



Province of Alberta

The 28th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday, May 23, 2012

Issue 1

The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 28th Legislature**

First Session

Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Speaker  
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont (PC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Jablonski, Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC), Deputy Chair of Committees

Allen, Mike, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (PC)  
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)  
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie (W),  
    Official Opposition House Leader  
Anglin, Joe, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)  
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)  
Bhullar, Hon. Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)  
Bikman, Gary, Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)  
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND)  
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL),  
    Liberal Opposition House Leader  
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (PC)  
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)  
Campbell, Hon. Robin, West Yellowhead (PC),  
    Deputy Government House Leader  
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort (PC)  
Casey, Ron, Banff-Cochrane (PC)  
Cusanelli, Hon. Christine, Calgary-Currie (PC)  
Dallas, Hon. Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)  
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)  
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Acadia (PC),  
    Deputy Government House Leader  
Donovan, Ian, Little Bow (W)  
Dorward, David C., Edmonton-Gold Bar (PC)  
Drysdale, Hon. Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)  
Eggen, David, Edmonton-Calder (ND),  
    New Democrat Opposition Whip  
Fawcett, Hon. Kyle, Calgary-Klein (PC)  
Fenske, Jacquie, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC)  
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W)  
Fox, Rodney M., Lacombe-Ponoka (W)  
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)  
Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)  
Goudreau, Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (PC)  
Griffiths, Hon. Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)  
Hale, Jason W., Strathmore-Brooks (W)  
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),  
    Government House Leader  
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)  
Horne, Hon. Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)  
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-St. Albert (PC)  
Hughes, Hon. Ken, Calgary-West (PC)  
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)  
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)  
Johnson, Hon. Jeff, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (PC)  
Johnson, Linda, Calgary-Glenmore (PC)  
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL),  
    Liberal Opposition Whip  
Kennedy-Glans, Donna, Calgary-Varsity (PC)

Khan, Hon. Stephen, St. Albert (PC)  
Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)  
Kubinec, Maureen, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (PC)  
Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)  
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)  
Luan, Jason, Calgary-Hawkwood (PC)  
Lukaszuk, Hon. Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC)  
Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND),  
    Leader of the New Democrat Opposition  
McAllister, Bruce, Chestermere-Rocky View (W),  
    Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
McDonald, Everett, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC)  
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Olesen, Cathy, Sherwood Park (PC)  
Olson, Hon. Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)  
Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (PC)  
Pedersen, Blake, Medicine Hat (W)  
Quadri, Sohail, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)  
Quest, Dave, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (PC)  
Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),  
    Premier  
Rodney, Hon. Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)  
Rowe, Bruce, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W)  
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)  
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)  
Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),  
    Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Scott, Hon. Donald, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (PC)  
Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (AL),  
    Leader of the Liberal Opposition  
Smith, Danielle, Highwood (W),  
    Leader of the Official Opposition  
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)  
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)  
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)  
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)  
Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W),  
    Official Opposition Whip  
VanderBurg, Hon. George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)  
Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)  
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)  
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)  
Woo-Paw, Hon. Teresa, Calgary-Northern Hills (PC)  
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)  
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC),  
    Government Whip

**Party standings:**

Progressive Conservative: 61

Wildrose: 17

Alberta Liberal: 5

New Democrat: 4

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 23, 2012

[The Mace was on a cushion below the table]

**The Sergeant-at-Arms:** Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated May 8, 2012, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

### Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

**The Sergeant-at-Arms:** Order! All rise, please.

His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Colonel (Retired) Donald S. Ethell, OC, OMM, AOE, MSC, CD, LLD, his party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

**His Honour:** Pray be seated.

**Mr. Denis (Provincial Secretary):** Hon. members, I am commanded by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to inform you that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of this Assembly shall have been chosen according to law. He therefore is pleased to retire from this Assembly, to return at a subsequent hour tomorrow to declare the causes of the calling of this Legislature.

