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Chair: Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal





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• (1120)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC)):** I bring this meeting back to order.

Ms. Kwan, please go ahead.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

At this juncture, I would like to move the following motion:

That the committee request that Global Affairs (GAC) provide the unredacted findings of the internal investigation regarding the issuance of “inauthentic” facilitation letters to third parties to the law clerk and parliamentary counsel for redaction according to his discretion before being sent to the committee, and further that GAC provide to the community the unredacted name and title of the official(s) within GAC who provided the “inauthentic” facilitation letter to George Young, acknowledged receipt of Senator McPhedran's email and shared the names of the vulnerable Afghans with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada no later than 30 days following the adoption of the motion.

Mr. Chair, I'm moving this motion today because we heard on August 25, 2021, from Senator McPhedran. In her testimony, she said, “the facilitation template in question was sent to me by George Young”. That's a quote from her testimony. She went on further to say, “Mr. Young received this facilitation template from Global Affairs Canada, and he told me this in writing.” She then further stated:

Names for the rolling list were sent frequently to George Young and Mr. Oz Jungic, a senior policy adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Jungic confirmed receipt of the names to me on August 24, with an assurance that they would do everything they could to try to help get these people out.

Senator McPhedran went on to say, “Mr. Young stated that he had put these names 'into the system'.” She also said:

When George Young sent me the facilitation templates on August 25, he wrote, with the first one, “I have received this from a colleague at GAC...try it. George.”

What we need to get to is who from GAC provided that “inauthentic” facilitation letter to George Young.

Mr. Chair, to that end, I am moving this motion so that we can get that information.

• (1125)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Brad Redekopp):** Thank you, Ms. Kwan. I believe the motion is in order.

I have a speaking list: Ms. Kayabaga and Mrs. Zahid.

Ms. Kayabaga, please go ahead.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to wait to hear Ms. Kwan's comments before I asked for a point of order.

Perhaps, through you, Mr. Chair, I would ask the clerk to tell us what the procedure is after a member puts forward the same motion that they have put forward before, and if this is an acceptable motion or not.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Brad Redekopp):** Madam Kayabaga, there are just two things to consider.

This is a new motion as far as we're concerned, and—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Can we perhaps then see the language of the motion through email and in both languages?

Maybe we could suspend to see the language of the motion.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Brad Redekopp):** Okay. We can do that.

We'll suspend for a moment.

• (1125)

(Pause)

• (1135)

**The Chair (Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.)):** I call the meeting back to order.

I want to thank Mr. Redekopp for chairing the first portion of the meeting.

I also would love to welcome Madame Bérubé, Mr. Zuberi and Mr. Iacono to the committee. Welcome.

The motion is on the floor, and I have a speaking list. It's Madam Kayabaga, Madam Zahid, Mr. Kmiec and then Mr. Maguire.

Madam Kayabaga, please go ahead.

• (1140)

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back.

I wasn't speaking to this. I think I already spoke, and my question was whether this was a similar motion to a previous motion moved by the member. I have received the copy as we requested to receive—

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, excuse me.

We are in public, so we cannot say anything directly or indirectly that might relate to our proceedings that were in camera. Please make sure when you speak....

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Chair, I will remove myself from the speaking list for now. I'll put up my hand if I have other questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you kindly. Now I will go to Madam Zahid.

Go ahead, please.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

In regard to this motion that was just moved by Ms. Kwan, I need just a little clarification, and maybe the clerk can add to that.

This email that was sent by the clerk to all the members of the committee mentioned that information to be redacted, like personal information, is normally specified in the motion when we request production of documents. I'm talking about the email that was sent by the clerk on April 17 to the members of the committee.

I think it is important to make sure we have some sort of criteria later on if we are requesting that documents be redacted, and that we let the law clerk know about the parameters or the types of information that should be redacted.

Maybe the clerk can specify a bit in regard to some clarification on what was meant by the email sent on April 17 to the members.

**The Chair:** Yes, I'll give the floor to the clerk.

I'll suspend at the request of our clerk.

• (1140) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1155)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

Madam Zahid, the comments you made.... I have had an extensive discussion with the clerk. The information that was distributed to the honourable member, and to all members, was in confidence.

Personally, I see that it is not the place now for Mr. Clerk to comment. I will give you the floor to continue. If you still insist that the clerk should speak, he's willing to speak.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair, for the clarification.

Based on the rules, without giving.... I'm just talking about the procedure. I'm not talking about the content of the motion or anything.

I want to bring to your attention that the rules state, "the motion is not a substantive motion or a subsidiary motion where such a motion is already being debated (a committee—"

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** No. I'm not talking about the content of the motion. I'm just talking about the procedure that—

**The Chair:** This motion....

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Based on what the.... I'm not saying anything about the content of the motion from the in camera meeting. I

am saying that where a motion has already been debated, a motion cannot be brought.

