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**LEGISLATIVE  
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**20<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**UNEDITED HANSARD**

**Thursday, June 4, 2026**

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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

This is an unedited Hansard

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# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nahendeh)

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Employment*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and  
Investment*

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(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

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UNEDITED HANSARD

## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, June 4, 2026

### Members Present

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Mr. Nerysoo, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

### Prayer or Reflection

---Prayer or reflection

#### **SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):**

Please be seated. I'd like to thank Karen Mitchell for the reflections today.

Mr. Clerk, can you please determine whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Gerald Kisoun, is prepared to enter the chambers and assent to the bills.

### Assent to Bills

#### **THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Gerald W. Kisoun):**

[No translation available] Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Premier Simpson, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, staff, and visitors in the public gallery. I would like to extend my warm wishes to each of you for a safe, restful, enjoyable summer. This is a time to reconnect with loved ones, spend time on the land, and appreciate all that our communities have to offer. Please be seated.

Whether you are traveling by road, by water, or by air this summer, I encourage everyone to take care and make safety a top priority. Please continue to look out for one another and remind friends and family to be prepared and to respect the land. While I hope you all find time to rest and recharge, I know that the important work of serving our communities continues. Your dedication to improving the lives of Northerners does not go unnoticed and it remains vital throughout the summer months.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, No. 2;
- Bill 41: An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents Licensing Act;
- Bill 48: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2;

- Bill 51: An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act;
- Bill 52: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027;
- Bill 53: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027.

Quyannani. Hiya. Mahsi cho. Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you Commissioner Gerry Kisoun for being here today to assent to our legislation. It is always an honour to have him join us in this chamber.

Thank you, Commissioner. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Premier.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 217-20(1): GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the responsibility all of us carry as Members of this Legislative Assembly.

In our system of consensus government, every Member has an important role to play. Regular Members have a responsibility to scrutinize government decisions, hold Ministers accountable, propose alternatives, and speak on behalf of their constituents. Cabinet has a responsibility to listen, to respond, to be accountable for the decisions we make, and to do the work residents expect of us.

That is how consensus government is supposed to work. It is not about avoiding disagreement. It is about working through disagreement with respect, accountability, and a shared focus on the priorities Members set together.

It is not always easy. It is not always comfortable. There will be disagreement in this House, and there should be. The issues before us are serious, and Members are right to ask hard questions when residents are concerned

about health care, social services, housing, public safety, affordability, infrastructure and the environment, economic development, and the delivery of government services and programs. But, Mr. Speaker, how we do this work matters.

Residents expect us to hold each other accountable. They also expect us to do that work with respect, humility, honesty, and a shared commitment to the public good.

I believe in consensus government. I believe it reflects something important about the North. We live in small communities. We know each other. We sit across kitchen tables, in community halls, and in the homes of elders and residents who expect us to listen carefully, speak honestly, and carry ourselves with respect. That same spirit should guide this House.

Mr. Speaker, the work before us has rarely been more important. Across Canada, people are paying closer attention to the North, to the people and the communities of the Northwest Territories, and to the role this territory can play in the future of the country. That attention brings opportunity but it also brings responsibility. We need to show, through our words and our actions, that we are ready to do this work together and in a good way.

Mr. Speaker, you have reminded us that all Members must focus on working together to advance shared priorities. You have also reminded us that debate must be respectful. Those reminders are important. They are not about limiting debate; they are about protecting the dignity of this House and the trust residents place in all of us.

The prayer that was historically used to open each sitting day reminded Members to honour the dignity and aspirations of those we serve. That is a powerful responsibility. It asks us to remember that this House does not belong to any one Member, any one group, or any one government. It belongs to the people of the Northwest Territories, and every one of us has a responsibility to honour the trust that they place in us.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with difficult issues. We are dealing with longstanding challenges in systems that affect people's lives in very real ways. These issues deserve strong scrutiny. They also deserve careful words, honest debate, good governance, and a focus on solutions.

As Premier, and on behalf of Cabinet, I want to reaffirm our commitment to being accountable to this House and to the people of the Northwest Territories. We will continue to

answer questions, listen to concerns, accept criticism and scrutiny, and do the work required to advance the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly. I also want to reaffirm our commitment to the principles of consensus government, to the dignity of this House, and to working in a way that is serious, respectful, constructive, and focused on residents.

Mr. Speaker, none of us is perfect in this work. We will disagree. We will make mistakes. We will have hard days in this House. But we owe it to the people we serve to keep coming back to respect, humility and accountability, and the shared responsibility we all have to make life better for residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Colleagues, before I go to the next Member, I would like to recognize Debbie DeLancey, former deputy minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Health and Social Services but, more importantly, she used to be my former boss. Welcome to the Assembly.

Ministers' Statements. Minister of ITI.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 218-20(1):  
WORKFORCE READINESS**

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is at a pivotal moment. Significant investments are being made across our territory in critical minerals, infrastructure, and economic development and we stand to see immense benefits over the coming years. Meeting this moment is about workforce readiness, where each Northerner can participate fully in the economy, using skills, abilities, and resources to maximize what is possible. My focus for the remainder of this Legislative Assembly is clear: Ensuring northern businesses, residents, and communities fully benefit from emerging opportunities with the economic benefits of new investment staying in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, to fully realize the potential before us we must ensure that the NWT workforce and business sector are ready.

For decades we have built a steady foundation through established programs and funding to support business, entrepreneurship, and labour market development, and we continue to build and improve on this foundation. Businesses that want to grow or pivot have access to advisors and funding for strategic investment, research and development, and financing options. People looking to entrepreneurship, who want to start something from scratch to meet the coming needs, have access to

advisors to help guide them, as well as funding to help with start up costs or product development.

For residents who want to develop new skills, further their education, or train in a new career path, we continue to build on the success of the skills development program, schools north apprenticeship program, and student financial assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we are making progress to expand and build on these vital programs. We have increased pathways to trades education. There are more communities in the NWT with SNAP students than ever before, in fact we have more than doubled the number of SNAP across the NWT. A few months ago, we signed an agreement with the federal government giving us an additional \$1.5 million for our labour market programs, supporting both employees and businesses. We are in the early discussions with Canada on increased funding and support for apprenticeships and trades as part of the recently announced Team Canada Strong \$6 billion federal investment.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are not starting from zero. What comes next is how we collaborate and work together - the territorial government, Indigenous governments, employers, communities, and the education and training ecosystem - to improve pathways to employment and entrepreneurship.

Mr. Speaker, all Northerners have a role to play in ensuring we grab hold of this generational opportunity. Success is not guaranteed. It must be stressed that each and every one of us has to act now to be prepared to meet this moment. Businesses and residents must understand the key role they play in our ability to fully maximize every opportunity before us, but they cannot act if it is too difficult to access the supports they need.

We are working to streamline access to business programs and ensure they are strategically focused and easier to navigate. This includes advancing a more coordinated, single-window approach so residents and businesses can find the supports they need when they need them. This will especially help cumbersome application processes, not only for entrepreneurs and employers but also for trades students.

We will be improving access to programs through tools like the Business Benefits Finder, which will advance regional pilot projects that support innovation and economic preparedness. It also includes ensuring that our programs are fair, transparent, and coordinated across government, so residents and

businesses experience a consistent and accessible support system.

Mr. Speaker, while increasing accessibility and awareness is vital to this work, I must also stress that we are not forgetting a critically important audience: Our youth. We cannot ensure workforce readiness without them because they are our future. We must ensure that young Northerners see a future for themselves in the Northwest Territories' economy. This includes showing what careers are possible and needed, while building on pathways to entrepreneurship including the access to the foundational skills, training, and experience they need to pursue these opportunities. The government is also working to simplify application processes for trades students to remove barriers to access the skills training that Northerners want and employers need.

Mr. Speaker, success in meeting the moment before us also requires strategic focus on the long-term gains. That is why the government created a new associate deputy minister, economic strategy and policy position: To provide dedicated leadership and coordination toward a more unified economic and investment strategy for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, workforce readiness is about supporting the growth of strong, resilient Northerners. It builds strong, healthy communities across the Northwest Territories and ensures we have the people and capacity needed to be partners in projecting Arctic sovereignty. By working together across government and with our partners, we are positioning the Northwest Territories to make the most of this moment, building long-term prosperity for our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 219-20(1):  
PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE  
FRAMEWORK

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, access to primary and community health care matters to people across the Northwest Territories. It affects whether someone can get help when they need it, how supported they feel when managing ongoing health needs, and whether care reflects who they are, where they live, and what matters to them. Most importantly, it can support residents on their health and wellness journey. Residents have told us they want health care that is easier to access, more

connected, and culturally safe. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the primary and community health care framework. This framework sets a long-term direction for how primary and community health care will evolve across the Northwest Territories in close collaboration with Indigenous governments, health providers, and residents. Mr. Speaker, primary care reform is not new. For many years healthcare providers have worked to improve access, strengthen continuity of care, and make services more culturally safe. What has often been missed is a shared direction that brings those efforts together. This framework provides that direction. It recognizes that communities across the Northwest Territories are diverse and that no single model of care will work everywhere. Instead, it establishes a common foundation to guide future planning and a co-design with Indigenous governments through existing partnership tables.

The framework is organized around three interconnected areas of focus.

First, Indigenous cultures are at the centre. This means creating a healthcare system where Indigenous knowledge, traditional healing, and cultures are weaved into the design and delivery. Indigenous self-determination also means supporting clients to make informed choices and focusing on prevention and community wellness.

Second are interconnected care models. This means strengthening team-based care, improving coordination between providers and the services they offer, and building a culturally safe and representative workforce.

The third, Mr. Speaker, focuses on a system that learns and is accountable. It emphasizes policies and decisions informed by the experiences of residents and communities while supporting intergenerational healing. It supports stronger accountability, Indigenous data sovereignty, and the use of evidence and Indigenous knowledge to improve quality and trust.

Mr. Speaker, the framework also identifies the conditions needed to support meaningful and lasting change. These include strong governance, a stable and supported workforce, sustainable funding approaches, and modern data and digital systems. This work has been shaped through collaboration with Indigenous communities, healthcare providers, clients, and the NWT Council of Leaders health and social services working group. It reflects lessons learned and innovation from communities across the Northwest Territories, evidence from leading practices across Canada, and the

experience of those who deliver and receive care.

Mr. Speaker, success means stronger continuity of care and relationships with providers who know residents, their families, and their communities. It means care that is better connected and easier to navigate, including during referrals, transitions between providers, and medical travel. Most importantly, success means building a health system that people trust.

Transforming primary and community health care cannot be accomplished by this government alone. This framework establishes how the health system designs care with, for, and by Indigenous peoples, and promotes an organizational culture that continuously learns, adapts and improves based on the experiences of clients, communities, and frontline staff.

Mr. Speaker, the primary and community health care framework provides a North Star for that work ahead. It establishes a shared direction towards a more connected relationship-based and culturally safe system that reflects the strengths, cultures, and realities of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to thank the hundreds of staff, Indigenous leaders, healthcare providers, clients, and national partners whose expertise and commitment helped shape this work. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 220-20(1): FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL RED TAPE REDUCTION

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I recently represented the Northwest Territories in Toronto at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of Ministers responsible for addressing red tape and improving government efficiencies. I highlighted the work we are doing in the Government of the Northwest Territories to improve services, modernize regulations, streamline permitting processes, and use digital technology to improve access and efficiency. I received a great deal of positive feedback on our efforts, and many of my colleagues are interested in learning more about our approaches. And while I take this interest as a positive sign, our focus remains forward-looking to continue identifying and addressing barriers that can delay projects, create challenges for businesses, and make more difficult access to services.

I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the centralized email address for residents, businesses, and public servants to raise red tape issues directly at [redtape@gov.nt.ca](mailto:redtape@gov.nt.ca). I encourage all residents to continue bringing forward specific examples.

Work is also underway to address more complex barriers. For example, through our recent MOU commitments we are working with the federal government to improve how land, water, and mineral development are regulated to improve clarity and predictability and to better align environmental assessment and permitting processes to reduce timelines, duplication, and address uncertainty. We are also working collaboratively with land and water boards to ensure our major projects teams can deliver projects in a timely way while upholding our obligations for environmental stewardship. All of this work has a common goal of adding consistency, clarity, and avoiding unnecessary burden.

We plan to streamline permitting and improve service delivery across several areas. For example, we are developing regulation under the new Liquor Act that will reduce duplication and improve coordination with the fire marshal's office. We are expanding online services, such as motor vehicle transactions and licensing, to improve access and reduce processing times.

Mr. Speaker, since we introduced the GNWT guideline on the use of generative artificial intelligence, or AI, last year, we've been working to build awareness and skills to ensure public servants use AI responsibly and carefully. We have been exploring how we can use these tools to help with routine tasks so employees can focus on work that harnesses their individual knowledge and expertise. For example, AI tools are being tested to support notetaking in health care settings so less time is spent on paperwork and more time is spent with patients. In other areas such as cyber security, data analytics, and software development, AI is being tested to improve our efficiency. And as we move forward, these efforts are guided by a clear focus on responsible, careful, and ethical use to ensure accuracy, protect privacy, and maintain public trust.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all residents and business owners who take the time to help identify red tape and recognize the public servants who find ways to address it. The progress we are seeing reflects these coordinated efforts across departments. Through improving permitting systems, expanding digital services, strengthening regulatory design, or identifying practical efficiencies through fiscal sustainability work

and frontline experience, this is a whole of government effort.

These efforts are making a meaningful difference, but we know the job is not finished. In October, I will be tabling a report on the government's red tape reduction efforts to demonstrate results, reinforce accountability, and set out the work we will continue to do for residents and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, reducing red tape requires ongoing attention and commitment to continuous improvement. It requires us to keep listening, learning, and adapting to what residents and businesses are experiencing so that we can reduce unnecessary barriers and improve access to all services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Ministers' Statements. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1073-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT RESPONSE TO THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUDIT

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight to speak to the recent findings of the auditor general on child and family services in the Northwest Territories by the auditor general.

Mr. Speaker, the report paints a deeply troubling picture. It identifies failures in responding to reports of maltreatment, gaps in monitoring and support for children and families, and serious staffing pressures. And these issues are not new, Mr. Speaker. This is not a single failure. It is a pattern, a pattern we have seen before, a pattern that remains unresolved.

Mr. Speaker, behind these findings are children and families who rely on this system. When the system does not work, the impacts are real and serious. We are emphasizing that this requires a clear and coordinated response. Members on all sides of this House have spoken to this issue at length, including during debate and the motion for a creation of a child and youth advocate. There is a shared understanding that gaps are significant and action is required.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that has already been debated in this House, and there is a clear expectation that it move forward. Committee is looking for a commitment to establish a child

and youth advocate, and to do so with a defined and timely path. But, Mr. Speaker, that is only part of the solution. We also need to support the people delivering these services - social workers, frontline staff, those working in child and family services. They are doing difficult work under significant pressure. If we want better outcomes, we must give them the tools, the support, and the stability they need to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Minister that further analysis is underway. But Members have been clear we are not starting from zero. We have audits. We have evidence. We have heard these concerns before. What is needed now, Mr. Speaker, is action. Analysis cannot become a substitute for action.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is bigger than one Member, one committee, or any one Minister. It speaks to the collective responsibility of this House. We are asking to work together. We are calling on the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services to work with Members to develop a coordinated response, one that strengthens accountability and supports the system and the people within it. The committee is ready to be part of that work, and we will continue to press to see it move forward. If work is already underway, we want to see it. We want to support it. We want to move it forward. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the expectation is clear: This work must move with urgency. The Accountability and Oversight Committee does not accept further delays as an outcome of this work, and we are committed to being part of the solution. Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent government issue. It requires shoulder-to-shoulder response across all Members of this House. We have one goal: The betterment of the people we serve. AOC stands ready to work with the Premier, the Minister, and all the Members of this House to move this forward. Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the responsibilities of our Cabinet. We are aware of our own responsibilities. What we need now, Mr. Speaker, is this issue goes beyond that, Mr. Speaker. We need to act, and we need to act together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1074-20(1):  
HEALTH INFORMATION ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Merci, Monsieur le President. [Translation] insert\* [Translation Ends].

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year we learned that over 750 known health information breaches have been recorded in our territory over the past decade. That is a staggering figure for a population of our size. An average of 77 breaches a year in a territory of only 45,000 residents were roughly one breach for every 58 Northerners over that period.

While it is true that in this day and age there are only more and more seeking to exploit our personal data for whatever reason, including the companies that run our social media accounts, the scale of these breaches is neither normal nor inevitable. It reflects a systemic failure that too often exposes Northerners to privacy violations and unnecessary risk.

A recent CBC article dated March 18th highlights the real world impact of these statistics. It profiles a Range Lake constituent who feels he has lost confidence in health and social services after learning his personal health information had been accessed without authorization from someone within the department. He was not notified for well over a year after his information was accessed, and the letter he received was scant on details. He simply wants to know who was accessing his records, what was viewed, and why notification took so long and what consequences followed. Yet to date those questions remain unanswered. Even after reaching out to the department, his MLA, and the Minister, he was told the names of employees are not disclosed in breach notifications in order to protect the privacy of who committed the breach and comply with the principle that only minimum information be shared.

