



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 086

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Chair: Mr. Heath MacDonald



Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

• (1645)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 86 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely by using the Zoom application.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

Feedback events can occur. This can be extremely harmful to interpreters and cause serious injuries. The most common cause of sound feedback is an earpiece worn too close to a microphone. We therefore ask all participants to exercise a high degree of caution when handling the earpieces, especially when your microphone or your neighbour's microphone is turned on.

I would remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, October 23, 2023, the committee resumes its study of rights of victims of crime, reclassification and transfer of federal offenders.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses today.

In person, from the Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, we have Dr. Benjamin Roebuck, federal ombudsperson for victims of crime.

As an individual, for victims' friends and families, we have Ms. Chwalczuk, Ms. Murray and Ms. Penner.

Welcome to all of you.

Up to five minutes will be given for opening remarks, after which we will proceed with rounds of questions. If it takes a little longer than five minutes, I will indulge you.

Perhaps we could start now with Mr. Roebuck, please.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Chair, I have a point of order.

I don't want to take any time. I just want to get this on the record in case any of our witnesses who aren't here don't know why Mr. Danson isn't here. They probably thought he was coming too. He was scheduled to be here. His headset did not arrive in time, so we're trying to work that out now.

If it doesn't arrive by the end of this meeting, we'll try to get him rescheduled. I just want to put that on the record so that everybody knows where Mr. Danson is.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): I just want to say that I fully support rescheduling if the headset does not arrive in time.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have Mr. Roebuck, please.

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck (Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime, Office of the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime): Honourable members of the committee, thank you for inviting me.

We are on the traditional unceded, unsundered territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin nation. I honour the leadership, strength and wisdom of Indigenous peoples and I accept personal responsibility for pursuing justice and reconciliation.

Security reclassifications in inmate transfers from higher-security to lower-security institutions have received recent attention from politicians, the media and Canadians. My heart goes out to the families who have been victimized and have had to fight for information even in Federal Court. These are not new concerns for victims and survivors, and recent debates highlight how victim rights are overlooked.

Sadly, the Correctional Service of Canada's transfer review did not even mention the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, in part because it had little to offer. While the CVBR has quasi-constitutional primacy over the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, victim complaints to federal agencies are generally deemed inadmissible or unfounded.

My office is non-partisan and operates at arm's length from Justice Canada. Our regulations do not permit us to review transfer decisions, but we are mandated to address victim complaints and ensure victims' rights to information, protection and participation are upheld by federal agencies. Rather than assessing whether legislation and policies were followed, an ombudsperson operates on the principles of procedural fairness and is intended to humanize government.

I am grateful for the correctional investigator's comments on the need for parity between our offices. We need supporting legislation and comparable resources. Currently the government spends less than 20¢ on victim complaints for every dollar spent on offender complaints to our respective offices.

We know that victims are not put first, and I'm not sure that people understand the importance of information to victims of crime. When someone has been seriously and intentionally harmed by another person, it's a common trauma response to need to know everything. Knowing the location of the person is especially important.

The transfer review concluded that more could have been done for the victims' families and recommended that CSC create a multidisciplinary working committee. This is under way, and our office is serving as a special adviser to the committee.

Also, following consultation with our office, the former minister of public safety issued a ministerial direction to CSC to meaningfully engage and elicit input prior to a transfer in order to engage with victims of crime. He directed CSC to work closely with our office and the federal Privacy Commissioner. We have been collaborating well and have made recommendations that are outlined in our submission to the committee. The same recommendations from our office have been provided to the multidisciplinary committee, and CSC is taking action to implement them.

Victim rights and offender rights can coexist. We can do a much better job of providing information while still respecting the Privacy Act.

How do we achieve that balance? The interests of victims of crime need to be given equal weight to the interests of the people who harmed them. It's not just the offender's transfer, the offender's parole hearing or the offender's release. These are significant for the people they have harmed.

Then whose information is it? We hear complaints from victims of crime that public servants get to pick and choose what victims are entitled to know and when, even if the consequences of not knowing cause fear, anxiety, post-traumatic stress responses or interfere with their ability to work. The impact of being told about a transfer as it happens or after it happens is grossly disproportionate to the privacy implications of providing advance notice.

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act is failing victims of crime. It limits information excessively, even upon request, and fails to provide protection and participation in ways that make sense to victims of crime. It is in conflict with the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, which carries primacy in the event of inconsistency.

• (1650)

Canadians are demanding better, and policy changes and amendments to the CCRA could easily achieve that.

First, a trauma-informed and violence-informed approach needs to guide communication, allowing victims to share safety concerns without providing traumatic details repeatedly in victim statements.

