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Chair: Mrs. Karen Vecchio



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• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 90 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the members. I'll keep it very simple.

Make sure you do not put your earpieces near the microphones. Make sure your microphones are off when you're not speaking. For those on Zoom, make sure your booms are down when you're speaking. As a reminder, if there are any comments, bring them through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, use the "raise hand" function.

Pursuant to the order of reference from the House dated Thursday, November 9, 2023, and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, November 20, 2023, we are meeting to study the subject matter of supplementary estimates (B) 2023-24 and votes 1b and 5b under the Department for Women and Gender Equality.

I would like to welcome Minister Ien, who is accompanied by officials from the Department for Women and Gender Equality.

Minister Ien, it is wonderful to have you here today. We will be granting you five minutes for your opening comments.

The clock starts now. You have the floor.

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth): Hello, Madam Chair and honourable members.

[Translation]

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I'm speaking with you from the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin nation.

It's a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the Department for Women and Gender Equality.

[English]

It is an absolute honour to be part of this department's work and see up close the positive change that comes from the programs we offer and support. I see it when I speak to people who put their

heart into helping women and children flee violent situations. I see it when I speak to organizations that are connecting women with economic opportunities and people who are breaking down systemic barriers—indigenous women, women with disabilities, members of 2SLGBTQI+ communities, newcomers, and Black and racialized women.

WAGE's role is so key at a time when people, specifically marginalized people, are feeling the strain of inflation and trying to make ends meet. These programs make sure that no one is left behind in these really tough times and that women are connected to well-paying jobs and have more money in their pockets. In our role as convener, knowledge broker and capacity builder, we act as the glue between government departments and grassroots organizations and work alongside provincial and territorial governments to deliver on our commitment to build a more equitable country.

You've all seen this work through the national action plan to end gender-based violence that we launched just last year. We've already reached bilateral agreements with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, Yukon, Alberta and Northwest Territories, and an agreement for the Province of Quebec to support its strategy. The funding from these agreements is already flowing to provinces and territories. It's reaching frontline services to prevent violence and address the root causes of this issue, which we know needs to include men and boys. This is on top of the \$55 million in direct federal funding to indigenous organizations to end gender-based violence.

On the economic front, we've been able to support women's organizations that play a key role in improving access to education, employment, health and social services. Earlier this fall, I had the pleasure of announcing support for the LEAP Pecaut Centre for Social Impact. It's an organization that helps not-for-profit organizations tap into private sector talent. These non-profits do so much and have so little. They connect women with well-paying jobs. They find women and children affordable housing and social supports, and help newcomers find their footing. Through partnerships, they have already unlocked \$21 million in pro bono work from private corporations and positively impacted 6.4 million Canadian lives.

In the face of rising transphobia and homophobia in Canada and around the world, we launched the federal 2SLGBTQI+ action plan, supporting grassroots organizations that are focused on building safer communities.

While progress has been made, the gains we've achieved have not been enjoyed equally. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have threatened to roll back decades of progress on gender equality.

• (1105)

[Translation]

We know that we must go further, faster.

[English]

Again, we are making these impactful investments to ensure that no one is falling through the cracks in their time of need. We're doing this through these supplementary estimates by requesting \$6.9 million to help organizations on the front lines, such as LEAP, and \$18.6 million to go towards the menstrual equity fund pilot, which is making sure that no one in this country has to choose between buying menstrual products and putting food on the table.

[Translation]

I'm confident that by working together we will ensure that Canada remains the best place in the world to live.

[English]

We know, and we've seen first-hand, that we all benefit when we have equal opportunities to succeed.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

I am ready for questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Joining Minister Ien today we have Frances McRae, deputy minister, as well as Alia Butt, assistant deputy minister, strategic policy. We have the minister for the first hour, from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m., and then from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. we will continue with the department.

We will begin with our first round of questions, with Dominique Vien.

Dominique, you have the floor.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Good morning, Minister. Thank you for being with us today and welcome.

I'd like you to give us some information about the Menstrual Equity Fund you've set up. It's a two-year, \$25.3 million fund that was created for fiscal years 2022–2023 and 2023–2024.

If I understand correctly, in addition to the \$25.3 million that was already requested, you are asking for additional funding to ensure the fund's smooth operation.

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: Right now, Dominique, it is actually \$18.9 million in the estimates.

Am I correct, Deputy? Yes. It's not \$25 million.

I'm so glad you asked that question. I got a text just a little while ago. I saw product that actually arrived at a food bank. Food Banks Canada is the umbrella organization that is rolling this out. The product is starting to roll out across the country.

I have to quickly tell you that at the food bank in my own riding of Toronto Centre, when I made this announcement initially on the \$18.9 million, there was a woman who had a pad. She cut it in three—

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Minister, perhaps we can revisit distribution-related operations.

If I understood correctly this morning, the program ultimately costs less than the allotted \$25.3 million. Is that correct?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: It's not costing less. It was a pilot when it actually rolled out, Dominique. Right now, in the supplementary estimates (B), it's \$18.9 million, not \$25 million.

Is that making sense to you?

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Yes. How much have you spent so far?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: I can get you that number. The deputy is working on that.

We wanted to make sure that this was a national program. It is hitting every province, including the province of Quebec. I believe Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, NDG, looked at communities that needed this most. Product will be arriving. It's already arriving and will continue to arrive, so that those who need product can get it.

This is continuing. As I said, it's a pilot, so we have to document. We have to measure. We have to see whether or not this works across the country, from Nunavut to Quebec. Does it work? Is it working? Who's partaking? Is this umbrella formula that we have actually the way we need to go?

As you know, with a pilot, if it's working, then we can request more, but right now, this is what's been tabled in supplementary estimates (B). It's \$18.9 million. That's rolling out now.

As to how much we have spent so far, it's over to you, Deputy.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Please.

Ms. Frances McRae (Deputy Minister, Department for Women and Gender Equality): Thank you for the question.

The funds to be expended under the program amount to \$17.9 million as part of the agreement the Minister reached with the fund manager.

According to our documents, the department's internal operations will amount to \$0.6 million. Those expenses are part of the total amount.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: What exactly will this \$600,000 received by the department for operations be used for?

Ms. Frances McRae: Allow me to explain what we've been up to since the approval of Supplementary Estimates (B) 2022–2023, which announced the launch of the program.

Obviously, this was a project for which our department didn't have much experience when it was announced last April. So we spent a lot of time in consultations with, among others, Minister Jenna Suds, when she was Parliamentary Secretary, to ensure that the pilot project framework would truly work.

As you likely know, we also launched a competitive process to determine who would receive the full funding.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Did you have to hire external companies for that consultation, or was the \$600,000 used exclusively to pay public servants?

Ms. Frances McRae: Those funds were granted to the department.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Very well.

Ms. Frances McRae: You have one minute left.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: The pilot project ends in March 2024 and the organization Food Banks Canada was chosen in September, wasn't it?

If so, that doesn't leave much time to get the work done.

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: It's not a lot of time given to them to do the work, but as the deputy pointed out, we wanted to make sure that we engaged with communities that needed it the most. Of course, it's a pilot. You know that policy comes from things that are measured, so if this works, and we get the numbers we need and see where the need is, we can go back and re-address this.

[Translation]

Ms. Frances McRae: I'd like to add something.

If you visit Food Banks Canada's website, you'll see that the organization has a proven track record and that it has the necessary distribution network. We chose this organization because it was ready.

[English]

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you very much.

We're now going to pass the floor over to Sonia Sidhu. You have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister and all the officials, for being with us and for the hard work you are doing on the ground for women and girls.

This committee, Minister, just started a study on women's economic empowerment. We are looking forward to hearing from witnesses about the challenges women face while in the workforce or starting a business, as well as the success stories of women when they break barriers in various fields that are male-dominated.

As the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, what steps are you taking to close that gender wage gap, and what are you doing to support women-owned enterprises or businesses?

• (1115)

Hon. Marci Ien: As a federal government, we have addressed the gap. It's the private sector that has not, and we see what happens to women when they do the same job as a man and don't get paid the same amount. That is the basis for a lot of what we do here at Women and Gender Equality, also working in concert with the Minister of Small Business.

There are entrepreneurship programs. This is something that has been a bedrock, where I have seen lives changed first-hand. Also, it isn't just women helping women. I mentioned the Pecaute Centre for Social Impact. It's engaging the private sector to help women with mentorship, to get them started and to make sure they know what to do when they get to a bank and have to ask for a loan.

