Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Tuesday, October 20, 2026 — 1:00 p.m.

Whitehorse, Yukon

Speaker: The Honourable Yvonne Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
2026 Fall Sitting

Speaker: Hon. Yvonne Clarke
Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole: Patti McLeod
Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole: Tyler Porter

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Cory Bellmore	Mayo-Tatchun	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Linda Benoit	Whistle Bend South	Minister of Highways and Public Works
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister of Health and Social Services
Hon. Jen Gehmair	Marsh Lake-Mount Lorne-Golden Horn	Minister of Economy, Tourism and Culture; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister of Environment
Hon. Scott Kent	Copperbelt South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Laura Lang	Whitehorse West	Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Women and Gender Equity Directorate; Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. Ted Laking	Porter Creek Centre	Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation

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Yukon Party

Doris Anderson	Porter Creek North	**Yvonne Clarke**	Whistle Bend North
Adam Gerle	Porter Creek South	**Patti McLeod**	Watson Lake-Ross River-Faro
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New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Official Opposition Takhini	**Lane Tredger**	Official Opposition House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Carmen Gustafson	Riverdale North	**Brent McDonald**	Klondike
Linda Moen	Mountainview	**Justin Ziegler**	Riverdale South

THIRD PARTY

Yukon Liberal Party

Debra-Leigh Reti	Leader of the Third Party Third Party House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin

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Tuesday, October 20, 2026

Speaker: I will now call this House to order.

We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: Before we proceed to the Daily Routine, the Chair wishes to inform the House of a change made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 179, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale North, has been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Visitors introduced

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Statement — Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day

Hon. Scott Kent: I rise today on Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day to celebrate the dedication of Yukon early childhood educators. Since 2001, Yukoners have marked this day on the third Tuesday of each October, recognizing the invaluable contributions early childhood educators make to children, families, and communities. Early childhood educators are among the first and most influential people in a child's learning journey, helping foster the skills, confidence, and curiosity that shape our next generation. This recognition is especially meaningful in the Yukon, where nearly two-thirds of children aged birth to five are in childcare.

I am encouraged by the next generation of educators, including those pursuing certification in Mayo through flexible early childhood training opportunities, and I know there are many others who have made immeasurable contributions to children and families during their careers. So, I want to thank Yukon's early childhood educators for the care, dedication, and expertise they bring to our community every day.

Statement — Timeliness of ministers' responses to correspondence

Kate White: I rise today to request a response to the June 17 letter that I sent to the Minister of Health and Social Services, requesting responses to questions I asked during the May 6 debate.

I received confirmation of the receipt of this letter on the same day that it was sent. For folks listening in, you may be surprised to know that the average response time for a letter sent from Opposition to a minister is long. We wait anywhere from six to eight weeks for a response, and I will note and offer my thanks to the few ministers who respond in a much timelier fashion.

I was patient. I waited and sent a follow-up e-mail on September 22, asking for a response or even a timeline for a response. I sent a follow-up e-mail on October 5, and in the October 6 health briefing, I mentioned I was waiting for a response to my June 17 letter and was reminded by officials that letters go through the minister. I know that, but I was hopeful that a response was finally on its way. Maybe folks are asking why this is so important. It's because it was about supports for families and children with disabilities.

Statement — Alberta vote to remain in Canada

Debra-Leigh Reti: I was very happy to see the news this morning that an overwhelming majority of Albertans have voted to remain a part of Canada. National unity in times like this is more important than ever, and Albertans have chosen Canada. I look forward to seeing our provinces and territories continue to work together on the important issues and move forward together as a more united Canada.

Statement — Small Business Week

Hon. Jen Gehmair: This year for Small Business Week, we celebrate the people behind Yukon businesses. These are Yukoners who have taken a chance on an idea, built something of their own, and opened their doors to serve their neighbours. There are more than 3,000 small businesses operating across the territory. More than half are home-based businesses, and together represent more than 15,000 workers in the territory. Behind those numbers are Yukoners who wear many hats: business owners, employers, neighbours, community volunteers.

Small businesses are woven into the fabric of Yukon life. They create jobs, support local events, and keep our communities vibrant, connected, and strong. To Yukon small business owners and workers, thank you for your hard work, for your creativity, and for helping make Yukon a home.

Statement — Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre

Linda Moen: I rise today to recognize and celebrate Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. They have provided essential resources, community connections, and a safe space for women in Whitehorse for over 50 years. What began as a gathering space has grown into a legacy community hub that provides essential supports for women. Their program fills critical gaps and addresses persistent challenges women face, such as the rural pregnant mom suite, which provides free accommodations for those living in rural Yukon who need access to the hospital in the final weeks of their pregnancy, or the woman's advocate, who offers tailored support for women navigating unique issues.

Today, we honour and thank the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre as they continue to show up for women by striving to increase well-being and challenging the norms and systems that create inequity.

Statement — Yukoner Appreciation Week

Adam Gerle: This year's Yukoner Appreciation Week takes place from October 22 to 24. What began as a one-day event to celebrate the contributions of Yukon businesses and the importance of buying local has grown into a three-day celebration with no shortage of fun, savings, and community spirit. Presented by Kilrich Building Centres, this annual celebration is eagerly anticipated by shoppers, diners, and browsers alike, with events and shopping opportunities to highlight the services, goods, and flavours offered by participating businesses.

Bring your phone and scan your digital passport at participating businesses for a chance to win great prizes, or head down to Third and Main to take part in a free all-ages concert experience with Canadian band Down with Webster. Thank you, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, and all sponsors and participating businesses. I encourage all Yukoners to take part in some of the great events taking place, and, of course, to buy local to support local businesses.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Scott Kent: I have for tabling a briefing note prepared by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition on August 3, 2026, entitled *A Place to Be: Framework for Community Action to End Homelessness*.

Kate White: I have for tabling the June 17 letter to the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding May 6 budget debate questions.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I have for tabling today a legislative return relating to the discussion with the Member for Takhini on October 8, 2026, during Committee of the Whole, Bill No. 203, Vote 51, Community Services, regarding the Mount Lorne water treatment plant.

Speaker: Are there any committee reports to be presented?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Debra-Leigh Reti: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to address the fact that the Yukon continues to have the highest inflation rate in the country based on the October 19, 2026 national consumer price index report.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fully endorse the *A Place to Be* report.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Question — Homelessness prevention and tenant protections

Kate White: On the very day that this government endorsed *A Place to Be*, the community plan to end homelessness in Yukon, it also tabled legislation to remove rent control and bring back no-cause evictions. The plan calls for homelessness to be rare, brief, and non-recurring. It tells us that more people are entering homelessness each month than are leaving it. Housing partners, First Nation governments, and people with lived experience spent months building the plan that this government has endorsed. The plan says that keeping people in the homes they already have is one of the most effective strategies available. Yet this government's own bill will make it easier to take that housing away.

Will the Premier explain to Yukoners how a government can say it is committed to ending homelessness, and on the same day, table a bill that will push more Yukoners toward it?

Hon. Scott Kent: I'm pleased to rise again today to speak to *A Place to Be*, the framework that we endorsed. And earlier today, I tabled a briefing note prepared by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition with respect to that document, and it says — I quote: "Endorsement represents a commitment to collaboration, shared priority-setting, and continuous improvement. It does not commit Yukon Government to implementing every recommendation, approving additional funding, or making legislative changes. Recommendations requiring future capital or operating investment would continue to be considered through normal budget and decision-making processes."

Yesterday during Question Period, I spoke to all of the investments that this government has made not only in the fall capital budget that is currently before the House but projects that are opening this year with respect to social housing. There are a number of units coming online, and we expect a number of units to come online in the future. We're proud of the work that we've done, but we're committed to collaborating with the Anti-Poverty Coalition on the work and to continue working on *A Place to Be*, which is the framework for community action to end homelessness.

Kate White: *A Place to Be*, the plan this government endorses, tells us that 53 percent of people counted in the 2024 Whitehorse point-in-time count said eviction played a role in losing their last home. *A Place to Be* noted that landlords hold significant power over renters' housing, and they said that stronger tenant protections would help prevent housing loss. In the media, the minister of Yukon housing said that endorsing a plan doesn't mean approving every recommendation. This plan was designed intentionally with all 29 recommendations working together. This government picking which of those to follow and which to ignore is not going to resolve this crisis. Ending homelessness requires a coordinated plan, and this is exactly what *A Place to Be* offers. So, which of the 29 recommendations in *A Place to Be* does the government not support?

Hon. Scott Kent: I'll quote again from the briefing note that I tabled earlier today. Again, this was prepared by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and presented to the Yukon Party caucus in early August. And I quote: "endorsement represents a commitment to collaboration, shared priority setting, and continuous improvement. It does not commit Yukon Government to implementing every recommendation, approving additional funding, or making legislative changes. Recommendations requiring future capital or operating investment would continue to be considered through normal budget and decision-making process."

That said, we'll continue to work with the community advisory committee on this important work and continue to fulfill that commitment to collaboration, shared priority setting, and continuous improvement when it comes to a framework for community action to end homelessness. So, again, those aren't necessarily my words that the member opposite was talking about; these are words directly from a briefing note prepared by the Anti-Poverty Coalition and presented to the Yukon Party caucus.

Kate White: I don't know if I would cheer about this statement from the minister. *A Place to Be*, the plan this government just endorsed, tells us that every month in Whitehorse, an average of 18 people are newly identified as homeless, while only 11 move into housing. This government has tabled legislation that removes rent control and reinstates no-cause evictions. It is shameful that Yukon will become one of only two jurisdictions in Canada to leave renters without any safety or stability in their housing. So, how does the Minister of Community Services reconcile her government's commitment to *A Place to Be* with her decision to remove eviction protections for Yukon renters?

Hon. Currie Dixon: Madam Speaker, the changes that we've proposed to the *Residential Tenancies Act* are aimed at creating a better balance throughout the rental housing market as a whole.

We believe that both landlords and tenants benefit from a healthy market. We know that the NDP doesn't support market forces; they don't think that they're relevant in this case — and that's a difference of opinion we have on this particular subject. But the changes that we've proposed aim at creating a better balance in the market and better supports for tenants, for landlords, and for a healthier system as a whole. That's what we're trying to achieve in the rental market. As the minister of housing has outlined, that's our response to *A Place to Be* as well.

Question — Medically complex children

Kate White: In May, the minister told this House that officials would reach out to families caring for medically complex children affected by funding changes for their children's care. These families used to receive a non-taxable quarterly payment to help care for their children. Now they are being treated as contractors. They receive no additional funding, but they now have to file taxes as a business. These are parents already caring for medically complex children around the clock and now are faced with unexpected tax bills and paperwork they had no way to anticipate.

What is the minister doing to make sure that families caring for medically complex children aren't worse off because of how Yukon Government chooses to administer program funding?

Hon. Brad Cathers: Again, unfortunately, characterizations made by the Leader of the Official Opposition once again are not exactly accurate. I will quote from my letter to her dated yesterday that responded to her questions, which notes, in part: "The Canada Revenue Agency provides guidelines on reporting this type of funding; it has always been the client's responsibility to report their Individualized Supervisory Care funding to the Canada Revenue Agency. However, I understand that the Government of Yukon had not previously provided recipients T4As to this funding and the inconsistency raised concerns when some were issued for 2025.

"When these concerns were brought to my attention, I instructed the department to work to find solutions that address the needs of these families. This work is taking some time to complete as we must work with tax specialists to ensure a viable approach is implemented that reduces burden on these families. Disability Services has been in direct contact with affected families. Nine families currently receive Individualized Supervisory Care funding. All families have received letters, and social workers have provided additional information when needed. We will continue to keep them informed as further changes are implemented."

Kate White: That was six months since debate and five months since I sent the letter, and it's dated yesterday but not received in my e-mail as of 12:58 today.

In May, I asked this question, and the minister promised to have an answer for Yukon families — again, six months ago. Disability Services contracts a pediatric physiotherapist for one half-day per week. With 294 children on that list, a child whose specialist recommends weekly physiotherapy may only see the therapist once every four months. For a young child, that gap matters; early intervention is critical. A lost opportunity to work with a pediatric physiotherapist can have lasting impacts. In May, the minister committed to looking into this and getting back to us.

Did the minister look into this issue, and has there been an increase in pediatric physiotherapy access for Yukon families?

Hon. Brad Cathers: Again, I appreciate the concern that people have brought forward. I would remind the member that from May to October is not six months. May is the fifth month of the year, this is the 10th month of the year. I would point out, as I did in my letter responding to the member, that when it comes to the area of physiotherapy services, "Disability Services relies on contracted physiotherapy providers to assess children's needs and determine the frequency of services required. When contracted providers have been unable to meet clinical recommendations, Disability Services has engaged alternate physiotherapists to help address service gaps.

"The previous contract with Physio Plus expired March 31, 2026 and a bridging contract extended the services

to the end of May 2026. A Standing Offer Agreement procurement process has since been completed and, since June, Disability Services has had an agreement with OT North and Physio Plus for physiotherapy. New referrals are directed to OT North while Physio Plus continues to provide services to their previous clients.

"Disability Services contracts directly for physiotherapy services rather than providing funding to families to select their own providers. Decisions regarding how services are delivered and funded are made based on program requirements, service availability, and operational considerations. As part of our commitment to improving support through Disability Services, the department is further reviewing the need for physiotherapy services and whether the current model is meeting needs and reducing administrative burden.

"While program policies are reviewed, I encourage any clients of Disability Services who are experiencing concerns to reach out."

Kate White: Building on that long-awaited response — Disability Services will pay for a third-party counsellor but will not pay for a third-party physiotherapist. Families have been told that policy prevents it. This means children go without the therapy their specialists recommend even when a qualified provider is available and ready to see them. Parents are being told no not because their child doesn't need the care but because of how the department has chosen to structure its contract.

It's not clear why the department will cover some third-party services but not others. Nor is it clear who decides how these funding decisions are made. Families deserve to understand the rules that determine whether their child gets the care they need and when they receive it.

Has the minister reviewed this policy, and has he directed changes so that funding follows what the child needs and not what's written in a contract?

Hon. Brad Cathers: I would refer the member to what I just said when I indicated the program policies are currently being reviewed. I'll complete my sentence, as I ran out of time previously: While program policies are reviewed, I encourage any clients of Disability Services who are experiencing concerns to reach out to their social worker and the Director of Social Supports so that alternative options can be explored. The Director of Social Supports…" — then it gives the name of the person and their contact information and how to reach them.