**The Chair:** Basically, you're telling me this is not a substantive motion. Is that right?

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Yes. Basically, what I am saying is that the committee has already debated a motion of similar substance, so this motion is out of order.

**The Chair:** Madam Zahid, as far as I see it, this motion has not been debated. This is a new motion. I don't recall this motion being debated earlier at all.

Do the members feel the same way?

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I disagree with you. I believe that the rules of committee procedures are that if a motion is being discussed or debated elsewhere, a committee is required to deal with only one motion at a time. Therefore, this motion is not a substantive motion. We cannot discuss this motion, as it is being debated elsewhere, whether or not we are allowed to discuss where it's being debated.

I would like to challenge your point on that, because this is a motion that's being debated elsewhere, and as our committee procedures clearly outline, we cannot be discussing this motion.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** On the same point of order, I see Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** I disagree with the member's interpretation.

The previous chair occupant made a ruling and considered it a substantive new motion. We then started debating it. We've had a debate now. You can't, three persons into the debate, try to deem a motion no longer acceptable after it's been received and accepted by the chair.

You've returned as the chair, and you're occupying it now. A ruling's already been made, so you can't do this after the fact. It's not a valid point of order to raise a matter after debate has already commenced on the motion.

**The Chair:** Madam Kayabaga, go ahead on a point of order.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Thank you.

I tried to raise a point of order earlier to the vice-chair of the committee, who ruled to accept the motion. I continue to challenge the chair on the same motion. This is a motion that is being debated elsewhere.

If I can quote the committee proceedings, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd edition, 2017 procedural info from the House of Commons of Canada, it says in the section on moving motions:

A member of a committee may move a motion at any time in the normal course of a meeting, provided that:

the notice period, if any, has been respected;

the motion is not a substantive motion or a subsidiary motion where such a motion is already being debated (a committee is required to deal with such motions one at a time);

I'm going to finish the other points too, just to make sure that I'm reading this entire section.

the member has the floor to move the motion and is not doing so on a point of order; and

moving the motion does not violate any rule the committee may have adopted in respect of the period in which motions can be moved.

Mr. Chair, you were not here. The meeting was being presided over by the vice-chair. I made a similar comment that this motion was being debated elsewhere, and the vice-chair unduly accepted this motion without actually following procedure.

These are committee proceedings. They are in the procedural information manual of the House of Commons of Canada, which clearly states that a motion that is being debated elsewhere cannot be a substantive motion. I tried to say this earlier. Unfortunately, Mr. Chair, the ruling of the vice-chair was false.

Therefore, I will continue to contest that this motion is not a substantive motion and that we cannot debate it right now. I think that the mover of the motion would be better served if they resumed debate rather than moving this motion right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kayabaga.

Madam Kayabaga, you have every right to challenge the Chair.

My position is that the officiating chair at the time took the decision, and I follow his decision.

I'm chairing the meeting right now, and if you are not happy with the chair's decision, you are welcome to challenge me.

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Mr. Chair, unfortunately the ruling of the previous occupant of the chair, who was the vice-chair, was not procedurally sound.

Therefore, you cannot go off a non-procedurally sound ruling to move forward with the committee. I would like more information. Perhaps the clerk can provide us with more information. We would have to suspend until we find that information, Mr. Chair.

I don't see how we can move forward with a non-procedurally sound proceeding happening in the committee right now.

**The Chair:** Do you want to challenge the chair, or do you want the clerk to speak on this?

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Could we take a moment, Chair, so that I can inform myself on what needs to be done? I think I'd like some time to make that decision, but we can't move forward right now.

**The Chair:** There are only two things, Madam Kayabaga. Either you can ask the clerk to intervene—

• (1205)

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Yes, I'm requesting that the clerk intervene, because there was a non-procedurally sound procedure that happened.

Before I challenge your decision or your ruling, Mr. Chair, I'd like to hear how we—

**The Chair:** If you challenge my ruling, again, this is non-debatable. I have to take a vote if you're challenging the chair.

I want you to make it clear. If you want the clerk to say something, he will. Make sure those two questions are very separate. One is going to the clerk to give direction to the committee. The second one is challenging the chair.

Do you want—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I'm sorry. Go ahead.

**The Chair:** You can't mix those two. I want you to be very clear in your deliberations.

Do you want me to give the floor to the clerk to answer your question on whether this motion is a substantive motion and in order?

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** Well, there's that, but it's also the fact that a non-procedurally sound decision was made by the vice-chair.

Mr. Chair, on principle, if we're going to follow the rules of the committee, this was not procedurally sound and I would like to challenge that.

