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Speaker: Honourable Tom Osborne, MHA

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MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): Order, please!

Admit strangers.

Today, we welcome to the public gallery: Patricia Hynes-Coates, who is the National President of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, as well as her husband, Terry Coates, the President of MADD Avalon, along with other members of MADD.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Also in the gallery today is Mayor Tony Keats, who is the Mayor of Dover, and the Vice-President of MNL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Statements by Members

MR. SPEAKER: Today, we have Members' statements from the Members of the Districts of Burin – Grand Bank, Terra Nova, Ferryland, Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune, Bonavista and Mount Pearl South.

The hon. the Member for Burin – Grand Bank.

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to recognize two residents from my District of Burin – Grand Bank, both members of the Canadian Coast Guard, Ray Cuza, originally from my hometown of Point May, now residing in Fortune, and George Bennett of Grand Bank.

Mr. Cuza recently travelled to Ottawa to receive an Exceptional Sailors award, the first recipient from the Atlantic region, Mr. Speaker. Through their quick actions, Mr. Cuza and another crew member were able to rescue a colleague who had fallen into the sea while attempting to board a tanker. Mr. Cuza prevented the individual from drowning and got him safely aboard the *Leonard J. Cowley*.

Meanwhile, last month George Bennett was recognized for 30 years of service when the Lieutenant Governor presented him with the Exemplary Service Medal and bar.

Both Mr. Cuza and Mr. Bennett are shining examples of the dedicated personnel who serve with the Canadian Coast Guard, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating two outstanding individuals on their well-deserved awards, and in thanking all members of the Canadian Coast Guard for helping protect our marine environment and for keeping our mariners safe while at sea.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Terra Nova.

MR. HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to pay tribute to a long-time community volunteer from my district.

Born in Hodge's Cove, Trinity Bay, Mrs. Florence Green attended a one-room all-grade school from where she graduated in 1950. In July 1952, Mrs. Green joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and spent three years at various posts in Ontario and Quebec.

Upon returning to Newfoundland and Labrador, Florence spent the next 40 years teaching school at Loreburn, Norris Arm, Goobies, Hodge's Cove and Little Heart's Ease, where, as vice-principal, she retired in 1991.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Green has been a prominent member of the Hodge's Cove United Church Women's Association. As well, her initial six-month appointment to the Dr. G.B. Cross Memorial Hospital's board of directors resulted in a nine and-a-half-year tenure.

Florence finished with the board in October 1996, but remained as an active member of the Ladies Auxiliary Committee until a fall in December 2016 necessitated her present stay at the Clarenville Retirement Centre. Now into her mid-80s, Mrs. Green continues with her devoted work by telephone.

I ask all hon. Members to join me in acknowledging Mrs. Florence Green for her

long-time dedication as a teacher and community volunteer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Ferryland.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to recognize the Goulds Atom B Pacers players and coaches who took home the gold medal at the 24th Annual All Star Invitational Christmas Hockey Tournament that was held in Mount Pearl from December 27-30. The Pacers, aged nine and ten, played five regular games over a four-day period before moving on to the championship game against St. John's Caps, where they defeated the Caps 3-1 to claim their gold medals.

Members of the winning team are: Colton Chafe, Jackson Collier, Aiden Curtis, Kalem Dalton, Christopher Fagan, Colby Howlett, Azlan Hubley, Ingo Jonsson, Harrison Lynch, Jacob McDonald, Kirk Noel, Daniel O'Brien, Owen O'Driscoll, Ben Ryan, Brendan Ryan and Adrian Whelan. Coaches were: Bob Lynch, Peter Ryan, Colin Howlett and Andrew McDonald.

I would like to congratulate the players on a job well done and working together to win the tournament. I would also like to acknowledge their coaches and volunteers for giving so freely of their time and for the great job they do in training and preparing players for their game.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of the House to join me in congratulating the Goulds Atom B Pacers team on their accomplishments.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in this hon. House to pay tribute to Dr. Ragaie Diebes, our incredibly dedicated doctor

to the residents on the South Coast for over 42 years. Recently, Dr. Diebes received much deserved recognition from Wow the World and took his place on our Pathway of Heroes at the St. Alban's Community Park.

Wow the World celebrates the extraordinary stories of everyday people making a difference, and it surprises none us that Wow's most read and liked story of 2016 featured our very own Dr. Diebes.

We have felt very fortunate and grateful that Dr. Diebes chose our rural area to call his home. First, he practiced from the fondly remembered old doctor's house, with limited equipment and staff, and then later opened the Bay d'Espoir Medical Clinic in 1974 where he still practices today. He is not only our doctor, he is our friend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members of this House to join me in thanking our local hero for all his years of mending our cuts, bruises, broken bones and also helping us through many family illnesses. Dr. Diebes devotion to medicine and our region continues to wow us and we are so proud of his presence on our Pathway of Heroes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Bonavista.

MR. KING: Mr. Speaker, on the weekend of December 9 and 10, Discovery Collegiate in Bonavista played host to the School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador 3A Boys Varsity Volleyball Provincials. Eight teams from across the province competed in this tournament, including the host Destroyers who went undefeated in winning the championship.

The Discovery Collegiate Destroyers boys' volleyball team is comprised of members who are mainly in grade 12 and have been playing together for over four years. In fact, there are members on the team who are part of the selection process for the NL Canada Games Team.

After going 3-0 in the round robin, Discovery faced Pasadena Academy in the semi-final

winning in a hard fought match in straight sets. The final saw a three-set thriller between the host and Jens Haven Memorial Huskies from Nain.

Discovery won the first set, with the Huskies taking the second. The third set came down to the wire with the Destroyers eking out a 15-13 victory. Special recognition goes to Joshua Maloney for winning the Sportsmanship Award for Discovery and Piccadilly Central High for winning the team award.

I ask all hon. Members to join with me in congratulating Discovery Collegiate on their win and all teams on their strong performances and sportsmanship.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's my privilege to rise in this hon. House to offer congratulations to a group of individuals who have made a significant contribution to sport in my community. Once again, this year's Mount Pearl Athletic Awards was a tremendous success which highlighted the achievements and emphasized the important role that sport has played and continues to play in the development of youth and adults alike within our great city. There were a number of very worthy nominees again this year in five categories.

Congratulations to this year's winners: Peter Halliday Executive of the Year award winner; Melanie Hallett of Campia Gymnastics; Coach of the Year, Andrew Murphy of the Mount Pearl Soccer Association; Female Athlete of the Year, Jennifer Boland, and Male Athlete of the Year, Daniel Kelloway, both representing Pearlgate Track and Field; and Team of the Year, the Mount Pearl First Choice Haircutters Men's Challenge Cup soccer team.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all Members of this hon. House to join me in congratulating these individuals on this significant accomplishment and wish them all the very best in their future sporting endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Statements by Ministers.

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Works.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me to rise today and tell you that the Department of Transportation and Works is focused on finding innovative ways to develop and improve vital road infrastructure in Newfoundland and Labrador.

This week, the Department of Transportation and Works issued a tender for an asphalt testing pilot project that will examine what asphalt specification is best suited for our climate and our environment. As part of this project, Mr. Speaker, 4.7 kilometres of the Trans-Canada Highway between Foxtrap and Holyrood will be paved with four different mixes of asphalt. These four sections will then be annually monitored to develop and determine which specification is best for our environment and our road conditions.

This is an innovative approach to future road infrastructure and something that has not been done before in the history of our province. We are all well aware of the issues that we have with rutting and the same areas having to undergo repairs year after year. This is not an effective use of taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Speaker, finding the best asphalt specification is a much better way to spend the public's money. Working with the Heavy Civil Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, this asphalt testing project will be evidence-based and share the vision of *The Way Forward*, enabling us to do more with less, improve outcomes, be more efficient and provide better value for the money we spend.

Our government looks forward to seeing the results of this project and to finding even more ways that we can improve long-term outcomes for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We acknowledge that the province's harsh environment, particularly our wonderful winter season, and how it can create problems for road longevity and maintenance.

Our administration was exploring different methods and mixtures of asphalt in attempts to find products better suited to our challenging conditions. Hopefully, this initiative will build on the past work and create further improvements.

Mr. Speaker, seeing the government is keen in exploring ways to improve our province's roadways, perhaps they can reinstate the 24-hour snow clearing program after eliminating it in the 2016 budget. I want to remind the minister, it's irrelevant how great the asphalt is if it's covered in six inches of snow and ice.

Thank you, minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

And it is good to see this much needed asphalt testing pilot project finally taken on by the department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. MICHAEL: Our province's roads are in atrocious condition. I do have some questions for the minister. He notes annual monitoring of the four text sections. When will the results of the work be ready? How long will it take, and has research been done about other parts of the world with similar climatic and environmental conditions that we can use in the interim?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to provide an update on the work we are doing to raise public awareness on the importance of tackling climate change.

To accomplish that goal, we have updated our Turn Back the Tide website to provide user-friendly information about climate change and energy efficiency.

On the site, people can find information about saving energy, reducing waste generation, and being more fuel-efficient on the road. Businesses can find information on reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs and improving their environmental sustainability while communities can access resources on improving resilience to our changing climate through infrastructure, land use planning and emergency management.

I'm especially proud of the section on schools which helps children learn about climate change. We have created a new interactive tool that will allow teachers to educate students on this issue and how they can take action in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to advancing action on climate change, and this is only one example of our public awareness efforts. Other initiatives include innovative use of social media and providing training for energy efficient building practices. We continue to engage on the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and will develop a provincial climate change action plan to build strong communities and a prosperous, low-carbon economy.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for an advance copy of his statement. Mr. Speaker, climate change is indeed an issue within our province, and I encourage all residents to do their part to not only protect our environment but to protect the environment of our future as well. Whether it be for community groups, school groups or families, the Turn Back the Tide website does indeed have some very valuable resources. However, Mr. Speaker, I must make mention of a recent move to dismantle the Department of Environment and Climate Change. As a result of this, there are a number of important environmental files which are lost in the shuffle. Even the ministers opposite aren't sure of their responsibilities.

Furthermore, I would like to make mention of the government's climate change management plan. The government also seems unsure if they are now following their own made in Newfoundland solutions outlined in Bill 34 or are they now following the made in Ottawa approach.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister.

It's interesting, the minister puts this forward without a provincial plan with teeth or resources to help fight climate change. Other provinces have great publicly-funded innovative programs, retrofitting homes and businesses with progressive green energy programs. What do we have? Environment separated from climate change, Muskrat Falls demanding we use every kilowatt of astronomically expensive power, impoverishing our province, while huge carbon emitters are still only being studied.

Climate change –

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MS. ROGERS: – it's government's climate that must change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Further statements by ministers?

Oral Questions.

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, after only a couple of days of negotiations this government has made an unprecedented move so early in negotiations by requesting the conciliation board's intervention.

I ask the Premier: Why are you filing for conciliation so early in the process? You've just begun negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the Member opposite. Negotiations have been ongoing since last fall. A number of the collective bargaining units have met on numerous occasions. There have been informal and formal discussions with the negotiating tables, with the union leadership at NAPE, and we believe that applying for conciliation in a small number of these particular bargaining units at this time is the right step so that we can have the opportunity that's provided through conciliation to reach an agreement with our public sector employees.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With some of these groups that they filed for conciliation we're told there's only been eight to 10 hours of formal negotiations of actually

sitting at the table with each other. Now the minister can correct that if it's wrong, but the minister should know that negotiation is tough business. It means sitting across the table day after day for many hours trying to work out a plan.

Now, the minister has been on the record as saying that they're going to bargain in good faith. Minister, explain to your public servants why only eight to 10 hours of formal negotiations is bargaining in good faith and looking after those very well-respected public servants. Tell us how that is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, again, the Member opposite is incorrect.

There have been numerous discussions at the bargaining table and a series of informal and formal discussions. It is the priority of this government – let me be clear for all Members of this House. It is the priority of this government to ensure that we are doing everything we can to reach an agreement with our public sector employees.

Mr. Speaker, our province faces a very difficult fiscal situation, and collective bargaining represents the contracts that we have with our employees, represents 45 per cent of our overall spending. We take this extremely seriously. We also take extremely seriously the important priority of coming to terms with an agreement with our unions on behalf of our very valued public sector employees, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, I'll ask the minister a very direct and simple question.

We're told that some of these bargaining units have only sat across the table at formal

negotiations for 10 hours or less. Can you confirm or deny that?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Member opposite probably needs to provide himself with the opportunity to do some research and ask some questions. Referring strictly to a press release is not necessarily the best way to provide questions in this House.

What I can tell him is that, as I've said to the media today, as I have also communicated in my conversation with Mr. Jerry Earle earlier this afternoon, that we have provided several options, several opportunities to have dialogue at the table since early fall. We have provided an opportunity for those discussions to happen.

The unions, NAPE's case in particular, has been inflexible at the table. We feel that conciliation is an opportunity for us to work towards finding an agreement. If the Member opposite doesn't think that finding an agreement is a priority, then he can continue to ask questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can speak for this Member myself and tell you that you find agreements by sitting at the table and hammering out an agreement with the public servants that she just said she respects so much.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you get information – we're provided information all the time and we come to the House here and ask questions. That's how we find out the facts, but the hard part is we don't get any answers from the Members opposite. That's the problem there, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister has said that she had hoped the negotiation table would be a productive and open dialogue. You can't sit at the negotiating

table for eight or 10 hours – she hasn't denied that that was the case. You can't sit at the negotiating table for eight or 10 hours and expect magically that something's going to happen.

Last year she disrespected the people of the province by the tax increases and fee increases they burdened the people of Newfoundland and Labrador with, and today they're disrespecting public servants, Mr. Speaker.

So I ask the minister: Will you go back to the table and do your job and sit at the table with the representatives of your public service?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I can assure that Member opposite, that no one in this House takes their responsibility, based on the circumstances that we find ourselves in, more seriously than this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. C. BENNETT: That Member, he asked a question about the amount of time that has been spent in bargaining. I have corrected him several times. There have been numerous discussions in a variety of informal and formal discussions. There has not been progress in some of these particular bargaining units, and, as such, we feel it is appropriate to avail of a neutral third party who can work with both sides in an effort to reach an agreement that is in the best interest of the people of the province and the best interest of our employees, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell the minister, if she wants to know the impact that this decision is having – because we've heard directly from public servants who feel insulted by the actions of the government

today and the actions they've taken through negotiations. They insulted the executive members of their team, the deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers last year when they sent a bunch of them packing, but brought in their Liberal friends. They've also insulted managers when they've created competition in the workplace where they have to compete for the job they've held, in some cases, for many, many years.

So, Minister, what we're hearing from people is we're asking – they're saying the best process here is to do the hard work at the table, and it's a tough job. I've sat at the table in negotiations on both sides, and I know how tough and difficult it can be.

I ask you once again: Will you agree to go back, sit across the table from the public service representatives and make an attempt, a good attempt, a long, hard attempt, to work out a contract agreement with them?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, we are at the table with our unions. Conciliation is a part of that ongoing dialogue that happens at the table. We are participating in this in a very transparent way with the public sector unions. We are eager to work towards making progress around the offers that they've presented and we've presented that we are discussing at the table.

Conciliation provides us an opportunity to engage a third party, a neutral third party who can help both sides work towards what an agreement might look like. And, Mr. Speaker, that process is ongoing. I think for the Member opposite to suggest anything other, I think is irresponsible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For many, many months the government has contracted outside assistance and support. They've actually spent now \$200,000 or more. The last update we had was \$200,000 on advice for public sector negotiations. They've actually sat at the formal table for a couple of days. It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, that they would at this point in time bring in a conciliator to sit between them in two different rooms. Negotiation happens across the table, Mr. Speaker.

What happened last week was also an insult and a problem for public servants. They've got managers in government, managers that operate government, directors, who are now pitted against each other.

Minister, can you explain to us how you came up with a process to cause a workplace where people have to compete against each other for a reduced number of jobs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite likes to use a preamble with a tremendous amount of information, and I won't lose the opportunity to correct the information that he erroneously puts out in his preamble before I answer his question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. C. BENNETT: Conciliation is a normal part of bargaining. It is a process that allows both parties to use a third party, a neutral party to continue the dialogue at the table. Quite frankly, I believe Mr. Earle even referenced it today himself, that he was considering conciliation. It is a mechanism that is used with the ability to be able to provide an opportunity for us to reach an agreement with our employees.

