

**Fourth Session – Forty-Second Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXVI No. 48A - 10 a.m., Thursday, May 12, 2022**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALTomARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
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WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 12, 2022

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Will you call for second reading debate this morning, from 10 to 10:30 or earlier if the debate is finished, Bill 228, the eating disorders awareness week, and from 10:30 to 11, Bill 203, The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act?

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 228, The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act, from 10 to 10:30—[interjection]—I was going to say that, yes—to 10:30 or earlier if the debate is finished, and second reading of Bill 203 to follow from 10:30 to 11. Bill 203 is The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

## Bill 228—The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore start with second reading of Bill 228, The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), that Bill 228, The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Naylor:** I am excited to stand in this House today to bring forward a bill that has so much personal meaning for me. It's an honour to stand here knowing that I'm representing so many people from across Manitoba who want eating disorders awareness week to be recognized, including the 230 Manitobans who signed petitions earlier this year.

I referenced my work as a counsellor in the past, but members of this House likely don't know that I was a counsellor in an eating disorder treatment program for the last 10 years before I was elected to the Legislature. I ran for election, first, as a trustee and—school trustee and then as an MLA, driven by my desire to address gaps in mental health funding and policy.

As an opposition MLA, I can't compel this government to invest more money or begin to seriously address the years-long waiting list for eating disorder services and other mental health issues, but I can bring forward a bill that will highlight the importance of these issues and validate the experiences of those affected by eating disorders.

Madam Speaker, in 1986, 40 people from Canada, the US and the UK gathered to talk about organizing an international eating disorders awareness week or EDAW. Two years later, the National Eating Disorder Information Centre became the national co-ordinator for EDAW, and various advocacy groups in Canada started recognizing it yearly, during the first week in February.

Here in Manitoba, the Women's Health Clinic has been hosting EDAW events since 2010, and community education on eating disorders for many years before that. Some of the Women's Health Clinic community are my guests in the gallery today. I also want to recognize my guests Elaine and Rick Stevenson. They have been passionate and persistent advocates and fundraisers for eating disorder prevention and treatment throughout the past 20 years, since they lost their precious daughter Alyssa to an eating disorder.

When I worked at Women's Health Clinic, we aimed to get provincial recognition for eating disorders awareness week. I want to sincerely thank the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), because when he was Health minister, he did respond to our advocacy letter about EDAW by issuing a statement, and gave EDAW that recognition in 2017. The encouragement meant a lot to those of us working in the field.

However, this bill aims to build on that and make EDAW a recognized week, annually, so that Manitoba can take its place alongside the seven other provinces and territories where EDAW is formally recognized. Madam Speaker, eating disorders awareness week creates an opportunity for Manitobans to increase their understanding of this life-threatening illness. Awareness is the critical first step in helping families identify when someone they love is at risk.

There's a lot of misconception and stereotypes about who has an eating disorder and that somehow it's a choice. In fact, eating disorders are mental illnesses that have devastating effects on one's physical health, quality of life and relationships. Underlying behaviours associated with food and exercise are distorted and self-critical attitudes towards one's shape, size and self-worth.

Eating disorders have one of the highest mortality rates of any mental illness, only recently surpassed in North America by opioid addiction. Eating disorders do not affect just young, affluent white women, as we once thought but, in fact, affect folks of all genders and from all backgrounds. The most well-known form of eating disorder involves restriction of food and significant weight loss, but it's even more common to experience binge eating disorder. There's a continuum of behaviours related to food and exercise that qualify as diagnosable eating disorders or as early warning signs.

Eating disorders arise from a complex combination of behavioural, biological, psychological, interpersonal and social factors. Each person's story is different, but common threads include personality traits like perfectionism or experiences of trauma leading to low self-worth or those who can't cope with life transitions or losses. People who have difficulty identifying and regulating emotions are often at risk. Those who experience depression and anxiety are more at risk, and rates of substance abuse are higher among those with an eating disorder than in the general population. Eating disorders are also prominent within athletes, particularly activities

where body shape or size is judged, such as gymnastics or ballet, but also common in many other fields.

EDAW provides an opportunity for education about how eating disorders impact people across the gender spectrum, people of all sexual orientations. Eating disorders impact disabled folks; people with other chronic illnesses; Black, Indigenous and other racialized people. They impact people of all sizes and body types.

\* (10:10)

Eating disorders develop within a context of society and media portrayal of an impossible and very narrow, limited idea of what a healthy, acceptable or attractive body looks like. The pressures on young people at an increasingly early age to be thin and pretty or bulked up and fit only continue to increase year after year.

Some children experience stigma, bullying or even pressure from well-meaning adults when they are labelled fat or obese at a young age, and their desperation to mold their bodies into something acceptable can lead to an eating disorder. In fact, research has clearly shown that early dieting in teens and children is disordered in nature, and that the diet cycle itself in people of all ages can lead to an eating disorder.

Eating disorders awareness week can be a tool to bring attention to the socio-cultural determinants that contribute to the development of eating disorders. These include the social pressures, but also things like food and income security, housing inequities and a lack of mental health services.

Another factor is systemic oppression that affects how people view their own bodies. This, of course, includes experiences of racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, sexual harassment or exploitation.

The science on eating disorders continues to evolve. Only in the past decade has binge eating disorder become better understood, and we know that it's directly tied to episodes of restrictive eating, whether or not that restrictive eating was from chronic dieting or a childhood lived in poverty without access to regular meals.

We know now that the brain is a powerful defender of our body's well-being, and no matter what caused the hunger and the brain's sense of starvation, the brain can compel a person to eat well beyond what

is comfortable and needed. With this deeper understanding, it's clearer now why people who have not had access to adequate nutrition for any reason are more at risk of developing an eating disorder in response.

Eating disorders sometimes provide a sense of control. People might use food or exercise as a form of discipline or punishment, or to maintain a sense of order when their lives are chaotic. Eating disorders can provide temporary comfort despite the cost to health, relationships and loss of opportunity. Eating disorders fulfill needs that people haven't yet learned to meet elsewhere. Familiar rituals can be soothing. They help people cope with intense emotions and provide comfort.

Treatment is not just about regulating eating, but must address the underlying issues that motivated the behaviours, and must help people learn new ways to cope with emotions and challenges. Eating disorders awareness week may help medical professionals become more knowledgeable about eating disorders.

Madam Speaker, medical training is very limited when it comes to education on this topic, sometimes as little as only a few hours. What that means is people are often misdiagnosed. If they are not thin or they're Indigenous or Black or male or trans, they're even more likely not to be diagnosed because of stereotypes about what someone with an eating disorder looks like.

Even when medical professionals know what's happening, they don't always feel equipped to deal with it. EDAW is important to bring awareness to the lack of services and supports, especially in rural and northern communities. Lack of Internet access, local services and culturally relevant services are all factors.

Manitoba's treatment services are centralized in Winnipeg at HSC or Women's Health Clinic, and the wait-lists are very, very long, having grown even longer throughout the pandemic. HSC's adolescent treatment program has the resources of a half-time psychologist, and, according to the medical director, the similar program in Ottawa has 10 psychologists.

Eating disorders have been sorely underfunded in Manitoba for many years. Many people access private services or simply go untreated. Families have sometimes remortgaged their homes to spend the many thousands of dollars of month it costs to send a loved one to a private program in the US or another province. Many people with eating disorders become

poor through lost earnings or lack of paid sick days from work, but sometimes their families also spiral into debt trying to get them care.

Madam Speaker, I have a lot of passion on this issue and, clearly, I have so much more to say, but I know that I'm running out of time. I know that I have no doubt that folks on all sides of this House have known families to struggle with this pervasive issue and would welcome the opportunity to learn more.

However, I will conclude by saying that we can all do our part to help prevent eating disorders by treating all people with dignity and respect, regardless of their body size. Through legislation and in our own lives, we can speak up and we can challenge assumptions that equate bodies that are not thin or white or able-bodied with any degree of inferiority. And we can all show our support to individuals suffering with eating disorders, their loved ones and all of the hard-working care professionals by passing this bill today, Madam Speaker. I look forward to the unanimous support of this House.

Thank you.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** I want to thank the member. I had a chance to briefly chat with her on the way into the Legislature this morning, and I'm very grateful for this morning's debate and this bill that she's put forward and this opportunity to discuss this important matter.

And so my question for the member is: Can she talk about the common stereotypes and misconceptions about eating disorders—eating disorders, and how she feels that this awareness week will help promote awareness and education and address those misconceptions?

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I thank the member from Madison—from Radisson for that question.

You know, I grew up on Afterschool Specials, and my stereotype and probably a lot of other people's stereotypes were, you know, young, wealthy white

woman, young girl. And, unfortunately, that stereotype is persuasive, and yet eating disorders cross all kinds of, you know, every gender. Research didn't happen for a long time and there still isn't enough research, but that's part of the reason that we're only just realizing how pervasive eating disorders are.