**The Chair:** Thank you. There is a challenge to the chair's ruling.

We will take a vote on that.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 5 [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** The floor is with Madam Zahid, and then I have Mr. Kmiec, Madam Kayabaga and Madam Kwan on the list.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Can you please clarify where we are now?

**The Chair:** We are debating the motion of Madam Kwan.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair.

I would like to say, in regard to this motion brought by Ms. Kwan, that I think it is very important that we provide some specification, so there is clarity. It is important that we specify what redactions should be made and how it should be. Because of the Privacy Act, we should not be mentioning things that are under cabinet confidentiality. I think that as a committee, we need to provide clarity on what specific information...and how that information should be redacted. Something has to be specified.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I support Madam Kwan's motion to have this document provided to us. At different points in the committee's testimony that was received in public, different departments told us they did review or conduct internal investigations or inquiries of some sort. This motion would basically have them produce one of those to be given to this committee.

The law clerk's office will be the ones to determine the redactions. I don't agree with Mrs. Zahid's contention that we need to give more directions. It's at his discretion. It's at the discretion of the office. It's been done many times in other parliamentary committees.

I'll point out, too, that in July 2022, the Liberal government appointed Philippe Dufresne to become the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. He was the previous law clerk of the House of Commons.

Obviously, I trust the public servants. I don't know why she or they wouldn't trust them to do the work correctly. The Access to Information Act doesn't apply here. We want the unredacted documents.

I'll also point out that when Senator McPhedran came before the committee and they provided documents, those were provided to us unredacted, with full emails and full names as well.

In a moment of transparency, we'd want the government to provide that document in full and unredacted to the law clerk. The law clerk's office can then determine which parts of it should not be given over to committee to form part of our testimony that's available to the public.

I don't know why they're trying to hide this document even more.

Let's proceed to a vote, get this over with and get this document into the public sphere.

• (1210)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Kayabaga, do you have anything to say? Your hand was up. Okay.

Madam Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I will just make a very brief comment, and I hope we can get to a vote on this.

I trust the law clerk in their work; they will make that assessment accordingly.

I just want to make it very clear as to why this motion is so important to our study. It is because Senator McPhedran indicated that she got the inauthentic facilitation letter from George Young, who is no longer with government. In that exchange she also indicated—and an email was provided to the clerk as part of the submission of information from the senator—that George Young indicated he had received this unauthenticated letter from someone in GAC. We don't know who that individual is. I think it is important for us to find out.

Part of the study was to try to get to the bottom of this issue, so if we don't ask for the information, we will never know and we will be unable to get to the bottom of it.

This is why I think it's absolutely essential. To that end, in terms of the rules that would apply with respect to documentation, the independent Office of the Law Clerk, I believe, will be able to do this work in such a way that respects the rules of the House and that will respect all the requirements accordingly.

The law clerk is experienced in this office, and they've done this work, as indicated, in other committees as well, so we should leave it to them to undertake this work. I hope the committee can move forward with this motion; let's vote on it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We cannot go to the vote yet, because the speaking list has not been exhausted.

Madam Zahid.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair.

Through you, before we vote on this motion, I would like to ask a question of the clerk of the committee.

Based on some previous history and previous examples, when the committee—not just this committee but any other committee—has requested from the law clerk some information, were there some parameters defined, or was it left to the discretion of the law clerk to redact the information? If you have some examples, could you share them with us? Are there usually parameters specified when requesting the production of documents for personal information, or has it usually been at the discretion of the law clerk?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Zahid.

I'll go to Mr. Clerk.

Go ahead, please.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Rémi Bourgault):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, there is precedence for the law clerk doing this kind of work. However, at the moment, based on the way the motion is written, the law clerk will probably have to come back to the committee in order to get some parameters before doing the redaction itself. Right now, it is clear that the law clerk will probably get back to the committee on that.

One point also I'd like to raise, if I may, Mr. Chair, is that the motion doesn't state that the government should provide the document in both official languages, which could be quite important in order for the law clerk to redact, but would be getting all the documents already bilingual from the department itself.

The law clerk has already done that in the past, but usually there are some kinds of criteria given to him. Right now, it's possible the law clerk will get back to the committee saying, "Okay, I've received documents. How exactly do you want me to redact them?"

• (1215)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

I don't have anyone else on the speaking list, so we'll go to Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Sorry, I just wanted to say a couple of things on this.

This is a really important issue. Of course, this goes back to the war that happened when the Taliban took over Afghanistan. When all that was going on, here in Ottawa there were some Liberal political staff and Trudeau-appointed senators who conspired to bypass normal procedures by providing these forged papers to certain friends to circumvent the proper process in Afghanistan for those trying to get out.