Next, the principles of the CCRA should be amended to explicitly include victim rights to timely and relevant information, protection and participation. CSC should adopt a more proactive approach to informing victims on pending transfers, including information on how decisions are made and how to share safety concerns or request geographic restrictions. CSC needs a clear, non-discretionary process to disclose information about transfers before they occur, unless specific safety or security reasons are provided in writing in advance. It should be ensured that the geographic location of registered victims is considered in all transfer decisions. An offender should never be transferred to an institution close to victims before they've been notified.

Finally, victims need clear information that explains how they can register to be informed about an offender and their sentence and how to provide input for consideration before decisions are made. It should be clearly emphasized that unregistered victims will not receive information. To be clear, most victims of crime in Canada with a federally sentenced offender are never informed about a transfer at all, because they're not registered.

We want a more compassionate, victim-centred approach at the heart of CSC's transfer process. Victims and survivors of crime are worthy of respect and dignity and are worthy to receive information.

Thank you.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roebuck.

Now I will invite Ms. Penner, Ms. Murray or Ms. Chwalczuk. As agreed prior to our meeting, take all of the time that you require for your opening remarks, please.

Ms. Marcia Penner (As an Individual): Thank you.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and honourable members.

My name is Marcia Penner. I want to thank you all for inviting us here today to be part of this witness panel and to testify on the impact of the moving of Paul Bernardo and all other maximum security prisoners.

When asked how this move has affected me, my quick answer is, "How hasn't it?"

When I received the news of this move, my heart dropped, and 31 years of anguish, anger, fear and despair rushed in and brought me right back to the day Kristen was brutally killed. That day, our lives changed forever, and our innocence was lost. Our naive perspective of the world would be forever tarnished. That day, I started to believe in monsters and had the harsh realization that true evil existed all around us. That day, we realized we were no longer safe.

I understand that the CSC, as well as Commissioner Anne Kelly, seemingly followed all stipulated guidelines and regulations while assessing this decision. All necessary boxes were allegedly checked, and criteria were met to accommodate this move. It is without question that a narcissistic psychopath such as Paul Bernardo would have no issue manipulating that system. Someone of his calibre would have no problem composing the appropriate answers necessary to warrant a move to a lower-security institution, a transfer that he himself instigated. It is also no surprise that after 31 years of not fulfilling the requirements to warrant a move, he was able to convince the CSC that he could now play nice with other inmates at an institution filled with similarly designated prisoners.

Prior to the decision to allow Paul Bernardo to remain in medium security, I forwarded a meta-analysis along with a letter submitted by Dr. Angela Book. Dr. Book has studied psychopaths for her entire career and clearly states in her letter that Bernardo cannot be rehabilitated.

The presiding judge at the Bernardo trial, Patrick LeSage, stated, "Mr. Bernardo...you have no right to ever be released. The behavioural restraint that you require is jail. You require it, in my view, for the rest of your natural life. You are a sexually sadistic psychopath."

Does the designation "dangerous offender" not hold any weight? This man is the worst of the worst: a pedophile rapist, a sexual sadist, a psychopath and a murderer. There are no worse crimes. If he doesn't fit the mandatory requirements for a maximum security stay, then who does?

Because he didn't pose any threat to the staff within the jail, is he no longer a threat? If he escapes, is he no longer a danger to all of us? What about the victims he hurt and murdered, whose lives he stole without their having any choice?

It is also my understanding that Ms. Kelly was quoted as saying the department has "compassion for the victims." I challenge that statement, as this decision was made and shared with the Liberal government four months prior to the move, but the families were notified the day of the move.

When the government was asked about its knowledge of this, it denied knowing anything about it. It was also reported that any media or public backlash would be taken care of in regard to this move. Is this consideration for victims or their families? How are

we to have any faith or trust in our elected officials when little to no regard is given when dealing with such a highly sensitive case as this one?

When does this end? Each and every time this monster takes the spotlight and gets his face in the media, all the victims and their families and friends are revictimized and retraumatized all over again. The victims' and families' voices are heard during trial and parole hearings, but then they are muted when it comes to important decisions such as reclassification and reintegration.

By moving Paul Bernardo from a maximum security to a medium security facility, you are telling the victims and their families that what happened to them is not relevant and that what happened wasn't that bad, and now that he can behave, he will be rewarded.

We need to bring justice back for these victims and their families. We need to move Paul Bernardo back to maximum security where he belongs.

Thank you.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Penner.

We'll go to whoever would like to go next, please.

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk (As an Individual): Good afternoon, Chair and honourable members.

I met Kristen French when I was four years old, and we were instantly best friends. At that time, 31 years ago, our city had crime, but we still felt safe.