If the Member wants to ask me the question that he finally asked after his long preamble about the important work our managers do, I'll be pleased to answer that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, last week the government decided to use the two-tiered approach. They identified individuals and terminated their jobs and put them out through the door at the time. And they've also created a circumstance now where managers have to compete against each other. I know cases where four managers have to compete for one job. I've heard of one where nine managers have to compete for one job.

I'm going to ask the Premier: When those people lose those competitions – three out of four will not be successful, eight out of nine will not be successful – will they be entitled to the same compensation and benefits as those who you pointed the finger at and sent out the door last week?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, as we shared with the people of the province during the very difficult decisions that we had to make around the position that this government had on leaner and flatter management, we communicated to our employees impacted that when positions were either restructured or consolidated, the actual position and job description, that we would provide employees impacted with the opportunity to apply for those positions.

The numbers that we released last week of 287 positions that were being eliminated, 90 of those positions were vacant and funded, and our position is to provide the opportunity for employees – through a process that is recognized by the Public Service Commission – an opportunity to participate in a competition that allows them to retain a job if they so choose, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the minister, I really don't think, answered the question, but I'll try and simplify it for her and ask a direction question here.

For those who have been identified, they have to compete with people they've worked side by side with for, in some cases, many years; will there be an independent job competition, including interviews, conducted to determine who will be the successful applicants, or are they just going to hand-pick who they want, like they've done before?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I also happen to be the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission. I take my responsibilities as the minister responsible for the public service act very seriously.

As part of this process, we had meaningful dialogue between the Public Service Commission and the Human Resource Secretariat to establish a process that is reflective of the act that would allow us to ensure employees had the opportunity to participate in competitions for the positions that were being created.

Mr. Speaker, for the Member opposite to suggest that employees are not provided that opportunity is, I think, disingenuous. I also think that the importance of respecting the difficult circumstances that these employees find themselves in right now and letting them work through that process should be respected.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, she never answered the jobs. So I'll ask the minister very clearly: Who is going to pick the successful candidate? Are you, the Premier, ministers able to pick or will it be done

independently by the Public Service Commission?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'll provide the Member opposite with the communication that went out to deputy ministers and the equivalents from the Human Resource Secretariat deputy minister, providing the details of the process that is currently underway in the departments, for his review. That will help him more poignantly and sharply position his questions because, obviously, he doesn't understand the process. I'm happy to provide that information for him.

Mr. Speaker, the positions and decisions will be made through the established process that the Public Service Commission has communicated to employees, as has the HRS department communicated to employees.

Might I add, the question he asked me earlier that he hasn't re-asked was around if employees are unsuccessful in the competition, they absolutely will be treated fairly, like every single other employee that we have to deal with because we're faced with a financial situation that they created.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Well, I thank the minister for telling me that they will be treated fairly, but the question was: Will they be entitled to the same compensation and benefits as those who were shown to the door last week?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, as the Member opposite would have heard when he sat a couple minutes ago in a press conference downstairs, all employees who are finished with government, and qualify, have the opportunity to receive severance pay.

Individuals who lose their position as a result of reorganization or restructuring receive pay in lieu of notice, and we've made a commitment that those employees who are not retained will receive their pay in lieu of notice, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the Member opposite doesn't understand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Minister, that was the question because I don't think the communication that went out – because we do have a copy of it, actually we've had several people send us copies of it, but I don't think it clearly articulated the pay in lieu of notice, and we just wanted clarification because there was some misunderstanding based on what people have been told versus what was written and so on.

Minister, we've had a long discussion after hearing the importance of negotiations and I want to ask you one more time and get you clearly on the record. Negotiations, I know, happen at the table and they're best served sitting across the table from each other. You've called in a conciliator earlier than ever before in the history of our province.

Will you do what's right, sit across from the table with the public servants and try to work out a deal? I know it takes time and I know it's hard work, but will you commit to do that here today?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear for the Members of this House, and for those listening at home, and for the media that are in the gallery, our priority is to reach a negotiated agreement with our unions, specifically around the collective bargaining contracts that we have in discussions now. We are going to do everything we can to reach a negotiated settlement. And as long as there's progress, we're going to continue to sit and participate at those tables.

Mr. Speaker, a conciliator to provide a neutral third party to discuss what are the issues on behalf of the employer and on behalf of the employees is a very prudent decision, we feel, and one that we feel will help provide an opportunity for us to reach an agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did attend the minister's press conference just before coming into the House this afternoon. And during the press conference, she made a comment that NAPE has been inflexible at the table.

Minister, can you tell us how they've been inflexible at the table, and why is it that you're not staying there trying to change that inability to be flexible and have a discussion with them?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to discuss the contract discussions, in light of the specifics that are at the table. What I said, and I will say it again here in the House for the second time, NAPE has been inflexible to this point and we believe that it is important for us to bring a conciliator into the discussion so that we can continue to work on how to progress towards the opportunity of achieving a collective agreement, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. P. DAVIS: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister wants to fan the flames and upset the public service, I'm sure by saying NAPE has been inflexible is certainly going to do that.

She doesn't want to talk about what's happening at the negotiating table, but she took about 35 or 40 minutes a little while – or 30 minutes, just

before coming to the House this afternoon, to lay out a long list of position points that the government finds themselves in. I'm sure they're position points that were discussed at the table.

So she won't tell us what's happening at the table, she will throw out that NAPE is being inflexible, but she won't say how and, in all of this, she's refused to sit across the table from public servants.

How does this instill respect and co-operation with your public service, Minister?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, again, the Member opposite is incorrect. The information that I shared as part of the press conference was information explaining existing terms and conditions on a couple of items – about a half a dozen, I believe, items that are contained within the current collective agreements.

And I felt, and we felt, it was important to share that information, because we're getting a lot of questions about that. Mr. Speaker, that information was shared to provide people of the province some context around the terms and conditions that are in our current collective agreements.

Our priority, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the Members opposite, and I say to my colleagues, our priority continues to be a negotiated settlement with our public sector employees with their union leadership.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on May 11, 2016, this House passed a private Member resolution to advocate to the federal government seeking amendments to federal legislation to ensure pensioners are

given priority on secured creditors with Wabush Mines during the bankruptcy protection process.

So I ask the Premier: What have you done to assist those pensioners since then?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm certainly happy to have a question of that importance from the Member opposite.

We all know that there are certainly tough times up when it comes to Wabush and, in fact, we know recently there's been some work done in the Quebec courts. We've been receiving numerous pieces of correspondence from people that are affected by this decision, and it's something we take very seriously.

However, as the Member opposite knows, changing legislation does take time, takes review, and the fact is that you cannot just simply change legislation willy-nilly. In fact, you can make serious mistakes.

So it's something we take seriously; we're looking at it. In fact, we have a number of people within multiple departments working on a daily basis trying to make sure that we can do the best thing possible for the people of this province, especially by people that are affected by this decision, and at all times our thoughts are with these people that are going through a very serious time.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Mr. Speaker, further to that, I will ask the Minister of Justice – I know it's ongoing in the courts in Quebec. If your government obtains a judgement for the Newfoundland Court of Appeal, pensioners could possibly move to the top of the list and get access to their compensation.

I ask the minister: Are you considering action in the court here, Court of Appeal, in Newfoundland?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is certainly considering a number of options here. But, again, it's something that has to be taken very seriously. Going to the Court of Appeal, like going to court on any level, it's a serious matter and you have to consider the repercussions and implications of doing so.

Again, this is something we take seriously. I know that various ministers, and certainly our parliamentary secretary have been working very hard on this. So it's something that we know – it's timely, but we have to consider everything before we take a decision, but at all times guiding us through this is doing what's best for the people of this province, and especially those affected by this very negative situation.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: I ask the minister: Was any analysis completed on what the impacts would be when you decided to cut positions which focused on violence prevention?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. C. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't believe there has been any communication – and, as a matter of fact, I know there hasn't been – as to the flatter, leaner management structure for government. As a matter of fact, I've said repeatedly in this House, and I said yesterday to the Member opposite, the

one who is asking this particular question, that until the employees who need to be spoken to and also have the opportunity to avail of the restructured positions that are inside the management ranks of the government, we will not be providing specific details on individual departments. When we have that information, I will be pleased to provide it to the Member opposite and pleased to provide it to this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: I ask the minister: When do cuts to the Violence Prevention Initiative – what is it that cuts to the Violence Prevention Initiative during Violence Awareness Week, last week – and minister, we are aware that the position was cut. What does that tell us about your government's commitment to addressing the problem of violence in the province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Member opposite that she would probably be best served in waiting and ensuring that she has the full picture as opposed to making assumptions and reactions based on hearsay and information that is not complete.

Mr. Speaker, violence prevention, which lies within my mandate, is something that I take very seriously. We have worked very closely with the community over the last year to identify the gaps that were in the prior administration's Violence Prevention Initiative, and we are working on meaningful actions that respect the work that people in the community are doing around violence prevention.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say that members of the public would be horrified to know that 500,000 vehicle magnets were paid for as part of their Violence Prevention Initiative.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Fortune Bay – Cape La Hune.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Speaker, we've made leaps and strides, the great volunteers in this province in increasing awareness –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PERRY: – of violence against women, Mr. Speaker, and that work needs to continue.

How can the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women justify travelling to New York to speak to the United Nations on cyberbullying while at the same time she's gutting the office of the Violence Prevention Initiative?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Member opposite wholeheartedly and passionately, that violence prevention work that's being done by community is extremely important and critical.

The work of the status of women's centres, the work of the transition homes, the work of community members that are actively working on the results of violence but also actively working on the things we can do to change how people in this province see violence is extremely important. I would agree with her on that. But, Mr. Speaker, for that Member opposite to suggest that we have done anything other than work very hard on this file is coming from a position of ill-informed, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for the District of Cape St. Francis for a quick question without preamble.

MR. K. PARSONS: Mr. Speaker, last week the management's position responsible for community enhancement programs was cut.

I ask the minister: Is the program cut like the position?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I just say, you should get a better researcher because your preamble to the question is absolutely wrong. There's consolidation within the department. The program hasn't been cut. There will be someone that will deliver the program. The program will be there.

As most of the people on the other side are calling me on a regular basis looking for additional funding, you know the program is there. If not, you wouldn't be calling me asking me for additional funding.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board described current public sector collective bargaining as difficult.

I ask the minister: How does she think calling public sector workers bargaining agent inflexible will assist in achieving a negotiated settlement in these difficult circumstances she's created?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

MS. C. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, collective bargaining in the current environment that we're faced with is in fact difficult, but it's not a difficulty that I created. It was a difficulty created from the financial situation that we find ourselves in as a population, as a government, and as a people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I have reached out to the unions. I have spoken to Mr. Earle myself and have met with labour leaders and encouraged them to provide us with innovative ideas on what they see as being options that we can consider. I would encourage any labour leader in this province, including the leader of NAPE and CUPE, to work with us to come up with an agreement that respects the employees but also respects the financial

situation that we find ourselves in in this province, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the House to consider: Who's being inflexible now? We see where the inflexibility is.

Mr. Speaker, the serious lack of instructional resource teachers and student assistants to support the inclusive schools initiative means that regular classroom teachers are not able to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has himself said publicly that inclusive education is not working.

I ask the Minister: When will he provide the resources immediately needed for inclusion to work properly in our schools?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. KIRBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I really appreciate the question. Prior to the election in 2015, the Premier had the wisdom to – I guess he was then Leader of the Opposition – to promise the people of the province that we would have a Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, to review the education system, to do a comprehensive review of kindergarten to grade 12.

When he formed that task force last fall, part of the mandate was specifically inclusive education. That task force has been travelling around the province. There's been a survey that's been provided to teachers, to parents, to high school students. There's been a lot of public engagement. I expect it will have a lot of recommendations regarding inclusion and other issues once the task force reports to the Premier sometime this summer.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I've listened and I've read some of the presentations and the minister knows, as well as I do, that people are so frustrated and there are things that are needed urgently, that he'd better start listening himself, not just his task force.

Mr. Speaker, we were told no full-day kindergarten class would have more than 20 students. But five classes in St. John's have had more than 20 students since September, creating major problems for teachers and children.

I ask the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development: What is he doing to fix this problem?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. KIRBY: It's ironic to get this question from the leader of the NDP caucus because I remember during the election campaign I got a leaflet in my mailbox at home that said the Liberal party is backing away from its pledge to have full-day kindergarten. Then when it actually came, push to shove here in the House of Assembly, the Liberal party was the only caucus here in the House of Assembly that actually supported early learning to the extent that we would implement full-day kindergarten, which was promised by each of the three political parties in the election.

So I find it highly ironic that the Member threw kindergarten kids and kindergarten teachers under the bus last year and now she has all these concerns.

We're working through some of the bumps in the road. When you implement a new program there are always things that need to be resolved. We're doing the best we can under the challenging circumstances we're in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again another example of how this government has made decisions without putting the resources in place in the educational system to make their decisions work. Fix these classrooms, I say to the minister.

I have heard from parents and educators about high-achieving students whose needs are not being met since enrichment was cancelled in 2004. These children finish work quickly. They're bored. They're given a book or a computer game or used as little tutors for other's having trouble.

I ask the minister: What is he going to do to enrich the learning opportunities for high-achieving students?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

MR. KIRBY: Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the Member for the question.

There was over \$30 million to respond to the first part of that. Over \$30 million invested in full-day kindergarten in the three years leading up to the program, and \$13 million additional operating funds invested in that. So to suggest that's not investing resources is completely disingenuous. It's contrary to the facts.

We know that we need to refresh and review some of the things that are going on in our schools. That's why, like I said, the hon. Premier struck the Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. Inclusive education, and I would include education for gifted students and enriched curriculum in inclusive education as part of the mandate, and they will report on that. We'll develop an education action plan as a result.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. KIRBY: Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Question Period has expired.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Select Committees.

Tabling of Documents.

Tabling of Documents

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources.

MR. CROCKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a document I wish to table in response to a question yesterday from the Member for CBS. So I table the document for the Member.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Further tabling of documents?

Pursuant to section 8 and section 10 of the *Public Tender Act*, I hereby table the Report of Public Tender Act Exemptions for August, September and October of 2016, as presented by the Chief Operating Officer of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Notices of Motion.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given.

Petitions.

Petitions

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's Centre.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS government plans to remove the provincial point-of-sale tax rebate on books, which will raise the tax on books from 5 per cent to 15 per cent; and

WHEREAS an increase in the tax on books will reduce book sales to the detriment of local books stores, publishers and authors, and the amount collected by government must be weighed against the loss in economic activity caused by higher book prices; and

WHEREAS Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the lowest literacy rates in Canada, and the other provinces do not tax books because they recognize the need to encourage reading and literacy; and

WHEREAS this province has many nationally and internationally known storytellers, but we will be the only people in Canada who will have to pay our provincial government a tax to read the books of our own writers;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government not to impose a provincial sales tax on books.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to stand now and to talk books and stories. If someone were to sit down and write a story about what this government has done in terms of making literacy even worse in the province – they couldn't have done anything worse, except maybe close the schools. Maybe that's next; who knows? But to attempt to close libraries, to impose extra taxes on books and to be the only place in Canada that does that, when we have the lowest literacy rates in the country; if someone were to write that in a book, in a story and say imagine, this is what a government did, they would say no, this much be some kind of sarcasm. It's inconceivable, Mr. Speaker, that that's actually what we're dealing with.

We know, in fact, what we should be doing is that government should be making books more

accessible, that government should be putting money into literacy programs, that government should be doing everything it possibly can to ensure that our people are as educated as they possibly could be. Not only so that they can weather this storm, but that we also encourage a better future for all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our greatest renewable, sustainable resource is our people and the best way that they can be resourceful is if they are educated, and this flies in the face of it. Mr. Speaker, again, if you were to read this in a book you would say: What kind of dystopian government is this? It's inconceivable and the people are pushing back.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS school-age children are walking to school in areas where there are no crosswalks, no traffic lights and there are areas without sidewalks; and

WHEREAS this puts the safety of children at risk;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to call upon the House of Assembly to ensure safety of all children by removing the 1.6-kilometre busing policy where safety is a concern.