You know, the average starting age for an eating disorder in this country used to be the age of 12. We're now seeing that happening younger and younger. And, really, any group and at any time, if you're in a group of people there's a good chance—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I want to commend and congratulate the member for Wolseley on successfully advocating for quite some time ahead of bringing this bill forward and for all of her work in getting to this point today, and all the community members who have advocated alongside her for a long time to see this happen.

And I wanted to ask if the member could share with us why this bill is so important to so many families, health-care professionals and providers and just generally to the public?

**Ms. Naylor:** My thanks to the member for—from Union Station for that question.

This is an important bill because it is a starting point. Recognition matters. It matters to the folks who have this lived experience, but it's also an opportunity for education. So, you know, every year during EDAW, community groups would promote themselves in the media and try to get interviews and put on workshops.

But if we're talking about this at the Legislature, then there's more chance that people across the province will know that this is an important issue, that there are services out there will help them. Maybe parents will be quicker to identify issues, children at risk in their own homes, or to learn about some of the ways they can prevent eating disorders—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'd like to thank my colleague from Wolseley for bringing forward this bill this morning.

I was wondering if she could walk us through the process of how a person is formally diagnosed with an eating disorder here in Manitoba?

**Ms. Naylor:** Thank—I thank the member from Notre Dame for that question—not Notre Dame, my

apologies, sorry. I'll just answer before I run out of time.

I can't tell you that in 45 seconds, but I can tell you that there are a couple of processes. If it's a child or adolescent, they would go through either the Health Sciences services for that diagnosis; an adult may come through Women's Health Clinic or Health Sciences. Individual practitioners can also make that diagnosis, but there are not many individual practitioners trained or practising in this field. And people can self-diagnose because the—you know, they can recognize the symptoms based on the criteria in the DSM and—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Can the member touch on some of the known risk factors of eating disorders and how this awareness week will address these risk factors?

\* (10:20)

**Ms. Naylor:** So, the risk factors are broad. I mentioned a couple of them. There are certain personality traits that make someone more at risk; certainly other experiences of mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. I did a lot of prevention work for a long time and we—I focused a lot helping parents understand some of the life skills that help protect a child from eating disorders: so, learning how to problem-solve, learning how to ask for help when they need it, learning self-soothing skills that don't require relying on food or exercise as a way to do that.

But we—another underlying factor is the culture that we live in that has this pervasive idea about what is okay, how a person should look—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** I'd just like to thank the member for Wolseley for bringing this very important bill forward and just acknowledge her advocacy, her professional work and even her published pieces on this issue.

I'd like to ask the member: How many people in Manitoba are currently estimated to have eating disorders?

**Ms. Naylor:** I would love to be able to answer that question for my colleague from Notre Dame. Unfortunately, the statistics are not well-kept in Manitoba, and that is something that I'm hoping that the introduction of this bill and further awareness will lead to—better collection of statistics.

Across Canada, we hear the number 1 million, but that's a very old statistic; estimates are as high as 3 million, but there's also an issue across the country around proper statistics. We also know that sometimes people die of an eating disorder, but they're—we hear that they died of pneumonia, a heart attack or suicide because it's not recorded as an eating disorder in the end.

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** I'd also like to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this bill.

I would like the member to identify how treatable an eating disorder is and why early intervention is so important?

**Ms. Naylor:** I apologize; I didn't entirely hear the question. Can I just get you to—I should have the earpiece in.

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Okay. How treatable are eating disorders and why is early intervention so important?

**Ms. Naylor:** Thank you to the member for Seine River.

Eating disorders are treatable. We want people to know and believe that they can get well, but early intervention is critical. And that is why funding, you know, programs that are involved in early intervention, funding services that aren't even identified as eating disorder services, but programs that work with young people on body image and self esteem are—and, you know, cultural—you know, feeling good about their culture and heritage and their identity are also really critical because it helps people to accept who they are.

And so early—prevention and early intervention are the most important areas and then treatment when people have a full—fully—a full eating disorder also—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**MLA Marcelino:** I'd like to ask the member: What does this government need to do to meaningfully address this devastating health issues?

**Ms. Naylor:** I would like to see, with the passage of this bill, a lot more attention paid to eating disorders in this province, and to see the funding increase. We know that Manitoba is—you know, per capita—is underfunded on eating disorders compared to many other provinces and, as I mentioned in my speech, very centralized to Winnipeg.

And so there needs to be more supports and services, you know, supports for nurses in nursing stations in the North, for mental health workers in other parts of the provinces. Women's Health Clinic does a lot of that kind of work but they are ill-equipped; they don't have the funding to meet all of the needs to offer those supports.

**Mr. Teitsma:** As I mentioned, we were chatting on the way in and the member clearly indicated to me that she would really like it if I could ask one particular question, so I'd hate to disappoint her.

And so I'll be asking her: Who did you collaborate with in the formation of this legislation? Was there any collaboration with eating disorder recovery groups and anybody else in the drafting of this legislation? Please let us know.

**Ms. Naylor:** Well, we all know that the consultation question is going to be asked, so I appreciate that. I want folks to know that I have spoken with people with eating disorders, certainly around this time and this bill, but hundreds over the years; with their families. More recently, I've also consulted with the National Eating Disorder Information Centre and the national institute for eating disorders, as well as local treatment providers and practitioners here in Manitoba.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Eating disorders, sadly, have been underfunded for many, many years in Manitoba, which is to the detriment of many people who've needed their services.

Can the eating disorders awareness day be used as a way to acknowledge that they've been underfunding and that needs to be much better funding?

**Ms. Naylor:** I thank the member from River Heights for that question.

I certainly hope that when we have annual recognition of eating disorders awareness week that it becomes part of everybody's knowledge and understanding of one of the really critical mental health services that is required in this province and that we can, you know, also, get better at funding programs that work, you know, across a variety of issues.

Sometimes it's really hard if you have a substance issue that you need help with and you have an eating disorder that—which program do you go to? And how is the knowledge shared? We need to get better at that and EDAW can help us with more education.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for this question period has expired.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** I thank the member, once again, for the opportunity to speak to this bill. You know, every Thursday morning at 6 a.m., I play basketball with a bunch of my friends from church. And I came home at 7 a.m. to find my family already having breakfast together, including my three daughters.

And I have a daughter who's 21 who's studying to be a nurse, a daughter who's 19 who's studying to be a teacher and a daughter who's nine. I mentioned to them that I'd be speaking to this bill this morning and that we were going to discuss it in the Legislature.

And it was really interesting to see the different responses each of my daughters, especially, gave to that. The one who's practically a nurse now smiled and said, that's a really, really important and interesting topic. She's—it's something that she's had the opportunity to study. It's something that she's had the opportunity to work on in a medical context and to be able to provide help and so that was her response.

The response of the 19-year-old who's studying to be a teacher was more subdued. She has a friend who's struggled with an eating disorder and so it's—for her it's personal and it's serious and it's something that she's, you know, had to work with first-hand. And so that was her response.

But the response of the nine-year-old was, what's eating disorders? What are those? Confusion, right—she didn't necessarily know and it's not something that we'd really spend a lot of time speaking with her about, although we've done a lot of the things that I hope parents do to help prepare their children for the barrage that comes with teenage years.

And if you think about the messages that so many teenagers, and especially girls, are exposed to and hear about their bodies and about their beauty and their image, you know, it's important, I think, to equip these young girls, especially, to be prepared for that, and so this was a great opportunity.

So I want to thank the member especially because, before the bill is passed, the results were already being seen around my kitchen table. We were talking about it. We were educating her about anorexia and bulimia. We were having an impact, I think, on her, and it's something that she can go forward and be like her older sisters: someone who can support and someone who can help and someone

who can show care and concern for people who are struggling.

I also want to take a moment to recognize those who are here today in the gallery, and I thank them for coming. And those who have suffered personally, and have felt it personally, it's very important that they're here.

I do want to make sure we get this to a vote, so I thank you very much for your time.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 228, The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

\* (10:30)

### Bill 203—The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act

**Madam Speaker:** We will—shall now move to second reading of Bill 203, The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I move, seconded by the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), that Bill 203, The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

### *Motion presented.*

**Ms. Fontaine:** I—it is my pleasure to get up again in the House. I believe this is—it's either the fourth or the fifth time that I've gotten up in this House on each of the abortion bills that I have introduced in this Chamber, I believe, since 2017 or 2018.

You know, just on Tuesday, as everybody knows in the Chamber, we had an opposition day motion. And the opposition day motion called on the government to stand up for abortion rights and abortion access in Manitoba, and to stand up for Manitobans accessing reproductive health, which also includes abortion, in our health-care facilities.