I also want to point out indigenous women and the \$55-million capacity fund we have that supports indigenous women who lead businesses. I'll point out that this sector in particular, Sonia, is doing so very well. Indigenous women are leading when it comes to entrepreneurship in this country, and it is the funding we provide at WAGE that helps with that.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you.

Yesterday, we stood together to commemorate a dark chapter in Canadian history. It has been over 30 years since the murder of 14 young women at the Polytechnique Montréal. This act of violence and misogyny shook our country and led Parliament to designate December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Yesterday, we commemorated the day—Minister, you were there—and remembered this horrifying act of misogyny.

We committed \$500 million in the last budget for the national action plan to end gender-based violence. Can you update the committee on the progress of the national action plan to end gender-based violence?

Hon. Marci Ien: If I might, I want to mention Andréanne Larouche here, as well as Dominique, who spoke in the chamber yesterday, as did I, on the day of remembrance. They were such powerful words.

Andréanne, you in particular said, “We’re here every year doing this. What does this mean? How much work is getting done?”

Those are valid questions. As I looked at all of us women standing in that House, I thought, we need to really understand that this is not a women’s issue, and that men and boys need to and have to be involved in this equation or, as Andréanne said, we are going to keep coming back and coming back.

I was so pleased to have that moment of silence. Many of you engaged, and we were there at the flame, and it really spoke so loudly to why the endorsement of this 10-year national action plan is so important. You asked for an update, and so far with the help of Lisa, our parliamentary secretary, we have signed 10 provinces and territories, along with the federal government, into agreement. That means money has rolled out. That means grassroots organizations are actually being impacted and can help people on the ground. That’s 10 provinces and territories.

It also speaks to the teamwork this is going to take. This means getting provinces, territories, the federal government and municipalities all on board with regard to fighting this and ending this. Again I stress that it’s men and boys. There’s no way we can solve this if we don’t address that. It is about prevention, and prevention is the first pillar of our action plan. When provinces and territories come up with their plans, at least 25% of those have to be on prevention. Then it’s the matter of underserved communities and then it’s making sure that the sector itself is secure. Those are the three tenets, and all provinces and territories need to meet them when they bring their plans. Ten of them so far are in agreement.

Thank you, Sonia.

• (1120)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: My next question is this. Yesterday I came across a UNICEF report showing a 20% reduction in child poverty in Canada from 2014 to 2021. This is a remarkable achievement.

What policies do you attribute this to, and what more can you say on that?

Hon. Marci Ien: In one word, it’s the CCB.

The Chair: Thank you.

We’re now going to move it over to Andréanne Larouche for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Thank you, Chair.

Like others, I can’t fail to mention that yesterday was December 6, the date on which, every year, we mark the horrific femicide that occurred in 1989, during which 14 women were killed simply because they were women. I said plenty on the subject yesterday, but I’ll come back to it later when I ask my questions. I feel I must emphasize this fact, as it is a significant event. We also have a duty to remember. We simply cannot forget these women, even 34 years after the tragedy.

At the time, I was seven years old—I’m revealing my age by saying that. The images of this tragedy are among the first that affected me, as a girl. In fact, I remember it very clearly. Today, I have a 21-month-old daughter. Being a mother has altered the way I view this tragedy. I think a lot about my daughter when I speak. For the past two years, my little girl has been on my mind every time I speak. I don’t know what’s going to happen, but I see the horrible rise of misogyny. I also see that we haven’t made much progress after all. We have gained some ground, but when it comes to violence against women, we’re haven’t moved forward. The number of femicides is on the rise, which is extremely worrying. But I’ll come back to this later, when I ask my questions.

One other thing worries me.

Yesterday, I said it was time for action. To that end, we’re aiming to create more representative, more diverse Parliaments. I even visited Rwanda last year: we were exploring ways of attracting more women to the various Parliaments. Indeed, we realize that we need them. We women make up 50% of the population, but here we barely make up 30% of MPs.

Given what’s going on right now, I don’t see how we’ll be able to attract more women into politics. I’m thinking of all my colleagues who will likely spend at least the next 36 hours voting. We’ll be taking turns. We’re suffering from incredible “proceduritis.” How can we send out the message that we want to see more women in politics when some people are so partisan, choosing to make us spend long hours or all night debating and voting? I don’t understand why people don’t realize that, in 2023, we need to approach politics differently. We won’t attract more women by engaging in politics this way.

I'm sorry, but, as a mother, I felt compelled to say so. This is hardly edifying for democracy. I have as many family obligations as I do in my riding, where, for example, I have to go out on week-ends and help people with food drives. I should be spending time in my riding, but I don't know what's going to happen in the next few hours. I'm not the only MP who feels this way.

That said, I will now turn to the minister.

In Supplementary Estimates (B) 2023–2024, \$6.3 million, part of the \$160 million budgeted, is earmarked for women's organizations and equity-seeking groups. These funds will be disbursed in the form of grants and contributions under the Women's Program.

I remind you that this program's purpose is to achieve women's full participation in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada through systemic change.

Beyond the way things are done here in Parliament, how could this funding help women's equity groups? There's so much left to do, one wonders if it will be enough and what changes it might bring.

Hon. Marci Ien: Thank you very much, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

If you'll permit me, I just want to acknowledge your courage and acknowledge the leader that you are. I can't bypass everything you just said. I want to acknowledge that.

How do we get more women in politics? It's a big question when we are in the environment that you described. I think more women seeing people like you doing this, and not just doing it but calling out the things you see, is really important. This is why we have some members we're looking at on a screen right now. This is why that is important. This is why we voted to keep it, but it is hard, and you are honest in everything you say. Thank you for saying it, and thank you for making sure it's on the record.

I had to address that before the women's program.

• (1125)

The Chair: You're at one minute, Andréanne.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: In practical terms, what is this money intended to do? What type of organization will be able to apply? What changes are hoped for and are specifically targeted? I'd like to come back to the budget and this program.

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: The women's program is so very important. I want to address here what has been categorized and characterized as cuts to it. They aren't. It's emergency funding. Emergency funding, Andréanne, is emergency funding, meaning that the national action plan and the half a billion dollars behind it that I mentioned before are meant to pick up where that emergency funding left off. People are saying this is a cut and are asking what we cut. I will always say that emergency funding isn't sustainable. The national action plan that I laid out and have been laying out this morning picks up where that left off.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister Ien.

I'm going to remind everybody of my wacky arm. When you start seeing me going like this, that means wind it down.

I'm going to pass the floor over to Bonita.

Bonita, you have the floor for the next six minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister, for being here today.

I want to talk a bit about the \$150 million in cuts to the women's shelters, but I want to start with menstrual equity.

I recently received a number of letters from a classroom of social justice students from Charles Best school, which is on the unceded and traditional territory of the Kwikwetlem.

Minister, in these letters they were asking for mandatory menstrual education. I want to read to you part of the email from the social justice teacher, Ms. Leslie. She wrote, "We are advocating for the inclusion of mandatory menstruation education in the public school system to dispel misinformation, empower children with knowledge and help end gender stereotypes. I believe you will find the students' arguments compelling and we look forward to hearing from you in the near future."

I will share those letters with you, Minister, but I wonder if you wouldn't mind sharing with the students, who I will definitely share this information with, what kind of education is planned. I know that we heard in this committee, in testimony around the menstrual equity study we did, that more education is needed. What can I tell the students about that?

Hon. Marci Ien: First of all, I love that students are writing to you and that they are so passionate, but as you know and they know, the provinces have jurisdiction over education. Do I wish I did, Bonita? I do, but it is provinces that do.

Here's what you can share with them. The fact that we even have a pilot and that it's called the menstrual equity fund is educating people. When it was included in the budget last year, it was considered a small thing, but there was so much interest in it. People wanted to know more. That's educating people. What does this mean? What does it mean that to buy menstrual products in Nunavut it's \$60 for a box of pads? What do you mean? What do you mean that women are showing up at food banks and other places and there's nothing there for them? There is now. What does that mean?

Provinces handle education, as you know. I am also the Minister of Youth, as you know. I love that they are engaged and they are passionate, but I would encourage.... As the deputy pointed out, Food Banks Canada has an amazing website that is up now and that will show students—because I know they are interested in these things—graphs and figures as to who gets what across this country, how it's being rolled out and how much money is behind all of this. It lays it all out. It's a great teaching tool.

I used to be a supply teacher, so I'm just letting you know that it's a great teaching tool. I love that they reached out.

• (1130)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much. As I said, I will send those letters on to you.