Mr. Speaker, our system of information protection should be supporting the victims of these breaches, not the people who are doing them. We need to put an end to snooping, and I will have questions for the Minister later today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1075-20(1):  
DISABILITIES COUNCIL REMARKS ON  
BARRIERS FOR FAMILIES WITH  
DISABILITIES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May, I attended an event where disabilities council CEO Denise McKee delivered remarks which I will highlight today in the House.

For a family living with disability, you learn early that there are moments in life when a family realizes that love alone is not enough to overcome the barriers placed in front of them. It can come when a parent spends months, sometimes years, fighting for therapies their child urgently needs while watching developmental opportunities slip away, or it comes when an adult living with a disability is told there is a waitlist for essential supports, accessible housing, transportation, mental health services, or respite care. It comes when families are already exhausted, isolated, and forced to become advocates, coordinators, therapists, and crisis managers all at once because the systems meant to support them are fragmented or unavailable.

The lack of service doesn't create inconvenience, it creates loss. It is the loss of independence for a person who could thrive with the right support. It is the loss of opportunity for a child who deserves every chance to learn, communicate, and belong. It is the loss of employment for parents who must leave careers behind to become full-time caregivers.

Too many people living with disabilities grow up hearing what they cannot do instead of being provided the supports to succeed. Too many families are left navigating systems that are complicated, underfunded, and difficult to access at the exact moment they are already overwhelmed. Each one of these unmet needs is not just a story but a human being. People living with disabilities are not asking for charity. Families are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for equity. They are asking for access. They are asking for systems that recognize their humanity and value their lives.

When appropriate supports are available, we see extraordinary things happen. Children communicate for the first time. Adults gain employment and independence. Families breathe again. Caregivers are able to rest. People become connected to their communities instead of excluded from them. Potential is no longer buried beneath barriers. Support services are not expenses to be minimized. They are investments in human dignity, inclusion, and stronger communities. So today I ask the Minister to help all of us. Please remember that accessibility is not only about ramps and policies. It is about whether people feel seen, whether families feel supported, whether a child is given the chance to thrive. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Whether families feel supported, whether a child is given the chance to thrive, because disability can touch any family at any time, and when that moment comes every person deserves to know they will not have to face it alone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1076-20(1):  
GRATITUDE

**MS. REID:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on my gratitude for our time together and the summer ahead of us. I want to wish all my colleagues an early happy Indigenous Peoples Day. I hope that we can all celebrate that day with family, friends, and in community. I especially want to thank our interpreters for all their hard work and thank them as they support new colleagues in the interpreter career pathway program that is now underway. This program is very exciting to see and celebrate, and kudos to you and the Minister of ECE and your staff, Mr. Speaker.

I am thankful for the momentum that we have on the major projects front, Mr. Speaker. We have been given a couple of opportunities to meet with the MPO since the Prime Minister's announcement, and the excitement is palpable. Being mindful of parliamentary language, let's get the Cece Hodgson-McCauley Highway built, Mr. Speaker.

I am so grateful for and specifically want to thank my colleagues who are Indigenous women for their wisdom and support. Each of you has been unwavering in your strength and advocacy for your communities, nations, and territory. I am honoured to serve in this Assembly with you.

Today, the MLA for Monfwi had good words to share with us in committee about the Dene laws. These laws were never taught to me in school, I am afraid. That shows my age. And these days I am really happy to see them posted in classrooms and school boards that I visit as a Member: Share what you have. Help each other. Love each other as much as possible. Be respectful of elders and everything around you. Sleep at night and work in the day. Be polite and don't argue with anyone. Pass on the teachings. Be happy at all times.

Mr. Speaker, I have a long way to go on some of those laws. I strive to embody them as much as I can.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote Behchoko Chief Bertha Rabesca Zoe, who recently said we all have a responsibility. Let us move forward with more compassion, more unity, and more accountability to one another. Let us speak life into our communities instead of negativity. Let us support each other through the difficult work ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1077-20(1):  
NORTHERN BUILDING CODE

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled reports produced by Taylor Architecture Group, which I am proud to say is a YK North business, which examined barriers and solutions towards establishing home building standards designed for the North. It's based on home visits with residents of Ulukhaktok, K'atlodeeche First Nation, and Somba K'e or Trout Lake.

Now, are NWT building standards just more restrictions and red tape?

Without any NWT standards, we either drive up the cost of building homes if you have to hire a professional engineer to design each home from scratch, which also delays the process, or else you buy homes off the shelf that meet southern standards and assumptions. Now, homes designed for the south usually don't include water and sewer tanks for truck services. They're likely to have high-tech digital controls for heating and ventilation for example, but what's the use of that if it suffers a blowout due to an unsteady local power grid and there's no one within a thousand kilometres who could fix it let alone parts available. Southern homes are not designed with appropriate insulation or ventilation to handle extreme cold, high winds, or blowing snow, so residents commonly seal windows and doors with plastic bags or blankets or use improvised fasteners to hold down roofing and siding. And of course there's all kinds of contraptions to stop pipes from freezing.

Now, one of the prototypes in the report is a home designed around a wood stove for those homeowners trying to save money on heating fuel. What often happens now, when a wood stove is just popped in as an afterthought, is that people shut off their high-tech heating and ventilation system, or HVAC, when they fire up their wood stove but this leads to poor air circulation, mould, and health problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the point is not to create a new one size fits all. The City of Yellowknife currently has its own set of building standards already, and what works in YK is different from what will work in Ulukhaktok. NWT building standards should be a suite of different pre-approved design options that a community or homeowner could choose from based on their particular environmental and economic conditions and constraints. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So those environmental and economic conditions and constraints could be, for example, whether wood is freely available for heating, whether the home is on permafrost, or what supply chains may be available for energy and construction materials. I believe we have the tools and the personnel in the North that we can move forward with northern homebuilding standards that work for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1078-20(1):  
TRAINING AND EDUCATION

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories stands at the threshold of an unprecedented opportunity. The Mackenzie Valley Highway is 70 percent of the right-of-way within the Sahtu region and major mineral projects from Fireweed, Snowline Gold, and Rio Tinto are moving forward representing hundreds of millions in investment and thousands of job opportunities. But are we ready?

We face a critical shortage of skilled, certified tradespeople across the Northwest Territories. This is recognized in the Sahtu also. Without immediate action, we risk and denying current and future next generational opportunities. Mr. Speaker, we have talented, experienced tradespeople in our communities, people with years of field hours who know the land and the work, but many lack formal Red Seal certification. We need to capture and credential this knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, we must start investing in education seriously. Succession planning and strategic planning are paramount to achieving a next generational workforce. Part of this successional planning is recognizing the trades and accumulated field hours by our employees and residents. This recognition must be activated and data collected for incoming major

projects. We must create clear apprenticeship pathways and training programs. We need partnerships between government, Aurora College, schools, tech schools, and industry. We need designated trainers in all regions.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in previous statements on training and workforce development. The Northwest Territories will see an economic tsunami, a high creation of employment opportunities that represents forecasted positive results and will lower our dependency on social programs. We cannot emphasize enough the immediate need for training and investing in education. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this moment will not wait. Major projects like the Mackenzie Valley Highway timeline and schedules are set. If we are not ready with a trained, certified northern workforce, these opportunities will pass us by. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions to the Minister of ITIT. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1079-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES FROM MACKENZIE  
DELTA

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize the graduates from the Mackenzie Delta region.

From Fort McPherson:

- Taylor Luxi
- Jessica Itsi
- Lucas Francis
- Myles Robert
- Jaryn Snowshow
- Cameron Blake
- Jasmine Nerysoo
- Grayson Koe
- Kayden Blake
- From Aklavik:
- Hans Arey.
- Kyler Irish.

- Marin MacDonald.
- Zackary McLeod.
- Cameron Charlie.
- Chad Jay.
- Kendon (audio).

Special recognition going out to Marian Bolton from Tsiigehtchic who is a grade 11 student in Chief Paul Niditchie School in Tsiigehtchic. She completed and is currently studying most of the grade 12 subjects like physics, computer studies, advanced mathematics through BC and Ontario online schools and got admission and a bachelor of engineering degree in York University to start this fall. I'd like my colleagues to join me in congratulating the graduates from the Mackenzie Delta region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta, Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1080-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES FROM MONFWEI

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, as the school year comes to an end, I want to recognize students in the Tlicho region from Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School, Mezi School, Jean Wettrade School, and Alexis Arrowmaker School, from junior kindergarten to grade 12 graduating class.

Every school year brings new challenges and to every student who kept moving forward, you deserve to be celebrated. You may not see it now, but the education you've shown is special and it will pay off in the future. The students who served as patrons or took part in Youth Parliament deserve recognition as well - Shiloh Simpson and Juliana Mackenzie of Behchoko. It is always special to see our young people engage in the work of this House.

To the parents and grandparents who helped them keep going, thank you. That support can be difficult when families are carrying pressures of their own, but the stability you give them is the foundation of their success. I also want to thank the teachers who have worked tirelessly to guide them. Anyone who has seen a classroom in the final week of the school knows teachers deserve recognition and probably a good nap.

Educating our youth is one of the most important responsibilities we have. Teachers are there to teach, but they are often asked to

carry needs that go far beyond the classroom. When a child needs deeper support, the child and family services system must be strong enough to respond. Teachers need to be able to focus on teaching, knowing that students will still be supported. That is how we give students the best chance to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I wish all our students and teachers a good summer. I know that students are counting down the days, and I suspect a few teachers are too as well. So job well done to all the students and parents. I'd like to welcome all the students, the parents, the teachers, and all the support that they have given to these young people. Please stay safe and look out for each other. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Member's statements. Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1081-20(1):  
FEES IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the new health and social services fee guide shows how disconnected this government has become from the cost of living crisis. While residents are asking for relief, this government is increasing fees and adding new costs for essential care. Long-term care fees have gone up, and for the first-time residents will now be charged the daily fee for alternative level care and will be charged while waiting a long-term care bed effective July 1st, 2026. Each type of care will cost families more than \$12,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, this will hit small communities hard, where basic goods are already unaffordable. But families across the NWT will feel the pressure whether they live in a small community or a larger centre. That is because this cost will fall on families already struggling to keep up. For those who need financial assistance, government points to a fee waiver application. But the waiver criteria only proves how disconnected this policy is.

To qualify for assistance, family income must be under \$80,000. So what happens to a family just over that threshold, already paying northern prices for food, fuel and rent? An additional annual expense of \$12,000 could take up to 15 percent of their annual income before taxes. For families already living paycheck to paycheck, that is completely unrealistic.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the deficit is a serious problem, but the answer cannot be to make essential care more expensive for families being pushed to the edge. Government

needs to take responsibility for the system pressures instead of making struggling families pay more for care they cannot go without. I will have questions for the Minister of health at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1082-20(1):  
FEES IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address my Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Line unanswered written questions noting that the critical questions raised, in my opinion, were not answered.

In my written question, I appreciated the Minister providing some high-level context, but a closer look reveals that the vital information still remains missing and unanswered. The Minister shared that a P3 agreement costs approximately \$12 million annually but only generates \$2.3 million from ten customers.

Mr. Speaker, it was originally sold as to print money, not to give away money, Mr. Speaker, so the question is what happened; where did the wheels fall off the car? Mr. Speaker, is the GNWT subsidizing a private entity to run this thing?

So at the same time, the government has failed to deliver specifics on the financial breakdown by this project phase and customers' costs that were requested. Mr. Speaker, I am left wondering. Worse yet, the actual management agreement was completely withheld under the guise of confidentiality. Now, I am sure something could have been provided to an MLA like myself, even an embargoed copy of some sort, Mr. Speaker. We get hundreds of confidential documents a week around here, Mr. Speaker. One more wouldn't have hurt, Mr. Speaker, and I, of course, would have respected that.

But when it comes to the future of our communities now, Mr. Speaker, the response falls even further short. The Minister lists which communities currently have service, and which rely on satellite but completely deflects on providing a clear implementation schedule or cost projections for the connecting of those communities left behind. Hey, who wants a community left behind? No community left behind, Mr. Speaker. That's my saying.

Mr. Speaker, the government disappoints them and it's disappointing me.

Furthermore, the serious issue of revenue leak to other jurisdictions was entirely ignored.

Again, I need to remind you, when the government's spending \$12 million and only getting two back, Mr. Speaker, we need to start asking some serious questions.

Lastly, the only complete answer out of all the questions I received was a reference to the BC economic study. While very important to understand outside data and how it's used, but Northerners deserve transparency about our infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. We deserve to know more about our budget and certainly about our timelines.

The general overview was falling short, Mr. Speaker. We deserve digital equity and certainly value for service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1083-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES FROM TU NEDHE-  
WIILIDEH

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before we break for the summer, I want to take a moment to recognize the graduates for my consistency of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. And, in particular, it was my great pleasure to inform this House that we have a very large group of strong graduates this year from both Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, Dettah, N'dilo, and Yellowknife.

In Lutselk'e, I want to give my heartfelt congratulations to our graduates:

- Naomi Isadore-Michel
- Zachary Martin
- Alexander Abel
- Jonas Lockhart
- Alaya Catholique
- Devanna Catholique

In addition, in Lutselk'e we have two exceptional Indigenous language instructors retiring this year after many decades of service: James Lockhart and Elizabeth Catholique.

In the Fort Resolution, I want to congratulate:

- Roshanda Baillilie
- Preston Forrest
- Sylvia Mandeville

I want to wish you all the very best in the future that you have ahead of you.

In Yellowknife, I want to congratulate:

- Kayden Boucher
- Angel Betsina
- Cheyenne Koyina
- Shelby Betsina
- Stanley McKenzie
- Quinton McKenzie
- Kyle Sangris
- Troy Beaulieu
- Colton Sangris
- Justin Card
- Matilda Charlo
- Tamara Sangris
- Lillian McKenzie
- Tina Liske
- Emerance Goulet
- Rebecca Evadjuk
- Henry Ben Martin
- Detoncho Fizi
- Hannah Lafferty
- Brendan Lafferty
- Alia Erasmus
- Sheena Charlo Lafferty
- Cameron Martin
- Lizdaya Martin Crapeau
- Mia Martin Crapeau
- Kelly Tsetta

From the K'alemi Dene School in N'dilo, I am proud to recognize graduates Clayton Tanzania and Eve Judith Goulet.

I also want to acknowledge from Fort Resolution:

- Dr. Lainey Beaulieu, who achieved her medical degree and continues to be an inspiration to our community;

- As well, former graduates Magnolia Unka, who got her law degree;
- Elita Edjericon, who got her master's in education; and
- Jess Anderson, who also got a Red Seal in heavy duty mechanics.

All are outstanding community members who have demonstrated exceptional skills and dedication in their respective fields.

To all the graduates, I extend my sincere congratulations. I also want to thank the teachers, school staff, families, and community members who have supported them along the way. Congratulations to all, and I wish you a very successful year and have a safe summer. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1084-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY AND PRIDE  
MONTH

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, June is a time for reflection and celebration as we mark National Indigenous History Month and Pride Month while also recognizing Men's Mental Health Month.

National Indigenous History Month is an opportunity to honour the rich histories, cultures, languages, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples. For generations, Indigenous communities have sustained deep connections to the land, vibrant cultural traditions, and systems of knowledge that continue to shape this country.

It is also a time to acknowledge the lasting impacts of colonization, including the legacy of residential schools. We all share a responsibility to advance truth and reconciliation. Recognizing this history is essential to building respectful partnerships and a more just and inclusive future.

June is also Pride Month. What began as an uprising on June 28, 1969 at the Stonewall Inn has grown into a global movement; a celebration of identity, resilience, love, and a continued call for inclusion, safety, and equal rights for all.

These observances are deeply connected. Long before colonization, many Indigenous cultures recognized and respected diverse gender identities and roles. Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer individuals stand at the intersection,

reminding us that identity, culture, and community are intertwined.

At the same time, June is also Men's Mental Health Month, a crucial reminder that mental wellness must be part of our broader conversations about inclusion, community, and care. For too long, many men have been told to be silent about their struggles. This silence can lead to isolation and harm. It is important that men feel supported and empowered to share their feelings in a healthy and productive way.

Creating safe spaces for men to speak, to be heard without judgment, and to seek support is essential; not only for individual well-being but for stronger families and communities. This is especially important in the context of reconciliation and inclusion, where understanding and compassion must extend to everyone.

As we mark this month, let us celebrate our progress, listen to lived experiences, and recommit ourselves to respect, inclusion, reconciliation, and mental wellness, ensuring everyone, across all identities and experiences, has the support they need to live with dignity, pride, and a true sense of belonging. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. Members' statements. Member from Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1085-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES IN NUNAKPUT

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer congratulations to the following high school graduates in the Nunakput riding for 2026:

In Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk

- ·Miley Wolki
- ·Sophie Ross-Saunders
- ·Jones Elias
- ·Sabrina Nasogaluak
- ·Cheryl Chicksi
- ·Natalie Avik.
- Angik School in Paulatuk:
- ·Kristen Green
- ·Ethan Ruben
- ·Nora Ruben.

In Ulukhaktok at the Helen Kalvak Elikhaktok is:

- ·Sierra Akhiaktak
- ·Kaden Okheena
- ·Kieren Notaina
- ·Ian Kataoyak.

