



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 124**

Monday, December 2, 2024

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Chair: Ms. Lena Metlege Diab





## Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Monday, December 2, 2024

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon and welcome, everyone.

[*English*]

This is meeting 124 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Pursuant to the order of reference of November 18, 2024, the committee is meeting today in public to begin its study of the supplementary estimates (B), 2024-25.

We have the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Mr. Arif Virani, with us this afternoon, as well as five members of the ministry.

Before I introduce you all to the committee, I will say a few words.

First, I remind members to please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic and please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

I remind everyone to please address the chair and have all questions and responses go through the chair. Before we start with our committee, I also want to call to your attention that the clerk has distributed the 10th report of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in both languages, further to the subcommittee meeting of Monday, November 25, 2024.

[*Translation*]

[The subcommittee considered] the business of the committee and agreed to make the following recommendations:

1. That the meetings of November 28 and December 16, 2024, be cancelled; and
2. That, for the meetings of December 5, 9 and 12, 2024, the committee conduct a pre-study of Bill C-63.

• (1535)

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the subcommittee report?

I have two people raising their hands.

Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** My answer to your question is yes. I was just going to move to adopt the report, if you hadn't done it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Brock.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** I'm asking that we defer moving the 10th report until after we hear from the minister. His time is extremely valuable. I think every member of this committee would understand and appreciate that. We're already five minutes into his hour. I received no indication that he's available beyond the 60-minute allotment.

There is a miscommunication, in my view, with respect to the 10th report. The committee as a whole did not agree with respect to item number two. There was vigorous debate. I believe we can still reach a compromise. I'm asking that we have that discussion after the first hour and before we hear from the other justice officials, to make proper use of our time.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

**Mr. James Maloney:** It's a simple matter of voting yes or no to adopt the report of the subcommittee, which we dealt with last week. I think we can do that without any delay to the minister and move on because we also have the officials here for the second hour.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Brock.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** It's not that simple. We had a vigorous discussion with respect to the merits of another proposed study. There was a compromise that I put forward for the committee as a whole.

**Mr. James Maloney:** I have a point of order.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** I'm not going to get into those details, Mr. Maloney.

**Mr. James Maloney:** We're treading very closely to that.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** I know the parameters. Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

I'm not getting into details. I am saying that it is not as simple and straightforward as Mr. Maloney and the chair would have this committee believe.

I'm respectful of the minister's time. Let's get to the minister, and then we can have a more fulsome discussion about adopting the 10th report.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

**Mr. James Maloney:** I move that we adopt the report right now. The subject matter of the report is outlined very clearly. What else Mr. Brock has in mind has nothing to do with the content of the report. It's a simple yes or no. We can vote on it and can move to the minister forthwith.

**The Chair:** A motion to adopt the report is on the floor.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Right, so we have to call the vote.

**The Chair:** I'm advised by the clerk that the motion is on the floor.

Yes, Mr. Brock.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** I move to adjourn debate.

**The Chair:** Can you give me a minute, please? I will get clarification from the clerk and the Table.

All right. I have clear instructions. It's black and white; it's not grey. The vote has been called. We can't move on from the vote, so I have to do the vote.

Clerk, please proceed.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Is the vote to adopt the report?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** No, the motion is to adjourn debate.

**The Chair:** No. The instruction I received from the Table is that this is not allowed.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Madam Chair, I'm moving to proceed to hear from the minister, which is a dilatory motion.

**The Chair:** The vote has been called. We can't have another motion. It's black and white. It's not something I can decide on; it's already decided. Apparently, it's the same way in the House. It's nothing I need to make any further points on.

Mr. Clerk, please proceed with the vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I want to welcome you, Minister, and the officials with you: Shalene Curtis-Micallef, deputy minister of justice and deputy attorney general of Canada; Laurie Sargent, assistant deputy minister, indigenous rights and relations portfolio; Bill Kroll, chief financial officer and assistant deputy minister, management sector; Matthew Taylor, senior general counsel and director general, criminal law policy section; and Elizabeth Hendy, director general, programs branch, policy sector.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

We thank you for participating in this meeting.

Without further delay, Minister, I give you the floor. You have 10 minutes.

**Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and members of the committee.

[*English*]

I'll be presenting today key items from the 2024-25 supplementary estimates (B) for the Department of Justice. This funding will make a real difference for people in this country who interact with our justice system, including victims. These items fit into our government's broader plan to increase affordability, provide social supports and create a better Canada.

Access to justice is a top priority of mine. To this end, I've put considerable time and effort into filling judicial vacancies. I've appointed 178 judges since I became minister. During my first year alone, I appointed 137 judges. The previous annual record was 107. Right now more than 96% of the judicial positions across the country are filled.

A robust legal aid system is another key pillar of access to justice. I believe legal aid provides fair representation. It ensures the smooth functioning of the court process and ensures that cases are heard in a timely manner. This year's supplementary estimates (B) provide \$80 million for criminal legal aid for provinces and territories and \$71.6 million for immigration and refugee legal aid services. This funding will pave the way for greater access to justice for indigenous persons, for individuals from Black and other racialized communities and for those with mental health issues, all of whom are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

If these supplementary estimates do not pass in Parliament, this critical support will be jeopardized. That needs to be understood by all committee members. Justice will not be served and people will suffer, particularly victims of crime. I know there are colleagues at this table who care about these issues, but I also know that some people may be instructed to oppose these measures.

To my Bloc and NDP colleagues, I think we know how some members will vote on these measures, including the official opposition. I'm looking to you to ensure that the estimates are able to come to a vote and pass.

[*Translation*]

I would like to point out other areas in which the supplementary estimates provide essential support for Canadians.

This will support the provision of legal advice and information to individuals who have been sexually harassed in their workplace. Sexual harassment is a scourge that disproportionately affects women. Statistics Canada tells us that one woman in four and one man in six have reported being victims of sexualized and inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

We also know that a large majority of incidents are not reported, which means that the real figures are probably higher. The \$10.3 million in funding provided in these estimates would help to support people going through a traumatic time, in particular if they do not have the resources to pay for legal representation or if they are unaware of their rights.

• (1545)

[*English*]

The legal aid program would support access to free legal information and advice to anyone who believes they have been sexually harassed in the workplace. This is very important funding.

The official opposition asserts that they care about addressing gender-based violence. They are often very performative about it, but I expect that, yet again, they will follow their leader's instructions and vote against supporting victims of gender-based violence.

This funding dovetails with a concerted effort from our government to support women and curb sexual assault and gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is an epidemic in this country and it must stop.

This is why we passed laws requiring training for judges on sexual assault and intimate partner violence. I worked on it at this very committee. That was Bill C-3, which we called the Rona Ambrose law, from the 43rd Parliament.

We also strengthened the national sex offender registry with Bill S-12 in this Parliament and reformed publication ban laws to empower victims to tell their own stories. We toughened bail laws for intimate partner violence offenders in Bill C-75 and Bill C-48. We funded women's shelters and crisis hotlines so that victims are supported in their time of need. We will continue to do everything we can to end sexual harassment and gender-based violence in Canada. I'm proud that this funding will contribute to this very important goal.

The online harms act will concretely tackle online sexual violence. For the first time, we are mandating that online platforms do their part to keep people in Canada, especially children, safe online. We are ensuring that child sexual exploitation material and non-consensual intimate images, including deepfakes, are subject to a takedown order. Online platforms will no longer get a free pass for hosting vile content. Women and girls across Canada are being intimidated and harassed online. We've seen children pass by suicide because of online abuse.

Enough is clearly enough. In our increasingly online world, we do not have time to spare. We need to act intentionally. We need to pass Bill C-63.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to address another subject that is important to Canadians: protecting tenants. We know that housing is one of the main sources of stress for Canadians right now, and this is particularly true for tenants.

Rising rents, renovictions and the lack of opportunities when it comes to housing availability are pushing tenants to leave their communities. Tenants also face unique challenges when it comes to

making sure that their housing is properly maintained and their landlord obeys provincial laws.

Tenants' rights and legal services organizations can help tenants work things out and overcome complex problems. Tenants facing threats to the security of their housing can feel especially powerless and alone.