Hon. Marci Ien: Please do.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I wanted to talk about the \$150-million cut to women's shelters under the WAGE program. I hear you on what you have just said about the women's program, that these are emergency funds, but gender-based violence is not an emergency. It's systemic, embedded and consistent. Shelters have an ongoing need for operational funding to combat gender-based violence, because in addition it's on the rise. The current women's program is not helping shelters.

What is the government going to do to offer long-standing protection of women through shelters?

Hon. Marci Ien: We already are: The national action plan to end gender-based violence is a replenishment of funds. It's a continuation of our work.

When you talk about that cut, I say, listen, emergency funding is emergency funding, and that was in the context of the pandemic, Bonita. During the pandemic, which was qualified as and is an emergency, we stepped up and said, "Immediately, \$300 million is going out to make sure shelters have exactly what they need in this situation."

The action plan, with half a billion dollars behind it, picks up on this, and I can tell you that shelter organizations are benefiting in 10 provinces—and we've made these announcements—including in my province of Ontario. I was meant to be in your province today, but because of said votes that Andréanne so eloquently talked about, I will not be travelling. I was meant to sign into.... Well, we have signed the agreement, but I was meant to announce tomorrow morning in B.C., because your province has signed on, the rollout of this part of the action plan for the province of British Columbia.

Shelters are benefiting. Organizations on the ground are benefiting, and the good thing about each province and territory is that they can map out exactly what they need, so the Province of B.C. will target what it sees and needs. It has and will put that forward in its plan. I look forward to getting there sooner rather than later.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Minister.

As you're talking about communities as they need it, I want to talk a bit about the fall economic statement and the failure of the government to mention the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit individuals.

Today I am subbing in for my colleague from Winnipeg Centre. This is a crisis in her riding. I wonder if you could just share what's being done to support missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirited individuals across the country.

The Chair: Minister Ien, we are already over time on that.

Bonita, if you don't mind, I'm going to move that to your second round. Thank you.

We're now going to move over to our second round, with five minutes for the Liberals and the NDP and two and a half minutes for the Bloc.... I mean five for the CPC and Liberals—please bear with me today—and two and a half minutes for the NDP and the Bloc.

Michelle Ferreri, we'll start with you for five minutes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Thanks, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister, for being here today.

There are some serious issues happening in our country. You said on record in your statement today, Minister, that "policy comes from things that are measured". Those were your words. In the past year, more than 50 cities and municipalities across Ontario have declared intimate partner violence and gender-based violence to be an epidemic, including Toronto, Sudbury, Hamilton, Kingston and my hometown of Peterborough. One woman is killed every other day in Canada inside the terrifying rates of violence and, under this Prime Minister, violence against women has increased 79%.

This is my question for you today, Minister. We are studying Bill S-205 in this committee. The intention of Bill S-205 is to better protect individuals who file domestic violence complaints. As well, it creates a peace bond in the Criminal Code that is specific to and provides for more severe conditions for individuals accused of domestic violence, and the bill would allow the judge to require the accused to wear an electronic monitoring device if the judge determines that the victim's safety and life are at risk during the interim release period.

It is pretty important legislation that was brought forth by a senator whose own daughter was murdered, but in this committee, the Liberals and NDP voted to remove the two major components of that bill, one being victim consultation and the other being the words "intimate partner". They voted to remove "intimate partner" and replace it with "persons".

You've said here that we have an epidemic. You say we have an issue with gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. How can you justify your party's removing this from the bill?

• (1135)

Hon. Marci Ien: Michelle, it's good to see you.

First and foremost, our government under Minister Virani has declared intimate partner violence an epidemic. My home province of Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, has not, so I will start there.

With respect to Bill S-205, it's my understanding, Michelle, that it's being studied by a committee and that clause-by-clause is still in progress. As a guest of this committee, I will not speak to the decisions of committee members and the decisions they are making here. However, I will say, with regard to intimate partner violence, that just this year Keira's law was passed.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you. On that point, Minister, I think it's absolutely your responsibility to speak to this. This is your ministry file. You are there for women.

With respect to Keira's law, we worked on that in this committee. It is critical. We actually had testimony from Keira's stepfather, who said how important this legislation was and to leave it the way it was.

It is your party, Minister, that has removed these two components of this bill. How in the world can you justify not having every safeguard possible, when these cities have declared epidemics? Every other day in Canada, one woman is killed amid the terrifying rates of violence.

Hon. Marci Ien: That is why my province of Ontario should know—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Why are you passing that to the province, Minister?

Hon. Marci Ien: I am making it clear—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: You are the federal minister.

Hon. Marci Ien: I absolutely am, and I'm proud to be, Michelle, but I'm not a member of this committee. I am the federal minister. You are absolutely right, but this is still being studied by committee. Clause-by-clause is still in progress—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: They've already removed those amendments.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I want to remind the member to please allow the witness to answer the question.

The Chair: I appreciate that.

As is always the case here, the majority of the time will go to the questioner. That is the time. There will always be time given to the minister as well.

Thank you very much, Sonia.

Go ahead.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Minister.

I go back to the words you said, that “policy comes from things that are measured”.

When violence against women has increased 79% under this Prime Minister, how much more measurement do you need in order

to implement change and to not remove amendments in a bill that protects the victim, that consults the victim, that removes the words “intimate partner” and replaces them with “persons”?

How can you justify that?

Hon. Marci Ien: Bill S-205 is still being studied, Michelle. I look forward to what comes out of this committee.

Thank you so much.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: The bill is being studied, but your party removed these words, and that is done. That was done in this committee.

Hon. Marci Ien: I am not part of this committee, Michelle.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We'll now move over for the next five minutes. I'm going to pass it to Anita Vandenberg, who is online.

Anita, you have five minutes.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Minister, let me start by saying that I appreciate very much that you are giving agency to the members of this committee to make our own decisions and our own choices when it comes to legislation. I think it is very important that the legislative branch be able to make those decisions. Thank you very much for making sure we're able to do that.

Can you go into a little more detail about the earlier question about the wage gap? In the 42nd Parliament, I was chair of the pay equity special committee. Out of that, as you know, we finally have, for the first time, after 40 years of feminist groups trying, pay equity legislation at the federal level. Pay equity itself is not the whole story on the wage gap. There are also women's caregiving responsibilities, the fact that women-owned businesses aren't able to scale up as quickly on entrepreneurship, and the fact that when women face violence, they often also face economic abuse. There are many things that create barriers that contribute to that wage gap. I wonder if you could address what we're doing, broadly, on the gender wage gap.

Hon. Marci Ien: Thank you, Anita, for giving me the opportunity to expound a little more on what we're doing and have been doing.

I want to start by saying, because I mentioned indigenous women before, that in my estimation, it's a story that isn't told enough—how that wage gap and those opportunities for indigenous women are turning into, and have been, amazing success stories of businesses across this country. They are businesses that are recognized globally. Of wage funding, 31% goes to indigenous people. I point out that statistic because it speaks to empowering women and empowering communities. We know that when women do well, communities do well.

There are so many stories, Anita, of women who were afraid to go to financial institutions because they knew they wouldn't be heard. There were stories that they were turned down for loans, weren't supported, didn't have the mentorship they needed or had a dream they didn't think they could actually pursue, because they wouldn't have the benefits that, frankly, men would have. On top of that, as you mentioned, there are children. We know that, in this country, by and large, women are caregivers.

This is where we weave everything together when it comes to having child care, and \$10 a day child care, being rolled out in our country. In my home province of Ontario, \$8,500 per child is being saved. That allows women to stay in the workforce. It allows them to learn. It allows them to progress, so there is that.

I also believe that, as the federal government, we are a model. Because we've passed this legislation that you mentioned, Anita, this is a model to the private sector. It's a model to others that shows what can happen when women are rightly paid the way their male counterparts are and rightly given the opportunities that they deserve.

• (1140)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Minister, thank you so much for talking about the intersectionalities and the fact that different groups of women, of course, face that barrier even more. You mentioned indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. What about women with disabilities, racialized women or newcomer women?

There are a number of different intersectionalities. It can be many of those things within one woman. Could you talk a bit about that too?

Hon. Marci Ien: That's the basis of what we do. In all our programming at WAGE, we have put those who are disproportionately impacted first. That means everybody you just mentioned in that intersectionality, Anita, whether it is women with disabilities, women from rural communities, racialized women or newcomer women. That is where the mentorship opportunities.... I mentioned the Pecaute Centre, but there are others, even within friendship centres across this country. There are opportunities now for women to get mentorship from those in the private sector, pro bono. There are programs, and that means newcomers are welcomed to their communities and given the skill sets they need to get their first jobs.

Might I point out here that—

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. I'm sorry. That's all my fault. We're way over time. I'm sorry, Minister.