As I indicated previously, the reason the approach taken to date has been taken is that Disability Services has relied on contracted physiotherapy providers and has done so under a previous contract and then under new contracts with two entities — with OT North and PhysioPlus — and I explained Disability Services contracts directly for physiotherapy services rather than providing funding to families to select their own providers.

But again, as mentioned in my last response and earlier here, program policies are being reviewed, and I encourage any clients of disability services who are experiencing concerns related to physiotherapy to reach out to their social worker and the Director of Social Supports so that they can understand those concerns and consider whether there are alternative options.

Question — Substance use health emergency

Debra-Leigh Reti: I have a question for the Minister of Justice. On October 7, I asked the government to increase funding to address the ongoing substance use health emergency. The government refused that request but said they would consider more funding if necessary.

Yesterday, the Yukon's chief coroner said — in quotation: Since early July 2026, Yukon's Coroner's Service has investigated eight deaths confirmed to have resulted from toxic substances. Toxicology results are still pending in two additional deaths suspected to be related to toxic substance use. All the deaths have occurred in Whitehorse."

Given this devastating update, is the government now ready to do more to address this emergency?

Hon. Brad Cathers: Again, what I would note is we do certainly, first of all, share our sympathies with all of the families of those who have been lost. The illicit drug supply remains highly toxic and unpredictable. There was a period of time where we were fortunate not to have seen opioid-related deaths, and unfortunately, we have recently seen an increase in those numbers — again, a very tragic situation. We have already taken action related to this and we plan to do more in this area.

I would also note that one of the things that was done recently by provincial and territorial ministers, including myself as Minister of Health and Social Services, was to lobby the federal government for the continuation of funding related to substance abuse and mental wellness that the federal government had planned to cut. They have now provided a one-year extension to that funding. That is helpful, but we need long-term certainty in that funding, because for us to develop new programs to expand what we're doing, we do need funding certainty from the federal government. It's not possible for us to staff up new positions related to additional supports on a one-year term and expect that is going to provide us with any stability or that we'll necessarily even be able to hire people to help that. Again, I would reiterate the importance of the federal government providing long-term funding certainty for funding to provinces and territories, including the Yukon.

Debra-Leigh Reti: On October 7, we had a debate in this Legislature. I asked the government to do more to address the ongoing substance use health emergency, and some of the responses that I received are that they already had enough regular funds to address the needs with the present opioid crisis that we're in. Two weeks later, Yukoners woke up to this news that 10 Yukoners have died in the last two months from drug overdoses. We are debating three different budgets this fall. None of them increase funding to address the substance use health emergency.

Does the government really believe it is doing all it can at this point to try to prevent these deaths?

Hon. Brad Cathers: We recognize the need to do more in this area. We've committed to doing more in this area, including working right now on developing additional programming related to second-stage treatment and recovery, and we are in discussions with others about that. Again, I would note the importance of the federal government continuing long-term funding and providing multi-year certainty to provinces and territories for substance use funding that they provide under bilateral agreements.

I would also note that the Yukon had a period in time when we were fortunate not to have as many opioid-related fatalities and toxic drug-related fatalities as we had previously. In fact, when the Public Health Agency of Canada presented recently to FPT health ministers, they showed a drop in numbers for the Yukon. However, that was a period-of-time count, and one thing that happens with the Yukon is, because we're dealing with such a small population, a small number of cases can cause either a drop in the overall statistics or an increase.

But what's important to recognize, and we do recognize, is that these are not just statistics; these are people involved in this, and ultimately, it is important that the Yukon Government but also others work together in trying to help as many people who are addicted to break free of their addictions and to live healthy, sober lives. That is something that we intend to do more in. As mentioned, we are working right now in developing additional programming related to that —

Speaker: Order.

Debra-Leigh Reti: Today, I'm calling on the government to expand funding for its own commitments to address the substance use health emergency, including expanding access to addictions treatment options, delivering prevention initiatives in the community where they are most needed, and establishing effective enforcement measures against the illicit drug trade. These are literally the Yukon Party's own platform commitments. So, when is the government going to act, and how are they planning to act?

Hon. Brad Cathers: Again, while we recognize more work is there to be done, I gave examples of steps we've taken, including jointly working with provinces and territories to push the federal government to continue mental wellness and substance use funding that they had planned to cut. They have now provided a one-year extension. Overall, the funding extension for the Yukon, which also includes another bilateral, is only about $1.3 million. We do need long-term certainty, and we need funding that is proportionate to the problem.

However, we have had some success in working with the federal government on the development of an integrated mental health service hub for youth in the Yukon. This is something that when the Minister of Health, Marjorie Michel, was here in August, we announced $6.6 million to strengthen and expand access to integrated mental health and wellness supports for youth and young adults aged 12 to 30 across the Yukon. This service will be delivered by BYTE.

It's also relevant to note that we heard from the province of Ontario at the recent health minister meeting how effective those hubs have been in Ontario at improving outcomes, and this is again a similar model also done in partnership with the federal government. These are a few examples; we recognize more work needs to be done. As I noted, we are currently working on developing additional support programs, including second-stage treatment and looking at aftercare and recovery, because we recognize that more does need to be done —

Speaker: Order.

Question — *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*

Carmen Gustafson: Last year, a Yukon Supreme Court Judge struck down part of the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* or the SCAN act. The judge ruled that giving tenants only five days' notice before eviction was unconstitutional. In addition, several community advocates have raised concerns about SCAN for years, as it has been found to disproportionately impact Indigenous, poor, and marginalized Yukoners the most. A review of the act is underway, but we are yet to see those changes before this House.

Can the minister tell Yukoners what specific changes will be made to address SCAN's disproportionate impact on Indigenous and marginalized communities?

Hon. Laura Lang: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question — and it's a good question. The review is underway, and just for the information of the Assembly, I have asked for a briefing on the status of where the review is at. I can confirm that not only is a review underway, but it also presents an opportunity to hear from Yukoners to review best practices around the country and to inform potential improvements to legislation to support community safety. As part of the review, I can also confirm that the Department of Justice completed public engagement with Yukoners, First Nations, and stakeholders in September of 2025. And so, while that information is being compiled, I thank the member opposite for that question, and I can assume that any concerns that have been held by the public will be part of those considerations.

Carmen Gustafson: When somebody is evicted under the SCAN act, they are often left with no options for housing. These individuals still need somewhere to live, and a shelter bed isn't always available, nor is it appropriate for families with children who are impacted. Last year, the SCAN unit received 195 complaints, 13 leading to evictions. Once evicted, people must search for housing in one of Canada's tightest housing markets. Yukoners are facing a housing crisis with little to no affordable options, and with the upcoming implementation of no-cause evictions and lack of rent control, things may only get tighter.

Can the minister explain what options for housing and housing support are available to Yukoners evicted by SCAN?

Hon. Laura Lang: In addition to the options that are available both through Yukon Housing Corporation as well as through income support as well as through other local organizations, I can confirm that the SCAN unit now supports landlords seeking to evict tenants for reasons relating to SCAN

investigations through the 14-day for-cause evictions provision in the *Residential Tenancies Act* or by applying for a community safety order from the Yukon Supreme Court. The *Residential Tenancies Act* processes have clear procedural fairness safeguards that respond to concerns expressed by the court in the *Wright v. Yukon* decision about the SCAN act's eviction provisions.

Carmen Gustafson: Under the SCAN act, an anonymous complaint can trigger a government surveillance operation on someone's home that the person never even knows that they're being watched, and serious consequences can come without a single criminal charge being laid. Legal experts have pointed out that this sidesteps the criminal justice system and bypasses tenant rights. This can lead to significant impacts on residents in the home that are targeted by SCAN.

The minister alluded to it in her last answer, but how is the government ensuring that Yukoners who are at risk because of a SCAN complaint have access to due and fair process that upholds their rights?

Hon. Laura Lang: I'd like us to just remember what the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* is supposed to do. The SCAN act works to make communities safer by investigating properties where illegal activity is occurring habitually and adversely affecting the surrounding community. The SCAN unit can investigate six specific uses of property: drug trafficking; organized crime; the illegal possession of restricted and prohibited firearms, explosives, or other weapons; illegal sale of alcohol or cannabis; illegal activities related to prostitution; and sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.

The act is complaint-driven, and the identity of the complaint is kept strictly confidential, protecting them from realities. As a reminder, if a home is under a SCAN investigation and the inhabitants of that home find themselves needing to find a different place to locate, I welcome them to use the process, which is the 14-day for-cause eviction provisions in the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

Question — Small businesses retaining employees

Doris Anderson: As we mark Small Business Week, Yukon businesses continue to tell us that finding and keeping workers is a big challenge for them. Can the Minister of Economy, Tourism and Culture tell the House what the government is doing to help Yukoners get the training they need and help businesses build jobs?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: A strong workforce is essential to a strong economy. Through our labour market programs, we are investing more than $7 million to help Yukoners access training, build new skills, and connect with meaningful employment opportunities. We are focused on practical programs to connect Yukoners with jobs and help employers build their workforce. Programs like Building UP and Staffing UP help employers recruit, train, and retain workers. Our partnership with the Department of Education supports apprentice training and pathways to the skilled trades.

We are also working directly with industry, Yukon University, chamber of commerce, and training providers to identify where labour shortages exist and to make sure training opportunities align with those needs. And we are working with Canada through the Team Canada Strong initiative, which is expected to bring significant new investments into the skilled trades training and workforce development over the coming years. Our goal is simple: Help Yukon businesses find the people they need while helping Yukoners develop the skills they need for good-paying jobs today and into the future.

Doris Anderson: Business owners often tell us that they know exactly what skills they need but sometimes struggle to navigate government programs.

How is the government making sure that its workforce development programs work for Yukon employers, especially small businesses?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: Workforce development works best when employers are active partners in the process. Just yesterday, I was out having conversations with small businesses trying to understand what it is that their needs are in labour market development. Businesses are often the first to identify any emerging labour shortages and skill gaps, which is why our approach is increasingly employer-led. Programs like Staffing UP were designed specifically for employers. Through a single application process, businesses can access support for recruitment, training, retention initiatives, job coaching, workplace accommodations, HR planning, and wage subsidies for workers.

We are also engaging directly with the employers through initiatives such as the workforce development committee with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and our Yukon nominee program review and ongoing labour market consultations. These conversations help ensure government supports remain practical, responsive, and focused on the needs of Yukon businesses. Ultimately, this work is about building a stronger Yukon workforce by helping businesses find the skilled workers they need and helping Yukoners access good-paying jobs and long-term career opportunities.

Doris Anderson: Creating opportunities for businesses to grow is about more than workforce development. Business owners also tell us they spend too much time dealing with paperwork and administration.

What is the government doing to reduce red tape for Yukon businesses?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: And we agree. We agree that business owners should focus their time on running their businesses, not navigating unnecessary paperwork. That's why we launched the red tape reduction initiative focused on making government services simpler and easier to access. We're reviewing regulations, streamlining application processes, modernizing service delivery, and reducing administrative requirements where we can. For example, we're implementing a new online funding portal to make programs easier to access, and we're reviewing reporting and application requirements to remove unnecessary steps and duplications.

We know government doesn't have all the answers, and some of the best ideas for reducing red tape come from the people creating jobs and growing businesses in Yukon. That's

why we're asking businesses to bring forward their ideas and identify barriers through our red tape reduction engagement process. We want to know where the paperwork is burdensome, and we want to understand where approvals are taking so long, and we need people to give us that information. If it's getting in the way of investment, growth, or hiring, we want to hear about it so we can work with businesses to help find a solution.

Question re: Red tape reduction

Justin Ziegler: Just under a year ago, the current government ran on a list of promises, and among the flagship promises of this government was to reduce red tape, and we were just talking about it during the last spring session.

I looked carefully to understand the government's explanation about the content of this promise. Unfortunately, the minister could not give Yukoners any clear definition or explanation with specific examples of "red tape reduction". But I was able to find one on my own. "Red tape" means the time, effort, and cost it takes to access government programs, follow government rules, and complete required processes.

Now that we know how to identify red tape, can the minister explain what will be done to make sure the protection of health, safety, and the environment is guaranteed?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I think what I will do is just acknowledge the definition of "red tape", which I think the member opposite will agree with based on his question. So, how we are defining this in the work that we're doing is that "red tape" is unnecessary time, effort, and cost associated with accessing government programs, following government rules, or completing a required process. As I've spoken in this House before, the work to do this also has to be measured with the work to ensure that privacy and safety of public information and public processes are also held in high regard. As we continue to work through this, we will be looking at opportunities to reduce red tape while also ensuring that our responsibility as a government to the safety and protection of Yukoners is accounted for.

Justin Ziegler: On May 6, the minister launched a platform to collect views of Yukoners on how the government can reduce red tape.

Five months later, we have still heard nothing about this questionnaire, nothing about what Yukoners provided as suggestions, nor about what this government intends to do with the suggestions collected through this form.

Can the minister explain how long this consultation will be open, and what will happen to the suggestions that are being made by Yukoners?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: I think it's really important to acknowledge that the key piece of a red tape reduction commitment is that it doesn't end.

We have no intentions to remove the opportunity for businesses to share with us the challenges they experience in navigating Yukon Government programs or funding, and that will remain available going forward. What I can share with this House is that as of October 1, more than 237 submissions have been received through the online feedback process; 19 have been through a business or industry group, seven through a non-governmental organization, 116 as Government of Yukon employees, 93 as individuals, and two as others. Issues identified vary significantly in scope and complexity and potential impact. As I've said in this House, we are committed to bringing a framework to this and sharing it with this House when that time has come and the document itself is ready.

Justin Ziegler: Nobody wants more red tape in their lives, especially those who are currently struggling to access necessary services in health care and social services.

The minister has identified red tape reduction as a top priority. Yukoners want to know when they will see a plan, the action to reduce service barriers, and the resulting improvements in their lives. How can people who submitted suggestions on the red tape reduction framework be sure that their suggestions will be heard?

Can the minister name a single concrete measure put in place over the last six months that reduces barriers for Yukoners accessing Health and Social Services?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: What I can say is that there is a process underway right now, working through the Yukon Government, so that the identified issues that have come forward are going to the appropriate place.