[*English*]

This is why in budget 2024 our government proposed an investment of \$50 million over five years to establish what we call a new tenant protection fund. Our government has made substantial advancements in housing. We know everyone deserves an affordable place to call home. Our housing accelerator fund is making a real difference in communities across Canada. It is very unfortunate that Conservative members of Parliament have been barred by their leader from accessing these funds for their communities. That's unfair, and it's certainly not leadership. The tenant protection fund is just one of many elements of these supplementary estimates that will go towards building more housing.

Other items include \$135 million for the Canada housing benefit to provide low- and moderate-income renters the ability to make ends meet. We're putting \$99 million into the rapid acquisition of shelter space and deeply affordable housing. We're devoting \$27 million to co-op housing development—a great way to increase affordable options for families. We will continue showing up for Canadians by rapidly building the housing we need.

I'd like to speak about one last item, which is new funding of \$4.9 million through the estimates for victims and survivors of hate crimes. This funding is part of Canada's action plan on combatting hate. The action plan represents Canada's first-ever comprehensive, cross-government effort to combat hate.

Budget 2024 announced \$29 million over six years, starting this year, to enhance or establish financial assistance and compensation programs for victims of hate-motivated crime. The funding would also help raise awareness in the judiciary about the unique dynamics of hate crime, and support the development and delivery of specialized training for Crown prosecutors on this very topic. We've seen an alarming rise in hate crimes in Canada. Horrible incidents of anti-Semitism have skyrocketed. Hate against the queer community is up. People don't feel safe in their own neighbourhoods. It is unacceptable and un-Canadian. We need to stamp out hatred in our communities and ensure perpetrators are held to account.

Bill C-63 is a key part of our plan to stop hatred in Canada. I was very proud to stand alongside the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and others when I introduced Bill C-63 in February of this year. I share the disappointment of many Canadians that this bill has been stalled in the House of Commons by partisan games. Bill C-63 creates tougher penalties for hate crimes and ensures there are mechanisms to hold people accountable for online hate that would not be acceptable in the off-line world. I am proud of this legislation, and I hope to see it progress soon.

Madam Chair and committee members, the appropriations requested through the supplementary estimates (B) are part of our government's larger vision of support, rather than cuts, for Canadians. I am committed to creating a justice system that is accessible, fair and efficient. I work every day towards achieving this goal. I hope all members of this committee will work to ensure this important funding flows to Canadians.

Thank you very much.

• (1550)

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

We will now move to our first round of six minutes each.

MP Jivani, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, you mentioned tougher bail restrictions in your opening statement. The 2024-25 departmental plan mentions a key priority of supporting survivors and victims of crime.

I'd be curious to know why you think police officers—like Sergeant Lisa Harris from Newfoundland and Labrador, who appeared before the status of women committee last week—are asking your government for stricter bail conditions, and why police unions across the country right now are begging you publicly to introduce stricter bail conditions, since you believe you've already delivered that.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Thank you, Mr. Jivani, for the question.

We heard loudly and clearly about the need for bail reform and responded to that request. That came about 18 months ago.

What I'd say about police is that I understand their concerns. I feel their concerns. I also know that in my city—close to where you represent, sir—we have 700 fewer police officers in the Toronto Police Service than we did when Bill Blair was the chief of police.

I think we need more policing, but we also need more resources dedicated by the provinces for things like courtrooms, Crowns, JPs and detention facilities.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** There's condescension in what you're saying, though. Police officers use their voice to express their concerns, and you dismiss it by saying you dealt with it 18 months ago. They're tweeting at you now asking for stricter bail conditions. I've seen you respond to the Ontario government, for example, and suggest that bail law is very difficult to interpret for those without a background in law.

There seems to be a streak of condescension. I'm asking you quite clearly if you're willing to take any responsibility for the problems police officers, survivors and victims are articulating to you now.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I take a lot of responsibility for keeping Canadians safe. That is my job. I respect the job that police officers are doing by putting themselves in the line of fire to keep us safe. I also take cues from police officers, including Deputy Chief Alvaro Almeida, who has said that in York Region, the problem is resourcing in the system, including the availability of court space and Crowns.

The National Police Federation, an umbrella organization that represents officers around the country, has pointed out the exact point that I've been making, which is that in some jurisdictions, JPs need to have legal training if they're going to make decisions about charter interests. That is not the case in Ontario, and it's an open question as to why.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I've heard you make this point before. Ordinarily when you speak, you seem to leave out entirely the principle of restraint, the part of the Criminal Code that many people point to as a source for a lot of the bail issues in our country right now.

I'm wondering if you will admit today that the principle of restraint being introduced by your government was a mistake, and that a big part of the problem is that you have not used your powers through the Criminal Code to enforce strict bail conditions, as many of these stakeholders—the police officers, victims and survivors—are asking you to do.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Mr. Jivani, this predates your time in Parliament, but when we passed Bill C-75, what we were doing was codifying Supreme Court case law, including decisions like *Antic* and *Zora*. Nothing changed with the jurisprudence being transferred into black-letter law in the statute. In fact, the only thing that actively changed was imposing a reverse onus on people who commit intimate partner violence, making bail more difficult for those individuals.

I appreciate the concern you're voicing. I appreciate the crisis happening on our streets. I appreciate the crisis of confidence that Canadians feel when they see people being let out on bail who have been subject to repeat offences. The second ground of bail—there are primary, secondary and tertiary grounds—is a serious risk of re-offending. That test needs to be applied adequately by adjudicators, and that involves having space to house people.

• (1555)

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I understand. There's an issue, though. You love to bring up that I'm one of the relatively new MPs, but you've been here for nine years, and to people who hear you speak, you speak like someone who takes no responsibility for any of the problems in the system. This is a source of frustration.

You fail to acknowledge that the principle of restraint in the Criminal Code is a problem for people. You might disagree with them, but at least acknowledge that their point of view is legitimate. When police officers ask you to make change, they're coming from an informed position. When victims and survivors ask you to make change, they're coming from an informed position. When provincial governments ask you to make change, they are coming from an informed position.

You continue to take this posture that you know everything, that everybody's wrong and that I just got here and you've been here for nine years, which somehow means you know what you're talking about and I don't. What I'm relaying to you is not my opinion. What I'm relaying to you is what we are hearing from Canadians and organizations across our country.

Are you taking the position that everybody doesn't know as much as you do and that they simply need to maybe read more of your tweets or your posts to understand better what's going on in the country?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** With all due respect, Mr. Jivani, in my response to your earlier—

**The Chair:** Minister, you have 50 seconds for a response, and then that will be the time.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Thank you.

With all due respect, Mr. Jivani, when you asked me if I take responsibility, I said that it is my responsibility, so I take responsibility.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** You say it—

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I just said it. I've said it twice, Mr. Jivani.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** You say it, but you don't do it.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** If I may, I'll continue.

I'm also taking cues from all the stakeholders in the system. What is fundamental for Canadians to understand is that you can amend the Criminal Code, but the implementation of law enforcement is something that resides at the municipal level and at the provincial level.

When I hear Donna Kellway of the Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association lamenting the lack of resources so that there are enough Crowns to argue about bail, that needs to be remedied at the provincial level. When I hear justices of the peace lamenting the fact that the Toronto South Detention Centre is so overcrowded that it resembles third world conditions—there's yet another article in today's news about that very issue—we're jeopardizing the entire criminal justice system. We need amendments to the Criminal Code, some of which I've delivered, and I'm willing to entertain more suggestions.

Secondly, we—

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Get rid of the principle of restraint. Some are recommending that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. The time is up.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** If I could finish, Mr. Jivani, what I would say secondarily is that we need more cops and Crowns, JPs with legal training and detention centres. We also need data. The fact that we don't have data, while Mr. Ford's governance of the criminal justice system is resulting in more than 50% of sexual assault charges being stayed or withdrawn, is a problem for everyone in Ontario, including the victims who want to have their day in court. They're not getting that because not enough resources are being dedicated to the system.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Jivani, and thank you, Minister. That is the time.

We have a substitute clerk today, so I don't have the 30-second warning before the time is up. I will try to interject as best I can and as nicely as I can.

MP Bittle, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here.

These last two meetings have been surprising. I'm looking across the way and seeing a former prosecutor and someone who went to one of the finest law schools in the world pretending they don't know how the legal system works in this country, especially the criminal system—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** It's not one of the finest. They're correcting me. Yale law school isn't one of the finest law schools in the world. I guess that will be on division. I think it's pretty good, humbly. I come from the University of Windsor law school.