**The Sergeant-at-Arms:** All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor, his party, and the Premier left the Chamber]

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

### Election of a Speaker

**The Clerk:** Hon. members, pursuant to the Lieutenant Governor's direction and section 16(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act nominations are invited for the Office of Speaker of this Assembly for the 28th Legislature. Pursuant to Standing Order 11(1) the Speaker shall be elected according to the procedure set out in schedule A of the standing orders.

Nominations are now invited. Mr. Quest.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I'm pleased to nominate the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky, for Speaker. He has experience as a minister in six portfolios, including health, education, culture, aboriginal relations, capital planning, and wellness. He served as Deputy Government House Leader for 12 years and most recently as Deputy Chair of Committees of the Legislature.

He knows and respects the rules and proceedings of the House. He has a great track record of assistance, fairness, and balance in this Assembly. He is eloquent, passionate, and multilingual and will be a great ambassador for Alberta at international events.

In conclusion, let me just add that he has received more than 40 awards and lifetime memberships for his community service, including four medals.

Our Assembly needs a person of his stature and experience, so I would urge all members to elect Mr. Gene Zwozdesky as our Speaker.

Thank you.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Zwozdesky, do you wish to accept the nomination?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** I do, Mr. Clerk.

I want to thank the hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park for his wonderful nomination.

Thank you.

**The Clerk:** Mr. Hehr.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you very much. To start, I'd like to say what a great honour and privilege it is to be in this House, serving with all of you in this legislative session.

It also gives me a great deal of pride to nominate Ms Laurie Blakeman for the position of Speaker of this honourable House. She has been a five-time representative of the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre. As you are well aware, she has represented our party as our House leader for virtually her entire time here. She understands the rules and procedures of this honourable House, I would suggest, better than anyone else. She is dedicated to openness and transparency and fairness in this process. I know that for a fact. She has even told me from time to time: you are far offside of the rules and regulations, and you should change your questions. I understand her commitment to fairness.

I know that she's had 17 years working in administration for nonprofit agencies. She has a professional background as a public speaker and events organizer.

She is committed to seeing this Legislature held in the esteem that it deserves. She wants to build on Speaker Kowalski's commitment to education about the role of the Legislature by taking the mock Legislature on the road to constituencies that have travel as a barrier to participating.

She wants to get the provincial legislators together to advocate with Canada Post that ad mail be delivered to all households so that provincial politicians can send annual reports, householders, get the information out to the public at their doorsteps. Currently Alberta's MLAs do not enjoy the same service as municipal and federal politicians to have this ad mail delivered. She is committed to seeing this democratic process through.

Like I said at the start, I am proud to support Laurie, to nominate Laurie, and I would respectfully submit that all members of this House should strongly consider her for the position of Speaker of this honourable House.

Thank you very much.

**The Clerk:** Do you wish to accept the nomination?

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Clerk, and my thanks to my hon. colleague the Member for Calgary-Buffalo for that really nice nomination. Thank you very much. I can't tell you how pleased I am to see all these fresh and eager faces, all this new energy in the Assembly.

Yes, I accept with pleasure. Thank you.

**The Clerk:** Are there further nominations? If not, I declare the nominations closed.

The nominees for the position of Speaker are Ms Laurie Blakeman and Mr. Gene Zwozdesky.

Voting will commence after the list of nominees is posted in each voting booth.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

**The Clerk:** The voting will now begin. Members will vote by printing the first and last name of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper, then placing their completed ballot in the ballot box on the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk. Please start with the first row at this end, the first row at this end, and proceed row by row. Voting will now commence.

[Members voted from 1:47 p.m. to 1:55 p.m.]

**The Clerk:** Hon. members, have all voted who wish to do so? We'll now count the votes.

[Ballots were counted from 1:56 p.m. to 2:06 p.m.]