In due time, I will share more outcomes and the reports of that as well as what the framework will look like.

Question — Trade apprenticeships support

Patti McLeod: We've heard today about the government's efforts to help businesses find skilled workers, and for many Yukoners living in communities like Dawson City, Watson Lake, Mayo, Ross River, and Old Crow, accessing training often means significant travel and additional costs. What's the government doing to ensure rural Yukoners can access the skills training that they need?

Hon. Scott Kent: I appreciate the question from the member. We want rural Yukoners to have the same opportunity as anyone else in the territory. That's why Yukon apprentices receive tuition-free technical training and financial supports to help cover the costs of attending training. An apprentice attending an eight-week technical training course in Alberta can receive over $5,000 in travel and living support. This is in addition to tuition costs paid by government and any employment insurance benefits for which they qualify. We're also investing in training opportunities closer to home. This year, we're providing $140,000 for Connected North programming, including $70,000 dedicated specifically to trades-focused learning, with most sessions directed to rural Yukon schools. So, no matter where someone lives in the Yukon, we want them to be able to pursue training and build a good career here at home.

Patti McLeod: Major projects across Yukon will require electricians, carpenters, welders, heavy equipment technicians, and other skilled trades workers.

What is the government doing to connect rural students with those careers early?

Hon. Scott Kent: What we're doing is creating more opportunities for rural students to explore the skilled trades before they leave high school. This year, we piloted STEP into the Trades, which provided paid work experience with Yukon employers.

We received 55 applications, and students gained hands-on experience with participating employers. This included students in Dawson City as well as a position in Teslin. We're also partnering with the First Nation School Board, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and Yukon University to deliver a rural experiential model event and a trades sampler program for rural students. In communities like Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Carcross, Watson Lake, and Old Crow, students are also accessing locally developed trades and technology programs designed to reflect the realities of life and work in their communities. So, our goal is simple: Introduce students to careers in the trades early and connect them to apprenticeship opportunities right here at home.

Patti McLeod: Yukon is investing in housing, roads, energy infrastructure, and resource development, and we know demand for skilled workers will continue to grow. How is the government ensuring rural Yukoners are ready to seize those opportunities?

Hon. Scott Kent: What we're doing is investing in apprentice and trades training today so rural Yukoners can fill those jobs tomorrow. The Yukon currently has more than 500 registered apprentices, and government invests over $2.5 million annually to support apprenticeship training and certification. We're also working with Canada on its Team Canada Strong initiative, which is expected to provide additional supports for apprentices, including a proposed $400 per week training benefit and a $5,000 completion bonus for red seal certification. These investments are about more than training; they're about making sure that when opportunities for Yukon communities are available, local residents have the skills, certifications, and support they need to take advantage of them and build rewarding careers in their home communities.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of Opposition private members' business

Debra-Leigh Reti: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3)(b), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 21, 2026. They are: Motion No. 40, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin; and Motion No. 51, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Lane Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3)(a), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of members of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 21, 2026. They are: Motion No. 183, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale North; Motion No. 181, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre; Motion No. 182, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre; and Motion No. 180, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini.

Speaker: We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 11, *Yukon Firearms Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second Reading, Bill No. 11, standing in the name of the Hon. Laura Lang.

Hon. Laura Lang: I move that Bill No. 11, *Yukon Firearms Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 11, entitled *Yukon Firearms Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Laura Lang: Responsible firearm use is a core part of northern culture and livelihoods. Traditional activities like hunting, trapping, target shooting, being on the land, and using firearms safely for remote wilderness protection are fundamental to the northern way of life for thousands of Yukoners, and these activities support survival and nutritional needs across our territory.

Several years ago, the federal government began taking increasingly unreasonable steps to target responsible, law-abiding firearms owners across Canada. This troubling trend of politically motivated policy, programs, and prohibitions was completely disconnected from our northern way of life. We are committed to making Yukon communities safe. The federal government's Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program and prohibitions will not achieve that goal. Instead, it's costing Canadian taxpayers the better part of a billion dollars, and this confiscation program doesn't apply to criminals. It's exclusively targeting trained, vetted, licence-holding Yukoners who have done what is being asked of them. Along with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, we jointly shared these concerns with the federal minister of public safety and requested a northern exemption or a solution that recognized the realities of the North. Our request has yet to receive a response.

We have consistently opposed the ongoing federal effort to confiscate firearms from responsible gun owners, and we will continue to do so. We recently welcomed the announcement of Public Safety Canada to at long last appoint a Chief Firearms Officer, or CFO, for the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. This is a promising development. It should improve and expand the delivery of programs and services as part of the administration of the federal *Firearms Act* and the Canadian Firearms Program for responsible Yukon firearms owners. Our government consistently advocated on behalf of Yukon and northern firearms owners for a CFO and accompanying federal investments and for the position to be based in Whitehorse.

However, our government will continue to further support Yukon firearms owners and be clear with the Government of Canada about the impacts unreasonable firearm policies,

including prohibitions, are having on many Yukoners. We will continue this advocacy by advancing territorial firearms legislation. This proposed legislation reflects the fact that activities like hunting, trapping, target shooting, and sport shooting and being on the land are much more than recreation. They are core parts of the northern culture in the Yukon, our livelihoods, and in many communities, integral to meeting survival and nutritional needs. For these reasons, this proposed legislation aims to go further.

I'd like to take a moment to go into exactly that. Our government has heard from Yukoners on their concerns pertaining to firearms legislation, regulation, and policies, including concerns related to the federal firearms measures. As I've already mentioned, we are taking action to ensure Yukoners' voices are heard. This proposed bill establishes the Yukon Firearms Advocate and creates a legislative framework to govern the functions, powers, accountability, and administration of that office. The bill also sets out the firearms advocate's mandate to advise, advocate, engage, and educate on firearms matters.

The use of firearms in the territory for subsistence hunting and harvesting, safety on the land, and sport shooting has a long history and is deeply ingrained in our northern way of life. This was underscored in our engagement on proposed firearms legislation this summer. We heard from many Yukoners, including those who use firearms safely and responsibly for worthwhile cultural and community pursuits. Again, this government has previously stated opposition to federal prohibitions on roughly 2,500 models of assault-style firearms and advocated for an approach to federal firearms regulation that recognizes the unique circumstances faced in the North.

This new legislation recognizes the importance of ensuring that Yukoners' perspectives are understood and considered in discussions relating to firearms legislation, policy, and programs that affect Yukoners. I would like to go over some key provisions of the proposed *Yukon Firearms Act*. The central feature of this bill is the creation of a firearms advocate. The advocate's role would include providing advice to the Minister of Justice on firearms-related matters, communicating with public officials, advocating for Yukon firearms owners and Yukoners, engaging with the public, and promoting firearms safety and education.

The bill would also authorize the advocate to conduct research, collect and analyze information, and engage directly with Yukoners on matters relating to firearms use, ownership, and possession. The proposed office would operate separately from the public service and would be supported through a framework established in the legislation. The proposed legislation also includes measures to promote accountability and transparency. The bill contains reporting, financial accountability, and conflict-of-interest provisions respecting activities of the advocate.

Ultimately, this act creates a position with a mandate to engage with Yukoners, communicate Yukon's perspectives to public officials, and provide advice on matters relating to firearms legislation, regulation, and policies. I do look forward to discussing the details of the bill and answering members' questions as this bill is considered by the Legislative Assembly.

Carmen Gustafson: I rise to speak to Bill No. 11, the *Yukon Firearms Act*. In general debate, I'm just going to go over and provide a hint of the things that I will be asking about further. I think it's helpful to inform further debate so that there aren't very many surprises so that we can really hear the answers to some of these concerns.

There are significant concerns with this legislation. I can start with a few. One concern that has been raised is that statements by the government and by supporters of the legislation have made it hard to understand really or to trust what the long-term vision or outlook for the implementation of this legislation is and what the role of the firearms advocate will be.

The bill is essentially asking for a blank cheque to pull money from other programming in Justice, much of which is funded through federal dollars that are earmarked for specific program delivery. So, I'm going to be really interested to hear where the minister is planning to fund this from. And I wonder how any responsible decision-maker can reasonably be expected to support a program for which no costs are provided, not even an estimate, when there are clearly costs to providing the program.

The Chief Firearms Officer for the territories is now situated in Whitehorse and will have significant overlap in duties with the advocate. This action predated this government. I think we are all quite happy to see the Chief Firearms Officer position now in Whitehorse. And so again, I'll have questions about that overlap of the positions. So, nothing in this legislation changes federal legislation. It couldn't. Nothing impacts the outcome of the Supreme Court case that will be heard in just a few weeks. I don't think it tangibly changes anything for Yukon firearms owners. So, some things that I will not make this debate about. It's not about my perspective or my views or my experiences with firearms. Other members may choose to share those views, but for me, that's not that important to me. It's not about whether some members in this House support legitimate uses of firearms more than others or what kinds of firearms should be available to Yukoners. It's not about whether some members in this House recognize legitimate, lawful, and safe use of firearms and others don't. It's not about whether firearms are a tool that need to be used safely; otherwise, they can and have had tragic consequences when accidentally or intentionally misused. So, in my view, nothing in this legislation will have a day-to-day impact on firearms owners in the Yukon, although it does seem that the Yukon Party is willing to let gun enthusiasts, party supporters, and their friends believe that it will.

This is also about priorities. I heard last week that the government can both chew bubble gum and walk at the same time. I agree with that sentiment actually, and I know it to be true and that the public service can and does regularly handle many competing priorities and directions. But at the same time, there are finite resources. The Premier and his caucus have been very clear. Money is tight, and his government needs to be prudent in its spending. In order to both chew the

bubble gum and keep walking or really do any kind of multi-tasking, energy and focus need to be allocated to both of the activities. If you put too much energy into chewing gum and focus too hard on the flavour and enjoying that experience, you're probably going to trip yourself up. Similarly, if you're putting everything you have into walking, you might end up choking on your gum. You need to balance your energy between the two.

This government chose to allocate policy and legislative resources to develop this particular bill. There are a finite number of working hours available to address government mandates. It was a choice to use those resources to develop legislation that, according to the number of responses to its own public consultation, is not particularly widely supported or something that Yukoners are widely enthusiastic about. So, instead of using their resources to address matters that impact and are supported by a wide range of Yukoners, we have a niche piece of legislation based on a vague election promise. What we don't know is what those resources could have been otherwise used for over the last almost year since this government was elected — perhaps updating SCAN legislation that I talked about earlier today or making changes to the *Public Utilities Act* to address known shortcomings, perhaps amending Yukon family law statutes to address known unfairnesses and improve the legal system for people facing intimate-partner violence. Those are not priorities that we have seen addressed in this fall session. I could go on with other examples, and I'm sure other members can think of some as well. But that's going to be a question for the minister that she can answer later in committee debate.

I want to be clear, since the minister is such an ardent supporter of the staff in her department, which I'm sure they appreciate as do I — I really want to be clear that this is not about the quality of their work or the effort that they put into putting the best piece of legislation forward with the direction they were given. It is 100 percent about the partisan and ideological choice made to direct efforts away from other important priorities into creating a stand-alone position at an unknown cost with an unclear mandate — and that many lawful firearms owners are puzzled what the benefit will be to them.

The minister is — I will give her credit for this. She is following one of the parts of her mandate letter given to her by the Premier, which was derived from the Yukon Party platform that talked about a *Yukon Firearms Act* aimed at — quote: "protecting lawful Yukon firearms owners". They also promised in their platform to create a territorially appointed Chief Firearms Officer position and to advocate for firearms owners and promote safety. Just to be clear, that is not what this legislation actually does. So, I'm interested to hear from the minister what happened to the other points in her mandate letter and what has changed given that the federal government has followed up on a long-awaited appointment of a Chief Firearms Officer situated in Whitehorse. It would be expected that this federal appointment might change the rubric for what is needed in the Yukon, but I haven't heard how that has impacted the development of the firearms act before us.

Given what I've seen posted from gun enthusiasts about what the firearms advocate will do, it seems pretty clear that confusion remains about what exactly the role does and who it takes direction from or who it gives direction to. There continues to be confusion about the federally appointed Chief Firearms Officer. The "what we heard" report noted there was confusion and misunderstanding about those roles. So, I suppose introducing an act with the same name as a promise that was in the platform technically fulfills that promise. I'm not sure the content does what people think it does. Or perhaps there are things that have been promised behind closed doors that are not apparent from the wording of the legislation that this role intends to do. So, I'll be looking to the minister for some clarification about what exactly the parameters of the role will be and to clear up the misunderstanding that continues.

There are several analyses that should be done to promote good policy-making and decisions by government. They include gender-based analysis, consideration of legislative and policy options, jurisdictional scans, costing, and others. Since this is information the public and the Opposition aren't privy to, I'm hoping that the minister will be able to speak more to the information and advice she received when providing direction on the drafting of the legislation.

I note, as the minister noted in her opening remarks, that there are some mechanisms for accountability in the legislation, and I do appreciate their inclusion. A financial statement and report of the activities of the firearms advocate are to be tabled annually in this Legislative Assembly. Those do provide some oversight after the fact but don't erase the concerns about the mandate, the potential for scope creep by the advocate who will be independent of government, and the lack of budget accountability. Once something's been done, it's done. Once the money is spent, it's spent. So, I'll be looking forward to hearing more from the minister about how she will be accountable to the public before these decisions are made or what process is available for people who have concerns about the conduct of the advocate during their tenure, who, I might add, has immunity under this legislation.

This leads me to the unaccountable spending allowed in this bill. One of the greatest concerns with this legislation is that there is no line item in the current budget that's been debated that would support implementation of the bill. No spending has been authorized, and when asked what analysis was done to cost the position, none was provided. It is highly unusual that a government would introduce legislation that they have no idea what the cost implications will be, particularly a government that considers itself fiscally conservative and accuses past governments of being reckless with the public purse. So, perhaps compensation for the advocate has not been determined because someone hasn't been hired. However, no position in the public service that I know of comes without a salary range. Some positions may even remain vacant because nobody wants to take the job for what government is offering. These can be highly impactful roles, including front-line roles supporting Yukoners. Pay in the public service is usually dictated by collective agreements or a classification pay scale or, for boards and committees, by statute. So, it is exceptional to give the minister the discretion to decide how much somebody should be paid and what their budget is.