In any event, I'm wondering, Minister, if there have been any court decisions with respect to the resources that are available for bail.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Absolutely, there have been. In a case called *R. v. Muchemi*, the justice said:

Even if pre-trial detention conditions were rendered more humane, the decision to deprive someone of their liberty before they have had a trial and the Crown has proven its case should be made sparingly. Given the utterly dehumanizing conditions at the [Toronto South Detention Centre], it must be made even rarer until those conditions improve.

That's the *R. v. Muchemi* case.

In today's newspaper, they're referring to the fact that the Toronto South Detention Centre is horrific. People there are described as being "filthy, underfed and caged". This prompted Madam Justice Himel of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario to again decry the situation and she reduce the sentence. Normally, there's a sentencing discount. I think most people on this committee understand that. She upped the discount because the conditions are so deplorable. She pointed to the need for better conditions, including more facilities to house people, but also to house them more safely.

This jeopardizes not only the conditions of detention, but also Canadians' confidence in the administration of justice, particularly in the province of Ontario.

• (1600)

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** This goes back to the Conservatives being misleading about how the justice system works. Why can't you, as the federal Minister of Justice, deal with the jail conditions that justices are talking about as the members of the Conservative party are suggesting you can?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** It would violate the division of powers under what's called the BNA Act of 1867. The administration of justice is the purview of the provinces. I set out pieces of legislation like the Criminal Code and appoint judges, but I do not build courthouses, I do not hire court workers, I do not hire Crowns, I do not hire police, I do not track data and I do not build provincial detention facilities.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** It's interesting, Minister, that the Conservatives are laughing when you're talking about the division of powers and the Constitution. There is clearly no regard for that.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** They're still heckling as we talk about issues like the charter and the Constitution. The Conservatives are completely unserious when it comes to issues of the Constitution.

I'm wondering if you could discuss the online harms bill, which I know you have before the House. Hopefully, the House will get back to its regular business. I've had the opportunity to meet with a lot of parents on this subject. I know everyone around this table is concerned about what's online and what's out there. We even heard Conservatives on that. They had a lengthy filibuster during their own bill, but one of the themes they talked about, significantly, was the takedown provision for the Internet, even though the private member's bill they were filibustering didn't have that provision.

Could you talk about the provisions of the online harms act and how they will make Canadians safer? I know a lot of parents are concerned about that.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Mr. Bittle, thank you for that question.

A duty to protect children and a duty to take down material will be imposed by legislation. Those are the first two points.

Secondly, the duty to take down material would apply to child sex abuse material and what is known as revenge porn, which is the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

I've spoken to a lot of mothers around this country. Specifically, Amanda Todd's mother Carol said to me that the victimization of her child continues 10 years after her death. Why? It's because the images of Amanda Todd continue to circulate online.

When I spoke to law enforcement, as Mr. Jivani was urging me to do, what law enforcement told me is that you can amend the Criminal Code as many times as you want, but it's very difficult to prosecute in this area. It's especially difficult when the perpetrator is in a foreign jurisdiction, including halfway across the world. They have told me that the only thing that will help these families and victims is getting those images down and doing it quickly.

That is what this bill would purport to do within a 24-hour time frame. It would get the images down. That is why the Canadian Centre for Child Protection is behind it, as are parents right around this country. It is at least one thing I hope we can work on collaboratively and in a non-partisan manner to get across the finish line.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** I'll ask a question about bolstering legal aid. Can you talk about the impact on people if we are unable to administer the additional \$151 million because of the Conservative filibuster in the House?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** That has to do with the stuff you guys deal with on a daily basis, which is about access to justice.

What we're facing is a problem with a lack of courtrooms, but also court backlogs. What you do when you implement legal aid is ensure people are represented. A represented litigant moves through the system much more quickly, whatever the disposition—up or down, yes or no, civil damages or not and conviction or not.



When I put on the table \$700 million of legal aid for immigration, refugee legal aid and criminal legal aid over the span of five years, what I'm doing is enhancing access to justice and the efficiency of our justice system. Again, that is something we should all be behind, because we need a more efficient justice system to ensure people get their day in court and get the kinds of results they deserve.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Fortin, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for being with us today, Minister.

The Bloc Québécois has introduced Bill C-373 which proposes to eliminate the religious exemptions provided in paragraphs 319(3)(b) and (319)(3.1)(b) of the Criminal Code. I would like to know your opinion on that.

Can we expect that your government will take up that bill, or support it, before the end of the current Parliament?

• (1605)

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Yes, I am very familiar with the provisions you have proposed in Bill C-373 concerning the religious exemptions provided in section 319 of the Criminal Code.

If you want to move this bill forward, I would say, quite frankly, that the first thing to do would be to break the deadlock the House is now in. Then, if you want to accelerate the process, I would remind you that a bill relating to the same provisions of the Criminal Code, more specifically section 319, already exists. It addresses online harms.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** I understand, Minister—

**Hon. Arif Virani:** The bill is C-63.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Forgive me for interrupting you. I don't want to press you, but as you know, we do not have a lot of time available to us.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** True. I will let you resume speaking.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Bill C-63 does not address religious exemptions, more specifically the two provisions to which Bill C-373 relates.

I would simply like to know whether you support the idea of abolishing these two religious exemptions or not. If you do, can we expect this to be done speedily? In order for that to be possible, the House would obviously have to break the deadlock we are in. On that point, I agree with you.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I will be brief. First, the same provisions of the Criminal Code are affected and could therefore be covered by an admissible amendment. Second, I am completely comfortable with the idea of your committee studying the situation, hearing testimony, and so forth. My main objective is to eliminate all the hate we are seeing, particularly now, here in Canada.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** We have the same objective: to eliminate hate. However, allowing hate speech for which religious belief is the excuse is not consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or with the values of Quebecers and Canadians.

Do you agree with me that this is a problem?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Those provisions are 20 or 25 years old. It would be useful to know how many times they have been used and whether the accused got off by using this kind of defence. I think those are rare cases.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Yes, this kind of defence has not been used often. The fact remains that Crown attorneys have this in front of them when they come to initiate proceedings. They have a certain number of cases to process and proceedings to bring, but they do not have the time to bring all of them. They are assigned to the most important cases, the ones where their chances of success are best. Paragraphs 319(3)(b) and 319(3.1)(b) cause endless problems because they suggest that if the acts were committed for religious reasons, the defence will be valid.

I would like you to tell me simply whether your opinion is that allowing hate speech where religion is used as an excuse is a problem or not.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** My answer is yes, it is.

When it comes to deciding how we can expand or amend our own laws, study the situation and combat hate, the approach we suggest in Bill C-63 is to increase the penalties. If the approach you suggest is to eliminate some of the exemptions provided, I will be completely prepared to listen.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** I would like you not just to be comfortable listening to me, but also to be comfortable agreeing with us. I understand that I will not get that consent today, but I invite you to think about it seriously.

What we are doing is looking at the question from all angles. As you know, the committee has held meetings in recent weeks in connection with its study of Islamophobia and antisemitism. You have heard about our debates. After listening to all the testimony, I find this question to be increasingly timely and increasingly urgent. Ms. Lyons, the special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism, also testified before the committee. While she did not say she was in agreement on this question, she found it interesting and said we should look into it. I would therefore press the point and say to you that this is something of considerable importance in the fight against hate speech.

I am changing the subject quickly because I have barely a minute left. This morning, La Presse published an article critical of the problems surrounding the appointment of Quebec judges to the Federal Court of Canada. I am sure you saw it, or at least were briefed on it. I imagine there will be two new judges from Quebec appointed to the Federal Court of Canada over the next few days. Can we expect you to appoint Quebec judges? As you know, the Federal Courts Act requires that there be 5 Quebec judges on the Federal Court of Appeal and 10 Quebec judges on the Federal Court.

At the moment there is a deficit, as Quebec's Minister of Justice pointed out. Can we expect that you will remedy this appointments deficit by naming Quebec judges to those vacant positions over the next few days?

