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November 19, 2025

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TAXATION

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rose in the House yesterday, and I asked the Premier this very direct question: In this mandate, will you promise not to raise taxes to pay for your expensive campaign commitments? There was absolutely no answer from the Premier. With an \$835-million deficit in the first six months of this year, no one is feeling the benefit of the extra spending, but everyone is going to experience the pain of paying for it. Will this Premier do what is right and be clear with New Brunswickers on whether she is going to raise taxes to pay for her campaign promises, yes or no? Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Our government has made extremely clear commitments to New Brunswickers. We promised to rebate the equivalent of the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax on power bills. The 10% rebate has actually been in place since January 1.

We promised to make life more affordable. We established a property tax freeze and undertook a property tax system reform. We see that, this year, some New Brunswickers' property taxes will go down, and those of other people will stay the same, so they will not increase. New Brunswickers saw many changes and increases when the previous government was in office.

Our government is working to reduce costs for New Brunswickers. The opposition members seem to be interested in balancing the budget instead, which puts all the pressure and cost on New Brunswickers. Our government isn't doing that. We have people's interests at heart as we do our work.

[Original]

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Madam Speaker, that was another nonanswer. The government members promised affordability. Raising taxes would make it worse. I ask the Premier this: Will she commit to not raising taxes in this mandate, yes or no?

Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services; L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the Premier said, we're working at reducing costs for New Brunswickers. Our government is focused on New Brunswick, and we will continue to make the investments necessary to ensure that we make life more affordable for New Brunswickers and increase access to care. Those are our priorities. That's what New Brunswickers elected us on. They were fed

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up with the former government and the six years of neglect from that government. We are left cleaning up the mess, and we will make the investments necessary. We've made investments. We've invested, with retention bonuses, in our nurses. We've taken 10% off electricity bills. We've implemented breakfasts in schools. We finished the job of fiscal reform for local governments. That costs money, yes, but we are making life more affordable. We're cleaning up the mess and the economy that the members opposite left us in, as we saw revenues take a deep nosedive.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Give people the opportunity to show you who they are, and they will, Madam Speaker. Here is your government. Will you raise taxes in this mandate, yes or no?

Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services; L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think we answered the question very clearly. We're working at reducing costs for New Brunswickers, and we're working at making life more affordable for New Brunswickers. The members opposite stand over there, boasting about being fiscally responsible Conservatives. But if you look at spending over the past six years, you see that it has increased by 40%. It has increased by 40%.

(Interjections.)

Madam Speaker (Hon. Ms. Landry): Order.

Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services; L): We have exactly the same incremental increase in spending, year over year, that the former Conservative government put in place. It's not an expense problem that we have, Madam Speaker. It's a revenue problem. It's a result of the economy that the former government left us with. We're cleaning up their mess. They took a record amount of federal transfer money from the federal government and did not use it for its intended purposes—not one bit—and we're left here investing in New Brunswickers. We will not apologize for—

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Oh, Madam Speaker, Liberal math is alive and well. We've heard the Premier alleging that 10 000 people have come off the wait list for primary care. The Minister of Health, in a scrum two weeks ago, mentioned 8 700 people coming off the wait list. Yesterday, the Premier alleged that 14 000 people are off the wait list. I reiterate that the numbers of NB Health Link, under the guidance of the Department of Health, tell a very different story. As of March 31, there were 114 743 New Brunswickers waiting for access to primary care.

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As of September 30, there were 124 045 New Brunswickers waiting to access primary care. These verified numbers tell a very different story than the one the Premier and the Minister of Health are trying to sell New Brunswickers. My question to the Minister of Health is this: Can he tell us the exact number of people waiting for primary care on the NB Health Link list? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): To the member opposite, I do appreciate the question. No, I can't. I can't tell you the exact number of New Brunswickers waiting for a family doctor. It changes. The number on the list is growing because we've told New Brunswickers that, if they want to be positioned in a collaborative primary care team, they need to get on that list. The list has grown for that reason.

I'm also pleased to help the member opposite with the math: 10 000 people have been added to the list, and 10 000 people can come off the list. It is not mutually incompatible. We're quite pleased with our efforts. In fact, this week, we spoke with family doctors who are looking to come to New Brunswick, to Fredericton South. We interviewed them to help people in this area acquire collaborative care teams and family practice units. This is a good news story. I can't spin it any other way. We have people coming to the province. People are coming off the list. Thank you very much for the question.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Madam Speaker, with an answer like that, it is clear how those members got to a billion-dollar deficit and have no idea how they got there. It's unbelievable.