Mr. Speaker, I live in a district where this is a real concern for me. On Torbay road, on a regular day, there are probably about 12,000 to 13,000 or 14,000 cars that travel on that road, and there are no sidewalks. There are no traffic lights and the crosswalk – a lot of times there's a very narrow crosswalk by Convent Lane and Marine Drive that gets used periodically and the

signage is not well there. There are no lines across; it's just two lines straight across that shows the crosswalk.

This is very dangerous, and I've had calls from so many parents it's unbelievable because they really fear – most of them will try to get their children to school in the morning and arrange that one of the parents who is working, they'll drive – there's a lot of driving in the morning. But in the evenings, a lot of people can't get off work and the child has to walk home. And with no sidewalks – especially in the wintertime, it's a real concern in the wintertime, because as we all know we get a fine lot of snow. There are ice conditions and there are very narrow side areas of the road and shoulders of the road, so this becomes a real concern for a lot of people.

I know that the Minister of Education, I heard him lots of times in this House, get up and present a petition basically on the same issue that I'm talking about here today. And I really believe that we need to have a look at it. I know that the 1.6 kilometres is something that is in place, but in areas where there's high traffic, areas where there are no sidewalks and areas where there are no traffic lights, we should really have a look at this.

The safety of our children has got to be put forward. The safety of kids that have got to walk along roads that are slippery with no sidewalks and very little shoulder, and no lights – this is a real concern for parents in my area and parents in areas just like it.

So I ask the minister: You understand this problem, you've brought the same petition basically to the House of Assembly several times; please have a look at it and do the right thing for the safety of our children.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned petitioners:

WHEREAS many feel their problems and concerns are not being addressed in an appropriate and timely manner;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly call upon the House of Assembly urging government to use all-party town hall events as an avenue whereby people can express their concerns to all parties.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ask to be heard.

I'm very pleased to present this petition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It was brought to me by a concerned citizen who has the initiative to go door to door and engage with hundreds, and I think multiple hundreds of others regarding the democratic deficit that exists in our province and in our House of Assembly.

Our caucus has been addressing this democratic deficit since at least 2007 and it has been a long-standing policy of our caucus to curb this deficit by implementing all-party committees. If we had all-party committees dealing with legislation, and especially difficult legislation, those all-party committees, which would be called Standing Committees actually, would be committees part of the House of Assembly and would be an automatic part of the discussion of legislation.

If you go to the House of Commons, for example, you can look up the schedule for Standing Committees and you will see them meeting on the different bills that are being discussed in the House because in committee, especially when you have a very thorny issue and you really need more research done, the Standing Committees call in witnesses.

When you go to the House of Commons, again, you'll see where the bill stands, what it is the committees are discussing with regard to the piece of legislation, what witnesses are being called, what days there are witnesses, and the public can go to those Standing Committees and speak freely with regard to the issues that

concern them, that we then make decisions on here on the floor of the House.

So if we were to put our Standing Committees in place and really use them, as it's outlined already in our Standing Orders we can do, the whole process is there in our Standing Orders, we would be able to have the kind of open discussion, open to the public, open to the electorate that this petition is calling for.

I was really quite excited when this petition came to me because I thought this is wonderful; this is really a grassroots move by this woman who has been out there knocking on doors getting these signatures. And I understand there are many more that are going to be coming to me that I will be happy to present in this House.

One of the things I've done as an MHA, and my colleague has done over the years, is to hold town halls and we know how effective they are.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. HUTCHINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of my district.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS the Witless Bay Line, Route 13, is a significant piece of infrastructure linking the Southern Shore to the Trans-Canada Highway and it's a crucial piece of economic infrastructure and means of service delivery to the region;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge government to provide resources to complete immediate upgrades to this significant piece of infrastructure and enhance the flow of traffic to

and from the Trans-Canada Highway, and further to ensure that the upgrades over the past years continue this construction season.

Mr. Speaker, this is, as I said, a piece of infrastructure that connects the Southern Shore and Route 10 to the Trans-Canada Highway, a significant piece of infrastructure. Over the past number of years there has been significant upgrades to that piece of infrastructure with the intent – obviously, a significant piece of infrastructure like that, it needs to be done over a period of time. Over the past number of years, I think there's something like \$1.6 million been invested to upgrade a number of kilometres and stretches of that particular highway. There's certainly more to be done.

Significant traffic on that piece of highway is certainly related to commerce, economics, residents, others, professionals that use the highway to transport back and forth in regard to their employment. You look at industries like the crab industry in the summertime and the amount of traffic that's a part of that highway in terms of transporting services, either back from harvesters on the Southern Shore or into the processing facilities along the Southern Shore.

As well, just recently, and ongoing today, it's the Pennecon Energy Marine Base in Bay Bulls. A lot of the generators and various large pieces of infrastructure related to Soldiers Pond, related to Muskrat Falls, and even some of the other equipment that's needed in Muskrat Falls, this piece of highway is being used to transport some of those significant pieces of equipment. So it's essential to the region.

There are sections of it over this time of the year that needs some patchwork done, but it's important that the government recognizes this. It certainly fits in the whole economic development and economic plan. I'd certainly urge government this season to take a look at that, and recognizing it can't be all done at the one time, but provide those improvements that continues the economic benefit for the region.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the hon. House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of Newfoundland and Labrador humbly sheweth:

WHEREAS there's been an identified lack of mental health services in our province's K to 12 school system; and

WHEREAS the lack is having a significant impact on both students and teachers; and

WHEREAS left unchecked, matters can and in many cases will develop into more serious issues;

WHEREUPON the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador – urge to increase mental health services and programs in our province's K to 12 school system.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I presented this same petition on Monday, and the overwhelming comments and the overwhelming contact that I had with people afterwards thanking me for presenting it and outlining the fact while our school system has a number of challenges, mental health, unfortunately, is not being addressed in the mainstream school system right now, because there are other challenges there around our academics, around our overcrowding, around some of the challenges.

So, I felt on the urging of a number of organizations that we keep this alive in our school system, particularly as we get close to decisions being made around our budget and around investments in our education. On an everyday basis, arguing in all the sectors from the NLTA to the parents' associations to all the other – the administrators and teachers out there are arguing about investments in the education system to get back to an acceptable level. Sometimes we have to address some of the other occurring issues that were always there but were never front and center.

As we look at that, mental health in our school system is one. Times have changed, our society has changed. The challenges on young people, the challenges in the households with economic issues, stressors, travel issues within the households, young people being exposed to things they normally weren't in previous times around bullying and some of the challenges around those type of things; about performance, being able to actually excel in certain areas. Being able to select exactly what it is they're comfortable in the school system, and some of the other challenges as we integrate people into mainstream school systems.

These all add to stressors within the school system, and have an impact on mental health. As is indicated here, the issues has been determined by all professionals here, and everybody who work in the field, the issues within the younger age category, if not addressed, if not given supports and if not engaged, will obviously lead to other more serious issues around mental health as people progress into their teens and their adulthood.

What we're looking at here is that the education system has a captive audience, has these young people in an engaged, safe, healthy, open environment, and what an opportunity to address some of the mental health needs of those particular individuals, but equally as important is being able to educate other students and staff around how you address mental health issues. How you lend support to people that may have some challenges around those. How you support the family themselves. So these are all very important things we need to be cognizant of when we talk about investing in the education system.

The mainstream education system is very important, the integration is very important, but all the factors that have an impact on people's ability to learn must be addressed too, and one of those key things is mental health. Because of the influence that will be necessary to address those at a younger age, we want to ensure the mainstream system is put in place, systems that can benefit people as they progress in their adulthood.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt I'll have an opportunity to present this numerous times before we get to the budget decisions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Acting Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Community Services, for leave to introduce a bill entitled, An Act – the public safety act.

AN HON. MEMBER: Patient Safety.

MS. COADY: Patient Safety Act – my apologies.

Bill 70, and I further move that the said bill be now read a first time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded by the hon. the Acting Government House Leader that she have leave to introduce Bill 70 and that the said bill be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

Motion, the hon. the Minister of Health and Community Service to introduce a bill, "An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The Province," carried. (Bill 70)

CLERK (Barnes): A bill, An Act Respecting Patient Safety And Quality Assurance In The province. (Bill 70)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 70 has now been read a first time.

When shall the said bill be read a second time? Now?

MS. COADY: (Inaudible.)

MR. SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

On motion, Bill 70 read a first time, ordered read a second time on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Acting Government House Leader.

MS. COADY: Mr. Speaker, Order 4, second reading of Bill 68.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Burin – Grand Bank, that Bill 68, An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 5, be now read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: It is moved and seconded that Bill 68 be now read a second time.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Highway Traffic Act No. 5." (Bill 68)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I read my prepared remarks, I'd like to draw attention to – as you did earlier – Patricia Hynes-Coates who is in the audience, along with her family, other members of MADD, because this next couple of hours, frankly, represents a lot of work on their behalf, as well as all members of government and many organizations and community leaders across the province.

Mr. Speaker, driving is a privilege, not a right. Those who chose to abuse this privilege by driving under the influence of alcohol in Newfoundland and Labrador will now face

tougher consequences once the amendments that we're going to discuss today come into force.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to explain the changes that we are proposing. I'm certain that my hon. colleagues in this House will agree that there are far too many stories in the news about impaired drivers. There are also instances where people have been charged with impaired driving multiple times on the same day. These proposed amendments will allow us to take action to curb this blatant disregard for public safety.

Currently, the province's vehicle impoundment program does not apply to impaired driving offences; however, we will begin impounding vehicles at roadside when drivers are found to have a blood-alcohol content above the legal limit or when they refuse to provide a breath sample. For a first offence, impaired drivers will lose their vehicles for three days. For their second such offence, within 10 years, they will lose their vehicles for a week.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, impaired driving has had devastating and far-reaching effects on our communities and families. And just by way of further background, I did want to just change my remarks to indicate that in the 2015 report from Statistics Canada, the capital region of St. John's, Mount Pearl has the highest impaired driving rates per capita for any municipality in the country – truly not something to be especially proud of.

Impaired driving is the leading criminal cause of death in our country. On average, four people are killed every day in impaired-driving crashes in Canada and nearly 60 per cent of the motor vehicle crash deaths are related to impaired driving. We've all heard heart-breaking stories about impaired driving in Newfoundland and Labrador communities. Frankly, I can speak for myself and I'm sure for many people listening and watching we have all lived those heartbreaks. So it is time for us to change the story on impaired driving in our province.

I'm sorry; I just wanted to go back now to my remarks on impoundment and what we are doing. In terms of moving forward, we are now catching up with eight other provinces and territories in our country that already have

mandatory impounding for impaired driving; three of these have discretionary impounding.

Another change that we are going to be proposing today is to prevent repeat impaired driving offences, Mr. Speaker. This involves what's known as a mandatory Ignition Interlock Program. Currently, drivers who are serving a suspension of their driving privileges for impaired driving can volunteer to participate in an Ignition Interlock Program. That's a voluntary program. However, with these amendments, we are proposing that that will now be mandatory; it will be a restriction as a condition of re-instatement of a driver's licence after an impaired driving suspension has been completed.

The ignition interlock system is an in-vehicle, alcohol-breath screening device that prevents the vehicle from being started when alcohol is detected. The system also requires the driver to provide breath samples at random times while the engine is running. If drivers fail the interlock test while driving, it activates an alarm much like an anti-theft alarm, with lights flashing and the horn beeping, until the engine is stopped.

Any time that an interlock test is failed, the system registers that attempt to drive while impaired. With this data available, the interlock requirement may be extended at the discretion of the registrar of motor vehicles if it is determined that the driver still poses a risk to the public. The requirement for a mandatory interlock system will appear on the driver's licence as a restriction. Under this new program, the terms for the mandatory interlock will be one year for a first conviction, three years for a second conviction within 10 years, and five years for a third or subsequent conviction within 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, young drivers are at greater risk of death or injury due to impaired driving crashes when compared to their older counterparts. According to recent Transport Canada data, young drivers also have the highest impaired driving rates of any other group of drivers. Recent data from Mothers Against Drunk Driving indicate that alcohol is a factor in nearly 60 per cent of all crash deaths among young people. That is why we are amending the *Highway Traffic Act* to require zero tolerance for

alcohol consumption for drivers less than 22 years of age.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Under this new legislation, drivers under 22 will be required to maintain a zero per cent BAC – that’s blood alcohol content – while driving. Mr. Speaker. We already have this requirement under the Graduated Driver Licensing Program in the province, where young drivers must maintain a zero per cent BAC for their first 20 to 24 months after obtaining their driver’s licence.

In most cases, the people who enter the Graduated Driver Licensing Program do so at age 16 and this first 20 to 24 months would, of course, often end by the time they the age of 18. With this amendment today, young drivers will have additional time to develop a habit of separating driving from the consumption of alcohol. It is our hope that this requirement will help establish a new generation of drivers who never drink and drive.

Mr. Speaker, we will be working with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to raise awareness of these new rules with young drivers through high schools and post-secondary institutions. We will also be working with the Newfoundland Labrador Liquor Corporation to raise awareness for all drivers through their social responsibility programs.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, these amendments will make it tougher for impaired drivers to continue to ignore our impaired driving laws. They will also help us establish a societal change by instilling within our young people the habitual separation of drinking from driving at a time when they are developing their safe driving skills.

With these changes, we are sending a message that the time has come to end impaired driving in Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Mr. Speaker, government alone cannot solve the problem of impaired

driving. This is the responsibility of every single citizen in this province. Parents, educators, municipal leaders, business owners and the general public all have a role to play.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the roles of some of our key partners in developing this legislation. I would like to particularly thank Patricia Hynes-Coates for her dedication to this cause.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Mrs. Hynes-Coates is the first Newfoundlander and Labradorian to ever hold the position of national president of MADD Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: Her work in impaired driving advocacy began in 2013 when her stepson Nicholas Coates was killed by an impaired driver.

Mrs. Hynes-Coates and her Mothers Against Drunk Driving counterparts – and there are some 12 locations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador – have dedicated their lives to changing legislation across the country to put an end to impaired driving.

MADD has active chapters, as I say, throughout the province and these are staffed by dedicated and passionate volunteers including, frankly, in my District of Lake Melville. Speaking to my colleagues, I have heard that many of them are also actively engaged with their own local chapters and several of them are here.

Mr. Speaker, I’ll say, yesterday, we had a technical briefing on this matter to prepare and it was standing room only. It was very inspiring to see the level of interest in my colleagues and in the Opposition; frankly, every Member of this House.

We also appreciate the support of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the RCMP in developing these recommendations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: The members of both of these law enforcement agencies encounter impaired drivers and deal with the consequences of impaired driving on a daily basis and their role is invaluable in enforcing these laws. Even as I have been sitting here, Mr. Speaker, I've heard from several members of the RNC and the RCMP, sending me messages. So it's a great emotional feeling to be here today and seeing this collaboration come to this floor.

I would also like to acknowledge Service NL staff who have worked tirelessly to bring Bill 68 to the House today.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to recognize the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, and I'm not able to say his name but I think we all know who that is. We also know what a huge role he has played – until recently – as the Minister of Service NL.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TRIMPER: It was certainly under his direction, as well as his EA, who I've seen here today. I know how closely they worked on this legislation and I thank them again for their hard work.

I know this was a very important set of amendments to him. He worked tirelessly to make sure that this be brought forward to this sitting of the House.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the legislation that we are bringing forward today is another example of how our government listens to people and then creates beneficial change with their feedback. It is the result of collaboration between government and active stakeholder groups, and it is an example of how, when it comes to public safety, we can all work together for the greater good.

I hope that we will look back on today as a turning point in the story of impaired driving in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

There are times in this house when we get the opportunity to all come together and do the right things for people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's so important that when legislation does come through that we recognize good legislation on both sides of the House.

I've been here now for nine years, and I look across and there are only a couple of Members on the other side that were – the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of AES have a lot of time in politics and they realize that there are days like this. There are days in government that politics and the political part just gets thrown away because sometimes it's the right thing to do. We're here to represent people of Newfoundland and Labrador. No matter if you're on this side of the House or you're on that side of the House.

This is one of the days I feel proud to be here, to be part of the 40 people who are in this House of Assembly to be able to do things that, hopefully down the road, will save lives, and hopefully will save families and hopefully will save what grief the families have to go through.