• (1610)

**Hon. Arif Virani:** What I can tell you is that I will be doing my work very quickly. In fact, I have already proven this: I am doing my work faster than any other minister of justice in Canada. For Quebec, 96.8% of judge positions are now filled. Only 3.2% are still vacant. Am I going to allocate the vacant positions on the Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal to Quebec judges, as the act provides? I am obviously going to follow the rules and comply with my obligations.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will now go to our six-minute round with MP MacGregor.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for joining our committee once again.

I was looking through both your departmental plan and your organizational chart. In the organizational chart, you have reference to a war crimes program, and in the departmental plans there are commitments towards international co-operation on criminal justice. However, when it comes to the supplementary estimates, I don't see any reference to funding for both of these. I'm just curious. With everything that's going on around the world—with Russian aggression in Ukraine and what's happening in the Middle East and Africa—can you explain why no additional resources are being devoted to these very important programs if we're serious about standing up for Canadian values internationally?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Thank you, Mr. MacGregor, for the question.

We've definitely worked on our international co-operation. We've definitely enhanced our collaboration, specifically in the context of the Ukraine conflict. There are Department of Justice employees who have been seconded to the International Criminal Court, for example. The RCMP is also assisting with investigations.

With respect to the actual numbers, I might defer to Bill Kroll or my deputy for the numbers dedicated to the war crimes unit.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I'll get to him during the second round.

I have a direct question for you. With respect to what's happening in the West Bank, do the illegal Israeli settlements there constitute a war crime?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I think the Government of Canada's position is the same—

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** This is a yes-or-no question, Minister. Is it a war crime or is it not?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** The West Bank is an occupied territory. The status of the settlements is that they are illegal at law. That has been Canada's position.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Is it a war crime? They're displacing the indigenous population, the Palestinians who used to live there. Is that a war crime?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** What I am telling you, Mr. MacGregor, is Canada's position. The investigation and the determination of a war crime are for an international tribunal. It's not for me to speculate.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Okay, but we are signatories to the Rome Statute.

You have seen recently that the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for both the Prime Minister of Israel and his former defence minister. When asked about that directly, both the Prime Minister and your colleague the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Canada will “abide by” the ruling.

What does “abide by” mean, Minister? You're the Minister of Justice. In plain English, what does it mean that Canada will “abide by” that ruling?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Mr. MacGregor, I'll simply restate Canada's position. We are a rule-of-law country. We are signatories to the Rome Statute. We respect our institutions and their independence, including international institutions.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Yes, but again, what does “abide by” mean? If the Prime Minister of Israel and his former defence minister were to set foot on Canadian soil, what would Canada do?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Mr. MacGregor, I'm not going to speculate on future hypothetical situations. What I was—

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I'm not asking you to speculate. Both your colleague and the Prime Minister were quite clear in saying “abide by”. I'm asking for a clear answer.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I'm echoing exactly what Minister Joly and the Prime Minister said, which is that we are a rule-of-law country, that we are signatories to the Rome Statute and that we believe in international humanitarian law and the jurisdiction and independence of the ICC.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Minister, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for both the Prime Minister of Israel and the former defence minister for crimes against humanity and crimes committed since the Israel-Hamas war began more than a year ago. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have said that they would abide by that ruling. You acknowledge that we are a signatory to the Rome Statute. You have been wavering in clearly committing an answer towards whether these illegal Israeli settlements constitute war crimes, and you're being equally evasive in stating, as the Minister of Justice, what Canada would do should both of these individuals set foot on Canadian soil. I think Canadians would like a clear answer from their Minister of Justice on this.

• (1615)

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I dispute that characterization, Mr. MacGregor. What I'm indicating to you is that I don't answer hypotheticals.

I've indicated to you, as to the status of the West Bank, that the settlements are illegal in international law, and what I'll say to you is what we've frequently said, which is that we abide by international law and by international institutions. We respect their jurisdiction and their independence, and as a signatory of the Rome Statute, we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I understand that it is a contravention of international law, Minister. However, again, we're talking about the West Bank, which is future land for a Palestinian state. It is acknowledged that these are Palestinian territories. These people are being forcibly removed. After, they are being prevented from returning because of the building of settlements.

Again, very clearly, does that action constitute a war crime, and would Canada hold those people responsible for that kind of conduct?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Mr. MacGregor, I'm trying to assist you as best I can. The determination, ultimately, about what constitutes a war crime is for an international tribunal. That is not before me, and I'm not going to speculate about it. What I can say to you is that Canada's policy has been that the annexed territory of the West Bank is occupied territory and that the settlements themselves constitute illegal settlements. We've articulated that many times over the past many years.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Well, I'm going to push back on this. In your departmental plan, under the heading "International cooperation on criminal justice", it says:

Justice Canada will continue to support Canada's criminal justice priorities internationally, ensuring that Canadian values and approaches are considered in the development of international norms and standards on crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

You're not even able to give a simple answer. What are Canada's values on those things? You can't even give me a clear answer on something that is very clearly happening in the West Bank at this moment. What are our values, if you as the minister are unable to provide a clear answer at this committee?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I again dispute your characterization, Mr. MacGregor.

Our values are that we should uphold our institutions, domestic and foreign, and should respect the rule of law and international humanitarian law. That is what we've always sought to do.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now do the second and final round of five minutes.

Go ahead, Mr. Van Popta.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Thank you, Minister, for being here with us today.

According to the departmental plan, the percentage of Canadians who have confidence that the Canadian criminal justice system is fair to all people stands at 50%. I find this shocking. How is it conducive to a strong, free and democratic society that half of us don't have confidence in our criminal justice system?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Well, to be frank, Mr. Van Popta, confidence in the criminal justice system gets undermined by two things. One is underinvestment in the system, particularly in building infrastructure and having the personnel to staff the system. Second, it's about people taking shots at and encouraging disrespect for our judiciary, including members of the Supreme Court of Canada. I've unfortunately seen that on repeated occasions from none other than the leader of the Conservative Party. I don't think that helps with the narrative about building up confidence in our institutions.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** People express concerns. We hear them all the time. Are you suggesting that those concerns aren't real? I'm thinking that maybe you don't believe them. Per a National Post article, you said, shortly after you were appointed to your current position, "'I think that empirically it's unlikely' that Canada is becoming less safe". I think there's a sense, coming out of the pandemic, that people's safety is more in jeopardy. It's in their heads. Empirical evidence suggests otherwise.

I'm looking at a recent study from the Fraser Institute about our worsening public safety record compared to that of the United States. Since 2014, the rate of violent crime in Canada has surpassed that of the United States by 14%, and property crime here is exceeding the U.S. by 27%. Can you acknowledge that the subjective feelings Canadians have about our worsening public safety situation are not just in their heads but are backed up by empirical evidence?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** There absolutely is empirical evidence of worsening crime statistics. I acknowledge that fully.

When we're concerned about people's perception of crime, it's about their confidence in our institutions. When we have decisions being rendered...and underinvestment, it erodes that confidence. I would point to some of the interventions I made earlier about the need to ensure we have enough police officers, Crown attorneys, courtrooms, court space and detention facilities to house individuals. It's not lost on me that 81% of those arrested in Ontario are on remand right now awaiting trial. That's a pretty startling statistic for most people to digest.

It's also not lost on me that JPs and judges are commenting on the deplorable conditions of said detention facilities as a disincentive for them to deny bail and keep people housed. That's very important to underscore.

• (1620)

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Yes, we heard that from you recently. You're trying to shift the focus to the provinces, which should be doing their part in shared jurisdiction under criminal law, yet Bill C-75 is a federal law that focuses on the principle of least restraint possible. That's your law.

We hear so many people expressing concern—police authorities and premiers—and saying that more needs to be done when it comes to bail reform. Is the concern, perhaps, that stricter bail conditions may be challenged as unconstitutional? In our environment today, repeat violent crime is becoming a scourge in society. Doesn't this pass the Oakes test under section 1 and is an immediate problem that needs to be addressed? Stricter bail conditions could pass a constitutional test such as that.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** We imposed stricter bail conditions through Bill C-48, which is important. That dealt with seriously violent, repeat offenders. Whether it's being applied and implemented in an appropriate manner by justices of the peace, who do not require any legal training in the province of Ontario, is a question that I think every Canadian should be asking, particularly every Ontarian.