With regard to the agreement that this government just signed with the physicians of New Brunswick, this province has a wait list of 125 000 people who are waiting to access primary care. I ask the Minister of Health this: What are the KPIs or SLAs in this contract? Is there anything in this contract that will compel a doctor to take on more patients and reduce the wait list? What are the ramifications if the service levels are not met? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, to the member opposite, thank you for allowing me to correct the number: 14 000 people have come off the wait list. We have announced eight new clinics. The last new clinic that we announced was the biggest yet. When we announce a new clinic, it doesn't take 3 000 people off the wait list instantly. That takes time. There are new people, new family doctors and new nurse practitioners, that recruit people off the list. Last week, I had a number of people come up to me not asking for a family doctor but thanking us for taking people off the list.

This is not something that happens overnight. There are still a lot of people on the list, and I will acknowledge that. Our goal for our mandate is to get as many people off that list as possible, and we will continue doing that. The work that we're doing today is a paradigm

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change. The government has had a very positive relationship with the Medical Society and others, and people from across this country are coming to work here in New Brunswick.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Keep going—just keep showing people who you are.

Madam Speaker, this government announced that a deal has been struck with physicians and that this deal has a price tag of \$270 million. The Minister of Health said that part of this money was going to collaborative care clinics. Can the minister reveal to the people of New Brunswick exactly how much of this \$270 million is going to wages and how much is going to the collaborative care clinics? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Madam Speaker, to the member opposite, I cannot give you the breakdown between wages, space, and physicians. We are investing money in these clinics, and that has many pulls, if I can put it that way. I am pleased, however, to announce that we are committed to spending the money this year, next year, and the following year. In fact, I have a book in my binder here that talks about all the collaborative care clinics that have been approaching us and that we've been having discussions with. Frankly, after our agreement with the Medical Society, more are coming. More are coming from Manitoba, Quebec, and other parts of the country, and they're doing it because of our new agreement with the physicians. This is a positive time for us. It can't be said across this country. We are the best place to practise medicine in this country.

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Wow, Madam Speaker, just wow. With the money that's being committed to the new contract with physicians, and with part of it going to the collaborative care clinics, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Is this money over and above the \$115-million total that you said these clinics would cost, or is the money that was announced in the physician agreement part of that \$115 million? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Dornan (Saint John Portland-Simonds, Minister of Health, L): Thank you. That's a good question. The money that we have invested in physicians in this province is new money. We recognize that we need to increase the number of nurse practitioners, nurses, and physicians, so this is new money on top of the money that we have already assigned to the collaborative care clinics. This is not an inexpensive operation. We need to respect our health care workers—our doctors, our nurses, and our nurse practitioners. We have contracts—positive contracts—with nurses, doctors, and many others. This government has not had labour disruption. We keep the team together. They want to come here and work because we have invested heavily.

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FUEL PRICES

Mr. Austin (Fredericton-Grand Lake, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to shift gears a little bit and talk about the carbon cost adjustor and the Holt government's commitment to removing that supposed 8¢ per litre, which it promised to New Brunswickers both during the election campaign and, just recently, here in the Legislature.

Now, we know the carbon cost adjustor was put in place when the federal government put in the Clean Fuel Regulations to ensure continuity of supply. For the everyday New Brunswicker, that means a place where you can actually fill your tank with gas. The point was to ensure that rural gas stations and urban gas stations could continue to operate and get a profit out of that operation so they could stay in business.

Now, this government, frankly, errantly, has come out and said that by removing that adjustor people are going to automatically save 8¢ per litre. There's one of two outcomes here. Either gas stations will close when that formula is removed, or a new formula will be put in place and the 8¢ per litre will be a wash. Which is it?

Hon. Mr. Herron (Hampton-Fundy-St. Martins, Minister of Natural Resources, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I know the member opposite agrees with me that New Brunswickers need a break. They need affordability. On this side of the House, we believe—and I would suggest that the honourable member agrees—that New Brunswickers should not pay a penny more than they have to in anything they do, including accessing transportation fuels. We believe that the proper methodology is that the onus should always be on the applicant to go before the regulator and prove its cost of operations, which should be a number fixed to meet the Clean Fuel Regulations. Thank you.

