fact, in an inflationary crisis that there is adequate support to purchasing power, and adequate stimulation to the economy itself, to in fact put people in a position where they can successfully get through the crisis that is before them.

If you think that that's the case, you have a pretty disturbingly superficial and weak grasp of economics, and in my judgment, we have seen all kinds of evidence here this afternoon of a government that does not deserve the people's confidence in their handling of this crisis.

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

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mx. Speaker, I am honoured to have an opportunity today to speak to this emergency debate on the cost of living crisis. As a health professional, I want to introduce a new term for the members of the Legislature, and it's called an impact analysis. As health professionals, when we analyze a situation, come up with a plan, and implement the plan, then we assess whether it was impactful and whether it achieved the goal that we wanted. So when the current Premier and the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board talk about sustainable and effective actions, we are talking about whether the impact is achieving its desired outcome, not just plopping a grant here or there.

I do want to use the terminology that the Leader of the Opposition used just today: not followed through on any commitments. That is a direct quote. I might not know what I ate for breakfast yesterday, but I have an encyclopedic knowledge of Hansard and what people have said in this Legislature, and I'd be happy to table that tomorrow, thank you.

Mx. Speaker, one of the things that I wanted to know from Opposition was how many single and double beds there were in long-term care because it has an impact on the money that a government spends. But the previous government did not know how many single or double beds there were in long-term care, so it's a little difficult for me to understand how they determine staffing budgets and infrastructure budgets. We now know, because our government is committed to accountability and transparency, so there are 7,923 beds in the system.

One of the things that I know is that when we took over as government, the number of people sitting in acute care beds was very high. The number of closed nursing home beds was even higher at 419. Now, it's closer to 100. It is down 67 per cent. In case anyone

is wondering why, there's a lovely document that I will table called *A Healthy Nova Scotia: Solutions for Continuing Care* that we put out in December 2021. Lest anybody decide that, well, these are solutions we came up with as a previous government, our government put out these plans a year before the election was called, our plan for seniors in long-term care, a year before the election was called. We didn't get those actions from anyone else; those actions were ours.

The Seniors Care Grant was a party platform. Counting the number of beds in long-term care was a party platform. Bringing in controlled envelopes of funding in long-term care was a party platform.

If you look at the party platform in terms of my mandate letter, you will see a check mark by everything - everything is under way. So let's talk about the Seniors Care Grant for clarification. It was the simplest government grant to apply for in the history of Nova Scotia. I do believe that's the truth. You put your name on it, you signed it, you sent it in, and in a week's time \$500 showed up in your office. Not only that, if you go for the property tax rebate now, you can pre-apply for next year's grant.

Speaking of the cost of food, the Seniors Care Grant - we estimated that approximately \$29 million would go out the door, but because of COVID-19, because of other restrictions, we didn't get all the money out that we would have loved to have done, despite using all of the former government's strategies, and many new ones of our own, including mailing 30,000 applicant letters directly to people's homes. The word is out there now, I guarantee you that.

The other thing I want people to know is that this was not a cumbersome application, and the money is not sitting - I think the word used by the Opposition, the former Minister of Seniors, was hoarding - we were hoarding the money. In fact, that is not true. That money was spent on 12 different funding initiatives, which there was a press conference about. I'm going to run through a few of them.

I'm going to skip over the fact that we gave the CCAs a 23 per cent raise. I'm going to skip over the fact that the previous Minister of Health and Wellness gave 150 CCAs 50 per cent tuition whereas this government is giving 2,000 CCAs 100 per cent tuition. I'm going to skip over the fact that our government increased the hours of nursing care in long-term care from 3.1 to 4.1. If you don't think that has an impact on every single person working in long-term care, you've never worked in long-term care.

I want to go through because I clearly know how passionate the Opposition is about funding seniors, because \$500 doesn't get you everything. If I could have made it apply for all sorts of things, I would have. The previous Minister of Seniors should have known, or should know, or I'll let them know now, if you give direct money to a senior, it can be considered income. A lot of seniors didn't sign up for this grant because that word got out,

that maybe it would impact your income level and it would boot you out of other federal or provincial programs.

