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• (1105)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 139 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

To all members, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. I would also like to remind everyone that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Thank you for your co-operation.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, the committee is resuming its study of hate-motivated violence targeting the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Before we welcome the witnesses, I would like to provide this trigger warning. We'll be discussing experiences related to hate-motivated violence. This may be triggering to viewers with similar experiences. If any participants feel distressed or need help, please advise the clerk. For all witnesses and for members of Parliament, it is important to recognize that these are difficult discussions, so let's try to be compassionate in our conversations.

I would like to welcome our witnesses.

I will start with, Mr. Tyler Wisner.

You have five minutes, please.

Mr. Tyler Wisner (Paralegal, As an Individual): Thank you.

Good afternoon, everyone.

I'm a gay 26-year-old paralegal with the Department of Justice Canada, although I do not speak on behalf of the Government of Canada in any way.

First, I want to thank the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for allowing me this opportunity to speak about my community. While I am not trans, and I cannot speak on behalf of all queer youth, I have supported queer youth in one way or another over the past 10 years. I'd like to give a glimpse into the bullying they face, the exclusion they experience and the role disinformation plays, but I'll also focus on the joy and the necessity of a community that strives for understanding. This kind of community encourages co-operation and respect. I believe it increases a sense of safety, and it strongly reduces the likelihood of violence.

I'll begin back when I was in high school. I started a gender and sexuality alliance not only to discuss queer issues but also to create space for my Catholic high school's queer community. I knew of

countless bullying incidents and overheard how people spoke negatively about trans youth in general. I saw first-hand how this group changed the lives of gay and trans youth, including me. The act of simply having space for queer youth to be themselves, without having to mask who they are, while engaging with their peers and with adults who either understand or strive to understand, I believe is paramount to the success of queer youth.

In 2015, then premier Kathleen Wynne introduced a new sex education curriculum. This new curriculum became incredibly controversial at Oakville, Ontario. One school board meeting comes to mind, when a strong disinformation campaign convinced many that the new curriculum was something very different from reality. This disinformation resulted in dozens of protesters filled with hate surrounding the school board meeting and resulting in the police being called.

Since 2021, I have worked as a camp counsellor for the 15- to 17-year-old group at Camp Ten Oaks. It is a summer camp in Ontario for youth of 2SLGBTQ+ identities, families and communities. The camp sessions provide a safe place for campers from across North America to engage with peers with similar experiences and to learn from the passionate team of queer role models, who also come from a variety of lived experiences. The executive director of the Ten Oaks Project, Kymani Montgomery, is here with us today.

Through deeply introspective conversations, real-life debates and their drive for a bright future, these groups of campers have opened my eyes to the common struggles that queer youth, especially trans youth, face today. While I can think of many examples, one conversation with a camper has stuck with me. An older camper pulled me aside and, articulately and passionately, expressed that they had been significantly struggling with coming out over the past few years. Camp Ten Oaks specifically gave them the confidence to come out and to be exactly who they are. I was lucky enough to see that change in them.

Queer and trans youth do not deserve the social exclusion, the emotional manipulation, the distrust, the transphobic and sexist rhetoric facilitated through social media echo chambers, and the violence that some experience. I know that places like Camp Ten Oaks are valuable and necessary—like my high school gender and sexuality alliance—due to the joy and courage that spaces like it produce.

In preparing for today's panel, I heard one common theme amongst my trans friends and colleagues: Queer spaces like Camp Ten Oaks were necessary for their own security and development. I hope for a future where queer youth can find a welcoming and nurturing community all around them, although, of course, this will not happen overnight.

Given my experience with queer youth, facilitating safe spaces for queer youth to be themselves and addressing disinformation through social media echo chambers or otherwise is important in combatting exclusion, bullying, hate and violence. Listening to the realities faced by trans people, especially trans people of colour, will absolutely contribute to a safer and more cohesive Canadian society.

Finally, learning is not just the responsibility of cisgender heterosexual people or straight people. It is also the responsibility of queer people to learn about those within their own community. Every one of us is human. We all feel happiness, fear and hurt. I truly believe that striving to understand rather than to tolerate or to accept is essential for queer youth.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you Mr. Wisner.

Next are Mr. Breault and Madam Baker.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, please. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

Before you start, can you please raise your mic to between your nose and mouth?

Thank you.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laurent Breault (Executive Director, Fondation Émergence): Good morning to all parliamentarians and partners. Thank you for having us.

My name is Laurent Breault, and I am the executive director of Fondation Émergence. I am joined by my colleague Olivia Baker, trainer and content specialist, also representing Fondation Émergence.

Fondation Émergence is a non-profit organization dedicated to informing, educating and raising awareness among the general public about LGBTQ+ realities. Our expertise lies in training services, professional coaching and the production of awareness-raising tools. In addition to working to make workplaces, seniors and caregivers more inclusive, we also take action against conversion therapy and cyberbullying.

We also organize an annual awareness campaign on May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, which the foundation launched for the first time worldwide in 2003. This year's theme was “The Rise of Anti-LGBTQ+ Hate”, based on the trends we have observed. These include statistics on the increase in hate crimes in Canada, the growing presence of online hate and misinformation, the significant rise in hate messages received by our corporate partners when they publish anything related to sexual and gender diversity, anti-LGBTQ+ demonstrations and acts of vandalism, as well as the attitude and comments of certain people who express opinions based on misinformation during our training sessions, such as the infamous litter box hoax, or people who demonstrate a certain hostility towards the subject.

We would like to focus our comments on two points related to today's topic.

Our first point is illustrated in our campaign slogan: “A rollback of LGBTQ+ rights is a setback for all of society.” This rise in hate and the rollback of LGBTQ+ rights must not to be considered in isolation, but rather as a symptom of a broader and more worrying trend for society as a whole.

It's often said that LGBTQ+ communities represent only a minority of the population, and that is true. We are generally talking about a little more than 10% of the population. However, anti-LGBTQ+ violence can also affect other segments of the population, such as people who are perceived as LGBTQ+, like a young boy who's considered effeminate and bullied for it at school, a cisgender woman who's considered too masculine and becomes a victim of transphobia, or the families and friends of LGBTQ+ people, including the children of same-sex parents.

It's important to note that, according to a Leger survey conducted in 2024, 45% of people in Canada have LGBTQ+ relatives. Then we have all the other marginalized communities, since LGBTQ-phobias open the door to other types of violence and can set dangerous precedents.

Ms. Olivia Baker (Trainer and content specialist, Fondation Émergence): Our second point is that this violence does not occur out of the blue. It can be seen as a pendulum swinging back after remarkable advances in LGBTQ+ rights in recent decades. Indeed, a spike in violence often follows major advances in human rights. I can't help but think of the massacre at École Polytechnique on December 6 or the growth of the masculinist movement, which so aptly exemplifies the negative reaction to feminist struggles of the day.

Anti-LGBTQ+ violence is also the result of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric. On that point, I'd like to share some thoughts on the concept of dangerous speech. Dangerous Speech Project defines dangerous speech as any form of expression, such as speech or images, that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of another group.

This kind of dangerous speech can be identified based on several hallmarks, including rhetorical hallmarks often found in anti-LGBTQ+ discourse. Examples include dehumanization; portraying the targeted group as a threat to the integrity or purity of the group, including the idea that LGBTQ+ people are recruiting or confusing young people; accusing LGBTQ+ people of attacking women and girls, including accusations of psychological manipulation towards LGBTQ+ communities, or a fear that trans women will attack cis-gender women.

Dangerous Speech Project produced a document on the use of dangerous anti-trans rhetoric in the 2024 U.S. election. However, we know that Quebec and Canada—

• (1115)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Madame Baker, can you wrap up, please? Your five minutes is up.

[Translation]

Ms. Olivia Baker: Okay.

We are seeing an increase in hate speech in Canada as well. In fact, 34% of Canadians think that hate speech against LGBTQ+ communities has increased in Canada over the past three years.

As far as solutions go, what we would like to highlight is awareness, in accordance with the recommendations of Dangerous Speech Project. This includes preventive awareness as well as in response to hate and disinformation. It is actually easier to provide information than to undo disinformation.

Thank you for your attention.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Next, we have Lauren Pragg. You have five minutes.

Lauren Pragg (Executive Director, LGBT YouthLine): Good morning. Thank you, Madam Chair, the committee and my fellow witnesses.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today, and I would like to thank the committee for undertaking this important study.

My name is Lauren Pragg, my pronouns are they/them, and I'm the executive director of LGBT YouthLine. YouthLine is a youth-led, anti-racist organization dedicated to supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth 29 and under across Ontario through peer support, resources, comprehensive training, advocacy and referrals.