Mr. Austin (Fredericton-Grand Lake, PC): You know, Madam Speaker, it's very interesting to see how the Liberals change their story all the time. First, they said: We're going to save New Brunswickers 8¢ per litre. That was the campaign promise. Just recently, the Premier stood here on this floor, in this House, and promised New Brunswickers that, on December 1, 8¢ per litre would come off the price of gas for every New Brunswicker.

What the government members are not telling New Brunswickers is that gas stations will close if the government members don't create a new formula to ensure that the 8¢ per litre is actually passed down. You can call it the carbon cost adjustor. You can call it the Billy Bob Thornton or whatever cost formula you want to add to it. The bottom line is that there are two options. Gas stations close, or New Brunswickers do not save 8¢ per litre. I don't care about formulas. I don't care about spin. I don't care about word salads. I want a direct answer. Will they save 8¢ per litre, or will gas stations close?

Hon. Mr. Herron (Hampton-Fundy-St. Martins, Minister of Natural Resources, L): Madam Speaker, this is a very learned member on the other side of the aisle. He's

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suggesting that he knows the cost of complying with the Clean Fuel Regulations. He keeps on saying that it's 8¢ per litre. I don't know whether it's 8¢ per litre. I'm quite sure he doesn't know that it's 8¢ per litre. Sadly, the EUB does not know whether it's 8¢ per litre because the sector has not come before the EUB to prove what its cost of compliance is. I believe that the honourable member will agree with me that New Brunswickers shouldn't pay a penny more than they have to.

Mr. Austin (Fredericton-Grand Lake, PC): That's unbelievable, Madam Speaker. It is absolutely incredible that we can go from a campaign promise specifically saying that people are going to save 8¢ per litre to the Premier obviously not talking to the Minister of Natural Resources to tell him it's 8¢ per litre. Now they're talking about formulas and ensuring that New Brunswickers don't pay more than they have to. Well, who's going to disagree with that? That's why the carbon cost adjustor was put in in the first place—to ensure that the cost was fair and that gas stations could continue to operate.

Again, if they're going to take out one formula because it was done by the big, bad blue team and put in this new red formula, which has the same calculations in the end, nobody will save anything.

Are New Brunswickers going to save, or is it going to cost more because they have to drive further because their local gas stations have closed? I don't want to hear about formulas. Save 8¢ per litre, or close gas stations. Those are your options.

Hon. Mr. Herron (Hampton-Fundy-St. Martins, Minister of Natural Resources, L): Madam Speaker, the original error occurred in bringing in the carbon adjustor in the first place. In that process, they asked a regulator to actually circumvent the standard regulatory practice where the applicant comes in and proves what its operational costs are. That side of the House voted for legislation to bring in the carbon adjustor to actually circumvent regulatory practice, put the onus on the EUB, and give a hall pass to the sector.

Instead, New Brunswickers want to have confidence in the regulatory framework. They want to be able to understand what those costs are. That's where that should be done. The applicants should bring before the EUB evidence that would be tested in a public forum. New Brunswickers would have surety that they are not paying any more than they should.

Madam Speaker, given the fact that this formula has been in place for as long as it has been—it was supposed to be temporary, but now we're almost three years into that process—New Brunswickers have overpaid.

BUDGETARY DEFICIT

Mr. Monahan (Arcadia-Butternut Valley-Maple Hills, PC): New Brunswickers woke up this week to deeply troubling news. The Holt government has released a second-quarter update

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showing an unprecedented \$834-million deficit. This is the worst provincial deficit in over 20 years. In barely six months, the Premier and the Finance Minister have taken the balanced budgets, declining net debt, and disciplined spending trajectory left by the previous government and turned them upside down.

What's most alarming is that this fiscal free fall comes despite the government's clear promise to New Brunswickers on September 11, 2024, that the Premier would deliver balanced budgets every year of her mandate—not once, but every one of the four years. Instead, debt is climbing, revenues are falling, expenses are ballooning, and there's still no plan to get back to balance.

How do this Premier and the Finance Minister justify this record-breaking deficit when she pledged balanced budgets? Where is their plan to stop this financial collapse?

Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services; L): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for this question. As I said earlier today, we're facing a revenue problem. This is after six years of the former government, which took record revenues from federal government transfers and did not use them for their intended purposes. Now we're left cleaning up the mess.