I want to set the record straight, the way the government grant was written did not impact your income, and you're going to keep all \$500 of it. I'm going to skip over the fact that under the previous government's 150 grants that saw 280 CCAs graduate, we have already got 1,000 signed up to start in September, and they are going to be graduating every month for the next year. I'm going to skip over the fact that those 4.1 hours of care is the highest in the country, and we already have one-third of our nursing homes working at that level before we put it in legislation.

Back to the Seniors Care Grant: We gave \$2 million to four adult day programs. Those are incredibly valuable programs that allow respite for seniors who may not have been able to afford to hire someone privately. That impacts the quality of living of all caregivers in Nova Scotia. I will skip over the fact that under the previous government, 550,000 home care visits were cancelled, but this year our home care wait-list went from almost 1,444 down to less than 820.

We are giving \$50,000 to the VON - wait for it - to buy digital medication dispensers. So rather than having to spend money to send a VON nurse in to hand out some medications to people, we are putting digital medication dispensers in there. That is something that no other government thought to do.

The money that didn't go out with the Seniors Care Grant went out - \$725,000 - went to the Canadian Red Cross in Nova Scotia. Do you know what they bought with it? Equipment that the previous government didn't fund. I'm talking about me making a phone call to someone who used to own a home care company on a Saturday morning to say, I need a hospital bed for someone who can't be discharged from hospital without a hospital bed, and it is a Saturday. Where do I get one? I'm fortunate to have been a physiotherapist so I understand the impact of trying to discharge somebody on a weekend when the Red Cross is closed. It bought oversized wheelchairs and walkers and commode chairs so that people could stay home longer.

We gave \$300,000 to Caregivers Nova Scotia, because if you thought there were a lot of people needing care, there are at least three times as many caregivers in this province looking after our loved ones. So we gave Caregivers Nova Scotia \$300,000 to assess the unpaid caregiver support needs and to develop Nova Scotia's first caregiver strategy in partnership with a new Department of Seniors and Long-term Care.

We gave \$200,000 funding to Independent Living Nova Scotia to develop a coordinated payroll and human resources program to make the Self-Managed Care Program more accessible for participants.

[5:45 p.m.]

It doesn't sound like a lot of money, but we gave \$50,000 to the ALS Society of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to purchase specialized equipment for loan to those with loved ones with ALS.

We are also giving \$3 million to six demonstration projects for new models of home care delivery in four areas of the province that include low-income seniors' housing in partnership with Housing Nova Scotia.

Now I am going to skip over the fact that we have committed to building 2,800 new or renovated beds, but I will say that it would have been nice if they had been built prior to the changes in the cost of living, prior to the changes in the cost of a home. But they didn't get built over the last 12 years, so we are going to do that for them.

So one of the other things that we did, Mx. Speaker, is we had too many people waiting for home care. I understand the philosophy of the previous government in wanting to have people stay at home, but they underestimated by a whopping amount - I can't define whopping, but I will probably have that by the Fall session of the Legislature - how many people it was going to take to do home care. As someone who did home care for ten years, I know that I could see, as a physiotherapist, five people in the run of a day.

When I was volunteering at Ocean View when they lost their physiotherapist, I saw 15 people in the run of a day. That's one to three. In order to help Nova Scotians, especially in rural areas who could not privately afford home care, we expanded the direct benefits program from \$1 million to \$13 million. That meant while we were dealing with the chronic underfunding of home care staff, we could give you the money and you could hire who you wanted. They would come on the days that you were going to need them. They were somebody local in your community - it could have been a family member or a neighbour who was going to show up at the time that they said they were because that's what you contracted.