I'm glad you brought up the Constitution, Mr. Van Popta. I don't think it helps to support Canadians' confidence in our institutions, the judiciary or our legal system when the response to this need for investment is simply to say that we should contemplate invoking the notwithstanding clause to override charter rights. That's exactly what has come out of the mouth of your leader, unfortunately. That, to me, is problematic for somebody who professes to be establishing freedoms, as opposed to overriding freedoms.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** I'm sorry. You're trying to put words in my mouth. I'm not talking about a notwithstanding clause. I'm talking about laws passing section 1 and the Oakes test as constitutional.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. It's unfortunately your leader putting those words in his own mouth.

**The Chair:** Thanks to both of you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brière, the floor is yours for five minutes.

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for being with us this afternoon, Minister.

This Friday, December 6, we are sadly going to mark the 35th anniversary of the tragic anti-feminist attack that occurred at the École polytechnique. Still today we see many violent crimes that target women. It seems that all parties want to support the victims.

In your departmental plan, you state that the safety of Canadians in our communities and online is a priority. First, what are you doing to protect women, including from sexual harassment in the workplace?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** We have already done a number of things. As I said, in the 43rd Parliament, we passed Bill C-3, which requires that new judges receive training on sexual assault. In the current Parliament, we have also passed Bill S-12; that bill restored the National Sex Offender Registry, which focuses particularly on predators who attack women.

We have also twice made changes to bail. This affects victims of intimate partner violence. It involves Bill C-75, which was passed in an earlier Parliament, and Bill C-48, which was passed during the current Parliament. So we have done a number of things.

What bothers me a bit, and concerns me, is that on the provinces' part, we see situations where victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault are not able to be heard by a judge and argue their case, to make the accused answer for their acts, because the provinces are not investing enough money, and this results in unreasonable delays. A number of articles have been written recently about the problem in this regard in Ontario.

• (1625)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Thank you.

You are asking for \$4.9 million to support victims and survivors of hate crimes. How would that money be used?

Bill C-63 will be considered by the committee soon. What are the other measures you have taken to combat the increase in hate crimes? You have mentioned several.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Thank you for your question.

The interesting thing about Bill C-63 is that it addresses the idea of deepfakes, a term used for the first time in the law. It addresses not only revenge porn, the disclosure of images showing intimate relations without consent, but also communicating images of women created entirely artificially. Whether it is really the woman who appears in the image or it is a faked representation of her, the result is the same: the woman is being punished, isolated and frightened, particularly on social media.

That is why this bill is so important. It is not just for adult women; it is also for young teens. We have repeatedly seen how they are victims of attacks by predators. I am thinking of Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd, and of young boys. These young teens do not have the capacity or tools they need to fight back against predators, and sometimes the result is that they commit suicide, which is a tragedy.

That is why Bill C-63 is so strong and so necessary if we want to make progress in the fight against predators. This is also about saving our young people, our teens and our women.

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Thank you.

I am going to move on to another subject of considerable concern to us: access to justice. Federal Court Justice Henry Brown said in February 2024 that there is a shortage of judges. Earlier, in your opening remarks, you said that more than 96% of judicial positions had been filled. You have appointed a lot of judges. Where do we stand now?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** The target set by Justice Brown was about 40. The number of vacant positions in Canada as a whole now stands at about 30.

I appointed 137 judges during my first 12 months in office, when the record was 109 up to then, so I beat that record by about 30 appointments. As well, I am continuing to make appointments quickly and I will keep doing so, because it is absolutely necessary that we be able to fill all the vacant positions if we want all Canadians to have access to justice.

I think it is interesting that the articles critical of the situation of victims of sexual assaults that occur in Ontario do not talk about the superior courts, which are under federal jurisdiction; they all talk about the Ontario Court of Justice, a provincial court, and how the process can be accelerated at that level.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fortin, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, since I do not have a lot of time, I would like you to answer my question quickly.

This morning, I saw in the media that the name of a terrorist entity, the Houthi group Ansarallah, will be added to the list of terrorist entities. My impression is that that this decision was made because this is considered to be a useful way to combat terrorism.

Last week, I introduced a bill to create an organized crime registry. Do you think it is a good idea to have a registry of criminal organizations as we do for terrorist organizations?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Your suggestion is interesting, Mr. Fortin.

I want to note that we are working diligently on the list of terrorist organizations, because our international partners, for example, also have a role to play there.

We will have to take time to consider your idea. I am not certain whether we can do the same thing at the national level for organized crime, but certainly it is a good idea to look at. I agree with you that organized crime is on the rise in Canada and we have to find more ways to combat this scourge.

• (1630)

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Do you not believe that the registry would be a valuable tool? If this kind of registry works for terrorism, it could work for organized crime.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I would just like to know, from my G7 colleagues, whether that kind of registry exists.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Right, but in any event, we are talking just about Canada. We are not talking about other countries.

I want to come back to another question before you leave the meeting. I have a few seconds left.

You speak a lot about your track record for appointing judges, which you say is impressive. I have a lot of respect for you, as you know, but former minister Jody Wilson-Raybould had you beat hands down when it comes to times. During her term in office, it took 126 days on average to appoint judges to the Federal Court of Appeal. Since you took office, it has taken 283 days on average. At the Federal Court, her average time to appointment was 476 days, while yours is 786 days. At the Quebec Court of Appeal, her average was 163 days. Yours is 286 days. At the Quebec Superior Court, her average was 158 days, but yours is 185 days.

In some cases, the average time to appointment has practically doubled. Can you explain why there is such a big difference between what Jody Wilson-Raybould did and what you are able to do?

**The Chair:** Answer very quickly, Minister. I know it is not easy.

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I would recall that Jody Wilson-Raybould comes from British Columbia. Last week, there was a position vacant on the British Columbia Supreme Court for about 36 hours. The position became vacant on November 26 and I filled it on November 28. So I am doing my best and I will continue to do so.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

For the final two-and-a-half-minute round, we have Mr. MacGregor.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, in the estimates, you announced that one of the votes is \$3 million for funding for the tenant protection fund. Then, under the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the total voted—\$1,158,000—is all going to the federal housing advocate.

You know that my colleague MP Zarrillo has been bringing up the issue that some large corporate landlords—Dream Unlimited, in this case—have admitted to using AI software, which the American government alleges can be used by landlords to collude and coordinate on rent increases. This is, as I think most Canadians would agree, a very unfair business practice. It might even be illegal.

With all of the pressures that tenants are facing these days from the organized might of corporate landlords, do you feel that the \$3 million in the supplementary estimates to protect tenants and the \$1.158 million for the federal housing advocate are adequate amounts of money to effectively address the problems and challenges that Canada's tenants are facing from coast to coast to coast?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** I'll speak to you as a guy who used to work at a few legal clinics.

It's important when you establish a tenant protection fund that it's funded sufficiently to give people the legal assistance they need. I would just underscore, Mr. MacGregor, that it's \$3 million this year. It's a \$15-million fund. Could more be dedicated? Absolutely, more could be dedicated. In cities like mine, there is an intense commercialization of rental properties, and it's having detrimental impacts, which include renovations. By increasing the supply of rental units, you're giving these people more options so that they're not effectively held hostage by predatory corporate landlords.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** I just want to be clear from the outset. I do understand how separate your role has to be from any criminal prosecutions, but can I ask you, in a very broad manner, what interest is the Department of Justice taking in these issues that tenants are bringing up, especially if big corporate landlords are starting to collude using this AI technology?

**Hon. Arif Virani:** Our interest is in distributing the funds that will support and finance tenant advocates. Obviously, when it comes to a prosecution or potential prosecution, it is handled by people who are independent from me, as they need to be. It's the PPSC at the national level, and then, obviously, at the provincial level, provincial Crowns in Ontario or B.C. as the case may be.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to the minister.

Thank you very much to the MPs around the table.

Minister, that concludes your appearance with us this afternoon. I'm going to suspend for three minutes to allow your departure, and then we will continue our time with the witnesses who are here.

• (1630) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Okay, we will continue.

There's no need for statements. That has been done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin, since I know you are going to ask me, I will let you know that we are starting the next rounds, for which the speaking times and order of speakers are different.

Ms. Ferreri, the floor is yours for five minutes.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you so much to the officials here.

We have officials here from the Minister of Justice's office, the folks working alongside this office. We just heard testimony from

the minister, and to call it appalling would be kind, to be honest with you.