YouthLine began in 1993 as a community-based solution to offer support to 2SLGBTQ+ young people who needed someone to talk to who understood what they were going through. Even 30 years ago, our founders recognized the need for support outside of major cities, so we aim to have a presence in rural, remote and underserved communities across Ontario and, at times, Canada, ensuring that even in regions where services are scarce, youth have one place to turn to for support.

At YouthLine, we're on the front line six days per week, connecting with approximately 3,000 queer and trans youth every year. Through our helpline, our peer-support volunteers provide support

for youth navigating the real and pressing challenges they face, including discrimination and marginalization in their schools, families and health care systems. These conversations offer sobering views of how policies and inaction directly contribute to the barriers and harmful experiences shaping young queer lives.

At YouthLine, we do this work while also living its impact, with staff and volunteers who are themselves 2SLGBTQ+ youth and adults working tirelessly to create safe and affirming spaces. Our experience tells us that youth know who they are and have a strong sense of how they might identify. However, what we're seeing, especially with the rise of the parental rights discourse, is that young people must negotiate whether school is a safe place for them to be themselves when home may already be unsafe for them.

When service users ask if schools will out them to their families, we can't provide a definitive answer or reassure them because of the vast differences in not just policy but also the application of policy and enforcement.

The truth is that there's always a risk of being outed, regardless of policy. For our service users, this means that we cannot tell them that they will not be in danger if they choose to come out. Even in school boards that are inclusive on paper, safe school policies are not being enforced. Queer and trans students are dealing with daily homophobia, transphobia and harassment from their peers and sometimes the adults in their school.

One service user told us that they're constantly just being given dirty looks or harassed in the locker rooms and bathrooms. They and their friends always get comments at lunch or straight up get called slurs. They and another student told the principal about them, but she hasn't talked to them.

We've also heard about harassment from school staff. Another chatter told us about one such figure saying that she'll come into their other classes and out them to everyone, that it feels like she misgenders them on purpose, that they feel like such a failure and want to cry. They told their vice-principal, but it still hasn't stopped.

We also have service users whose parents have been radicalized by the far right and espouse opinions echoing popular figures like Donald Trump, Elon Musk and Jordan Peterson. We get service users whose parents are against the so-called "left agenda" and think schools are "transing" kids, but for these youth, school is actually the only safe place they have to be themselves.

Anti-2SLGBTQ+ violence also impacts students who aren't out. Since the lockdowns have ended, we've noticed that young people are having trouble making and keeping friends, and a lot of our chatters feel like their options are to put up with homophobic friends or to be alone.

Beyond schools, protests like the 1 Million March for Children and the rise of transphobia in general have trans people worried about their safety, at minimum, and at worst, have some of our community members feeling hopeless about being queer or trans entirely. Youth have also expressed the intense hatred that's facing them externally as being turned inward on themselves.

November was our busiest month of this year; specifically, the day after the U.S. election was one of our busiest days of the year. Of the service users who shared their gender, all were either trans, questioning or cis women. Of those who shared their age, all of them were 18 or under.

In one week's time, half of the chats that mentioned the election explicitly named being worried about trans rights or anti-trans legislation. On the night after the election, half of the chats that mentioned the election were from chatters from other provinces who were worried about the influence that the U.S. election will have on their own rights. Some of those chats have come from provinces that have stripped trans youth of their rights, such as Alberta, with chatters expressing absolute desperation. One chatter felt that they were forced to leave their province because they felt so unsafe; they felt there would never be a place for them.

- (1120)

YouthLine's recent advocacy campaign, Write for Student Rights, focused on school safety and inclusion for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Ontario. The campaign was developed in response to anti-trans legislation in other provinces and the recent nation-wide anti-trans protests. The campaign was also motivated by comments to the media from Premier Doug Ford—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Lauren Pragg, you just have 30 seconds left. Please wrap it up.

Lauren Pragg: Thank you.

Comments to the media by Premier Doug Ford and the former Ontario Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, in the fall of 2022 suggested they agreed with the policy changes in other provinces, which brings us back to the ongoing discussion that's been happening in this committee about the use of the notwithstanding clause.

The last thing I will leave you with right now is that I want to be clear that queer and trans people are everywhere. We're your neighbours, friends, family members and community. No social or political issue remains separate from our communities and our very real concerns about transphobia and homophobia—not indigenous sovereignty here or abroad, not poverty, not education, not housing, not the climate crisis and not health care. I hope the committee keeps that reality in mind as you complete this important and meaningful study.

I'm more than happy to answer any questions you might have for me.

Once again, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Lauren Pragg.

Next, we move to Mr. Tyler Boyce.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Tyler Boyce (Executive Director, The Enchanté Network): Good morning, members of the committee, and the Enchanté member organizations that have already provided testimony today.

My name is Tyler Boyce. I'm the executive director of the Enchanté Network, Canada's national association for 2SLGBTQI+ organizations. I'm also a proud Black gay man.

Today, I'm here to share the real life stories and challenges facing hundreds of queer and trans organizations across this country. Let me start with an uncomfortable truth. The organizations that the Enchanté Network supports should not have to exist. Their existence is a direct result of the gaps in government systems that have left 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians without access to health care, housing and basic safety, yet these organizations step in to provide life-saving services from suicide prevention to mental health supports, despite being underfunded, undervalued and now increasingly unsafe.

Anti-gender hate has created a chilling effect across the 2SLGBTQI+ sector, threatening the very existence of those vital spaces. This chilling effect is not abstract. Last summer, a queer organization in North Bay, Ontario called me. Their executive director, a trans man, had opened an email in the morning with threats against his life. Anti-gender extremists told him that they were going to put him through a wood chipper.

Just months later, I spoke with a mother in Vancouver, and she shared how she stopped attending the local parent support group for trans youth in her community because she feared being followed home. She described taking winding routes home from meetings, worried that anti-gender extremists might harm her simply for seeking the support that she needed as a parent.

Earlier this year, a cyber-attack on TransCar+ in Ontario forced them to halt services and divert their already scarce resources to cybersecurity efforts rather than providing their life-saving care to trans youth. These stories are just a few examples of how hate is not only targeting individuals but destabilizing the very organizations working to keep Canadians safe.

Meanwhile, the resources to address this crisis are grossly insufficient. Canada's national action plan to combat hate allocates 5.5% of its \$273.6 million to 2SLGBTQI+ organizations. That's barely a fraction of what we need. When will our elected officials finally meet us with the resources necessary for us to meet this moment?

The Enchanté Network's very own rainbow resilience fund received over \$1.6 million in requests from queer organizations in less than three weeks. However, we only had \$500,000 to distribute, due to limited government support. For every organization that we helped, three more were left vulnerable to threats of violence. If something happens to these organizations that are left unsupported, the responsibility will lie squarely with our elected officials, who have failed to act decisively to prevent it.

Fortunately, this committee does have the power to act. I urge you to recommend three things. One, provide new and expanded funding to ensure that 2SLGBTQI+ organizations can continue to offer life-saving supports. Two, renew rainbow resilience fund support to address urgent safety needs. Three, improve systems for reporting hate crimes so that law enforcement and community safety alternatives can be best equipped to support our communities.

These are not luxuries; they are necessities, and the cost of inaction is devastating. When organizations like OUTLoud North Bay or TransCar+ face overwhelming threats of hate, it reflects the broader danger of anti-gender hate. 2SLGBTQI+ organizations are doing their part, often at a great personal and financial cost. It's time for government to step up and do its part as well.

Members of this committee, we have a choice to continue underfunding and overlooking the organizations that are quite literally saving lives or to act decisively to protect the spaces and the people who rely on them. The future does not have to be defined by this chilling effect. There is a Canada where queer and trans Canadians can thrive, where hate is no longer tolerated, and where every person, regardless of who they are, has the chance to live a safe, full and dignified life, but we can only get there if you act.

Thank you.

• (1125)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mr. Boyce.

Thank you all for your opening remarks. Now we will move to our rounds of questions.

We'll start with Ms. Ferreri.

You have six minutes, Michelle.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Thanks, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

If I could, I'd like to start with Mr. Breault.

You previously referenced your stats. Could you share with the committee the stats you've seen on hate crimes impacting your clientele?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Laurent Breault: May I answer the question in French?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Yes.

Mr. Laurent Breault: Fondation Émergence commissions Leger to conduct a survey every year to assess the opinion and perception of Canadians on LGBTQ+ realities. All of our surveys are available on the foundation's website. A total of 1,500 respondents from across Canada took part in the survey. To answer your question, 78% of Canadians say they are allies of LGBT communities, but there is still a significant gap.