The opposition day motion asked that this House stand in solidarity with our relatives in the US, who are now under the most extreme attack on their rights and on their bodily autonomy. That opposition day motion asked this House to stand up to support children going to school not to be harassed and



molested by grown adults, anti-choice adults, who choose to protest in front of schools.

And, the opposition day motion asked that this House stand up for those Manitobans that work at delivering reproductive justice and, more specifically, abortion access.

And, I mean, it's pretty straightforward, Madam Speaker. That opposition day motion was pretty straightforward. Unfortunately, every single one of the members opposite got up on Tuesday afternoon and voted against those things, voted against their own constituents.

They got up in this House, which they're elected to do—they're elected to do what's in the best interests of Manitobans—and they all got up in this House proudly, gleefully, and they voted against Manitobans' rights to access abortion services and to access, safely, reproductive health in all of its myriad of manifestations.

And that's a sad commentary. It's a sad commentary that I'm up here again. Again, I—and I can't remember if this is my fourth or fifth time introducing this bill. It's a simple bill. It's a simple bill that other jurisdictions, including Alberta, Ontario, have already instituted.

This bill in particular protects Manitobans when they are going into the Women's Hospital or they're going into the women's clinic—or the women's health centre to not be harassed, molested, intimidated by anti-choice Manitobans who stand out there, who feel that it's their right to tell other Manitobans what they should or should not be doing with their bodies.

And it's a simple bill to protect those Manitobans that work on the front lines of delivering health care—essential health care to folks that want to access abortion services.

And again, it's a simple bill to stand up for children not to have to leave on their lunch break and have to make their way through anti-choice Manitobans with all of their ridiculous propaganda. And I've said this now—this will be, I think, the third time that I'm saying this. I specifically remember—and I've had people reach out to me about their kids going to school and being harassed by these grown adults, anti-choice adults.

But I remember one day a couple of years ago when my son was still in high school, my son calling me and saying, Mom, do you know what happened at school today? And I said, no. And he said there were

anti-choice protesters. And he said they were yelling—these anti-choice protesters parked themselves right across the street, in front of the McDonald's where they know everybody—all the kids go to McDonald's.

They parked themselves there with their propaganda signs and they were yelling at 12-year-olds, kids in grade 7 and 8, about abortion. Like, nobody's thinking about abortion in grade 7 and 8, and certainly nobody's thinking about abortion on their way to get lunch.

And so here's a bill that can prevent all of that, can prevent Manitobans in a variety of different fronts from getting harassed from anti-choice Manitobans. And yet here we are again. I have to keep getting up and saying the same speech over and over again because members opposite don't want to stand up for Manitobans' right to access reproductive health care. It is a sad commentary.

It's a sad commentary that we still have members opposite that can't even utter the word abortion. And, you know, I want to disabuse the notion that we should be cautious, ever so cautious, for ministers, grown men in this Chamber, who are getting \$150,000 a year to run the Province and do what's in the best interest of all Manitobans when—and we're supposed to kind of be—we're supposed to be okay with the fact that some of these men can't even utter the word abortion. And yet, these are the same men who make the policies in respect of abortion. [*interjection*]

And I hearing 'titsing' and whatever members opposite are doing. How can you be a minister, how can you be in charge of a Province if you can't even utter the word abortion? There's nothing wrong with the word abortion. There's nothing wrong with the act of abortion. There's nothing wrong with Manitobans seeking out abortions. And honestly, there's nothing wrong if people don't believe in abortion. That's fine. When you get pregnant, don't have an abortion. It's as simple as that.

But for people to sit in here and think that we have to kind of tiptoe around the issue of abortion, particularly right now when US citizens are under, like, the most archaic, dinosaur attacks on their bodies. And I said this in my opposition day motion speech: we have states right now in the US who are contemplating—openly contemplating, as they're getting interviewed on CNN, they're openly contemplating banning contraceptives—condoms, the pill—they're openly considering banning citizens who want to leave the state to access abortion, restricting their movement to go access an abortion in another state.

That is some craziness that I don't think anybody on this side of the House would have ever thought we would have seen, and yet it's occurring. And yet we're expected to kind of tiptoe around the issue of abortion, and we can't be annoyed with the fact that there's men on that side of the House that can't even utter the word abortion, and yet it's these same men that make the decisions that impact on Manitobans' lives.

\* (10:40)

That is ridiculous. And I will say this in this Chamber, as I say every opportunity I have: who Manitobans elect matters. Stop electing men that cannot say the word abortion or cannot equitably care about all of their constituents and all of the citizens, even if they don't agree with them. Stop electing these men who have no—or these anybody, for that matter—that cannot stand up in a time where people must stand up and must show that courage and that determination and that vigilance to protect abortion rights.

And so, for the fourth or fifth time, Madam Speaker, I am asking this House to consider supporting the abortion protest buffer zone. Let it pass; let people be protected when they're accessing abortion services.

Miigwech.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** I thank the member for bringing The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act for discussion this morning.

My concern, or my question, to the member for St. Johns, is the narrowness of the scope, and why we're not looking at expanding the protected services that—of women, children and, indeed, all individuals 'accessing' health-care services should be protected from.

An example, during the height of COVID, we had individuals misinformed who were attending our health-care facilities loudly protesting and blocking people who were getting COVID treatment and such.

Would we look—would the member look at an amendment to expand the buffer zones to indeed

protect all individuals accessing medical services in Manitoba?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Well, I appreciate the question, and I'll point out this—and the member knows full well that I introduced a bill in this House to prevent any protest in front of health-care facilities, specifically in respect of COVID, and what happened? Nobody on that side wanted to support it.

And I know that he took my bill that I introduced and he put his name on it and introduced it. So I would encourage him that if that's what he wants to do, talk to every single one of these members here and get them to pass it.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I want to say thank you to my wonderful colleague for standing up strongly for abortion rights, which is a human right.

As we all know that this PC government is known for their cuts, especially to health care, I would like to ask how these cuts hurt women's access to health care in Manitoba?

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech to my colleague.

You know, we have a woman—the Women's Health Clinic that does phenomenal work, like, absolutely phenomenal work. Everybody that works there are phenomenal human beings that step up day in and day out and do just great work. And they have to routinely ask for donations so that they can give out free contraceptives or provide abortion.

They shouldn't be having to do that. It is essential health care. This government should be supporting those services in the most comprehensive and robust way possible.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Just to—we support the initiative from the MLA for St. Johns. It is important to the reproductive and mental well-being of women in Manitoba.

I do have, you know, a question, which is important for people to understand, why this bill is still needed when there is federal legislation which protects people near health-care facilities?

**Ms. Fontaine:** This bill—and I appreciate the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), miigwech—and he's absolutely right that this is also a part of mental health, right, for folks that are going in to access these services.

I cannot tell you how many Manitobans have reached out to me to talk about how traumatized they were to go through, again, this—these anti-choice

Manitobans who—maybe they were going there, they were miscarriaging or they had a stillbirth and they had to go through these, so I actually really appreciate him bringing up the mental health capacity.

Again, why this bill is important is because it is specifically in respect of those anti-choice Manitobans who intimidate and bully Manitobans in accessing essential health care.

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** I do also want to thank the member for bringing this forward.

And the member from River Heights kind of touched on a little bit of what I was going to talk about, or ask. Because I do know in the most recent federal election, all party leaders across the scope stated that the issue of abortion in Canada was settled.

And I'm just wondering if the member would agree that the additional hyperpoliticization of the issue—does it trigger any thoughts or issues that women who have gone through the services—or others that have gone through the services may apply because of it?

**Ms. Fontaine:** I'm not sure what his question was about, the last part of it, but what I will say is this. This isn't hyperpolitical. This is a real issue in the lives of citizens who want to access abortion.

And I'll remind the member opposite that 75 per cent of current elected Conservative MPs are anti-choice and are proudly anti-choice and have said routinely that they would put in measures to restrict abortion. And, actually, since 2007, 47 private members' bills or motions have been brought forward federally. That's dangerous.

**Mr. Brar:** I would like to ask to my colleague: Have there been incidents in the past that suggest this bill could help protect women and service providers from violent attacks?

**Ms. Fontaine:** You know, if there's a bill in place—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** If there's legislation in place that protects facilities that are offering abortion services, you're protecting the folks that are on the front line. A really good example, Madam Speaker, is, you know, in the—just a little while ago, when we had the, like, freedom truckers—white nationalists—they actually went to target the Women's Health Clinic.

And so here they are, they're talking about my body, my choice—co-opting feminists, intersectional

feminists and activists from years and years and years—co-opting our language to take that language and go and protest in front of the women's health centre, while they're supposedly fighting for their own freedoms. And this bill would prevent that, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** If this bill is inspired by the American court case, why is the member debating American issues when you could have called bill 39, which deals with immediate issues here in Manitoba?