I'm sorry, Anita. That's my clock error. I apologize.

I'm now going to pass it over, for two and half minutes, to Andréanne Larouche.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Chair.

Minister, I'd like to come back to the issue of violence against women and gender-based violence.

Yesterday, I met with representatives of the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne, and they told me they had been completely overlooked in the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. They told me there were no measures to help francophone women.

Of course, when a woman is a victim of violence, it's vital that she have access to services in her own language. For example, there are no shelters for French-speaking women in far too many places in Canada. They have no way of getting help in their own language.

Minister, do you plan to rectify this situation?

Hon. Marci Ien: Thank you for the question, Ms. Larouche.

[*English*]

I was pleased last week to be in Quebec—we missed you being there, and we will catch up—to announce with Minister Biron a Quebec strategy to end gender-based violence. Minister Biron pointed out all the things that Quebec is doing in order to address this.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Excuse me, Ms. Ien. I wasn't talking about the Quebec strategy. I was talking about Francophone women, from the francophonie elsewhere in Canada.

At the Secrétariat à la condition féminine du Québec, of course, French is spoken. However, Canada doesn't provide the same services under the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence to help francophone women outside Quebec. At a meeting yesterday, representatives of the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne lamented the fact that there was, regrettably, nothing to help them in this action plan.

And yet, they were consulted, Minister. They submitted proposals to you.

[*English*]

Hon. Marci Ien: I was about to say that they were consulted. They are part of the minority groups that are laid out in the action plan.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Minister, although you say they're among the minority groups in the Action Plan, there are no measures, there are no proposals. Francophone women outside Quebec have no help or services in their own language. There's nothing specific in the Action Plan to help them. There are no adapted services in place to support them. That's what they told me yesterday at the meeting. They asked me to put the question to you, because they would like to see the situation remedied. They want help in their own language, French. That's what I wanted to say.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Larouche. Your time is up.

[English]

We will now pass it over to Bonita.

Bonita, you have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, in July of this year, CBC published a report card on the implementation of the calls for justice from the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. It has been four years since the national inquiry published the calls, yet only two out of 231 calls have been completed, while more than half haven't even been started.

What is WAGE doing to further the implementation of the calls for justice? Why aren't these efforts mentioned in the fall economic statement or being funded?

Hon. Marci Ien: As I mentioned—I wouldn't be going too far to say this—the bedrock of this ministry, 31% of all WAGE funding, goes to indigenous people, indigenous-led businesses, indigenous communities. Under my portfolio, we've invested \$55 million over five years to bolster the capacity of indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people and organizations.

This is violence prevention programming. This is grassroots programming. This is programming that I've seen. This is young people getting back to the land and learning from elders. This is the revitalization of language. This is starting and being led by indigenous people but starting with the youngest people. This is looking at the root causes of violence.

I might mention the red dress alert, because Leah isn't here today and does such excellent work. As you mentioned, Winnipeg Centre is the epicentre of a lot of this. Leah is now sitting at a table. She is alongside Emergency Preparedness. She is alongside Crown-Indigenous Relations. She's alongside ISC. She's alongside many other ministries in understanding how we roll this out well and make sure that this happens in a way that is indigenous-led. Leah is sitting at that table and I'm glad she is.

There is a lot of work being done, Bonita. Is it all that needs to be done? Absolutely not, but on WAGE's part, I will again say that it is the bedrock.

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you very much, Minister.

We'll now finish up this round with five minutes to Dominique and five minutes to Emmanuella.

Dominique, I'll pass the floor over to you for five minutes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: I will share my five minutes with my colleague, Ms. Ferreri.

The Chair: Very well.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Minister, last April, your colleague Ms. Fortier, then president of Treasury Board, announced \$15 billion in upcoming cuts in no particular order, after the budget was tabled, because there had been a great deal of spending.

Were you specifically asked to proceed with budget cuts in your own department?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: I will send that over to the deputy, because I want to be specific, Dominique.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: The officials will stay with us after you leave.

I was once a minister. You've probably had conversations with the President of Treasury Board. What kind of conversation did you have about these upcoming cuts?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: I haven't had discussions on those cuts as yet.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: So you didn't receive any directives about the necessary cutbacks to meet the \$15 billion in desired cuts.

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: No, Dominique, the question was whether I had had a discussion with the Treasury Board president about cuts. I have not.

As soon as there is more information on that, we can get that to you.

I just want to be very clear.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Did your department receive an order to cut back from Treasury Board?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: Yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Very well. What was that amount?

With all due respect, Minister, I'm somewhat surprised that you don't have that figure in mind.

Ms. Frances McRae: Let me explain—

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: I do have it on hand.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Briefly.

Ms. Frances McRae: I'll explain the conversations he had with Treasury Board.

Essentially, the process is still underway. Yes, we're going to participate in it, as we've been asked to do. However, the numbers—

Mrs. Dominique Vien: And how much will that participation amount to?

Ms. Frances McRae: The figures for the requested share will appear in the Estimates.

What you probably saw, in Supplementary Estimates (B) 2023–2024, reflects cuts of roughly \$579,000 in travel and professional services budgets. That's what was in the documents tabled in Parliament, so far.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: I have one last question. There was one thing that my colleagues on this side of the room and I didn't quite understand.

Is the budget for the Menstrual Equity Fund \$25 million, or rather \$18 million for the entire program?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien: We're talking about \$18 million now.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Thank you very much, Chair.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Going to the pilot program for menstrual equity, because we're here today for supplementary estimates, you're asking for \$18 million more, but in the supplementary estimates that we have here, it's over \$25 million when it's broken down. I understand that the equity contributions are simply \$18 million. For clarification, is that where you're coming up with that number?

Hon. Marci Ien: Yes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: One of the questions I have—and we studied this in committee—is around the fact that federally regulated employees are eligible for this. That seems a little odd and wrong. We have low-income people accessing food banks at the highest rates in history, and you're mandating that federally regulated employees be subsidized to receive menstrual equity products.

Hon. Marci Ien: Michelle, thanks for the question, but those are two different things. It's just that they happened at the same time.

There were three things rolling out. In all federally regulated buildings, under the Ministry of Labour, there had to be menstrual products. At the same time as this pilot, the Minister of Labour and I believe it was Minister Hajdu for ISC—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: How much is that costing, Minister?

Hon. Marci Ien: That is a Minister of Labour decision, so I can get that to you.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Yes, if you could table that for the committee, it would be wonderful.

Hon. Marci Ien: Yes, that's fine.

Then our menstrual equity pilot, in that fund, is separate.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you for clarifying that.

Very quickly, because I have only 10 seconds, Food Banks Canada is paying only \$106,000 to administer the program. Under your operating grants here, you're saying \$537,000. It is the food banks that are really doing this, but they're spending only \$106,000. Why is the government using \$537,000 of taxpayer money to administer this?

The Chair: We are over time.

Perhaps you could table that.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: That would be great. Thank you.

The Chair: We're going to go online, to Emmanuella.

Emmanuella, you have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister, for being here with us today.

The first question I don't think you'll necessarily be able to answer, but I would also like documents tabled, if possible. Women's health is a major concern of mine. There's a huge gap when it comes to women and men being misdiagnosed. Women are misdiagnosed 30% more often than men. Because, for years, women were left out of research, very little is known about many women's conditions, such as endometriosis, ovarian cancer, etc.

I did a lot of work trying to push Minister Duclos, when he was the health minister, to change the guidelines that are put in place for breast cancer, so that women across the country could get screened as of age 40 instead of 50. I know that it's more the health minister's job to do that, but is there any way you can help us get the information to committee to say if there's been a gender-based analysis put on the budget that we put forward last year on health? There was a big chunk of money going into health. If we could see how much of that was going towards women, if there was a gender-based analysis done on that, I think that would be really helpful.

• (1155)

Hon. Marci Ien: You're absolutely right. Thank you for the question, Emmanuella.

I will say that on breast cancer screening, this is where intersectionality becomes an issue as well. For Black women in particular, the screening ages can be deadly. When it comes to the intersectionality of when we screen, whether it's 40 or whether it's 50, that is real. All of that will be tabled.

Yes, as far as GBA+ is concerned, it is applied to each and every ministry across government.

Thanks so much.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you. If you could table any information you have on the money that was put into health last year, that would be great.

I know that you kicked off the 16 days of activism to end gender-based violence in Quebec. I'm wondering if you can go into a little more detail about what the Province of Quebec is planning to do to help combat gender-based violence.

Hon. Marci Ien: Thanks so much.