As far as hate crimes are concerned, we rely heavily on police data. This is publicly available data on the rise of hate crimes. Between 2018 and 2022, hate crimes against people from the LGBTQ+ communities nearly tripled or quadrupled. We always use official data. I don't know if I'm answering your question correctly, but perhaps Ms. Baker would like to add something.

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: That's great. Thank you.

We've seen a lot of witnesses come forward to share some powerful testimony. One of the things I've seen in my own community is that people who are violating parole and violating bail are committing crimes, so public safety is at risk for a lot of people who feel more vulnerable or who are more vulnerable.

I have a lot of friends who don't feel safe walking down the street anymore. They just don't feel that public safety has been a priority, based on the bail and justice system, where people are out free, like violent repeat offenders.

Has this been an issue within the communities that you serve?

Anyone is free to answer that question. I have Mr. Wisner and Mr. Boyce in the room, but anybody is free to answer that.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Olivia Baker: Yes, I would like to add to that. Assaults and hate crimes have increased quite dramatically, by 72% in recent years. That said, we also need to consider all the crimes that go unreported and the complaints that go undocumented. Here's another figure that might give an idea of the situation: 91% of LGBTQ+ people who have experienced violence related to their sexual orientation or gender identity did not report it to the police. So when we talk about these figures, it's important to remember that this is really just the tip of the iceberg.

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Agreed.

One of the things we've seen in our studies on intimate partner violence from witness testimony is that, when there are no consequences, there's nothing stopping hateful people, bad people or criminals from doing these things again. I think you're exactly correct that.... I don't even know that all of these things are reported, especially when we look at intimate partner violence or domestic violence, because there's an element of shame as well for a lot of folks.

Mr. Boyce, you looked like you wanted to say something as well.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: First of all, I really appreciate the question.

I do want to bring this committee back to the point that it's not only violent criminals or repeat offenders who are committing these crimes against queer and trans communities. Rather, we're living in a heightened moment where folks with no record, everyday Canadians, are being radicalized into an anti-gender movement for a myriad of different reasons. I really want to bring it back into focus that it's not only folks who are repeat offenders who are committing these crimes. Rather, there are folks who are being radicalized. That's why these conversations are so important.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: That's fair.

Are those folks getting charged? With the folks who are engaging in those radical movements, those crimes that you're talking about, do you feel that justice is being served? Whether they're repeat violent offenders or first-time offenders, or whether these are hate crimes, do you find that justice is being served for the victims?

Mr. Tyler Boyce: While it's very important to think about justice, I think there are many ways to think about it. One is with the approach I think I'm hearing in your question, which is a punitive approach towards justice. I think there are other ways to approach justice. That's why conversations like this, listening to witnesses who are providing real-life testimony, allow us to understand how broader narratives around the pathologization of queer and trans people, some of which has been echoed in the House of Commons itself, have consequences. It's not only about the punishment but also about us all acting responsibly with our words to prevent crimes from happening.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you so much. I'm out of time.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Michelle.

Next we move to Mr. Serré.

You have six minutes.

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

Thank you to the witnesses for being here and for your testimony.

I'm going to start my questioning with Lauren Pragg.

Thank you for working with the YouthLine. It's very important.

I just have a couple of quick questions. You mentioned that the line is available six days a week. What are the hours, and where do you get your funding? I just need a quick answer on that.

Lauren Pragg: Thank you so much for the questions.

The hours are 4 to 9:30, six days a week. We're not open on Saturdays, but every other day. Our funding comes from a mix of sometimes government and corporate grants and money, and then there's a lot of great community support from individuals.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you.

We definitely need to look at that being 24-7. There's no doubt.

For my next questions, you mentioned parental rights and the whole discourse that's happening right now. I want to get your thoughts because, obviously, when we look at 2SLGBTQI+ in schools, it was a safe place. Now youth are feeling that it may not be a safe place. I have two questions for you.

First, what would you want to tell parents who are listening today?

Second, where do youth go for a safe place now, if the school is not safe?

• (1135)

Lauren Pragg: Thank you. Those are both great questions.

I'll start with your second one first. Asking where youth can go is a great question. Like I said, sometimes youth have to make exceptions and have to stay in friend groups or in different kinds of relationships that don't feel supportive to them, so their options are limited. I also think that our communities do turn to online a lot of the time. That's a really important place for our communities.

There's also, as we all know, a lot of misinformation and disinformation happening online. Social media algorithms contribute to a lot of dangerous trends and can really impact mental health. It's not a pretty picture, I guess I would say. More funding and more spaces are needed. The spaces that exist need to train people so that they can be more supportive, welcoming and inclusive.

As for what I want to say to parents, there's a lot that I want to say. I think, for now, I will say that I can understand parents feeling afraid. I can understand parents feeling confused. What I've heard in previous conversations at this committee is that we want to open a dialogue, if this is about helping people to understand.

When things are presented in an extreme way, with very little facts and information, it can feel very different, new and scary for parents. Give your children the opportunity to speak for themselves. Offer your understanding and empathy, and also be open to learning for yourself. These are still the same children and young people you've always known and who have been in your life. They need the support to say who they are, to speak up and to be themselves. Without that room, very dangerous things can happen, as we've seen. Without a supportive home space, there are higher numbers of youth in homelessness and engaged in substance use and abusive relationships and all kinds of things, because people are looking for a place to go. As I mentioned earlier, there aren't very many options.

I would ask parents to come to the table with an open mind and some empathy. Hopefully I, and other organizations that do this kind of work, can help with some of that information and can help create dialogue.

Thank you.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you, Lauren. I have limited time.

Tyler Boyce, thank you for mentioning North Bay and the issues there in your testimony. My nephew and godchild Jenna Seppa lives in West Nipissing, right beside North Bay. He's feeling some of those threats in terms of queer youth. He's a drag queen and I'm very proud of him.

You mentioned online radicalization. Do you have any recommendations for us when we're looking at the algorithms of social media, and the bots? What would you recommend the federal government do? It's these companies like Elon Musk's Twitter. I call Twitter "the cesspool of hate". What would you recommend we do, as a government, in that space?

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I appreciate the question.

I think it's very difficult, because we have to weigh our civil liberties against what is right and keeping people safe online. I can share that what we've seen in our work is this: When it is the wild west online and there are no guardrails for the safety of queer and trans folks, there are real-life consequences to that hate. I brought up in my testimony how folks are being radicalized in extremist, anti-gender movements, and a lot of that is happening online. We know that about a third of gen Z identifies as being part of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. We also know this generation—the future leaders of tomorrow—is spending a lot of its youth online.

I'd recommend this government do that balancing act between our online civil liberties with preventing online hate crimes and the real-life consequences. Consider the real-life experiences of queer and trans folks who are being impacted by the Internet. There is a role for government to play in that conversation.

• (1140)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mr. Serré.

Next, we move to Madame Larouche.

You have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

I'd like to begin by thanking all five witnesses for being with us today for our study, which is taking place in a rather troubled and uncertain environment. The statistics on the rise in hate against communities are striking, and they follow a study on the rise in femicide. Clearly, this could all be linked, to some extent, and that's extremely disturbing.

I will begin my first round with the representatives of Fondation Émergence.

Mr. Breault, I'll come back to you after I ask Ms. Baker my question.

Ms. Baker, you concluded your opening remarks quickly by talking about Dangerous Speech Project. I'd like to give you a minute or two to add anything that you didn't have time to say at the end of your opening remarks.

Ms. Olivia Baker: Actually, I didn't have much more to say. I would add, however, that I find the concept of dangerous speech very interesting. It's not just a question of hate speech, but rather it's about really looking at the consequences of that kind of speech and rhetoric.

My colleague Mr. Boyce talked about social media as an environment where anything goes, but this type of discourse sometimes also spreads through public communications, such as columns, books or perhaps larger media outlets, that paint an alarmist and biased picture of gender-affirming care or the place of LGBTQ+ people.

In our training sessions, someone might tell me that they read such and such a thing in the newspaper, even though the reporting was not based on proven facts. It's harder to disprove something that comes from a column or report that appears in so-called traditional media than when it comes from a Facebook post.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Other witnesses have drawn a link between the U.S. elections and the climate observed over the past year. Would anyone like to comment on that?

Mr. Laurent Breault: I just returned from a mission in Geneva, where I met with Canadian representatives at the UN.

There are tons of red flags all over the planet when it comes to LGBT rights. Certainly, with the changes in the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court favouring a shift to the right, it sends a signal worldwide that LGBT rights are now an easier target.