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, let me just correct the member. This bill is not inspired by what's going on in the States. It's inspired by, every November, we have anti-choice Manitobans who, for 40 days and 40 nights, go in front of hospitals, go in front of the Women's Health Clinic, go in front of schools and harass and intimidate and bully Manitobans because they don't believe in abortion. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** That's what this bill is about. It's preventing that. And if the member doesn't think that what's going on in the States doesn't impact us here, I would suggest she does some more research.

**Mr. Brar:** Why does the member think the government would oppose such sensible legislation?

**Ms. Fontaine:** That's a good question. I don't know why people who have been elected—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —to represent all Manitobans, even those Manitobans who don't agree with them—I don't know why these members would year after year after year fight against a bill that would protect Manitobans. The only thing that I can say is that they want to capitulate to their base and that many of them are probably anti-choice themselves.

\* (10:50)

**Mr. Martin:** Madam Speaker, to the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), in her speech, she made reference to a particular incident involving her son and a protest at McDonald's in which anti—pro-life or anti-choice, in her words, demonstrations were occurring.

How would this bill, Bill 203, the 'abrotion' protest buffer zone, protect the students at McDonald's? Because my understanding, if I read the bill right, is at health-care facilities and schools.

So, I'm just wondering, how do we—how does her bill extend and protect all students?

**Ms. Fontaine:** In the bill, we've provided a buffer zone, so in this case, that McDonald's, it would have been—it's too—it's still—it would have been within that buffer zone. They wouldn't have been allowed to set up where they set up, which was directly across from the school. And so this bill protects children who are attending school, living their best lives, from not being harassed and bullied and molested by anti-choice Manitobans.

**Mr. Brar:** Talking about buffer zones, do buffer zones infringe on the right of Manitobans to protest?

**Ms. Fontaine:** Absolutely not, and as I've said, I don't know how many times I've said it, anti-choice Manitobans can protest all they want—they shouldn't be protesting; like, why you're protesting what I do with my body and when it's none of your business, is beyond me—but I always encourage anti-choice Manitobans, you're more than welcome to come to the Leg.

We love protest here at the Leg. Come on down, any time you want. That's why we're here. You're not harming anybody. You're not bothering anybody. Come here, protest all you want. Leave schools and health-care facilities and those on the front lines alone.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for this question period has expired.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** It's my pleasure to rise and put a few brief comments on Bill 203, The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act.

Before I begin, though, Madam Speaker, I think it's important to put on the historical record all of this Legislature's and all MLAs' 'condimination' of what occurred yesterday in Peterborough with Jagmeet Singh, the leader of the national NDP party.

If members aren't aware, Mr. Singh was subjected to a horrendous amount of verbal violence and borderline physical violence, all caught on tape. Mr. Singh showed admirable courage in dealing with this, but I think as collective legislators and as elected officials we all need to stand in solidarity to ensure that that does not occur in our society. So, to that, Madam Speaker, I just wish my best wishes to Mr. Singh and let him know that this Legislature

supports him as an elected official and his rights to do that unmolested, not harassed or be intimidated.

Madam Speaker, I recently had the great fortune of visiting Poland and Ukraine. So I understand the privilege that we have in this Legislature, especially in light of what's going on overseas. We've seen the news, and I saw on the ground what is happening over there. We see women being used, as they often are used in times of war. We've read horrific stories of women, children being raped by Russian soldiers and in many instances, obviously, resulting in—it's, unfortunately—it's sad to say, but it is a long, historical part of war, where women are subjected to sexual violence.

And so, absolutely, I mean, whether you're Ukrainian women, whether you're Polish women, whether you're a Canadian woman, absolutely, your rights and your reproductive rights need to be respected, need to be enshrined and need to be, in all ways, understood as your fundamental rights.

I think it's very appropriate that the member for St. Johns is actually bringing this bill here in this Legislature this morning, Bill 203. It is, as many members know, it is moose hide day, Madam Speaker. I proudly wear the moose hide. The moose hide was created approximately about a dozen years ago, and it is about recognizing violence towards Indigenous women and Indigenous children. And more importantly, it's about standing up for Indigenous women and children, and speaking out against violence towards them.

What the member for St. Johns, in her comments and in her speech, is often referring to is that verbal violence that women can experience and do experience at times when they're accessing their fundamental reproductive rights and, as the member says—and I'm not afraid say it—their right to access an abortion here in Manitoba and in Canada, Madam Speaker. So I think it's most 'impropriate' that we have this discussion.

My concern, and some of the concerns with the bill, Madam Speaker, is the narrowness of the scope. And when we look at—and, fundamentally, that absolutely we need to protect all individuals, whether a woman is attending a health-care facility to receive an abortion; whether a woman is attending a health-care facility to get cancer treatment; whether a child is attending, you know, to have their arm set, being broken; or a gentleman is there, you know, for—to have a stint put in.

All these individuals—any individual here in the province of Manitoba accessing any medical service should be fundamentally protected to access that service without being harassed, without being molested and without being intimidated by any individual, whether state-sanctioned or not.

Now, the dilemma always is, Madam Speaker, when we have these discussions and—is the issue of freedom of speech versus, you know, the protection of a woman's fundamental right to access abortion. I do appreciate that, obviously, there has to be—and there is limitations on freedom of speech. You simply can't go into a movie theatre and yell, fire. It's just not, obviously, allowed. And to that end, ensuring, you know, the buffer zone, whether it's 50 metres or 150 metres, in order to provide that safety and that security.

As noted by my colleague, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), there is—not only is there—there is a physical aspect to the abortion discussion, but, obviously, there is a mental health aspect to the abortion issue, Madam Speaker. And any individual, again, accessing an abortion here in Manitoba does not need to be put under that extra pressure.

They have made a decision. It is their right to make that decision, Madam Speaker, and to—and these decisions do not come easily. And they're not always done exclusively by the woman. There are many instances where the woman will have a partner and those choices are made together in the decision that they feel is in their best interest as a couple. But again, fundamentally and at the end of the day, it is a woman's choice as to whether or not they want to access abortion services here in Manitoba or, indeed, anywhere here in Canada.

So we need to ensure, though, Madam Speaker, that any service that a woman, you know, if—whether it's—whether it is abortion or pre- or post-op pregnancy, that they are fundamentally protected from accessing those services, that they're fundamentally allowed to access any medical service here in the country or in the province without harassment, without intimidation and without any con of being molested as they attend these.

Because we can see—I mean, we are already dealing with, in many instances, vulnerable people, Madam Speaker, who have already made, in many instances, a difficult choice. The necessity of some individuals to attempt to shame an individual who's made this choice is incomprehensible to myself as a legislature and as an individual.

But we need to take a look, Madam Speaker, at how do we widen the scope of this protection? How do we balance that right to protest, that right of individuals who we don't disagree—or who we may not always agree with? And I know the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) made that reference, that we need to support and we need to represent all our constituents. And there are going to be constituents on both sides of the issue. Now, how do we balance those out?

Now, absolutely, we need to—again, we need to make sure that there is that freedom of any individual accessing any medical service here in Manitoba, that they—

\* (11:00)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have two minutes remaining.

## RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 14—Calling on the Provincial Government to Develop Better Policies to Protect Youth in Sports**

**Madam Speaker:** The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Calling on the Provincial Government to Develop Better Policies to Protect Youth in Sports, being brought forward by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses).

## House Business

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, and prior to that, we will deal with some House business.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Invest in Public Health-Care Nurses.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that pursuant to rule 33(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Wolseley. The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Invest in Public Health-Care Nurses.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** I will now, then, move to the private member's resolution and call on the—recognize the honourable member for St. Vital.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), that,

*WHEREAS a Winnipeg high school coach/teacher was recently charged with sexually assaulting and exploiting five former students between 2004 and 2011 at two separate high schools; and*

*WHEREAS this revelation revealed that current policies regarding student and coach interactions fails to adequately protect youth in sports; and*

*WHEREAS policies such as coaches and teachers being allowed to have youth at their homes puts youth at risk; and*

*WHEREAS the majority of these assaults happened at the coach's home behind closed doors; and*

*WHEREAS the coach was able to continue working as a high school teacher until these revelations were announced over ten years later; and*

*WHEREAS sexual abuse has an adverse impact on youth that can last for a lifetime; and*

*WHEREAS sexual abuse survivors face stigma in coming forward and are often blamed for being victims; and*

*WHEREAS children aren't adequately notified of supports available to them in the case of sexual assault; and*

*WHEREAS support services such as a dedicated text/phone line for athletes to report instances of sexual assault aren't currently in place; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has the legislative ability to develop better policies to protect youth.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to develop better policies to protect youth in sports from potential abuse, such as preventing coaches, teachers from having players and students at their homes, and by implementing services such as a dedicated text and phone line for athletes to report instances of sexual assault.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Vital, seconded by the honourable member for St. James,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to develop better policies to protect youth in sports from potential abuse, such as preventing coaches/teachers from having players, students at their homes, and by implementing services such as a dedicated text/phone line for athletes to report instances of sexual assault.

