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# Lukaszuk's question going on ballot

## Smith government pre-empts vote at committee with news release

CINDY TRAN

The Forever Canadian citizen petition will be on the fall referendum, the UCP caucus announced before a committee of MLAs voted on a motion calling for the question to be put on an Oct. 19 ballot.

The UCP caucus sent out a news release presupposing the outcome of the vote.

UCP MLA and committee chairman Brandon Lundy was quoted in the release saying the committee

has voted in favour of the motion.

"More than 400,000 Albertans signed Mr. Lukaszuk's Forever Canadian petition. Combined with the reported 301,000 who signed the Alberta independence petition, this means over 700,000 Albertans want — and deserve — the opportunity to have their voices heard in a referendum," Lundy said.

Alberta NDP house leader Christina Gray called a point of privilege minutes after the news release was sent out saying releasing the de-

cision of a committee prior to the decision being made "absolutely breaches" the rights of MLAs to engage in debate.

"While we are debating this in this committee, oftentimes it feels like the politics of the UCP is a stage play to exercise their power to do what they want," Gray said.

After a brief recess, the members came back to vote on a motion by Opposition deputy leader Rakhi Pancholi to refer the point of privilege to the Speaker. However, it was defeated in a 3-2 vote with the UCP holding the majority.

To continue the meeting, since it went beyond 3:30 p.m., the com-

mittee needed to unanimously agree, but both Opposition members voted against, ending the meeting before the motion to put the Forever Canadian petition to a referendum could be voted on.

Technology and Innovation Minister Nate Glubish, who was at the committee meeting in lieu of Indigenous Relations Minister Rajan Sawhney, introduced a motion that not only puts the question "Do you agree that Alberta should remain in Canada?" on the fall referendum, but also asks that the question put to voters include an option for Albertans to vote for Alberta to remain in Canada.

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GREG SOUTHAM

# LIFE-SAVING LESSON

Clinical educator Tina Hyshka, right, keeps a close eye as paramedic student Logan Cox practises how to intubate a patient with the help of a video camera Wednesday. National Paramedic Services Week, which runs until Saturday, honours the men and women who work in the field and shines light on the role they play in the health-care system.

## Edmonton's suburban growth outpacing ability to provide fire services: deputy chief

STEVEN SANDOR

In order to reduce wait times, six new firehalls are needed to serve the city's growing neighbourhoods near the Anthony Henday Drive ring road.

The question in a city that has major budget pressures, where's the cash that's needed to build these halls?

Megan Rogers, the city's deputy chief, administration, said that the city's growth in its suburban

reaches is outpacing the ability to provide fire services.

"Edmonton Fire Rescue Services is serving a city that has expanded geographically," said Rogers. "Existing fire stations are serving larger geographic areas, leading to increased response times. Outside the Anthony Henday Drive, average response times are approximately three minutes slower than in more established neighbourhoods."

While three minutes is the av-

erage, there are some neighbourhoods where response times are significantly longer. One example is the Big Lake area, in the northwest of Edmonton. The closest firehall is in Lewis Estates, more than nine kilometres away. Insurance underwriters can red flag a neighbourhood if it's not within eight kilometres of a firehall.

"Twenty minutes, if you make a call, that's what you can expect to wait," said Coun. Reed Clarke, who represents these neighbourhoods

as part of the Nakota Isga ward. "Being at the firehall in Lewis Estates, talking to guys there, it's a huge concern. They know it's only a matter of time that by the time they get to call, something's going to be burned down and it's too late for them."

If new neighbourhoods are built away from firehall catchment areas, extra costs are passed onto homebuyers.

"If you don't have halls close by, there's actually a premium that developers have to pay for homes to have heightened fire safety standards, so it plays into the housing affordability conversation," said Ward papastew Coun. Michael Janz.

SEE FIREHALLS ON **A4**

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