Setbacks have occurred pretty much everywhere. Canada is not excluded from this, and what happens in the U.S. eventually, over the years, ends up here. The debate happening in the U.S. right now is very heated, very complicated and very complex. The situation varies significantly from one state to the next. In fact, if you superimpose a map of U.S. states that are experiencing setbacks overtop of the actual map of the United States, what you'll find is that the states where LGBT communities already had very few rights or protections are regressing even further. This is a global phenomenon, and we feel it coming here.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: That's very interesting.

Another topic you touched on in your opening remarks was conversion therapy. I know you care deeply about this issue. The federal government passed a law to ban these therapies and, in response to that law and to see how things were going, you organized a symposium on these therapies at the beginning of the year. I would like you to comment on your findings. We realize that it is still very easy to circumvent the law, especially for religious groups. Is that correct? Is that consistent with the initial findings?

Mr. Laurent Breault: You're absolutely right. Thank you for raising the subject. We're very proud of the fact that Canada is one of 11 countries or states that have banned conversion therapy, making it a criminal offence. What we're learning on the ground is that very few people know what conversion therapy is, and that includes stakeholders, law enforcement, the health care community and educational community. When we meet with people on the ground, there is a great deal of confusion among the public. Many people believe that conversion therapy is gender-affirming therapy, in other words, to become gay, lesbian or trans. So we're working hard to raise awareness and inform people about these therapies.

Also, just because conversion therapy has been banned doesn't mean the work is done. We're seeing a number of challenges, because therapies are taking other forms. They're even more hidden and more insidious, and they're still happening. For example, two journalists from the former Metro newspaper infiltrated churches in Montreal and were very quickly able to obtain conversion therapy services. In addition, with everything we know about telemedicine, therapies are being moved elsewhere and offered virtually, often from the United States. So that's where we're at with conversion therapy.

As a final thought on that point, we need help finding victims. Let me explain. The very nature of conversion therapy means that victims are often stuck with the people immediately around them who are complicit in the conversion therapy. This makes it very difficult for victims to report the people in their circle who encouraged them to undergo conversion therapy in the first place. This makes it hard for us to find victims, given the complexity of conversion therapy.

• (1145)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Joined—EMM Thank you.

Next is Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Gazan, you have six minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Thank you so much, Chair.

I'm so sorry that I can't be with all of you in person today.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here.

I want to talk about the radicalization of the far right, and in particular about Jordan Peterson. I've heard he's moved to the States. Good riddance to bad rubbish. He supports things like the one million man march. What is concerning about Jordan Peterson is that the Conservative leader actively fraternizes with him and supports him. The reason I'm concerned about this—I try to stay as non-partisan as possible in committee—is that I worry, as one of the witnesses mentioned, about another Polytechnique, but this time against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Canada.

I believe you mentioned that, Olivia Baker.

I'll give you some examples. The current leader, Pierre Poilievre, appeared on a show with Jordan Peterson on the latter's YouTube channel on May 16, 2022, to talk about freedom.

Jordan Peterson wrote an article very recently, on February 29, 2024, entitled "Jordan Peterson: The awe-inspiring conservative counter-offensive against woke nonsense", which is something that we have to hear about. Gender-affirming care is now "woke nonsense", and 2SLGBTQIA+ having the right to access safe bathrooms is now "woke nonsense". That was written in the National Post. Those are a couple of examples.

We know there has been an increase in far-right nonsense since the pandemic. I said recently in a national documentary that I think people are really struggling with mental health and that these far-right movements are usurping people into these anti-gender movements that have the potential for violence.

I want to start with you, Lauren Pragg. Why is it dangerous? Why does it put the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in danger when political leaders fraternize with people who spew hate speech?

• (1150)

Lauren Pragg: Thank you so much for the question.

I think the bottom line is that it legitimizes these positions. For folks trying to make an informed political decision, it seems as though these are viable options and real and legitimate claims. I would suggest Naomi Klein's book *Doppelganger*. It really lays out a lot about how the pandemic contributed to misinformation and disinformation and the kind of radicalization it led to.

The other thing I will say is that some of these campaigns are really about scapegoating. We know that. We see that. It's come up again in this committee already. I think we need to get a bit deeper in what we're asking. What is the purpose? What are far-right figures trying to scapegoat our community for? It's for division. It's for control. It's for increased limits to freedom, even though they speak largely about freedom.

I think that is the risk.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I totally agree. It's like freedom for some and not for others. I've said that many times before.

I want to move now to Olivia Baker.

You spoke about Polytechnique. It sent shivers down my spine. It's one of the reasons I supported this study. You said that you were trying to define dangerous speech. It seems like freedom speech is called “woke”, but let's talk about dangerous speech. I think what's happening...even with petitions being brought by Conservative members against women and girls, talking about an attack on the safety of women and girls to have gender-affirming bathrooms, or having trans women going to bathrooms. I would say that's dangerous speech, because it's not based on fact.

You've said that dangerous speech is any form of speech that will condone or encourage violence against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It's aimed to recruit and attack. You specifically mentioned bathrooms. How is the current rhetoric...?

I take my role as a member of Parliament seriously. I know that what I say has impact, and that it can be either good or harmful. How is the current political discourse emboldening far-right extremism and putting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community at risk?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Olivia Baker: I would like to say two things about that.

First, I mentioned the Polytechnique massacre, but I could have mentioned the incident at the University of Waterloo, when someone stabbed a gender theory professor for those same reasons. I and my fellow trainers at the organization wondered whether we too were in danger when giving our training sessions. Would I be stabbed next for talking about gender theory? I'm being sarcastic with the use of air quotes.

Second, I think it's very interesting to note that the concept of dangerous speech came about when statements made prior to acts of violence such as genocide and war were studied. Why do humans act on something or agree with certain types of violence?

When you instill fear in someone by telling them that people in the LGBTQ+ community are coming for their children, you are using an argument that is going to cause a lot of violence. If a parent feels that their child's safety is at risk, resorting to violence will seem much more acceptable to them. This type of threat mobilizes a lot of people, but it can also be a caricature. We've seen trans women caricatured a lot in relation to their use of women's bathrooms; they are depicted as sexual predators. That rhetoric becomes dangerous because it gives people permission to defend themselves against the threat.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Leah.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thanks so much.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): We are starting the next round with Mrs. Roberts.

You have five minutes.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I'm going to start by asking if anyone has heard of Bill C-412.

No.

Bill C-412 is a better alternative to Bill C-63, the online harms act. It will keep Canadians safe online without infringing on their civil liberties. The online harms act creates a costly censorship bureaucracy, which the PBO has estimated at \$200 million—arguably the most expensive in the world. Bill C-412 gives Canadians more protection online through existing regulations and the justice system.

The reason I ask is that I understand free speech. I get it. However, what I'm getting from all the witnesses is that we're not holding people accountable. I feel it's important that if you commit a crime, you should be held accountable. If we don't stop the perpetrators from hurting people.... It was said earlier by Ms. Baker, I believe, that 91% of 2SLGBTQ1+...do not report.

How can we make this a better world if we don't hold these individuals to account?

I'll start with you, Mr. Boyce.

• (1155)

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I really appreciate the question.

I'll be more specific than I was earlier.

I agree that justice must be part of this conversation, but I don't want the sole focus of this conversation to be on punitive approaches to justice.

I think another alternative to justice is taking the path of deterrence. Right now, there is a public education imperative that is necessary in this country. Maybe Canadians in general understand what it is to be gay, bisexual or lesbian, but in this committee, I think the focus has been squarely put on gender. That means trans and non-binary communities. I don't think we should jump the gun by not giving Canadians the chance to be publicly and properly educated about the realities trans people face. Bring Canadians into the conversation before we jump to the punitive approach. There are many ways we can have that conversation on deterrence.

To close, I think education has to be a first step.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: One of the reasons I asked this question is that, in my previous life, a customer of mine who was gay could not speak about it at home due to cultural beliefs. She was therefore always very cautious and fearful because of the repercussions, even at home.

You talked about education. How do we educate individuals who are coming to Canada about this being acceptable in Canada and that we need to embrace it and not make people feel insulted or harmed—or effectively have harm come to them.

How do we do that?

Mr. Tyler Boyce: That is such a great way of thinking about it. I think we share that approach of empathy and compassion.

I'll equally share a story. I volunteer at old folks' homes just to meet new people and get different ideas from a different generation. So many times when I tell folks from that generation about my sexual orientation, the conversation shifts. However, through those moments, I have developed so much hope and belief in the good spirit of Canadians being brought into conversations of broader equality and justice. So many times, those conversations could have told me, "This person is a bad person because they don't understand my sexual orientation or gender identity." When I took the time to listen and give them the patience and grace to come with me along that journey—when they felt safe to ask questions about what it means to be trans, non-binary or gay—suddenly, a new connection was built.