**Mr. Moses:** First of all, Madam Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking the community activists and organizers who have been leading the charge over the last few weeks, in light of the revelations by a coach—actions by a coach at Churchill and Vincent Massey high schools in Winnipeg.

These community activists have been leading the charge to push this movement forward, to find ways to protect our student athletes, and so I thank them and welcome them here to the Chamber today. The action that they're looking for, it stems from seeing some of the wrongdoings that we've all seen on the—in the papers over the last few weeks, of harassment, abuse by coaches.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

The—what we've seen in the paper also extends more broadly to other areas, and other sports. We've seen stories of abuse in sports at Brandon University. We know there were instances in the ballet here in Winnipeg. And we know in all other areas, sadly, there are instances where there are abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse and bullying, as well.

And these forms of harassment are unacceptable in our society. And even though there might be some processes in place, it's on us to look at those, review those, and see if they're enough, or to see if there are better ways that we can protect, and in this case, protect our youth, our young people, our students, our athletes in sport. So I'm glad for the effort that they have put in to bring us here today, and to motivate us as elected officials to take the steps that we can to take this issue seriously, and put real action forward to protect our students.

And I want to begin by saying that this issue, for me, as well as being something that I'm glad to have been brought by community, is a personal issue. I was involved in sports for many, many years. All through my junior high, high school days, I was an athlete, played as many possible sports as I could touch. And after high school, I was glad to play sports through university with the Winnipeg Rifles and the Manitoba Bisons football team.

And today, I'm actually wearing a ring that I haven't worn in many years. It's my provincial high school championship ring that I proudly wear in solidarity with athletes around our province who are doing their best, not just in school, not just in their community and home life, but also in sport—can rate themselves a well-rounded person and being in our province.

And I also coached in sport for many years. I coached basketball for nearly a decade. And through all those experiences, I can honestly say the coaches I had, the mentors and leaders I had in sport, I trusted them. I believed in them. I wanted to work as hard as I could for those coaches and put my best effort on the field for them and for my teammates and as well as for myself.

But through that time, and through that trust that I had in my coaches, it became obvious and clear, looking backwards, retrospectively, that if something had happened, I would've been completely blindsided because I would not have expected it from any of my coaches.

I would have not expected to have an abuse brought on me. I would not have seen it coming. I wouldn't have been aware of the issues of grooming. I wouldn't have been aware or been able to prepare myself for that reality. And I'm fortunate to have not had that experience.

But it makes it even more clear and more of a reality and more importance as to why student athletes need protection. Because they are vulnerable. Because they trust their coaches and believe in them. And because that victim—'beyond' a victim of this is not just a victim of the abuse itself, it's a victim of that trust that you place in these people of authority, like the coaches and the leaders in our community.

And so, we look, today, to see what is in place, to see whether there are enough protections for these people, for our student athletes. And we see that there is a gap, there are gaps in our system. There are processes in place, but we can do more. We can simply do more.

And so I want to talk about some of the things that we can do. We can do more to prevent these things from happening. We can call on coaches in our industry, in our province, to support some of the responsible coaching movement pillars. Some of those pillars in the responsible coaching movement include the rule of two, include having coaches not alone, one-on-one, with a student athlete. That would

go a long way to preventing these sorts of things happen.

We call on today, also, obviously, it inappropriate for having coaches invite students and athletes into their homes for these sorts of meetings. We know that that's obviously not the only place where it's inappropriate for coaches to have, you know, interactions with their students, but that is a significant one, and that should be avoided.

We know that, through that rule of two, also comes with proper background screening, something that we do have in Manitoba, but we can look at whether that can be rebuffed and improved. And we also know that ethics training is 'insential' for coaches. And that makes up some of that—those three pillars of responsible coaching, and that is important for us to look at.

We also need to look at education—not just through these education of coaching, but education for parents and for student athletes as to what grooming looks like, and when it's not okay for your son or daughter, your child, your student athlete to go to an event with a coach, go out for Slurpees with a coach, and when it's okay to say, no, you shouldn't do that, and that's not appropriate behaviour.

And as we educate students and parents, we also need to provide for them an opportunity to speak out. And the next thing we need to do is have a reporting mechanism for our student athletes, other teachers, parents, community members to report where they see these sorts of things occurring. When they get that sneaking suspicion that something's wrong, they need to have an avenue, an easy avenue, an accessible avenue, for them to report these behaviours and be listened.

Because we know that there are—there is a reporting line here in Manitoba. We want to make sure that it is enhanced, that they have the authority and the responsibility to listen to individuals who are reporting these instances of abuse, listen to them and take action, and have the authority and the responsibility to follow up with them, and to take the responsible step to prevent it from happening again.

And further on that, Madam Speaker—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to also say that it's important for us to know that when these 'sordant' things do happen, unfortunately, in our community, we want there to be supports for the victims so that they can be made whole after they've gone through this tragic event; that they can become, again—once

again, members of our community and feel like they've had the support they needed to move forward after that—these tragic incidences.

\* (11:10)

And so, I want to conclude my remarks here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by saying that this issue is a starting point for us, starting and moving forward the conversation for protecting our student athletes. I hope that we can pass this resolution today in a bipartisan—a non-partisan way so that we can take an honest look at how we best protect our student athletes.

And, finally, I want to just say, for any student athlete who's watching this at home and needs help dealing with something today, that there is a current support line, a Safe Sport Line, here in Manitoba. So, if you're watching this and you want to have—want to reach out and to talk to somebody about this, please call 1-833-656-7233. That is the Safe Sport Line, here in Manitoba, so if you would like or need to talk to somebody about an issue that you're dealing with now, you can call that number.

Thank you very much. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I've been advised of a rule of this House that gallery guests are requested to spectate and not participate by clapping. Certainly, no offence taken, but it is a rule and it is my job to uphold those rules.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. And questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** I want to thank the member opposite for St. Vital for bringing forth such an important resolution here today. As a former athlete myself, I do understand the importance of this and the need for protecting our youth.

My question to the member opposite is, in his resolution here, he states that, whereas support services such as a dedicated text, phone line for athletes to report incidences of sexual assault aren't currently in place. And yet, the member opposite mentioned in his opening statement that there is a dedicated phone line that this Province has in place.

So I'm a little confused as to what the member's asking in the actual resolution, when he acknowledges there is a dedicated phone line for that?

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I'm glad for the question, and I recognize the member's years of dedication to sports, and I think that's important to acknowledge the importance of safe participation in sport.

What we can do—we have a phone line in this province, but what we should be doing is enhancing that phone line, making sure that it has the tools, that it's funded, and it has not only the ability to go back to victims and their parents and their families, to make sure that they get the support they need and get the resolution they need, but also investigate and follow up on these cases, so that they don't happen again and that the proper steps are taken. That phone line needs to be enhanced and supported with the proper funding.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I'd like to thank my colleague for bringing forth this important resolution.

And I'd like to ask, why would youth be hesitant to come forward and report that they've been sexually assaulted?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for the question.

I want to just recognize the member for St. James for all his hard work with moving this resolution forward, reaching out and listening to the community to bring this here today because he recognizes the importance—as well as the rest of our caucus—the importance of keeping kids and athletes safe.

Victims might not come forward because of hesitation of the stigma around abuse, around that fear of what might happen to that coach, whether they might even be listened. There are so many barriers that people might have—hesitations and fears about bringing these things forward—that we need to make it easier and more anonymous and make it—more tools for them to bring these things forward in a safe manner where action will actually be taken.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Yes, and I thank the member from St. Vital for bringing this really important resolution forward.

I know, as an educator for 35 years, you know, a coach for 32 years and an athlete—been involved in athletics all my life—I think this is so important to protect our youth.



So, from the member's perspective, what are some supports that could better assist survivors of sexual abuse as they're on their journey of healing?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, you know, survivors in—who've survived assaults need a lot of support and they need the help. They need the counselling. They need the guidance. But they also need to know, first of all, that they're going to be listened when they bring these things forward. They know that action's going to be taken on their case.

And they also want to know that, you know, there's going to be preventative measures taking place—and these are some of the steps that we're looking forward—with—starting with the resolution and moving beyond this. We want to make sure that all students and athletes are safe as possible and that starts today.

And I hope the member, with his long history in sport, can support us in this resolution today.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'd like to thank my colleague from St. Vital for bringing forward this resolution.

I was hoping that he could speak a little bit more to the dedicated text line. I know, thinking specifically about the generation currently in high school—teens and youth and how tech-savvy they all are, as well as just the anonymity potentially behind this dedicated text line—why this is such a critical piece of this legislation?