I wish to offer you the best in all your endeavours. As young leaders in your community, there are many children that look up to you now. The hopes and dreams of your family is with you as you move ahead for further education, work placement, apprenticeship, or travel and volunteerism. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Nunakput. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1086-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES INUVIK

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to send my congratulations to the graduating class of East 3 Secondary School who will be graduating this Saturday. It's such an incredible milestone. Last year, we had multiple, multiple speakers at their grad, and I know I've heard from many of them before there's too much talking. So this year, I know that I won't be able to be there with them all but I am cheering them all on with pride. And as the MLA for Twin Lakes, I want to say that the community is proud of you, all of you. And whether your next step is work, college, university, trades, whatever your path takes you, carry your resilience, your roots, your strength, because these are the gifts that your ancestors have instilled in you.

I also want to say congratulations to all of the little kindergarten graduates who also will be graduating. Hopefully I will be home to be able to see them. And, you know, in Inuvik, we used to have two schools and so the grade 6 graduation from the elementary school to the high school is always a big event. I still remember my graduation. I had -- I think I had torn jeans from playing outside. And then I remember my daughter's graduation, I had to go and buy her, it was like a grade 12 graduation dress. So they've made this a big, big thing. And so I am very proud of all of them for their successes. And all of the Aurora College grads that just graduated from their programs and all of our graduates that are graduating from all of their post-secondary, coming home, you know, to work and, you know, take on new careers, I applaud you and I encourage you to keep learning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1087-20(1):  
2026 GRADUATES IN NAHENDEH

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, today I rise in the House to congratulate the Class of 2026 from two schools in the Nahendeh riding, Liidlii Kue Regional High School and Echo Dene School. This is an important milestone for graduates, their families, teachers, school support staff, and their communities, and I am pleased to recognize their hard work and achievement.

Colleagues, these students completed their high school journey during an extraordinary period that included the global pandemic and all the disruption that came with it. Their education was interrupted, their routines were changed, and they were asked to adapt in ways none of us could imagine. Yet through it all, they persevered. They remained committed, they stayed focused, and they continued moving forward. In many ways, these graduates are stronger because of what they have overcome. They are stronger students because they have tested themselves. They are stronger candidates for employment because they have learned to adapt and persist in the face of uncertainty. Most importantly, they are strong people because they discovered resilience, determination, and integrity within themselves.

For some grads, this day marks the end of 13 long years of school and the beginning of a new chapter. For others, it is the next step in a long educational journey, whether that is university, college, or an apprenticeship. Whatever path they choose, they should know that they are well prepared for the road ahead.

To all the graduates (names attached at the end of the statement and ask to be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard), I say this: The diploma you receive is the result of years of effort, commitment, and perseverance. Wear it with pride. It represents not only what you have accomplished but also the promise of what is yet to come. Congratulations to the Class of 2026. I wish each of you every success as you celebrate this special day and take your next steps forward, and I will see you guys next week.

I look forward in witnessing your celebration next week as I said just previously.

As well, Shazney Waugh graduated from UBC with distinction with a BA in gender, race, sexuality and social justice with a minor in Indigenous studies. And Daniel Gargan-Lacasse, who will graduated from Red

Deer polytechnic social work diploma -- hint, hint, potential opportunity for us -- June 5, 2026.

Again, congratulations to all the grads and I ask all of you to help me thanking them.

**Liidlii Kue Regional High School:**

- Gombée Elizabeth Jose
- Martin Lawrence Antoine
- Hendrix Dolphus Edward Martineau
- Jacob Joseph Cli Letcher
- Tyler Nicholas Tsetso
- Blake Alton Speed

**Echo Dene School:**

- Dayton Antoine
- Nigel Timbre
- Nicolas Bilodeau
- Hunter Klondike
- Kei Isaiah

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a few people in the gallery today. I'd like to recognize, also like you, Debbie DeLancey, who when she was the deputy minister of MACA, I was a town councillor in Hay River and used to complain about the lack of funding for our community. So I'd like to welcome her. I'd also like to welcome a few Gwich'in elders here today, good friends of mine. Sue Look, Bella Husky, Alice Charley, Annie Rose McNabb, and Esther Semmler. Thank you for visiting us here today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a couple of visitors from Fort Smith here today, and their MLA is out representing the territory on the national stage, so I'd like to, on his behalf, recognize Mildred Martin and Rashmi Patel and welcome them to the Assembly. As well, I would like to recognize Marie Wilson, one of the Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to welcome my grandmother Esther Semmler. And I also want to welcome Sue Look, Alice Charley, Annie Rose McNabb, Bella Husky, and Debbie Delancey. She wasn't my boss at MACA but I did work under her when I was at health and social services, and now she is the co-chair of the Council of Leaders health and social services working group. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my returning page Kyra Brennan, who is helping us out this week. Thank you very much. I would like to recognize Regan Junkins, who is my constituency assistant and also the Member for Frame Lakes' constituency assistant. She started in January and has come so far. So proud of her. I would also like to recognize Mrs. Semmler in the gallery. I have never met her, but I am wearing one of her brooches. And also to welcome Kyla Cockney-Scott who I grew up with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize two ladies that don't need any introduction, Debbie Delancey and Marie Wilson. Welcome to the chamber.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Kam Lake.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Kam Lake residents, and my neighbours, Carole Tetlow and Randy Cleveland and thank Randy for insisting Carol let him take him out for dinner or take her out for dinner over 50 years ago, because otherwise I wouldn't be here. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Sue Look, Alice Charley, Annie Rose McNabb, and Bella Husky. Welcome to the chambers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I will start by recognizing and thanking the pages who have been so diligently helping us out this week who are from YK North. We have Annika Oguta, Louisa Casey, and Cooper Dempsey-Pickles. Thank you for your patience and work this week. And of course I also want to recognize YK North constituent Marie Wilson, not only former Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, member of the Order of Canada and Order of NWT, and also more recently an author. And I apologize for other constituents that might be in the gallery that I cannot see. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also recognize Mrs. Esther Semmler. We are proud to boast that she's a Frame Lake resident. And also my friend, Kyla Kakfwi-Scott. I always appreciate her sagely advice and appreciate her work in the Assembly. And I just wanted to note that Mr. John Gon has been part of the new interpreters program and has been in and out of the Assembly, and I wanted to thank him for his work, as well as all the interpreters, always, for their hard work. And, of course -- I am being poked here. I wanted to also note Regan Junkin, my new constituency assistant who, as Kate said, has been doing a fantastic job and we're so happy to have her in the office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Yellowknife South.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to start by recognizing the interpreters. It's not something I've often done, but I sped through my Minister's statement today as I saw the clock tick down. So thank you for your work, and I am sorry. And, Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to recognize I have a returning page from the Yellowknife South, hoping that he might come in the room, and I am lucky. Joshua Kostache, thank you for all your hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize everybody in the gallery. Welcome. Good to see everybody here

today. Also, I would like to recognize the interpreters, all of them that are here, including Jonas Lafferty and Maro Rose Sundberg, Bertha Catholique, and Dennis. I just want to say mahsi. I am happy you guys are here. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from YK Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am first going to thank the Member from Mackenzie Delta pointing out that somebody in the gallery is a constituent of the Yellowknife Centre, and that's Ms. Bella Husky. I've been a friend of hers for a long time. I am not with spectacles today so I can't see that far, but I also heard through recognition that Ms. Kyla Kakfwi-Scott is also in the gallery. And I know she likes being recognized. No, she's very shy so she's probably like, err, please to stop. That said, I wish to welcome them and all their friends today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yeah, we've got many returning pages today and over the course of the week so I'd like to recognize Range Lake page Isaac Straeder for his hard work over the course of our sitting. It's been a small but mighty sitting, and he's done a great job. Thank you, Isaac.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to rise and recognize everyone in the chamber, as well as in the gallery, as well as the translator for Dene Zhatié, Mary Jane Cazon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone today, we would like to thank you very much for allowing us to represent the people of Northwest Territories for a short period of time. We greatly appreciate that. I hope you enjoy the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

Notices of motion. Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 82-20(1):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE,  
CARRIED

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when the House adjourns on Thursday, June 4, 2026, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, October 20, 2026;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to October 20, 2026, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier or later time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice;

AND THEREUPON, the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

MOTION 84-20(1):  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION MATTERS,  
CARRIED

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Consensus Government Process Convention on Priority Setting and Reporting calls for the establishment of a Special Committee on Transition Matters;

AND WHEREAS transition to a new Assembly is an appropriate time for reporting on matters of ongoing action, discussion and consideration;

AND WHEREAS Members of the 21st Legislative Assembly may wish to consider how to build on the direction and deliberations of the 20th Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that pursuant to Rule 9.2(8), the Legislative Assembly hereby establish a Special committee on transition matters;

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be named to the Special committee:

- Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya, Member for Deh Cho;
- Mr. Julian Morse, Member for Frame Lake;
- Mr. George Nerysoo, Member for Mackenzie Delta;
- Honourable Lucy Kuptana, Member for Nunakput;
- Mr. Daniel McNeely, Member for Sahtu; and
- Honourable Jay MacDonald, Member for Thebacha.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Special Committee on Transition Matters be established by the terms of reference, identified as Tabled Document 533-20(1).

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, a Member from Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstained. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Member from Range Lake.

MOTION 80-20(1):  
CLOSING THE LAND SUPPLY GAP IN THE  
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the City of Yellowknife is located on Chief Drygeese Territory, the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the North Slave Metis and all Indigenous peoples of this region whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations;

AND WHEREAS the City of Yellowknife is experiencing sustained and accelerating growth, driven by military presence, major

remediation and infrastructure projects, mining, tourism, and public administration expansion;

AND WHEREAS the population of the City of Yellowknife is projected to reach 26,659 by 2051, putting pressure on housing and municipal infrastructure systems;

AND WHEREAS the City of Yellowknife has less than 1 percent of developable land within its municipal boundary, restricting the City's ability to deliver sufficient housing, support commercial expansion, and plan and service critical infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS without timely and coordinated land action, these constraints will intensify, limiting employment growth, slowing economic diversification and undermining Arctic Security Readiness;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories is actively engaging with the City of Yellowknife to ensure that a transfer of land can occur to support the projected needs of the city and territory;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Government of the Northwest Territories designate and transfer priority Commissioner's lands identified by the City of Yellowknife to the municipality to deliver residential and commercial land supply;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish an accelerated land transfer process that occurs in 12 months or less;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories transfer the 41-hectare Frame Lake parcel identified by the City of Yellowknife to the municipality to enable timely planning and development;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure major regional initiatives are coordinated through intergovernmental planning with Indigenous governments, local authorities, and the federal government;

AND FURTHERMORE, that any actions or decisions resulting from this motion shall be interpreted and implemented in a manner that does not derogate from, abrogate, or infringe upon the existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the North Slave Metis, or any other Indigenous Peoples of the Northwest Territories, as recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this motion in 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, this House is debating the Government of the Northwest Territories' land tenure policies for municipalities. And, once again, many find the policies of the GNWT coming up short to meet the moment where there is an opportunity for unprecedented federal investment at our doorstep.

Now unlike other motions, Mr. Speaker, in this sitting this motion is squarely targeted at Yellowknife. Admitted fully. But there is good reason, Mr. Speaker, because Yellowknife has been identified as a forward operating location to receive a massive infrastructure expansion to host the Royal Canadian Air Force's new F-35 stealth fighters. Upgrades include new and repurposed hangars, aprons, taxiways, ammunition compounds, and expanded accommodations.

This investment, along with a \$230 million investment to extend and modernize Inuvik's airport main runway, will allow both of the communities of Yellowknife and Inuvik to serve as anchor points for the logistical web of northern operational support hubs.

I want to commend Yellowknife's Mayor Ben Hendrickson and the hardworking city councillors for being such strong advocates for the urgent need to prepare for these investments. And not only that, but also the hard work they've done to collaborate with other governments and communities, like the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, the GNWT's Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Town of Inuvik and, most recently, a trade mission has been announced to the Town of Hay River.

These efforts have stirred me to once again rise to advocate for their collaborative vision of a territorial capital that supports all communities and will play its part to ensure the NWT doesn't miss out on one of the most important economic development programs in the history of our modern territory and certainly in the history of our country.

This government must take action to deliver results on land supply, and fast. Prime Minister Carney has delivered on this Assembly's wish list of major projects, and now we must deliver on the needs of our communities. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear excuses for delays in land transfers and just as

the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to seemingly find more layers of red tape, our federal counterparts have rolled out solutions to take immediate action on the needs of Canadians, like the One Canada Economy Act and the major projects office. They are not afraid to implement new policy solutions and legislations that move projects forward quicker.

So let's get into that, Mr. Speaker.

We are often told that when it comes to the management, lease, or sale of public lands in the NWT, the government's hands are tied. We are told that every routine decision, every low impact disposition, must enter an indefinite loop of consultation that stretches on for years without end. This is a myth, Mr. Speaker. This is a fundamental misinterpretation of Canadian constitutional law, and it is a disservice to the people of the Northwest Territories who elected us to govern with decisive action.

To be clear, I agree, as do we all, that Indigenous land rights are non-negotiable as is the Section 35 duty to consult. Unfortunately, all too often these legal and moral requirements to meaningfully consult and collaborate with Indigenous governments seem to be used as excuses for bureaucratic inertia and weak decision-making. Indigenous governments ought not to bear the responsibility for the land tenure decisions of this government. While that is not being said directly, the implication cannot be ignored.

Today, in support of this motion, I want to lay out a clear, legally sound, and plain language case for why this government has the absolute jurisdiction to build efficient land policies that can help our friends at Yellowknife City Hall and why the law does not require us to stay trapped in a perpetual application process. This argument relies on three principles: Authority, finality, and certainty.

First, let's be absolutely clear about our jurisdiction. Since the historic milestone of Premier McLeod's devolution deal in 2014, the final administration and control of public lands and resources were transferred directly from the federal government to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Under the NWT Act, this Assembly holds the statutory authority to make laws regarding territorial lands. No longer a mere delegate of the great powers that be in Ottawa, the NWT holds the sole mandate to manage our lands in the interests of all Northerners. The legal authority to write policy, establish rules, and make land dispositions, belongs right here in this chamber.

Second, let's take a look at what the Supreme Court of Canada actually says about Section 35

rights and the duty to consult. In the landmark Haida Nation ruling, the court was explicit, consultation is a process, not a veto. It requires meaningful dialogue and appropriate accommodation, but it does not require absolute consensus. In the Little Salmon Carmacks decision, the Court affirmed that the Crown retains the ultimate right to manage public lands and make final decisions, emphasizing that consultation must be balanced with the public government's democratic mandate to govern. And perhaps most critically, in the Rio Tinto decision, the court clarified that the duty to consult is only triggered when a specific government action threatens a direct, adverse impact on an Indigenous right.

We aren't all lawyers, Mr. Speaker, but what that means is the GNWT has the full legal room to establish clear policy thresholds for land tenure. Routine land decisions, like municipal land transfers and certainly recreational cabin leases for that matter, do not automatically trigger exhaustive multi-year reviews. Northerners have been clear, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that land disposition processes must have a defined beginning, middle, and end.

Finally, let's look at a unique advantage here in the NWT. Much of our land is governed by modern treaties, comprehensive land claim agreements that are constitutionally-protected contracts between sovereign Indigenous nations and Canadian governments. The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled, notably in the Na-Cho Nyak Dun case, that modern treaties like these are intended to bring certainty to who owns the land and how it can be used. They already contain the agreed-upon rules for land management, land use planning, and co-management boards. Where a modern treaty exists, the treaty is the law of the land. If the GNWT follows the explicit consultation steps and timelines written into those agreements, then its Section 35 obligations are legally fulfilled. The GNWT ought not to require a separate, open-ended consultation process outside of the frameworks; the frameworks they themselves signed and agreed to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this motion reflects a need for land supply in a region of the NWT where final modern treaties are still being negotiated. The government will look to the Akaitcho process, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the North Slave Metis Alliance, and other Indigenous groups, and they will no doubt argue that because these comprehensive claims are not yet finalized, the NWT is paralyzed and must enter an endless consultation loop for every single square inch of unceded land. But our own laws and our own

negotiated frameworks say the exact opposite. I am, of course, speaking of interim land withdrawals.

Through negotiations with the Akaitcho and Metis governments, the GNWT has formally withdrawn massive tracts of public land around the city of Yellowknife. Within the municipal boundaries of the city of Yellowknife alone, over 1,000 hectares of Commissioner's land has been frozen. As City Hall has keenly pointed out in their presentation to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, quote, the City owns less than 1 percent of potentially developable land within its own municipal boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, what is the legal purpose of those withdrawals? Immediate and uncontested certainty. By taking these lands out of play, we have given our Indigenous partners a guarantee that their potential treaty lands are protected and will not be sold off while negotiations take place. Furthermore, with the federal government's recent formal recognition of the North Slave Metis Alliance's Section 35 rights, we have a clear path to bring everyone to the table under the same predictable rules. But here is the crucial policy point for this government.

We must confidently assert that the boundaries go both ways. Interim land withdrawals draw a definitive line in the sand. Inside the withdrawal, land is unavailable for any kind of development or disposition until land claim negotiations are finalized. Outside the withdrawal, on the other hand, regular governance and economic development must continue, whether in the city of Yellowknife or any other community in the Northwest Territories. The Supreme Court of Canada cases I spoke of earlier still hold sway on these public lands. The GNWT, as the Crown, retains its authority to manage them, and the existence of an ongoing negotiation does not strip the GNWT of its statutory authority to do so. The government has already legally protected that space for future claims. Outside of those specific boundaries, however, the GNWT has the full authority to implement streamlined land disposition policies over lands that negotiating parties explicitly chose not to withdraw.