Let me review where the revenues are down. Corporate income tax revenue is down by \$75 million. Personal income tax revenue is down by \$61 million. Special operating agency revenue is down by \$50 million. Conditional grants are down \$27 million. Madam Speaker, therein lies the problem. We're working with our partners, and we're looking at ways to increase revenue and grow the economy. We're going to continue to invest in New Brunswickers. We made a promise to them to make life more affordable, and that's exactly what we're going to continue doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Monahan (Arcadia-Butternut Valley-Maple Hills, PC): Madam Speaker, I didn't get an answer to my question. What worries me the most about this government's deficit is not just the size of it. It is also about confidence in the Holt government's priorities.

A budget is not just an accounting exercise. It reflects discipline, vision, and respect for taxpayers. This Premier has failed on all counts. In just six months, the Holt government has transformed our province, which was moving confidently toward long-term stability, into a province that is wandering aimlessly.

This is not about politics, but about trust. When a Premier promises balanced budgets but records the largest deficit in two decades, there is no longer any trust. When trust is broken, the credibility of governmental decisions disappears with it.

Since, in just a few months, this government has abandoned its basic budgetary promise, how can New Brunswickers have any confidence in its future commitments?

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Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We're talking about trust. In fact, New Brunswickers' trust has been increasing since the last election. We see support for our party and our government increasing. The public is in favour of the process we have been following.

We have invested in health care and affordability measures, Madam Speaker. I would like to call a spade a spade, because we know that members of the previous Conservative government considered themselves more financially responsible. However, spending has increased the same way year after year under our government.

This is question period. I'm going to ask the members opposite questions, since they criticize us when we find savings in certain sectors and when we spend too much. I ask them this: In which parts of the budget do they want us to find savings, Madam Speaker?

[Original]

Mr. Monahan (Arcadia-Butternut Valley-Maple Hills, PC): This government promises its successes based on the way it spins its failures. We're seeing that here in question period today, Madam Speaker. It says that tough decisions are coming, but this phrase is only used by government for public cuts, clawbacks, and broken promises. This is not leadership. It is damage control. New Brunswickers were promised steady management, responsible spending, and long-term stability. Instead, this government has handed out economic uncertainty, slow growth, and a government scrambling to explain how it lost control of the province's finances so quickly. Now we hear that real GDP is projected to grow by just 0.9% next year, below even the private sector average. Yet, the Holt Liberals insist they will continue to make the investments they promised. Given the chaos it has created, what exactly does this government plan to do in its 2026-27 budget to clean up the fiscal mess it has made?

Hon. Mr. McKee, K.C. (Moncton Centre, Minister of Justice; Attorney General; Minister responsible for Addictions and Mental Health Services, L): Madam Speaker, the only cleanup we're doing is of the fiscal mess made by the former government. The members opposite were part of a government that refused to invest in New Brunswickers. They did not move the needle on any file. We saw wait lists for housing grow exponentially. We saw wait lists for family doctors grow exponentially. We saw wait times for mental health services grow exponentially. We have been left to make these critical investments in New Brunswickers. We see our support across the province increase. New Brunswickers are responding well to the initiatives we are bringing forward. I can name others that we are bringing forward. With housing, we've taken the HST off multiunit builds. We've worked hard on labour negotiations. We've settled several—several—contracts that will secure our education and our health care services for the future. I am prepared to continue talking about—

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Coon (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Madam Speaker, every additional tonne of CO₂ or methane emitted into the atmosphere makes global warming worse, which means more human suffering. Burning more fossil gas, diesel, or gasoline, therefore, makes global warming worse, creating more human suffering.

I was part of the New Brunswick delegation at the Paris climate summit and witnessed the historic agreement to keep the earth's temperature from warming by 2° C. Madam Speaker, this created much hope, hope that we could avoid climate breakdown by burning less and less fossil fuel until we are fossil fuel-free and avoid the human suffering caused by climate breakdown.

Now, 10 years on, NB Power is proposing to build a large fossil gas and diesel power plant in Tantramar that will emit up to 1 million more tonnes of carbon per year for the next 25 years. This will burn through the 2030 climate target in our *Climate Change Act*. Will the Premier just say no?