**The Clerk:** Hon. members, the number of ballots cast for the election of Speaker, 86; the number of spoiled ballots, one; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 44. The member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky, Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek. [Standing ovation]

[The Speaker, with apparent reluctance, was escorted to the chair by Ms Redford and Ms Smith]

**The Clerk:** Hon. members, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky is hereby declared the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 28th Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members. I'm both humbled and privileged by your vote and by your support, and I will do my very utmost to ensure that we maintain that level of support in the Assembly. I will comment more on that at a later time.

Let me just say very quickly that I have four or five main areas of focus that I would like to leave with you to ponder over the next couple of days. Number one is to be as impartial as I possibly can in the delivery of my duties with which you have charged me today; two, to maintain and, where possible, improve the civility and decorum in this House that we all know, love, and respect; three, to encourage more community interest and participation in Legislature proceedings and Legislature events; four, to increase student learning about the workings of government, the opposition, the democratic process, and the work in general that you do as MLAs; five, to help promote as positive an image as possible of our beloved province, Alberta, both nationally and internationally and, of course, locally. I'll be pursuing other priorities as well, and we'll get to those at a later time in some of my comments.

I want to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre for putting her name forward. [applause] Laurie, we've known each other a long time, and somehow I just know that if I need help, it'll be there. So thank you for that.

I also want to thank our outgoing Speaker, Mr. Ken Kowalski. He did a truly outstanding job. I could make an impromptu speech here for many, many minutes just on his role, but we will thank him at another time and in a more appropriate way than today's time allows. [applause]

In any event, more comments soon to come.

Sergeant.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms placed the Mace on the table]

## Prayers

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I would invite all of you to please stand for our daily prayer.

Let us pray, each of us in our own way. Dear God, our great Creator and Author of all wisdom, on this day of a new beginning we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken, and we ask for Your help in fulfilling our duties. As Members of this Legislative Assembly of Alberta may we faithfully serve all Albertans, and in the process of serving them, may we also serve You. Amen.

Please be seated.

## Election of a Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act and Standing Order 58(1)(a) nominations are now invited for the Office of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of this Assembly for the 28th Legislature. Please note that this is one position to be filled by one person with two duties, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees.

The floor is now open for nominations. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to nominate the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont, Mr. George Rogers. I've served with Mr. Rogers since he became an MLA in 2004. I know him to be a person of integrity and honesty. He's never been shy about expressing his opinions in this House. I must say he does have a flair for fashion, and I think he'll look great in a black robe and a tricorn hat.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Dr. Brown.

Hon. member George Rogers, do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. Rogers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am humbled and honoured to accept the nomination from the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there any other nominations? Dr. Swann.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a rare honour and pleasure to stand before you and nominate the peerless Member for Edmonton-Centre for the position of Deputy Speaker.

**Ms Blakeman:** Fabulous.

**Dr. Swann:** The fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre. I'm sorry. She's peerless, and the Centre is fabulous.

Ms Blakeman's knowledge of parliamentary process, faithfulness to the rules, precedents, and previous Speaker rulings as well as keeping those of us in the opposition caucus in line prove that she is the right person for the job. She is committed to public service, and she has always sought the best for her constituents and for all Albertans.

I therefore enjoin all members of this Legislature to do the right thing, the honourable thing, the unprecedented thing in Alberta and elect an opposition member as Deputy Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Dr. Swann.

Ms Blakeman, would you like to accept the nomination?

**Ms Blakeman:** It would also be unprecedented to have a woman, I think, but thank you. Yes, I do.

**The Speaker:** Are there any other nominations? Seeing no other nominations, I would then declare the nominations closed.

The nominees for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees are Mr. George Rogers and Ms Laurie Blakeman. Voting will commence as soon as the list of nominees is posted at each voting station.

Thank you.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

**The Speaker:** Very well. The voting shall now commence.

[Members voted from 2:18 p.m. to 2:25 p.m.]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, have all those who wished to cast a vote now done so? All done? Thank you.