We can and must respect Section 35 rights where direct adverse impacts are proven and provide accommodation when determined, but this government cannot trap the rest of our public land base in a perpetual loop of red tape driven by insecurities around a government exercising its own legally justified authorities.

Mr. Speaker, reconciliation does not mean policy paralysis. It means meaningful

nation-to-nation relationship building with Indigenous Peoples and nations who have called the lands of the NWT home since time immemorial. It does a disservice to those bilateral relationships and ongoing project of real reconciliation if this government is reluctant to act decisively when our own very economic future, not to mention the future safety and security of the Arctic, is on the line, and this government points to reconciliation as a reason why we can't move quickly. Through many rulings that have evolved over time, the Supreme Court of Canada has laid out a framework that respects Indigenous rights while protecting the Crown's ability to get things done.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's past time this government got municipal land transfers done. We have the jurisdiction via devolution. We have the procedural finality backed by Supreme Court decisions. And we have the certainty provided by our modern treaties with Indigenous nations, including interim land withdrawal measures, while outstanding land rights agreements are negotiated. It's time for this government to confidently exercise its legal authority. We can, and we should, implement robust, predictable land disposition policies that set firm timelines and clear boundaries. We can fulfill our constitutional duties faithfully without allowing our territory's economic future to be put on hold. It's time to move forward, to invest in our future, and empower local communities to realize their full potential. Let's help the City of Yellowknife close the land supply gap, build new homes, grow new businesses, and create shared benefits for the growth of the entire Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are at a moment where we need to move quickly to take advantage of significant federal investments in the North. I support the principle of economic readiness and better coordination between all levels of governments. I agree that a stronger cooperation is needed, particularly from the territorial government. We have Indigenous governments, municipal governments, and the federal government all working together moving on major investment. The GNWT needs to be a more open and responsive partner if we are going to make the most of this opportunity. The city of Yellowknife is positioned to receive major investment as a key northern supply hub and as a forward operating base for the armed forces. Securing those investments does not happen overnight. It's a lot of work. So when the City of Yellowknife raises concerns, like any community, it's important we listen because

they are pointing to real challenges that need to be addressed, especially as we continue on the path to secure investment that will benefit our territory as a whole.

Issues surrounding the land are very complicated. I also acknowledge the work underway between the City of Yellowknife and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation on reconciliation. There's still more work to do, but I believe the City of Yellowknife is committed and that relationship will continue to strengthen. At the same time, however, there is an ongoing land claim process that must be respected. I have spent much of my life working on land claims so when I say matters of land claims are complicated, I know where that is coming from. But I am mindful of my responsibility as a Member of this Assembly while our chiefs work towards a fair and final agreement for their members. So while I understand this motion does not directly affect interim land withdrawals, it does touch on the land and that matters deeply to my people who are looking to their chiefs and their elders.

For that reason, out of respect for the ongoing negotiation process and my chiefs and the elders, I will be abstaining from this vote.

I want to end by saying that ongoing land claims and self-government negotiations are vital to the future of the territory, the partnership between our communities and our shared prosperity. These are fundamental processes that deserve to be respected in both substance and in tone, and that is the spirit behind my intention to abstain on this vote today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I absolutely rise in support of the principles of this motion, and I am pleased to second it. I've also been pleased to work with my colleague of Range Lake in the past of coming forward with other motions of a similar nature, and I am hoping this one gains some traction.

So, first off, let's be clear. I support the larger principle of the land transfer. I have been advocating for timelines to be accelerated to make sure we meet the demands provided by the City of Yellowknife so it can meet the demands of our city. And keep in mind that Yellowknife is one of -- one, not only, but one of the key engines of the territory so we need to ensure that we are firing on all cylinders, as they say, to make sure we can help support our whole territory. And I think as stated earlier, our City of Yellowknife is deeply reaching out into

other areas to ensure that they're not just a leader but they're a full partner of other communities.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't known by everyone but in some ways we have to ask ourselves about the challenge of how does the city balance its needs, its recognizing on where it lives.

Well, the city isn't subject to Section 35, the duty to consult, on these particular lands or these initiatives. But what is key and absolute is they spent a lot of time engaging and building full partnerships with their Indigenous partners. So what it does is underscores how important they view these relationships, even though they're not legally bound by them. Because they know where they live, they recognize, you know, their audience. You know, they can see this is a live issue to our community and the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I have strategic support on this particular motion, and I will get to that in a second, because I have a slightly different point of view and I've directed it to the city specifically about where I think we could go with this in recognition of their need.

Now, again, time is of the essence. Where do we start with that?

So I do agree with the principles set out in the capital area commission. And what I want to say here with -- you know, with my short time here today is the fact that it's meant to protect the lands around the legislature for the people of the Northwest Territories, maybe even in perpetuity. But my experience even as a city councillor and as a resident of Yellowknife, I have seen things change over time. We cannot tie the hands of a city council if they so choose. And there's a reason I am laying that out, because they can change their mind on how they deal with some of these things, and this will be critical to why I call it strategic support. But I think what we have to not lose sight on is, as pointed out by my good colleague from Range Lake, and of course I should point out my Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh colleague has pointed out the integral relationship we have with both First Nations and the importance we need to be ready for the demands that the federal government is bringing billions of dollars to the North. Could you imagine if something like this stood in the way of that initiative? Oh my goodness. I mean, Mr. Speaker, we cannot watch the diamond mines shut. The music is starting to end without a plan of the future. Well, the lifeboat or the life raft showed up of the military investment. We must find a way to onramp that opportunity. We must turn the lights on and say hey, we will be full partners. And this land is key for the City of Yellowknife to be a full partner in those types of

investments. Again, we don't want to miss out on an eager new dance partner who wants to invest in the North, because those dollars are absolutely critical to the health of our economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, now, I did say strategic support, and I want to describe it a little bit so people can appreciate it. It's sometimes a funny line to walk when you represent one perspective in the Assembly and then you've got to represent another perspective in the community and then you've got to work -- it's sometimes very challenging. So my strategic support is this: First, again, I want to reaffirm, I know the City of Yellowknife needs money -- or sorry, my apologies -- they need money too, lots of it. They need land, and they need the support for that. And to me that is so key to everything that's happening.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore they need a clear timeline. I mean sometimes, not specific to this one, these can take years to see land transfer. But the city doesn't have years to wait and certainly the military investment doesn't have years to wait. They need to move. And they are dealing with pressures that are far beyond anyone in this room's knowledge, and they need to be ready for them. And we can't let them not be ready. That is huge. But where I find -- again, important to stress here is that I do agree with the principles of the capital area commission and the area -- the site overall.

Now, it was intended to set out as a nature area to respect the people of the North, a treasure for the northern people, to be forever. And in essence, I don't know what forever could be but I will say, in my mind, that experiencing when you blast a rock, you scrape it down, you can never return it back to nature as much as you try, you know. So when the city gets land, it has the choice under its rules and processes as to how it finally ends up with it. So if the territorial government gives all the land -- and I am getting to the strategic support in a second -- in essence, it's giving all control away for it. And that would worry me as an MLA, as a citizen, and certainly as a person here in the legislature to say are we giving all the land away around the legislature? I certainly hope not. But what I do think is there's plenty of land to work with. Where I draw the line is saying things like this: I think we need to have a situation, and I've expressed this to the city, that we create a nature zone all throughout around Frame Lake and we have the city ensure it gets transferred back to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories so we can protect it in perpetuity.

Now, the NWT government typically isn't in the housing or land development business so the likelihood of someone building houses on the edge of Frame Lake will just end there. And we

cannot control it if it ends up in the city without our control, because any opinion of the Commissioner or the Speaker or any other Member of this House will just simply be an affected party of the community but not necessarily weighted in a manner they have to follow.

So I think -- I've already explained this to the city, my angle of support, which is we must ensure a swath, a barrier around Frame Lake is protected, so we can ensure that the trails still exist, so the sight lines of the legislature still are principally supported, and the fact is that we have natural space that belong to the people of the Northwest Territories. Because, Mr. Speaker, even when I was a city councillor -- and this is going back a ways -- you know, they even talked about turning public parks into developments. And I remember being approached by one developer -- I won't say their name, but they might be the biggest developer here, individual private developer that has huge apartment buildings, I mean greatest apartment buildings around, but the truth be told is they said, what are they doing? There's no way the public would sit. Well, sure enough, time has moved forward, the City of Yellowknife's been desperate for land, and they've converted park and nature space -- I should say that way -- to development opportunities. And I've seen it. And I wouldn't want this to happen around Frame Lake, around the legislature, and around the piece of public space that Northerners deserve and certainly the intent it was certainly set up for.

Now, Mr. Speaker, overall I am supportive of the whole concept, and my swath, or my barrier, or the track around Frame Lake, should be talked about face to face, and we should get that clearly articulated when it comes down to the time of the transfer. But that said, I've already spoken to the city on how critical that is to me, and I think they understand at least the messaging I have, because they also know that if they have it it's theirs to decide.

And, lastly, I will point out on that piece is, Mr. Speaker, what this council may do by tying their hands -- and this is frustrating but it's true -- they cannot tie the hands of a future council. So if the next council says well, we're going to put trailers or ATCO trailers all along the lake and we're going to do these kind of cool things, and somebody will say, what? But it's well within their power to do that. So we must make sure we can limit that as reasonable as possible. And hence that's why I keep saying that once we identify the right space around the lake, that it gets transferred back. And that's what I've explained to the city, I've taken that position here at the legislature, and I think that's very important.

So at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we find a way to support this motion. If it doesn't affect your community, I would certainly appreciate the support you can have for this. This is significant to the city of Yellowknife. And if anything, I can't stress enough this is absolutely critical for the future of the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this motion is somewhat similar to a previous motion brought forward about two years ago. And I want to be clear that I do support timely, efficient, and robust land transfer processes to all municipalities, and I also believe it should be possible to set defined timelines for each stage of that process. I do also believe that timely and efficient land transfer is critical to allow municipalities, and most urgently at this moment Yellowknife and Inuvik due to the imminent Department of Defence investment, to allow those municipalities to do the planning and build the housing needed to ensure that these investments can proceed and that northern residents actually obtain the benefits rather than us falling back on the old fly-in/fly-out labour. However, I want to point out that this motion is different from the previous motion -- and I did support the previous motion -- because this motion names specific applications for land by the City of Yellowknife that are currently being looked at through the department of ECC. And so essentially, we're asked to demand that the GNWT just approve this application regardless of where it's at in the process. And I want to point out that this is not our role in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I just want us to step back and think what are we doing here? It's not up to us to approve or deny specific applications. It's not up to us to debate sort of the merits of a particular application or try to, you know, on the fly set what the terms of, you know, an approval should be. It is up to us to look at ways to improve policy and processes, things we are in charge of. And I just wanted to note, too, that I find it troubling that instead of focusing on things we do have some control over, we're asking, you know, for a specific application to be approved, whereas in the case of the Frame Lake parcel that is specifically mentioned in this motion, currently the process is stalled with the capital area committee, which Members of this Assembly are involved with via the board of management. So there are tools there that Members do have influence over to help move this process forward in a productive way, and I would just urge us to use the tools and the roles

appropriate to us to move these types of things forward.

So because I don't want to be setting a precedent that this Assembly is trying to pick and choose which specific applications we think should be approved or denied, I will be abstaining from this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Due to the ongoing negotiations of the Deh Cho process with the Deh Cho First Nations and the Government of the Northwest Territories and respect for the First Nations and this process, I will be abstaining from this motion as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the motion. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to note that, you know, I am and stated during the public briefing that we just had with the city on this matter -- you know, I am very supportive of the city in their application for land. I think that, you know, it's been pointed out, and I want to share a bit of a nuance that I shared with the board of management when this issue first came up and that is just that, you know, as a former city councillor, of course, this is an issue that is quite close to my heart as I advocated very strongly on the city side for land to be handed over, and I want to note that, again, I also seconded and voted in favour of a motion speaking to the general -- speeding up the general process of land. I've spoken to the Minister about it. I've made statements about it. I have brought it up during Committee of the Whole. But a detail that hasn't been brought to the floor that I just want to note is that the perspective I shared with BOM at the time was, in my opinion, the concerns that are being expressed at the capital area committee to the city about what could or could not or should or should not be done with this land is between the city and the capital area committee. It needs to be resolved at the municipal level. I think the municipal government has the ability to govern the lands within their boundary and should be given the ability to do that. And so my hope was that those concerns not get in the way of a land application process, and I continue to hold that position, Mr. Speaker, and certainly encourage my colleagues at BOM to bring this to a quick resolution as much as they can.

As the Member for Yellowknife North noted, you know, in an area where we have the tools and

we have the ability and we have certainly the jurisdiction to move aspects of this application forward where we can, let's use those tools and let's do it expediently. And I continue to urge BOM to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I think what gives me a bit of pause here and where I want to be very careful in how I conduct myself as a Member is just, you know, the point made by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the point that I deeply respect, and want to note that I want to be very careful not to be seen to or inadvertently step on negotiations between rights holders, landholders, and claimants on the land, and I think we need to tread carefully on that matter. And it is up to, you know, the government to complete those negotiations as need be, and it's up to the city to ensure that the rights are upheld. And I know that the city built a very strong working relationship with neighbouring Indigenous governments during my terms on council, and I was very proud of that and continue to be proud of that. And in respect to that position taken by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, I think it is best if I also abstain from the motion in this case and just want to note that, you know, I want to express while doing that strong support for the city's application and strong support and continued encouragement to resolve the issues where there's issues standing in the way of this moving forward, let's certainly get out of the way and move this issue forward decisively for all the various reasons that have been discussed, I think quite publicly and extensively on the public record at the city, in this House, in committee, and otherwise. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the motion. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be voting in favour of the motion. We did have committee presentations by the mayor of Yellowknife and the town manager. So given the presentation, the information and the exchange back and forth, I am satisfied that this is our capital of the Northwest Territories and the huge opportunities coming in with this large client, the armed forces department. So land is very important in any occasion of development. So all the factors lead -- and I did mention at committee I support that, and again today I will mention I will support this motion there. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. To the motion. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't retrace the points made by my colleagues earlier. Just to say that when the similar motion came before us a couple of years ago, I abstained with concerns of treading into areas that I do not feel I can respectfully tread in. This is, again, a regulatory issue between multiple jurisdictions, including Section 35 right holders. Although I do support the transfer in principle and I've said so on the public record in committee, I will be abstaining from this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the motion. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Ever so briefly, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Also an issue that obviously I've brought to this floor as well from the Town of Inuvik albeit in a little different perspective, given that they have two settled land claims in Inuvik, but there is an issue of getting the block transfer of the land within the municipal boundaries transferred to the community as a whole. Having said that, for all the reasons that my colleagues have said here in this House, I will be supporting this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Does the mover wish to close debate?

**MR. TESTART:** Why yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you very much for the support of colleagues on this motion. I just want to point out, in case it wasn't clear, but the application that's specifically referenced in the second clause of the motion around the 41-hectare Frame Lake parcel is not a selected -- is not land selected by the Akaitcho process or any Indigenous group that I am aware of. So that again -- and I gave a lengthy speech about how that works, how interim land withdrawal works. And, of course, the motion also, the final -- or the second last clause talks about not infringing on any Indigenous rights. So I am not sure how that wasn't communicated clearly but just -- I want to really state that, that this motion -- land is life in the Northwest Territories, and it's so important, which is why that's in there, to make sure with absolute certainty there is no question about the potential harm to Indigenous people by inappropriately seizing land that is not ours to take.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why this motion came about is because the City of Yellowknife put together a very nice information package, came to standing committee, came to the board of

management, and has loudly advocated for this. And that's the community I represent. I am friends with many of those councillors. I'd like to think I have a good relationship with the mayor. And it was easy to say, well, let's give your presentation package a bigger stage on the floor of the House. I don't see that as interfering with any regulatory process. My good friend from the Sahtu frequently speaks about the need to speed up Mackenzie Valley Highway, something I support, I think something we all support, and I've never heard any concern that we might be stepping on anyone's toes about a specific project in a specific region to do a specific thing. So I am a little surprised today, but that's fine. Everyone needs to make their own decisions. But, again, what I was calling for in my speech is something I think that is important. It's approaching these challenges with public policy and in an unceded, unsettled land claim area, it is incredibly challenging to make decisions because there's uncertainty kind of built into that process until there is certainty. But governments have to act with confidence. We only have 4-year terms, and if we're too hesitant to act decisively, especially when there's an opportunity ahead of us, then things can slow down, and we have a bad reputation of being a very slow government.

So the reason for this motion has been clear: The City of Yellowknife brought this forward. They're great advocates for our community. I am happy to support them in bringing this to the floor. I am happy we could get -- show support from across the territory and that we can move forward. And I hope that all those who are listening understand that this is an urgent matter that needs top priority. Every Yellowknifer cares about this, and I am happy to have supportive colleagues moving forward. And I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Range Lake has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposing, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Yellowknife South. The

Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The results of the recorded vote are six in favour, zero opposed, and 11 abstentions. Motion carried.