This parliamentary committee got hold of certain documents, including emails, that exposed this conspiracy and held hearings back in 2022, actually, and 2023, but we were constantly blocked by the Liberals from calling key witnesses, such as the chief of staff for the defence minister, George Young, who allegedly ran this conspiracy.

We also learned in our hearings that the immigration department, Global Affairs and the Canadian Forces all launched their own internal investigations into these activities.

This motion is just to enable us as parliamentarians to get the most up-to-date information from Global Affairs Canada on their investigation. We'll see if the Liberals are going to be transparent and allow this to happen—

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I didn't want to cut through my colleague's comments, but he's talking about a conspiracy. I think that's out of order. What happened in Afghanistan was not a conspiracy. His conspiracy comments are out of order.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kayabaga.

Mr. Redekopp, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

When we tried to bring George Young to this committee to answer questions on the subject, every time I moved the motion, the Liberals blocked it.

I don't know if “conspiracy” is the right word. Maybe—

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Cover-up.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Cover-up. Sure. We can use cover-up.

Will the Liberals finally support the efforts of the opposition parties to get to the bottom of this, or is there something being hidden here? We need to know the answer to this question, because we have documented proof of a Trudeau-appointed senator, Liberal ministerial political staff and sitting Liberal ministers who participated in this.

If there's nothing to hide, we should just be able to get these documents—unless there's somebody who needs to be protected. It certainly can't be political staff, because I think they throw them under the bus often. It can't be a senator, because they're already implicated in this. Who's left? Maybe the Prime Minister. I don't know, but let's find out.

Let's get this information. Let's get it. The law clerk is wise enough to redact it as he needs to.

I'm just excited to get this motion passed. Hopefully, the Liberals will support it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Kmiec is back, so I'm going to call the vote now.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

**The Chair:** Mr. Kmiec.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm glad we could get through that portion of our agenda and pass that important motion.

I have another motion that I've put on notice that I would like to move at this time:

That the committee acknowledge it has received correspondence from the President of Canada-Hong Kong Link, Andy Wong; that it express its deep concern at the unreasonable delays being imposed on Hong Kong Pathway applicants of up to 21 months; that over 8,000 applications are still waiting to be processed; that Hong Kongers in Canada are freedom-loving people and keeping them in limbo is wrong; that the committee call on Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to immediately begin processing renewals and extensions of Open Work Permits and Study Permits; and that this matter be reported to the House.

Here is the urgency of the matter, Chair.

We've all received a letter from Canada-Hong Kong Link. It explains the situation facing many of the applicants and respondents. Many of them are losing status, and it's also affecting their children, because when the parent loses status, the children oftentimes can't continue to go to school legally, so they're being removed from those schools, and the situation in Hong Kong is not getting better.

There were trials against Jimmy Lai. Other people who worked for Apple Daily and student protesters from the pro-democracy movement there have all been targeted. Some of them are being released, but they're being released with criminal penalties. On their records, it shows that that they were criminally charged and convicted. Sometimes the Hong Kong constabulary upgrade the charges to something much more serious when they're released, so they're having greater difficulty coming to Canada.

Then, once they're in Canada, once they have a visa to stay here, when they apply for permanent residency or for an extension, they face unreasonable delays, despite the fact that they were promised publicly and repeatedly by the Liberal government and by the minister that their matters would be heard in a timely fashion and would be expedited.

So far, I can count 8,357 applications that are still in processing. That's according to the Toronto Star report of March 15, 2024. I have spoken directly to persons working inside IRCC on whether, in fact, there is still priority processing for Hong Kongers. There is a lack of clarity. I've heard both that there isn't and that there is from my case file manager and from members of the Hong Kong community in Canada, whether they're in Toronto, Vancouver or elsewhere. They are saying, in fact, that they've been told the opposite, that they're not getting priority processing. That's causing a lot of anxiety in the community, and people are very worried about their futures in Canada.

In addition, they're also worried about whether or not Canada is still a welcoming place for pro-democracy activists. We all saw what the Hogue inquiry found on Friday last week, that, in fact, there was interference in our election. It wasn't successful, but the PRC is participating, and they're also targeting members of the Hong Kong community.

I am one of 18 parliamentarians who were targeted by the PRC by the APT31 reconnaissance pixel email attack. That's already been raised with the Speaker of the House of Commons, but if the government can't protect parliamentarians or won't protect parliamentarians, as we discovered with my colleague Michael Chong and his family being targeted by the PRC, many Hong Kongers see that, and they're extra worried. If the government won't protect parliamentarians, they hold no hope that the government will do right by them.

There are many groups now advocating for that priority processing for Hong Kongers to be done. I have a petition in the House of Commons as well that asks for an acceleration of the approvals to ensure that processing is done in a timely fashion and that "Hong Kong citizens' applications will not be rejected due to target restrictions".