We actually kicked it off with Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and it's been ongoing, but you're right, Emmanuella, Quebec was last week. Minister Biron was talking about those who are impacted most. It's important to state again that each province and territory has autonomy when it comes to what they feel their province or territory needs. Minister Biron talked a lot about indigenous communities. She talked a lot about prevention. She talked about men and boys.

My colleague, Minister Duclos, who is the MP for Quebec, talked about the importance and what it means for men and boys not only to be at the table but also to understand that they are and can beat the root causes of this violence. Minister Biron has a plan that will continue to be rolled out, but having indigenous people focus on strengthening the sector as well is a big part of that plan.

If you like, Emmanuella, we can connect you to Minister Biron and her team. As well, we will be putting on our website the framework for this plan. What that means is a breakdown of each province and territory, how much money has been received and where they are targeting those funds. You can see which province is doing what, who is targeting what, what their plan is and whether they're sticking to their goals. On an annual basis, they will be before our department to look at what they've accomplished. That is contingent on whether or not the money continues.

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thanks.

I know that this will be a loaded question for 45 seconds, but violence against indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people does continue to be the biggest tragedy in this country. You did speak a bit about what we've done. You said 30% of the funding has gone there.

Hon. Marci Ien: It's 31% of all WAGE funding.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: What does that equate to?

Hon. Marci Ien: It's a lot of things. There's a capacity fund that is \$55 million. What it's meant to do, Emmanuella, is bolster the capacity of 2SLGBTQI+ people as a whole. It addresses violence and addresses all these things.

I'm getting the wrap-up sign, so let's chat more about this. We can get all the information to you, okay?

The Chair: Yes, you were getting the wrap-up sign because her five minutes were up, but we do have one minute left, and that's why you're going to be stuck with me for a question, because Emmanuella got me thinking big time.

I was sitting on the health committee last night, where we were talking about random tests. In terms of the majority of the people who were being used in these random tests on breast cancer, I believe that 98% was the number for white women.

We know that for people who are racialized it's those greater than the age of 40 who should be screening, and for white women, I believe it's at the age of 60 that they're more prone.

It needs to start earlier. I cannot see that a gender-based analysis was actually done on the 2018 guidelines. Can you please table that if possible?

• (1200)

Hon. Marci Ien: Absolutely, and with pleasure.

The Chair: Thank you. I really appreciate it.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Minister Ien for coming here.

We will be remaining here with Ms. Butt and Ms. McRae. We will have them for the remaining hour, but on behalf of the committee, thank you very much, Minister Ien, for being here.

We will suspend for about two minutes, just so we can get back on track.

Thank you very much, Minister Ien.

We're suspended.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1200)

The Chair: We're back, committee. We will continue with our rounds of questioning.

We are starting our second round. We'll start with the CPC. We'll have Dominique Vien...after her next bite.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Okay. We'll switch over to Michelle Ferreri for the beginning of our second round.

Michelle, you have the floor.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Enjoy your meal, Dominique.

Thank you so much to everybody for being here and for answering our questions.

I think one of the biggest concerns that is on the floor right now is just the efficient use of money. I think that is the number one concern when we have a cost of living crisis. I'm hoping you guys can shed some light on supplementary estimates (B) 2023-24 and the funds advocating "gender equality".

Just under \$7 million was allocated to this in grants and contributions, but \$537,612 of that goes to departmental operating costs. My question is, why is this operating cost so high? That's almost 10% on an operating budget. What is that money going to? How is it an efficient use of money?

Ms. Frances McRae: I was looking for the chair, to answer the question, but perhaps I'll just start.

I just want to make sure I know what you're looking at, which is the supplementary estimates for this year, and the columns you're looking at, which are "Operating expenditures", "Grants and contributions", and then "Statutory". Is that what you're looking at?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Yes, I believe so. It's the \$160 million budgeted over three years, but then underneath the supplementary estimates (B) 2023-24, on the funds advancing "gender equality" in particular, it's just under \$7 million. The exact number is \$6,837,612.

• (1205)

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Then the operating costs are \$537,612. That's my question. I just want to know how that money is broken down.

Ms. Frances McRae: Sure. Generally speaking, when we do grants and contributions, it does take a fair bit of time for us to run a process, for example.

I will just mention one of our latest processes on the women's programs, which closed on November 7. We had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of applications, which is great, but it does take time to do the assessment and advice on which ones get funded. We are always oversubscribed, so that, really, the operating money is to enable our folks to go through properly, do the assessments and then manage the contribution agreement process.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: The \$537,000 is strictly for you guys to decide who gets the money...?

Ms. Frances McRae: Well, it's to enable us to do the work of the proper assessment of the hundreds and hundreds of applications that we get, to be able to determine the amount of money we can provide and to whom, and to provide that advice, so it's \$500,000 or so, which is a few people to do the work.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: How many is "a few"?

Ms. Frances McRae: Well, generally speaking, I would say that the Treasury Board Secretariat tends to estimate full-time equivalent folks at a certain level. We do have, as well, the employee benefits plan that has to be factored into that. There's essentially a formula, depending on... If it's the level of an officer, it might be an EC-05. There's a specific range of salary, and we tend to go through—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: What would that range of salary be? I guess what I'm having a hard time understanding here is that you said "hundreds of applications", and this is \$537,000 to determine who gets money.

Ms. Frances McRae: Let's think about the total value. The applications we get represent well over \$500 million in terms of requests. For us to spend time properly assessing those, we really want to make sure we are giving everyone a fair shot.

We take the time we need to assess each application carefully. Then, as I said, the additional piece is the assessment, then the decision-making process and then the establishment of the contribution agreements, which then requires monitoring and discussion with each recipient.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Are you saying it takes more money to decide if somebody gets a \$500,000 contract, a \$10,000 contract or a \$5-million contract? Are you saying it's going to cost more money to assess that?

Ms. Frances McRae: I'm saying it costs more money when you have a large volume of applications.

Each application has to be looked at separately and properly. That takes the time that we have in our—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Who measures how long, or do you have key performance indicators of how long it should take you to assess an application?

Ms. Frances McRae: For the assessment of the applications, I would have to go back to our team to find out exactly how long it takes them. It depends on the call and on what we've requested of each applicant.

I would say, overall, when you have that level of volume and demand—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Are you mandated on how long it takes?

The Chair: Your time is over. Thanks very much, Michelle.

We're going to move on now to Marc Serré.

Marc, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Ms. McRae, thank you for the work you're currently doing.

My first question concerns the National Action Plan to end gender-based violence, which we have implemented.

Before we get into specific criteria, I'd like you to briefly explain why some opposition parties are saying there were budget cuts. As I understand it, before the pandemic, funds were allocated on a project-by-project basis. During the pandemic, we obviously had emergency funds, which doubled. The provinces also contributed. In any case, the Horizon Centre for Women in West Nipissing received additional funds and the province also contributed.

Now, the program has existed for 10 years. These are the ongoing funds, which is what agencies requested.

So, there were project funding and additional emergency funds during the pandemic, and now there's a ten-year plan including the provision of ongoing funding that helps organizations and provinces.

Have I accurately summarized the situation?

• (1210)

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you for the question.

With regard to the National Action Plan, it's true that each participating province and territory must also contribute in some way, that's part of the Action Plan. It is indeed a 10-year action plan.

Presently, there is funding for four years. We're working very closely with the provinces and territories to make sure the existing funds are well spent and that we can demonstrate the results of that funding on the ground.

Then, if there are adjustments to be made to the strategy and funding, governments across Canada will have the opportunity to make them.

Mr. Marc Serré: If I understand correctly, one of the action plan pillars focuses on men and boys.

I joined the committee five or six years ago. At the time, the government had launched a temporary program. Now, if I understand correctly, it's part of the negotiations with the provinces. It's one of the first pillars. I think the minister mentioned earlier that it accounts for about 25% of the funds allocated.

Can you explain to us where the money is invested for educating men? The approach is different for adults and for boys in elementary and high school. We certainly understand the importance of prevention and education to ensure that these men are part of the conversation and the solution.

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you for the question.

This is a societal issue we need to address, and men and boys are part of the solution.

I've heard what the committee's witnesses have said here in the context of other studies you've done. Clearly, there's work to be done around the trauma that men and boys have experienced and the ways they manage their emotions. That's part of the prevention pillar. As the minister said, each province has to invest at least 25% of the funding in prevention. There are many examples of how various governments and organizations are tackling this issue.

It's important to realize that not everyone needs the same solution, necessarily. For example, we're working very closely with an organization called Pauktuutit in the north, which has really important programs for young Inuit men, but it's not the same thing for people in, say, rural Nova Scotia.

