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DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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Gay-Straight Alliances

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, this government's position on GSAs [gay-straight alliance] is becoming a national embarrassment. When the Premier reversed his position on strip clubs, he said it was necessary even to protect just one person from increased risk of human trafficking. But when it comes to protecting vulnerable kids, the Premier refuses to budge. He prefers a vague policy released in secret with absolutely no publicity, and he refuses to enshrine this right in legislation.

Experts say this legislation would make a big difference for a lot of kids, Mr. Speaker. But my question, my question to the minister: even if it saves just one life, even if it prevents one suicide, why don't we do it? Why don't we put it in legislation?

The Speaker: I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you can have a secretly released policy. There was nothing secret about it. We were very serious in communication with our education partners, and for the NDP to somehow portray that we're not prepared to provide the facilitation of GSAs is just wrong. The policy is adamant that if you're receiving public dollars from the government in Education, GSAs must be facilitated.

That policy is identical to the bill that they introduced in the House, Mr. Speaker. In fact, their bill is arguably pretty weak, because if you go to the section where there would be enforcement, what do they say? This is the NDP bill: "School administrators shall ensure that the Student Bill of Rights is respected and promoted in each school and that the Student Bill of Rights is posted in standard . . . [CNIB] . . ." and the thing goes on. But basically their bill says that school boards must do this.

You can do it by legislation. You can do it by regulation. We're doing it by policy tied to funding, Mr. Speaker. I said in estimates, if there's a need to go further we will, but right now we're going to work with school boards and all schools to make sure that GSAs are available freely and immediately in the province of Saskatchewan.