---Carried

Colleagues, being reflective of the time we need to let the interpreters get a break. So we went a little over so we will have a brief break, and then we'll come back.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** The interpreters appreciated that. Motions. Member from Range Lake.

#### MOTION 85-20(1): CENSURE OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 6.2(14), I wish to withdraw Motion 85-20(1). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. The Member from Range Lake wishes to withdraw Motion 85-20(1). Rule 6.2(14) provides that a motion may be withdrawn with the consent of the seconder providing that debate has not begun. As we have not started debate on this motion, I will turn to the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for his consent to have the motion withdrawn. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, as a seconder of this motion, do you consent?

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I consent to the Motion 85-20(1) to be withdrawn. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Colleagues, pursuant to Rule 6.2(14), Motion 85-20(1) has been withdrawn and by the mover with the consent of the seconder.

Motions. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

#### Oral Questions

##### QUESTION 1290-20(1): NORTHERN BUILDING CODE

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my first set of questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, following up on my Member's statement today.

So my understanding is that there is already work underway within the Department of Infrastructure to create an NWT building standards policy framework. Now, I am not sure if that means we're busy creating building standards or what the policy framework part actually means, but my first question is, can the Minister describe what work is taking place towards creating northern building standards and what is expected to be the end result of that work, the end product. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Departments of Infrastructure, Municipal and Community Affairs, and Housing are working together to advance a coordinated approach to build standards for the Northwest Territories. This includes research, policy development, and assessing the implications of broader approach of the national building standards across the country and the territory. The working group is actively engaging with partners and stakeholders, including community governments, to understand the potential impacts, identify areas of concern, and ensure that northern realities are reflected. The intended outcome of the comprehensive building standard framework for the Northwest Territories that strengthens safety and consistency and is supported by a clear policy foundation where needed and at end of the legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us what is the timeline or the estimated timeline for completing that work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** So the working group is currently reviewing the existing regulatory framework and continuing the engagement with local stakeholders. Based on this work, recommendations to be established in the NWT building standards framework will be advanced in 2026. The goal is to bring forward a legislative proposal, if needed, before the end of the current Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I am tentatively hopeful here and encouraged. Can the Minister tell us how he will ensure that building standards are not a one size fits all, you know, imposition and how they can be responsive to very different environmental and economic constraints, both within communities

and amongst our very diverse NWT communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this work is not about importing the southern building practices in the North. It's about strengthening the public safety and by formally adopting a nationally recognized code and standards the way they work in the North and reflect in the North. To be clear, we're not developing a standalone NWT-specific building code. Instead, the focus is adopting the National Building Code, which is developed collaboratively by provinces and territories to reflect the diverse conditions of the North. Importantly, jurisdictions have the flexibility in how they could adopt and apply the code. For example, Nunavut has tailored its building regulations by removing or modifying provisions related to water heater efficiency, foundations, and thermal insulation for better reflecting the northern conditions. The NWT will take a similar approach, ensuring that any framework is adaptable, practical, and responsive to the unique environmental, economic, and capacity realities of our northern communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1291-20(1):  
ENGAGING ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES  
WITH LUTSELK'E

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation issued a letter raising some concerns. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier in regards to the letter, commit to immediate re-engagement with the First Nation leadership on their outstanding issues in regards to the letter that's sent. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My job as Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is to engage with Indigenous leadership, so I am always happy to engage with Indigenous leadership. I understand that Lutselk'e has had an election and that the results need to be verified. I am not quite sure of the process right now, but I know that it's sort of we're in the midst of that right now. And so as soon as everything is confirmed and set, I am happy to have those conversations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Akaitcho Assembly is coming up next month. Will the Premier keep his word and

confirm whether the financial compensation previously discussed with Chief Marlowe is still on the table, or has the commitment has been dropped? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we have committed to provide Lutselk'e with funds for different purposes over the past couple of years, and those monies have flowed. There's perhaps other requests for funds that were not commitments but requests. That being said, I want to ensure that we are working to improve our relationship with the community of Lutselk'e. I have been invited to the Akaitcho Assembly. I responded saying I will attend the Akaitcho Assembly in Lutselk'e. So that's an opportune time to go there, speak with residents and speak with leadership, and I look forward to spending some time this summer in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the community of Lutselk'e has read strongly on his apology letter, which was issued without meaningful engagement, delivered from Yellowknife rather than the community and accompanied by continued excuses and justification from the read. Anyway, my question is how does the Premier justify dismissing what Lutselk'e Dene First Nations concerns on reconciliation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven't dismissed any concerns on reconciliation. I've been trying for a couple of years to get into the community, have not been able to come to an agreement with leadership on that trip, what we would be doing once we're in the community, how the activities would unfold. I would have loved to have been there already. I would have loved to have been in the community multiple times already. And so hopefully this time around there's a fresh start and we can start that relationship again, and I can go to the community, I can speak to the people in the community, and we can start to build an even stronger relationship than we had before. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1292-20(1):  
CHIEF JIMMY BRUNEAU SCHOOL FORMER  
STUDENTS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is following my questions on Chief Jimmy Bruneau residential

school. Mr. Speaker, many former students are seeking answers about what happened at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School and how those experiences continue to affect families today. My question for the Minister is this: What role can the Department of Justice play in helping former Chief Jimmy Bruneau School students and residents have their experiences heard? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a big question. It's a tough one for me to stand up here and answer. I don't want to direct any student to go out and -- or former students to do anything that would, you know, potentially re-traumatize them. If the Member has some sort of proposals -- she knows her community much better than I do -- can provide some guidance on what exactly the former students were looking for, I am happy to see how we can work together on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister work with former Chief Jimmy Bruneau School students and residents alongside Tlicho leadership to determine an appropriate path forward? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to commit the Minister of Justice to anything. I am answering questions on his behalf today but if there's an important issue to people in the community, in the region, then we're always willing to try and work together on that. I think that this discussion probably needs to be fleshed out a bit more so we have a better understanding of exactly what is being requested and what people would like to see. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** A public inquiry would be good, but thank you. Will the Minister commit to taking this issue back to the Department of Justice and returning to this House with a clear action plan for how the GNWT can support former Chief Jimmy Bruneau School students in having their experiences heard and responded to? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can take this back, I can have conversations. But I think we're going to need to involve the Member, involve Tlicho leadership, so that we can get a better understanding of what people are looking for. This is the kind of thing that there needs to be real discussions about. Here on the floor of the House, just spitballing ideas

is not -- I don't think it's going to come to the solution that people want, and it's not something that the Department of Justice can say here's what we're going to do going forward. Whatever is done, it needs to be done in a collaborative fashion. It should be led by survivors. And I could just leave it at that for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 1293-20(1):  
HEALTH INFORMATION BREACHES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to information breaches, especially health care information breaches, Northerners deserve better. Other Canadian jurisdictions have set a higher bar for transparency and accountability in privacy breach reporting, and the NWT should be doing the same. Our Minister of health must act with greater urgency to address threats to medical record privacy, whether from employees improperly accessing records or external cyber intrusions.

Mr. Speaker, if an investigation into a privacy breach is complete and my constituent has been notified, why is it the Minister's policy to refuse to identify the staff member who accessed my constituent's health information without authorization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the name of employees who may have inappropriately accessed personal health information are not disclosed in these client notifications. This approach is consistent with the privacy legislation and established practice. It ensures that only minimum necessary information is shared, protects the employee's privacy, and supports due process particularly where internal reviews or investigations may be still going on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The key word is inappropriately accessing. We're not talking about a benign breach or an accidental breach. We're talking about an intentional breach.

How does the Minister justify treating the identity of a staff member who improperly accessed health records as equivalent to the protected health information of the patient affected? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, in this one instance here, I have to say here on the floor of this House that I agree with this Member. This has been a frustration of mine as a Minister. And the review that we have just completed has highlighted this, and I have directed my department to -- when these breaches are coming forward in investigations, that they need to be held at the highest standards. And that is one of the areas where, you know, I continue. Every time a privacy breach crosses my desk, it angers me. It angers me because we're trying to build trust in this healthcare system and we have our employees breaching that trust, and there's disciplinary processes within our government that we have to take. And so, you know, within the HIA and the review, I know within the next government, that's slated for a legislation update. I believe that there needs to be stronger things put in there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are public interest provisions in the current Act but they're never used to disclose the identity of staff found to be snooping, Mr. Speaker. So my question to the Minister is we don't have to wait for a new change. There is a public interest disclosure provision. We could make it apply to these inappropriate cases. So tell me why we can't essentially. Is it too narrowly drawn, or is it just never used? Because it's already in the legislation, but it's not getting used. My constituents can't wait until the next Assembly. They deserve justice for what's happened to them today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take this back to my department. I will look at it, and I will have a conversation with them and maybe -- as well as the privacy commissioner. Some of these laws and there are these interpretations of them and so, you know, I hear the Member, and I agree. I've had many of my own constituents who've had this happen. I've had staff in the past, you know, when I was a manager, that I've had to deal with and go through the process with -- you know, with HR. But I believe that, you know, this is where I think we do need to make it stronger, and if I am able to -- within the legislation, to direct my department to make stronger changes, I will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1294-20(1):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE OPTIC LINE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to ask questions. I am very excited, I should say, to ask questions of the Minister of Finance regarding the Mackenzie Valley fiber Optic Line. I am following up from my Member's statement. So given that the Mackenzie Valley fiber link generates \$2.3 million in annual revenues against a \$12 million annual cost, the GNWT is subsidizing the asset at a rate of approximately \$9.7 million per year. What is the department's formal break-even strategy, and what specific revenue growth targets have they set out for the northern lights general partnership to reduce the taxpayer-funded shortfall before the agreement expires in 2037? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was eagerly awaiting my name. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a P3 project, so it was built in such fashion where given the significant costs back in 2015 or so when this was being constructed to build a project of this magnitude to bring fiber all the way up the valley and through difficult terrain in a manner arguably ahead of some of our territorial colleagues, the options would have been to try to fund that entirely up front, which may have been a bill that we simply back then, I would suspect, could not have afforded, take on a massive amount of debt, which would come with a deficit inclusion and likely a significant amount of interest, which we would still be paying off, and possibly a breach of what the borrowing limit would have been back then, or to do it as a P3, which means, Mr. Speaker, that you pay a smaller amount up front, you spread that cost out over time, and that is what we are seeing now. So it's not -- it's subsidizing in the sense that it's paying off the cost of the infrastructure asset. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** But it's not generating money to pay for it. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's response failed to address the inquiry regarding revenue leakage to other jurisdictions. And to be clear, that's with respect to my written question. From the accountability standpoint, has the GNWT conducted a formal assessment to quantify the value of telecommunications traffic originating in the NWT that it is currently routed through to southern providers rather than the Mackenzie Valley fiber optic link? If so,

what is the estimated annual fiscal loss to the Northwest Territories economy? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly do track the customers that come to the Mackenzie Valley fibre line. Right now that is predominantly as a result of the satellite array that is up in Inuvik, and certainly do look for opportunities, particularly with the coming, you know, increase in the Inuvik area from the department of defence and from other countries about the opportunity to increase traffic on the fibre line. But, Mr. Speaker, this is not -- you know, and it's not my expectation that this fibre line is going to suddenly become a significant cash cow. There is a small residential base, a small customer base here in the Northwest Territories to buy the wholesale fibre that we have. This was always meant to be the backbone that would provide fibre opportunities into small communities and better link our system across this territory, and that is what it continues to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's response identified eight communities that remained, quote, satellite served, with maximum speeds of 15 megabits per second. Despite the Mackenzie Valley fibre Link being framed as a strategic public asset, on what basis of financial accountability does the GNWT justify the continued \$12 million annual expenditure when we're not making revenue on these specific resident -- for these specific residents are forced in these particular circumstances to switch to things like Starlink, which far exceeds the 100 megabits per second to meet their community needs?

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to revisit the earlier submitted written questions and answer them in a more fulsome way? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance, you've got two questions in there.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I will take my pick of the two questions. I will answer the first. Mr. Speaker, the fibre line was always intended -- and, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't in the Assembly when the fibre line was being designed or debated or discussed or justified. Other Members may have been, Mr. Speaker, so. But, Mr. Speaker, I can see at this point in time, my understanding the fibre line provides an important point of presence into communities. The fibre line

connects all the way up to Tuktoyaktuk, without which there would not be a point of presence of fibre. So every community pretty much North of -- well, North of Fort Simpson and even into the Fort Simpson area would be on some form of microwave or satellite. So the fibre line provides that opportunity, brings that satellite -- brings the satellite systems to opportunity in the North and provides a point of presence to all of those communities up and down the valley. And that was the intent of it, Mr. Speaker. That's -- it's providing that intent, it's providing that point of presence. And I think I will stop there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from the Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1295-20(1):  
FEES FOR LONG TERM CARE CLIENTS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain how the department determined that \$80,000 is the right threshold for financial hardship when these fees can cost more than \$12,000 a year and residents are already facing a cost-of-living crisis? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Deh Cho. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am unaware of where the Member got the \$80,000 figure, as the long-term care rates don't have that. There is no threshold for financial hardship when it comes to fees for long-term care in the Northwest Territories. If long-term -- currently, the way the process works, if there's long-term care clients that can't afford the fees, they can apply -- you know, there's income support that they can apply through for room and board to help cover those costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The income threshold information came from the department's -- research got it for me. So can the Minister confirm what options are available to families who need care but fall outside of the income threshold for relief and cannot afford these fees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated, anyone who -- so the process for long-term care is that they're assessed by their practitioner, there's a care plan done, an application done for long-term care, and then it's reviewed by the territorial admissions, and then it's prioritized on hierarchy for the beds that are available in the

Northwest Territories. And every single person, before they sign the agreement for long-term care, you know, they have the fees. And so in the Northwest Territories, that fee, I believe -- I believe it's \$1,100. I'd have to get back to the Member on that accuracy, to the House. It is the cheapest in Canada. Anywhere else in long-term care, you know, it can range from anywhere from \$3,000 to \$5,000 a month. This is for full care. But anyone who cannot afford these fees, they can work with their -- you know, with the health provider and income support to put in an application for their room and board. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, further to this, will the Minister commit to suspending the new alternative level care charge and reviewing long-term care fees before families are forced to pay costs they cannot afford? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these fees are only being charged to those clients who have applied for and been approved for long-term care. They are the same fees that are charged to all of the clients in the Northwest Territories in our long-term care and in our extended care that are admitted. In the Northwest Territories, as I mentioned, has the lowest, and currently it is \$34 a day or \$1,021 per month as of May 1st, 2026. And so with that, using the hardship, they can also -- it shouldn't put anyone -- anyone with undue hardship who doesn't have the means to pay -- the client doesn't have the means to pay, they can go through the income assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 1296-20(1):  
SOLUTIONS FOR TRADESPEOPLE  
WITHOUT RED SEAL

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. What solutions are in place to ensure the experience of tradespeople who do not have a Red Seal can be captured and used? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate

the Member recognizing that there are multiple Northerners who have extensive experience in the trades but don't carry any formal credentials. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does have a process called the Designated Trainer Process, and this is where individuals who are not certified journeypersons or Red Seal holders can be assessed and recognizing as having sufficient knowledge and can then act as trainers and mentors for apprentices within the field. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that knowledge is recognized and the response from the Minister. My second question there, Mr. Speaker, does the department have designated trainers already in the NWT? If so, how many, and how many is in the Sahtu? Mahsi.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are currently 17 designated trainers across the Northwest Territories. Specifically, there are two in the Sahtu region, four in the Tlicho region, one in the Deh Cho region, one in the Beaufort Delta, and nine in the North Slave region. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that clarification. What other improvements is ECE considering improving access to trades, especially to ensure workforce readiness in the time of the upcoming major projects, like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a very timely question, a very important question right now. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, last year there were additional entry pathways into the trades that were opened up by education, culture and employment. In addition, we continue to grow the SNAP program, or the Schools North Apprenticeship Program. We've more than doubled our SNAP students and tripled the communities that SNAP students are found in. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the department is currently reviewing the apprenticeship trades and occupational certification regulations. And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, there are multiple conversations happening in a very excited territory as projects of national significance are looking to be built in the territory. And so, Mr. Speaker, some of the other conversations that are happening are exploring communities to deliver trades essentials programming in the Northwest

Territories, and in addition to that, exploring partnerships with education bodies, Aurora College, Indigenous governments who are looking to deliver trades fundamentals and trades opportunities in communities as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, education, culture and employment. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 1297-20(1):  
EVIDENCE ON LAND CLAIM OBLIGATION  
FULFILMENT