Could we proceed with the count, please?

[Ballots were counted from 2:26 p.m. to 2:37 p.m.]

**The Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the number of ballots cast for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, 85; number of spoiled ballots, one; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 44. The member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. George Rogers, is declared Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 28th Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Congratulations, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees. I would invite you to make a comment at this time if you wish.

**Mr. Rogers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. members of the Assembly: it is indeed an honour and a privilege, and I thank you for bestowing on me this great responsibility. It is my intention to be fair and diligent in my duties as your Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much, and congratulations once again.

### Election of a Deputy Chair of Committees

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act and Standing Order 58(1)(b) nominations are now invited for the office of Deputy Chair of Committees for the 28th Legislature. The floor is now open for nominations.

The hon. Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations.

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed my honour to rise and nominate Mary Anne Jablonski, the hon. Member for Red Deer-North, for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was recently elected to her fifth term as a member of this Assembly. She has continuously earned the support and confidence of her constituents with the same qualities that I believe would make her an exceptional Deputy Chair of Committees. Over the past four terms the hon. member has served in many capacities. She has advanced private members' bills and motions, served as minister of seniors and community supports as well as serving on both standing and special committees too numerous to list.

You see, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Jablonski has many good qualities – honesty, fairness, generosity, humility, and kindness – all things we wish for in ourselves and hope for in our friends.

Mr. Speaker, my nomination of Mary Anne Jablonski is without reservation, and I encourage all hon. members of the Assembly to support her. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Mary Anne Jablonski, do you accept this nomination?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on your new position as Speaker and congratulate my colleague from Leduc-Beaumont as our new Deputy Speaker.

Then I would like to say to the hon. Member for Red Deer-South: thank you very much for that nomination. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and pleased to be able to accept this nomination.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, are there any other nominations for this position?

I don't see any other nominations for this position, so I'm very pleased to declare that the Deputy Chair of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 28th Legislature shall be Mary Anne Jablonski. Congratulations. Would you like to take a moment?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Thank you to all my hon. colleagues. I'm very pleased to be able to accept this position. I, too, would pledge fairness within the Assembly, impartiality, and to treat all members of the Assembly equally within this House. Thank you, all, very, very much. I'm very honoured.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Congratulations once again.

Hon. members, it's been a very great first day of this new sitting, and I'm very humbled by it myself, obviously. I also want all of us to remember this day. That would be wonderful from my perspective.

I also want to thank our Premier, Alison Redford, and the Leader of the Official Opposition, Danielle Smith, for having persuaded me out of my chair into this position. I'll just make a brief comment, more so for our guests who are listening or watching today, on why there is always some traditional reluctance to accept this position. In a nutshell, it turns out that some Speakers over the history of parliament, going back hundreds of years, might have made some decisions that were in disfavour with the king or the queen of the day, and as such those Speakers were beheaded. Ever since that time there's always been a bit of reluctance – we can understand why – to assume this chair. Nonetheless, I'm grateful for the opportunity.

Also, might I just remind all of us that this is the last time that we'll be able to use full proper names or names of any kind in addressing any members. From here on in it will be ministers or it will be opposition members or it will be their particular constituency referenced by name.

May we all enjoy many more such days. In conclusion, I just want to thank my family who are here today: to my wife, Christine, who's been with me for 37 years, thanks, Love; my son Myron, who's been with us for almost 26 years; and my new son, actually son-in-law – but he's my son just the same – who is here from England, Joseph Whitlow, who is married to our daughter Ariana. I would ask all three of my family members to please rise and receive a warm thank you.

Lastly, we have two former members who are here with us in my gallery – now I can call it my gallery; it's a nice thing – former ministers of the Crown Dennis Anderson and Mel Knight. If you would rise and receive the welcome.

There being no further business, I would declare the House adjourned until 3 tomorrow afternoon.

[At 2:44 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Thursday at 3 p.m.]









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