I am somebody who has sat on the status of women committee for the last three years and listened to the stats on women being murdered in broad daylight, including here in Ottawa. Down the road, a woman died in a park in front of her two children. Her throat was slit, and innocent people had to hold her while she died in their arms in front of her children.

The minister said he's reformed bail, but the people committing these crimes are out on bail. It was very insulting testimony to victims of violence.

I think it's very pertinent that I move the following motion. It was put on notice on November 26. The motion reads:

Given that members of Parliament committed to 16 days of action to combat gender-based violence; that one woman or girl is killed every single day in Canada; and that since 2015, sexual assaults have increased 74%, sexual violations against children have increased 118%, kidnapping has increased 10%, harassing communications have increased 86% and human trafficking has increased 83%, the committee report to the House that Liberal criminal justice policies have failed to protect women and the committee undertake a study of no less than two meetings during the 16 days of action to combat gender-based violence to hear from survivors of domestic violence, experts and advocates.

I'm asking for some retribution, because what the minister said here today in committee was that he himself has done a tremendous job in combatting gender-based violence. I'm moving this motion to hopefully get the support of every member in this committee to study this. Let's actually let victims have their voices heard.

Sergeant Lisa Harris from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary was here. She testified at the status of women committee last week and said:

The death of Cortney Lake—

It's really important that we say victims' names.

—highlights the tragic consequences that can happen when those accused of intimate partner violence are allowed to remain free on bail, with few repercussions for breaching court orders. Her story is one of many that demonstrate the urgent need for stricter bail conditions for those accused of intimate partner violence.

If we are serious at the justice committee, I would urge every member to vote in favour of this study to bring forward victims, who definitely need to have their voices heard, and implement the policies that can be made today to stop this insane attack on women and stop gender-based violence, especially in our northern regions, where we have an epidemic.

Just a couple of weeks ago, a young woman who was 16 years old was brutally attacked in broad daylight. Again, her attacker was out on bail. Police in northeastern Ontario respond to over 100 intimate partner violence calls every single week.

This is the justice committee. If people are serious here, we have to do something.

I will leave it at that. I plead with members of the committee to take this motion very seriously because 187 women were killed violently in Canada last year. That is one woman every two days. According to Peel Regional Police, a woman is strangled every single day in this country. We can do better.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank Ms. Ferreri for bringing forward this motion.

The minister has been on record, time and again, describing gender-based violence as an epidemic. To suggest that anybody doesn't take it seriously would be a mis-characterization in the extreme. It is a topic that merits discussion at this committee, at other committees and in Parliament as a whole. I would like to see this motion reviewed very carefully and perhaps expanded.

We have witnesses here today and our schedule and timetable are full until the end of this session, until Christmas, so I move to adjourn debate to allow us the opportunity to consider this motion further down the road.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** You're really putting your money where your mouth is, James. She'll love that answer. She's watching you right now, just so you know.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Then she knows how seriously we take this.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** Yes—really seriously.

**The Chair:** We have a motion and I need to call a vote on it.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Are we voting on the motion or are we voting on—

**The Chair:** It's on the motion to adjourn. We have a motion to adjourn debate.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** I just wanted to clarify what we're voting on.

**The Chair:** I need the clerk to deal with that before proceeding any further.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** Madam Ferreri, I'm going to give you two more minutes, if you like, with the witnesses.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** I'll take them, for sure. Thank you, Chair.

One thing that has come up repeatedly, which is not protecting victims on the street, who are being hurt and murdered by repeat violent offenders out on bail, is Bill C-75.

Police Chief Stuart Betts, who testified at the status of women committee, said:

We know that release from custody is a ladder principle and that the least onerous form of custody is to hold that person accountable for their behaviour while they're awaiting a trial, and that is what we are letting people out on. Often, that is perhaps underserving victims in our community because the least onerous, depending on the nature of that offence, is insufficient to protect our community once they've been released.

A Liberal member then tried to question him by saying, "it's the application of the law; it's not the law itself." Chief Stuart Betts replied, "I'm sorry. It is the law itself as well, because it is how it's currently being applied but it is also the law."

My question to the officials is this: What are you doing to change and implement Bill C-75 so that violent repeat offenders are not getting out on bail?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor (Senior General Counsel and Director General, Criminal Law Policy Section, Department of Justice):** I can say a couple of things. The first thing I'd point you to is the recent meeting of FPT ministers responsible for justice and public safety. These ministers, provincial and federal, met in October and agreed that there continue to be challenges in the bail system and that, through them, officials at all levels of government should continue to collaborate—

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** I'm sorry. My frustration and anger are certainly not directed at you; I know you're officials, but the Minister of Justice is the minister responsible for justice in the country. Is that correct?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** The federal Minister of Justice is responsible for—

**The Chair:** There are 10 seconds for Mr. Taylor to respond.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** We don't need a meeting.

**The Chair:** Ms. Ferreri, he's allowed to respond.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** He did.

**The Chair:** No, he didn't.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** Yes, he did. He just responded.

**The Chair:** Your time is up.

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri:** We don't need a meeting about what's not working. We need action from the justice minister.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Your time is up. Thank you.

Now we'll have MP Mendicino for five minutes.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the officials for appearing this afternoon.

I would like to focus my questions on Bill C-63. The context for this legislation is the Government of Canada's concern about the alarming rise of online harm and crime.

I will begin by pointing out that the prevalence of online harm has continued to increase over the last number of years. In 2022, a Canadian Internet youth survey revealed that 71% of Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 had been exposed over the previous 12 months to online content inciting hatred or violence. In that same year, the uniform crime reporting survey reported 219 cyber-related hate crimes, which was up from 92 reported incidents in 2018.

I will highlight a few other important statistics. Between 2014 and 2022, police reported 15,630 incidents of online sexual offences against children and 45,816 instances of child pornography. In 2022, police in Canada received 2,524 reports of non-consensual distribution of intimate images online. A 2020 study by the U.K.-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue found that Canadians were sharing white supremacist, misogynistic and other radical content in more than 6,600 online channels and that Canadians were proportionally more active in such channels than other users abroad.

I've taken the time to go through these statistics in order to underline the importance of this legislation. Among other things, the bill identifies and provides definitions for seven types of harmful content, many of which are directly responsive to the alarming trends around online harm, violence and crime that I have just elucidated. Those seven types of harmful content include content that foments hatred, content that incites violence, content that incites violent extremism or terrorism, intimate content communicated without consent, content that induces a child to harm themselves, content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor, and content used to bully a child.

In my remaining time, I would like the officials to expand on how they see these provisions, once implemented, being able to be deployed by law enforcement for the purpose of reversing the trends that I have identified, which are some of the main reasons it is so important that we study this bill and pass it into law.

I'll open the floor to whoever wants to take the question.

• (1650)

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Mr. Mendicino, helpfully, you have identified the context and main themes of the bill.

As you will know, the bill is divided into a number of different parts. You talked about part 1 of the bill, which focuses on creating a new regime, a new infrastructure, to address harmful content online and take steps to remove that harmful content.

You touched upon issues around child sexual exploitation and abuse material, which that part of the bill would be able to address. However, I would point out that the bill also proposes amendments to what we refer to as the mandatory reporting act, in order to strengthen that tool and address the ability for law enforcement to investigate and respond to this behaviour. I—

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Can I stop you right there? I'm sorry to interject, but in my remaining time, I'd like to hear more about the mandatory reporting regime, because that would be a novelty in this particular area of online harm. Can you just expand on that?

**The Chair:** Answer very briefly. You have a few seconds left.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Very briefly, the mandatory reporting act is an existing piece of legislation that allows for the reporting of child sexual exploitation abuse material to centralized police agencies like the RCMP. This in turn allows the RCMP to share that information with law enforcement partners, with a view to investigating and addressing that conduct in Canada.

• (1655)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin, the floor is yours for two and a half minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** That's unfair.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Kroll, I addressed certain issues earlier with the Minister of Justice. Since you were present, I will not repeat what I already said at length.

I would like to come back to the question of judicial appointments. In his swearing-in speech in 2023, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, Justice Yves de Montigny, said that funding was inadequate. Also, in a decision Justice Henry Brown wrote last February, he stated that the current number of vacant positions on the Federal Court was unacceptable. The Chief Justice of Canada, the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, has twice said—I do not recall the exact dates, but it was a year or two ago—that the times it took to make appointments made no sense and were contributing to undermining public confidence in the justice system.