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are going to be given to the Premier. You mentioned in one of your statements that you have a commitment and accountability and engagement to the House. Do you have a commitment to accountability and engagement to the residents of the Northwest Territories, the Indigenous governments, and especially to the -- what -- does the Premier believe that GNWT is currently meeting the obligations to work in partnership with Indigenous governments and land claim organizations? And if so, what evidence can he provide to demonstrate those obligations are being fulfilled to the land claim groups? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not a small question. A lot of the work that we do involves Indigenous governments. That's the reason work gets done. I can point to a number of areas where we've collaborated and improved relationships. I always start with the Council of Leaders, a place where all the different leaders in the territory, Cabinet, Indigenous leaders, can come together and actually discuss issues. And those discussions inform Cabinet decisions. They inform how I operate. And so right there, that level of communication doesn't exist anywhere else in Canada, in any other jurisdiction. There's no other Premier and Cabinet that sit down regularly with Indigenous leaders from across the territory and travel together to Ottawa and advocate together for shared priorities. There's examples with our major projects. Working with the Indigenous groups on the Mackenzie Valley Highway, Arctic Economic and Security Corridor, the Taltson Watershed. There's -- I mean, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of asking me what do we do as a government. Because that's what we do. Everything we do, we try to do in collaboration with Indigenous governments. We have housing MOUs with Indigenous governments. We work with the Inuvialuit on child and family services and taking over that authority. We're working with the Tlicho on drawing down authorities under their

self-government. We're working with Deline on a number of different initiatives. I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. This is what we do as a government. Thank you.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What measures are in place to ensure that land claim organizations are meaningfully consulted and involved before the GNWT enters into contracts, projects, or initiatives that may affect settlement lands or treaty rights? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are consultation guidelines, and we follow those. You know, there's some places across Canada, they might not think that those are very clear, those Section 35 consultation requirements. We understand those here in the Northwest Territories, and we consult whenever we are required to, and beyond that, when we're not required to because we want to be good partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Mr. Speaker, to that note, we -- I, myself, and a contractor and the GTC are trying to work collaboratively with the Cabinet to no avail. How does the Premier ensure that the commitments made through modern treaties, self-government agreements, and intergovernmental agreements are reflected in GNWT decision-making on contract negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have a negotiated contracts policy in the Northwest Territories. That is to support companies or Indigenous governments that are -- to help them gain capacity. Generally, for the first, you know, few times when there's not that capacity and they can't necessarily compete with other companies, there's an opportunity to enter into a negotiated contract and support them. There's -- it has been used differently across the territory, and there's some instances where a single company might get a negotiated contract for 5, 10, 15, 20 years in a row. And we can't always do those kind of things. Sometimes we need to ensure that there's opportunities for other companies. There's companies that do work. There's perhaps companies that want to do work but they can't get their foot in the door because contracts don't go out publicly; they just get negotiated. And so it's striking a balance to ensure we're keeping benefits in the territory, we're supporting northern businesses, and we're supporting entrepreneurs who want to get into business as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 1298-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO REVIEW OF  
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories recently released a what we heard report on the review of the Residential Tenancies Act, and at the end of this report, it states that they will -- or the Department of Justice will study the information gathered from the stakeholders that responded to their request for feedback as well as issues raised by the rental officer and consider how this feedback can contribute to improving and updating the Act. My question today is, does that mean, then, that the Residential Tenancies Act will be looked at to be opened and amended in the 21st Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak to what will happen in the 21st Assembly. I can speak to what will happen in the 20th Assembly, and I note that there was a review. I don't believe that it's on the legislative agenda at this point to be opened up, but we could be in a position at the end of this government where work has advanced to the point that the 21st Assembly is set up to open up that act and do work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so in this report, in the what we heard report, it talks about feedback from MLAs, and, of course, the feedback given by MLAs was from the 19th Assembly, Mr. Speaker, if you read it carefully. Will there be an opportunity for MLAs in this Assembly to provide feedback? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, they get paid to do that. When we develop legislation, it's done with Members of this Assembly. As I've said before, when things are said in this House, when we get letters from committee, when Ministers are in front of committee, that's feedback. MLAs don't need a special designated time to provide feedback. They can always provide feedback. That is their role. Once we develop a legislative proposal, which is the first step in creating legislation after identifying a need, that legislative proposal is sent to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for feedback. Once a bill is drafted, there's a whole committee process where MLAs can have input and make amendments, propose amendments to bills.

And then, of course, here in the House, there's opportunities to move motions as well. So yes, absolutely, Members will be intimately involved in that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the Premier can explain my job to me. But what I would like clarity around is, rather, if I have feedback and information and options that I think are fascinating and might not be chosen to be studied by committee, would the GNWT be interested in receiving those options? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. You know, I brought forward many pieces of legislation over the past six years, and I can tell you that it's very much informed by MLAs. If there's an MLA with a particular interest in a particular area, that is considered. When we're sitting around with our staff and Cabinet, we talk about that Member's concerns and what they want to see in legislation. So yes, absolutely, Mr. Speaker, I welcome that feedback. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1299-20(1):  
SUPPORTED LIVING REVIEW  
RECOMMENDATIONS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of health, as I was speaking about disabilities earlier today. Mr. Speaker, as has been noted several times in this House, it's been three years since the supported living review was released. The last time I asked about it, the Minister noted that the health sustainability unit review is going to help integrate -- I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. The health sustainability unit is looking at that area. But, Mr. Speaker, how is the HSSU going to help identify a path by which the Supported Living Review recommendations will be actioned? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Supported Living Review that was completed is -- the department continued to work on that over the last few years and implement and work on developing the supportive living standards, and most recently established the admissions committee. But within the partnership with health sustainability unit, some of that work has kind

of paused while the analysis is going on, and they're analyzing the out of territory programs to determine, you know, the cost of it because it continues to increase year after year, and determine some options for in-territory service delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I am sure that disability advocates will be excited to hear that we are exploring service delivery in the territory, which is what people have been asking for, and so I am excited to see what the HSSU brings forward in potential savings that we can use to improve our programming. Mr. Speaker, I noted the standardized process for supported living admissions. I am wondering, is the department exploring other areas for service integration or improvement of service delivery for persons with disabilities and their families. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what the supportive living review is doing is people who have needs beyond, you know, so that they need support. And I think there's different levels, and what that work that has been done is trying to identify, like, the different tiers. Like, in long-term care, we have different tiers of level of care, and so, like, anything under fours, they can remain at home and be supported. And that's how our home care program runs. And so with the supportive living, this is where we -- you know, we've had different organizations who have provided some services, NGOs, but we're trying to look at options right now. And I think that's the big piece, is that we know we have many residents who still live at home, families who just need support. We need people that are in the territory that can have independent supportive living, but then we have those higher levels that sometimes in the territory we can't support. So that's what -- a lot of the work that's going on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the Minister elaborating on that point. Mr. Speaker, what's the timeline for health care sustainability unit recommendations with relation to this item, supported living, and the recommendations of the supported living report? When can we -- when can we in the public look forward to seeing the results of that work? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't currently have the timeline for the health sustainability unit, but I know it's No. 2, and I know it's going through its processes right now to -- and so hopefully -- I can't give a

date, but I can commit to providing that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from the Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1300-20(1):  
CLASS OF FORT PROVIDENCE AIRPORT

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me if NWT airports are -- they're classified different ways? And what class is the Fort Providence airport? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, yeah, airports are different across territories, depending on the length of the runway and what instruments are available at the runway. The actual certification for the Fort Providence runway, I am not aware of, but, however, they do -- they are capable of handling essential aircraft like the medivac plane and stuff like that, so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When and if we get trained personnel and an operational ambulance in our community, will our airport be shut down? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, all our airports are utilizing medivac aircrafts across the territory, so it would never shut down due to the fact that you have trained personnel in the community that provide emergency response. So the airport would remain open. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi. And thank you to the Minister for that response. Can the Minister tell me why there isn't a terminal building at the airport in Fort Providence? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of that one. I'd have to ask the department if there ever was one. I mean, you would probably know as a resident. But if there is the ability to put one there or at least get it on our capital plan or anything like that, so I will work with the department to find out what the plan is for that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1301-20(1):  
CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my questions now are for the Minister of Finance. So earlier today, Bill 32 received assent, and that was the first phase of much-needed changes to the Public Service Act. But there is important work left to do. Last fall, the government committed to pursue a second phase of changes to the Public Service Act, focused on overhauling Section 41, to allow public servants to choose the bargaining agent that represents them and specifically to create a fair and lawful process for union certification and decertification in the NWT public service. So can the Minister describe what work has been completed since last fall on these phase 2 changes to the Public Service Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, quite a lot has, indeed, taken place. So, Mr. Speaker, there's been a robust series of engagement sessions, so not the least of which, first and foremost, with bargaining partners, Mr. Speaker, but also a period of public engagement. And then with that, Mr. Speaker, we were able to submit a legislative proposal for review by standing committees. And, thereafter, once that is -- once that's complete -- when that review gets complete, Mr. Speaker, we take that over to be drafted, and that's the stage that we're at now. We're also engaging quite regularly with the federal government. We were relying, likely, on a Yukon model that relies on the Federal labour Relations Board and so on to talk to them and make sure that we could utilize that. So that has all been happening during that period. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that update. Can the Minister tell us what's the expected timeline for the introduction of a bill in this House that would create that fair and lawful process for union certification and decertification in the public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am anticipating a fall introduction of the bill. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So given that a what we heard report has been complete, can the Minister tell us if there were any big takeaways from the public consultation process so far that may have altered or enhanced the direction of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for folks who are very keen, the GNWT's Have Your Say web page does provide links to all of our what we heard reports, including this one. By way of just high-level summary, Mr. Speaker, we do -- there was quite a range of responses, including, in particular, support for increasing employee choice in representation, as well as concerns around ensuring that that process be fair, wanting to make sure that there's opportunities for that choice to include specific sector representation, wanting to know -- have certainty around what that process -- what the decision-making process would be around certification and who would be involved in it. Some concerns raised around reflecting the ongoing need for diversity and inclusion in the public service, Mr. Speaker, in the course of these processes. But again, as I say, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to do a lack of justice to the detailed reports that we had and would commend folks to the Have Your Say web page. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake. Oh, sorry. Okay, yeah. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 1302-20(1):  
LEAVING THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
FOR HEALTH CARE

**MR. TESTART:** Yes, the ongoing problem with Yellowknife lakes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I spoke of a constituent of mine who is being forced to leave the territory due to her acute medical needs. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services explain to this House how it's acceptable that a specialized front line health care worker is being told by her own physicians that she has no choice but to leave the NWT for care. And I know the Minister knows this because I have sent the file to her office, so I expect a full response. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have not gotten any information back yet on the -- as there has been some back and forth with my office and the Member's office. So I will take that on notice, and then I will provide the information as soon as I have that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. Apparently the encampment has shown up on the infrastructure property downtown just down the street on -- near the Whitford building, down the street on 49th Street. So I am asking the Minister what are they doing about it and how are they assessing and monitoring this process. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Infrastructure. Oh, housing?

[Audio].

Oh, Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe Housing NWT does their own infrastructure acquisition, so this would be directed to the Minister of housing. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Sorry for all the confusion. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Understanding it's on Infrastructure property, but Housing NWT is leading the formal encampment response process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1303-20(1):  
ENCAMPMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That encampment is growing. It's affecting the residents in the neighbourhood there. I'd like to hear what the government is doing to solve that problem because the people and families in that neighbourhood are not enjoying the late night -- we'll call it entertainment provided by this encampment. On top of that, that's a parking lot for Infrastructure vehicles. That's why I went to the Infrastructure Minister first to see what they're doing about it, just for clarity, Mr. Speaker. So what is Housing going to do to help these families that are under this distress? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing did commit and the government did commit to a coordinated response and a standard operating procedure. Housing NWT, along with government partners,

have issued the framework today, and this framework lays out what the different departments, along with the City of Yellowknife and the Municipal Enforcement Division and RCMP, work alongside with EIA and the Integrated Service Delivery Unit to provide support to the neighbourhood and to the people that are within the encampment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. My third -- yeah. This is my third question. One question --

**MR. SPEAKER:** [Audio].

**MR. HAWKINS:** Yeah, my third. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has anyone had the courage to ask them to leave? They're now blocking government parking and we have government vehicles that have to go somewhere and this is interrupting the operations of government, and maybe direct them to a -- we'll call it a better location of Commissioner's land, which you guys have all the access to that information --

**MR. SPEAKER:** [Audio].

**MR. HAWKINS:** So, Mr. Speaker, has anyone had the courage to try to ask them to relocate to a place that isn't in conflict? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I will find out the specifics for the MLA and provide that information to them by tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 1304-20(1):  
SPECIAL NEEDS FACILITY

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for health and social services. Minister of Health and Social Services. You know, I did raise this issue back in February regarding special needs facility. So, Mr. Speaker, Tlicho regions -- in Tlicho region, families continue to raise serious concerns about the absence of a dedicated facility to support residents with special needs. I know that the Minister said there were, like, 12 of our Tlicho citizens that were outside of the NWT. They were in a facility outside of the NWT. So given the ongoing concerns raised by families, the Minister said she was going to talk to TCSA. Can the Minister update us on the status of the development of a dedicated special needs facility in Tlicho region? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I -- you know, I appreciate this question being raised again, and I do agree that, as I said to the -- in the last questions that I was responding to on supportive living is that there are many of our residents that are living outside the territory because we currently haven't established places in the territory for that. And that is what -- and I know that work on the health sustainability unit should be coming available soon. Once that -- you know, that comes forward, then -- you know, then that gives us the decisions to figure out what we're going to do in territory. And I agree with the Member that, you know, bringing back people home, we don't want to bring them back and have them in a big institution if they're -- if they have to live. We want to make sure that we're looking at different options. And so as soon as we have this information, I am sure, you know, with -- the Premier will brief the committee, and we will be able to have a plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, when we see our residents that are in the south, you know, it's very heartbreaking for many of the family members when they see them when they're going to be leaving. Some of them cry. It's a very emotional time for many of them. So, you know, 12 outside, and then there's more than 10 in Tlicho region with the need that we can surely use supportive living programs in the community. So with that in mind, can the Minister confirm how many special needs units are available in the NWT to accommodate, you know, both the elderly and the young people with special needs? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now we currently have a facility in Hay River for supportive living. We have two facilities in Inuvik. One is more independent, and one is more of nursing care in there, more advanced care. However, there's multiple people living with families and other people in the territory. And this is one of the concerns, and that's why we created the territorial supportive living application so that families can go through this if they need supports. So then we can kind of identify of those ones that we don't know that are in small communities that maybe need supports, we need to have everybody apply through this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to put a rush order on this for supportive living in Tlicho region so that our young people do not have to leave the Northwest Territories.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now what I commit to is that I know within the assessment phase we are trying to make sure that people who are living outside the territory that are Tier 1 and Tier 2, those are the ones that we would be able to, you know, try to support. That's where we're thinking, but -- so everybody has to be reassessed to make sure that -- so even if there's, as the Member said, 12 residents from Behchoko or Tlicho region outside the territory, not all of them might be 1 or 2, so they may not all be able to be supported back in the territory. But what I can do is get more information on that and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1305-20(1):  
APPRENTICESHIP AND TRADES  
PROGRAMS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the topic of improving our apprenticeship and trades programs, following up on yesterday. So the ECE service centres are tasked with monitoring workplace training, but I've heard concerns that their compliance monitoring is not necessarily always proactive or consistent. So my first question to the Minister, does ECE do proactive on-site visits to all workplaces that are hosting apprentices, or is compliance more reactive or based on complaints? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answer quite simply is yes, that career development navigators do on-site visits. That being said, Mr. Speaker, the priority is certainly making sure that we're supporting more potential apprentices, more persons, more students to get involved into the trades. And so making sure that we are processing applications is certainly a top priority in supporting students in the trades. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose we shall read between the lines on that answer, that perhaps there are not always

proactive visits in every case. Secondly, though, I mentioned yesterday that unlike other jurisdictions, we don't seem to have a way to connect employers eager to find apprentices with the appropriate students who might be a good fit. Has the Minister or the department looked into providing that type of assistance to employers interested in taking on apprentices? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no need for the Member to read between the lines. Like I said, ECE is proactive but certainly can only be in so many places at once. Mr. Speaker, to the Member's recent question, yes, ECE is currently reviewing apprenticeship programs to ensure that they are more accessible. And this, of course, includes reviewing consent forms to make sure that ECE has the permission to be able to provide this information to employers. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, finally, has the department considered changing regulations to allow for situations where a journey person might be able to safely supervise more than two apprentices at a time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, short answer, yes. Longer answer is that this is already something that employers can do. So if employers want to be able to take on a third apprentice, they can actually speak with the director of ATOC in order to seek a special waiver to be able to increase the number of apprentices that they have within their workplace. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, the time is up for oral questions. Oral questions. Written questions. Member from Range Lake.

### Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 38-20():  
PRIVACY BREACHES IN THE HEALTHCARE  
SYSTEM

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. What is the cause of delays in the notification of the affected individuals following the occurrence, detection, and patient notification of the 574 confirmed privacy breaches at the

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority from October 2015-April 2025?

2. What legal or policy provisions prevent the NTHSSA from disclosing the job title, department, or region of an employee responsible for an intentional privacy breach?
3. Of the 750 plus confirmed privacy breaches in the Northwest Territories health system over the past decade, how many involved repeat offenders?
4. How frequently does the NTHSSA conduct proactive or random audits independent of complaints or staffing changes based on their current auditing tool system? And finally,
5. What is the completion rate for mandatory annual privacy training across all staff categories in the Northwest Territories, and what metrics are used to assess whether this training effectively reduces unauthorized access to patient information?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Written questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

WRITTEN QUESTION 39-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RELIEF MEASURES AND  
EKATI MINE COMMITMENTS TO  
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question:

When the Ekati project was approved in 1996, commitments were made to Indigenous governments through Impact Benefit Agreements. Since the Ekati mine operator entered creditor protection, reports suggest the operator has fallen behind on Impact Benefit Agreement payments, despite significant federal loans and Government of the Northwest Territories relief measures intended to stabilize operations.