We absolutely have to tackle the issues that are specific to each place, and that's what the national action plan to end gender-based violence will help us do.

Mr. Marc Serré: I'd like to pick up on Ms. Larouche's question and talk about the work you're doing now with francophone women across the country, who were forgotten in the action plan.

Can you tell us about the negotiations and what can be done to better support francophone women in minority communities in Canada?

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you for the question—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm going to leave that as a statement, not as a question, since we're way over time.

Thank you so much.

We're now going to move over to Andréanne Larouche.

You have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was going to ask you a different question, but I'll go with what Mr. Serré asked because the minister more or less answered my question when I asked her.

Anyway, I saw you nod just now. I'd like to hear what you were going to say about the lack of services for francophone women outside Quebec. They were consulted and clearly explained the fact that francophone women who are victims of violence and need health care or need to be heard have to be understood in their own language. In a crisis situation, they cannot be served in a language other than French.

What's your plan for addressing that?

• (1215)

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you very much for your question. I'm very happy to be able to share information about that with you.

We've had several conversations with the representatives of the association you mentioned earlier. We put them in touch with our provincial and territorial colleagues, each of which has a network of partners they work with to develop and implement their plan.

For example, in British Columbia, the people representing the organization you mentioned were very interested, and they told me they hadn't managed to join the provincial consultation network, so we put them in touch with those people. I also met with the people in charge of that organization when we were on Prince Edward Island during the last meeting.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: You're talking about the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne. I met with its representatives yesterday to discuss their pre-budget requests because any national action plan comes with funding, of course. They analyzed the action plan and its envelope, and they came to see me to make sure this would be fixed in the next budget and there would be money specifically to help francophone women.

Will you be fixing that in the next budget and updating the national action plan to end gender-based violence?

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you very much.

Our priority is to roll out the national action plan. We want to make sure the association and its members are part of the conversations with their province or territory. It's important to us that the provinces and territories consult people on the ground.

We have other projects aimed at supporting women in minority language communities, and we're working with groups in New Brunswick, for example. We can probably tell you more about those projects later, but we have to make sure that the people who need services get them in their language, as you say.

The same goes for immigrant women. We worked with the provinces and territories to make sure those women are taken into account in their action plans.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: We're running out of time, so I just want to point out that those women have been forgotten and there aren't really any services available to them. I would invite you and the department to think about that. These people say they weren't consulted. They say they sent you their recommendations, but nothing was earmarked for them.

Unfortunately, I didn't have enough time with the minister. Like some of my other colleagues, I'm concerned about the cuts that Treasury Board has directed various departments to make. The minister more or less addressed that. You tried to add something. We're talking about cuts now, and I'm trying to find the number you mentioned. Maybe I'll let you elaborate on that.

There have been questions. We completely agree that there needs to be better oversight over public finances. However, Women and Gender Equality Canada has a huge amount of work to do in various areas, especially to address the needs of female victims of violence.

I'm trying to understand exactly where you're planning to make those cuts. You're talking about millions of dollars. Can you give us the specific amount again? I'm sure you've started looking at where you can make those cuts. I sincerely believe that, with everything that's going on, cutting budgets is the last thing we should be doing. We should be increasing them.

Given how great the needs are, I believe we need to think about this. I'm worried about the impact these cuts could have. We've always said that, in some cases, we have to keep helping people in really difficult situations.

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you for the question.

The purpose of the resources we have at Women and Gender Equality Canada is really to enable us to fulfill the role we've been given within the government as a whole. As the minister said, our organization has a few hundred people, which isn't a lot. Our role isn't to do everything related to equality, be it of women or gender-diverse people. Our role is to act as a catalyst and spur others to action.

Personally, I believe that the resources and the needs exist throughout government. We do agree that we need to pay attention to 50% of the population.

• (1220)

[English]

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you so much.

We will now move over to Bonita.

Bonita, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

I want to revisit the funding cuts on emergency shelters. I asked the minister about the \$150-million cut around the emergency pandemic funding, when gender-based violence is still an emergency. It's systemic. It's embedded. It's consistent. This funding is still desperately needed. Saying that the women's program will meet the ongoing needs of shelters.... How much funding are we talking about to meet the need, and is this addressed in the supplementary estimates (B)?

Ms. Frances McRae: In terms of the work that we're doing with shelters, first of all, Women's Shelters Canada is a very strong partner of ours. We work with them very closely on a range of issues.

There are a couple of things I would say.

One, the minister talked about the gender-based violence national action plan. The shelters are a part of the conversations that provinces and territories are having. As we are able to publish the action plans for each jurisdiction, we will be able to see where those funds are going.

I would also mention the crisis hotline agreements that we had, and this was also during the pandemic. With the demand for crisis hotlines having grown significantly, we committed \$30 million over five years to address that. Agreements with all of the provinces and territories have been signed. The money is out there.

We see that there are a lot of areas where we can support. Victim services are our key issue as a key part of the pillars for the gender-based violence national action plan, and we look forward to being able to share all of the provincial and territorial plans with folks.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: This is very concerning—that what I'm hearing is not a commitment in the supplementary estimates on meeting the needs of shelters. We have \$150 million cut from a \$300-million promise.

Therefore, my next question is this: What about the other half, then, of this \$300 million? Are the women's shelters at risk of losing the additional \$150 million promised to emergency shelters?

Ms. Frances McRae: I'm going to see if I can ask Alia to answer that question, because Alia was around when all of this work was being done.

Ms. Alia Butt (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Department for Women and Gender Equality): The \$300 million was specifically to fund shelters, sexual assault centres and any organization that was supporting those who were fleeing any kind of gender-based violence during the pandemic, so that funding was very specific to that emergency situation.

I just want to clarify that WAGE did not have resources previous to that to provide any kind of funding to shelters specifically in terms of their operations. This was emergency, pandemic-specific funding, so that they could keep their doors open, because we knew there was a rise in violence against women. We could see what was happening in other countries before the pandemic came to Canada, so this was what that funding was for specifically. It's not necessarily a cut, but it was time-limited funding.

The pivot we're talking about now is moving towards a national action plan in which we're working with each province and territory, through the \$500 million plus that was announced in the budget, to put in place bilateral agreements under which each province and territory can prioritize what their needs are with respect to ending gender-based violence over the 10-year national action plan.

We talked about things like requiring 25% of the funding to go for prevention, but we also have priorities within the national action plan for the funding, which include stabilizing the sector.

This is where we're sort of moving towards some of that support potentially coming through PTs. As the deputy minister said, we plan to make those bilateral agreements and the plans public on our website.

Thank you.

• (1225)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I have a follow-up question to that, then.

Can you share what the parameters were by province or territory for allocating those funds? What information was used, by province and territory, to allocate those funds?

Ms. Frances McRae: The funds allocated to each province and territory are allocated based on the formula we usually work with Intergovernmental Affairs and the Privy Council office to establish.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Can you share those, please?

Ms. Frances McRae: They will all be public. As the agreements are being made public, you'll see all the numbers come out.

Right now, as the minister mentioned, we already have about 82% of the total funds available accounted for, and the rest will be accounted for shortly.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you.

Madam Chair, can I ask that the criteria be tabled with this committee—not the “post” criteria, but the “pre” criteria with respect to how the money has been allocated—as well as “post”, if that's all we have.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: You're welcome. Thank you so much.

We're now going to start our next round, which will be five minutes, five minutes, two and a half and two and a half.

I'm going to pass it over to Dominique Vien for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. McRae, I'm interested in the cuts Ms. Freeland announced. Actually, it was the President of the Treasury Board who announced \$15 billion in cuts.

Earlier, you said there might be cuts to travel and professional services. Do I have that right?

Ms. Frances McRae: I said that, in the supplementary estimates (B), there was \$579,000 less than in the main estimates. That's the amount allocated to travel and professional services for this fiscal year. That budget cut applied to every department.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: So, if I understand correctly, all departments had to make cuts to travel and professional services. Is that right?

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Okay.

Off the top of your head, do you know what proportion of that \$580,000 is for travel versus professional services?

Ms. Frances McRae: The Department of Finance and Treasury Board gave us a total amount, told us what our share was and what was cut.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Okay.

In this case, is the Department of Women and Gender Equality in a position where it has to cut all the budgets that would otherwise have been spent on services from outside firms? Is there still money for outside firms?

Ms. Frances McRae: I want to make sure I understand the question.

Are you asking me if we cut spending elsewhere to pay outside firms?