Hon. K. Chiasson (Tracadie, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. NB Power and the Minister of Energy have always been clear that the RIGS project in Tantramar will be base power that will permit the utility to transition toward a greener electricity grid. Now, obviously, in the past few months, we've heard about different wind projects that will be coming online. One of those is being led by First Nations of New Brunswick. They are working on different projects that will bring in 450 MW of wind power. The issue is that, if we don't supply that base power, then these projects will not move forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Coon (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): Madam Speaker, according to an analysis published this week at the UN climate summit in Brazil, implementing the commitments made by Canada and the signatories to the climate treaty in 2023 to triple the amount of renewable energy generated by 2030, double energy efficiency by then, and make substantial cuts to methane emissions would avoid nearly 1°C of global heating. Madam Speaker, this would give our children and grandchildren the hope they so desperately seek by avoiding climate breakdown and the overwhelming human suffering that would cause. This would mean increasing NB Power's legislated energy efficiency target to 2.75% and its wind generation capacity to 2 500 MW. Will the Premier commit to doubling NB Power's energy efficiency targets and tripling our wind power capacity by 2030?

Hon. K. Chiasson (Tracadie, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Well, I agree with the member opposite. We do have to increase our wind capacity here in the province of New Brunswick, and that's exactly what NB Power is doing.

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As I mentioned, First Nations are leading several projects of up to 450 MW, and there are others on the horizon. Again, the issue we have is that we also need to attach that to base power to guarantee New Brunswickers a reliable and affordable energy supply if the wind doesn't blow and the energy doesn't come from that infrastructure. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Coon (Fredericton Lincoln, Leader, G): The minister opposite is struggling with this, Madam Speaker, but he's doing his best. I appreciate that.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, during the United Nations climate summit in Brazil, over 80 countries joined the call to support a road map to phase out fossil fuels. They hope to sign an agreement that would require countries to present road maps for the transition to giving up fossil fuels. This would give our children hope for the future, because they currently don't see any hope. They only see inaction regarding climate disruption and the suffering it will cause in the future.

Will the Premier commit to presenting, before the end of next year, in the Legislative Assembly, a road map to phase out fossil fuels in New Brunswick?

Hon. K. Chiasson (Tracadie, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, L): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Original]

I want to talk a little bit about base power. Yesterday, the member opposite got up and started criticizing the Mactaquac Dam or the refurbishment that needs to be done on the Mactaquac Dam. Well, that's a perfect example of clean, renewable base power. It's easy for the member opposite to get up and start criticizing everything that NB Power is doing, but the reality is that it is on a path to really transition the electricity grid to a greener kind of approach by including wind power in the mix. However, again, I keep saying over and over—and the Minister of Energy is singing the same tune—that, to increase our wind power capacity, we also have to supply that base energy. That's exactly what NB Power is doing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Savoie (Saint John East, Leader of the Official Opposition, PC): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm going to go back to the cost of carbon adjustor. This government promised 4¢ per litre immediately. A year later, nothing has been done and the Premier doubles down and says 8¢ per litre on December 1. The government was told by the EUB: Do not remove this formula. It will not work. Now, we see the skating, obfuscation, and backing off that's happening on the floor of this House this morning. The whole point was to deliver affordability at the pumps. The question is very, very simple. This government promised to reduce the price at the pumps for New Brunswickers, and it's now skating and

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saying that it's going to be up to the system. It's going to be up to a formula. The question is very simple. Do you believe that this promise to New Brunswickers is being fulfilled? Will New Brunswickers save, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm glad one thing is clear for the member opposite. In our eyes, it's very clear that New Brunswickers need help, and that's what we're trying to give them.

[*Original*]

If you want to talk about obfuscation, as my colleague pointed out, the folks on the other side put something weird in place to try to help out their buddies and to put the cost back onto New Brunswickers.

(Interjections.)

Madam Speaker (Hon. Ms. Landry): This is a test of the emergency alert system.

Hon. Ms. Holt (Fredericton South-Silverwood, Premier; Minister responsible for Official Languages, L): The emergency that New Brunswickers are facing is that they're having a hard time paying their bills. Our government is trying to help them by taking off the cost of carbon adjustor. It might have cost 4¢ yesterday, but it costs 8¢ today and will cost something different tomorrow because the members of the previous government put in place a ridiculous formula that wasn't based on the actual costs. New Brunswickers should not pay more for gas, and our government is going to protect them from the mess that those folks put in place.