My questions are for the Minister of Finance:

1. Can the Minister provide a breakdown of all GNWT relief measures or fiscal support provided to the Ekati mine operator as part of efforts to stabilize operations;

2. Can the Minister provide the value of each GNWT relief measure or form of fiscal support provided to the Ekati mine operator, including any accountability requirements attached to that support;
3. Can the Minister confirm whether outstanding obligations to Indigenous governments were considered before any GNWT relief or fiscal support was provided to the Ekati mine operator; and,
4. Can the Minister provide the process that will be used to review outstanding obligations to Indigenous governments before any future GNWT relief or fiscal support is provided to the Ekati mine operator.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Written questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

WRITTEN QUESTION 40-20(1):  
INUVIK WIND PROJECT COSTS AND  
REVIEW

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a couple of written questions.

Mr. Speaker, the first written question is with respect to the Inuvik wind project costs and review. So, Mr. Speaker,

The Inuvik Wind Project was originally approved with \$40 million in public funding, including \$30 million from the federal government and \$10 million from the Government of the Northwest Territories. The project has since been publicly reported as expected to cost more than \$70 million and has involved delays, access road issues, contractor disputes, litigation, and unresolved damages. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation are as follows:

1. Can the Minister provide a full cost breakdown of the Inuvik Wind Project, including the original approved budget, current total cost, major cost categories, and all remaining or unresolved costs?
2. Can the Minister provide a chronological timeline of all revised cost estimates, budget increases, scope changes, and major project delays, including when each was identified and what caused the change? And lastly,

3. Can the Minister provide a list of rationale points used to authorize continued spending after the project exceeded its original approved budget?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Member from Yellowknife Center.

WRITTEN QUESTION 41-20(1):  
OPERATIONAL HEALTH AND CAPITAL  
CAPACITY OF PROSPER NWT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is with respect to the operational health and capital capacity of Prosper NWT.

As the territory's primary business development lender, Prosper NWT must balance its economic diversification mandate with strict risk management. Amid rising northern operational costs, a comprehensive evaluation of Prosper NWT's current loan portfolio, underwriting thresholds, and write-off metrics is required to ensure the crown corporation maintains the asset health and capital liquidity necessary to protect northern taxpayers from undue liability.

My questions are for the Minister of industry, tourism and investment:

1. What is the current total lending capacity of Prosper NWT for the upcoming fiscal year, and what percentage of its total loan portfolio is currently classified as non-performing or at high risk of default?
2. What are the specific credit limits, underwriting thresholds, or risk-mitigation policies currently used to evaluate high-value commercial loans in volatile economic sectors?
3. How many businesses have been turned away or denied funding in the last 12 months due to Prosper NWT reaching its sector-specific capital or credit allocation limits?
4. What is the total dollar value of loan write-offs or debt forgiveness approved by Prosper NWT during the last two fiscal years?
5. What adjustments are being made to Prosper NWT's lending framework to specifically support micro-businesses and commercial operations struggling with localized infrastructure disruptions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Written questions.

WRITTEN QUESTION 42-20(1):  
ACCOUNTABILITY LIMITS FOR  
GOVERNMENT DIRECT APPOINTMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next is the third of five. So the next one is with respect to the accountability and limits for government direct appointments.

While the Public Service Act permits direct appointments during exceptional circumstances, routinely bypassing competitive hiring processes risks damaging public trust and institutionalizing bias. This practice can limit career advancement for long-term northern residents and directly conflict with affirmative action commitments. The issue is particularly critical during the final six months of an Assembly's mandate, making full disclosure of the economic and demographic justifications for all recent uncompetitive appointments essential for proper legislative oversight.

My questions are for the Minister of Finance:

1. How many direct appointments have been made across all departments, boards, and agencies within the last six months, broken down by department and position level?
2. What specific criteria or emergency thresholds must a department satisfy to bypass the competitive hiring process for senior management or executive roles?
3. Will the Government commit to implementing a policy requiring formal caucus notification or real disclosures to all Members of the Legislative Assembly for any direct appointments made during the final six months of an Assembly's mandate?
4. What is the total annual salary and benefits expenditure associated with the direct appointments executed during the last two fiscal years?
5. How many of the direct appointments made in the past 12 months were granted to non-residents of the Northwest Territories, and what justification was provided for bypassing affirmative action priorities in those specific instances?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

WRITTEN QUESTION 43-20(1):  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES VACANCIES  
AND COMPLIANCE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next question is with respect to child and family services vacancies and compliances.

Repeated auditor general reports highlight chronic gaps within the Northwest Territories child and family services system that directly threaten vulnerable children. High caseworker vacancy rates and intense staff turnover continue to undermine the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Child and Family Services Act. A clear, regional accounting of caseworker retention and compliance benchmarks is required to ensure accountability and guarantee that mandatory cultural support plans are being actively delivered.

My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services:

1. What is the current caseworker vacancy rate by region, and what specific targeted recruitment strategies are being deployed to fill frontline positions in small communities?
2. Of the active child protection files opened in the past 12 months, what percentage have fully complied with mandated safety welfare check timelines?
3. What concrete measures or training frameworks have been implemented to ensure caseworker compliance with required cultural support plans for Indigenous children in care?
4. How many child welfare safety audits were completed late or remain overdue across the Northwest Territories as of April 1, 2026? And lastly,
5. What baseline funding increases or resource allocations have been directly committed to community-based Indigenous governments to support localized preventative child and family services over the last two fiscal years?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

WRITTEN QUESTION 44-20(1):  
MEDICAL TRAVEL CASE MANAGEMENT  
AND REFERRAL COORDINATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last written question. It's with respect to the medical travel case management and referral coordination.

Mr. Speaker, medical travel is a critical lifeline for remote communities, but it remains one of the fastest growing and most volatile expenditure sectors in the health budget. Internal inefficiencies like duplicate bookings and uncoordinated non-medical escorts cause both financial waste and severe patient distress. To ensure accountability, the department must provide empirical evidence that recent administrative investments such as specialized nurse case managers are successfully streamlining care and lowering the program's overall cost trajectory.

My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services:

What is the current operational status, completed milestones, and implementation timeline of the "referral coordination project" originally identified under the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority's Deficit Reduction Plan.

1. How will the recently announced medical travel nurse case manager positions in Yellowknife be operationalized to actively reduce common system inefficiencies, such as administrative duplication, missed connections, or premature patient rebooking?
2. What specific performance indicators, metrics, or financial benchmarks is the Department of Health and Social Services tracking to measure whether the addition of these specialized case management positions is successfully lowering the overall cost trajectory of the medical travel program?
3. Of the total medical travel flights authorized in the last fiscal year, what percentage were classified as non-urgent or escort travel, and what was the corresponding total expenditure for those categories? And finally, Mr. Speaker,
4. What steps are being taken to integrate real-time digital tracking or

portal access for patients and referring community health centres to reduce administrative backlogs within the medical travel system?

And that's the last question for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 544-20(1):  
DEHCHO CRITICAL INCIDENT  
INVESTIGATION REPORT  
RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 545-20(1):  
PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE  
FRAMEWORK – A SHARED JOURNEY  
TOWARD THE NORTH STAR

TABLED DOCUMENT 546-20(1):  
2026-27 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
AUTHORITY BUDGETS SUMMARY

**HON LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Deh Cho Critical Incident Investigation Report and Recommendations; Primary and Community Health Care Reform Framework; and, the 2026-2027 Health and Social Services Authority Budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for WSCC.

TABLED DOCUMENT 547-20(1):  
WORKERS' ADVISOR OFFICE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND  
NUNAVUT 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories and Nunavut Advisory Official 2025 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for WSCC. Tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 548-20(1):  
EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY  
FRAMEWORK - DEHCHO DIVISIONAL  
EDUCATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Education Accountability Framework Deh Cho Divisional Education Council Annual Report for the 2024-2025 School Year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment. Tabling of documents. Member from Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 549-20(1):  
NWT DISABILITIES COUNCIL CEO DENISE  
MCKEE REMARKS – 2026 ACCESSIBILITY  
IMPACTS AWARDS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for reasons of brevity I had to edit the statement I gave earlier so I wish to table remarks delivered by NWT Disabilities Council CEO Denise McKee at the 2026 Accessibility Impact Awards in full. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 550-20(1):  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL ACT SCHEDULE C AMENDMENT  
REGULATIONS, 2026

TABLED DOCUMENT 551-20(1):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR  
THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 3, 2026, TO MAY  
26, 2026

Colleagues, pursuant to Section 21(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act Schedule C Amendment Regulations, 2026.

As well, pursuant to Section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowance, and Expenses Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the summary of Members' absence for the period of February 3, 2026 to May 26, 2026.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 3, Tabled Document 445-20(1) and Tabled Document 483-20(1), Committee Report 45-20(1), Committee Report 47-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the chair.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE  
WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, your committee wishes to consider Committee Report 45-20(1) and 47-20(1) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We'll continue on. Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 45-20(1), Standing Committee of Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4. I will now go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges for any opening comments. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In November of 2025 and March of 2026, the committee received correspondence from Speaker Thompson requesting a review of certain rules and practices of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. Specifically, the committee was asked to consider:

- Standing committee's review of bills;
- Clarification on criteria for Private Member bills (audio);
- If there should be a change in the location of replies to the budget address, to item number 3 on the day that the budget address is delivered (day 1) and, item number 2, every day there afterwards (days 2 through 7);
- To consider providing the chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight with a reply to the budget address on behalf of the committee, without losing the opportunity to provide their own reply as a Member;
- If reporting attendance on additional meetings for committees that Members are not part of should be eliminated; and
- To create a new rule to disallow chairs of standing and special committees from chairing committees reviewing

matters that originate from a motion or a bill moved by that chair.

The committee has considered these matters and delivered its report to the House on June 2, 2026. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 45-20(1). Is there any general comments? Seeing no further comments, I will go back to the Member for the Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** One moment, please, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 8.3(3)(a) be amended to read 8.3(3)(a) Notice of intent to proceed with a bill not reported in accordance with Rule 8.3(1) may be given to the House by the sponsor of the bill under the item Reports of committees on the review of bills, and removing the words "'Ministers' Statements" on the order paper if it is a government bill and under "Members' statements" if it is a Private Member's Bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, the motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 5.5(1) of the Consolidated Rules of the Northwest Territories be amended to read, quote, "The Clerk shall place the item "replies to the budget address" on the orders of the day immediately after "budget address" on the day of the presentation of a budget and immediately after "Prayer or Reflection" for the next six Sitting days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that a new Rule be added after Rule 5.5(2) that states: "Notwithstanding Rule 5.5(2), the Chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability may deliver a reply to the budget address on behalf of the committee as well as an individual reply to the budget address." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Thank you. I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the practice of reporting attendance for additional meetings for which the Member of the Legislative Assembly is not a committee Member be discontinued. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called -- I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This certainly isn't the most important thing we'll be considering today but I do -- I do -- I just, I reflected on this one a little bit and, personally, I think I would miss this reporting. I think it's something that, yes, it is -- it is a small thing, but I appreciate -- I appreciate us keeping track of what Members are up to and which meetings they're attending. You know, I like just reading the report for myself and saying oh, I attended a bunch of extra meetings and I think it's just -- I get the impression it was put in place for Members who want to show their work, so to speak, and I do understand that it's not necessarily the same as the accountability reporting for the committees that Members are actually appointed to, which is a bit of a different thing. This is just more information for the public, and I just don't see the harm in reporting it. So I am not in favour of this particular motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion. I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Members' attendance is an accountability mechanism to ensure that Members are attending to the duties to which they are elected to perform as Members of the House and to which they're appointed to by the House by way of standing committee. The purpose of those attendance reports is -- again, is squarely an accountability mechanism so constituents and members of the public can see that Members are discharging their duties faithfully to the institution and attending meetings that they're supposed to attend. Additional meetings, I am not sure what accountability mechanism that serves and, to be clear, it doesn't serve any accountability mechanism. There's no requirement to attend additional meetings and certainly attending additional meetings is not an obligation of any Member of the House. It is a privilege that we can attend meetings of the standing committee and participate but not -- certainly not a requirement. I think there's some issues with it as well. I mean, if -- because the other thing too is attending meetings is not a measure of productivity. Just because you attend a meeting doesn't mean you are contributing to that meeting. It doesn't mean that -- you know, you might have just popped in to hear what was going on, maybe you didn't ask questions, whatever, but -- and, certainly with today's -- you know, with our new procedures where there's a lot more remote committee meetings where people can use telepresence equipment to attend, it's easier than ever to attend a committee meeting now. And that's great. It really speeds up our work and lets us meet a lot more often. But it's also easy to get attendance checkmark by clicking into a meeting. And, again, there's nothing wrong with that. And I hope Members continue that practice but, you know, creating a record of that, again it does not demonstrate any real productivity. And even, I might add, the meetings that we're required to attend as Members, an attendance checkmark doesn't indicate productivity as well but it does speak to our obligations to the public and to the House and to the oaths we swore to to take this job seriously. So why are we reporting this? Why are we measuring it when it doesn't serve any accountability purpose?

And I think, unfortunately, often it can skew the public perspective of what Members are -- or of how productive a Member is versus another Member. So if someone has attended, you know, 50 percent more meetings than all the other Members, well, they must be the star

performer, Mr. Chair; they must be doing much more work than everyone else. And as I said, that's not true in any measure and also it's not a requirement to attend those meetings.

So I think this -- I am not going to say -- I am not going to suggest it can be abused, but I am certainly going to suggest it doesn't paint a full picture. And it can paint a misleading picture, perhaps, because if there was a Member, let's say, who had a great deal of work in the constituency, made sure they had perfect attendance on all the committees they were supposed to be on but never attended those extra meetings, you know, it does create a disparity between someone else who would. And, of course, it's always easier for Yellowknife Members to attend standing committee meetings typically, so these extra meetings are typically seen, I think, if you look historically, behind the statistics of representatives of the capital. So I've always found this problematic. Again, I am not looking for less accountability, I am just looking for the right accountability. And we've got a lot of obligations as Members. Some have family obligations that make attending every meeting difficult. Others have, again, constituency matters or are engaging, you know, interest groups, stakeholders, lobbyists, whatever, people who are important. Our time is needed in those places. So that, I think, is a good reason to discontinue this practice, to have a fair record of Members' obligations and Members' accountability and stop kind of allowing stats to be padded that aren't all that useful in determining the public's -- or in creating a public record of productivity because there's no way a quantitative number of days missed or attended or extra meetings is going to do that. So for that reason, I support this. I note that the committee supported this as well, and I would hope that my colleagues on the Standing Committee of Privilege and Procedures would join me in supporting this motion as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion. I am going to go to the Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will not be supporting this motion. I don't understand why we are rolling back transparency. You know, it's already happened. It's there. It's something for the public to see. In my experience, as a Regular Member and in the last term, the additional meetings a Member attends really is a good indicator of their work ethic. It shows what their -- it gives an indication of what their understanding of government is. If you attend a lot of meetings of the different committees, you get a good overview of what's going on in government. And, of course, attending -- all that you have to do to get

marked as present is walk into the room during a meeting and then you can walk out and you're still marked as having attended that meeting. As far as I know, that's the way it was for the past many years. And so why record any meetings if, you know, we're worried that this doesn't show the extent of what's being done in the meetings?

I think it's also useful for future assemblies. So if there's Regular Members now who are running for Cabinet in the future, the -- you know, new Members could go back and look to see, okay, what has this person done in the past, what sort of stats are there, right. There's nothing really easily accessible like that. So instead of rolling back transparency and just doing the bare minimum, I think that there is value in this. I have found value in this. I found it to be reflective of, you know, work ethic and ability. So I am not in favour of this. I think that, you know, we talked a lot about accountability recently, and this is one of the few ways that there -- one of the few measures of accountability that we have in this Assembly so I'd like to hold on to it. So I will be voting against it. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the motion -- I will go to Kam Lake, sorry. Sorry about that. Normally I get all my [indiscernible] on this side of the House. I will go to the Member from Kam Lake. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yeah, lake at the other end of town. Certainly, Mr. Chair, I feel like, as well, this is a transparency piece. I will not be supporting this motion here. I do appreciate being able to see the activities of MLAs have in the past and have residents raise this to me as well. I do think there are many different ways to evaluate and be able to have conversations around effectiveness but access to that information is certainly key, you know, and effectiveness is certainly up for discussion. Some Members, you know, based on the number of emails they send, the number of motions they give in the House, or the meetings they are required to attend, but certainly making sure that the public has access to this information, I think is important as they make decisions but also be able to have conversations about the people who represent them in this House. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion. I will go to the Member from Yellowknife South.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I guess I don't see what harm we're trying to correct here, and my understanding is that attendance is really quite

simple now that there's options for online and telephone attendance. So not knowing what harm we're going to correct, I am content with the rules as they are, and I will vote no. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion. I will go back to the Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I will start with the last question and then sort of jump into it. What harm are we trying to correct.