Mrs. Dominique Vien: No, that wasn't my question.

You're telling us that almost \$600,000 has been cut from travel and professional services. Once those cuts have been made, will there be any money left for you to hire outside firms?

Ms. Frances McRae: The \$569,000 I mentioned was cut for this year.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Can you still hire outside firms?

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes, we can.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Do you intend to?

Ms. Frances McRae: Do you mean between now and the end of the year?

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Yes.

Ms. Frances McRae: We're still spending money on professional services, which we get from both internal and external firms.

For example, we pay for professional services like Pay Centre services.

Another example would be the Department of Justice, to which we would pay legal fees.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: It can also include firms outside of government. Is that right?

Ms. Frances McRae: It's possible.

For example, if the minister does an event, we need to go to external firms for interpretation services—

Mrs. Dominique Vien: So you don't use internal resources for that, you use external resources. Is that right?

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes.

• (1230)

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Ms. McRae, can you tell me how many people the department has hired since 2015?

I don't need an exact number, just an approximate one.

Ms. Frances McRae: We can get you that information.

People definitely come and go, so we'd have to take into account the number of people who have come and gone.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: You can just give us an approximate number. You're a deputy minister, so you're used to dealing with these kinds of numbers. You see them every day.

How much would you say the number has gone up by?

Ms. Frances McRae: Are you asking how much it has increased by since 2015?

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Yes.

Ms. Frances McRae: We became a department in 2018. The number of employees went up significantly then.

In 2015, there were 70 of us. Now, we're at almost 400.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: That's getting to be a lot of people.

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes, but the—

Mrs. Dominique Vien: How do you justify going from 70 employees to nearly 400?

Ms. Frances McRae: We've been asked to do a lot more things in connection with the funding voted by Parliament and work on gender-based violence. We set up a new secretariat—

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Lastly, Ms. McRae, do you have room to do—

The Chair: Mrs. Vien, your time is up.

Thank you.

[*English*]

I am now going to pass it over to Lisa.

Lisa, you have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Frances and Alia, for being here with us today.

I just want to clarify off the top that we have not actually seen cuts to funding for women's shelters. It was pandemic funding that was disbursed. When that ended, we started a national action plan, which is now rolling out across the country.

Can you clarify that on the record?

Ms. Alia Butt: That is correct.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: Thank you.

Further, my colleague Ms. Zarrillo asked about the formula for funding through the national action plan. I think there is a formula that you can share with the committee. I believe it's that the provinces get a base funding of \$2 million; territories get a base funding of \$4 million, and then it's calculated based on population.

Ms. Frances McRae: Yes. The formula is the one that is typically used for transfer payments to provinces and territories, and that is government-wide.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: Thank you. I just think it's helpful for the committee to clarify that there is a formula that people can look at.

We were talking earlier in the committee about GBA+ analysis. Would you just get to the basics of what this means, what it does, why it's important for departments to follow this process and how we're doing in terms of compliance among departments?

Ms. Frances McRae: GBA is something Canada has been doing for about 25 or 30 years now. We have worked very hard with government departments. Our role as convener, capacity builder and knowledge broker is really where it comes in. Gender-based analysis is everyone's job to do.

I would use the words of the Auditor General, Ms. Hogan. When asked where the key accountability is, she says it belongs with every minister and every department. That is fundamentally our approach. When we talk about what it is, it's considering the various factors we need to keep in mind, as we're designing programs or policies, to ensure there are no barriers to access.

There are many people—we've talked about it here at this committee—who face additional barriers. We don't want our government programs and services to be inaccessible to anyone, so we have to take special measures to do that. That's what departments and agencies are required to do. They're required to do it for memoranda to cabinet, for Treasury Board submissions, increasingly for budget proposals and, of course, the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act. They put a fair bit of pressure on organizations to come forward with that information.

In terms of compliance, we have been playing a role as an aggregator of information. We have now taken our implementation survey that we sent to organizations and have revised it with information and input from the Auditor General and from various committees and stakeholders. That implementation survey is now out in the field with our colleagues. We expect to be able to publish it in the coming months, once we have responses in.

• (1235)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Do you have any indication, at this point, which departments are fulfilling that obligation, and which ones are not fulfilling it as well?

Ms. Frances McRae: We have a sense that all departments are taking this quite seriously.

I would say one of the big pluses on our side is that we have very strong partners in this, which are the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat. They are the gates through which people have to pass when proposing policy and funding authority ideas. They are really improving their expectations of departments and agencies as they put forward proposals, and that's a really strong plus for us.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: That's good to hear.

Going back to the gender wage gap that we heard about, we know that, federally, we have legislation to ensure pay equity among genders. Does that legislation put any pressure or have any effect on the private sector or other levels of government?

Ms. Frances McRae: We believe it does have an impact on others. Certainly, when we think about pay equity, some things we also have to look at are the structures of government and the structures of workplaces. It's not just about pay equity; it is about some of the other things we talk about around the systems and structures people are in.

Minister Ien and Minister O'Regan did a very good video on pay equity day that—

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you so much.

We're now going into our two-and-a-half-minute round.

Andréanne, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Sometimes, when people talk about budgets that went up during the pandemic, I get the sense that they think everything has been resolved in some areas, such as violence against women. The pandemic may be over, but the needs are greater. I realize this is semantics, but there are still consequences.

Canada summer jobs is another program for which the government says it didn't cut funding, it just went back to the pre-pandemic budget. Unfortunately, the Minister is gone, but she's also responsible for Canada summer jobs, a program that both employers and young people looking for work experience really appreciate. That's a different part of Ms. Ien's mandate, but she is responsible for it.

We have made representations. My colleague, Louise Chabot, instigated a study of the Canada summer jobs program at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This year, despite our representations, the budget is the same as last year even though it was a real headache in terms of applications on the ground. I hope you'll pass that along. I don't know if there's been a conversation with the minister about that.

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you for the question.

We're aware of the Canada summer jobs study that's under way. We've received an incredible number of applications for that program for years. We'll certainly pass the message along.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Is there a plan to reinstate the bigger budget to take into account needs on the ground for both employers and young people trying to get experience?

Ms. Frances McRae: You're still talking about Canada summer jobs.

I can answer the question about demand. As public servants, we operate the programs with the money we're given, and that amount is voted by Parliament.

However, I can say that demand has always been very high. You're right about that.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going on to Bonita for the next two and a half minutes.

Bonita, you have the floor.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

As the critic for disability and inclusion, I need to talk about women with disabilities.

The objective of the women's program is “to achieve the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada through systemic change.” I know that DAWN, which sits on the national advisory committee to end violence, has a stat that “58% of women with disabilities live on less than \$10,000 per year.”

My question is this: Could you please describe how women with disabilities will be supported through this funding?

• (1240)

Ms. Frances McRae: I want to clarify which funding you're talking about when you say, “this funding”.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: It's for the women's program, specifically.

Ms. Frances McRae: Absolutely. Women with disabilities are at a significant disadvantage. This is when we talked a bit about diversity, inclusion and barriers. Women with disabilities certainly face some of the highest barriers we see. It's even greater if we talk about women with other intersectional considerations—in rural areas, for example.

I would say the women's program investment we have in the supplementary estimates (B) is part of the overall \$160 million that was provided in budget 2023 and voted on by Parliament to add to the women's program.

The recent call for proposals I was talking about, which closed on November 7, is on women's economic empowerment. We expect to be able to support particularly marginalized women, including women with disabilities, in that process.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: I know there's not a lot of research around women with disabilities. It's been very hard to find. Even through the Library of Parliament, there's very little research or data.

How do we find the groups that are supporting women with disabilities, and how do we get some data on that?

Ms. Frances McRae: You're right that there is not a lot of research. We work very closely with DAWN to understand what they're seeing on the ground as well. We all see the most recent statistics on women with disabilities and people with disabilities generally. There are eight million people in Canada who say they have a disability that limits their daily activity.

I would say disability statistics, generally, are not that easy to find. Of course, we are seeing young women reporting great numbers as well.

We partner with Statistics Canada for their work on disaggregated data.

The Chair: Thanks very much, Ms. McRae.

We're now going to move back, in order to finish off this round. We have five minutes with Michelle Ferreri, and then it's over to Sonia.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks again to the witnesses for being here.

I want to continue where we left off, because I had so many more questions. We were talking about the operating budget.

As I said, we have a cost of living crisis, so taxpayers watching are very mindful of ensuring that money is efficiently used. We have \$68 million to grants and contributions for advancing gender equality—just under \$70 million. We were talking about the \$537,000 for operating costs.