We made it easier for Nova Scotians to get home care. I can tell you, Mx. Speaker, as I am travelling around this province to visit the nursing homes, to visit the residential care facilities, to visit those who received the Age-Friendly Communities Grant, Nova Scotians are doing every single thing they can to improve the lives of Nova Scotians. But we're not just committed to the Nova Scotians we are tasked with looking after. We are committed to looking after our staff, and that's why there has been significant funding to help reduce the injury rates and to improve the staffing levels in long-term care and home care so that staff are working in a place that they are proud to work in.

Most importantly, we are equally as committed to the caregivers. They make up the largest group in this province, and although you might not see a cheque cut to them, every single thing - \$1.2 billion under a minister and an entire department devoted to looking

after seniors, the first in Nova Scotia's history. We are going to do everything we can to make sure that our promises are being kept, that they will continue to be kept, and that over the next four years we will be equitable and accountable so that all Nova Scotians get the care that they need from one end of the province to the other. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mx. Speaker, I have to say the minister definitely knows her file and I'll give her that. She really does, but what we've just heard here today and what we continue to hear is exactly why people are sick of politics. They're sick of politicians and they're sick of politics.

The following members voted against their own constituents who don't have a home to live in, who can't pay their bills, who have electricity rates that are going through the roof. The following members voted against having an actual real debate on the cost of living crisis, not to pat myself on the back because we passed a budget: Kings West; Hants East; Hants West; Glace Bay-Dominion; Chester-St. Margaret's; Colchester North; Shelburne; Eastern Shore - yes, I am allowed to name them; Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley; Lunenburg West; Guysborough-Tracadie; Richmond; Digby-Annapolis; Argyle; Cape Breton East; Lunenburg; Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank; Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River; Sackville-Uniacke; Cumberland South - I hear a yahoo, it's not something to be proud of; Eastern Passage; Queens; Pictou East; Inverness; Pictou West - who happens to be the Minister of Community Services; Antigonish - who happens to be the Minister of Health and Wellness; Kings North, who happens to be the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Pictou Centre; Dartmouth East; and Sackville-Cobequid.

All of them refused to stand in this Legislature and talk about the cost of living crisis. All of you did - you all voted against it. I see some of you shaking your head no. You've got to just rewind Hansard for those who have an exceptional memory, Mx. Speaker, on Hansard. Why don't you rewind it a couple of hours, you'll see who voted. They refused to speak about the real issues because this is nothing but PR - Public Relations 101. This is what's happening here.

There are Nova Scotians who have nowhere to go, and the Minister of Community Services and the Premier himself stood here in the first session and they used the words "Winter is coming, we are giving money to people to have housing." The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stood there in that press conference, and they patted themselves on the back. Not one of them visited a homeless shelter or the tent situation in HRM. I went to the tent homes. I spoke to them. They didn't see a minister there. Do you know what else they didn't do? They didn't solve the homeless issue.

Do you know what they did with the money? Right before the budget in March, they gave \$22 million to one of the largest developers in Nova Scotia - no strings attached - to build affordable housing, which is not going to be affordable, for housing they were

already building. They were already going to build that housing and the government had to scramble out the door to spend that money before budget season, so they gave it to one of the largest developers. The same developers that are sitting in my community and tripling and quadrupling rent, and they are sitting in all your communities doing the exact same thing.

That's their solution to housing right there. Forget about those in tents - we'll move them to a different section where people don't have to see them. If anyone doesn't believe that, you can just look in the paper, Mx. Speaker.

I don't need to talk about health, quite possibly the worst year in health care history. Quite possibly more people have died from COVID-19 under this watch than in the previous three years combined, but they pretend like it doesn't exist. They've dismantled the COVID-19 resources in our communities. You can't get tested anymore anywhere. It's gone. They've dismantled it, Mx. Speaker.

Before COVID-19 - something they won't talk about - the family doctor list actually was decreasing. It saw a decrease in people on that list. I see some people smirking and doing this one. Look it up, it's facts. What did this government do? The first thing they did when they got in, to use the Premier's words, was to put his personal buddies in power. They scrapped the health board that had a ton of health care experience. They put a single person in charge, who actually is a card-carrying member of the Party. (Interruption) If the member from Colchester wants to say something, you've got 15 minutes. They put somebody in charge with zero health care experience, and look what's happened. The family wait-list has doubled. You can't get tested anywhere for COVID-19 now.