**Mr. Moses:** Thank the member for the question. It's really important.

The—one of the key aspects of the phone line or a text line is that it's easily accessible, and we know that young athletes these days often communicate via text and that's why a text line is important. That's why it increases the accessibility and the ability for people to reach out in a manner that they feel comfortable with and that they can do safely and, hopefully, make them and encourage them to report these things whenever they are victims of it.

**Mr. Khan:** Again, as a former athlete, I'm really proud and excited that this bill's coming forward—this resolution's coming forward. And I understand it's—the massive importance of this as athlete who played sports throughout high school, university and then on to the professional level. This is so important to protect our kids and this bill is so important, as a father of a young nine-year-old, myself, who's very actively involved in sports.

And it's very important that we all work together to protect our youth. As the member from St. Vital mentioned that this is a non-partisan bill, or he wants to move this forward and hopes—in the hope of this being passed as a non-partisan bill, but I'm curious as to who the member consulted with when drafting this resolution?

**Mr. Moses:** It's a real pleasure to have a question again from a former athlete, and I'm hopeful and I'm pleased with his interest in looking at ways to protect our student athletes, and, hopefully, that starts with his support in this resolution today.

We consulted with a lot of community groups, namely, coaches—Coach Geordie Wilson from the Winnipeg Rifles. We consulted with Sport Manitoba. We consulted with parents who've been involved with some of the schools that were mentioned. We consulted with people in charge of Winnipeg high school football and a variety of other people who've again told us that there are things in place.

But so much more can be done. There are gaps here in our system that we can fill—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Sala:** I'd like to ask the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), what more can we do to encourage young people to speak out when they see or experience something that isn't right?

**Mr. Moses:** Thank the member very much for the question.

We can do—first thing we can do is create safe spaces for them to actually speak out, making sure that they feel like they're comfortable and they'll be supported and listened to if these things happen and if they want to speak out.

And it doesn't always have to be the victim themselves. If a teammate, a friend, a teacher, a neighbour, someone sees something that is not happening properly, they can call that help line and see if they can activate—work on getting the supports they needed where it is. And that's why we want that support line to be enhanced, make it more accessible and give it the resources it needs to be a successful tool.

\* (11:20)

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Can the member speak to how he feels social movements such as the MeToo movement empowers survivors to speak up and speak out on

sexual abuse and violence within the school environment and in sport?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, I think that there are many movements around, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that encourage people to speak out against wrongs, and I think the MeToo movement had its place, and I think also that in sport, the movement brought forward by the community members who are here today and many others are pushing us forward in our own movement in Manitoba.

The movement is to protect kids in sports, and let's do that, in part, and as a starting point, by passing the resolution today.

**Mr. Sala:** I'd like to ask the member about the importance of counselling services for athletes who have been impacted, and if he could expand on the need for that in Manitoba?

**Mr. Moses:** Thanks so much for the question.

You know, when these do happen, victims need support. They need the counselling to be made whole again, to become a complete person and go back into our society and 'fufeel'—fulfilled in their lives. And we know, sadly, that many of the victims of abuse continue to build on cycles of either violence or harassment in their lives, or it comes out in other ways, through addiction or, you know, or mental health issues. And by getting that counselling right at that incident occurs, it can help to end that cycle of addiction or mental health issues that might come in later on at life.

And so I think it's very critical for us to take steps to get counselling services—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Khan:** Grooming—I had never heard of grooming youth in this manner growing up as a student athlete as a kid, playing with friends in high school and university I'd never even heard the term of grooming. And now we know that this is a major factor or indicator that needs to be addressed to protect our youth.

My question for the member is, what does he see in place for identifying and helping youth identify grooming techniques, and teachers and parents and bystanders for grooming—for the grooming that is happening to these youth?

**Mr. Moses:** Thank you very much, this is an important question.

I mean, I think the fact that the member didn't know what grooming was speaks to the fact that there isn't enough education about it, right? As an athlete, I didn't know what that was, and I think some athletes today don't know what that was, and do what that looks like and how that feels.

And so that's why it's important for us to educate our student athletes onto what grooming looks like, educate parents on what that looks like when it's happening between their coach and their student—and their child or their student athlete. And when we educate people on what that looks like and then—and we provide them with opportunities to report this and call it out, we'll hopefully prevent these sorts of things from happening, and getting to the point where we've seen in the newspaper the last few weeks.

This is about preventing, allowing people opportunity to report where they see it, and then providing support for victims. These are things we are presenting in the resolution today, and I hope—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

The time for questions has ended.

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The floor is open for debate.

**Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** I want to thank the MLA for St. Vital for bringing forward this very important issue.

I know it's—all members of the House, in fact, agree that everyone deserves to enjoy sporting events as a youth, a young adult and any point in their life, and it's particularly egregious when somebody, particularly someone like a coach or a teacher, in a position of power, takes advantage of someone in that position. It is particularly terrible.

I know that everyone in this House, and I'd say everyone across the province, who were particularly angry and upset when they heard the news not too long ago about this particular case, and I know I share the thoughts and prayers with the families and certainly the survivors of this horrific act, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do commend the police for doing their job and investigating this and looking forward to the outcome of this investigation.

This issue affects, I believe, all Manitobans. I think, you know, particularly in this House here, we'll say that a lot of us have participated in sport, myself included, as a young child, but into my young

adulthood, and I say that's probably the best years of our lives, and to have somebody come in and actually take advantage or abuse their situation, abuse their power and sexually abuse a student athlete is absolutely terrible, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's absolutely inexcusable. And I know that I stand with everybody in the House when I say that we condemn that wholeheartedly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that safe sport has always been a priority for our government, and I know Sport Manitoba in particular. While harassment, discrimination, abuse have been documented in the sport sector for some time, a renewed focus on safe sport principles gained significant momentum in the lead-up to, and during, the 2019 Red Deer federal-provincial-territorial sport, physical, activity and recreation ministers' conference.

Addressing harassment, discrimination and abuse was a key agenda item in the 2019 conference, paving the way for all governments across the country to approve and endorse the Red Deer Declaration. I thank the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Cox) for her critical role to enforce Manitoba's commitment in this declaration.

The Red Deer Declaration calls upon all governments to work collaboratively on making Canada's sport system safer, who all agree that this is harassment, discrimination and abuse in sport would become a standing item in all future conferences, and officials were directed to establish a working group to advance safe sport policies and actions.

Sport Manitoba and government agencies responsible for amateur sport in our province have already acted upon the government's commitment to support the objectives of the Red Deer Declaration by hosting a safe sport summit one month after Red Deer conference by initiating a review of all provincial sport organizations' codes of conduct.

As a result, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government made it compulsory for all provincial sport organizations to adopt our government code of conduct, to ensure all participants, athletes, parents and coaches are treated respectfully, fairly and equitably in an inclusive, harassment-free environment. Funding is tied to the signing of this agreement.

Sport Manitoba continues to act on our government's commitment. Last year, Sport Manitoba launched a safe sport campaign to build awareness and provide messaging to educate athletes, coaches, parents, volunteers and the general public. This

campaign also reinforced messaging to remind and inform people about the safe sport resources that are currently in place.

Our government will continue to work with Sport Manitoba and the provincial sport organizations to enhance the qualifications for all coaches and officials that are in place, which include the rule of two, working to ensure that more than one adult is present with an athlete, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation; background screening, including criminal record checks; and respectful and ethics training through the coach development courses which offer respect in sport and making ethical decisions.

Manitoba has been at the forefront of this issue and continues to work with Sport Manitoba, our government agency and sport partners to keep the dialogue ongoing when it comes to safe sport, best practices and processes. Our government is committed to providing safe sport environments for Manitobans and are always looking for opportunities to strengthen or enhance safety measures.

Just yesterday, I was happy to attend Sport Manitoba, along with our provincial sport organizations, to launch the Pathway to Safer Sport, a comprehensive framework of tools, templates and resources that empower provincial sport organizations and all who participate in sport in Manitoba to create a safer report system.

Sport Manitoba was the first sport organization in the country to mandate respect in sport training for all Manitoban coaches, taking the responsible coaching movement pledge and have committed the true sport principles. On this pathway, Sport Manitoba continues to build on this framework by introducing three key services for preventing, addressing and acting on misconduct or maltreatment in sport: the Safe Sport Line, good governance policies and a new partnership with Sport Law.

\* (11:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sport Manitoba was the first provincial sport leader to implement the services of a toll-free support line. The Safe Sport Line is for anyone experiencing or witnessing abuse, harassment, bullying or hazing in sport to share their concerns, get advice and be referred to the appropriate resource for actual steps for the safer sport experience.

