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Amendments to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I presented a petition calling for the inclusion within *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* for the terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination. To the Minister of Justice: is he open to acting on this petition?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's our position that discrimination against transgender people in Saskatchewan is unacceptable. We as a government have committed to make sure that all Saskatchewan residents, whether they're transgender people, other groups, have the protections of the law against discrimination, Mr. Speaker.

The Supreme Court has said that human rights legislation is to be interpreted in a broad fashion. We have asked for an opinion from the Ministry of Justice; we have asked for an opinion from the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission to determine if an amendment is necessary to the code. In their opinion, the existing wording does protect against discrimination with respect to this particular group, Mr. Speaker. We have great confidence in the Human Rights Commission and the commissioner with respect to his opinion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and now, just this month, Newfoundland and Labrador all recognize that this is an important human rights issue and have included it in their Human Rights Code.

Today is Transgender Day of Remembrance in which we remember those who have been killed as a result of transphobia. It's a good day to commit to action. To the minister: will he commit towards better protection for transgender people through amendments to The

Saskatchewan Human Rights Code?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my last answer, we did seek an opinion from the Human Rights Commission as well as the ministry as to whether or not any changes were necessary to the Human Rights Code. The Human Rights Code does include both sex and sexual orientation as prohibited grounds. And the case law from a number of jurisdictions determined that those grounds are satisfactory to protect against discrimination in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I'll quote from the letter that the Human Rights Commissioner had sent to us, a copy of which I have shared with my friend across the way:

Canadian courts have consistently interpreted human rights legislation in a broad and purposeful manner. Courts and tribunal decisions from across Canada consistently recognize that transgender persons are protected under the grounds of sex and/or gender.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before, we have great confidence in the opinion of the Human Rights Commission with respect to this matter and we will not be moving with any amendments to the code at this time.