Well, I actually -- you know, one of the unfortunate privileges of being the dean of the House is that I was there when they created this rule, and they created the rule because we had Members not going to committee meetings. And that's kind of where it started, which is taking committee attendance because people weren't. Then they struggled with, well, how do they communicate that. And hence we have somewhat a similar version of what we have here today, and that's kind of what happened. And it's true, I think, as the Premier pointed out, we had people even would just walk through the meeting at the start of the meeting and say, I am here, make sure I got my checkmark. And so the Legislative Assembly has always struggled with how to do that, as in how to -- to ensure or sell to the public that, you know, your Members are working or they're being accountable. It's always been a tricky dance. During that time, that was my first term in 2003 to '07, I mean, they struggled with trying to understand is, are we taking -- are we treating people like children by doing this. Are adults making good choices or bad choices and how do we -- you know, how do we deal with that. Well, we got where we got. Then people complained that they went -- because we had people who had -- I often joke but with the term I call it, they had meetingitis. They had to sit on every meeting and delay every meeting and suck the life out of every opportunity to sit in another meeting that they weren't on the committee. And they demanded to tell the public that, oh, I went to every meeting that everyone in -- was on. And, you know, they used it as the boastful position of saying I am the only one doing the real work around here. So that -- when you start saying, what are we trying to fix, it actually turned into sort of the old fashioned, as they often say to conflict of interest, it's the sword and shield approach. So instead of shielding Members in the sense of, like, justifying and protecting them, people use the extra attendance as the sword. And then CBC was reporting about who was not going to extra meetings, and they used that to embarrass Members, even though Members had good attendance, if not perfect attendance, on their meetings and committee requirements,

that was still not good enough for the media and it was still not good enough for the public about the extra, extra meetings. So in other words, you were fulfilling your community obligations. You were fulfilling your rule obligations of going to meetings and certainly being that. And I think it's been highlighted already here today -- I don't have to go through which Member. But, I mean, the fact is this has nothing to do with quality of work. This has nothing to do with volume of work. This has everything to do with nothing but bragging that you go to other meetings and saying look at my attendance, it's really good. You know, woohoo, I am all -- you know, I am extra, extra. I need a gold star, Mr. Chairman, or a double gold star. That's all these things turn out to be. Especially the old fashioned ones where you get to scratch and they had funny smells like strawberry, etcetera. So I think what people miss is the fact that this is a tricky process to demonstrate.

Now, at the same time, I want to stress what's changed significantly. Going back to my first Assembly, the 15th Assembly, there was no open meetings in the manner we have. We have a ton of open meetings and people can say -- see not only who's there but who's being productive. I mean, what's it next? Are we going to measure -- create matrix to measure work? And then another matrix to measure how many words we say? And then another matrix about how many motions we pass or don't pass or try to pass? Like, I mean, I think the phrase of accountability is flaunted around about, well, you're not being transparent or accountable. I think it's about the right type of accountability and the right balance of transparency.

You know, like, some -- you know, you could say, well, that Member didn't go to a committee meeting but they're -- you know, they put in this enormous yeoman's effort in being in -- their actually communities that need them at a particular time. I will never criticize a Member who's devoted to their community or constituency and not able to do it. Now, I will be frustrated if we can't have a meeting, yes. But that hasn't been the case. We've always been able to have meetings in some form or not. So I don't see that. And work has changed significantly.

So it's easy for Cabinet to say oh, you know, you need more tracking matrix as a Member, but I never hear any proposal from Cabinet about Cabinet tracking matrix. I mean, how many Cabinet committee meetings are done that are not articulated through these? I brought this up, and it just seems to go, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, and then just disappears.

What about how much time do Cabinet Ministers spend at their office? How many

meetings do they have? How do we track that fairly and reasonably? This continues to be a monitoring of this side of the House where one side thinks they're the mature people and the other side has to be the ones we watch extra closely.

I can tell you that I have seen Members maybe not put as much committee time in that I thought might be perfectly responsible, but at the same token as they are incredibly hardworking Members, we don't take into account how many hours people put in at public meetings and constituency meetings and meeting with organizations, etcetera. I mean, even Members I find that sometimes drive me crazy, I still have respect for how much time and energy they put in. I am not going to pick a Member. I mean I could, or two. But I can see people even I don't politically or geo -- or whatever you want to say -- align with. I do respect the fact that they put in extra work doing meetings. Those don't come on the checkmarks.

And so, again, this is so subjective. It's almost like a desperation to say well, we got to make sure we got to come up with another enforceable rule to demonstrate we're coming up with something. And it's just this drama that continues to live on the -- people whining about well, we need more. I think the proof is in the pudding, Mr. Speaker -- or Mr. Chairman.

And so back to, ultimately, these are just -- these stats, you know, may appear -- I don't know who they're useful for. Someone's gonna say, oh, I live and die by these things. But I -- you know, there was no stat -- I am going to not pick on a particular Member. I am just gonna pick a Cabinet Minister out of the hat. They had no attendance record for coming to -- I am looking straight across, and this is not directed at Minister McKay by any means. But he had no previous committee attendance record, but yet he was selected for Cabinet. I mean, there's another there, Minister Kuptana, she had no committee attendance --

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** -- point of order --

**MR. HAWKINS:** -- And yet they got --

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members speaking to a motion must speak to the motion. This is clearly not speaking to the motion. It's pointing out -- I am not sure what's going on here, but we don't really need a debate on this, Mr. Chair. I think it's one you could probably just tell the Member to move on, and we could continue on with our day. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the motion and conclude your remarks. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no point of order. The person who just called it -- the Premier called point of order, Mr. Speaker -- was the one who said he uses past attendance to consider. And now he's saying I am giving examples where people had no past attendance for the exact example he spoke to. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where he's coming up with this very sunshine perspective of like mis -- I don't know. It's just misinformation, Mr. Speaker, and that's all it is, just to break up the rhythm of the Member. And if he had bit his tongue for two more minutes, I would have been done my time. It's just a waste of committee's time. That's all he's doing.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question's been called. So all those in favour, show your hands. All those opposed, show your hands. There's a motion.

Yes, thank you for the clarification. On the point of order, I call to move forward with no debate. We just wanted to get to the motion and speaking to the motion. And so we're going to continue on. The question has been called. So we're going to move on. So I am going to go to the motion -- I am going to go back to the -- for closing remarks, I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** That's all right, Mr. Chair. Question has been called.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. Thank you. So to the motion, please show your hands. Sorry about that, it's been a long day for everybody. To the motion. The motion is on the floor so the question has been called. So to the motion.

I am jumping ahead of myself. Okay, sorry. All those in favour, put up your hand. Okay. All those opposed, put up your hand. Okay, thank you. All those abstaining, put up your hand. Thank you. Motion is defeated.

---Defeated.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, I am going to go back to the Member from Great Slave. Okay, thank you. Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have included consideration of Committee Report 45-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privilege Report on the Review of Rules of the

Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Agreed? Okay, thank you. Committee, we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 45-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privilege Report on the Review of Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 4. And we'll take a five-minute break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 47-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Health Care Accountability and Sustainability. I will go to the chair of Standing Committee on Social Development for any open comments. I am going to go to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Development has been working on this study of the accountability and sustainability of the healthcare system since October 2024. After careful consideration of evidence heard from healthcare system experts, the medical professional community, and the Ministers of the GNWT, the committee has made a total of 28 recommendations. These recommendations seek to address the gaps found in our healthcare system.

These issues must be addressed with the utmost urgency, and the committee members of the Standing Committee on Social Development will continue to hold this government to account on the issue of health care accountability and sustainability in the NWT. The committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

The committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the review. The feedback we heard was at times distressing and concerning, but ultimately it was crucially important information to hear to be able to improve our healthcare system. I would like to thank the committee for their work on this review. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I am going to go to the Member from Range Lake. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a Member of the Standing Committee on Social Development, I wanted to recognize the

importance of this work that's before the committee today. This report provides a large amount of very comprehensive recommendations to improve healthcare delivery and sustainability in the Northwest Territories. And as the Chair mentioned, it started back in October of 2024, so we've taken quite a bit of time and thoughtful care to hear from experts, work with our very talented support staff, and the ideas of Members bringing their own experiences from their communities, from their constituents, and from their observations, and of course as patients in the Northwest Territories healthcare system. And as this is a priority of this Assembly and certainly a priority of many members, it's good to have some very concrete, tangible recommendations that can be brought forward. And I wanted to thank our committee chair, Member for Monfwi, for steering us through this work. It was not always easy and often took a lot of our time as a committee. But we got through it, and I think we have a great package of recommendations here, and I am glad we are going through them in this way so we can get the House's attention and the public's attention on these important recommendations. So, once again, I'd like to thank my colleagues on the standing committee, but in particular, our fearless chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Any further general comments from Members? Okay, seeing none. I am going to go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work directly with frontline healthcare staff to incorporate their knowledge and connection to social networks into the recruitment of healthcare professionals into the Northwest Territories healthcare system. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** The question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories investigate and report on the feasibility of

increased incentives for healthcare workers in small communities to the Standing Committee on Social Development such as subsidized rental units and designated spots at child care centres and day homes for healthcare workers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories research, identify, and address barriers, including those related to privacy within the Health Information Act and related to necessary higher technology upgrades to support the timely implementation of technologies such as online booking, automated reminders for appointment, virtual care, remote ultrasound, and expanded use of artificial intelligence scribing across healthcare settings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those against? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that procedures are in place for the implementation of new technologies in the healthcare system, including appropriately trained designated staff (or contracted local practitioners) and clear processes for quick and effective application and execution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories promote job-sharing opportunities for healthcare professionals in the Northwest Territories based off of Nunavut's model as a strategy to increase the recruitment of healthcare professionals to the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories significantly increase investments into the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority for their work in providing on-the-job education training to licensed practical nurses to further enhance the sustainability of the healthcare system and the autonomy of this type of nursing profession. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with employers and licensed practical nurses to promote awareness of their changed scope of practice and work with employers to update job descriptions to ensure that they are reflective of the regulatory scope of practice in order to

provide proper support to licensed practical nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a targeted initiative to expand and support the integration of nurse practitioners in small communities to improve access to timely primary care services, including ensuring that nurse practitioners have continuous and reliable access to consultations with physicians. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review current job descriptions within the health and social services system to see where registered psychiatric nurses may be best utilized. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into the feasibility of

establishing registered psychiatric nurse educational programs in the Northwest Territories that would meet the unique needs of our mental health system. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into the feasibility of implementing programs to address key nursing education and professional development gaps, such as nursing refresher programs, nurse practitioner programs, nursing bridging programs, registered psychiatric nursing programs, midwifery programs, and prescribing and diagnosis programs in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories invest in the professional development of all nurses in the Northwest Territories without reducing the allocated funding envelope for professional development for other health care practitioners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct research into potential changes to the health care delivery framework in the Northwest Territories, including governance and reporting structures with potential changes to be based on the three governance structure principles outlined in this report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately reassign the initiative of organizing team-based care for frontline healthcare workers to the medical doctor to ensure there is a clear point person to take over the details of this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Social Development, and publicly report on a plan for how team-based care will be operated in small community health centres and health cabins. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the Government of Canada to share or transfer some decision-making power of the non-insured health benefits program to Yellowknife, including establishing a physical office for non-insured health benefits in the North. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a bursary program for Indigenous residents of small communities and a funding program with the purpose of incentivizing residents of small communities in the Northwest Territories to pursue nursing education programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a marketing strategy targeting the recruitment of Indigenous residents into healthcare fields and healthcare education programs by showcasing success stories of northern Indigenous healthcare practitioners working in the health field. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories staff patient advocate positions in each small community of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** The motion is in order. Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories demonstrate that the work of the health care assistance sustainability unit and the public administrator of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is being informed by the experiences and input of frontline health practitioners to better understand where to find efficiencies in the healthcare system, such as with medical travel, and with every decision being made and reported upon that it notes the input that has informed that decision. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release how many dollars can be saved by eliminating non-core services, including a breakdown per program service area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release the methodology used by the healthcare system sustainability unit for the evaluation of the seven program service areas identified for initial sustainability efforts and how they will gain an understanding of each program service area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories demonstrate costing and milestones of the 2025-2028 People Strategy and commit to an independent analysis of its results. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories prioritize the work of advancing a pan-Canadian licensure at the national level, as well as work with the Yukon government and the Government of Nunavut, to establish the tri-territorial licensing model. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a scholarship or bursary (similar to British Columbia) that internationally educated nurses can access in the Northwest Territories to support the cost of their inspire assessment program with the condition that they work a certain number of years in the Northwest Territories healthcare system upon receiving the scholarship or bursary. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the College and Association of Nurses in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to ensure cultural training programs are afforded to internationally educated nurses as well as cultural competencies for nurses across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories research a regulatory model based on British Columbia's Health Professional Occupation Act with the aim of creating an arm's-length regulator that encompasses a group of allied health professionals in the Northwest Territories and report on their findings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 47-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Health Care Accountability and Sustainability; do you agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 47-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Health Care Accountability and Sustainability. I want to thank the Member from Monfwi. I am going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I move that the Chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 3, Tabled Document 445-20(1), Tabled Document 483-20(1), Committee Report 45-20(1), Committee Report 47-20(1), and would like to report progress with 31 motions carried, that Committee Report 45-20(1) and Committee Report 47-20(1) are concluded. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder. I think I am going to take that smiley lady from Monfwi. Look at that smile. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions?

---Carried

Report of committee of the whole. Third reading of the bills.

Colleagues, it's been a long day. I know we have places to be and people we want to spend time with. However, before we adjourn, I want to say a few words. Thank you for your time and attention.

First, I want to thank everyone that makes it possible for us to do our jobs. Our staff, department staff, the Office of the Clerk, and the contractors. I also want to give a special thanks to our interpreters and pages. I want to thank each of you.

Our jobs are important and challenging. The hours are long, the work never seems to end, but it is rewarding work. I thank you for the work you do to represent your constituents and all residents.

Colleagues, this has been a short but productive sitting. We have had some great debates, discussed numerous motions, and have moved important legislation forward. I congratulate everybody for their efforts.

I have seen a lot of passion from all Members. We all have our roles and responsibilities in this House. I appreciate your energy and enthusiasm but I want to remind you we all share one important goal: Effective and meaningful representation of and for the people of the territories.

Our people are the reason we are here. Many of the issues and challenges we face are longstanding ones. It can be frustrating and feels like we aren't making enough progress. However, if we work together we can and will make a difference and make important progress for our people.

As we enter the summer season, there is a lot for us to celebrate and enjoy across this

territory. With the end of the school year upon us, I know many of you will be attending graduation ceremonies and celebrating the academic achievements of your constituents.

I want to take this time to congratulate our grads from those finishing kindergarten to those finishing high school, university, college, or trades programs. I know they are proud of their achievements and I am proud of them too.

Summer is also the time for many assemblies. I know many of you will be attending assemblies throughout the territory. These are important meetings. I thank everybody who participates and wish them successful and productive assemblies.

Although we will be busy this summer, please find the time for yourself and your family and friends. They support and encourage us in doing our job. Let them know how much you appreciate them. Take the time to give them the support they need as well. I know you're all looking forward to reconnecting and spending time with family and friends. I am as well. I am especially excited to be welcoming another grandchild to our family later this month.

Finally, I ask each of you to take some time to reflect on the time we have spent together in this 20th Assembly, to look ahead to the time we have remaining, think about what we have achieved and what we can still achieve during our remaining time. Not only do I want you to think about what we can still achieve, I want you to think about how we can do it in the most effective way possible.

I truly believe the most effective way we can make progress is by working together. That doesn't mean we will always agree. It doesn't mean we will always get what we want. It doesn't mean abdicating responsibility or foregoing oversight. It is simply working together to achieve the best possible outcome for our people and our territory.

Colleagues, you all know I am a strong supporter of and believe in our system of consensus government and the Rules of this Assembly. Before we return in October, I encourage each of you to again review our Rules and the Guiding Principles and Process Conventions, which are all available on the Assembly's website. I want you to think about our guiding principles and how embodying these principles can help us be more effective in this House. In particular, I want to highlight a couple of these principles:

Consensus government is defined by the ability and willingness of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together within

their respective roles for the collective good of the people of the Northwest Territories;

Open and respectful communication between all Members is the most essential feature of consensus government; and

The use of the element of surprise is inconsistent with consensus government.

Colleagues, when we return in the fall, I expect to see and hear behaviour and debate that is in keeping with our Rules, Guiding Principles and Process Conventions: Behaviour and debate that is thoughtful and respectful. Behaviour and debate that will make our residents proud and will allow us to work efficiently on their behalf.

Thank you for your time, colleagues. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

#### CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 20th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
  - OQ 1249-20(1), Regulation of Prediction Markets
  - OQ1260-20(1), Navigating the Healthcare System
  - OQ1302-20(1), Leaving the Northwest Territories for Health Care
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
  - WQ 38-20(1), Privacy Breaches in the Healthcare System
  - WQ 39-20(1), Government of the Northwest Territories Relief Measures and Ekati Mine Commitments to Indigenous Governments

- WQ 40-20(1), Inuvik Wind Project Costs and Review
- WQ 41-20(1), Operational Health and Capital Capacity of Prosper NWT
- WQ 42-20(1), Accountability and Limits for Government Direct Appointments
- WQ 43-20(1), Child and Family Services Vacancies and Compliance
- WQ 44-20(1), Medical Travel Case Management and Referral Coordination

11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 81-20(1), Reorganization of Social and Health Governance
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 3, Carbon Tax Repeal Act
  - TD 445-20(1), 2025 Review of Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Compensation and Benefits Report
  - TD 483-20(1), 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 20th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

UNEDITED HANSARD