It's an emotional time, I'm sure, today. I heard down to the news conference today, it was very emotional for people. So it is, when you lose loved ones and people that are dear to you because of impaired driving. So today is a great day for this legislation. I'm very proud to be here. I'm very proud of the work that has been done.

I, too, minister, want to congratulate some people. I, too, want to congratulate you for bringing in this legislation today. I want to congratulate my good friend, the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm sure he did a fine lot of work on this and I congratulate government. I really do congratulate government.

I really want to congratulate MADD Canada. I'm very proud to know that the chairperson, Ms. Coates, is from Newfoundland and Labrador. It's a great thing to have a person

from our province to be in charge of such a great thing that really works for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I also want to make sure that we realize our law enforcement people, our police workers and policemen, both the RNC and the RCMP. A lot of times media, and especially these days, sometimes it's not so public that people are really looking out there, but we're so lucky to have these people on the roads protecting us day and night. I really feel glad that this is something that will help them also do their job. They don't have to go to the scene of an accident where there's a young person that's killed, or an old person or anybody, because of impaired driving. The steps that are done here today, I hope protect lives, save lives, and like I said, save families.

I also want to thank the people – I'm sure as we're here today, there's a lot of work that is done with this to make sure this legislation was brought in by people at Service NL. I was over the other day and had a briefing. I really felt those people really put their heart and soul in this. I really want to thank them for what they've done.

I'm going to go over it just a little bit; I know the minister mentioned a good few things that I'm also going to mention, but when you see that St. John's has the highest impaired rate among all Canadian cities, that's really something that we, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, can be just shaking our heads because it something that's – it's just not right.

Today's announcement, and the steps that are taken here today, let's hope that the next time they do these stats, we're the lowest.

Again today, we look at what's been done here with young people. I know if you look at 16 to 25-year-olds, alcohol and drugs play a 50 per cent factor in crashes and yet there are only 13 per cent of the people that are on the road are between 16 and 25. Yet, 33 per cent of the people who cause impaired charges and impaired driving accidents, 33 per cent of the whole total is that age group.

So this legislation today, some people will look at it and may say it should be for everyone, it

should be whatever, but the intent today, and I heard the minister just say it a minute ago, if we can encourage young people – it's like when seat belts first came in. I know for a fact myself, it was hard to get adjusted to the seat belt, but young people were already wearing their seat belts and even today you see they're all still wearing their seat belts. So this is something that if a young person, right from the time he gets his licence and the habits that he has then, will really help down the road because it's a habit that hopefully he will keep for the rest of his life: he or she.

Again, the amendments here today, I know MADD Canada was really pleased with it, and I'm sure the general public is.

I just want to go through a little bit of the legislation and the actual amendments. The first one is zero tolerance under age 22. So usually now when a person gets their licence they can do – I think there are two groups that you can do, and this is mainly for insurance purposes that you can take programs and stuff like that. It's 20 to 24 months that you're not allowed to have any alcohol consumption. So then they go from a 16-year-old to an 18. So it's 18 to 22 now that this is zero tolerance for your blood alcohol level. That's really, really good because it's the habits, like I said, of young people that hopefully will bring into the future. I know the recommendations are similar to the ones that are done in Ontario, New Brunswick, Quebec and Manitoba.

The second one is a very interesting one. It's the mandatory interlock. All other jurisdictions except Newfoundland and Labrador and I think the Northwest Territories are the only other places that don't have this in place. The interlock intermission is done; it's a period of time with restriction after you get your licence back. It is one year for the first conviction, it's three years for the second conviction within 10 years, and it's five years for the third conviction also within the 10 years. But the thing I like about this – and, Minister, I think I'm right when I say this, you can correct if I am wrong. But if a person goes to try to drive that car while this system is on, it will register and if you can notice that the person has tried to drive, then he can be extended longer than the one year that is there.

This is a great – for some people out there that still want to do it time and time after again, this will show, listen, it's not going to be tolerated and if you even try to do it, then we can recognize it and the extension will go longer again. So it's a really great – you hear too often, too often we'll hear tell of people who get charged with impaired driving and then they get the second charge while their licence is suspended and stuff like that. We hear it all the time on the news. So it's very important that this – this is a great thing to do.

The other one is the impoundment. On the impoundment, I remember only – I think it was a couple of months ago I heard on the news that a person got picked up for impaired twice in the one day. I mean, seriously, it's just unbelievable that that could happen, but it does happen. There has to be some way that we can make sure this doesn't happen. So this impoundment coming in right now is really, really good.

It's three days on your first offence, seven days on your second offence, 30 days on the third offence. If you get caught the third time you lose your vehicle for 30 days, but it will also keep those people off the road for that period of time because, like is said, I heard it a couple of weeks ago that someone got charged twice in the one day for impaired driving which we just can't tolerate. So that's a great part of this also.

Before then, the only time we could really impound a car was if they had an invalid licence or if mechanically it wasn't fit to be on the road or they were driving without insurance. An impaired charge, if you get picked up for impaired your car is impounded, and that's where it should be. So there are a lot of things in it.

The main thing I want to talk about today is really public safety. That's what this bill is about. No matter what, we as legislators in this House of Assembly, anytime we can all work together and get together and make sure people's safety is foremost, our children, our family members, our neighbours, our friends, anybody – and this part of the legislation today really makes it safer for everybody else on the road. I want to applaud everybody, like I said who worked on this.

Driving is not a right. When you drive a car you have to make sure you respect the people that are on the road. It's a privilege for us to be able to do what we do, to live in the country that we live in.

I can remember when I got my first vehicle. I was on the fish truck making money all summer long knowing that my birthday was coming in November and there was a change to get that right to be able to drive. And I'm sure young people today, they get their jobs, they work at Tim Hortons, they work all over the place just to be able to make the money so they can get – and a lot of them have parents that help them out. I helped my two out a little bit, but it's a privilege to get on the road and be able to do this.

So when you get that privilege you have to make sure you respect it and know that you're out there, you're driving a vehicle that can kill people. You're driving a vehicle that could cause injury to everyone out on the road. So it's important that we make sure we understand what it's doing.

I have to say, it's disappointing when you see us – we're very proud Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but when you see a national average of impaired driving rights and we're down – we're not even close to where we should be. Then, like I said, the City of St. John's, the St. John's area, to be the highest city in all of Canada.

So we have a problem. We have a problem and we need to fix that problem. And today I'm hoping this is part of fixing the problem. It's great to see that all parties, I'm sure, in this House will support this and send a message to the people out there that we really want to make sure our roads are really, really safe.

I'm also glad Service NL will work with all government departments, and it's important that we do get that message out there. Newfoundland and Labrador co-operation – the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation, it's important they have a great awareness program. So this is another way we really have to – because awareness is key. I also believe – not only is awareness key, but education is also key.

I spoke to a person a little while ago and they were telling me about MADD Canada and what MADD Canada does in the classrooms. It's a simulator they do and it shows the children what could happen at an accident. It's not a very good scene they show but here it is this is what happens. It's eye opening when you look at it. You come upon a scene where people are injured, and there are people hurt and there's blood. There could be death there and it's very traumatic to the people that really see that. So it's important that we and government really make sure that our children, our educators, and everyone puts an emphasis on this. This is a huge item for everyone.

I have a couple of questions, Minister, when we do get in Committee on it, just a couple of questions to see how things are going to be run, timelines and stuff like that. Myself, I'm very happy to be here today. I'm very happy to be a part of this legislation today, and very happy to be here as a Member of the House of Assembly today to represent the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

I think this is going to be a great thing. I hope, I pray that it saves lives. I hope it saves families. And like I said, impaired driving, we'll see people that – like the Coates' that are here today, what happened to them. Let's not hope it happens to anyone else.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER (Dempster): The Speaker recognizes the hon. Member for Labrador West.

MR. LETTO: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And it's certainly a pleasure to rise in this hon. House today. I'm very pleased to rise to lend my support to Bill 68, which is An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

As my colleague, the Minister of Service NL and the Member for Cape St. Francis –

MR. K. PARSONS: The beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. LETTO: The beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

They are right when they say driving is a privilege and it's not a right. We should all keep that in mind. This issue of impaired driving certainly affects us all and it's unfortunate that so many families have been affected by drunk driving crashes. We know all too well what the outcomes of those are.

So it's a privilege today to stand in this House and to be representing this government who has brought this bill in, in the first week of the spring sitting of this House of Assembly, to put this into legislation. It's long overdue, but it's here today and we're very proud to be able to stand in this House and support this bill today.

Madam Speaker, this past March, the hon. minister and I – I'm not sure if you were there or not, but we met with the Labrador West chapter of MADD. I hate singling out people because you tend to forget somebody, but the MADD chapter in Labrador West are very, very active, a very strong chapter, and people that I know very well. But there's one person I have to single out, and that's Josephine Gaulten-Rowe who's been relentless and has put so many hours into lobbying for what we have on the table today. She's been relentless. I tell you, every time I see her and every time we meet, there's always the talk about drunk driving and what we need to do, as a government, to make it safe for our children and people who are on the roads.

I just want to say that, because they have a great group; very active, as I said. The Red Ribbon Campaign, I haven't missed one yet and I don't intend to. They certainly make sure that I'm notified and that I'm there and they try to accommodate me the best way they can. So I just wanted to say that today on this very special occasion.

A major problem we have seen in recent years, Madam Speaker, is the issue of repeat offenders when it comes to impaired driving, and that's the unfortunate part of it. We've all heard about the impaired drivers who are charged and then return to driving their vehicles only to get charged again – on the same day, in some cases, which is very, very unfortunate. We've also been frustrated to hear about repeat offenders

who are charged again and again over a number of years but never seem to get the message that impaired driving is a dangerous habit that puts lives at risk every day.

We were given a briefing yesterday by Service NL, and this is where I want to say my accolades for that department because I've been there for the past year or so with the minister who is now the Minister of Municipal Affairs and –

AN HON. MEMBER: Environment.

MR. LETTO: Environment – it keeps changing. I want to commend the minister and the staff from Service NL who have put countless hours into preparing this legislation. They've heard from a lot of people. MADD has been a very, very strong advocate for these measures that we're putting in today.

We've listened. I think what we're doing here today puts us – because when you look at it, Newfoundland and Labrador don't have a good track record when it comes to drunk driving and crashes and whatnot. Our legislation was at the bottom of the list, pretty near – it was pretty near at the bottom of the list, but after this legislation is introduced, we'll move to the top. We're the trendsetter now. We've gone from just about the bottom to the top. So we're going to lead the country now in regulations and legislation with regard to drunk driving. I'm very proud of that. I think we all should be, no matter what side of the House we're on. We should all be proud of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: Because when you look at some of the statistics, Madam Speaker, it's frightening. In 2015, Statistics Canada report – and it's nothing against the people of St. John's or it's nothing against the city, but unfortunately we're wearing it; because, in 2015, St. John's had the highest impaired driving rate among major cities in Canada. It's unbelievable. And when you look at it, when you look at the chart, we're twice the Canadian average. That's nothing to be proud of, I can guarantee you. So obviously, we are lacking something. I think the measures that we're putting in today will go a long way – hopefully – to improve that statistic and bring us down to where we should be.

Of course we'd all like to be at zero. That's where we'd all like to be. But sometimes we have to deal in reality and there are some times that people just don't pay attention to legislation or regulations. But hopefully, we'll see a major improvement in the statistics that we have here.

Even more disturbing I think is that young people have the highest rates of traffic death and injury due to impaired driving. And that's sad. That's sad. Because that's the time in your life that you should be learning to drive, learning the rules of the road, learning what to do, what not to do and it's unfortunate that that's the statistic we're living with as well. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 16 to 25-year-olds. And alcohol and/or drugs are a factor in 50 per cent of those crashes. Not a great statistic.

And 16 to 25-year-olds constitute 13.6 per cent of the population in 2010, but made up almost 33.4 per cent of the impairment-related traffic deaths. Again, it's scary. We do have a graduated licensing program; it's called the GTL. For the first 20 to 24 months of driving, for novice drivers, which has a zero point zero blood-alcohol content restriction, and that's good. But obviously, it's not doing the trick.

We also have a voluntary Ignition Interlock Program, but it's voluntary. We also have a vehicle impoundment program, but guess what? It does not include impaired drivers. You can be stopped for – your car could have a bad wheel bearing, or bald tires, or whatever, something wrong with your car, and it will get impounded. But you get stopped for impaired driving, we don't have that authority. So obviously, these are the changes that have to be made.

So these amendments that we're seeing here today, I think, will go a long way to do that. And these are the things that we're implementing. We're setting a zero per cent blood-alcohol content for drivers under 22. Instead of the first 20 to 24 months now, it's under 22; keeping in mind that the drinking age of course is 19.

I think that will go a long way. Because most young people today, they got their learner permits at 16, they get a driver's licence at 17 and they're on the road. And this is at a time when – we were all young at one time.

AN HON. MEMBER: Some of us still are.

MR. LETTO: Some of us still are. Unfortunately, I am not one of them. But that's neither here nor there; I can't do anything about that.

AN HON. MEMBER: What a truth teller.

MR. LETTO: What a truth teller.

These are the times in our lives when we're wild and fancy-free, but we have to learn to take some responsibility. Whether we're on the road or wherever we are, we have to learn to be accountable for our actions. I think putting this age up to 22 allows them more time to learn the rules of the road, to learn, as I said, not to drink and drive, because they become more mature. So I think it's a great move.

Impose the mandatory interlock as a condition of licence reinstatement for impaired driving offences; I won't go through all the nuances with that and what the limits are because that's been done by the minister and also the Member for Cape St. Francis, the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis. But it's something I think that will go – and I've seen this personally in use, by the way. Not that I've used it or had to use it; don't get me wrong. But I have seen it, and guess what? It works – it works. I think the measures that we're imposing here today, the mandatory interlock system, will go a long way as well.

Just for a matter of information, I guess, and a little service broadcast there. I just want to give the locations where they are located in the province. We do have fixed sites where these units can be installed. They're in St. John's, Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook, Labrador West and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. You can get them installed in either one of those places, and there are mobiles units that will move around, obviously, on the Northern Peninsula, Southern Labrador and in Stephenville and Port au Port. I think with these locations and access to these ignition interlocks, there's no reason why that can't be implemented and that can't work.

The third and final one is: Provides the authority to make regulations to require the roadside

impoundment of vehicles for impaired driving offences. As I said earlier, you get stopped now on the highway and your tires could be bald, you could have a broken axle, windshield, or anything and your vehicle can be impounded. But if you get stopped for impaired driving, just leave it there and go back and get it when you sober up. Basically, that's what it is, or get somebody else to drive it home for you.

So, at this point, with this new legislation, the impoundment goes into effect and the cost of the impoundment sits with the driver. So they're charged for – and if they're far away from home, you got to get a tow truck or whatever, that can get pretty expensive. Nevertheless, it's the price you pay for breaking the laws of the road and breaking the drunk-driving issues.

Again, I won't get into all the particulars about all these measures that we've taken, because they've been outlined by the minister. I'll just go through it briefly. I think that the changes we are making today, it will be much more difficult for impaired drivers to show such blatant disregard for our impaired driving laws. I think it shows blatant disregard for the driving public. Certainly anybody who's witnessed and had family members, friends or whatever being a victim of a drunk driving crash know all too well the consequences of that and what we have to live with after, and how really needless it is to have happened in the first place because of drunk driving.

Under the new rules, as I said – that's why, I guess, if you find you've been operating a vehicle in an unsafe manner, your privileges are suspended until you can prove that you've learned this most important lesson and that lesson is not to drink and drive.

Madam Speaker, again, I want to congratulate everybody who has been a part of this. I want to certainly congratulate MADD Canada for being such good advocates, strong advocates, and never giving up. It goes to show that if you have something you believe in, please, you should never give up because sooner or later you will meet somebody who understands what you want to do and are willing to listen to your cause and are willing to do what is necessary to make it right.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: There are nine chapters of MADD in Newfoundland and Labrador, by the way. As I said, I –

MR. TRIMPER: Twelve.

MR. LETTO: Twelve, no. Well, this is wrong.

MR. TRIMPER: (Inaudible.)

MR. LETTO: Okay, right. Thank you.