I do hope the minister will be able to provide some rationale and reasons why this position deserves to be treated in such an exceptional manner. The "what we heard" document showed that there is relatively little interest in responding to the firearms advocate role. There were only 226 formal responses received, and this was despite an engagement in which — quote: "Some special consideration and invitation were paid to the firearms community through organizations such as hunting and harvesting associations, rifle and pistol clubs and outfitters. The feedback received reflects this."

So, it was a decision of the government to pay particular attention to the people most likely to support their position. This included an invite-only, closed-door Q&A with the Premier and minister in attendance. I note that the Premier and the minister were absent from the widely advertised public event that anyone could attend. It was also noted in the "what we heard" document that in spite of the way the engagement questions were worded that presuppose the creation of the advocate, there was a clear degree of opposition to the creation of the role and the use of government resources to support it.

The firearms act creates a firearms advocate position that will act outside of government. It has a legal structure outside of government. In order to do this, the bill includes provisions that are quite unusual or curiosities, some might say. Other provinces have firearms commissioners or other roles with respect to firearms, but so far as I can find, they are not equivalent to this position. So, I'll be asking the minister why she made some of the policy decisions she did to include provisions we rarely see and again for an explanation about what is so exceptional about the firearms advocate role that it needed to be created in this manner. So, given the uniqueness of some of those provisions, I probably will have a lot of clarifying questions for the minister so that I can better explain what it does and why it was created the way it is.

Governments are usually advocates for their citizens, and so I do have questions about why this government feels it is so unequipped to advocate for firearms owners that this position was necessary. Their record, which they included in the "what we heard" document, demonstrates that the minister has used her voice, has worked with her northern colleagues, and is at present advocating for Yukoners on this file. I suspect the minister for hunting and fishing does the same, along with other Cabinet resources that have gone to advocating for the position of the government with respect to federal firearms legislation. So, I do hope that the minister will be able to articulate why the Yukon has created its very own lobbyist to do this work now instead and what tables and conversations the advocate would be invited to that existing officials wouldn't be.

My final preview to the minister and the public servants who will be supporting her in committee debate is to flag a concern with the broadness of the regulation-making powers. I'd like to hear what sort of regulations the government is contemplating making, or what has been recommended in order to fully implement the legislation the way that they envision. My concern is that it allows Cabinet to change, expand, or direct the role without public debate in this Legislative Assembly. I want to recognize the organizations, Yukoners with many interests in this law, and the firearms owners and hunters who have reached out to us asking that we oppose this legislation. They have told us that it doesn't reflect them or their priorities, and they do not feel served by the legislation or the language used to promote the legislation.

I expect that there will be some who want to pigeonhole opponents to the legislation as taking some particular stance on firearms, but I don't think that is fair. There are many reasons, as I have said at the beginning of this statement, that really have nothing to do with firearms, who uses them, which kind they use, and why. Those views are important as well, but I don't think we need to think this is a debate about: Firearms: good; Firearms: bad. It's not.

I also want to recognize the public servants in the Department of Justice for their work on this challenging file and thank them for their briefing on the legislation. I look forward to hearing more from other members in this House as well as to further debate in committee.

Debra-Leigh Reti: I rise to speak to Bill No. 11, the *Yukon Firearms Act*.

In my home community of Old Crow, firearms are tools that help feed our families and keep us safe on the land. Our elders taught us to handle them with care long before any federal gun course existed. I fully support the rights of lawful firearms owners and the safe use of firearms. So, for that reason alone, yes, I will be voting in favour of this bill, but my support is reluctant. This bill creates a new firearms advocate to advise the minister and speak for firearms owners. The government can already do this work on its own, and just last month, the federal government announced a dedicated northern Chief Firearms Officer for all three territories created specifically to respond to the needs of the North.

So, if the government can do this work itself and there is a dedicated federal authority for the North now, why are we spending more time and money on this? There is no dollar figure anywhere in this bill. Pay and funding are left to the minister's discretion, and when asked recently, the minister told this House the funding model is "yet to come". Meanwhile, Yukoners keep hearing from this government that there is no money, while essential programs are being cut at the same time. No money for baby baskets for new mothers, reductions to youth sports funding, no more money for the substance use health emergency. Yet somehow there is room for a new office with an open-ended budget. As I said, I will vote for this bill at this time, but in Committee of the Whole, I do look forward to hearing the minister explain what this office will cost, why it is a higher priority than the needs our communities are still waiting on.

Doris Anderson: I rise in support of Bill No. 11, the *Yukon Firearms Act*. As a Yukon First Nation person, I am happy to stand here today to support this bill. We as a government made a promise to stand up for those who rely on firearms for hunting and trapping, for protection while enjoying the outdoors and traditional pursuits. It is important that we recognize the perspectives and experiences of Yukon First Nations in this discussion.

Hunting and harvesting on the land have been central to my life and Yukon First Nation culture and traditions for generations. Subsistence hunting is not a recreational activity

but a way to feed our families, friends, and neighbours as well as to pass knowledge between generations, honour and continue traditions, and connect with Yukon, this land that sustains us. Firearms are an important tool in supporting these practices as well as keeping us safe on the land where we may be far from emergency services or immediate assistance. Our approach to policy must be reflective of these realities and be respectful to those knowledgeable, safe, and law-abiding Yukoners who themselves have a deep respect for firearms.

As firearm users, we have a responsibility to ensure firearms are handled and stored safely and used responsibly. This legislation recognizes that there is a stark difference between responsible and law-abiding gun owners and users and those who may pose a danger or risk to others.

Safety and education are key components of the bill and would be emphasized through the creation of a Yukon Firearms Advocate. A Yukon Firearms Advocate would do this going forward. They would ensure that Yukoners' interests and voices are heard, represented, and communicated. An advocate would promote education, training, and safety among firearm users.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this legislation. I am proud of the work that has gone into this bill and would like to thank the Minister of Justice and her team for the countless hours they have worked getting us here today.

Hon. Linda Benoit: As the MLA for Whistle Bend South, a Yukoner, and a law-abiding firearms owner, I rise today in support of this bill.

As the Minister of Justice mentioned, we appreciate that the Chief Firearms Officer for the Yukon and the other territories will be located in Whitehorse, although the position could have just as easily been placed in one of the other territories.

Having a firearms advocate is important. We've seen how out of touch the Government of Canada is with our culture here in the Yukon and across the North. Responsible firearms owners who are collectors, sport shooters, hunters, and others taking part in traditional activities deserve to have a voice in matters that affect them. I'm happy to see our government following through on the commitments we have made to Yukoners, including this one.

Kate White: Today, I'm speaking about Bill No. 11, the *Yukon Firearms Act*. I've listened to the conversations not only in the Assembly but on the radio. I've listened to folks who advocate for the use of guns and the safe use of guns and others.

I think the one question I would have is: Why is it called the *Yukon Firearms Act* and not the "Yukon Firearms Advocate Act?"

When I listened to my colleague from Riverdale North ask the questions about how this bill was directed and the policy decisions made by Cabinet and the minister and what this piece of legislation should do, I think there are a lot of questions and rightfully so. I've listened to CBC where I heard that the firearms advocate was going to directly go to Ottawa and advocate on behalf of individual firearms owners. I had a question as to what that would look like. I've just been going through some media pages in Yukon with people asking the questions about: Why? or: What does this do?

The one thing I'll note is even from folks who support the legislation, what I haven't heard is a clear understanding of what it does and how it does it and what it means. I think that in the absence of more clear information and direction from government, people have been able to envision what the *Yukon Firearms Act* will do and what the Yukon Firearms Advocate will do.

I'll note that lobbying is a respectable business for lots of different reasons. We have the Yukon lobbyist registry here, and folks who will lobby government for changes need to register on that.

Yukon pays lobbyists in Ottawa for different things. When we're encouraging looking north for things like mine development or others, lobbyists will do that work. They will have those meetings in other places and try to advocate or bring forward those regulation changes, those legislative changes.

When I listened to the minister and I listened to the Member for Porter Creek North and the Minister of Highways and Public Works speak, I'm still not entirely sure what this legislation does. I think that there's a lot of different ways to have advocates within government. They can work for departments. If this position is going to be about informing the minister and giving advice to the minister, I'm not sure why it wouldn't be someone who worked for the Department of Justice.

I have questions about the cost of resources for the position. Knowing that it's an office that's distinct from government, I think about all our House Officers. I think about Elections Yukon or the Yukon Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner or the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, and I think about the struggle that they have to pay for office space and the regular justification they need to make about why they need those resources. And here we have a piece of legislation in front of us saying that there's going to be an office distinct from government.

At this point in time, it's not clear as to whether this position is a full-time or a part-time position. I've heard different things on the radio about how long the term may last and the term may not last for.

In all these things, I think really it's Yukon Government creating a lobbyist for firearms. Again, lobbying is a respectable thing, but instead of having a lobby, the Yukon Government is actually funding a lobby for themselves to have that conversation back and forth. So, this Yukon Firearms Advocate will help give advice to the minister, help give advice to the government.

This position is going to go to other places. I was having a conversation with someone the other day and they said: Do you think that this position just means that they get to have really cool Yukon swag and then they get to go to like gun shows and gun ranges and other jurisdictions and hand out Yukon firearms like swag?

Government swag from Yukon Government — is that what we'll do? Is that one of the things? Will that be restricted — will that not be a thing? There was a comment about whether or not the firearms advocate would just be able to go

and wine and dine folks in other jurisdictions. Could they go to gun clubs in Alberta? Could they go to organizations in Ontario? Could they spend money while socializing? Is that a legitimate part of the firearms advocate position? Because that's kind of what a lobbyist does. We're talking about a piece of legislation that's called the *Yukon Firearms Act*, but really, what we're talking about is the Yukon Firearms Advocate — the firearms advocate.

I think about all the things in government. I think about all the priorities and all the interesting things that could be funded and are important. I think about back to our debate on disability legislation, and I know based on the folks that I know in the disability community, something that would be really welcomed would be a disability advocate. I mean, that could be very similar to what we have with the firearms act. Imagine if we had the Yukon disability act and within that we had the Yukon disability advocate. They could go to Ottawa and they could bring forward the concerns of folks with disability in the North and the challenges that they face and the reality that they live with. Heck, I'd be even happy to have a disability advocate within Health and Social Services itself.

I know that Seniors Action Yukon met with the minister earlier this year and they noted that Yukon really needed a senior and elders advocate, someone to help them be able to access the services that they needed to remain as healthy as they could for as long as they could. I think that when we talk about the need to support seniors and elders — folks who have invested so much in this territory and its success — they have asked for an advocate, but we don't have the Yukon seniors and elders act in front of us.

I think about the need for an advocate within the LGBTQS+ community — someone to help navigate government programs, funding access to health care and how that advocate position could be really critical.

I think about an agriculture advocate, someone who goes to Ottawa and talks on behalf of Yukon farmers about the challenges that they face here, the unique challenges that they face in the North. Northern agriculture is a way of life for many. It needs support, needs a better understanding.

I think as I talk here — and I mentioned that it's called the *Yukon Firearms Act*, but really, we're talking about the Yukon Firearms Advocate. Why isn't it in the title? Why isn't that what this piece of legislation is called? And then I do question, because I remember what the commitment was during the territorial election, and the interesting thing is actually I went to public consultations on this legislation — and it was really interesting — and I say that because there was a lot of folks that I haven't seen at other public consultations, and they were mad. They were mad, and I thought that it's really too bad that they hadn't been to an engagement or a consultation prior to the Yukon Party's experience with the rewriting of the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* or the Yukon Party's desire to open up the territory to hydraulic fracturing.

Because prior to those two things, public consultations actually were presentations of information and the ability for folks to ask questions and have them answered, but during the Peel days and the fracking days, those public meetings got pretty heated, and the government of the day — the Yukon Party of the day — changed how it worked. So, then it became public servants who have great fortitude standing next to information panels speaking individually with people, but it stopped being the presentation of information and the public asking of questions. The reason why I note having gone to, for sure, the consultation at the library is that the folks who went there reading the information panels and maybe trying to decipher this legislation — that's not what they were talking about. Because during the election campaign, the Yukon Party told them a different story about what this legislation would do.

I think partially why we are debating the *Yukon Firearms Act* and not citing the "Yukon Firearms Advocate Act" is because of that commitment in an election campaign, but having been at that meeting and having listened to those concerns of folks, I can say that those concerns aren't addressed in this legislation, that what they were bringing up as concerns weren't addressed in this legislation. And I appreciate that there have been references to the engagement and note that it was not really well responded to. I mean, it certainly wasn't the cannabis legislation. It certainly wasn't the Special Committee on Electoral Reform survey on creating a citizens' assembly, because that had like 6,000 people respond.

This recent engagement to the firearms act certainly wasn't the 2024 consultation on the changes to the Yukon *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that had more than 1,500 people participate. The reason why I bring that forward is because there is a drastic difference in that response — there's a drastic difference in that response. I think about folks who sent in things like: I listened to the interview today regarding the gun advocate, and when I first heard this headline, I almost laughed. An advocate for firearms? This to me is not needed, and personally, I fail to see the justification.

There are questions from folks sending in: Will the Yukon Government's firearm advocate be communicating with minors on social media? If yes, how will their parents and guardians be informed? Questions that have been asked — I think there's probably other questions, to be honest, from this person. But the one thing that I'll note is that even people who, during the election campaign, were interested in this — when I saw them at that consultation, what I see before me is not what they were asking for, and I understand what they were asking for is not actually able. As my colleague mentioned, there's the federal court case in a couple weeks that could have an outcome, but so, today, we're being asked to support an unknown, an undescribed, an unmarked amount of resources for a position, a position that I haven't heard clearly explained.

I've heard multiple interviews on the radio, and neither of the folks in support of this said the same thing. That was challenging. I can go online. I can go on social media and I can go through the comments, and very few of the comments think it's the same thing. Here we go — we have a piece of legislation that's talking about resources, and again, we've been told by this government that there's a reason; the money is tight. There have to be decisions about where money goes, but this is a piece of legislation that's just saying the money will go, that it's going to be an office distinct from government that doesn't have what those roles and responsibilities will be clearly laid out.

Again, I think about the conversation where the person said: Does this mean the advocate will go to gun shows and places and other jurisdictions with Yukon Government swag? Is that what this is? Is that how this position, you know, takes on the concerns of Yukon gun owners?