I shared that example because that individual connection in my life could be the blueprint for how we approach Canadian society in general.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: My time is limited.

I actually volunteer at seniors' homes. I will tell you that I enjoy it, because they're very innocent. I don't find they judge people. I find they're at a time in their lives where they're accepting. It's very reassuring to me that we are able to understand this as we get older. I'm a senior—I'm not going to lie—and I'm damn proud of it because I'm on the right side of the soil.

What I want to emphasize is that, unless we ensure the safety of everyone—whether it's within their home or outside of their home—there must be penalties so that we can keep everyone safe. That's what's concerning to me. I have family members who are gay and I know the struggles they went through with their own families. We need to change that.

When you talk about education—

• (1200)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mrs. Roberts. You're way over time.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Am I cut off?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): You can quickly give a short answer in 30 seconds to Mrs. Roberts.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I didn't hear the end of your question, but I will say that I don't think it's an either-or conversation. The point I'm trying to make is that there is a continuum of justice. I'm saying that the first point on that continuum must be one where we meet Canadians with empathy, compassion and the hope they can be brought into a conversation.

Maybe the last step is the punitive approach, but at this point in time, in 2024, I'm very willing to lean into public education as a first piece.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mr. Boyce.

Next, we have Ms. Damoff for five minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you so much to all of the witnesses for being here today.

I'm going to move over to the other Tyler, if that's okay.

Tyler, you and I met in 2015 after you had been to the school board. You mentioned the meeting at the time. Your teacher asked me if I would have a coffee with you because you were so upset about what had happened. I still remember this, because the mom of one of your best friends had not treated you well.

Can you talk a little about your own personal experience being subjected to that level of hate?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I'll expand a bit more on that board meeting, specifically.

Thank you again, Pam, for inviting me here. It's an incredible opportunity.

At this board meeting, my friend and colleague Joel was able to speak on my behalf about the social exclusion I experienced in elementary school in grades 6, 7 and 8, which pushed me to miss about half of grade 8, simply because I felt so excluded. The fear of bullying was so intense that, even though I was very involved in school and loved learning, I hid in my bedroom. I attended this board meeting with a youth group through the Positive Space Network. It was a youth action committee. My friend Joel, who was the student trustee at the time, shared my story, which was incredibly emotional to hear. It was very impactful, I believe, at this meeting. What resulted, because of a mass disinformation campaign—I have some articles about that here, which I'll mention later—were many hate-filled protesters screaming every slur you could ever imagine at us and getting physically violent, which is why the police had to be called.

This kind of violence continues today. I received a death threat a month ago. These things happen to my colleagues all the time. I don't see it changing today. However, as the other Tyler mentioned, I think we are at a place where we need to come together and talk about this. Education is the first step.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Tyler, I just want to say how incredibly proud I am of you, not only today, but also in 2015 when you told me what you were doing and that you were not giving up. It's obvious that you still haven't given up. It just makes me sad that you continue to have to fight these fights. I know that at the time, the Halton Catholic District School Board had elected officials on it who were contributing to the hate.

Today, there's a by-election in British Columbia, and the Conservative candidate there, in 2021, in a debate over conversion therapy, quoted the Bible to say that gay people were "unclean". My colleague Rob Oliphant countered that to say that he is not unclean. Quite frankly, it was despicable. She's running for re-election today, and very likely, tomorrow, she could be a member of Parliament in the House of Commons again. We have a Conservative MP who said on a podcast recently that if he was given the opportunity, he would vote against gay marriage.

Tyler, I'll start with you, and then the other Tyler could, if he wants, comment as well. How do comments by elected officials contribute to the hate that is targeting people, the 2SLGBTQ+ community?

• (1205)

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I'll first mention that the rhetoric of being "unclean" is exactly what people said about people of colour. It's the exact same thing.

Ms. Pam Damoff: That's right.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: It's completely the same, which is hard to hear. It's very hard to hear the rhetoric from social conservatives and people like Jordan Peterson. I'll speak about what I've heard from campers. It is devastating. They are terrified. It's something they can't wrap their minds around and that they hear every single day. It's also through social media, which pushes them into echo chambers that are filled with hate, which we've mentioned a few times here. The rhetoric is terrifying. Actually, I think this will connect to something that was asked earlier about where they can go.

If there are no safe spaces in schools, then where do they go? First of all, they shouldn't have to go anywhere, of course, but Camp Ten Oaks is one of those places. For example, in 2024—

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Mr. Wisner, if you could, please wrap it up in around 30 seconds.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: —309 campers applied, although we were only able to accommodate 179. That's an increase from 2023, when 287 applied. This is an ongoing need that needs support.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, the witness mentioned that he had some articles.

If there's anything you want to leave with the committee, Tyler, it will get distributed to all of us.

Thank you.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Absolutely. I have some articles about disinformation, specifically this board meeting, as well as some stats about Camp Ten Oaks.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Next, we have two and a half minutes with Ms. Larouche.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to turn to the Fondation  mergence representatives. I'm going to be quick because two and a half minutes goes fast.

I want to thank Mrs. Roberts for bringing up seniors. Aging Gayfully is one of your organization's many programs. There is a lot of focus on the importance of educating seniors and taking a proactive approach, before acts of hate are committed. Prevention is a major part of the program.

Mr. Breault, you're very familiar with the program. Funding is a serious problem for that kind of programming. Do you have anything to say about how important it is for government to keep these programs going?

Mr. Laurent Breault: When people think about LGBTQ+ rights, they tend to think about the realities young people face, and

rightfully so. However, it's important not to disregard seniors. According to Canada's demographics, the population of people 65 plus is almost bigger than the population of people 25 and under. With 10% to 15% of the population being LGBT, we know there are LGBT seniors who are overlooked, who are invisible.

Unfortunately, the Aging Gayfully program hasn't had funding for a number of years now. The federal government provides very little funding for awareness and education programming and projects for seniors. However, a great deal of work needs to be done. Unfortunately, the population is invisible because many seniors are in the closet. Retirement homes and other senior communities are places where LGBT-phobia is still very present—and not just between seniors. There is a failure among stakeholder communities to prevent homophobia and transphobia and to respond to problems. It is a widespread issue, and unfortunately, resources to make these places more inclusive are very scarce.

It is very important to remember that seniors need to be taken into account as well.

• (1210)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Madame Larouche.

Next we have Leah Gazan for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

I just want to say that part of my directness today is because I'm hoping that this study will allow us to all do better as elected officials in this country.

I want to point to a blog post written for the London School of Economics by a woman named Emily Sams-Harris. She wrote:

...far-right protesters occupied Canada's capital city of Ottawa in February 2022, under the banner of the "Freedom Convoy" and the ways apathetic police responses encouraged anti-gender rhetoric. Originally claiming to be organized in protest to COVID-19 vaccine mandates established by federal and provincial governments, the convoy quickly evolved. It quickly became clear that this anti-vaccine, anti-masking protest had absorbed anti-gender movement discourses and dog whistles under the banner of [so-called] "freedom". For more than three weeks, occupiers employed aggressive and threatening tactics such as confronting people on the streets whom they believed to be pro-mask, pro-vaccine, particularly women, Black communities, Indigenous communities, people of colour, as well as [the] queer and trans communities. Hearing transphobic slurs was not uncommon.

I want to say that also happened with "Every Child Matters", where the Orange Shirt Society pushed back against the convoy, asking them to stop.

Lauren Pragg, I want to go back to you. With the rise of far-right extremism in the country, what can we do as elected officials to ensure that we are not contributing to far-right extremism? What should we also do as elected officials to call out far-right extremists who are currently elected and serving in the Conservative Party of Canada?

Lauren Pragg: Thanks very much for sharing that and for the question.

As I said before, it's a question of really just naming misinformation and disinformation. It's also about offering empathy and understanding—understanding that, as elected officials, you're representing everybody in your constituency and that there are gay, queer, trans and bi people in your constituency. Understand that all of your constituents deserve the same rights.

In terms of existing discriminatory positions and thoughts, we have to come back to facts. We have to come back to laws and the charter. These things matter, and they need to be held up. This is where, like I mentioned before, the use of the notwithstanding clause to get around some of those things is a very dangerous precedent that we're seeing in many different instances—its either being used or being alluded to as a way of getting around that.

Again, it's just having conversations based on fact, empathy and equity, and it's really aiming to represent all Canadians as as our elected officials are supposed to, based on the charter. That would be my quick answer to your question.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Next, we have Ms. Dominique Vien.

You have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

Thank you to the witnesses for making time to meet with the committee.