Anyway, there are many chapters of MADD in the province and I want to congratulate them all. We've had a lot of them in our boardroom. Like I said, we met with the ones in Lab West. They've all been good advocates, but to have such a great person and a dedicated person as Mrs. Patricia Hynes-Coates as now the president of MADD Canada, I think that speaks well for the work that the MADD chapters in this province have done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: You're a great example of how an organization, a volunteer organization, should work and does work when we all work together for a common cause.

Madam Speaker, with that, I'll take my seat. I want to say in closing that public safety, to us, is a top priority. Driving is a privilege; it's not a right. And driving while impaired will now have much tougher, tougher consequences, which is a very good thing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LETTO: The proposed amendments that we are introducing today will reduce impaired driving – I'm confident of that – in Newfoundland and Labrador and make our roads and highways safety for everyone.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: The Speaker recognizes the hon. the Member for Conception Bay South.

MR. PETTEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up today and speak on this bill. It is an important piece of legislation, as my colleague for Cape St. Francis and colleagues opposite, minister and the Member for Labrador West, just pointed out. I don't plan on getting into the bill. I think they've done a great job on elaborating on it.

I guess what I felt important to speak on; I want to recognize Patricia Hynes-Coates and her husband, Terry, and the Coates family, actually. They're from Conception Bay South, my community, and I welcome them here and I congratulate her and their group on the passion they've put behind the cause, and my colleague from Lab West just pointed out, you have to admire that. You know, we have a lot of these groups. They're activists. They're fighting for their cause. We all commend them and we recognize them, but I'd like to be on record to really, truly commend them for the work they do, they've done and they will continue to do on such an important cause as this. I want to acknowledge that, Madam Speaker.

Drinking and driving, we hear about it in the news, you read about it in the papers and I guess it astounds me sometimes that it's an ongoing issue. As was alluded our rates are so high. It's amazing that in this day and age, and I think I spoke about this in a previous bill sometime last year, I'm still amazed today that this is such a problem. I realize it's a societal problem. It needs to be addressed. There are a lot of reasons. This legislation will reduce the – the hope is, and I certainly hope it does, reduce the rates of drinking and driving.

I realize this is under 22 years of age, but I guess on that note, maybe the challenge should go out to all drivers, no matter what your age, to have zero tolerance, zero alcohol rate whenever you sit behind the wheel, regardless if you're 22 or you're 62. I think that's something that we, as a society, should try to achieve that goal.

On a personal note, I've got that notion of, if I have one drink of anything, I don't drive. It's something I'm proud to say and something I continue on. It's always easy to pay that cab ride home and get your vehicle the next day; it doesn't make any sense to me, personally, and to

a lot of people I know – maybe that’s something we all should try to achieve regardless of our age, Madam Speaker.

On this topic, I mentioned I know the Coates family and I know the tragedy they’ve dealt with. You can’t fathom it. I know a couple of other families as well, and a former member of MADD – probably still is a member, I think is former president of MADD – lost his son some years ago and it really motivated him and activated him. Actually, he’s a sitting councillor in CBS now, Richard Murphy, who has put a lot of time and effort over the years into this cause as well. I wanted to recognize him because, I guess, in the CBS area he brought the MADD cause to the forefront for me, personally. I became more aware of what MADD was about after the unfortunate death of his 20-year-old son. I believe he was 20.

Madam Speaker, another thing – and these are personal anecdotes but stuff that’s stuck with me. There was lady in my previous life; we worked together for some years. She was a very quiet person, but there was a certain time of the year that she’d be very down and I didn’t understand. So, anyway, the story of it was her daughter was on the way home from a dance, a teenage dance, she was 16 years old. It was her only child. As she was coming home, she saw her daughter through the living room window and was getting ready to go to bed, waiting for her to come home and she got struck by a drunk driver and passed away.

I guess stories like that, and I can tell others, but that was one stuck with me forever. That was 20 years back I heard that story. I still see her memory on Facebook every year. I see her and she still pays tribute. It’s pretty heart-wrenching stuff.

We’re on this topic today, and I know it’s a very emotional issue for a lot of people. I don’t think any of us can – unless you experience it – I don’t think you can actually put yourself, walk a mile in someone else’s shoes, but I felt it important on a couple of issues on a personal note that I wanted to be on record as saying or commenting on.

Just before I got up to speak, I noticed the bookmark from MADD and this picture of this

young gentleman here, D.J. Hancock. I mean, that’s so telling. It’s so tragic. We see a lot of these things and you can’t put it into words, I guess, is the only way to describe it. It’s unfathomable.

Madam Speaker, something else, too, on a personal note because I wanted to just speak very personally about the bill without getting into details of it. I understand government – I commend them for bringing this legislation forward and trying to – anything we can do to reduce impaired driving rates is a good thing. But, unfortunately, and this is why I put out the challenge to any driver, it’s a job to legislate. You can’t always legislate common sense.

As hard as we try, and we do try as a society and as a government and our organization such as MADD, I think that the public awareness – I encourage each and every person to take it seriously, be very cognizant of what they’re doing when they’re out to a social event or what have you. That one drink or two drinks, you see the commercial sometimes; it doesn’t take much. It can make a huge difference in someone else’s life. It’s something that I think we all should endeavour to try to do and make a personal challenge for each and every person out there.

I don’t plan on going on much longer, Madam Speaker, but I just want to, I guess, commend government for bringing this legislation in. I want to commend MADD for the work they do because a volunteer group to fight a cause like that deserves a lot of admiration and recognition. I know they’ve gotten a lot and deserve everything they’ve got.

So, on that note, I’m going to take my seat, but I just want to say in closing that I think this is a good piece of legislation. It’s a good step forward to reducing drinking and driving and impaired rates, to bring us down well below – it’s not a nice thing to see our rates where they are compared across jurisdictions, across the country. So, hopefully, this works to reduce those numbers and to make our streets safe and to make it safer for everyone out there, Madam Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister for Transportation and Works.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Certainly, I count it a privilege today to stand, particularly, on this piece of legislation because this is truly a historic day for this province. It's been long overdue, but I am so proud to be able to stand today to support this piece of legislation because I know that many people have actually been advocating for this for quite some time.

I'd just like to recognize my colleagues, certainly the Minister of Service NL and also the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment for the tremendous amount of work they did. Obviously, Madam Speaker, none of this comes easy when we have to put together a piece of legislation that has certainly been shamefully neglected for so long. I think the time has come and I think it's important for us today to recognize that. That we are certainly making great strides when it comes to putting in provisions that will, hopefully, totally, eliminate impaired driving.

Madam Speaker, I'm not really going to get into the specifics of the legislation. I'm going to talk a little bit more about, as the hon. Member opposite talked about, I guess a somewhat personal – and I know I've been connected with MADD for quite a number of years now. I think it really hit home to me several years ago when I first met Terry and Trish Coates – I'm sure she don't mind me calling her Trish – and the family. It was the first ceremony – because we have a candlelight vigil every year in Grand Falls-Windsor, and I'm going to talk about that in a minute. It was the first time, since their son had lost his life in that crash.

At that time, Madam Speaker, it had an impact on me, as a person. I couldn't relate to them in a sense that I lost someone through a crash. I don't like using the word accident because it's not really that. People who choose to drive impaired, it's not an accident; it's a crash; it's a crime.

And from that moment on, I knew that I, as a person, I thought it was important for me to be an advocate for what MADD was doing, and the tremendous amount of work that they had been doing for many years. I think it was from that

moment on, and then last year when we, as a government, met in the caucus room and the members of MADD – people who have been impacted. They haven't been impacted for a day, or a week; they've been impacted for their entire life.

I had several conversations with Terry and Trish after that and I said if there's anything that I can do as an individual, that I can do as a Member of this House to make sure that we move this forward, then you have my commitment to do so. And I am so proud today to be able to stand in this House to support this legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: Madam Speaker, I'm going to read a couple of paragraphs: Dear friends, the day is coming when there will be no more impaired driving crashes, a day when we will no longer need to hold a candlelight vigil for victims and survivors of this horrible crime. But until that day, we need your help, right now, so that we are there for grieving people to offer them a safe place to express and share their sorrow. I hope you'll make the decision to be there for victims, survivors, for your own family, for your own friends, by supporting MADD today.

Madam Speaker, these are not my words; these are words from Patricia Hynes-Coates. And I want to tell this House today that this government is here for that purpose.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HAWKINS: Madam Speaker, I am not proud of the fact that our community, the community of Grand Falls-Windsor, has a monument, I wish we didn't have the monument but it's there. I just want to applaud the people who recognize the fact that the people who have lost their lives from impaired driving crimes are recognized, people who have lost loved ones are recognized, and that while their lives are unnecessarily taken and why they were taken from us in such a senseless, senseless act, let's never, ever forget the important that means to all of us.

While we have that monument, Madam Speaker, I do want to recognize the many people who

worked hard to make sure that every single year we take time to remember, to reminisce, to cry, to laugh, to share and an opportunity for us, as a community, to heal to some degree, as we remember and as we walk up and as we light the candles in memory of those people that have been impacted by impaired driving.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to recognize the tremendous amount of work that my local chapter of MADD, Kim Brown and all the volunteers that are so passionate about what they're trying to achieve and, hopefully, Madam Speaker, this piece of legislation is just another tool that we'll have so that the general public, so that people who choose to drink and drive, will know the consequences.

Madam Speaker, I encourage every Member in the House, on June 10 – we normally have it every June – on Saturday, June 10, we will have our vigil as we do every single year in Grand Falls-Windsor and I would invite all Members on this side, the opposite side, and anyone who's listening, if you really want to get the feeling or really want to empathize and really want to get some sense of what these families are going through, I invite you, all of you, to come to Grand Falls-Windsor on June 10 and be a part of that ceremony because, Madam Speaker, it would change your life. You will see and you will sense and you will feel the anguish and the pain that has been caused by these senseless crimes.

It's always a daunting piece for me, when I walk into that and I see in MADD's promotion, when I look at and realize, they have pictures of people who've had tremendous potential and opportunity in life, that's no longer there.

Families have to go through that every day, as long as they live. They have to realize that in cases and situations and circumstances – and many of us have been fortunate enough that our children or families have not been impacted – have to realize that there are occasions that they're not going to be able to share with their loved ones.

Madam Speaker, for me as an individual, for me as a Member of this House, I think it's totally long overdue waiting for this time to come. I just want to applaud all who have had some part in

making this happen today because I believe it will make a difference. I believe the message will get out and through education and through many of us advocating and speaking a voice for those who no longer have a voice, it's going to be important for us. If we can save one, two, three lives, it's all worth.

I think, Madam Speaker, it was evident in the words that Trish Coates said, she is looking forward and her family is looking forward to the day when there will be no more impaired driving. I, as an individual, I, as a Member of this House, I, too, am looking forward to that day, Madam Speaker.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for St. John's East – Quidi Vidi.

MS. MICHAEL: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Like the rest of my colleagues, I'm quite pleased and happy to stand here this afternoon and to speak in support of Bill 68, the *Highway Traffic Act* relating to impaired driving.

W giving a lot of recognition, and very rightly so, to MADD, to the families and to the friends of those who have lost loved ones because of people who've been impaired drivers. We're recognizing all the work that they have done. I think we also should apologize to them, that is has taken us so long in this House to bring our regulations and our legislation up to where we're bring it today. It's good to celebrate that we're doing it, but let's also at the same time, say to them we're sorry that it has taken so long, but it has and let's keep moving forward.

I think one of the things that's going to be important, it's extremely important, first let me say that we are taking this move with regard to zero tolerance for drivers, all drivers under 22, not just novice drivers but all non-novice drivers under 22, I think that's extremely important. It will have effect – it has had an effect in other parts of the country where this has happened. Rates of impaired driving have gone down,

deaths have gone down and that's extremely important.

I do believe having to be under this legislation that drivers under 22 have a longer time to think about the need to be sober when they're behind the wheel. So we have to hope that because of this legislation, as more and more young drivers are getting into the habit of being sober behind the wheel, that keeping that going until they're 22, for all drivers, will have a very positive effect down the road and we really have to hope for that. But we also have to continue the process of educating. I'm sure MADD knows that educating – because, unfortunately, we certainly have the proof that even with zero tolerance for novice drivers, it still doesn't stop all drivers from drinking and driving.

We have to keep up the education process. We have to keep up education in the public. We have to keep up education in the school system. We have to keep up education even attached to driver instruction. That should be an important part of driver instruction, the importance of being sober.

This legislation is going to help with all of that process and it's wonderful that we are bringing it in to this House of Assembly today, but, as I said, we've been a long time waiting for it. It's about time we're doing it, and I want to be very practical here. I'm not going to go through the bill. Some of my colleagues, the minister for sure and others, have done that I think. We know the details, so I don't need to go into all the details for sure. However, I do want to be practical and name a couple of things I'd like the minister to comment on when he speaks again, or maybe we may need to do some of it in Committee, I'm not sure, but I notice that the bill – the act that this bill is affecting comes into force six months after the day on which it receives Royal Assent.

So two points I think for the minister, and for all of us. Number one, I hope Royal Assent will be immediate. That once we pass this legislation, I hope Royal Assent comes immediately so there's no delay in getting this legislation into place and into law. I also note that it's six months after Royal Assent before it comes into law. I think it would be good if the minister could explain to us when he speaks again what

are the details that are keeping – making such a long time between the Royal Assent and the legislation coming into place. I'm sure there have to be reasons but I don't know what all those reasons are.

Certainly, with the ignition interlock it seems like things are in place for that to happen right away. We've been told that the Atlantic Canadian Provinces, we have a negotiated contract with a company and the service provider has set up their offices, et cetera. It seems with the interlock program, that should be in place fairly soon. So I'd like to know what other details, what other issues would keep the legislation from happening sooner than six months after Royal Assent. That's not a criticism, that's a question. If there are reasons, and I know there are, then I think it would be good to know the reasons.

The other question I have, again, it's a practical question and we are dealing with legislation, so we need to make sure we understand what we will be voting on. The current interlock system we have, ignition interlock system is voluntary and we have legislation covering that voluntary interlock program. In our legislation right now if somebody applies for the ignition interlock and enters the program, that person has to pay the costs that are involved with that. So I guess what I'm asking the minister is, will he let us know – once it's in legislation and it is compulsory, will that then be covered now by government or is that going to have to be covered by the individuals?

I see the minister making head movements over there, but when he stands he can, I think, speak to us about that because I think it's an important point for people to understand. Right now, if drivers have to expend money they're choosing to do it. I think – let me make my point – the ignition interlock should be compulsory. I'm glad it is going to be compulsory, but when it was voluntary we expected people to pay all the costs. Will they have to pay all the costs now that it is becoming compulsory?

These are some of the practical points I wanted to make in standing and speaking to this bill today, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'm not going to go into the details of the program itself because I think we're all clear on it.

I think the zero tolerance – there have been some other debates in this House over the years where I've personally promoted zero tolerance for drinking and driving and I'm glad we've come to the point today where we've done this for drivers under 22. As we move on with this issue, and it will be an issue for a long time, I fear for older drivers. I think maybe down the road we'll be enhancing our legislation even more, who knows, but I think the step we're taking today is an extremely important step.

I too want to add my voice to those who have recognized the work of MADD, and recognize the work of Ms. Patricia Hynes-Coates. I think it's very important that we recognize them because it's a sad thing to say but perhaps we wouldn't be doing this today if they hadn't done the work they'd done. I think we should have been doing it anyway. We should have been doing it before now, but I think we need to recognize that perhaps it may not have been happening if they hadn't done their work.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to congratulate MADD. I'm very happy to say I'm glad that we in this House today are going to vote for this legislation, and say to the minister, I hope we're going to get it brought in as soon as possible. If six months are necessary by the time Royal Assent is given – we have to wait another six months – then let us make sure we get this approved as soon as we pass it here in the House.

Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Warr): The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. PARSLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this hon. House today to speak to Bill 68 to amend the *Highway Traffic Act*. It is a pleasure to welcome Ms. Patricia Hynes-Coates and her family to the gallery. Patricia is our national president of MADD.

Back in December I had the pleasure to attend the kickoff for MADD Canada at the Avalon Mall with the whole team. It was an event I will

not forget. Driving is a serious offence, when you take the lives of others into your hands. I just want to share how one senseless act changed the life of a family.