Has something been done in this regard? Does the budget provide for additional funds to create judge positions and provide new courtrooms and staff?

Better funding for the judicial system could also curtail the problem of proceedings being stayed as a result of the delays referred to in the Jordan decision. These stays cause considerable damage to the image of the justice system, and this could lead to a major crisis of confidence in our justice system among the public.

I would like to hear your views on that.

**Mr. Bill Kroll (Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Management Sector, Department of Justice):** Thank you for the question, but it really involves the Court Administration Service rather than my department.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** I understand, but you are here to talk to us about the budget. Does the budget provide funds to create new judicial positions or to speed up the appointment process?

**The Chair:** You have a few seconds left.

**Mr. Bill Kroll:** There are none in our department's budget.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. MacGregor, you have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Madam Chair.



Thank you to the officials for staying with our committee.

I want to focus my question on the part of the supplementary estimates that provide additional funds for legal aid for refugees. I want to place this in the context of the ascendancy of a second Trump presidency. Trump will, of course, be inaugurated on January 20. We know that members of his inner circle have been talking about mass deportations.

I'm curious about that. I'm not asking you to comment on American politics, but rather to look ahead and inform this committee about how the Department of Justice is preparing for what that could mean at the Canadian border. Are these supplementary estimates and your plans taking into account what the situation might be post January 20? Do you expect the demand for these types of services to increase post January 20? Are any departmental plans being put to work to prepare for that contingency?

**Ms. Elizabeth Hendy (Director General, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice):** The funding in the Department of Justice's estimates and supplementary estimates for immigration and refugee legal aid is money we provide to the provinces and territories—mainly provinces—as they deliver immigration and refugee legal aid services. We are obviously in contact with the provinces' legal aid service providers to maintain and understand the forecast from April 1 until now and what it could potentially be to the end of the fiscal year. We take that information and use it to work with our other colleagues.

We're not at this time forecasting an increase over and above the \$71.6 million we need to get to the end of the fiscal year, and that's part of the supplementary estimates.

• (1700)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you.

Very quickly, the minister in his opening statement talked about the judicial vacancies that were filled. Do you have a rough estimate, with the current demographics we have, of what the vacancy rate will be like going into the future? Do we expect a lot more vacancies heading our way because of the current demographics of sitting judges and how close they are to retirement age.?

**Mr. Bill Kroll:** I'm afraid we don't have that answer.

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's the time.

This is a bit different from what we've done, so I'm going to ask you to bear with me.

We'll now go back to Mr. Brock for five minutes and then to Mr. Maloney for five minutes. Then I'm going to reassess my time. I need about 10 minutes at least at the end because I have seven questions to pose about the supplementary estimates.

Just bear with me and I will look at the time.

Mr. Brock, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Thank you, Chair.

All my questions can be answered by any official—no one in particular.

I want to push back a bit and correct an error that I believe the government is pushing through the House and delivering to the public.

I know the minister spoke about Antic and Zora in response to a question regarding the failings of Bill C-75, but I want to have everyone reflect on what those two key, seminal decisions pronounced. They indicated that “for most alleged crimes, release on bail at the earliest reasonable opportunity with minimal conditions is the default position.” The decisions also “make clear that the principles operate alongside the grounds for detention and do not replace them.” That is very specific language.

Do the officials agree with the ratio of those two key, leading decisions, yes or no?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** I agree with everything you've just articulated, Mr. Brock.

**Mr. Larry Brock:** Then why is there a specific wording imbalance that has created the crisis this country has seen with respect to bail decisions?

Section 493.1 was amended by the Trudeau government in 2019. It reads:

In making a decision under this Part, a peace officer, justice or judge shall—

That's mandatory language.

—give primary consideration to the release of the accused at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions that are appropriate in the circumstances—

That's language right out of the Supreme Court.

—including conditions that are reasonably practicable for the accused to comply with

Then at the very end is this tag line:

while taking into account the grounds referred to in subsection 498(1.1) or 515(10)

These are the primary, the secondary and the tertiary grounds.

That is not a balance. That is telegraphing to justices of the peace and judges that the default is the primary consideration regardless of the predicate offence, regardless of the offender's criminal record, regardless of a track record of breaches of the administration of justice and regardless of background overall.

Is the current government open to strengthening the language in section 493.1 when we're dealing with individuals who create a majority of the menace on our streets and continually violate bail conditions? Is the government open to the possibility of amending the language in section 493.1 to ensure that judges are placing equal emphasis on all three grounds enumerated in subsection 515(10)?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** I think you emphasized a couple of really important points that bear repeating. One is that section 493.1 operates alongside the primary, secondary and tertiary grounds of bail, Mr. Brock, such that where detention is warranted, detention should be imposed.

Minister Virani did allude to his openness to looking at ways to further strengthen the bail system—

• (1705)

**Mr. Larry Brock:** With all due respect, Mr. Taylor, how long do victims, premiers, police chiefs and presidents of unions have to wait while this government sits and considers this? We are in a crisis. Victims are disappointed in this criminal justice system. I hear from them daily. My colleague Michelle Ferreri hears from them daily, as do Mr. Van Popta and Mr. Jamil Jivani. We are hearing from victims. We are hearing from stakeholders. This government is not ensuring a balance.

How long will it take for this government to provide the necessary tools to judges and justices of the peace so they can hold repeat violent offenders accountable?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That's a good question, and unfortunately it's one that's best addressed to the minister. We are working very actively with our provincial partners. We also hear those concerns as public servants responsible for advising the government on the criminal justice system.

We work with our provincial partners. We work with policing partners. We're alive to those concerns, but as to whether law reform should be advanced by either the government or Parliament, that's not for me to comment on.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Next we have Mr. Maloney for five minutes.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thanks, Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here. I appreciate your testimony and that of the minister. I will add the questions from my colleagues to that list.

I want to pick up on something that Mr. Brock was just trying to get at and something Mr. Fortin referred to earlier. It's important, in my view, to understand the distinction in responsibility between the federal government, the provincial government and, to some extent, the municipal government when it comes to law enforcement.

Regarding Mr. Fortin's point about judicial appointments, he talked about stays of proceedings and more money for courtrooms. That's what I want to talk about. If you go into a Superior Court in Ontario, the judge is appointed and paid for by the federal government, but everything else is the responsibility of the province. Is that not the case?

I don't know who wants to answer that, but you're all nodding your heads in the affirmative.

**Ms. Elizabeth Hendy:** Yes, that's correct.

**Mr. James Maloney:** That includes the number of courtrooms, the courthouse, the light bulbs, the staff and the Crown attorneys. It's across the board. Is that right?

**Ms. Elizabeth Hendy:** Yes.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Similarly—and I'll use Ontario as an example again—when it comes to detention facilities, those fall under the jurisdiction of the province as well, do they not?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Yes, provincial detention facilities and remand facilities would fall under the responsibility of the province.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Right. If people are denied bail in the province of Ontario, they're going to end up in one of the provincial remand facilities. Is that correct?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That is correct.

**Mr. James Maloney:** If there aren't enough Crown attorneys and provincial detention facilities, or if there is not enough room in provincial facilities, there's nothing the federal government can do about it. Is that right?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Conditions in provincial detention facilities are entirely the responsibility of the provinces.

**Mr. James Maloney:** It's not the federal government's responsibility to build courtrooms or to build provincial detention centres.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That is correct.

**Mr. James Maloney:** That's why the article the minister referred to from the media today was so important for highlighting this. Unfortunately, you're seeing many politicians try to put blame on their opponents as opposed to trying to find appropriate legal solutions. That's really the point I was trying to make.

That also goes for bail laws, because although not all the members are in the room today, I've heard from conservative legal authorities I respect that we don't need new laws; they just need to be better enforced. That goes to what the minister was saying earlier about justices of the peace and provincial court judges. They are the ones responsible for hearing bail applications, if they even get to them—because there aren't enough Crowns to put them before the court—and are not waiving the hearing.

Is that a fair statement?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That is correct. The federal government's responsibility is legislative development, but the implementation and administration of those laws are the responsibility of the provinces and territories.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you.