Before I get to my questions, I'd like to set the record straight. The Conservative Party of Canada agreed to undertake this study on hate-motivated violence targeting the LGBTQ community and to give it the serious attention it warrants. We did so in the spirit of openness and compassion.

That is why it is so unfortunate today to hear the disinformation coming from my colleagues in other parties. This is not the first time since we've started the study that we've heard comments like that. Frankly, they are disturbing and inappropriate, especially since the Conservative Party of Canada and its members voted against conversion therapy. In fact, Mr. Poilievre himself appointed a member of the LGBTQ community as his deputy leader, Melissa Lantsman.

That said, Mr. Wisner, did I hear correctly that you received a death threat a month ago or less?

• (1215)

[*English*]

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Thank you for the question.

Yes, I received a death threat online, and it was absolutely not the first time. It likely won't be the last. It was about a month ago. I specifically remember that one line said, "I want to beat you to within an inch of your life." This is someone I've never met. They know nothing about me. It was good, old-fashioned homophobia.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: How gratuitous.

What did you do? You told the committee about it today, and we thank you for sharing it with us, but did you report the incident to police?

[*English*]

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I reported this incident to the social media organization through which the incident took place, and I'm waiting for a response.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: I see.

As Ms. Baker, the Fondation Émergence representative, said, some 91% of victims do not report incidents to police. The same is true for many sexual assault victims. They don't report what happened to them either.

You didn't make it up. You received the threat, you saw it, you read it. You were obviously deeply shaken by it. Do you plan to report it to police?

[*English*]

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Absolutely, that is my intent.

Unfortunately, the message was sent from an anonymous profile that was deleted within an hour of its being sent. I was quick enough to take screenshots and send them to the social media organization, but I'm waiting on them to figure out who said that—where that account came from—before getting the police involved. It's also....

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Of course.

[*English*]

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I'll leave it at that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: It is no secret that the Conservative Party of Canada is a party that stands with victims, and we of course want legislation that puts victims first as much as possible.

Ms. Baker, you mentioned two statistics that really struck me. First, 78% of Canadians describe themselves as community allies. I'm not sure whether it was you or your colleague who said it. Second, 91% of LGBTQ people are victimized but do not report it.

Why don't they report it? I'm asking you that, but at the same time, I do want to point something out. When we studied intimate partner violence or violence against women, specifically, we found out that girls do not report hate crimes because they don't see the point—they don't think anyone will believe them.

When people do not want to come forward about hate crimes, what kind of situation are they in? Why don't they speak up? Ninety-one per cent is a huge number.

Ms. Olivia Baker: You're right, the same phenomenon can be seen in other contexts. When it comes to the LGBTQ+ community, specifically, I think it's important to keep in mind the relationship between police and community members, historically. Not that long ago, police were raiding bars. There are still people who were criminalized or persecuted by police, so it obviously plays—

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Madame Baker.

[Translation]

Ms. Olivia Baker: I'll send the figures afterwards.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Send them to us in writing. If you have the data, we would like to see them. It's important information.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): There's no interpretation.

Can you just pause for a minute?

Can you say a few words, Madame Baker?

[Translation]

Ms. Olivia Baker: Yes. The main reason they gave is that they didn't think it would make a difference.

• (1220)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Yes, it is fixed.

Go ahead. If you can, please wrap up in 30 seconds.

[Translation]

Ms. Olivia Baker: All right. Here are three figures: 74% of people thought it would make no difference; 45% said they didn't trust police; and 26% said they didn't think police would believe them. Those figures come from Women and Gender Equality Canada. I can send them to you by email.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Yes, we would appreciate it. Thank you very much.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Next we have Ms. Hefpner for five minutes.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for being here with their very important testimony today.

I'm kind of all over the place as to where to start here. I think it's clear that the Conservatives have no interest in asking questions about why we have seen such rising hate against the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Tyler Wisner, I thought it was interesting hearing the questions to you about why you didn't go to police after an online threat. I wouldn't expect the police to be able to do much about an online threat like that. We are moving forward in this country with some online harms legislation. It's not perfect. There's more work to do. The Conservatives have put forward a similar bill that would make

you have to sue the online media company to have the post taken down or to get any sort of retribution. All the onus is on them, but you'd have to sue the social media company to get any retribution.

What are your ideas about...?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I have a point of order.

That's not true, just for the record. If you can table proof of that, that's all I would ask. That's not true. That's not what the legislation is.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: I don't interrupt you with untruths, Michelle, so you can wait till you have the floor to continue with your untruths.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Ms. Hefpner, you have the floor.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: How do you think we fight this?

You're right. It's not just online harms anymore. We're seeing manifestations of this on the street. People are being physically attacked. It's happening in real life now. It's not just online.

Do you have any suggestions?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: You mentioned that it's not only happening online. I received a death threat in the streets of Toronto last week while I was walking home from work. How do we address this? I think part of the onus should be on these social media companies. They need to be monitoring in some way, because these threats are immediate. They need to be addressed in a timely manner, or violence will occur. It's that simple.

How to regulate these social media companies is difficult, because there are pros and cons. They do provide a great network to reach out to people like yourselves to find community where you otherwise wouldn't, but the threats of violence are real and very vast.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: Tyler Boyce, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Tyler Boyce: We're really bringing this conversation to where it needs to be when we talk about online harms, because, as the other Tyler mentioned, these harms are happening in real life.

One common theme today that I'm seeing is the responsibility of our elected officials to make sure these conversations are happening in a responsible way that doesn't cause undue harm. What I would add is that I know, in a non-partisan way across all parties, folks do understand the responsibility of what it means to represent Canadians. What I would add is a gentle reminder that "all Canadians" does not mean those who are politically convenient; it means all communities, including our communities.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: When we hear the Leader of the Opposition say that "female spaces should be exclusively for females, not biological males", what does that say to you if that is the leader of the Conservative Party?

Mr. Tyler Boyce: It says to me that trans women who are simply trying to use the washroom are at a heightened risk of becoming a statistic of an unnecessary and avoidable hate crime. It means, to me, that the way folks are expressing themselves, whether it's intentional or not, needs a lot of work if you're going to live up to the promise of representing all Canadians.

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Thank you.

I have about 45 seconds left.

I was hoping to get over to you, Lauren Pragg, online.

I was very moved by your opening statement, particularly when you spoke about a student who had been harassed by teachers and parents who had been radicalized to think that schools were “trans-ing” kids. I asked a teacher about this in our last session at this committee. Teachers themselves are being attacked over the misconception that they're causing students to think a certain way about their gender.

Can you respond to that?

• (1225)

Lauren Pragg: Thank you so much for the question. I know we don't have much time.

The truth is that gender is a social construct. It's part of a teacher's role to speak about that, as they do with any other social concept they're sharing with students. I think that, again, there is a fear among school officials of parental backlash and what that does. There is, as many of my colleagues here today have said, the threat of this violence spilling out beyond our communities, as well.

The last thing I want to say right now is that think we need to go a bit deeper and look at what is driving this division. The cost of living is up. This is about people not feeling like they have enough and looking for scapegoats all over the place. Right now, we're talking about the 2SLGBTQ community, but there are other examples of this throughout our society. I think these are the things we need to address. We have to make sure everybody has what they need to function, so they don't need to turn on each other to feel as if they have power and access to the services that speak to them.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Thank you, Lauren Pragg.

Now we'll go to Ms. Ferreri for five minutes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses today. The world is obviously politically heated right now, and we appreciate your time.

I want to come back to Mr. Wisner, if I can.

Death threats are certainly not acceptable at anyone's expense.

One thing we're seeing and hearing a lot about in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is homelessness—access to resources and housing. In a lot of the agencies you're helping with.... Again, I know there's a diverse group of people here who are working with different folks.

How important is housing? I see it in my community of Peterborough. We have a youth emergency shelter. There's a high percentage of kids who are identifying, and they don't have access to affordable housing. How important do you think the economy is, and how does it come into play in how people do? We've seen this. We've heard the Liberals say this, too: When the economy falls, people look for a scapegoat. They're stressed out of their minds, they're not regulated, and they project and hurt other people because they're in survival mode.

Mr. Wisner, how important do you think a healthy economy is to restoring the ability to even learn, be educated and be in that headspace?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Thank you for the question.

Affordable housing, affordable groceries and affordable living are incredibly important. It's unfortunate if we have this discussion and not talk about those things. We need to have this discussion before we can move on. We have to address these issues, or they won't go away. We should be talking about the housing crisis, the groceries crisis and the job crisis. These are things that affect people across Canada, no matter what.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I think about the mental state of folks. It's like an intersection. You think you're never going to be able to afford a home or have a safe home or safe street, and you're also dealing with an intersection of other issues, like a lack of education. My colleague Anna said it's about trying to reach different people and having those discussions—as you did, Mr. Boyce.