They had the audacity to send out something from the health authority, and the minister sat by quietly and said nothing: Drop your loved ones off at the emergency room but don't come in. We don't have space for you. Don't come into our emergency rooms. Imagine dropping off your senior mother or father and not being there with them. Imagine dropping off a child and not being there with them, but that's what they said.

That's what the health authority put out under the direction of this government, and not a peep from the Minister of Health and Wellness. She talked about waving a magic wand to fix things. Not a peep from the Premier, not a single peep, but that's okay. That's how they're going to fix health care.

There are estimates that over 50,000 Nova Scotians right now are waiting - and this is from a doctor friend of mine who has been in health care for a long time, is one of the most respected surgeons not only in this province but in this country and internationally - that there are 50,000 people waiting for life-saving and life-changing surgeries here in Nova Scotia, and he said nothing is being done. This is a government that promised 24/7 surgeries - you did. We can't even get seven surgeries, let alone 24/7. If God forbid, you find . . .

MX. SPEAKER: Order. Can the member speak through me, please. I hear a lot of yous and it would just be easier to stay on track if you avoided one of those.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Sorry, Mx. Speaker. If Nova Scotians, God forbid, find something wrong with them - maybe they find a mark on their skin, maybe they're having trouble breathing - and they need to go into the hospital to find a solution, to find out what it is, they are going to wait a long time. Part of that is because of decisions made by this government. They decided that COVID-19 was over. The world didn't, but they decided that COVID-19 was over. That comes straight from people in health care, Mx. Speaker. They were told that COVID-19 is over. Too bad, buckle up: We made a promise. We're going to keep it.

This is a singular-promise government that is failing miserably at that promise. All metrics have decreased. They've decreased. Less people have access to a family doctor. I stood in Public Accounts Committee, Mx. Speaker, and they replied to my question: By the end of June, every single Nova Scotian would have access to virtual care in this province. Every single Nova Scotian. I stood in the Health Committee a couple of weeks ago, and 22 per cent have access. We're well over June, and they sat there and they patted themselves on the back and said, well, we're doing a great job.

That's what they do. They make these grand promises like a better paycheque for every Nova Scotian, and like the honourable member for Halifax Chebucto said, we don't even think the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board understands finance at this point. Finance 101. He doesn't understand inflation. He doesn't understand interest rates. He certainly doesn't understand the impacts you can have locally when you're headed down the barrel of a recession.

My nine-year-old son knows that. He was literally asking me questions the other day about this. I'm not joking. Yet the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board stands there and goes, well, it's tough, you know - we're not in charge of the world. Well, you just spent \$13 billion, and you patted yourself on the back about that. They act like it's their money. "We spent," "I spent," "we spent," "I spent." You didn't spend. It's not your money. It's Nova Scotians' money.

THE SPEAKER: Order. I'm just going to remind you to speak to me and not use "you" and refer to other members.

The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I apologize, Mx. Speaker. It has been quite possibly one of the worst 10 months, 11 months, that I can remember. There's more homelessness. The food banks have quadrupled. We all know that. More people at the food bank. Some people look confused about this. If you don't know, you better ask. The shelters are full. They're jammed full.

When people come into our constituency office and need a home - I had a lady come in the other day. She works for a local non-profit, her husband is an EMT. Rent is being tripled - where do I go? She said, I spend my life finding homes and resources for people - now I have to do it and there's nowhere for me to go. She was in tears.

There isn't because their solution to housing was to build bigger and more expensive housing. Their solution to community services was to cut money to community services. People receiving money are receiving less today because of inflation than they were when this government came in.

I look around and I see a lot of privileged people. We're all privileged to be here. I think we've forgotten what it's like. Maybe some of these people have never struggled a day in their life. I know there's a lot of wealthy people in this Legislature. But they've forgotten what it's like to struggle, and it becomes a number. It becomes a number now, \$13 billion.