I'll read off some of the points they're making. They say, "Permanent residence (PR) pathways for Hong Kong residents takes effect on June 1, 2021, and expires on August 31, 2026". They mention that, "More than 8,000 Hong Kong citizens are awaiting PR processing as of April 2024. Some of these applications have been waiting for over a year, despite being designated"—like I said—"for priority processing." They say that "in December 2023 and February 2024, only 30 and 48 cases...were approved for permanent residency".

That is from over 8,000. That is a huge discrepancy. If it's a priority to give people a yes or a no—I'm not saying everybody will get a yes—the department should at least be giving people an opportunity to plan their lives out and plan for their own future. It's difficult to plan when you're not given an answer.

The petition continues, "The Hong Kong pathway lacks measures to extend OWP, leaving some individuals with expired visas without access to health insurance, jobs, and education". As I said, it's affecting children. In the cases that I have been tracking, there are well over 50 that I've found so far in different applications where children have been affected.

• (1220)

Again, the target number for PRs based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds is being reduced by the government. That's according to the government's own immigration targets plan tabled in November. It's going to be reduced to 13,715 by 2024, and by 2025 it will be 8,000. This reduction raises significant questions of whether Hong Kong citizens and residents will still be accommodated within the stream.

If the government plans to reduce the total H and C down to 8,000—and I just mentioned that there are 8,357 applications, which means that some applications have dependents attached to them—and they're all supposed to receive an answer, hopefully, within a reasonable amount of time, then what is the government indicating to them? There are lots of other agency applications going on, and they can't all be reserved for Hong Kong residents.

The government is saying, on one hand, that it does care for these Hong Kongers who are fleeing an oppressive Communist regime that, through the Basic Law and further legislation that's passing at a local level, is further constraining the freedoms of Hong Kongers and pushing more people to leave the country and flee, like eastern Europeans did in the 1970s and 1980s and like my family did in the early 1980s. My father came here in 1983 and then could not return to communist Poland. It's the same situation facing Hong Kongers today, and we have a stream that is shrinking in size and is now below the total number of applications that Hong Kongers alone have put in. There are lots of other humanitarian and compassionate grounds applications that are being made.

I want clarity from the government on exactly what it's going to do, but I want this reported to the House so that we can have a full-some debate there and so that the House is made aware of what is going on. All these numbers are publicly available, and this motion puts them all together as a presentation piece, so that we can clearly see that this particular community has a great deal of anxiety about its future in Canada and about how many of its members will be allowed to stay as permanent residents and make contributions to Canada. They love democracy, human rights and free speech. They want to participate in the democratic process. These are, hopefully, future Canadians who will completely integrate into our system. We have a long history of Hong Kongers moving to Canada—becoming parliamentarians, even—and making a contribution to Canada. I have a lot of friends from there. I just find it appalling that the government would leave these people hanging, typically, until the last minute.



If I can make a comparison to what's been done with Ukrainian CUAET visa holders, when the program was to be shut down or extended, the government waited until the eleventh hour to announce what it was going to do. Now there are Ukrainian CUAET visa holders who are feeling the same rising level of anxiety that Hong Kongers in Canada have. I feel like this is the bellwether for how the government's going to treat other diaspora communities who are fleeing to Canada because of oppressive regimes overseas, so we have to do more. I want this reported to the House so we can have a fulsome debate.

• (1225)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

I have the speaking list: Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Madam Zahid, Madam Kwan and Mr. McLean.

The floor is with Mr. Chiang. Mr. Chiang, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome back, Mr. Chair, from moving your private member's business.

Good afternoon, everyone.

I thank the members across for the two motions that we are discussing this morning in committee. I'm sure we can get some work done today and get these things done so that we can move on with the other pressing matter that this committee has to work on.

I would like to amend the following thing in Mr. Kmiec's motion. After you wrote "open work permits and study permits", delete "and", and I would like to add, "pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government provide a comprehensive response." I'd like to add that to the end of the motion. In this way Mr. Kmiec can get an answer from the government on this important issue. Hong Kongers are important to me also. I have lots of Hong Konger friends too, one of whom is right across from me.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Chiang has brought an amendment.

Mr. Kmiec, do you accept that as a friendly amendment?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** I'd like to hear debate from others.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Now I will give the floor to Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You can keep my name on the list for after this is done.

I think it's important that we do this motion. I think there are other pathways to get responses from the government, including talking about it in the House. I don't like the idea, then, of adding this to the motion, as it takes away that ability from us.

I think I would not agree with this amendment to the motion, but I do support the motion, which I can talk about after.

• (1230)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Does anyone else want to speak to the amendment made by Mr. Chiang?