Good day, Ms. Parsley – this is an email I received – thank you for the opportunity to share my life experience since losing my mother and a lifelong friend. It had an effect on my family.

My mother, Jenny Furey, at the age of 31, was senselessly killed on the way home from work by a long-term offender on May 22, 1981. Jenny was a loving wife, the mother of two children. I was three at the time when she was killed and my brother was eight years old. We waited her return home so we could begin our annual Victoria Day family camping trip the following morning. Sadly, she never returned.

Our mother's death created a terrible effect on our childhood that has carried over into our adult life. We lost so much more than our mother that night. Our father is a seasonal worker and was not in a position to provide a stable home for two small children. We went from being a happy, loving, four-person family unit, planning our family outings, to a broken family consisting of two scared and confused children and a young widowed husband. Neither of us knew where we belonged anymore. We had to move out of our family home, living these past 35 years without our mother, and limited time with our working father has compiled too many special life moments to count that he was not able to share with us.

Thankfully, our grandparents, while in their 60s, stepped up and took on the responsibility of raising my brother and me along with our family dog, instantly changing their plans for a future. Sadly, now I see a new generation of my family being affected by the senseless decision to drive that night.

My brother's children, my sweet nieces and nephews can only hear stories and old faded photos that are kept alive through family memories. They will never get to know their wonderful grandmother. This man's decision to get behind the wheel that night, after a long night of partying, has affected every aspect of our lives. There is no escaping what he's done. Something as routine as a medical checkup

reminds me that I'm missing a link in my family chain, my mother was killed so young and I had no idea what genetic issues she may have passed along to her children. The ripple effect from his choice is still being felt 35 years later.

Imagine the horror to see the man who took my mother's life on the front page of *The Telegram* news 33 years later, committing a similar offence. Luckily, he didn't kill the victim but she still needs hospitalization. The gentleman – which I don't want to name – is now deemed a long-term offender by the court. It has taken 33 multiple repeat offences from an impaired driving, theft, fraud and more to get this conviction. The public safety has been repeatedly put in harm's way with this man being given lenient sentences. Our laws are no deterrent for those who have proven to be unwilling to police themselves and have not changed over 30 years.

In a province that is tied for the highest number of impaired driving, it is time for change. It is time to put the public safety first and call it as her own. It's not an accident, calling it that is an insult to the victims. Adults make decisions to drink and drive and should be held responsible for their choices.

They may not have a specific victim in mind when they get behind that wheel but they know the full potential there is for this vehicle to be turned into a killing machine and to choose to take that gamble with all our lives.

As I take my seat, I am so pleased in this hon. House today, with all of our colleagues, to put forward this bill and to support it in every way. There's been a lot of work done by our previous Member and now our other minister, and especially to Patricia Coates and her family. Life is precious.

Once again, this needs to be passed today so we all can move on in a safer, safer place to drive.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Mount Pearl – Southlands.

MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's certainly a pleasure for me to come to my feet this afternoon and to support Bill 68. I think my colleague, the Member for Cape St. Francis, the beautiful district, as he likes to call it, of Cape St. Francis – it is a beautiful district, I have to admit – I think he put it best. And not to be too repetitive, but I've been in this House of Assembly now, this is my sixth year, and I've seen a lot of legislation go through the House from both perspectives, as we all know.

There are times when legislation has been passed in this House that I would consider housekeeping. There have been times when there's been legislation that was passed, things that weren't too serious but things that needed to be done to improve things and to tie up loose ends. There's been times when there's been legislation which has been very important legislation for various reasons. There's been legislation that I've totally agreed with. There's been legislation that I adamantly disagreed with. There's been legislation that I agreed with parts of it and other parts I didn't. There hasn't been a lot of times – I can honestly say – that I've left the House of Assembly at the end of a day and really felt like I had done something that was really special, I guess, for lack of a better term, something really positive, something that I felt all Members of the House could be proud of.

I think today is one of those special occasions. It's one of those days where we all get the opportunity to make a real, substantive difference. Something that's going to impact people, it's going to impact people's lives. Hopefully, it's going to save many lives. Hopefully, it's going to result in a lot less families in the future having to go through the grief of losing a loved one. That's what we're doing here today.

I could not possibly support any piece of legislation any more than I'm supporting this legislation here today. Like I said, after six years, I can think of nothing else that stands out in mind as actually accomplishing something very positive, tangible for the people than what we are doing here this afternoon. I think every Member of this House of Assembly, regardless of the party, regardless of the side of the House or even if there is no party, but as an MHA, I

think we should all be proud of what we are doing here today.

I, too, want to acknowledge everybody who has played a part in bringing this legislation forward, certainly the government. I commend the government 100 per cent. I've said many times that if the government makes bad decisions, I'll be the first one to stand up and criticize; but, when they do the right thing, I'll be their biggest fan, their biggest cheerleader. I commend them today for doing the right thing, for doing something positive and I thank the government, I thank the minister, I thank the former minister because I know he had a big role in making this happen before the portfolios changed, and I will acknowledge that publicly.

I also want to thank MADD Canada and all of the chapters of MADD here in Newfoundland and Labrador, in particular Patricia and Terry Coates, who I've gotten to know over the last number of years. It's very tragic, I guess, in the sense of how I got to meet them and through which avenues I got to meet them, through MADD and through the loss of their loved one, and many other people who have experienced the same thing.

They've taken a negative – and I can't imagine as a father myself, a father of two, and many of us here in this House we have children, I cannot imagine the impact that an event such as losing your child to an impaired driver, losing your child in any regard, but certainly a tragedy like losing a child to an impaired driver, I can't imagine how you cope with that and how you deal with it. Certainly you could get very bitter and upset and depressed, and I'm sure all that goes along with it. But you can also take that and you can draw from your inner strength and you can take all of that negativity and turn it into something positive to make sure that something positive comes out of it, despite of all of the downside of that event in your life.

They've certainly done that and I have nothing but the utmost admiration for Patricia Coates, Patricia and Terry, and all the other people who I've met along the way who have lost loved ones who were involved with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the courage that they show to be able to turn that negative experience into a campaign to make change so that others will not have to

experience, in the future, what they've had to endure and what they've had to experience. They really need to be commended for it, and I certainly do just that.

I can tell you I heard the Minister of Transportation and Works and he talked about the monument in Gander – or sorry, Grand Falls-Windsor, I apologize, and the vigil. I, too, would encourage all Members to attend the vigil if they have an opportunity. I did attend it a couple of years ago and I have to say that I really believe that anybody who is convicted of impaired driving – and I know that this is not something that we could, I guess, practically legislate, but if there was a way of legislating it, I believe every impaired driver who gets convicted should be forced to go to that monument, forced to go to that vigil, and sit there and see the pain on the faces of those people who have lost a loved one.

To watch that slide presentation and see the faces of all those lives lost – particularly the young people, who had so much going for them and so much promise. To see their face come up on the screen – I can tell you I was there, and I spent the whole time swallowing softballs and fighting back tears. I've got to be honest. It is something that, when you go there and you experience it and you listen to the speakers and you watch the lighting of the candles, it's something that sticks with you; it's something that you will never forget.

And it's certainly something that if you even had the faint thought of getting behind the wheel after having a drink or a couple of drinks or whatever the case might be, that thought comes in your mind, you aren't going to do it. Not going to do it. Mr. Speaker, I look at impaired driving, it's like a game of Russian roulette. It really is. If somebody gets behind the wheel of a car, impaired, under the influence, that car is a weapon. I would make the comparison – because I see no difference; it's no different than somebody going out on Pitts Memorial Drive or Kenmount Road or wherever the case might be, with a .303 and just firing off a couple of random shots down the road.

And the bullet could lose its trajectory and fall, could hit a pole, could hit a car, could hit a sign, or that bullet could pass through a windshield and hit a person or could hit a pedestrian and it

could end their life. And it's no different – that analogy is no different – than when somebody makes the decision to get behind the wheel of a car while they're under the influence. They're playing Russian roulette, not just with their lives, but of the lives of the victims, the lives of the person who they strike, and in a lot of cases kill. And not just the victims of the crash but the families who have to live with that for the rest of their lives, as have been said by a number of Members.

We have a responsibility in this House of Assembly for public safety. That's one of the mandates we have; one of many. What we're doing here today is the right thing to do. Anything we can do to curb that activity to, hopefully, make sure it doesn't happen to begin with, and I believe the piece on not allowing a driver up to the age of 22 to have any alcohol at all, zero, I think that, hopefully, with the new generation, with the younger people, it sort of sets them on that path for a number of years. As a new driver now, they're going to have a number of years where they can't have any alcohol. Hopefully, that creates a habit and a mindset, no different than seat belts were, as an example, teaches them, psychologically, subconsciously, that if I'm going to drink, I'm not going to drive at all. I'm not going to drink at all if I'm going to drive. Hopefully, that becomes a learned behaviour and it prevents it from happening again.

There's no need for it to happen. That's the reality. There is no need for it to happen. There are designated drivers. There's a thing called taxi. If you're going out and you know – for the most part, people know, we all know, if we're going out to a social function, we're going out to a party, we're going up to the cabin, whatever it is we're doing, we know in advance if we're going to be drinking or not. We have a good idea, right. You don't just go out for supper and all of a sudden just randomly decide let's drink a dozen beer and get smashed. That doesn't happen. If you're going out and you're drinking, you know before you go out you're going to be drinking. It's very easy to make the decision to leave the car at home and take a cab or have a designated driver.

So, obviously, we have a problem. When you look at the statistics in Newfoundland and

Labrador, we have a big problem. I mean, it's a huge problem. It's not something to be proud of. It's something to be ashamed of, actually, but we need to deal with it. By putting in this zero consumption for up to age 22, I hope that's going to start our younger people, instilling this mindset that it is not okay to have even one drink and get behind the wheel. Hopefully, by the time they turn age 22, we would have established that mindset, we would have established that habit, whatever you want to call it, and it just won't happen in the future.

Now, we all know there will always be people, no matter what – that's why we have prisons, that's why we have police, because there are always going to be people who will break the law. But that doesn't mean we don't put appropriate measures in place to try to prevent these things from happening, and that one does it. The interlocking system for ignitions – thank you, lost the word ignition – I think that's a fabulous move as well. It really is, and I can't believe it was ever voluntary to be honest with you.

Actually, I've met with MADD a couple of times, met with them when I was critic for Service NL, and we talked about this legislation, proposed legislation. I was blown away by the fact that it was voluntary to begin with. I never realized they actually had an option. It seemed ludicrous to me. The fact now that we're going to make it mandatory, I think that's a positive thing. It's a positive thing. Again, it's going to prevent somebody from getting behind the wheel under the influence and putting their lives and the lives of others at risk.

Certainly, the vehicle impounding is another one. It's amazing, I heard one of my colleagues talk about the fact that if the RNC or RCMP haul you over and you have bald tires or something, they impound your car. If you're loaded drunk behind the wheel, they don't impound your car. I mean how ludicrous is that? To put that in place, again, it's definitely another positive for sure.

It's getting tough – basically, it's getting tough on impaired drivers. It's sending a message that we will no longer accept impaired driving and the carnage caused by impaired driving and the heartbreak and the loss. It's just not acceptable.

Therefore, as I said, I'm very proud and very pleased to be able to stand in this House this afternoon and support something that's going to benefit not just the families today, because like I said, I know they're very pleased this is happening. I know they worked so hard for it, but really what we're doing, we're putting this in place to prevent tragedies in the future and to prevent these types of things from ever happening again. For that I think we should all be proud on all sides of the House.

Once again, just to conclude, I thank all Members, the NDP, the Official Opposition and the government in particular, for bringing this legislation forward so that we all have the opportunity to come into this House and do the right thing, and to leave here at the end of the day feeling good. That we actually came in here and we did something that was so important and was so positive, and is going to impact so many people and their lives into the future, I think that is a wonderful thing and something, like I said, we should all be proud of.

I'm going to take my seat now, Mr. Speaker, and as I said, I will be supporting this piece of legislation one thousand per cent.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

MR. JOYCE: Thank you –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour to be in the House again today to have a few words on such an important piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, before I go any further, and I know the Minister of Service NL already mentioned that, I know over in the office, the deputy minister's office, Sean Dutton, Roxie Wheaton, Alan Doody and Gina MacArthur are over there looking now. Thanks guys, you did a lot of work with this. I just wanted to recognize four of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: You guys did a lot of work with this over the last year, and I just want to recognize that, and I know the minister did also today. Thank you very much for all the work the staff did on this and mainly these four people because you put your heart and soul into it. I know personally what you did for it.

Patricia and Terry Coates, it was a pleasure meeting you guys. I have to tell a little story, when we first sat down with Patricia – I know she's going to kill me, but that's all right, I don't mind that. We sat down and the first time we ever met, we're sitting in a room and we're going on, and halfway through the meeting she looked at me and she said: So what are you going to do about it? I looked at her, she said: I suppose you don't like me now, do you? I said no, actually, I like someone from Curling who's good and saucy, who speaks their mind. That was the first time we met in the meeting and it was great ever since.

Patricia, I know you're the face of MADD. I know there are a lot of people behind you around the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada supporting you, but you have a lot of passion. Your initiative and your passion, because of the tragedy you had, come through.

I have to say, when we first met I was handed this letter. It was a report card. Newfoundland was an F, and Patricia Coates looked at me, she said: We have to change this. I said: I can't do it. We can't do it. We all have to work together to do it. This is the result today of everybody working together in the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: There are two other people I have to mention. I can't say their names because you're not allowed in the House of Assembly, but Mark and Carol Anne – oh, sorry, Burin – Grand Bank and Placentia West. I remember those two individuals when we had a private Member's motion; I have to bring this story up.

People didn't know, but myself and Trish were quietly saying: What can we work on? This is the three things we came up with to work on. I

remember having one of those issues and I'm sitting down with Mark and Carol Anne, and I remember when I brought it down. I said here's what – just brought in one. I remember the Member for Burin – Grand Bank, I can't say your name Carol Anne, the Member for Burin – Grand Bank, I remember she said: That's all you're doing. Mark jumped in two minutes later, he said: That's not good enough for us. That's not good enough for us. So the two of you people behind the scenes, I know the work you guys did for this, pushing for this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I won't go over what has already been said here because everybody here has said it so well and we have unanimous support in the House. I know there were some questions that were asked by the Member for the St. John's East – Quidi Vidi about the length of time.

The length of time – we have to make a lot of changes to the regulations. We have to make a lot of changes, for example, with the form on the licences. We have to get the police involved. We have to do an education process. So that's the delay. It's not a delay for any specific reason, except to get everything ready. That is the delay. Everybody in this Legislature, everybody involved with MADD wants this done ASAP.

When I sat down with the minister, the Minister of Service NL said to me: Eddie, as soon as this gets an opportunity to get done, we'll have it done. I just want to thank the minister for taking that, carrying that on, following that through and making that commitment here in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: I know everybody supports this. I can tell you in Cabinet, and I know we're not allowed to talk about what happens in Cabinet. We know that, but I have to tell you a few things.

I brought in a few pieces of legislation, and I can tell you I was raked over the carpet for. I make no bones about it, Sir. If you want to see a guy from Curling trying to stand up for himself with 13, 14 hens pecking at him, you had it. I can guarantee you that, but I can tell you one thing,

when this legislation came in, it was the quickest piece of legislation that was brought in to Cabinet since I've been in there in 14 months because everybody around the Cabinet table wanted it done. No delays. Everybody supported it. Everybody said: What are we waiting for? Let's get this done. This is the fastest piece of legislation that went through a Cabinet meeting that I have ever been involved with in 14 months because everybody in the Cabinet realized the importance of this here. I just want to thank all my Cabinet colleagues. I know everybody supported it 100 per cent. I just wanted to make sure that I recognize the support that was there so quick, so easy.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say the caucus also, I know when we were coming up on the private Member's motion, if people in the province looked at the private Member's motion before this was announced, when the private Member's motion that was brought in by our caucus, was to bring in these regulations. We couldn't announce it until we actually had it through Cabinet that it was done, but while we were waiting to get it done through Cabinet, this caucus, the Liberal caucus, had it on the Order Paper to bring in the regulations anyway. That's how important it was for the people of this caucus. I just want to recognize everybody in the caucus who did that, without the knowledge of what was being done in Cabinet. So I just want to recognize that and the hard work that everybody did on that.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go into all the details on it, but I can honestly say when you look at what we brought in, it brings in line with a lot of Canada now. It's a big tribute to Newfoundland and Labrador. It's a big tribute to all of us that we all came together: Opposition, Third Party and independent. We're all on side.