When is the last time you walked down the street in your own community and asked people how they were doing? They'll tell you that they're worse off today than they were. If they're not, they're lying to you.

Gas is higher. This government did nothing while everyone else did something. They did nothing. You know why they didn't do anything? Because they wanted the money. They wanted Nova Scotians' money. That's exactly why they didn't do anything. Because if they had any type of consciousness, they would have returned that money to Nova Scotians to help them. Instead they said, we gave them 150 bucks. If you're lucky, for some people, that fills a gas tank.

We heard the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board say over and over and over, get a job. Get a better job. That's what he says. He says that there are lots of jobs out there. He said it today - there's lots of jobs out there, better-paying jobs. People are looking for jobs. Tell that to a single mother with multiple children who has to get up every day, who depends on a government to help them - and they're not helping them. They're not, because they have decided that those people don't matter. They have done a calculated choice. I would almost guarantee that they think those people don't vote for us, or those people don't matter - this is the area that we're concentrating on because that will win us an election.

Yet we have CFIB. Their members - 8 out of 10 said this government is failing. If you don't believe it, look it up. Small businesses in Nova Scotia, 8 out of 10 say the Province does not understand the cost constraints their businesses are facing. Eight out of 10. There was a recent poll. I saw it online. They all bragged about the Premier's personal popularity, but what they didn't talk about was 62 per cent of Nova Scotians said they're failing at health care. Over 70 per cent said they're failing at housing. Over 80 per cent said you're failing at cost of living. The member for Eastern Passage talked about the history of Nova Scotia. In the history of Nova Scotia, we've never seen numbers that terrible.



[6:00 p.m.]

I know a lot of you probably don't like when I get up and speak - whatever - but the moment the Premier's popularity decreases, you're done. You're gone. The moment that the Premier's popularity starts to sink, the members will be gone. There's arrogance, and confidence, and there are just a lot of brave faces over there. In the end, when this is all said and done, you've got to be able to look yourself in the mirror and say, did I do what was right for Nova Scotians, or did I do what was right for this party?

I would argue they're not doing what's right for Nova Scotians. They're doing what's right for this party by continuing to be the party of public relations, the party of conservative values, and there is not a single progressive bone on that side of the aisle.

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

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'm pleased to rise and say a few words about this debate topic brought by my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I believe earlier today in Question Period, the Premier called the Legislature a distraction. Today, just this once, where we find ourselves in an emergency session - a matter of overriding public interest to make a change that does not require our presence here - I agree with him. This is a distraction. It's a distraction from what? It's a distraction from the real emergencies, the real challenges that are facing people across this province on which there is actually no debate.

This government has acknowledged that we have a health care crisis, and it needs to be fixed. We all know, regardless of what we have to say about it, that we are in an unsustainable inflationary environment that is deeply hurting people in this province.

I would like to remind the government that this is the People's House. This is where we come to bring the people into the conversation. This conversation becomes easily abstracted. It is very easy for us to talk about - as other speakers before me have said - billions of dollars, and this or that program that was rolled out at some time. But the reality is there is no debate that people in this province need help. That is why we are here. We are here in the People's House to bring the people's voices into this Chamber.

The Premier used the term "compassionate government." The Premier has used that term a few times. I hope that the Premier might take the time to reflect on the fact that a compassionate government would act with compassion. Compassionate action is required right now. If you don't want to take our word for it, many speakers before me have said in this Chamber that every other province in this country has taken a compassionate move. This government in the last couple of months since gas prices have skyrocketed, since groceries have skyrocketed, in an environment of 9.3 per cent inflation, has done nothing to directly address the need that people have. That is not compassion.

Just to bring some people into this Chamber who were so recently right outside, ECEs are a great example. Early child care educators in this province do not make a living wage. We have been hearing stories for the last month about how they choose not to eat three meals a day, how they look forward to retiring in poverty. These are the people who make it possible for people like me to be standing here in this Chamber. It is shameful. This is action that could be taken now. We could move toward a living wage. If this government wants systemic long-term actions, there's an action.