Madam Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to actually move a subamendment to the amendment. In fact, on this issue, what I think needs to be done is, of course, for the government to immediately resume priority processing for Hong Kongers. When the immigration measure was first introduced, the processing took six months, approximately. That's the average time it took people to be able to get their PR application. Now, it's being extended to 21 months.

In the meantime, what's happening is that people's study permits and work permits are expiring. For a few people I've talked to, they have already expired. For others, they are about to expire, so time is of the essence.

We know that immigration processing is often actually much delayed. What I would like to do, then, is amend this amendment as follows. In the line where it says, "to immediately begin processing renewals and extensions of open work permits and study permits", I would like to change that to "immediately automatically renew open work permits and study permits for Hong Kongers as they wait for their permanent residence applications to be processed". Then the rest follows.

I think that is absolutely essential, because the fear here for a lot of the folks is that as they wait.... Even if the government says it will resume priority processing, actually, government officials, from what I understand from one community group, have indicated to them that they have actually never stopped priority processing. However, nonetheless, it's taking 21 months for these applications to be processed.

In the meantime, people's statuses are expiring, so we need to make sure they don't lose their status. We're looking to what's going on with the priority processing and to resuming that work so that people don't end up being sent back to Hong Kong.

What's happening right now in Hong Kong is that article 29 has passed in Hong Kong, whereby the Hong Kong government is escalating the arbitrary detentions and arrests of Hong Kongers. Can you imagine, if people are sent back, what they will face? I fear that for them and their family members.

I am a Hong Konger. I was born in Hong Kong. The people there are subject to this turn of events where the national security law has been brought in and the Basic Law for Hong Kongers has been all but dismantled. As well, frankly, the promise that was made when the handover took place, not just to Hong Kongers but to the international community, has been breached.

Therefore, I think it is incumbent on us to do this work. The government says that it stands with Hong Kongers, so let's do it not just by words but in action. What needs to be done at this point in time is to ensure that priority processing is resumed and, in the interim, that the Canadian government automatically renews their work permits and study permits.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kwan.

Before I go to the debate, Mr. Clerk is asking if you can provide us with exactly where this should be inserted.

Mr. Clerk, is that all you want?

**The Clerk:** Yes.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I will repeat the language.

After the words “Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to immediately”, strike out the word “begin”. Then, we add in the word “automatically”. Then, we strike out the word “processing”. Then, the word “renewals” becomes “renew”, and we strike out “and extensions of”, and then it goes on to “open work permits and study permits”. After that, we add in “for Hong Kongers as they wait for their permanent residence applications to be processed”.

That last piece is just to make it clear that it applies to Hong Kongers. It's not forever in terms of renewing their study permit or work permit; it's just until their PR application is processed, so that they don't end up losing status as they wait and then getting caught in the bad situation of having no status while they wait, in violation of IRCC regulations, or being sent back to Hong Kong to face consequences that I certainly don't want to think about.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kwan.

We are debating on the motion brought forward by Mr. Kmiec, amended by Mr. Chiang and subamended by Madam Kwan.

Mr. Chiang, you are on the speaking list.

If anyone else is wishing to speak to this subamendment, please raise your hand.

Go ahead, Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Madam Kwan, for bringing your subamendment.

As you say, you were born in Hong Kong. I, myself, was not born in Hong Kong, but I do have lots of family in Hong Kong. Hong Kong holds a special place in my heart, too. I learned Cantonese because of my Chinese heritage, and I want to make sure I stay connected to my heritage.

We are good to support you on your subamendment. This committee is here to work together, to make sure we get the work done and that we can move forward, not to dwell too much on certain things. I would love to work and get this thing done. Hopefully, one day we can all go back to Hong Kong for a visit.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Chiang.

As there are no more hands up, I'll take the vote.

(Subamendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we are back to the debate on the amendment, and I have the speaking list.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** On a point of order, Chair, was the consent to the subamendment, or both the subamendment and the amendment proposed by—

**The Chair:** It was on the subamendment proposed by Madam Kwan.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Then we are back on the amendment proposed by Mr. Chiang.

**The Chair:** That is what it is, and I have the speaking list.

I have Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Madam Zahid, Madam Kwan and Mr. McLean.

Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On my proposed amendment to Mr. Kmiec's motion, with my amendment we can get more answers from the government, I believe, on this important issue we are debating here. It is something I want to see us get done. My amendment clarifies it more so that we can get a comprehensive response for this committee, so that we can do the important work we're doing here. I'm hoping that we can agree on my amendment, so that we can move on and get this thing done.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Do the members on the speaking list still want to speak on the amendment brought by Mr. Chiang?

No? You want to speak to the main motion. Okay.

Madam Kwan, please go ahead.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Can I just hear the whole subamended amendment of the motion, please?