The fall economic statement is supposed to be delivered today. What do you want to see in that fall economic statement in terms of how the economy should be functioning, in order for people to have access to the basics—food and housing?

I'll go back to you, Mr. Wisner.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I'd say that because of my position at the Department of Justice, I shouldn't comment on that.

I will say that hate is received by, or perpetuated by, not just those in low socio-economic statuses. I grew up in Oakville, Ontario, an incredibly wealthy city, where I received incredible hate from wealthy social conservatives. My colleagues at work have received the same from a very different point of view.

• (1230)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I think we've talked about this multiple times with other witnesses. It's that connection piece that has to happen for people to see people. That's where that discussion and education opens up, and this goes to Mr. Boyce's point about going into seniors homes, and to my colleague Ms. Roberts' point. When we see the person, it dissolves a lot of that tension or anger.

I will hammer this point: When people can't afford to live, they're not even in a position to listen or hear or be regulated. I'm just getting a message from my community right now. We have the highest rate of food insecurity for children in history—in history. If you're a child and you're different, if you learn differently, your gender is different, or your sexuality is different, and your parents can't afford to live, they're fighting and they're stressed out. The incidence or risk of domestic violence is going to go up. The desperation that happens when you can't afford to feed your family bleeds into all facets.

There's been a 251% increase in hate crimes in this country since Justin Trudeau took office. That's not a coincidence. It's also seen the lowest GDP per capita growth. I would love to see people be able to have this education and understanding and be open to these things, but we have to ensure that people can eat and house themselves.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): MP Ferreri, you have about 30 seconds, please.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you so much.

I just want to ask Ms. Baker about access to housing for folks and the resources, when they're in that housing, to have peer support.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Olivia Baker: There's no question that LGBTQ+ people are overrepresented in the population of people experiencing homelessness, one of the main reasons being rejection by their families. The second reason is that shelter staff, among others, aren't always equipped or trained to treat LGBTQ+ people in a respectful way. Trans women, in particular, come to mind, because they aren't always welcome in women's organizations.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

Next is Ms. Lambropoulos.

Emmanuella, you have five minutes.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to start by thanking all of the witnesses. They have all been great today. I want to thank them so much for their testimony.

I'm hearing some things that I'm really not okay with. I've heard things throughout this meeting, and actually other meetings for this study, that I haven't been okay with. It kind of just reinforces the idea of using scapegoats when things are not going well. I've heard it said today that newer immigrants, new populations, might be the cause for the rise in hate. I heard the same thing said at a previous meeting by another member.

I just want to say that this is not okay. In my experience, people who used to have a mentality of “live and let live” are actually the ones who have changed their mentality over the last few years. It's not necessarily new people to Canada. It's Canadians who have been here for a long time and who have access to disinformation and misinformation online and to what they're being shown. Honestly, I think the Conservative Party does use scapegoats, unfortu-

nately, and does use certain minority communities against each other, trying to use this as a reason for increased hate.

I don't think that's the case. I think it's very dangerous to go down that path.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I would like to continue, thank you very much.

My question is this: What can be done, in your opinion, or what can be said to people who did have this mentality of openness before, of live and let live, and who have been influenced by the change in rhetoric they're hearing online? What are some of the messages you would want people to hear today?

Anyone can answer that.

Go ahead, Mr. Boyce.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I really appreciate the thoughtful question and that you pointed out the harmful consequences of scapegoating communities.

What can be done in order for us to avoid the low-hanging fruit of scapegoating communities and, rather, to create the enduring relationships we're going to need to take us into the next decade, and definitely into this next electoral season we're going into, are those conversations that are going to be led by 2SLGBTQI+ organizations.

The easiest way to bring folks back to an understanding—and I'm actually going to pull from your previous question—is the simple fact that we need to have equal opportunity across all sectors in Canada, whether it's in housing, in employment or in health care. If Canadians, simply because of their gender identity, sexual orientation or whatever other factor, cannot access those same resources, then we're never going to get to where we need to be.

I think that immigrant communities understand this maybe better than most Canadians. Most immigrant communities came here for the chance to access all of the amazing resources and to become members of Parliament, elected officials and leaders in AI and innovation, and we only see that because we were able to access education and resources.

When we're talking about scapegoating communities, for folks who might have forgotten their humble origins in this country or folks who are scapegoating whole communities, I think we have to understand the tremendous opportunity we have to create connections in this country. That doesn't start by scapegoating. It starts by reaching out to these communities in conversations like this, led by people like me and the hundreds of queer and trans organizations you represent at the Enchanté Network.

● (1235)

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you so much.

Actually, you spoke to something that had been mentioned previously about housing.

I know a trans woman who was refused rental housing, even though she had the funds to pay for it. She was refused at least 10 times before she finally found housing she could live in.

These barriers existed before people weren't able to afford housing. It's like you said: This intersectional lens needs to be applied because not everyone has equal access, regardless of their economic status.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I'll add that we'll be submitting a brief with precise statistics of how queer and trans communities are doing across sectors, and also with an intersectional analysis of data, particularly for Black, queer and trans folks who we know have heightened inequitable access to these public services.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

I think Mr. Wisner wanted to chime in as well.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I'll just quickly finish up my comment from earlier.

The cost of living crisis is very real. I believe all political parties agree on that. I do want to hammer this point that low socio-economic status does not cause gender dysphoria.

I'll leave it at that.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you.

Lauren, you spoke to us earlier about your organization, which helps 3,000 youth a year.

I'm wondering if you've noticed this increase recently. Have more people been reaching out?

What would you say is the biggest cause?

You also spoke a little bit about the fact that more people are having a harder time making and keeping friends since the pandemic. What do you think is contributing to that?

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Please wrap it up in 30 seconds.

Lauren Pragg: Thank you so much for the question.

I would just say that isolation is largely leading to that. The roots of that are complex. The whittling down of community spaces is a really big part of that.

Tyler Boyce was talking about connecting with people outside of your own demographic. There are a lot of examples of this. Those spaces and those opportunities are fewer and fewer for people. Especially for youth who may have gone to school virtually for the majority of their high school experience, etc., it's becoming more and more difficult. Social services don't have funding, so there's less opportunity for things like volunteering or summer jobs and things like that. It's harder for them to get those kinds of connections and make real relationships, I would say.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Lauren Pragg.

Next, we have a two and a half minutes for Madame Larouche.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: ggle preview Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to apologize to the witnesses. Mostly, though, I am embarrassed for members of the committee. We obviously didn't learn anything from our meeting this summer, when members tried to politicize violence against women, just as this important issue is being politicized today. I urge my fellow members to remember that witnesses asked us not to turn this into a political issue.

That said, I very much want to thank Lauren Pragg, Tyler Wisner and Tyler Boyce for their remarks, which are very helpful to our study.

Mr. Breault, I found it interesting when you brought up the investigation by the Métro newspaper reporters.

Ms. Baker, I know the show "*Décodeurs*" addresses these things.

With all the disinformation and misinformation out there, it's important to highlight that traditional media outlets have to abide by rules of ethics, unlike online media, which can post just about anything. I sometimes equate the online media world with the Wild West because it doesn't have the same rules and it contributes to the partisan polarization on this issue.

Could you explain why traditional media are an important tool for addressing the concerns of the LGBTQ community, as compared with social media?

• (1240)

Ms. Olivia Baker: Digital literacy tools also come to mind. We were talking earlier about the importance of education. I provide training in corporate settings, and the people in my sessions tend to be what you'd call white-collar workers. These are pretty educated people, but they still ask me about litter boxes in schools.

What I'm trying to say is that people have access to so much information that it's sometimes hard to differentiate between what's true and what isn't. When it's something people read, they don't always distinguish between a real news article and a story.

We were talking about accountability. I would like to see media organizations citing their sources, and being more transparent and clear in how they report the information.

I would also like to see fact-checking tools. I encourage the participants in my training sessions to check the information. I know there are a lot of English-language tools, sites like Snopes, which I use. In French, the show "*Décodeurs*" is an option people can use. Quebec's chief scientist wrote an article about trans women in sport, as well as one about the litter boxes in schools. However, it doesn't seem that the resources are familiar to everyone, and they don't necessarily cover everything.

I think one way to help counter disinformation is having individual media outlets or news sources taking a strong stance on the information they report. People would know they could trust the source of the information. They would know where to draw the line in terms of what is true and what is based on research and science.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Madam Baker.

Next, we have Ms. Gazan. You have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you so much, Madame Sidhu.