I'm going to move on to legal aid, something Mr. MacGregor was talking about, because that's another area of jurisdiction that gets a bit muddled in people's perceptions about areas of jurisdiction.

I practised law in Ontario for 20 years before I went into politics. Legal aid always fell under the jurisdiction of the province. Is that accurate, with the exception of immigration? I'll get to that in a second.

• (1710)

**Ms. Elizabeth Hendy:** Criminal legal aid is with the provinces.

**Mr. James Maloney:** It's criminal legal aid; that's right.

In the last 10 years, certainly since I became a member of Parliament in 2015, there have been some significant changes to the role of the federal government in how it gets involved in criminal legal aid or other components of legal aid. Could you take us through that on a higher level?

**Ms. Elizabeth Hendy:** In these supplementary estimates, there's an additional \$80 million for criminal legal aid, which would be coupled with \$440 million over five years from budget 2024. That additional money would go to the provinces and territories for their legal aid plans for this year.

There's also additional funding, as I explained to Mr. MacGregor, for immigration and refugee legal aid of \$71.6 million. That would go to provinces that provide legal aid in immigration and refugee services. That money is also required for this fiscal year.

There is workplace sexual harassment funding. That is for legal advice for claimants of workplace sexual harassment. That runs through the legal aid program, with an additional \$5 million in the supplementary estimates this year. There is also an additional \$10 million this year for public legal education and legal advice for those individuals. I'll stop there.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Members, bear with me. We are now at 5:11 p.m. and I am going to shorten things a bit. This is a subsequent round. This is not the norm, but this is what happens when we have this kind of session.

I am going to give two and a half minutes to one side and two and a half minutes to the other side, and then Monsieur Fortin, you will have one and a half minutes, and Mr. MacGregor, you will have one and a half minutes. That will bring me to time.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Otherwise, Arif will ask the questions.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** I'm trying to explain the process of how we time this, because it's not one we've dealt with in a long time.

Mr. Van Popta, you have two and a half minutes. I believe you are next.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** I'll take it. Thank you.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here today.

You were in the room when I asked the minister a question about stricter bail conditions. I asked whether Bill C-48 and Bill C-75 were the best we could do or whether we could write a stricter law that would pass constitutional scrutiny in court, perhaps using the section 1 test under Oakes. Is that possible, or is this already the best we can do?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** I think Parliament always has scope to act in the dialogue with the courts, informed by the charter.

The Supreme Court has said that the denial of bail is permitted where it is done on the basis of just cause. You know what the Criminal Code articulates as just cause. Mr. Brock spoke about them already: public safety concerns and public confidence in the administration of justice.

Could another ground for just cause be developed? Yes, it could. Our role as departmental officials would be to support the government if that was government legislation and advise on the constitutional and broader policy implications associated with it.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Thank you, Mr. Taylor, for that answer.

In your opinion, will the courts look at the current circumstances of society, for example? I raised in an earlier question that only 50% of Canadians have confidence in our criminal justice system. Is that a consideration that judges would look at when deciding whether or not Parliament trying to be stricter on something passes constitutional scrutiny?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** Indeed, public confidence in the administration of justice is the tertiary ground for bail. It was one of the main policy drivers for Bill C-48, so it is something the courts would look at.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** That's all for me.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

I'm not sure who is taking the next two and a half minutes. I know we're a bit out of the norm today.

Please proceed, Mr. Maloney.

• (1715)

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll pick up on something we spoke about earlier.

Just to be clear, bail hearings, bail applications and bail reviews in the courts in Ontario are handled completely by Crown attorneys who are hired by the provincial government. We established that earlier. The federal government doesn't have the ability—it's not within their jurisdictional lane—to hire more Crown attorneys to create more capacity so that have the ability to process more bail hearings.

Just so we're clear, is that an accurate statement?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That's correct. The overwhelming majority of bail hearings are conducted by provincial prosecutors. The Public Prosecution Service of Canada is responsible for federal prosecutions under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, for example, but that is generally correct.

**Mr. James Maloney:** The same applies, then, to the physical facilities as well. The federal government just doesn't have the jurisdictional ability to go in and solve the capacity issue in the province, does it?

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That's correct, and that's why we talk about shared jurisdiction.

**Mr. James Maloney:** All the federal government can do is make amendments to the Criminal Code, which are then applied to bail hearings, for example.

What we saw in the media today was that not only are the structural capacity deficiencies you see in the province of Ontario causing a problem with respect to bail hearings, but they're now resulting in diminished sentences. People who have been tried will have their sentences reduced because they were subject to awful conditions in provincial detention centres. The only way to address that issue is to address the capacity issue with Crown attorneys and the provincial detention centres.

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** That's correct, and it's a critical piece in the administration of justice and improving efficiencies.

**Mr. James Maloney:** Thank you.

I'll stop there.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

Go ahead, Monsieur Fortin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Sargent, I understand what was said, and my respected colleague Mr. Maloney has explained that this falls under provincial jurisdiction, not federal. I am glad to hear that, because we in the Bloc Québécois fight often, if not daily, to have Quebec's powers respected.

That said, there are still things to be done, because your 2024-25 departmental plan states that only half of Canadians believe that the justice system is fair to all people, when the minister had set a target of 70%, if I am not mistaken. You cannot manage the administration of justice in the courts that are under federal jurisdiction, I agree. The fact remains, however, that you can appoint judges. We have seen that there are delays. What other measures do you think can be taken?

How do you plan to increase Canadians confidence in the justice system in order to raise it to more than 50%, which is actually a bit pathetic, in my opinion, with all due respect?

**Ms. Laurie Sargent (Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Rights and Relations Portfolio, Department of Justice):** Thank you for the question.

I am simply going to underscore what we have already said, which is that the meetings between the federal government and the provinces and territories are the main venues for the ministers to discuss these challenges together, challenges that are actually shared—

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Does your departmental plan consist simply of organizing meetings?

**Ms. Laurie Sargent:** We devise solutions in terms of legislation or programs and we need to discuss these things together. Sometimes, the federal government enacts laws but the provinces may not have the resources to implement them. We must therefore absolutely coordinate our efforts.

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Why is there no departmental plan for that?

**Ms. Laurie Sargent:** I think in part, precisely—

**The Chair:** Please answer briefly.

**Ms. Laurie Sargent:**—investments in legal aid and in the criminal justice system are going to help a bit in solving the problems in the entire system.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Sargent and Mr. Fortin.

Mr. MacGregor, the floor is yours.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to ask the officials about the supplementary estimates being earmarked for the Law Commission of Canada. You have proposed authorities to date of around \$4.6 million, and these supplementary estimates are going to provide an additional \$735,000.

I know the Law Commission provides very important research that can help guide public policy, but I was very interested in the research project they're doing on prison law. The other committee I sit on is the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. Of course, we're very familiar with the Correctional Service of Canada and the Office of the Correctional Investigator.

I would like to know, in practical terms, how the Department of Justice thinks this research is going to be used. What are your hoped-for outcomes? Are you working hand in glove with the Department of Public Safety on the research you will receive from the Law Commission of Canada? I'm curious about that, because I wear both hats at two different committees.

• (1720)

**Mr. Matthew Taylor:** From a policy perspective, we obviously work very closely with Public Safety. We have good relationships with the Law Commission. I think the specific issue you've identified will be of more interest to our Public Safety colleagues, but it is certainly something we follow closely as part of the policy development process we do.

Mr. Kroll, did you want to supplement that?

**Mr. Bill Kroll:** I was simply going to say that we are not in a position to speak to the supplementary estimates for the Law Commission. That's a separate department. You'd be best to ask them about the funding they're seeking.

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

Thank you, colleagues.

I have a number of questions and votes to go over.

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS SUPPORT SERVICE OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$1,705,807

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$1,158,787

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

COURTS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$5,990,525

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Vote 1b—Operating expenditures.....\$5,965,722

Vote 5b—Grants and contributions.....\$187,394,935

(Votes 1b and 5b agreed to on division)

LAW COMMISSION OF CANADA

Vote 1b—Program expenditures.....\$735,000

(Vote 1b agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall I report supplementary estimates (B), 2024-25, to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Chair:** We've come to the end of the session. We're actually a few minutes early. That was very nicely done by members. Thank you very much for your efforts in getting through the supplementaries.

Have a wonderful afternoon. We'll see everybody next time.

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