**The Chair:** Mr. Clerk, could you please read it, when you're ready?

**The Clerk:** Ms. Kwan, I'll do my best, but because I didn't receive your text in written format—

**The Chair:** Why don't I suspend for two seconds and let Madam Kwan come and give you that? I don't want any excuses—

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Mr. Chair, before we suspend, are we doing the motion now with my amendment on it, too, or is it just Madam Kwan's?

• (1240)

**The Chair:** It's the amendment and the subamendment together. Thank you.

I'm suspending the meeting.

• (1240)

(Pause)

• (1245)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

The floor is with the clerk.

**The Clerk:** The motion reads as follows, and then I will read Mr. Chiang's amendment separately.

It is:

That the committee acknowledge it has received correspondence from the president of Canada-Hong Kong Link, Andy Wong; that it express its deep concern at the unreasonable delays being imposed on Hong Kong Pathway applicants of up to 21 months; that over 8,000 applications are still waiting to be processed; that Hong Kongers in Canada are freedom-loving people and keeping them in limbo is wrong; that the committee call on Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to immediately automatically renew open work permits and study permits for Hong Kongers as they wait for their permanent residence applications to be processed; and that this matter be reported to the House.

Then amendment by Mr. Chiang is to add, “pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government provide a comprehensive response” after “that this matter be reported to the House”.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any debate on this?

We're voting on the amendment of Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** After the vote, can I speak?

**The Chair:** You will have the floor first, on the main motion.

(Amendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** The amendment by Mr. Chiang to Mr. Kmiec's motion is adopted.

Now we are back to the motion brought forward by Mr. Kmiec and amended by Mr. Chiang and by Madam Kwan.

Is there any debate on that?

I will go to Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** I want to be on the speakers list for after the vote.

**The Chair:** Okay, I have the speaking list in this order right now: Mr. Chiang, Mr. Redekopp, Madam Zahid, Madam Kwan, Mr. McLean. If you are telling me you are not speaking now, I give the floor to Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for navigating that.

I just wanted to add my support for this. I met with members from Hong Kong who are suffering with these problems, so I think this is really important. The government said that there was going to be priority processing for these streams, stream A and stream B, for Hong Kongers in Canada, and as has been pointed out, these are freedom-loving people. These are people who can add to what makes Canada what we are.

These people are being unduly hurt, I would say, from the conversations I've had, by having their paperwork expire while they're waiting for the government to process their PRs. I've talked to mums who can't put their kids in school now because their paperwork is expired and technically they're in the country illegally now, and that's completely wrong and totally against the whole point of why these streams were created in the first place, to help these people escape the problems they were having in Hong Kong. Also, they don't have any options. They can't leave Canada. They can't go back to Hong Kong, so it's a real problem for them. It takes away their access to health care and education.

This is really important, and as my colleague, Mr. Kmiec, mentioned, the modus operandi of this government seems to be to wait until the very last minute before actually renewing something or

doing something about it. We've seen this time and again on different programs.

I don't want to see that here. I'd like to see some action, and that's why I think this is really important and those are my thoughts on this motion. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Redekopp.

I have Madam Zahid on the list.

Madam Zahid, do you want to say something?

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Not on this motion.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you.

Madam Kwan, do you want to say something?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll just finish up with some closing comments with regard to this. I want to say thank you to all the committee members for their support for my amendment, because I think it's absolutely essential that we restore people's status automatically.

This has been done before, by the way, Mr. Chair. During the COVID period there were many people who were falling out of status because of the situation, and I proposed to the then minister that what the government should do is automatically renew people's work permits and study permits so that they don't fall out of status. Many people were at risk of that, and as we know, when people fall out of status they're here illegally, and that would have implications for any immigration streams to which they might want to apply at a later date. It leaves a black mark on their file forever, so to preempt this, I think we should go forward with an automatic renewal.

The other thing with an automatic renewal is this. Aside from giving protection for people whose status would expire, it would also save IRCC resources. It would mean that they wouldn't have to go and process renewal applications and could instead invest that time and energy and those resources into processing permanent residence applications.

I really hope the government will actually undertake to do this work in action and not just in words. Thank you so much.

● (1250)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Kwan, and I have my dear friend, Mr. McLean, on the list.

Please go ahead. I'm sorry you had to wait a long time.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Thank you, and I won't be very long at all, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to my colleagues, Tom Kmiec and Brad Redekopp, and Mr. Chiang, for bringing this forward and speaking about this, and Jenny as well. Thank you very much.