As we go through Committee of the Whole and as the minister answers those questions, there are many. My colleague alluded to them already about what policy direction, about what advice was received, what decisions were made, and why. I think about the importance of when we look at legislation like this and we think about gender-inclusive diversity analysis. I'll note that the minister has multiple files. Was the gender analysis done? How will this affect other parts of the community?

Knowing that it's called the *Yukon Firearms Act*, but really, it's the Yukon firearms advocate act — I think about all the other advocates that Yukoners would probably really like to see: disability advocate, seniors and elders advocate, agriculture advocate, 2SLGBTQIA+ advocate. Oh, my gosh — imagine if there was an advocate in Health and Social Services. What about a medical travel advocate? That would be pretty great. So, I will listen to the Committee of the Whole debate. I'm interested to hear the Committee of the Whole debate, and like my colleague from Riverdale North, I do recognize and thank the public servants who worked on this legislation, because our questions and our criticisms aren't about the work that they presented, but it's about the direction they were given. In a time where so many other things are top of mind — affordability, accessibility — but this is where the resources went. Thank you for the time, and I look forward to the questions and answers that come.

Linda Moen: I'd like to rise today to speak. I do have a lot of concerns about this proposed legislation. As the Opposition critic for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, that's where I'm going to begin my comments from and really talk about the reality of intimate-partner violence. I too am feeling conflicted in the dual roles that are here, and I'm going to be very mindful. But I think I'll do a disservice if I don't address it here on the record on behalf of women's organizations and the issues that are continually being faced in the past, present, and most likely in the future.

Nationwide since 2009, 85 percent of firearms-related intimate-partner violence has been toward women and girls. Shooting was a cause of death for 294 victims of intimate-partner violence between 2009 and 2024, nine in 10 — 91 percent — of whom were women and girls. That represents one in five — 22 percent — of intimate-partner homicides over this period, an average of 18 deaths per year. Indigenous people are overrepresented as victims of homicide in general, and that is also the case when it comes to firearms-related intimate-partner homicide.

Between 2009 and 2024, 15 percent of all victims of firearms-related intimate-partner homicide were Indigenous despite representing only five percent of the population in general. However, Indigenous people were even more overrepresented in intimate-partner homicides that did not involve firearms, accounting for more than one quarter, so approximately 20 percent of victims.

It really saddens me that I have to talk in numbers about that. It really saddens me, because we're talking about women and girls and their safety.

Between 2009 and 2024, 38 Indigenous women were victims of firearms-related intimate-partner homicide. About one in five Indigenous women who were victims of intimate-partner homicide were killed by a firearm, compared with 20-some percent of non-Indigenous women who were killed by intimate partners. More specifically, 38 Indigenous women were victims of firearms-related intimate-partner homicide between 2009 and 2024.

The rate of gender-based homicide of women and girls in rural areas is more than twice the rate in urban areas. In rural areas, shooting was the most common method to cause death. The Yukon has some of the highest rates of intimate-partner violence this country has, and I'm concerned about the minister's statements that this legislation is used to promote firearms. Safety and education around firearms are extremely important, but promotion is a whole different thing.

I'm curious if the Minister of Justice, who is also the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, met specifically with the women and gender-equity-seeking organizations to discuss this legislation. She met with gun enthusiasts. They're given private consultation on this legislation. Were women and girls afforded the same opportunity? As Indigenous people are also disproportionately affected by gun violence, did the minister meet individually with all Yukon First Nation governments? Did they too get afforded the same private audience and attendance from the minister and the Premier?

In 2020, Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy was developed. The strategy listed four goals, and they were: to implement coordinated and effective violence prevention, intervention, and crisis response across Yukon that contribute to safer and healthier communities for Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people; end violence against all Indigenous people in the Yukon, in particular, women, girls, and two-spirit+ people; increase the economic independence of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people; and increase public awareness and engagement with the community in ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people.

Three of those four goals speak specifically and directly to reducing, ending, and preventing violence of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit+ people. That is where an advocate would do so well, as the Member for Takhini alluded to — all the other advocates that are needed.

When we see again a population that is disproportionately affected by gun violence, I'm wondering if this is the best use of our resources outside of the government's reach — no mandate, no money.

I think about the lack of consultation. Again, hearing these words of transparency and accountability, but when I look at these organizations, these NGOs that do this difficult work — were they consulted and asked what contributes to why a lot of those organizations exist?

Again, I find the difficulties of the ministers' dual roles in advocating for a firearm and a gun advocate when we have so

many other priorities that this government can give attention to, including addressing all those concerns that I just mentioned.

Justin Ziegler: Je vais m'exprimer en français sur cette loi. C'est important, j'ai beaucoup de choses à dire. On entend beaucoup parler, évidemment, du contexte culturel de cette loi.

Moi, je suis yukonnais depuis 2018. À la base je suis originaire de France et je voudrais commencer par citer François Mitterand. Ça peut vous paraître étrange, mais à la fin de son mandat, on est en décembre 1994, le président français François Mitterand s'adresse au Parlement européen en disant : « Chacun regarde le monde depuis l'endroit où il se trouve ».

Il se trouve que moi, j'ai le privilège de pouvoir regarder le monde depuis deux endroits en même temps : ici, le territoire du Yukon, et la France, où j'ai passé les trente premières années de ma vie. Je voulais parler de ce point de vue. Qu'elle était, au cours des trente premières années de ma vie, ma relation avec les armes à feu?

Il faut savoir que la France est le pays d'Europe qui compte le plus grand nombre de chasseurs, qui sont, a priori, les seuls détenteurs d'armes à feu en dehors des forces de l'ordre. Donc, on peut établir ici un parallèle avec la ruralité yukonnaise. Mais, il se trouve que pour chasser, on doit passer un examen; l'État encadre cette pratique. Et il se trouve que personne ne voit ça comme une attaque contre les traditions. Le préambule de ce projet de loi, justement, oppose ces deux choses : la tradition et l'encadrement.

Alors moi, j'invite tous les membres opposés à lire Jean-Jacques Rousseau, le *Contrat social*, qui est la fondation même de ma conviction politique. C'est une lecture particulièrement intéressante qui pourrait éclairer cette loi d'une autre lumière. Jean-Jacques Rousseau fait partie du courant littéraire des Lumières. Ce n'est pas un jeu de mots quand je dis ça.

La sécurité que l'État doit fournir, c'est évidemment la prévention, les soins, notamment en santé mentale, et le soutien aux femmes et aux familles dans les communautés rurales. Alors, je dis ça parce que pour moi, c'est tout ce qu'il manque dans ce projet de loi.

Évidemment, l'opposition officielle s'opposera à ce projet, et on peut mettre ça dans quatre raisons principales. La première raison est que ce projet de loi ne fait rien. Absolument rien. La deuxième raison est que ce n'est pas une priorité. On a frappé à beaucoup de portes l'année dernière. On a continué d'ailleurs à frapper aux portes. J'ai eu cette opportunité pendant l'été d'aller à la rencontre des Yukonnaises et des Yukonnais, d'aller sur les marchés, de parler avec les gens, de rencontrer les Yukonnaises et les Yukonnais. Et jamais, pas une seule fois, quelqu'un n'a mentionné ceci comme une priorité. Jamais.

Alors évidemment, mes collègues ont déjà abordé beaucoup de sujets principaux. Parmi les lacunes de cette loi, évidemment, on voit que cette personne nommée par le ministre ou la ministre exercera à titre amovible, c'est-à-dire que son mandat pourra lui être retiré. C'est un mandat d'un maximum de deux ans et que sa rémunération et son financement dépendront entièrement des ministres, ce qui semble particulièrement arbitraire. Ce que je vois en tout cas c'est que dans ce projet de loi, il y a beaucoup de points d'interrogation et très peu de certitude.

I will switch to English, because there is one thing that is very important that I noted from this. The English title creates a Yukon Firearms Advocate. The French title creates a défenseur des droits relatifs aux armes à feu. Right. In English, that means "defender of rights relating to firearms". This is, to me, a very serious question, because these are two different mandates and these are about two very different things — different offices. I think when you mention in a bill something that is a right, owning a firearm is a licensed activity. Right. So, it's something you earn through training and screening, and you can lose it. So, it's not a right per se. I'm not an expert in law, but to me, these are two different things. This law actually calls this position "defender of rights relating to firearms". So, I think I will have questions for the minister about this when we reach Committee of the Whole.

The question being if it's a translation choice or if it's a policy choice. I don't know if either answer is a good answer. That's all I have to say. I'm really looking forward to Committee of the Whole. I know my colleague from Riverdale North is going to have a lot of questions. I just mentioned I'm going to have some questions too. I think it's interesting, and I'm really looking forward to hearing what the minister has to say about all of this.

Brent McDonald: I'd like to talk about Bill No. 11, the firearms bill, today. What I would like to say is that I think it's important that this government be very honest about what this bill is and what effect it will have. The federal government has jurisdiction over firearms throughout the whole country. There's nothing the Yukon can do to change that. This bill, in my opinion, has been mainly spurred on by the federal gun buyback program. And whether you support that program or not, this bill will have no effect on that whatsoever. None. When I think about the money that's already been spent on it and the money that's going to be spent on it and I look across the floor and I see every minister sitting there whose department could use those funds to benefit all Yukoners — going to fund this one particular job and position that doesn't really reflect the needs of all Yukoners. And honestly, because of that, I'm resentful of the time we're spending here today on this subject, because we've got more important work to do to serve Yukoners and we have money to be spent in better places than this at this time. So, I think it's important that this government is honest about this and its priorities.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, the member will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Laura Lang: I appreciate hearing the words of my colleagues in the House today on this bill.

I'm looking forward to what is sounding like a pretty robust debate that will include a variety of different types of questions. I can confirm for Hansard that never will I ever be dishonest in anything that I say. And so, as we proceed with that debate, my intention is that everyone brings honest conversation to this floor and that we look at this through the

lens of supporting Yukoners, supporting our territory, and supporting how we are bringing voice to a policy choice that does not respond well to our northern way of life.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Currie Dixon: Agree.
Hon. Scott Kent: Agree.
Hon. Cory Bellmore: Agree.
Hon. Brad Cathers: Agree.
Hon. Linda Benoit: Agree.
Patti McLeod: Agree.
Hon. Laura Lang: Agree.
Hon. Jen Gehmair: Agree.
Adam Gerle: Agree.
Doris Anderson: Agree.
Tyler Porter: Agree.
Kate White: Disagree.
Lane Tredger: Disagree.
Brent McDonald: Disagree.
Linda Moen: Disagree.
Carmen Gustafson: Disagree.
Justin Ziegler: Désaccord.
Debra-Leigh Reti: Agree.

Clerk: Madam Speaker, the results are 12 yea, six nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it.
I declare the motion carried.
Motion for Second Reading of Bill No. 11 agreed to

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.
Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair: Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 8, *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)*.
Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.
The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)*.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I believe we left off yesterday with a question being asked. I did not record it, so if the member would please ask that question again, thanks.

Kate White: By the absolute grace of technology and Hansard, I can remind the minister of the question I asked yesterday. Prior to my last question, I asked the minister or her department for any breakdown of what changes could mean for the numbers of folks within mobile home parks versus landlords in mobile home parks. I was talking about the 2024 engagement and specifically about the almost 600 people who would respond to the mobile home questions. I had asked if there could be a breakdown or if the minister is able to get a breakdown of numbers of folks within mobile home parks who themselves were owners versus the landlords of parks, and then the minister said she just wanted to go back to a conversation about the differences and how mobile home sites in the residential tenancy acts are separated from the rest. She went on to say they have a special section recognizing that they're different than other tenant situations and that there are specific protections for them.
Then this is where we ended. I said that maybe the minister can walk me through then the changes or the differences. I've noted already that although they will not be captured by section 68.01, which is evictions without cause, it does say in the *Residential Tenancies Act* that if a tenant receives a rent increase, they can view it as a reason to end tenancy. This is specifically around mobile home owners.
Can the minister walk me through again all the protections that currently exist for mobile home owners and which ones will stay after these changes? I'm looking for the protections that currently exist for mobile home owners in the *Residential Tenancies Act* and which ones will stay after changes that we're debating today.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The no-cause eviction provisions will not apply to mobile home site tenancies. The proposed language in section 68.01, as mentioned, does not apply to mobile home sites.
The amendments proposed in this bill to rent increases do apply to all types of rental units. The 2025 *Residential Tenancies Act* has a distinct part, as mentioned, part 4, that lists distinct provisions for mobile home site tenancies. There's only one amendment proposed in this section, and that is to increase the notice of rent time from three to six months, and the rest of part 4 remains unchanged.

Kate White: I'm just going to go back to the *Residential Tenancies Act.* I'm going to go to part 4. It says, "Additional provisions for mobile home site tenancies". It

starts on page 52, in case the minister wants to follow along, because I think it's important, and this is what I was trying to get to before.

I do appreciate that mobile homes are carved out of this legislation in a way that they weren't previously. Again, legislation that was just changed and that had more than 1,500 people comment on during the engagement process, an engagement that was not done again, I'll note.

Part 4, "Additional provisions for mobile home site tenancies." There is an important note. Clause 91 says, "Rent increase for mobile home site may be treated as notice to end the site tenancy (1) If a site tenant receives a notice of rent increase in accordance with section 90, the site tenant may treat the notice as a notice to end the tenancy by advising the landlord in writing of this within 30 days of receipt of the notice. (2) If the site tenant treats the notice of rent increase as a notice to end the tenancy, the notice takes effect on the date that is…", and it goes on to the next things.

The reason why I bring this up is since 2014, I have advocated, one could say, even lobbied government to put in rent control for mobile home owners for pad rent increases. I knocked on hundreds of doors. I didn't only table one petition. I've actually tabled two petitions about the rights and protections for mobile home owners. I co-wrote a letter with the Yukon Party MLA for Porter Creek North in 2017 to the then-Minister of Community Services asking for specific protection for mobile home owners. That's what we see prior to any changes in the legislation.

I am going to go back. I understand that in a mobile home park, a tenant cannot be evicted without cause. But I'm going to ask if a mobile home owner is given — I'm just going to throw in a number — let's say a $500-a-month pad rent increase, $6,000 a year increase on top of the definitely more than $6,000 it currently is. I'll remind everyone that's not mortgage payments, that's not utilities payments, that's not heating fuel or heating costs, that's not groceries, it's not cellphones, and that's not anything — that's just the pad rent.