People across this province, particularly outside of HRM, are telling us that they can't afford to fill their gas tank to get to work. They can't get to work because they can't afford to get to work. People need help, so the question is, who is this government helping financially? Who is this government helping? Well, as has been mentioned, some very wealthy developers have received tens of millions of dollars to bulldoze a wetland in my constituency, and to provide some housing at 80 per cent of market rate. I will take this opportunity to say, as I have many times before, that is not affordable. That is not affordable housing, and yet they get \$22 million of government funding. For what? To build a project they were already going to build that is not going to alleviate the housing pressures we have for the people who need it most.

Today, we also heard that two new Crown corporations will be headed by - in the Premier's word - his "friends," who will no doubt earn six-figure salaries. So that's help for the Premier's friends - but they probably don't need it. As many have pointed out, the cost of living increases, 9.3 per cent inflation this month, are impacting people across the province in their capacity to live their everyday lives.

I am taking the opportunity of this debate to state the obvious because it needs stating. The emergency is not to quash a piece of legislation that we never should have been here for in the first place. The emergency is that people can't feed their children, they can't get to work, they can't pay for rent, and they can't pay for medication. That is the emergency.

The good news is that this government can act quickly. They have acted quickly. We've seen it. The raise for CCAs, which the minister speaks about herself so glowingly, that she personally gave to every CCA in this province, was welcome and long overdue, but we need to look at the context of that raise. We need to know that right now, the environmental workers in long-term care homes across this province - the people who empty the garbage, who need to be there to make sure that these facilities stay open - are in bargaining, and conciliation has broken off. You know how much they make, average, an hour? Fifteen dollars. They make \$15 an hour. We are breaking off bargaining in long-term care facilities because this government doesn't want to pay people more than \$15 an hour. They don't want to pay them a living wage in an environment of 9.3 per cent inflation. Those people aren't being helped.

Yes, there are jobs. We are hearing this from the government. There are jobs. We are in an environment where there are a lot of jobs. A very tried and true Progressive Conservative talking point: get people back to work. Doing what? Do you want to empty bedpans or empty garbage or clean rooms in a hot, long-term care facility with no air conditioning for \$15 an hour when you could do anything else? Probably not. Do we expect anybody else to want to do that? Probably not. Why? Because we have to pay them what they are worth. That's a good investment from government, but we are not seeing it.

So many people can't pay the bills. The government says they are helping, but we want the government to help these people. We want the government to help these people directly like every other province in the country has. Our recommendation is direct support. We came out of COVID with a budget surplus. I was the finance critic when there was a massive deficit projected that did not come to pass. We had a surplus.

There is a windfall on gas tax. We disagree that gas tax itself should be waived, because that tax is all over the place. We don't know what will happen with the price of gasoline. We need to transition away from fossil fuels, but at this moment in time the government is getting a windfall. When gas costs over \$1.80, that's more revenue that the government is receiving from people who can't afford to fill their gas tanks. Let's use that revenue now to help those people get by. That's sustainability.

This question of sustainability - the government came out of COVID with a surplus. They were elected into a surplus. What a lucky opportunity. I say luck. A lot of that money came from the federal government. A lot of that had to do with the uncertain accounting around COVID. They were expecting much worse and they didn't get it. So what are they going to do with it?

Yes, we have seen some programs, but people need help right now. This is why we are here. We are here because this is the People's House.

We are here to ensure that people get the help they need and to talk about the real emergencies - whether people can afford the necessities of life, whether Nova Scotians can access health care, whether we are addressing the unfolding environmental crisis as we sit in this 30-degree Chamber in the middle of Summer - with the urgency that it requires.