It's a very important issue, and I think it's important for people to recognize what this means to people who are living in Canada who came from Hong Kong and who are waiting for their immigration process to be finalized or to be temporarily extended. Open work permits, when they're not extended, cause people to not get jobs, because some employers want to make sure they're hiring somebody for the two- or three-year term, and they want to make sure they're going to be there for the two- to three-year term. As my colleague, Mr. Redekopp, also said, when you have children in school, that school is provincial jurisdiction. It's overseen by provincial authorities, and they also want to make sure all the paperwork is there, so that the children can attend school legitimately and have the paperwork to do so.

The other situation, of course, is the health care system, and the health care systems in the provinces need to ensure that there's the right paperwork so that we provide health care services to people who are awaiting the paperwork requirements from IRCC as well.

This has become a situation in which too much is being held up, and we need to process these as we told people we would. Now all their representatives are coming here. We're parliamentarians. We represent this. It seems we're all speaking with one voice in this place.

Can we please move forward here as quickly as possible and get something done for these people? We've made promises to them and we've made commitments to them, and now we have to fulfill those commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McLean.

It seems like the list is exhausted. We will take a vote.

(Motion as amended agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Now that the motion has been voted on, I think we have important work to do in regard to the Afghan letter. We have taken too much time getting that letter completed. We have only a few paragraphs to go, and I wanted to see if we could finish the letter so that we can move on and have the ministers and department officials come in, speak to us and answer questions for us.

I would like to not delay that anymore. We should move on with getting the letter done at our next meeting, because today the time is running out, and we're almost at the one o'clock mark. I want to ask members across and colleagues here what they think.

At this time, I don't think we have enough time to get any more business done today. If they like, we can either suspend or adjourn the meeting until Wednesday.

● (1255)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Chiang, I'm sure you are well aware that you have to bring the motion to adjourn. Only then can I call the—

I see Mr. Chiang and then Madam Kwan.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** Okay. It is not debatable.

All in favour?

**Mr. Greg McLean:** We need to get business done. We have five more minutes. Do we need to adjourn?

**The Chair:** We have to go in camera if we work on the Afghanistan letter, which will take about 15 minutes.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** We've already agreed not to be in camera on it.

**The Chair:** It's not necessarily on the Afghanistan letter. I have to bring it forward again, and there will be a discussion on that one.

Madam Kwan.

Because this motion is non-debatable—

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** It is a non-debatable motion. We have five more minutes, so let's vote on this. I have one other bit of business I'd like to advance, if I may, which will hopefully take only three minutes.

**The Chair:** We will vote on the motion to adjourn.

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

**The Chair:** Madam Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll quickly move this. Hopefully, it's not controversial.

I move:

Given that between November 1, 2022, and November 24, 2023, only 77 of 21,472 applications from permanent residents seeking to join the regular force of the Canadian Armed Forces were accepted, that the committee call on the government to immediately take action to expedite processing times for permanent residents in the recruiting process, including the security screening process, and that this motion be reported to the House.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any debate on this motion brought forward by Madam Kwan?

All in favour...

I see Mr. Zuberi and Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** I'll go after Mr. Chiang, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I'm sorry. I have a point of order. Are we actually in a vote? We've already called a vote, so we're not in debate.

We're just clarifying whether or not the Liberals are voting for or against. Is that right?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order.

You didn't call the vote, Chair. You were just asking.

**The Chair:** I asked if you were all in favour. If there's not unanimous consent, then I will call a vote, right?

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Yes, that's what I'm saying. The vote has not been called.

**The Chair:** Yes.

Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Could we suspend this motion for now, because we don't have enough time to—

**An hon. member:** We're in the middle of a vote.

**The Chair:** No, no. We're not in the middle of a vote. I asked if there was unanimous consent.

If not, they have every right to say it.

Mr. Chiang had the floor.

Mr. Chiang, we still have a few minutes. You can speak on this motion.

• (1300)

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to add an amendment: "and pursuant to Standing Order 109, that the government provide a comprehensive response". That's it.

**The Chair:** Have you finished, Mr. Chiang?

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Now we are on the motion brought forward by Madam Kwan and amended by Mr. Chiang.

Is there any discussion on the amendment?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Just so I'm clear, Mr. Chair, the amendment is to ask for a comprehensive response from the government in addition to it being reported to the House. Is that right?

**The Chair:** That is correct.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Let's vote.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there unanimous consent in the room?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we are back to the motion brought forward by Madam Kwan, as amended by Mr. Chiang.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** The motion brought forward by Madam Kwan and amended by Mr. Chiang is carried.

It is 1:02. We'll go to Mr. Chiang and then Mr. Redekopp.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** We want to suspend.

**The Chair:** You want to suspend?

Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Do I have the floor?

**The Chair:** You have the floor.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Given the time of 1:02, I move that we adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** The motion is non-debatable. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Chair:** There isn't unanimous consent, so I'll ask the clerk to take a vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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