The Safe Sport Line is Manitoba's 24-hour confidential support and referral service for every person involved in sports in this province. Phone number is

1-833-656-SAFE or 7233. We all have a responsibility to report any signs of child abuse, and I encourage you all to add the Safe Sport Line to your contacts in your phone. Again, the number is 1-833-656-7233.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through Sport Manitoba, provincial sport organizations have access to the learning centre and online platform which standardize policy templates that support good governance and help them make ethical decisions. These documents were developed by Sport Law and have already been reviewed and tested by other national and provincial sport organizations.

Good governance ties directly into effective risk management. With these templates, provincial sport organizations can become more confident and competent in mitigating and controlling their greatest risks. The whistle-blower, safe sport and respect in sport policies are some of the policies that all provincial sport organizations will be required to adopt and implement as part of their annual funding. We encourage you to ask your coaches, recreational directors and community sport convenors about safe sport policies that they already have in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to thank Janet McMahon and the staff at Sport Manitoba for their ongoing dedication and commitment to ensuring athletes, parents and all participants in sports have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the many healthy benefits of experiencing a safe and active, welcoming sport environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I—as I said earlier, many of us in this House have had the opportunity to participate and compete in sports in our—either in our childhood, our young adulthood or even our teenage years, and I know that—it's like I said before, it's some of the best times of our life, and to have somebody abuse that, abuse their privileges and abuse their positions to sexually abuse an athlete, a student, a student athlete or anyone else in their care, is particularly egregious. And I know that we can all condemn that very action here.

And I want to say, I mentioned just earlier about the Sport Manitoba's initiative that was talked about yesterday at their news conference, they do—and they are going to be introducing a text line as well. I know that many youth now are particularly text-savvy and would prefer to use a texting line rather than a phone line, and so that's why they're introducing that.

And I know that our government's going to continue to work with Sport Manitoba and all the provincial sport organizations to ensure that we have and continue to evolve with the evolving threats that are out there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that together, with our government, and certainly all of Manitobans, the provincial sport organizations and Sport Manitoba, parents, coaches, volunteers and that, working together, we can help protect our student athletes, protect our students and protect those who are most vulnerable in these situations.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I rise today as the member who represents Churchill High School in the Legislature. I also rise as part of a team that has my colleague from Fort Garry, former football player and coach who represents Vincent Massey in the Legislature. And I rise as the parent of two student athletes in high school sport who play hockey, basketball and football.

I want to begin by acknowledging the survivors. I want to acknowledge the courage and say that the trauma that you have experienced should never have taken place. And in acknowledging your courage, we must honour your actions to date by following through to make changes to ensure that such things don't happen again. We have to honour your courage with action.

I want to acknowledge the many folks who are here today, beginning with Geordie Wilson, who has taken a spearhead role here; Fran Taylor, an educator who helped to raise this in terms of attention; the many athletes, former athletes, current coaches and parents who join us here today, I want to thank you for bringing this forward to my colleague from St. Vital and my colleague from St. James so that they could bring it forward here to the Legislature.

This is the people's building. Your response to a very difficult situation by pushing for positive change to me exemplifies not only team spirit and fair play, some of the great things we try to teach young people about through sport, but also some of those better characteristics of us as Manitobans. So, thank you.

We know that this issue is brought forward because of the suffering and what allegations have come forward from Churchill High School, from Vincent Massey Collegiate. And these things should never have taken place. We know that. And as legislators, as elected officials, we are compelled by the

suffering of student athletes and former athletes to do better for the future.

This is an issue that has reared its ugly head time and time again in the sports world more generally. I think we're all very upset by the whole Graham James fiasco. I can remember being on the steps of the courthouse as a CBC reporter at the time, speaking to Sheldon Kennedy and hearing his response during that process.

I know that there's also been allegations brought forward, historic ones, at the Assiniboine Park Hockey Association—hits close to home. APHA is an area that my children have played in in the past. We also know that the Royal Winnipeg Ballet—we may associate it more with the performing arts, but let's be clear that those folks are athletes themselves; remarkable athletes, at that. And, of course, now it's high school football that compels us to act.

There are standards in place. There are resources at people's disposal. But I think we all agree, including the minister, who I want to acknowledge his remarks, that these are not enough. The screening in place did not prevent this from happening. There were clearly barriers in terms of the implementation of some of the supports after the fact. And of course, you know, the rules and practices being implemented here, I do think need to be reviewed.

And I do welcome the bipartisan spirit from my colleague from Fort Whyte and, of course, the minister responsible for Sport, here. And I would say that, of course, further policy development is welcome and, I think we all agree, is needed. But we, as opposition, can't bring forward spending initiatives. And so I would put it before you, I would put it on your table, that over and above policy changes that are necessary, there is also a requirement for the resources to be in place so that these rules, practices and supports can be communicated to the parents who need them, to the coaches who need them and to the student athletes who need them.

And so, inasmuch as there are further announcements being made, and I'm sure further announcements to come, let's ensure that there's also the financial and human resources in place so that those can actually be mobilized in the community by those folks who may stand to benefit. And then, my colleague's point about prevention may further be realized.

And when I think about these standards that he's talking about, they make a lot of sense. When I was

coming up through the—you know, Hockey Canada's coaching stream, you know, those ideas—rule of two, you know, these things are in place, have been talked about for many years.

But I think we now need to go further. You know, I think Mr. Wilson has made a clear point about, there's no reason for a coach to have a student athlete at their home. And I think that that is a very common-sense response that we need to follow up on on the policy side.

And so I think that these are clearly calls coming from the community. It sounds as though we're all standing united behind this issue, and so let's commit to working together to do something that I think we all recognize is important for Manitoba. Because when we get down to it, in considering this issue, we ought to ask ourselves, what does sport mean? What does sport mean to us as individuals and what does sport mean to us as a community?

\* (11:40)

And to me, I can't give you the Webster's definition of what sports means, but I can tell you that sports are where some of the biggest moments of our lives take place as athletes, as parents, as grandparents. Rushing onto the field to celebrate the big win, consoling your child after the big loss—these are the moments that we carry forward with us through our lives.

Whether that takes place on the gridiron, at the hockey rink, on the baseball diamond, on the wrestling mat, on the basketball court, or in any other sporting venue, there is a sacred trust there. It's a sacred trust that the athlete and the parent invests in the organization, the association and the coach.

And the coaches themselves, and the managers themselves, those volunteers step up and they commit and they invest of themselves, because of the beliefs of something greater, the belief of what sport represents to all of us and to our communities.

And so with that in mind, let's work together to ensure that everything that is being invested by all parties into this sacred trust, into this venue where some of the most powerful moments of our lives take place, is safe, and that we honour that.

So let's protect sport. Let's protect the bond of development between a mentor and an athlete, a coach and the aspiring performer. And let's protect those things by protecting our kids.

Miigwech. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** My list indicates the honourable Minister of Education is next, so we'll go with that.

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Happy Manitoba Day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing forward the resolution, to give us an opportunity to have a conversation, to bring certain things to light, not necessarily a very bright spotlight, of course; it's to shine a light, a broad-cast a broad light on the topic.

And I'd like to extend my sincere thanks for everyone participating today and coming to this incredible House here at the Manitoba Legislature: the people in the gallery, who are here today to listen to what many of us have to say.

As a—Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, as a former—and as a teacher of 28 years and a coach of almost 33 years myself, and of a parent of 22 years of two boys, I spent many, many years not only teaching, guidance counselling, but also coaching in this great province of ours. And the heartbreaking stories that have happened in the past, and have also continued to be spotlighted in the media, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is absolutely heart-wrenching on a day-to-day basis.

And I'm hoping that with today's resolution as well, that this also continues that conversation. I hear various different things in the Chamber in regards to moving forward together, bringing—shining light, creating different policies and those types of things, and all very well said, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Manitoba schools should be a safe place for all youth to attend, and as the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, it doesn't matter of the students, where they live, their background, their cultural background, their individual experiences. They all deserve to have a safe place to go, and a supportive place, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is our job, not only as educators and community members, coaches, volunteers, to make sure that we're protecting and we're responding and we're supporting our youth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take a look at the resolution, and I know that the title is protect youth in sport, but I agree; I think we need to not only protect youth in sport, we need to protect youth from abuse. And there's many different things that happen in the school system and in communities, with the help of volunteers and coaches and teachers and parents and guardians, absolutely all of the above, we all play a

part. Each and every one of us play a part. As Manitobans, as Canadians, we play a part in this.

I take a read of the resolution and I take a look at a couple points and, again, I appreciate the member bringing forward this resolution, but as far as collaboration and working on the resolution, and their wish is to have a bipartisan move forward on this; myself, as Minister of Education, with 28 years of teaching and guidance counselling, 33 years of coaching, I was not approached or asked any questions in regards to my own experience. And I'm not really expecting that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but also, what is happening in the school system? How are school divisions, how are school boards addressing these issues?