The Premier says this place is a distraction. If we can distract this government from helping their friends, into taking action, that's fine with me.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: I really look forward to the opportunity to get up and say a few words. (Interruption) Nobody else jumped up, so I did. I'm going to take a few minutes. I may not take the full 15, but Mx. Speaker, they never got up, so I

stood up. That's their fault; that's not mine. They can keep going (Interruption). I'm going to keep going because they weren't paying attention.

I am going to talk about a couple of things that I think can happen right now. We've heard a lot of passionate debate about what previous governments did and what the current government has done, and that's great. You know what I mean?

I can stand in my place here. I watched the current government put shovels in the ground on projects all over Cape Breton that they didn't support - a billion dollars worth of work that was designed by the doctors, not the government. So when they get up on their feet and they say all this mess was there for the last eight years, well, Kevin Orrell and Dr. Brake and Paul MacDonald and the Health Care Redevelopment Team and everybody else down there who are working day and night on these projects - boy, oh, boy, they don't mind bringing a shovel to put in the ground in New Waterford or put a shovel in the ground at the cancer centre or put a shovel in the ground in Glace Bay when they called it all a disaster and they called the work of the teams a disaster, and apparently plaques are coming back. Anyway, I'll leave it there, so we can have this back and forth. We all have successes - the NDP did when they were in government, we did, and they're going to tout the record.

Really what this is about is about an emergency debate around the cost of living. It's been heard here multiple times that there's absolutely no reason at all for us to be here right now. There's not. But it's important that we are here because we're actually - and I give credit to my caucus and the NDP caucus, because we both saw an opportunity, because of being called back on something that all we had to do is not table the report until the Fall, or we had consent of the caucuses not to come back here. But then the letter - I don't have it to table but I'm happy to bring it forward - there was a letter with the brand, the Premier's name with the brand, the Nova Scotia logo, that's what went out.

When Stephen McNeil dealt with this, he dealt with it because that's what leaders do. He just dealt with it. We weren't getting a raise, he told everybody in 2013. I came in 2015 and then in 2017 he dealt with it. Didn't need a letter, didn't need to come back to the House. That's what he did. There were no logos involved, there was no brand involved, there was no Stephen McNeil. He dealt with it because it was the right thing to do.

We would not be back here right now pulling staff from every department, who all have been working day and night for the last two years during COVID-19. We pulled them all back from vacation for this session that doesn't need to happen. It could have happened in the Fall, but we're going to take this opportunity to talk about it.

What I want to talk about are some of the tangible things the government could be doing right now. It's not major infrastructure, it's not buildings. We can get into that debate all day long. Why don't we feed our kids lunch in school? If you want to do something tangible for families, feed them lunch. This has been a conversation for years. It's tangible. We feed them breakfast now. I'm proud of our record as a government. We expanded the

breakfast program. God willing, if I'd had six more months in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, we would have had a lunch program, we were that close. That's why it's frustrating for me that this isn't happening yet.

[6:15 p.m.]

They are a year in, like, 11 months and change, sorry. Eleven months they're in, so feed our kids lunch. It's tangible, like, right now. School is in a month. We could take that expense away from families. Feed them lunch, that's one.

I know the feds are talking about this too. If I was still in that department, I would be pounding the drums, saying we need this for September. Every kid in Nova Scotia, regardless of where they're from, regardless of their background, is getting free lunch in September.

I can't talk about a bill at length, but I tabled the bill today because P.E.I. did it - school supplies. Again, another tangible thing that we can help families with. So now not only are kids going to have their supplies, they're going to get a free breakfast and they're going to get a free lunch. You're just levelling the - that's why we worked day and night - and I've given them all the credit in the world and I will continue to do it to the wonderful staff who are involved - with the negotiation of the child care deal. We knew what was coming down the line. We already knew that it was too expensive. We knew that ECEs weren't paid enough, and we knew that the cost was at a point where we knew that in certain communities across Nova Scotia one in five kids was accessing child care. It was that significant. That's why we rushed and worked as hard as we could with staff to get one of the best deals in the country. That was Step 1. Lunch was Step 2.