I have said this many times in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker, this is not a Liberal bill, PC, NDP or Independent. This is the people of Newfoundland and Labrador bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Cape St. Francis got a bit upset with me today and asked me questions. I was trying to answer very quiet and calm, as I usually do, but

I know when we were going through this here, and I was briefing him on it, the man was so supportive of that, the Member for Cape St. Francis. Of course, when I was bringing stuff in over the last month or two and I was giving him a heads up what we were doing, he was so supportive, I have to say. I just have to recognize the Member for Cape St. Francis for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. JOYCE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I won't be much longer on it, but it's a proud day for Newfoundland and Labrador and a proud day for MADD. A proud day, Patricia, for you and your group and all the province. We can finally; you can finally go up to the rest of Canada and say: We're with you.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Conception Bay East – Bell Island.

MR. BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's no doubt the Minister of Municipal Affairs eloquently outlined that this is a proud day for Newfoundland and Labrador and it's a proud day for the House of Assembly. It's a proud day, obviously, for the volunteers that we have in this great province and the organization that spearheaded this.

We've come a long way in addressing the issues around safety on our roads. We've come a long way in trying to curb the culture in our province. Sometimes a lot of the positive things we've done in life get lost in some of the negative things and some of the negative ways that we operate in our society but this is a way for us to address some of those, to ensure that the culture changes for this generation and future generations down the road.

It's all about proper safety. It's all about people feeling engaged in our community and feeling safe in what they do. What better place than on our roads, knowing that you're going to be safe. When your children are out on their bicycles, when you go on about for a stroll, when you want to drive your car on one of our highways,

one of our country roads within the city limits, because you know the people driving are doing it with due diligence. They're following the laws. The laws are put in such a way that safety is the paramount process here.

I do compliment the Minister of Service NL and that side of the House and this side here for being cooperative on this piece of legislation. No doubt, we all agree, it was a long time coming. No doubt, when you look at Newfoundland and Labrador, we never want to be the last at anything and we shouldn't be. We're much better than that. We're much more capable. We have much more of a supportive service society here and we need to move forward.

This is probably one of the things that, unfortunately, it's in our past now, we've moved forward. We can make this a positive thing. That's the positive things about what we're doing right here today. We're making history for a reason. We're making it because the people of this province stood up for something they felt was needed for the citizens here, about protection and that the government and the people in this Legislature looked at what our roles are. Our roles are to protect people. Find proper legislation. Find the process to put in place to ensure all our citizens are protected.

When we look at the situation here and we look at the number of deaths, the tragic, the unnecessary damage that's been done to people's lives. The unnecessary cost that it's incurred in our society and the challenges that people have had to face due to it. It's not only those who have lost a loved one but no doubt it's those who caused the loss of those individuals, what impact it had on their lives and their families.

There's always a situation where there's a negative connotation when people take risks in society, particularly when they're drinking and driving. The risks are to everybody in our society. We need to curb that attitude. We need to curb it. Sometimes, unfortunately, you have to do deterrents and sometimes you have to be harsh in those deterrents. The old cliché: tough love. Well, sometimes you have to do that because sometimes we don't think in the best interest of what makes common sense.

What this does here is make people think, make people step back and say there's a reason. The media coverage we'll get from this, I'm hoping it's going to be the first start of getting people to think about how we handle things. What our cultural behaviours have been in the past and how we have to curb them. Every member of our society here, every day when they step out on their porch and step out into their cars, always want to be safe and they want to ensure they don't endanger anybody else out there, to do that around ensuring that alcohol is never a factor that affects what happens in our society.

We know there are going to be traffic accidents. We know there are unfortunate situations. We know there are going to be mechanical issues that cause it. Sometimes we can control those, most times we can't, but we can control if there are deaths, if there's injury because of misuse and abuse of alcohol and that tolerance of using that while you're operating a motor vehicle is not acceptable.

Again, as I said earlier, and it's been noted by my colleagues here in the House of Assembly that we've come a long way in addressing what the issues may be. It's because we've had open dialogue. It's because people in our society have stood up and said: Look, enough is enough. We need to start educating. We need to start engaging. We need to start standing up for what's right and maybe we need to step to the next level. That's what we've done here.

We boast sometimes, and I say this with tongue in cheek, that we try to be as good as other provinces. Those days for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are gone. It should not be our philosophy. We should be better than the other provinces. We have that ability to be better. We have that background to be better and we need to set the tone. This is a good example of how we can set that tone and take it to the next level.

We need to ensure that everybody in society understands why we're doing what we're doing. This is not in any way, shape or form an approach to try to stop one group or to try to hinder another group or to put any financial burdens on anybody. This is about ensuring people are safe and that people follow what we set as our laws. We have rules and regulations and we have laws. They're there for a reason, to

keep society safe, to keep us in a mode that everybody would know exactly, on a day-to-day basis what is acceptable and what isn't.

So this piece of legislation here now makes it into law. It makes it into law in such a way that we can add to it. We can modify it. We can ensure if things change in society that we can address those issues and make sure that the next generation is safe and safer and whatever it takes to make sure that the people of this province have a safe environment to live in.

We also know at the end of the day, we want young people – it's geared towards young people in some cases – but we want young people to realize they are our future. They're the people who are going to run our province. We want them to be safe. We don't want them to have any ill-feelings about how they're going to operate in society. We don't want them to have any tragedies in their life. We want to minimize that. There are going to be health risks in life that you can't control; we can control these. Putting in legislation hopefully sends the message, and sends a strong message: We want you to think about what you're doing.

We need to take this, and we need to take it to the next level. We need to work with our educators, our education institutions, our youth organizations, all the organizations that are out there that already have as one of their primary objectives of keeping our young people safe. We've got a great organization in MADD, who take the lead on doing what they're doing, and don't preach for the sake of preaching. What they talk about is let's engage the sector out there. Let's engage our citizens to ensure people are safer. Let's find ways to do it.

And to do that, you have to find the proper rules and regulations. You have to ensure that you can enforce those. We have our police forces here that have a responsibility to do that. This, after reading the information in the bill itself, outlines how those partnerships will work. To get to this point has been open dialogue between the partners involved to ensure that the process put in place can be maintained, it can be enforced, and it can be understood. At the end of the day, it can serve the purpose it was set up to do, and that's to protect our citizens.

So as my colleagues on this side have said, and all the colleagues in the government side have said, and no doubt future ones will say too, this is a good piece of legislation to ensure that that we continue to have our society safe, our roads safe and ensure people understand their responsibilities. So, Mr. Speaker, I will sit on that, and say it's a pleasure to be in this House as we support an historic piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Virginia Waters – Pleasantville.

MR. B. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd be remiss if I didn't first say a big thank you to the Member for Harbour Main for giving us that story.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. B. DAVIS: I'm a soft-hearted kind of guy and that was a real tear-jerker for me for sure, and I'm really thankful that you shared that story with us. Thank you.

Bill 68 is a piece of legislation that has far-reaching impacts right across our province in every community. We see some people up in the gallery today that have worked very hard for this legislation, and us doing this today is going to change the barometer, or change the needle as they say, to make it a little bit better in each and every one of our communities. And that's a huge thing.

I'm not going to go into the legislation; that's been done before – fantastically done before by all the colleagues in the House of Assembly and I've never been so happy to stand on a piece of legislation as I have been today, to be on both sides of the House in support of this great initiative, and I'm just very pleased. But the angle I'm going to take today is on the youth side. That's where my background is in youth service and I think that the changes that we're making in this legislation for young people, and the safety for young people as we go forward, is going to be great.

When we look at the vulnerable individuals that are facing incidents of impaired driving, one of the big vulnerable people is our youth.

According to MADD in 2015, young people have the highest rates of traffic death and injury per capita among any age group and the highest rate per kilometre driven among all drivers 75 years and under. More 19-year-olds die or are seriously injured than any other age group.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 16 to 25-year-olds and alcohol and drugs are a factor in 55 per cent of those cases; 16 to 25-year-olds constitute only 13 per cent, a little over 13 per cent of the population, as of 2010, but it made up 34.4 per cent of the impairment-related traffic deaths. This needs to be addressed and we're doing it here today.

This report indicates the highest impaired driving rates were recorded in drivers between the ages of 20 and 24. Part of the prevalence of impaired driving incidents among young people must be addressed and even more stringent education for our young people and awareness campaign needs to exist.

I can't think of a better awareness campaign than the one I've had the pleasure of attending on a couple of occasions. It was the Nick Coates Memorial Car Show. As a fundraiser for a living, I think it was a great initiative that was different. People had the opportunity to come by and see some beautiful cars, which was a passion of Nick's as well. Just to see people talking openly about their experiences is a huge indication of education in our province. More of those events need to happen across this province.

We hosted one right here on the parking lot. It was great to see all of Nick's young friends come out and support. For me, it was probably one of the best fundraising events I've ever been at, and I go to a lot of them. Hats go off to MADD for coming up with a great event. I know it stemmed from the experiences of what Trish and Terry and their family have experienced. So I'm very moved by that.

We're going to work with the Department of Education and Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour to raise awareness for young drivers, each and every time we have

the opportunity. However, it's also very important that we go further to prevent impaired driving from ever happening.

I was happy to see these changes being brought to the House today. Changing the blood-alcohol content to zero seems like a no-brainer, but it's very, very important that we do this here today, making sure that it's very difficult for young people to even have that habit start. So changing that habit is very important. And, in Newfoundland, we all know that's a habit we're trying to change, we're wrestling with and it is getting better, but it's still not to the level we want it to be.

Some of the stats that – I'm not going to belabour the stats too much, but some of the student surveys that have been done: 4.1 per cent of Newfoundland students drove a vehicle within an hour of using alcohol. I mean that's amazing and we've got to be better. And 4.1 per cent sounds like a low number but it's still way too high – way too high; 11.5 per cent of students said they'd travelled with drivers who had been drinking. These numbers, although they may be small, account for a very, very – with all the education purposes we have in place now in this province, it should be zero.

If you live in an urban centre like I do, and some of my colleagues don't have that pleasure to live in St. John's where cabs are available and things like that, but every opportunity I have to talk to young people in the CLB or organizations that I go to, I always suggest that it's much better to have a plan for after the event than try to plan for it after you've been at the event. So plan before for how you're going to deal with it after.

I know that every father or mother would never mind getting a call at 2 o'clock in the morning to come pick up their son or daughter after an evening of enjoyment. So I think it's very, very important. I'm not a father, but I can tell you that I know that my father came to pick up me several times, so I understand that it's very, very important.

On a personal note, I'm honoured to stand here today because I had the honour of knowing Nicholas. We were both members of the CLB. I've known Terry and his family for 20 years or more. Having to see what they've gone through

as a family, and going to the funeral home where it was absolutely packed, packed with friends, and to see the amount of difference that a young man can make in so many people's lives, and that didn't stop there. Today is a reflection directly of the impact that Nicholas has made, not just on your lives but the lives of everybody in this province and, hopefully, everybody in this country.

I know how sometimes it's very difficult to have these discussions but you guys have made a big difference in bringing forward this legislation. I owe a huge thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Service NL. I know both have worked very hard. In particular, I'd like to say thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for all his hard work and dedication on this file.

It's not just a passion you have for this, you've lived it. So you understand it, and it comes from the heart of that matter. I'd just like to say thank you on behalf of the House of Assembly for the great work you've done. I was never – I was probably very proud when I heard on VOCM one day that Trish had been named chair or president of MADD Canada. I wasn't surprised, but I was very happy to hear it. So thank you very much for everything you've done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Placentia West – Bellevue.

MR. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What a fabulous and fantastic afternoon here in the House of Assembly. It's reminiscent of actually some of the pieces of legislation that we brought in in the fall. Particularly I reference the presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters, as well as the bill on secure withdrawal treatment for young persons.

It's the kind of day when I think all of us, and I think these views have been expressed, think to ourselves and look to our constituents and say this is the kind of day of why we entered politics, to make a difference in the lives of others and to do something positive. There is no doubt, much has been said about the legislation itself and I'm in full support of this.

We have a very active chapter of MADD. Of course, the Member for Burin – Grand Bank and I actually met with Trish and Terry, Vern, Roma and Julie, I guess it was probably a year ago now, and we committed then to try and do our part to make this happen. So I'm just delighted to be here today to see this legislation on the floor of the House of Assembly so that these new laws can come into effect to send a clear message from this Legislature forth that we will not tolerate those who make a choice to get behind the wheel while impaired because it is a choice.

Of course, I mentioned Julie Kenway who is in the gallery with us today, Mr. Speaker. Just a few weeks ago I was at the 10th annual Cory Kenway classic; of course, her son passed away. Since then his school, Christ the King school in Rushoon has gone to great lengths to honour his memory. They host a basketball tournament in his memory and honour each year. This was the 10th anniversary.

I can remember standing – I stood in the middle of the gymnasium, which was packed with upwards of a thousand people probably, and different teams from all over the Burin Peninsula, and I remember saying to them we're going to try our very best to make this happen. I said that with full knowledge that our entire caucus was behind this. I knew all Members would be behind this. I didn't know we'd have this minister behind it at the time, as Minister of Service NL, but I knew the Minister of Municipal Affairs – who I can't name here today, but we know who he is – had done such great work on this file. He was so behind this and personally invested into this himself that I had full confidence when I told the people of my district that this would be done, that this government would bring it in under the leadership of that minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWNE: So, Mr. Speaker, I won't belabour much about this, because I know there are a number of speakers here and I want everyone to have the opportunity to get up today if they can. But I will say that we have such a fabulous group in MADD, particularly our local chapter. They do such fantastic work.

The Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development visited their garden while she was on the Burin Peninsula and saw what they have taken over, and put a monument there, much like the one in Grand Falls – Windsor. They have a beautiful service there each year.

They have really taken on what is such a sad cause, a sad cause, Mr. Speaker, and taken it onto their own to make the streets of this province safer and to help other families not go through this. We spend so much time raising money for different things, whether it's for cancer research or autism or dementia, but this is a preventable cause of death, Mr. Speaker. This is a cause of death that occurs as a result of people's poor choices. I hope this legislation that we bring today will help mitigate that.

I remember last year in the early months of being an MHA, getting a call on a sunny afternoon, a constituent in my district had lost her life; an 83-year-old woman, Ms. Jane Newhook of Norman's Cove – Long Cove. She had gotten a call, Mr. Speaker, to go have supper with her family in the neighbouring community of Thornlea. Hesitant, she didn't know if she wanted to go but ended up saying yes, I'll go over to Thornlea. It was a very sad circumstance of what happened there, Mr. Speaker, and that was preventable.

I hope that what we do here today will enable other families to keep their loved ones at home. I want to recognize the good work our volunteers do in making us accountable and making sure that we're honest with ourselves and with the people of the province to bring forward legislation that matters and that can help other people.

So I certainly, Mr. Speaker, support the legislation, and I want to say thank you to all Members who are supporting it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Topsail – Paradise.

MR. P. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you for recognizing me and giving me a few minutes to speak to this bill this afternoon. It's been a busy afternoon, but I've been trying to keep my ear to debate and what's taken place.

This is one of these bills I think where it's in so many ways a pleasure for Members to come here to the House. There are lots of days that we come in here in the House and we're back and forth at each other. We have a difference of opinion. We throw the politics across the floor and we do all those kinds of things, but this is definitely one of those bills where we can come together as a House and debate a bill and pass a bill that will definitely be in the best interests and the safety of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: I congratulate Members for their demeanour, their tone, their presentations in debate here this afternoon, and I also congratulate the government for bringing this bill forward to the House of Assembly as well.

I know the minister who presented the bill, I mean he has articulated and has given credit to the previous minister who recently changed portfolios. And I join him in that, because I know in my experience when I was a minister that I experienced myself, especially in Service NL – I remember a piece of work, I won't tell you what it was, but there was a piece of work that we worked on.