Because things come up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the media, in our local communities, that absolutely pop up. And for anybody to think that anybody within government or that are participating in sport—and whether that's Sport Manitoba or Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association or school boards, teachers—again, community members, volunteers, coaches—to think that they are not thinking about ways and different ways that we can create different policies, and that, unfortunately, I think the member for St. Vital is mistaken when he brings this forward and says that we, you know—absolutely, we have to do better on a day-to-day basis.

I take a look at the very last whereas, and there's other, you know—I'm not going to get into the grammatical drawing up of this because I don't want to sway away from the main importance piece of the resolution—the main important piece of the resolution is to protect our youth. It says, whereas the provincial government has the legislative ability to develop better policies to protect youth. That's the last whereas.

Absolutely, policies—you know why policies is so important? And here's a bit of a teachable moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's to absolutely everybody. Why is policies important? Policies are important because they're nimble and they're flexible. And we're able to take a look at policies, we're able to go ahead and make policy changes, to adapt and to maybe take a look at what's working really, really well in the province. What's working really good but needs some tweaking? What's not working so well and needs some changing? That's where the policies come into place. And I commend the member for putting that whereas in the bottom there, absolutely.

There's some other pieces. And again, what is starkingly clear to me in the resolution and also conversations that I've had with various coaches and volunteers, community members, teachers, leaders of 35 years-plus, is the fact that we do have programs in place. Are they absolutely rock-solid perfect? Are they going to protect each and every youth moving forward? No. No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because if that was the case, Respect in Sport, Child Abuse Registry, criminal record check would have got that done.

But what it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the ability to have the conversations with each and every one of us great Manitobans that, at the end of the day, have the youth in mind. We want to make sure that we're having these conversations to be able to empower the bystanders, make sure that our coaches are taking Respect in Sport, you know, making sure that they're aware in their reading and their comprehending Respect in Sport. I've taken it multiple times since its development and since its implementation here in this great province of ours, which was way back in the mid-2000s–2006, 2007, somewhere in there.

\* (11:50)

We have committed, Mr. Deputy Speaker—oh, one more thing I want to mention. Today's moose hide day, wearing your moose hide pin. And I know some of my colleagues are around the Chamber, and I'm sure as the day goes on, we're going to be wearing them. The Moose Hide Campaign: this is happening in our schools all across this great province of ours, and it's encouraging that I've heard from other members across the way today.

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Wearing this moose hide signifies your commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in your life, and that is fitting that we're bringing this resolution today because we're having these conversations.

I want to say, in the short amount of time that I have left, we are working very closely with Manitoba School Boards Association, the board of directors, trustees, teachers, Manitoba Teachers' Society, all this education partners across this great province of ours.

And just yesterday, I did send a mandate letter for all school personnel to complete the Respect in School program between September 1st, 2022 and June 30th, 2023, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a lot more conversations to have on this very important topic.

Thank you, everybody, for joining us—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable minister's time has expired.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Again, I'd like to thank my colleague for St. Vital for bringing this resolution forward this morning, and I'd like to thank our guests who have joined us here in the gallery this morning as well. Thank you for joining us and being part of the legislative process in introducing legislation and having it debated.

I am going to keep my remarks very short, as I'd like to see the legislation passed here this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but there are a couple of things I just wanted to get on the record.

I would be remiss if I didn't make reference to Nomads and Sisler Spartans; they haven't yet come up this morning and I know we're talking about sport culture, something that I personally am not too familiar with, but I do get to attend a lot of football games in my constituency, and one of the things that Winnipeg Nomads, North Nomads as well as Sisler Spartans always make me aware of is that this government has a role to play when it comes to protecting those who are playing sports—our athletes—and one way that they can do this is also by helping us invest in and ensure that we have proper equipment, things like helmets. Helmets save lives, and one thing—I did not know this until I became elected and started meeting with these groups—helmets actually have an expiry date, so little things like this are ways that this government could also help.

But more directly to the legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talk about how it is important to have those boundaries set in place between teachers and coaches and students, and I think it is a very healthy dialogue to be having because it's hard to justify why a coach would have to have a student at their house. We don't quite understand that. Again, it's not—you can't easily justify that, so let's implement those boundaries. Let's make it a little clearer to ensure that we are being preventative and taking care of our students, of our youth and children, of all the athletes here in Manitoba.

I also really like the idea of a text line, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know more and more often, people are very comfortable with texting and less so with making phone calls, even less so with in-person conversation sometimes, and this is for a myriad of reasons, whether it's from being able to do it from the comfort of their homes and they're familiar with it, whether it's

being able to be a little more anonymous by being able to send a text rather than have to go and see someone in person. When a person is feeling vulnerable, perhaps a victim who have experienced some form of harassment or abuse, let's be creating opportunities for them to bring these issues and these experiences of theirs forward.

I have two more quick thoughts. One, I know it's been referenced on both sides of the House, the rule of two, and I just wanted to read this; this actually comes from Prince Edward Island back from 2019 when they implemented it: The rule of two requires at least two trained or certified coaches to always be with a minor athlete in any potential vulnerable situation, ensuring one of them are the same gender as the athlete.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this really protects all the parties involved: it protects our school systems, it protects coaches and teachers, it protects students and athletes. Again, it's just a way to take these preventative measures.

It also—Prince Edward Island also implemented some abuse and harassment policies. These are things that here in Manitoba we could be revisiting again as well. Let's take a page out of their legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The last thing I want to talk about is—and I've mentioned this quite a few times over the last few years—the idea of regulating therapy. And again, it's been talked about by members in this House here this morning. There is a need to ensure that whether it's our student athletes, whether it's victims of any kind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, anyone who needs to talk, they should have access to regulated therapy.

This (1) means making it affordable. Right now, therapy in Manitoba, it is very unattainable and out of reach to so many, because there is no coverage for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and by regulating therapy, it would allow larger coverage so people could actually afford to get therapy and have therapy in their lives, any sort of psychotherapy.

The other reason it's incredibly important that it becomes regulated is we want to ensure those providing these therapeutic practices have the proper training in place. Right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, anyone can be a therapist. You can graduate high—you don't even have to graduate high school and you can set up shop and have your own private practice.

And this is dangerous, people are not aware of this, and oftentimes people are going to see therapists

with no credentials. Let's make sure we regulate therapy here in the province of Manitoba to make sure we have proper, well-trained, competent therapists in place and ensure that people can afford to go to therapy.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few words, and with just a couple minutes left on the clock, here, I'm going to cede the floor and hope to see this resolution passed unanimously.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia, on House business.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Acting Official Opposition House Leader):** I recognize that folks want to move ahead with a vote on this important resolution today; however, I do also understand that there are some members who would also like to put some words on the record. So I'd simply like to ask leave of the House that we allow for two further speakers, specifically the speaker for—or the member from Fort Whyte and the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), and to not see the clock until they've had a chance to speak and we've had a chance to vote on this important resolution.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to not see the clock until two members have spoken; namely, the member for Fort Whyte and the member for St. James, after which there would be a vote on this matter?

Is there leave for that request from the member from Concordia?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I hear a no.

Leave has been denied.

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** First off, I want to acknowledge—I apologize I didn't get to it earlier—I want to acknowledge all the coaches, leaders and volunteers for coming out today and being in the viewing gallery, and thank you for all your work you do, day in and day out, with all the students and the athletes and youth. As a youth athlete myself, I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for people like you. So, thank you for that.

I also, like the members opposite, want to acknowledge the survivors, their bravery, their courage, their strength for coming forward. These things should have never, ever happened to you. I



could not ever even fathom these things happening during my time as an athlete, and they should have never happened, but because of your strength coming forward to—coming forward, because of what you're doing, we are going to work to make sure this never happens again. So, thank you for coming forward with that—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) will have nine minutes remaining.

The time being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 12, 2022

CONTENTS

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		Debate	
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS</b>		Martin	1914
<b>Second Readings—Public Bills</b>		<b>Resolutions</b>	
Bill 228—The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act		Res. 14—Calling on the Provincial Government to Develop Better Policies to Protect Youth in Sports	
Naylor	1905	Moses	1916
Questions		Questions	
Teitsma	1907	Khan	1918
Naylor	1907	Moses	1918
Asagwara	1908	Sala	1918
Lamoureux	1908	Wowchuk	1918
Lagassé	1908	Lamoureux	1919
Marcelino	1908	Debate	
Morley-Lecomte	1909	A. Smith	1920
Gerrard	1909	Kinew	1922
Debate		Ewasko	1924
Teitsma	1910	Lamoureux	1925
Bill 203—The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act		Khan	1926
Fontaine	1910		
Questions			
Martin	1912		
Fontaine	1912		
Brar	1912		
Gerrard	1912		
Isleifson	1913		
Morley-Lecomte	1913		

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