I want to be really clear: This is a non-partisan issue. Human rights are a non-partisan issue. All committee members supported the study. I want to be really clear about that.

I also want to be really clear that what we do as elected officials and the messages we send, as we have been cautioned by the witnesses today, can either harm or help people. I take my role as a member of Parliament very seriously. I worry about how the halls of power are being used right now in a way that can harm people.

Saying that, I want to ask you a question, Tyler Boyce. You spoke a lot about education. I was a teacher. I feel so sad about what's happening in schools, because I was a teacher. I was actually a sex ed teacher at the beginning of my career.

Why is education important?

Do you think members of Parliament should have to go through mandatory training when they are elected to understand their roles and legal obligations to uphold the charter, which includes the whole Constitution? It seems that we pick and choose when to uphold it and when not to, depending on the issue.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I really appreciate the question.

Of course, I'm a huge proponent of providing folks with the tools they might need to do their jobs in the best way possible. In this case, I think it's very clear that it also includes training on the language to use to ensure that folks are not unintentionally causing harm.

I would also add that, in response to the first part of your question on education, my mom was also an educator. When we talk about education, we have to remember—and I want to bring this in to the community—to look at the diversity of witnesses who have been called to provide testimony. We didn't all just fall from the sky; we all come from our own individual communities.

I want to present this committee with the fact that there is a tremendous opportunity for us to share the lessons learned that we've already had to learn in our individual communities—religious, racial, ethnic and otherwise—which have built bridges. That's why, when we talk about education, and when I talk about it, I'm such a huge proponent of the fact that people can change their minds, that people can see things in a different way, because I know I've done it, and I know that all of my colleagues who are here today have done it in their own communities. Allow us to bring those lessons learned to those in the House of Commons as well.

• (1245)

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mr. Boyce.

Next, we have Mrs. Roberts.

You have five minutes.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I want to state for the record that I'm really disappointed in the other parties that want to politicize this, especially to my colleague across the way, when I mentioned a personal client of mine who shared her very deep story with me. It was because of her background and her religious beliefs that I brought it to the forefront. That's why I was talking about education, because we need to make sure that, in Canada, everyone is accepted. That was my point. I'm very disappointed.

However, let's talk about online harms.

Tyler, I'm so sorry that you had to deal with someone who threatened you. That's not acceptable. I am interested to hear from you about the operations....

Bill C-412 aims to ensure that we don't have this hatred online. The Liberals are trying to stop it because they want to create another department. We don't need \$200 million going towards another department. In my view, we need that money to go towards what you've stated today about education and helping people understand that it doesn't matter whom you love, and it doesn't matter whom you want to love. That's your personal choice. That's the freedom that Canada offers.

I'm tired of this committee's pointing the finger at our Conservative leader who is a believer. We have a deputy leader who is gay and who is proud of it, and we're proud of her. I'm not sure where this is going with the Liberals, because when you point fingers, four more point back at you.

I want to let you know that I'm sorry that you encountered hatred online. That's not acceptable. I have family members who are gay, whom I love dearly and trust from here to the ends of the world, and I'm proud of them.

Why can't we make sure that this online hatred...? Introducing Bill C-412 would stop it and would make them accountable so that individuals who choose to love whomever they choose to love would be allowed to do that without hate.

Mr. Wisner, I'd like you to respond.

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Thank you very much. I do feel your empathy, so thank you.

Again, because of my position at the Department of Justice, I will not comment on federal policies, but I'd be more than happy to continue talking about the exclusion, bullying, hate or violence that my campers have experienced and have told me about. That's really the experience that I want to bring and that I want to relay; the rise in anti-trans, anti-LGBT and sexist rhetoric has been devastating for queer youth across North America. We have campers from the States. We have campers from the territories.

Thank you.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: I would say that the best way to stop this hatred—and I agree with the educational part, absolutely, one hundred per cent—would be to make sure that people understand that you can choose to love whomever you wish. We're not here to judge that. No one should be. Don't you feel that if we could stop this rhetoric online, this hatred online, it would help with the educational process?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: I would say that hateful online rhetoric definitely limits the reach of education.

Again, I'm not an expert in social media regulations and, because of my position at the Department of Justice, I can't comment on it.

• (1250)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Boyce, do you not agree that we need to stop this hatred online? I get sick when I see it. I really do. I think there should be some consequences to that.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: I want to commend all of the folks who are part of this committee for agreeing to go through with this study and for unanimously accepting that it go forward. I think everybody in this room can agree that something needs to be done to ensure that online safety is a reality, especially for our trans youth, who are right now experiencing a very hard time.

As for whose approach we use to get there, I think that debate is something that should happen in the House of Commons. On this committee, I can share that those conversations need to happen in collaboration with queer and trans organizations, that are working on the front lines every day. We have a multitude of stories and realities among folks who are experiencing online hate. We have the data and the stories about how that hate is translated into real-life instances of lack of safety for our community. I hope that expertise can complement this ongoing discussion about which pathway is going to get us there.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: I hope we will look at Bill C-412, so that we can make sure we can stop people who project that hatred online, because it has to stop.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you, Mrs. Roberts.

Next, we have Ms. Damoff.

You have five minutes on the floor.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thanks so much, Chair.

I'm so happy to get another opportunity to ask our incredible witnesses questions.

For the record, the legislation the Conservatives mentioned is a private member's bill that has no hope of ever seeing the light of day. It also puts the onus on a victim to come forward and get digital or social media companies to respond.

Tyler, I know my experience with reaching out to them results in nothing. Our Sergeant-at-Arms says you can't even reach out to Twitter anymore.

If my colleagues haven't read it yet, I want to focus on a report from the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime that came out last week. It's called "Strengthening Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime in Canada". It's an outstanding report. I asked him to submit it to the committee for evidence.

I want to read you some of the stats.

Tyler, you mentioned one particular death threat. I know that's not the only one you've encountered.

It says:

72% of police officers said their police service did not have a dedicated hate crime unit. Of those that did, 44% had only one officer

44% of victim services had fewer than 5 paid staff

73% of victim services cited limited resources as a significant barrier to providing adequate support

77% of police officers and 82% of victim service workers believed the proposed standalone hate crime offence in Bill C-63 would be helpful or very helpful.

It also says:

Throughout the years, discriminatory laws have marginalized 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and recent data suggest they are more likely to suffer physical harm from hate crimes than other targeted groups.

He's made 13 outstanding recommendations that I hope colleagues will take the time to read.

Again, I'll start with the Tylers in the room. Then, if we have time, I'll go online.

Have you gone to the police to report hate crimes, and what has been your experience if you have?

Tyler Boyce, I'll start with you.

Mr. Tyler Boyce: After experiencing a hate crime with my partner when we were out for a walk in our neighbourhood, we did report the hate crime, and it really wasn't a very good experience. There were a lot of questions about what actually happened, almost as if they didn't believe us. In terms of the support provided, the call began, and when the call ended, nothing ever came of it. Maybe it's because they're understaffed; maybe it's because they don't have the information, but this really spurred us at the Enchanté Network to understand that this wasn't an individual experience but one that was happening to thousands of Canadians across the country.

We went out and asked folks why they were not reporting to the police when they had experienced a hate crime. We unlocked a can of worms about the deep relationship, or lack thereof, between police services and queer and trans communities. There's a lot of trust that needs to be rebuilt there so that queer and trans folks feel safe to report a hate crime, whether on the phone or in person.

To put it in context, imagine being a trans person walking into a police station to report that you have experienced a hate crime. Do we believe that person is going to be met with an environment that allows her to tell her authentic story about something traumatic that happened to her?

I think that, in the women's rights movement, folks understand what it means to come forward and tell your story, and all the barriers that are included in that process. There are lessons to be learned there.

First, we do need to build up police services to be able to respond, but we also need to understand how to put community in the position where they feel comfortable reporting these hate crimes in the first place.

• (1255)

Ms. Pam Damoff: One of these recommendations is actually to invest in training for police in victim services, which speaks to your point. I just read that there was a horrific crime in Hamilton against a transwoman who was beaten and lost her teeth. Through victim services, a GoFundMe campaign and donations, she's been able to have her teeth restored, but it cost tens of thousands of dollars because of the beating she took.

In the 15 seconds left, Tyler, did you want to add anything about that?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Very quickly, yes. I have not gone to the police about a hate crime, although I have heard stories from my campers who have had to. I have almost had to call the police on their behalf at camp, but because of age regulations, I did not.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Can you send us more information about the camp?

Mr. Tyler Wisner: Absolutely.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Sonia Sidhu): Thank you.

That concludes our panel today. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank each and every witness. Thank you very much.

Seeing no further questions, the meeting is adjourned.

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