If a mobile home owner cannot afford the rent increase, what is the consequence of that?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I believe I answered this question a bit yesterday, but I will try again today. As the rent cap has been removed for all tenant sites, if any tenant receives a rent that they don't believe they're able to afford, in different situations, there are subsidies and supports available through the Yukon Housing. I would suggest that if a mobile home owner receives a rent increase notice, they contact the residential tenancies office to see what their options could potentially be.

I'll just read some other provisions that are in this section of the act so folks can understand better some of the provisions for mobile home owners. It says that provisions that provide additional responsibilities for landlords of mobile home parks. Waste disposal, snow removal, road maintenance, water, sewage and electrical systems, maintenance of park grounds, provisions preventing landlords of mobile home parks from charging fees related to operation of the park, prohibitions against landlords interfering with the site tenant selling or renting their mobile home. The limited options available to landlords to end a mobile home site tenancy have additional protections. Most ways to end a tenancy do not apply to mobile home sites.

Kate White: This is not the first time that the minister said that folks could go to Yukon Housing Corporation. I read a letter yesterday that said a mobile home owner had gone to the Yukon Housing Corporation to apply for the Canada-Yukon housing benefit that the minister had mentioned and that they were denied because they owned their home.

Can the minister tell me what other programs she believes exist for folks who are mobile home owners that may not be able to afford their rent once the provisions that the minister has brought forward are in effect?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'm not aware of all the criteria and requirements of the different housing supports and programs available through Yukon Housing. I can certainly have that discussion with my colleague, but at this time, I'm not aware of what those criteria are.

Kate White: The reason why I'm concerned by the minister saying that she doesn't know what those criteria are is that she's saying that's a solution. One would expect that if a mobile home owner was to be listening to us right now and to hear the minister say that's a solution, that it would be a viable solution. I'll note that I'm concerned with that for lots of different reasons.

In my scenario, a mobile home owner is given a rent increase that they cannot absorb in the six-month timeline that they now have because a rent increase is six months. Can't afford it — what is the outcome? What is the outcome? Is she encouraging folks to sell their homes? Is she encouraging them to move somewhere in the City of Whitehorse or outside of the City of Whitehorse? What is the outcome? There are no programs that exist that I know of right now. The minister of housing has said there's no intentions of creating programs or bolstering programs.

If a mobile home owner is handed an increase they cannot afford, what happens?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'd just like to say that I understand that each individual has probably very unique circumstances — where they are, the park they live in, the type of tenancy agreement that they have signed with the landlord. I'm sure there's lots of different variables within that. I'd be remiss to provide advice at this point in time. The advice I would provide is to contact the residential tenancies office, go over what's happening with the individual's specific situation, and they can provide further advice and reference section 91 in the act that has protections available for mobile home park owners.

Kate White: Okay, so we're going to go down that scenario. A mobile home owner who can't afford the rent increase goes to the residential tenancies office. What happens next? The legislation allows for unlimited increases with six months' notice, and that homeowner goes to the residential tenancies office.

What support will they get from the RTO at that point?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: It would really depend on the specific circumstances of that person's issue — like I said, many different tenants, many different issues, potential variations. I wouldn't want to comment on specific advice here. Contact the residential tenancies office. There are protections separated, as the member noted, new areas in the 2025 legislation separating the mobile homes, recognizing that they are separate and different types of tenancies than regular tenancies, and that is the best course of action that I can recommend.

Kate White: Can the minister walk me through then the reasons why a mobile home park owner can evict a tenant?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: A landlord can only evict a tenant of a mobile home park site in a few specific circumstances, if there is a problem rising to the level of a for-cause eviction, for example, a health or safety risk, or for changing the use of a mobile home park.

Kate White: Is a for-cause reason for eviction non-payment of rent?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The non-payment of rent is a for-cause reason for eviction.

Kate White: In my scenario, a mobile home owner faces a rent increase that they cannot afford. They are unable to pay their pad rent.

Does that mean that they are able to be evicted by the landlord?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: If a tenant is not able to pay their rent, does not pay their rent, it is for cause, as I mentioned. If they do receive notice to evict because of that, I would suggest again that they contact the residential tenancies office. There could be various different reasons or things happening to which this scenario doesn't speak and I obviously can't give advice on. The best course of action again is to use the services of the staff at the residential tenancies office, as they are the experts in assisting folks.

Kate White: Is there intention from the minister to increase the resources of the residential tenancies office?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I do believe I answered this question yesterday, but I will again. It says that while the RTO may temporarily become busier immediately following the changes, they do not anticipate the changes will have significant implications for their timelines. Since the proposed changes provide a much simpler process than some of the existing provisions, for example, related to rent increases, these changes may lead to a reduction in the number of disputes over time.

Kate White: Am I to understand that the minister believes that the residential tenancies office is adequately resourced at this time?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I do believe that they are adequately resourced at this time.

Kate White: I just want folks in that office to know that I wish you had additional support and that there were more people to do the work, because I know it's a lot and it's going to get more.

Currently under the legislation, a tenant, for example, can go to the RTO and file a dispute resolution. For example, it can be about the health and safety of a unit. I'm just asking for clarification from the minister: Currently, are landlords prevented from any kind of retaliatory action when a dispute has been filed?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I would like to just say that often when disputes are discussed or worked on at the residential tenancies office, there's a variety of information that comes forward, and the best thing for a tenant to do is to have a conversation with the residential tenancies office to see what that looks like for them, to ensure that all the pieces are there and that information has been received. It's difficult to say on a single item, because there tends to always be much more involved.

Kate White: I have to say that one of the challenges of being middle-aged is fighting with memory and trying to find words. The word I was looking for was "retaliation" initially, which I'm relieved about, because when I look at the legislation, it says in part 8, "Offences and Penalties".

The reason why I mentioned that is because it does say in part 8, under "Offences and Penalties", on clause 136(2), it says: "Every person commits an offence who coerces, threatens, intimidates or harasses a tenant or landlord (a) in order to deter the tenant or landlord from making an application under this Act; or (b) in retaliation for the tenant or landlord seeking a remedy under this Act…"

I'm just going to ask again for clarification: Is a landlord allowed to act in retaliation or in response to a tenant bringing forward a complaint under the *Residential Tenancies Act*?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Again, I'd just like to say that there are always lots of variables in potential situations that are going on. I would encourage both landlords and tenants, if they have a dispute and they're not able to just resolve their dispute independently between each other, that they do contact the residential tenancies office. Those supports are available for both sides there.

Kate White: It did make sense before to have that there not be retaliation for a tenant or landlord seeking a remedy under this act, because previously to the changes that are going to pass, no matter how much I talk — because there were no-cause evictions in the legislation, so it was very specific. You couldn't just evict someone because you were upset that they called out your lack of maintenance or they asked you to fix the washing machine. Similarly, it could go the opposite way — a landlord could have been requesting things — but I'll note that in the very near future, there could be a dispute resolution that finds for the tenant. It says that there's an obligation for the landlord to make repairs or to address whatever has been highlighted as being wrong, and the next day, the tenant can receive a six-month eviction notice.

Am I understanding that correctly? Is that what could happen? When we talk about no-fault eviction, does that mean it could happen after someone files a dispute resolution and it gets to a decision document?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I do understand that the residential tenancies office, through their work, as mentioned, provides the supports to both landlords and tenants if there are issues happening within their tenancy agreement and works hard to resolve those disputes equitably and in a timely manner. Hypothetical situations are hard again to discuss here. I would suggest that if people are having concerns, they contact the residential tenancies office.

Kate White: Again, the answer is to contact the residential tenancies office. The legislation as it's currently written prior to these amendments says that there can't be retaliation for the tenant or the landlord seeking a remedy on this act. A person could make a complaint; it could be found valid, and it would mean, for example, under the act prior to these changes being adopted, that they couldn't just be evicted, because if there was not a cause for eviction, they could not be evicted. But by putting in no-fault evictions, no-cause evictions, a person can go through the dispute resolution process because of very valid reasons. I'm sure we've all supported different folks in this Assembly — everybody in this Assembly has, I hope, participated in this process. So, they could go through the process. It could be found that their complaint or their concern was valid. There could be a direction to remedy that situation, and then they could receive a six-month eviction notice.

There's a reason why I bring this up. I've talked about this before in this Assembly, and it has to do with the mobile home owner in the Benchmark Trailer Park at the time. This is where this lesson comes from. I appreciate that the court case I'm holding is about a mobile home and it's not the same, but I'm going to bring it to the attention, because when this court case was called, this was a dispute over an eviction notice. But what the judge found is that ultimately, given the unequivocal and steadfast intention of the landlord to terminate this tenancy and their legal right to do so, they could. Even though in this case, the judge found that the eviction notice that the person had been given wasn't valid, the judge did also say: Because there are no-fault evictions, you're going to be evicted.

The reason why I bring it up is because what this legislation is set up to do now by putting back in no-fault evictions, no-cause evictions, there are no longer rental standards. There are no longer any protections for tenants, because they have to weigh the decision as to whether or not they risk going for help to the residential tenancies office for dispute resolution to try to get something that they need fixed — washing machines, snow removal, garbage pickup, locks on doors, bedbugs, windows that close, flooring concerns, unsafe bathrooms, mould issues, quiet enjoyment of a unit — any reason. They have to now weigh risking asking for intervention and support to be able to have it resolved or possibly risk eviction.

How does the minister reconcile legislation that says no retaliation with inserting no-cause evictions? Could she walk me through how those two things work together — no retaliation, no-fault evictions?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: As I've said, the provisions and the support at the residential tenancies office apply to both landlords and tenants. While the member has listed all these hypothetical reasons which a tenant may bring forward and have an issue and eventually be evicted for whatever reason, there's also on the other side of that a whole long list of hypothetical reasons a landlord may wish to evict a tenant — very real concerns that we've heard about property damage and all kinds of stuff. Like I said, in every situation, there's a variety of concerns and issues on both the landlord and tenant side, and it is important for people to use and access the services of the residential tenancies office to resolve these disputes.

Also, I just wanted to reiterate what I was saying yesterday about the desire to have landlords re-enter the market, have them feel confident that the investments they're making are their investments, and to increase the supply so that we have a new, healthy, and robust supply of residential rental homes on the market.

Kate White: Does anything in the current legislation allow for an eviction in a shorter period of time than six months?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Yes, there is a variety of reasons for eviction for cause as well as some no-fault eviction reasons less than six months.

Kate White: Can the minister walk me through the reasons why, for example, an eviction can happen as quickly as 14 days?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: There is the notice for cause, which could include a variety of reasons, depending on the tenancy agreement between the landlord and the tenant, and a notice for non-payment of rent.

Kate White: Are there any other provisions for a longer eviction notice or a reason to end a tenancy?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'll just list them here: the landlord or purchaser's use of property is three months; renovation or repair — the landlord must offer the tenant first refusal on a new tenancy after the work is completed — is four months; change in use or demolition, four months; condo conversion, six months; tenant ceases to qualify for a subsidized rental unit, one month; relocation for change in eligibility requirements for subsidized rental unit, six months — housing agency only, landlords must offer another unit the tenant qualifies for; end of employment, depends on the length of employment; mutual agreement by the landlord and tenant — it's not applicable; rental unit is abandoned or vacated, it ends the day the tenant vacated the unit; tenancy agreement is frustrated, the day the tenancy could not continue; and if it's ordered by the RTO, on the day it's ordered by the RTO. I'll just reiterate that there is a wide variety of reasons for cause and quite the list of no fault as well.

If somebody receives a notice for eviction, they should contact again the residential tenancies office about their specific situation, because I obviously don't have the details of everybody's specific situation. I do believe that their good work is important and useful for tenants and landlords.

Kate White: I'll note that in the current legislation, ending a tenancy in division 1, there are many reasons with

cause — notice for condominium conversion, notice for change of use, notice for demolition, non-payment of rent, notice for cause, tenant ceases to qualify for subsidized housing, landlord's notice for end of employment. There's a whole series of reasons and timelines.

Can the minister tell me again where they looked for no-fault evictions? Where did it come from? Did the minister request a jurisdictional scan for no-fault or no-cause evictions in Canada?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: We did hear from Yukoners that the amendments made to the *Residential Tenancies Act* in 2025 have restricted the rental markets. We ran on this commitment to remove the rent caps and to balance the rental market. The bill we are discussing today achieves these commitments. I would like to point out that I really appreciate the work completed by Community Services and Justice, as I said yesterday, on these proposed amendments. The decisions were made in careful consideration by me and colleagues, and we believe that these amendments, in combination with the scope of the efforts of this government on the housing spectrum, the housing continuum, all the pieces, will support a stable housing market.

Kate White: I note that I'm quite envious, because the minister is sitting next to officials. Has the minister asked what other jurisdictions in the country allow for no-cause evictions? If she hasn't asked, maybe now is the time.

What other jurisdictions in Canada do allow for no-cause or no-fault evictions?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Across the nation, there's a variety of different types of residential tenancies acts. Various different jurisdictions have various different rules for no-fault, no-cause evictions, and I don't have that information available.

Kate White: I do: Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador.

The reason why I bring it up — I do appreciate the CBC and the work that they're doing in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I wish we had similar looks here in the Yukon, because that would be great. But in Newfoundland and Labrador, no-fault evictions exist and there are lots of articles about the hardships and what it's done to the market.

Can the minister tell me why, based on her decision and her colleagues' decision — she said she's heard from Yukoners and yesterday she committed to tabling that information — those e-mails, including the number of units that have been taken off the market — but can the minister tell me why she's made the decision that we should join Newfoundland and Labrador to be the only two places to allow no-fault evictions?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'm certain that the good folks of Newfoundland and Labrador have their very good reasons why they have the legislation that they have. The legislation that we have tabled here today is based on the circumstances we see here in Yukon. We see a shrinking rental market and we see higher demand, and we would like to reverse that. We have talked to homeowners and landlords who have removed or intend to remove their rental units from the market based on the fact that they have zero control without this legislation. They want to enter the market. They'd like to add units to the market. This is important, and this is what we said we would do, so this is what we are doing.

Kate White: Maybe similarly to the way I've read letters off and talked about the e-mails that I've received — maybe the minister could do the same.