I'm curious. You said you have hundreds of applications. That's why you need to have this high number. What is the formula that decides how much each employee is paid to do a...? What is the formula that decides salary?

What I want to point out here.... My colleague Ms. Vien brought this up. She asked you a question. She wanted to know how the number of employees has changed since 2015, when Prime Minister Trudeau took office. You guys have gone from 70 employees to 400 employees. That is a significant number. When we talk about bureaucracy and the cost of living crisis, that's a significant amount of money in salaries.

Can you explain the formula that decides how you come up with an operating budget that is almost 10% of the budget for advancing gender equality?

Ms. Frances McRae: Thank you very much for the question around resources.

I recall that last time, when we were talking at committee, we did actually table with the committee as a follow-up the change in our resources. Hundreds of millions more dollars were provided to us by Parliament to implement programs in the time frame that we're talking about. To do that, we need people. Those funds go out to communities. We used to have a grants and contributions budget of about \$19 million. Now we're up into hundreds of millions of dollars. It does take people to manage that work. We're quite prepared to be able to table with you those resources.

I would just say that it's not one specific formula. It depends on the program. It depends on how it's delivered. With the women's program there have been very direct contributions with specific organizations. There are hundreds and hundreds of projects. We take care of those projects. We want to make sure they go well, and we're in touch with people on the ground. It does take resources to do that.

• (1245)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I'm sorry. I have limited time.

This is a bit baffling. I'm going to be honest; it's a little bit insulting for people to be watching, because the stats.... Things have gotten worse, significantly worse. As I said to the minister earlier, there's a 79% increase in violence against women. There's crime and chaos. You're saying you have hundreds of millions more dollars, but everything is worse. People who are watching at home are saying, "They're spending almost \$600,000 to pay people to hand out money. Where's the money going?"

We've seen this. I don't want this to be.... I know you're doing your job. I get that, but as a member of Parliament elected to elevate the people's voices.... We are in a cost of living crisis, where inflation is driving up the cost of living. The more you spend that is not spent efficiently, the more the cost of everything goes up. We've created a rabbit hole. The more money we give you, the more you need, because it's not doing what is expected. You've just told us that you've gotten hundreds of millions more dollars and you need more people to decide where that goes, yet we have a 79% increase in violence against women. We are the status of women committee. If the economy is not working, nothing works.

We've heard from my NDP colleague that women's shelters are not getting the money they need.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: I have a point of order, or of clarification, actually.

WAGE was created in 2015, so there was no department before that.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: That's debate.

The Chair: Excuse me, that's debate. Thank you.

Go ahead, Michelle.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I think the bureaucracy is what is so upsetting to people. You're not giving a clear answer on where this money is going and how it's getting into the hands of the people who need it most. Even in this \$25 million that's asked for.... Food Banks Canada are able to do it with \$106,000, and they're the ones administering this menstrual equity program for people who need it. You're saying it's \$537,000.

I would love for you to table this, to break it down so that people can see it. Prove me wrong: I guess that's what I'm asking.

The Chair: Michelle, your time is over.

On her behalf, if you could table that information specifically on menstrual equity, showing the costs, that would be wonderful.

We're now moving it over to Sonia for five minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to ask about seniors, specifically senior women. We know that seniors were impacted by the pandemic and it was important to continue supporting the work of our organizations supporting them. Can you talk about the department's ongoing efforts to help senior women?

Ms. Frances McRae: Certainly, we're seeing that senior women need support in a number of areas. Entrepreneurship is one example. We see a lot more women wanting to continue to work and contribute to the economy as they move out of their perhaps permanent jobs.

We can give you some examples of some of the work we do with senior women. I would just say that we also see challenges with senior gender-diverse people in areas where, for example, they do not feel comfortable in care homes. We see specific challenges around older women on gender-based violence as well. Financial abuse is one of those areas that we see quite significantly, not just with intimate partners but certainly with family members.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: About an hour ago, I learned that Minister Saks has announced \$500,000 for Queen's University to support the development of online training modules for educators on gender-based violence and prevention. Can you provide an update to this committee on the work your department is doing specifically on GBV prevention with the provinces and territories, especially with the Province of Ontario?

• (1250)

Ms. Frances McRae: The work that Minister Saks is announcing is work that we do closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada. They are partners with us in a range of areas around public health related to gender-based violence.

When we talk about the Province of Ontario, the minister was mentioning that we made the announcement with the Government of Ontario a few weeks ago. They have now made some announcements themselves about where those funds they have been allocated are going.

We look forward to making sure that the publication of those action plans shows transparently where the funds are going, and the minister did talk about reporting back in on impacts, which is something that's very important to all of us as stewards of public funds.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: I also wondered if you can talk about the five pillars of a plan to end gender-based violence. My colleague Mr. Serré talked about one pillar. Can you talk about the other four pillars and how they set a foundation for the provinces as a guide to implement the plan?

Ms. Frances McRae: I'm just taking out our handy booklet on the pillars. It's important to note that these pillars were developed with the provinces and territories. We did not develop these on our own.

Pillar one is support for victims, survivors and their families. What we've provided the provinces and territories with are just examples of areas where they could act, and it's really important that they speak to their own communities about what's needed.

The second pillar is prevention. Those are certainly population-specific issues. We talked about men and boys being one of them. Training and guidance for professionals is really critical in terms of trauma-informed approaches.

Pillar three is a responsive justice system. This is one where we work closely with our colleagues at Justice, but also, they work with provincial justice departments. It really is a full justice system that we need to be looking at.

The fourth pillar is implementing indigenous-led approaches. This was something that was very important to all ministers around the table when we discussed it. We recognize that indigenous people have to be leading their own solutions, and those solutions are actually quite different depending on what part of the country you're in and depending on what your specific situation is, even among the rights holder groups. There are different approaches for different places.

The fifth pillar is social infrastructure and the enabling environment. We talked a bit about that earlier.

Those are the key areas that are the foundation, and we look forward to publishing the action plans.

The Chair: Thank you. That's perfect. We really appreciate that.

I have a couple of questions that came from here. We will be ending very early. We've lost one of our members. I'm going to ask a couple of questions.

Ms. McRae, I know that you and I have discussed this before when we looked at gender-based analysis, because we know how important gender-based analysis is in order to create equity for people. Regardless of whether you're living in the north, the south, the east or the west of this country or whether you're Black, racialized, indigenous or white—whatever you may be—gender-based analysis is really important.

According to the Auditor General's report, only 40% of the budget actually had a gender-based analysis applied to it. I do not believe that is any of the intentions of this department, because I know the tools and resources are there, but we have departments that are not implementing GBA+ on their actual budgetary items. Can you comment on that, please?

Mr. Marc Serré: I have a point of order, Madam Chair. Shouldn't we be having the Bloc or the NDP for the last two minutes and a half?

The Chair: No. For the round, it goes five minutes and five minutes, two and a half and two and a half, and then five and five. In the first round it's six, six, six, six, six and six. We have already finished the full round, so I am taking advantage of that in being able to ask a question that Ms. McRae and I have actually discussed.

Are you asking that I don't get the response? I'm sorry....

• (1255)

Mr. Marc Serré: I was just asking.

The Chair: Frances, can I get a response, please?

Ms. Frances McRae: I would say that with the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act, which has been in force only since 2018, there has been significant change in terms of the department's GBA requirements in its proposals. I would say, though, that Women and Gender Equality Canada does not participate directly in the budget process. We work with our colleagues at the Department of Finance, and in fact, their capabilities, their confidence and the rigour that they are expecting are increasing. We will expect to see a higher threshold that is enforced more by the central agencies than by us, but we are certainly hearing that.

The Chair: I really appreciate that.

Bonita, you have a question.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Can we send a letter from this committee that says that we would like to see more take-up of GBA by all departments for budgets?

The Chair: That is something that can absolutely be discussed. I was just going to ask for some documents. Let's see what we can do there, Bonita, for sure.

Bonita, you had a request for documents right in the middle. Do you remember what that was? Can you remind them?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: It was about the formulas for the distribution by province and territory.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think the "pre" criteria and the "post" criteria are what you were asking for. That would be wonderful.

One other thing is that if you could provide the gender-based analysis that you provide to other departments, just so we can make sure.... My greatest concern is.... I know you're not trying to make it a check box. I know that it needs to be much deeper. When these departments are looking at that, can we just see what they're advised and those types of tools? Could you table that as well?

Are there any further questions or comments from the committee?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: Seeing none, thank you very much to Frances and to Alia. Thank you so much for being here to support our committee.

Today's meeting is adjourned. I'll see you Monday.

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