We worked on it for months and months and months, and it seemed like it was never going to come to an end. We wanted to get it done. I got shuffled, and about a week later the work was done. The new minister announced it, and oh, look what a great job you did. Davis couldn't get it done, but the new minister got it done right away. So good on the new Minister of Service NL for giving his colleague who worked on this probably over the last 15 months since he came into power to get that done.

My colleague from Cape St. Francis talked earlier –

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. K. PARSONS: Beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

MR. P. DAVIS: Oh, the beautiful district. I thought you were saying the Member for Cape St. Francis was beautiful. You're saying his district is beautiful. I let you go there, I think everybody over there agreed that he's beautiful, but anyway, I digress, Mr. Speaker.

He talked about the seat belt analogy, and we had talked about this earlier. How true is that? You think about the evolution of seat belts. I remember when I was a child in a car with my parents, we never wore a seat belt. Then, one time, my dad got a car and there was a seat belt. It was clipped up in the top, the top strap, like the front strap that you wear now that's automatically there, it used to be clipped up on the roof of the car and don't ever dare take it down because it was a terrible task to try and get it back up there. And you'd never get it back up the way it was when it came from the factory. You never touched it; you never put on your seat belt. Seat belts were buried down in the seat.

And then, slowly, people started to use them. Today, for young drivers, young people who are becoming drivers today would never think of getting in the car without putting a seat belt on. That's evolution and that's how things change. They happen step by step by step, and it's done over time.

Also, we know that there has to be a slow moving, sometimes, of the general public in an area and a direction that people really feel they should go, but they know sometimes there's resistance in the public and so on. Impaired driving was much like that as well. If it wasn't for organizations like MADD, I'm fully convinced, and I couldn't be more sincere, that we wouldn't be where we are today in having a focus on preventing and stopping impaired driving in Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. P. DAVIS: Because I'm sure that MADD is not finished and they're going to continue to drive the agenda. Good for them for doing so. They are going to continue to say well, putting your seat belt on in the front seat is not good

enough. To go back to that analogy, people in the back seat should wear them too. And not only should they wear them, they got to have proper seating. That evolution will happen and continue to happen when it comes to impaired driving, that they'll continue to push the envelope. Pushing the envelope is a good thing for society and it's a hard job to do.

I was actually a member of MADD Avalon executive at one point in time. I was involved with them for a couple of years. I think my colleague for Conception Bay South referenced Richard Murphy earlier. And really how I got to know Richard Murphy was through MADD. Richard's interest in the organization came in the worst possible means, by the worst possible way of creating an interest for his own interest in MADD, and his family as well, not just him but his family as well.

Many people in MADD come to it because of those terrible circumstances. But I can tell you it also drives them and it gives them passion. It becomes very personal for them and that is what makes, sometimes, the best people to drive those agendas, to encourage people for change, and to do better.

One time, the blood-alcohol content was 80 milligrams of alcohol, 100 millilitres of blood, and we know that the older instruments they allowed nine points for – they'd lower it to the closest tenth, so if it was 89, it gets lowered to 80. They allow 10 milligrams for failure in the instrument, so you could really blow higher. Now, really, the repercussions of drinking and driving start at 50 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, a lower level in many cases if you don't reach that criminal record; but there's still a level of significant inconvenience, embarrassment and recourse that a person has to live with afterwards.

Tuning that up and increasing that, by increasing impoundment, by lowering the age and establishing age where zero milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood is now the standard will help to set that new generation of those who evolved in seat belts, it also helped to set that generation of saying no drinking and driving.

I appreciate it and I think the minister may have referenced the talk about move in generations and generational thinking and how standards for people today who are 15, 16, 17 years old who are wiser than ever before for that age group will now, when you get 22, nothing magically is going to happen between 22 and 23 or 24, 25 and, hopefully, those habits that they formed very early will continue, and eventually that will go through the generations.

So this is a good bill. This is a good piece of legislation. There are no two ways about it. This was a good debate. One of the hard parts that come with debates in legislation like this is that you can't measure the lives that have been saved. You can't measure how many people haven't got behind the wheel tonight and consumed alcohol or drugs before they drove a car. You can't measure that.

When MADD goes and promotes their Red Ribbon Campaign in the fall of the year and through Christmastime, you can't measure how many lives are saved or how many people did not drink and drive because a red ribbon was tied on to a car. You can't measure the success when the police in our province, the RCMP or the RNC, do roadblocks and they announce they're doing roadblocks and people see roadblocks. You can't measure how many people the next day decided I'm not going to drink and drive because I saw that last night and I don't want to get caught, I don't think that should be me, I don't think it's the right thing to do or I don't want to cause harm.

You can't measure how many lives are prevented from those types of activities. You can't measure how many injuries didn't happen because someone decided not to drink and drive. We hope and we hope that people will continue to get the lesson. This legislation is another piece of legislation that will help drive that home.

Minister, when we get to Committee there are some questions and clarifications that we're going to ask, but I can assure you that we fully support you bringing this bill forward. We fully support the continued transition and movement of laws and what is acceptable to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, what's acceptable to us as parliamentarians and we

should always lead by example that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should have to follow.

In summary – I think I said I was going to be five minutes but that's 10 now – it's so important for us to be thankful for organizations like MADD, be thankful for the work that police agencies do in preventing crime, not only just in detecting and arresting and catching impaired drivers, which is so important, but also in the philosophies of encouraging the public to report them and to talk about it when people are arrested because they are all deterrents. Every time that happens, it's a deterrent to someone else. We certainly hope it is, and I believe it's a deterrent to someone else. So we appreciate all of that.

I thank the minister and the government for bringing forward the legislation. As I said, we will have some questions later, but we'll fully support this bill. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity this afternoon.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Exploits.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DEAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is with utmost humility that I exercise the privilege, on loan to me, by the people of Exploits to speak in favour and support of the proposed amendments to Bill 68, both on their behalf, as well as for all of us who call this great Province of Newfoundland and Labrador our home.

At yesterday's briefing, as mentioned by Minister Trimper earlier, staff commented on the number of MHAs in attendance and remarked how, to their recollection, it had been quite some time since seeing such a full house. That undebatably bears witness to the extent of how serious this issue is with each and every one of us who sit in this House. Our government, in collaboration with MADD Canada look forward to the day when drinking and driving are a thing

of the past and families are kept together and not torn apart.

I'd like to delve just a little bit into a little bit more information, if I may, with the good people from MADD. Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada was formed in 1989 to create a national network of victims, survivors and concerned citizens working to stop impaired driving and to support victims and survivors.

MADD Canada estimates that 36,642 lives have been saved from the impact of the anti-impaired driving movement in Canada between 1982 and 2010. In this time period, 43,276 Canadians were killed in alcohol-related crashes. Impaired driving remains the leading cause of criminal death in our country. MADD Canada's strategy to meet its goals of eliminating impaired driving include: lobbying for legislative reforms; promoting new evidence-based, anti-impaired driving technologies; using public education campaigns to shift attitudes and behaviours about impaired driving. MADD Canada has nine chapters in Newfoundland and Labrador, in centres such as Avalon, Grand Falls-Windsor, Gander, Burin Peninsula and three community leaders in smaller rural areas such as Rocky Harbour and the Labrador Straits.

The current president of MADD Canada is a Newfoundlander, Patricia Hynes-Coates, whose son Nicholas Coates was killed by an impaired driver in August of 2013. I would like, if I may, qualify in support of my colleague the Minister of Transportation and Works in also pointing out that several months ago we, too, met with our local chapter of MADD, the Exploits Valley chapter, leading up to today's announcement. A great bunch of people to work with, I can guarantee you.

The chapter's been active in Grand Falls-Windsor for 15 years. The monument, as alluded to by the minister earlier, has been there for 12 years. It was built, of course, to put names of people who were killed or injured by drunk drivers. Unfortunately, each year, there are more names added to the monument. The activities, other than the vigil, in which MADD participates, are provincial monument services; the MADD candlelight videos shown in theatres before movies; Christmas parade float; and

speaking at the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, et cetera.

They also provide a victim support course, during the time of their vigil during June. This course is delivered by two trained counsellors who are employed by Central Health, and who volunteer their time for this. They also offer their services on an as-needed basis to any victims who may be in need of it.

There's anecdotal story that I know the minister's aware of, and I spoke to a representative earlier, and they thought it would be nice for us to relay it here today, and that is the story of Andrew and Rita Baird, who had two sons and one daughter.

They moved around the country due to Andrew being in the army. The children came back to Grand Falls-Windsor during summers to spend time with their grandparents. Their youngest son, Harry, was unsure of what he wanted to do after graduating high school, so his sister invited him to come to Brooks, Alberta, where she was serving as an RCMP officer. He was happy to do that and moved up with her, getting a job at the meat packing plant there. He became involved with the community and joined the ball team there.

One night he was walking home after his game and was, unfortunately, struck and killed by a drunk driver – one who had been previously arrested for drunk driving three times. His sister was one of the first responders on the accident site. She mentioned to her partner that the victim had sneakers that looked like her brother Harry's. She was led back to the squad car to be told that, indeed, it was her brother.

Families that could have been, happy occasions that were missed, treasured memories not realized, these are only some of life's happy passages gifted to us by God, only to be lost to the dark shadow of society's historical, unbridled tolerance for drunk driving.

I look forward to what I know will be unanimous support of the proposed amendments to Bill 68 by all of my colleagues here in the people's House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Member for Burin – Grand Bank.

MS. HALEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, usually when we stand in this hon. House to speak to a bill or a resolution, we do so with pleasure because we feel the positive undertones of the proposed legislation. In an ideal world, we would never have to dictate to drivers what they do behind the wheels of their vehicles.

However, the unfortunate truth is even though Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been saturated with information on the dangers of drinking and driving over the years, and even though the majority of citizens are in every respect responsible drivers, there are those who still, all too willingly, take risks – serious risks, Mr. Speaker, not just with their own lives but with the lives of anyone who might cross their paths.

That's the people that whom this proposed legislation is aimed, Mr. Speaker. It is quite disturbing to be told that you live in a province that is above the national average when it comes to impaired driving, that our capital city has the worst record in Canada for any major city when it comes to this issue. But finally, and after much discussion and consultation with advocates and advocacy groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, we are ready to pass legislation that will undoubtedly help temper this scourge on society.

I especially want to mention here today the Burin Peninsula Chapter of MADD. Since its inception, it has been busy keeping this issue in the collective consciousness of the people, and using proactive means to drive home the message of responsible driving.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost way too many of our youth to impaired driving. The amendment to set a blood-alcohol content of zero per cent for drivers under 22 years of age should be welcome news to every single parent in this province who is left worrying every time a son or daughter heads off in the car to spend time with friends. Combining inexperienced driving with

inexperienced use of alcohol is a lethal combination, and zero tolerance is the only way to go.

Moving from a voluntary to a mandatory interlock system is a step in the right direction. If you have proven to be incapable of making the decision about not driving after having consumed alcohol, then society will make this decision for you with this interlock system. We have been impounding vehicles for years for much less serious offences than impaired driving, so now we will finally see that rule of impoundment extended to those caught with a blood-alcohol level above the legal limit.

There is not one measure here that a reasonable person would consider draconian, Mr. Speaker. Not one aspect of this legislation oversteps its bounds and infringes on the legitimate rights and freedoms that we hold near and dear. This is legislation, rather, that ensures that the rights of those who take to our streets and highways, motorists, passengers or pedestrians, and do so in a responsible manner, are protected.

Mr. Speaker, I thank MADD Canada, national President Trish Hynes-Coates, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Service NL, our local chapters of MADD, for all of their hard work. Like the previous speakers, I, too, add my support to this legislation, knowing that by doing so we are making our roadways safer for everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Osborne): The hon. the Member for Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair.

MS. DEMPSTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is – I won't say pleasure. Like my colleague referenced, it is an honour to stand here and speak to Bill 68 today, Mr. Speaker, An Act to Amend the Highway Traffic Act.

There's been much, much said about this bill today, but I have spent the afternoon listening and thinking about one word that's been coming to my mind ever since I was in the Broadcast Centre listening to the announcement, and that

was cost. The cost of this bill, the tremendous cost to the people, Mr. Speaker, that have lost loved ones, that have been given a life sentence. Many of us know that when you lose a loved one that's a life changing thing, but when you lose a child, that is to experience life's greatest loss.

Mr. Speaker, Trish Coates' name has been mentioned many times here this evening, and I was thinking, no matter – the Leader of the Opposition mentioned people take up a cause when they're passionate about it, and there are many people that no doubt have lost loved ones. They've lost children, they've lost family members, but not everybody is able to take up the cause and lead and be that champion that you need. So I too want to take my place and commend Trish. In doing so, you are helping countless, countless others, and you will never know the far-reaching impacts of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MS. DEMPSTER: I read a quote, Mr. Speaker, some time ago that said a short life does not mean an incomplete life. Mr. Speaker, I think when you lose a child there's two things. You want their memory kept alive in a meaningful way. You don't want their death to be without purpose.

So for Nicholas Coates' dad, he can take great comfort in knowing that the short life of his boy did not mean an incomplete life. When a child is born into a home you have lots of hopes and dreams and aspiration for that child. The one place you do not want to see their name is on a monument. No matter how you've lost them, you live with that every single day. You never reach a point where you say, they survived. They survived the loss of a child, because every day you are surviving.

Mr. Speaker, when you see something like Bill 68, that's going to make a difference. One of my uncles, my dad's brother was a pilot and he used to say – and he loved flying – and he used to say, when I get in that airplane I've got the whole sky, but when I'm on the road I don't feel as safe because there's just that one line that somebody can move across.

No matter how you lose someone in your life, you live with that. I can't imagine, Mr. Speaker, what it's like to live every day and look at someone and know I don't have that person. Christmas morning under the Christmas tree, family vacations and all these things we live for.

Mr. Speaker, here in this House, and it's been said many times today, we have lots of lively debate. We don't always agree on things, but today it is an honour for all of us to support Bill 68. We're family people. Sometimes people look at politicians and they forget we are wives and we are daughters and we are mothers, but we are. And our children are our most prized possessions, Mr. Speaker. Everything we do in life, I think we try and make it better for them. Better for the little place we call home, better for the region, and that's what Bill 68 does.

The minister today that we're giving a lot of accolades to for the bill, my good friend Michelle Brown, she lost her only child because somebody chose to put up an unmarked barrier. The Minister of Municipal Affairs went to great lengths to bring in a bill to ensure that people can be charged for doing that. Because that loss is permanent and the person can never be replaced.

I want to thank MADD Canada. I was just at a tournament last weekend, Mr. Speaker, very good friends of mine and they no longer have their only son because somebody chose to drink and drive. That was actually a snowmobile. We haven't talked about that, Mr. Speaker, but I live in a rural district in Southern Labrador, and we unfortunately have too much impaired driving on snowmobiles.

This young man, Damien, there's a large crowd that comes together every year to remember a young man. I'd see him many times when I went to pick my daughter up at the school, walking out with a big smile and his hands in his pockets. He's not here because somebody chose to drink and drive irresponsibly. We had a bunch of young people that got tossed out of a small boat just a few months back, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that I'm really, really pleased about is we need more campaign awareness. My daughter when she was just in grade six, and there was a young guy in our community and the

word went around a small town fast the next day that said, did you know that so-and-so beat up his dad's truck last night because he was driving drunk? My daughter, only then in grade six, said: Mom, I can't believe people still does that with all that we know. I thought if she's thinking that way in grade six, there is hope for campaigns as we go forward to change this.

I'm especially pleased, Mr. Speaker, because my daughter is now 20 and behind the wheel, and like most parents I worry about her on the road. I'm especially pleased to see that this bill will reduce the permissible proportion of alcohol in the blood of a person who is under 22 and not a novice driver.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to our children, when it comes to our brothers and sisters and the people that mean the most to us, no law is too stiff, and zero tolerance, nothing less is acceptable. I want to thank MADD. I want to thank the Coates' for sitting through this. I'm sure it's been painful but it's a bittersweet day, no doubt, as you can know that your son did not live and die without a cause, but many people, many people will be helped because of that.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. A. PARSONS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the hour of the day I would move, seconded by the Minister of Service NL, that we do now adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now adjourn.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned
until tomorrow, Monday, at 1:30 p.m.