Could the minister read us some of the concerns she's heard from folks and how come they need no-cause evictions or no-fault evictions here?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I've had many conversations with different landlords — conversations, not necessarily written correspondence. I have had lots of conversations with tenants. I've had conversations with colleagues. The fact is that the rental market is not increasing at the rate we need it to increase. The private rental market is not producing the units that we need produced based on the growth in population, and we would like them to re-engage in being landlords in the Yukon, and that is why these decisions have been made.

Kate White: I'm interested to know how many landlords the minister has spoken to. The reason why I'm asking this is again the 2024 engagement survey on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* with more than 1,500 people — and in that, both landlords and tenants said that, for example, rent control was important. No-cause evictions, no-fault evictions wasn't talked about because it's archaic. It's archaic.

The minister has said that there's been a loss of rental units, but even when she pointed to the *Yukon Rent Survey — April 2026* and the numbers there, I then went back and again, from April 2018, it said there were 2,194 units; that was prior to the rent cap. October 2020, there were 2,231; that was prior to the rent cap. October 2022, there were 2,238 units, and that's not that far after the rent cap — so that's gone up. October 2025, there were 2,347. Then looking at the rent survey for April 2026, there are 2,374 units.

The minister keeps on saying that the number has gone down, but in the one piece of information that we can both look at, that anyone in this Chamber can look at, that Yukoners can look at, it says that it's gone up, and so I'm just looking for evidence. If it's not evidence and the minister just wants to say it's ideology — that she's making the decision based on ideology — I'll accept that, but then at least I'll know. But you can't say that you have spoken to landlords as if it's fact but then not have anything to share. I'm just looking for additional information. Again, if it's ideology, say it and I'll stop kicking.

I'm looking for information. I'm looking for jurisdictional scans. I'm looking for best practices. I'm looking for information that helped make this decision. If it's driven by ideology, if it's driven by the Yukon Party belief and not based in fact — if the minister tells me, I'll stop asking some of these questions, not all the questions — let's be fair — at least I'll know where the changes are coming from.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I just wanted to explain what I meant by the reduction in units available on the market. We know that the Yukon has grown very quickly in the last few

years, and the rental units, while showing increases as the member has listed, have not kept pace with that growth, so there is a reduction in the available supply.

Kate White: I'm not an economist or a statistician, so I'm going to ask the minister to walk me through this again. The population has grown and, therefore, with that growth of population, there's a reduction in the number of available units. If I'm misunderstanding — I'm just looking for clarity. So, population growth, number of units, therefore, there's a reduction in units — I'm just looking for a better understanding of that.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: A reduction in the supply of units in relation to the growth of population.

Kate White: Looking at the Yukon rent survey from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics and going from 2018 to 2026, it shows an increase in units; right? So, there have been more units. I guess I'm wondering if the minister's assertion is that landlords will magically, come December 1, meet the housing needs of Yukon — that all of a sudden, there will be enough units for everyone who needs to rent, because the problem holding folks back is rent control and not being able to evict folks without cause. Is the assertion that as soon as these two things come into play, the need for private units will be magically met by landlords?

Again, I don't know how many landlords, because we just get told that it's many landlords. I don't know how many units, because I've just been told "units". I'm looking forward to the minister tabling the information that she committed to. At some point, I'll have an idea. I'm struggling to understand — the justification that the minister is using is that there was a population boom. Is that accurate?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: There's a variety of reasons that we have moved in this direction. I think we've talked about a lot of them in the last couple of days here. But the crux of it is that this is what we've heard from Yukoners. We've heard that the legislation was not working. We've made these changes to bring up supply, reduce demand, and work on fixing this piece of the housing market — working on all areas of the housing market but specifically these few amendments to the legislation to fix this piece of the housing continuum.

Kate White: How did the minister hear from Yukoners? Because there wasn't an engagement on the changes. Again, I'll note that, in 2024 — almost two years after rent control came in — 1,500 people participated. What the minister is saying is not what was reflected in that engagement.

Can the minister just tell me how she reached out to Yukoners? How these conversations happened? How many? Where they happened? Did they happen with municipalities? Were there conversations with Dawson City about the changes and how this might affect them? Were there conversations with the City of Whitehorse? I'm trying to get a sense, because if the minister says that this is coming as evidence from Yukoners, then I want to see the evidence; I want to hear the evidence. So far, all I've been told is — I've written it down many, many times: Heard from Yukoners; spoke to landlords — but I'm looking for numbers; I'm looking for an idea.

Again, the minister can say this is ideology; this is the idea — that the free market will magically fix the housing crisis. But until we get to a point where that is the assertion — that it's ideology, that this is a partisan decision — and I keep on hearing that it's because of conversations with Yukoners or it's in talks with tenants, it's in conversation with landlords — that to me says that there's some kind of evidence. I'd like to see that evidence. I think Yukoners deserve to see that evidence.

If it turns out there isn't evidence, then that is fair to say as well. But it can't be both ways. It can't be that the minister spoke to Yukoners and heard from landlords without there being more information to back that up. When I talk about the engagement with Yukoners, I'm talking about the 1,500 who participated in the survey on the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* review in 2024 — again, just about two years after rent control came in, that shows that it's supported.

If the minister is going to continue to say that it's based on evidence by saying that the minister heard from and spoke to…, I'm just looking to see that. I want to hear the stories; I want to know what was said. I've read off e-mails; I've shared stories. I'm looking for the same.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'd just like to say that I don't think it matters anymore — the numbers, back-and-forth of the detailed numbers, who said what to who, different conversations that we've had, different conversations that other members have had. I think ultimately — and we've both said this in this debate — we don't agree on the work moved, on the rent control policy work that's going on.

We have said that we have talked to Yukoners. Yes, we've talked to Yukoners. We have heard that this is not working. We said that we would amend the legislation to work toward making a healthier market, and that is what we are doing.

Kate White: I disagree. I disagree with that entire statement. The numbers do matter. Data does matter in making decisions unless there is the assertion that says: I'm making these changes because those are my values. That is valid. I disagree with it, but to say that the data doesn't matter and then say that: I've had these conversations; I've done these things, but it doesn't matter — I disagree, because in looking at the numbers from the April 2026 Yukon rent survey with the Whitehorse rent summaries, knowing that there are 2,374 rental households, it does matter. It does matter.

Again, I am going to ask: Is it based on policy, jurisdictional scans, best practice, or is it based on ideology?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I do believe that we've had this question multiple times, and I do believe I've already given the answers.

Kate White: I disagree. I disagree — I have not heard an answer yet. I've been told that there are conversations like that is fact. I've been told that the minister has spoken to landlords who have taken units off. I've asked the number of units. There's no answer. I'm being told that there are numbers, that there's data, that there's backup, and so I ask again: Is it ideology that's driving these changes? Is it strictly ideology?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I think I've explained the reason why we've done this multiple times already.

Kate White: I'm going to come back to this. Don't anyone think that I'm not.

How do the changes that are being proposed affect people who are in shared rental accommodation?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Just to answer the question, if the act applies to the tenancy situation, then obviously the act applies to that tenant.

Kate White: Can folks in shared accommodation expect a six-month notification for an unlimited rent increase?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I understand that there could be a variety of different tenancy agreements in relation to shared-type accommodations. Again, my best advice would be to contact the residential tenancies office based on your tenancy agreement that you have to see if that applies.

Kate White: What is to protect tenants from receiving more than one rent increase in a calendar year?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: In the proposed amendments, there are no changes to the yearly increase of rents for tenants.

Kate White: What happens — I'm reading an e-mail right now: "Our landlord came to us last month wanting to raise our rent by 25 percent." I'll note that in today's market, 25 percent is probably about $500 a month. "With such a drastic jump, we were able to negotiate a rent raise of half of that for now and the other half in the spring."

If a person, for example, in this situation, was to go to the residential tenancies office with their notice of a rent increase in less than a calendar year, what support would the residential tenancies office be able to offer?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: With this, obviously, like I've said before, there are many different factors that go into different tenancy agreements and situations. In this particular one, again, I would direct the tenant to the residential tenancies office to see how that applies in their case.

Kate White: Based on the legislation in front of us, it does say that rent can only be raised once every 12 months. When a tenant, if they face this in this case that I just read this e-mail, what supports can the RTO give?

We know that retaliatory action, at the time when it was put in there, would have been eviction — for example, threatened with eviction. Now we have no-fault eviction, so what happens to a tenant if they're told that the landlord wants to increase the rent more than once every 12 months?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: It would seem that this is a very specific situation for a very specific tenant, and I'm not comfortable commenting on that specific situation. I would ask them to go and see the folks at the residential tenancies office. It's not appropriate to comment at this time.

Kate White: I was optimistic and hopeful that you were going to tell us we were going to take a 15-minute break, but I can keep going. I can keep going. When it comes back to being trained every 4:00 to the expectation of a cup of tea and a break — but I can manage 4:15 onwards.

I'm going to go back and I'm going to ask this question again. No-fault eviction means that a tenant can receive an eviction notice from a landlord for no reason. It's nothing that they can fix. They're not being told it's for a reason. They're not being told that they need to maintain the sidewalk. That's not the reason. It's not because they're being told they're smoking in the unit in contravention of their lease. It's not a reason. It's not with reason. There is nothing in the legislation with these changes that are being proposed that says that a tenant has protection. A tenant can take any of their concerns to the residential tenancies office, where at this point in time, every single tenant in the territory has been directed to go to ask for help, but the reality is that there can be a disagreement and a person can get an eviction notice with six months. There can be a post maybe on Facebook that a landlord doesn't agree with and there can be an eviction in six months. There could be a conversation in the Legislative Assembly that a landlord doesn't agree with and it could see an eviction in six months. There are rural MLAs in the room. It's a reality. It's a reality, so how will the RTO support tenants who are going through the right steps to ask for support and protection when on the other side of any decision that the RTO makes, there's the possibility of an eviction without cause? How does that work? Can the minister walk me through what that looks like?

The folks at the RTO — the good folks at the RTO, who are very overworked right now, I'll note — how will they navigate that? How is the minister going to support her department to navigate that?

A person cannot have done anything wrong and they can face an eviction; right? It doesn't have to be something the landlord didn't like. It doesn't have to be something that they can remedy. There can be no reason at all. So, how is the minister going to support the folks, the department, the people who work at the residential tenancies office as they navigate these changes?

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)*.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I believe the question we left off on was about no-cause evictions and about what the RTO would do to support no-cause evictions. Again, I'll just reiterate that there are various different reasons and issues in different scenarios and that if folks receive this and they have concerns, that they should contact the residential tenancies office.

Kate White: I'm just going to ask the minister to elaborate on that. What can a tenant do if they face a no-cause

eviction and they go to the RTO? What can the RTO do to support them? Because it's not in contravention then of rules or regulations, because it will be allowed, so how does the minister envision the residential tenancies office and the staff there — how will those folks be able to support tenants who are going to see them because they have received a no-fault or a no-cause eviction?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The good folks at the residential tenancies office will advise on the application of the legislation dependent on the specifics of the scenario.

Kate White: Can the minister help me understand what she means about the scenarios? The minister is in the process of putting in no-fault evictions with a six-month notice time. What recourse will a tenant have? What resources? I can't imagine there's an appeal process. The minister saying that tenants should go to the residential tenancies office — what supports will the RTO be able to offer a tenant who has received a no-cause eviction?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Again, I think I just answered that question. Based on the specifics of the scenario, the good folks at the landlord tenancies office will be able to advise the person on the application of the legislation in their specific scenario.

Kate White: I am just trying to understand. The minister just said the folks at the residential tenancies office would be able to advise on the application of the legislation. So, what does that look like? No-cause eviction — what will the RTO office be able to advise a tenant of when it comes to a no-cause eviction?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I think that this is the same question. There is a variety of different scenarios that could potentially take place, and they would advise the tenant or landlord or whoever comes to them for various different reasons on the application of how the legislation applies to their scenario.

Kate White: This is the minister's legislation, and so I'm asking again. I'm familiar with the residential tenancies office and the dispute resolution and the work that is done there. But the minister has again said that they will be able to advise on the application of the legislation. She's mentioned different scenarios, and again, I'm asking like what supports — so, for example, if it's a dispute resolution, there are steps to follow. What will exist when a tenant goes to the residential tenancies office with a no-cause eviction?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: If a tenant goes to seek advice at the residential tenancies office, they have a variety of fact sheets and information available to them there.

Kate White: I was on the website earlier and I can go back. Can the minister give me an idea of what will be included on a fact sheet for a no-cause eviction?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Obviously, the fact sheets are not live, because this is tabled legislation that we're discussing, but they would include information about the legislation for both landlords and tenants.

I just wanted to reiterate — obviously, we're trying to get at this question — the reintroduction of no-cause evictions is to provide landlords with a simple option for eviction. They no longer require a reason for eviction, as mentioned.

Kate White: That just brings us back around, back to the question: What protections exist for tenants when no-cause eviction is back in legislation?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The *Residential Tenancies Act* has a variety of protections for tenants. The protections under the no-cause eviction will be based on specific scenarios — potentially, for wrong date of application or something, they may be able to talk to the residential tenancies office about that — but generally, no-cause evictions are simply no-cause evictions.

Kate White: I'll note that the minister I believe just referenced section 8, which talks about section 68.01 that's going to be added in clause 2 where it says that a tenant may dispute the notice to end the tenancy by making an application for dispute resolution within 14 days after the date the tenant receives the notice. I'll note that really it will be about paperwork and process. So, even if they win this dispute, the landlord will just have to re-issue them an eviction notice that follows the paperwork.

I'm asking again: In the legislation, once eviction without cause comes in, what protections do tenants have? Are they protected from, for example, retaliation — retaliatory actions by a landlord? Are they protected from more than one rent increase in 12 months? Are they protected in the health and safety of their units? How does the minister envision protection for tenants and no-cause eviction living in the same piece of legislation for the same population of people? So, for tenants and landlords both — how does she see them working together?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'd just like to reiterate that all the protections for a tenant remain in the *Residential Tenancies Act*. We've introduced no-cause evictions. The change that we've made to this piece of legislation from previous legislation is that there's a six-month notice for the eviction.

Kate White: With the minister's understanding, which I'm looking for, how does a tenant go about making sure that their rights are protected? What's the process?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I think I've answered this many times. There are a variety of reasons and circumstances and scenarios, and I would advise the tenant to go to the residential tenancies office and seek their advice.