Now we have another option. We can take a lot of pressure off families and off parents by just implementing these things that are so tangible and so easy and decisions that could be made like that. As the Leader of the NDP said - rightfully so - the raise for CCAs, that's the right move to make. They can make the right move tomorrow and pay for school supplies. They could do it tomorrow and we'll support it. Everybody will support that. That is a no-brainer thing we can fix right now that will save families hundreds of dollars coming into the Fall. Then we figure out lunch, which, again - breakfast, lunch, supplies, it's fantastic.

These are the things that I'm kind of scratching my head about. Nobody's talking about this stuff. P.E.I. came out with the school supplies, and it was like crickets from the government. It's not a huge expense. It's not like multi-million-dollar expenses. These are little things - not really little things, a big thing for a kid to have all the supplies to go to school, but these are the things that are so tangible that families would just be like, wow, this is amazing. This is just another expense I don't have to deal with.

We're not seeing any of that stuff. Again, I'm listening to the debate back and forth today, and people have suggestions, and of course the government is going to defend their record, but the comment has been made a couple of times, every government does something. They do things to support people. The NDP did it. We did it. The member for Halifax Chebucto said it. We're living in a completely different world right now where inflation is so high, people are screaming for help, and nobody is answering that call. I give the Minister of Seniors and Long-term Care credit, she's great with statistics. She's proud of what she does.

I would say that with all of you. I could probably go around with each of you, even the newer members, and I have a personal story about all of you, about how we worked on a project or how we helped one another. I could do that. I say that with all positivity. It's not meant to be negative when I say that, but I'm going to say this about your government. You have an empathy problem. I don't know if it's a communication thing or what, but your ability as a government to express empathy . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. Please speak to the Opposition through me.

DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Again, and I don't say that in an attacking nature at all. It's what people are telling me in the communities - that they feel like government is just not listening to this stuff, that they're having problems putting gas in their tank and they're having problems putting food in the cupboard, and they're scared for the Fall. We're sitting here; we're in a heat wave. What's going to happen in September, in October, in November? If we don't see any kind of relief, which I don't think we are and all the experts are saying it, is that there's not, and people in the communities I talk to and I represent are saying, government just doesn't care.

I'm sitting there going, I know the people in government. I have a personal relationship with them, a lot of them, and I know you wouldn't be here if you didn't care. The point I want to make is what I see, personally, is that there's an empathy issue at hand, and the government's ability to show empathy is lacking, and it comes from the top. People are just seeing this, going they just don't care. I personally know you do. Where's the gap here?

You can feed our kids lunch tomorrow; you can buy their supplies tomorrow. You have the ability to do it. We can get into financing all day long. You're borrowing money and you're collecting record gas tax, and people don't know where the money is going. We're not seeing it. Show them where they can put it. Put it into our kids. Give our ECEs a raise. Feed our kids. Do something tangible right now that will impact people outside . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order. The time allocated for the emergency debate has elapsed.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

[The House adjourned at 6:24 p.m.]

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**NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)****RESOLUTION NO. 372**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Nicholas Pettipas for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

**RESOLUTION NO. 373**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;



Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Rick Smith for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 374**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Jackie Broussard for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 375**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Crystal Kent for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

**RESOLUTION NO. 376**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Robin Webber for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

**RESOLUTION NO. 377**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Dave Roberts for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 378**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Zack Stephen for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 379**

By: Claudia Chender (Dartmouth South)

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

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival is a two-day celebration of Nova Scotian musicians that was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in Porters Lake, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the festival featured The Stanfields, Andre Pettipas and The Giants, The Royal Volts, Stonebrother, Zephyr, a youth presentation, and a Women's Songwriters Stage featuring Jenn Grant, Christina Martin, Brooklyn Blackmore, and Lindsay Misiner, Mitch Roberts, Foggy Road X The Homewreckers and Dancing Queen; and

Whereas the Trunk 7 Music Festival brought the community together to celebrate and support Nova Scotia's incredibly diverse and strong local talent;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Gene Justasson for all their hard work organizing and promoting this wonderful community event.