Kate White: If a tenant goes to the residential tenancies office and they file a dispute resolution and they win that dispute resolution, what's preventing them from receiving an eviction without cause? Let's say the next day, a week from then, two weeks from then — what's to say that they will not face an eviction without cause after they have filed and possibly won their dispute resolution?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Again, this is another hypothetical situation. I would advise tenants to go to the residential tenancies office to seek advice.

Kate White: The reason why I keep on asking these questions is I have — I mean, we can go online and we can read some of the decisions from the residential tenancies office and how they made those decisions, and I'm asking — currently, the legislation says that a person can't face retaliation in bringing an issue forward, and I guess my concern is that one would think that an eviction without cause is the ultimate retaliation. So, I'm just trying to understand how the minister sees those two working together. How is the minister able to guarantee that a tenant has access to a safe place to live? How does the minister guarantee that tenant — any tenant — has the right to live in a place that is free of risk or free of mould? How is the minister going to make sure that's the case? How is the minister going to make sure that tenants have access to all the rights that are currently included in the *Residential Tenancies Act*?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Thank you for bringing up the dispute resolutions, and I would like to thank the good work done at the residential tenancies office on all the various different files that they see. Again, this is a specific scenario that is hypothetical. I'm not able to answer the question based on a hypothetical situation. There are always a variety of different factors for folks. The protections have not changed for tenants in the *Residential Tenancies Act*. They remain. The reintroduction of no-cause eviction is new, and should a tenant have questions, they should go to the residential tenancies office to ask their advice.

Kate White: Does the minister view receiving a no-cause eviction following a dispute resolution process as retaliation?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I won't comment on a hypothetical situation. I think that folks need to go through the process that's available to them in the *Residential Tenancies Act* and office.

Kate White: Is there a way that the minister will be tracking dispute resolutions and evictions following these changes to the legislation?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: We have said that we would monitor the situation; we would work with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to expand the data they collect to help us better understand the impacts of these changes, which was not done previously, and so we don't currently have that information.

Brent McDonald: I'm going to ask a series of questions, first of all, about who this new act will apply to when it finally passes. Yukon Government has a lot of rental units for rent-geared-to-income clients. Will this act apply to them where if the government so chose, they could increase the rent similarly to the private sector?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: That is a piece of the housing continuum that's very important for Yukoners. There is definitely a rent-geared-to-income, subsidized housing, low-income housing piece of the housing continuum that has attention, and I would best direct that question to the minister for housing.

Brent McDonald: My next question is: Will unlimited rent increases also apply to those clients in social housing units?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I think the same answer applies. Social housing is a form of subsidized housing or rent-geared-to-income housing, and there's special circumstances around that, and those questions are best answered by my colleague specifically.

Brent McDonald: I have the same question about staff housing. Will the rent increases apply to staff housing?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Yukon Housing as a landlord is subject to the rules of the RTA. Like I said, there are specific things about rent-geared-to-income housing. Staff housing is a part of that portfolio, and that is a question best directed to the minister for housing.

Brent McDonald: Because I don't know how all this works, I'm going to ask the same question again about Crown corporations and all their staff rentals.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Can I just ask the member to clarify his question about Crown corporations?

Brent McDonald: Yes, for clarification: Crown corporations like Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Energy, and any other Crown corporations, many of whom also have staff housing — will these new regulations affect everyone who are tenants in those organizations?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: There's a variety of different types of tenancy agreements and such in relation to different Crown corporations for staff housing, short-term housing, et cetera. I don't have the specific answer for that. I don't know how many different types of specific situations are in relation to Crown corporations.

Brent McDonald: The questions that I've just asked were specific to rent increases, and so I'm going to ask the same questions again and this time for no-cause evictions. And I'll just summarize: Yukon Housing has rent-geared-to-income, staff housing, social housing, potentially more classes of housing I'm not aware of. Do no-cause evictions allow the government the same process of evicting clients via no cause?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The simple answer to that is that as long as the act applies, the no-cause provision would apply. So, if there are circumstances where the act does not apply, then it's based on those circumstances.

Brent McDonald: And finally, I'll ask the same question again about Crown corporations' rental units. Will it also apply under the no-cause part of this bill?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The same answer: If the act applies, the no-cause provision applies.

Brent McDonald: I realize sometimes when an act changes, there can be potential policy conflicts. I'm wondering

if the minister is aware of any policy changes that may need to happen or, in this case — because it seems like this is going to apply in a relatively short period of time — if there are exceptional circumstances that crop up, if the minister would intervene to help. So, I guess there are two questions there. One is the potential conflicts between the new law and any existing policy and if the minister can intervene to try to find satisfactory solutions until policy can be changed.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Similar to previous answers, there's a variety of situations and that could crop up from this, and folks should go to the residential tenancies office for assistance and support. But I also just want to flag that it would be inappropriate for me to intervene on specific items. We have agreed to monitor these changes to see the impacts of the changes that are being made. I would really just suggest that people utilize the knowledge at the residential tenancies office if they have any questions about their specific situation.

Brent McDonald: The City of Calgary had suffered from the same kind of low vacancy rate that Whitehorse and perhaps Dawson City does now — the two main concerns here. The University of Calgary did a 15-year study, and in that study, they found that a $100-a-month increase in rent correlated to about a 10-percent increase in new people having to move into homeless shelters. So, I'm wondering if there's any preparation or if the government is making any movement in that regard to help prepare for this potential event of more people needing to move into homeless shelters.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'd just like to reiterate that the purpose of these changes is to see an increase in supply over time. We are also doing work among the housing continuum in different areas. These are very specific changes. There are also the other areas of the housing continuum that we're doing work in, and I think that, with all this work together, we're working to make a healthier housing market.

Brent McDonald: I'll speak a little bit about some concerns in my home district of Klondike and specifically Dawson City. We have two organizations — the first one I'll speak of is the School of Visual Arts which attracts students every year from Outside, and every single year, we see students advertising for accommodation six months, a year before, right up until near to when the school starts. Perhaps an unintended consequence of this could be to price students out of being able to be educated at this institution. With no new building lots available, it's going to be challenging for landlords for some time to create new rental units to help solve this problem.

Is there any concern or consultation that was done with institutions like SOVA specifically and, in a different way, Yukon University, which from time to time brings students from Outside who need accommodation — and not just students but instructors? Was there any consultation or was there any input from these institutions that could potentially be seriously affected by this change?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I've not had direct conversation with SOVA or Yukon University about these changes. I do appreciate the housing issues seen in Dawson City. I understand them and have seen some very innovative solutions over time that have come forward from members of that community, and I appreciate the work that they have done.

Brent McDonald: One of the indicators of available units is a vacancy rate. A higher vacancy rate indicates there's more available units; perhaps more were built — there's all kinds of things that go into that. Was the vacancy rate a consideration in the drafting or the means behind this bill?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Certainly, seeing the demand continue to increase and the demand on a market that was not increasing supply at the same time was a factor in the decision to move forward with these changes.

Brent McDonald: I know percentages don't tell the whole story. For example, in Whitehorse, a two-percent vacancy rate could indicate 50 or 60 potential available units as a whole. In Dawson City, we can have a one- or two-percent vacancy rate as a percentage, but in my community, that translates into one, two, or three units available to rent. In 2024, Statistics Canada found zero available units to rent in Dawson City, and earlier this year, when they did their work, they found there were two vacant units at the time they did the study; I'm not sure if they're still vacant or not.

I have a serious concern that anyone who can no longer afford a rent increase or who is affected by a no-cause eviction has no place to go other than to leave our community. This law applies to pretty much everyone: trades, medical professionals — all the people we need — administration staff, support staff, to keep our town running. It also applies to all the creative people in town — the artists, musicians — who make Dawson such a vibrant place to live.

Is there any concern on the government's part that in our particular community the situation of unlimited rent increases and no-cause evictions are going to wound our community — potentially, people are going to have to leave rather than find another place to stay, specifically because there is no other place to stay?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Yes, there is concern in your community. There's concern across the Yukon that this has been happening for a while. The vacancy rate is not increasing. The supply for the rental market has not kept up with the population increase across the Yukon. We'll be happy to see the new Korbo units come online in Dawson very soon and hope that alleviates some of the issues in your specific community.

Brent McDonald: I guess my next question is a bigger-picture question. The prices of real estate are typically driven by two main factors: One is supply and the other one is demand. The Yukon Government essentially controls the supply because they are the main lot developer in the whole territory, and in a way, they also control the demand because they're the single biggest employer in the territory. The government is constantly trying to bring needed new employees from Outside into the territory to staff our hospitals, schools, everywhere that the government needs new employees. So, the government controls the supply, and they also have a tremendously large effect on the demand. In a way,

it's a bit of a conflict of interest, because the Yukon doesn't rely on a free market for this. There's no land that a property developer can just go and buy — stake it off and buy. They can't do that here; there's a process they have to follow. We know that not enough building lots have been created to satisfy demand or even supply an available inventory beyond the demand that will help regulate rent controls and rent increases and the amount that landlords can charge. Because it's not based on supply and demand here; it's totally based on basically supply.

Is there a conflict of interest here in a way? Like, you sort of can't have the free market unless the free market exists and opportunities for it exist. Was that a consideration or thought process when it came to maybe unintended consequences of this bill?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I'd just like to talk a little bit about the housing continuum again and the importance of increasing the supply across the continuum. Work is ongoing, as we have said, in the affordable housing and rent-geared-to-income housing-type pieces. This *Residential Tenancies Act* applies to the market rent. As well, there's the homeowner piece and developer piece of land development. We are doing various different projects across the Yukon. Yes, land development is much needed in the Yukon, and those projects are underway.

Linda Moen: It's very, very interesting stuff that's coming out about this — keeping in mind that we have such a transparent and open government on this process and somebody new like me sitting here and wondering how we all came to this. I appreciate all the knowledge that's been shared by the Member for Takhini, who has so much knowledge to share — where we were, how we got here — and it sounds like a real dismal future that we're going to be looking to for a lot of people who are going to be affected by these changes.

Because I am the official critic for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, that's where I really want to focus some of my concerns that I have. Can the minister or officials tell me if there was a gender-based analysis done of any of these changes that are coming?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: What I can say is that the department follows corporate requirements, and if an analysis was required, they would have followed it.

Linda Moen: I would like confirmation if that was done.

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I will endeavour to find the information if I can.

Linda Moen: That would probably require data and compiling organizations that deal with that, so I'd be very interested in getting that return from the minister.

Can the minister confirm how many RTO offices are here in Whitehorse?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: There is one RTO office in Whitehorse.

Linda Moen: Can the minister please confirm how many offices are in the rural communities in the Yukon?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: The RTO only has an office in Whitehorse.

Linda Moen: Can the minister confirm how many Yukon First Nations she or her department conferred, consulted, wrote letters to, called, had conversations with in regard to this?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I don't have the information the member is asking for, but I can confirm that we're preparing notices to First Nation governments and reaching out to stakeholders and First Nation governments regarding this legislation, should it pass.

Linda Moen: I'd just like to note that most First Nations are landlords. They have their own housing stock. So, it's interesting that there would be these changes that would have huge implications.

I take copious amounts of notes, Madam Chair. They're for my own use, because I think it's important to really get an understanding when these discussions happen. She mentioned time and time again, for Whitehorse tenants or landlords that have issues, to go to the RTO office. She doesn't speak in hypothetical situations, but what would be her advice to people who live in rural Yukon that don't have the luxury of walking into an RTO office and speaking face to face?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: Folks who live in rural Yukon certainly have equal access to the residential tenancies office through phone or e-mail and online information.

Linda Moen: Oh, thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for bringing that up, because as you know, many times in this Assembly since I've started here — I can count maybe three times that I brought up the cellphone issue. It makes it very interesting that we continually ask rural Yukoners to depend on what the minister just suggested when we don't even have reliable services to count on and depend on. It's very interesting that she would mention that, but again, with no solutions for that either.

Going on to the next question: Can the minister tell us why there was no public engagement or consultation? Again, I participated in those. I went to the meetings at the Sternwheeler Conference Centre. It was very informative. I sat at tables with landlords. I sat at a table with people who rented. I sat there as a tenant and as former leadership in Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

Why would there not be an active engagement to get some really good feedback so we could have data that we could look at, we could have surveys that we could refer to — if the minister can share her thoughts?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: I do think this question was asked, but thank you again for asking it. We have heard from Yukoners that the legislation was not working and was driving prospective landlords and current landlords out of the market and away from the rental market, and we are taking action to reverse that trend.

Linda Moen: I know that the minister alluded to not looking at data and having data, and she has a number of her colleagues who have different portfolios. What I'm hearing is that it seems like it's quite easy that if you have an eviction, you can go and find another place to live or you have all these other services. She mentions Yukon Housing Corporation quite a lot in her answers. Can she tell me what the wait-list is for a rental unit with Yukon Housing Corporation?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: That question is best directed to the minister responsible for housing.

Linda Moen: I think that would be really pertinent information to get when we look at a no-cause eviction of what that would mean to a tenant and what is available to them should this happen, the 14 days' notice. Going to the six-month notice time period, I know that before, they used to have it in the legislation that you couldn't evict at certain times of the year.

Can the minister confirm if that is not going to be applicable either?

Hon. Cory Bellmore: To the member's question: There's nothing specific about the evictions at a different time of year currently in the act; no changes have been made there. Just further, you can't end a mobile home tenancy in December, January, or February.

Kate White: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank my colleagues for bringing their perspectives in and really just fuelling my fire.

I look forward to additional days of conversation on this piece of legislation and the two changes and what it will mean for Yukoners.

Madam Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Takhini that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Patti McLeod: Madam Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 8, entitled *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled today:

LR 36-1-44

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Kate White related to general debate on Vote 51, Community Services, in Bill No. 203, *Interim Capital Appropriation Act 2027-28* — Mount Lorne water treatment plant (Bellmore)

The following filed documents were tabled today:

FD 36-1-35

Briefing note from Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition requesting endorsement of *A Place to Be: Framework for Community Action to End Homelessness* (August 3, 2026) (Kent)

FD 36-1-36

Letter re May 6, 2026 budget debate from Kate White, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Brad Cathers, Minister of Health and Social Services (June 17, 2026) (White)