The day Kristen was taken will be a moment frozen in time, filled with terror and pain that to this day never leaves me. From the initial phone calls about whether we had seen her to combing the streets searching for her, it was a trauma I have never healed from.

The subsequent two-week search was agonizing as we watched failed lead after lead announced and watched the hours pass into days, knowing the outcome was grim. No one felt safe at any time. Life would never be the same.

After two weeks of a living hell and realizing that she was truly gone forever, the new nightmare began. It was a trial that seemed to take forever and was filled with errors, and a deal with the devil to send Paul Bernardo to a maximum security prison.

Nine counts are what he was given, and 25 years with no parole, yet it didn't seem even close to what he deserved.

At the parole hearing in 2018, the hearing officer stated to Paul Bernardo, “Your understanding and insight remains limited”, and added, “It was evident today that you continue to exhibit behaviours that are counterproductive to the development of insight.”

How is it possible that there is such a drastic change in just four months, from 30-plus years of this type of behaviour to now showing full signs of collaboration and willingness to change? Perhaps a master manipulator and psychopath such as he has a plan to secure more rights and freedoms that he will access at a medium-security facility.

While I understand the comment made at the live press conference delivered by Anne Kelly that the CSC needs to be able to manage these dangerous offenders on the inside, my question is, at what cost?

If it is not psychologically possible for a sadistic psychopath to ever truly change, why should he receive the same privileges offered to the other offenders who actively work towards rehabilitation? I do understand he has rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but it is beyond frustrating to witness him being relocated to a medium security prison.

When the CSC moved Bernardo without proper communication and respect to the victims' families, this actually created a new trauma. It literally stunned not only the families and the friends of the victims, but also the entire community. It caused pure rage, doubt and disturbance all over again, especially with no warning. There was no time to process, to react or to refute. It also brought with it a renewed fear for the public's safety.

The response from Anne Kelly was that they will have more proactive and meaningful discussions with the victims' families. That reply brought more anger and anguish, as the families and friends were left in that moment to do nothing but watch.

I am here to be a voice that stands up for Kristen. One of the many concerns I have is this: Are the victims' rights respected at all in these decisions?

After 31 years, I can say that I have not healed from the horrifying and monstrous loss of Kristen French. There will never be full closure. It changed me forever. It changed who I was and who I became. It made the world around us a darker place.

Knowing that she and his other victims will never get the opportunity to live the life and the dreams they should have has left a profound sadness in our community. All I can do is continue to be her best friend and offer my voice to fight for justice and the rights of the victims of Paul Bernardo to prevent future tragedies.

I plead that you will reconsider your decision and keep dangerous criminals of his calibre where they belong: in a maximum security prison for their entire sentence, for the well-being of our society and out of respect for the victims.

Thank you.

• (1705)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chwalczuk.

Ms. Murray, go ahead, please.

Ms. Laura Murray (As an Individual): Thank you, honourable chair and members.

There were issues with my microphone earlier. If you're having trouble hearing me, please feel free to interrupt me, and I will use Marcia or Tennille's microphone. However, it seems everything is okay, so I'll go ahead.

Thank you for having me. For me, it's nearly impossible to fully express the impact Paul Bernardo and his crimes have [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. For us as teenagers, dealing with the loss of our best friend Kristen French in such a brutal way was insurmountable and something we have never fully recovered from. At the time, trying to process such horrific events left us feeling immeasurable grief, sadness, anger, confusion and fear, in addition to the loss of our sense of safety and security.

The list of Bernardo's victims, however, is extensive. There are the many other women who were directly brutalized by him, the parents who lived in terror that their own child would be the next victim, and the loved ones who watched helplessly as people they loved were traumatized. There were also the first responders who searched and collected evidence from crime scenes, and even the legal personnel, including witnesses and jurors, who had to witness the horrifying images of these crimes on videotapes.

In the 31 years since then, many of these individuals, including us, have developed ongoing mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder, severe anxiety, depression and substance abuse. Some people have also had difficulty forming healthy and secure relationships with their friends and partners, and they have struggled to raise their own children without the fear and hypervigilance that conditioned us.

When Bernardo was finally incarcerated and labelled a dangerous offender, I think we all felt some sense of relief, some sense that we could begin to move on from the nightmare. However, almost every year since his capture and incarceration, many of Bernardo's victims, along with their families and friends, have been retraumatized by the re-emergence of his name in the news, which inevitably comes with the rehashing of the brutality of his crimes. For many of these people, retraumatization involves terrible visual and emotional flashbacks, recurring nightmares, dissociation from their lives and loved ones, and severe anxiety and depression.

The latest news of his transfer to a medium-security prison was no exception. We are aware that there are protocols and guidelines for determining the classification and transfer of prisoners. However, one thing was blatantly missing: the careful and real consideration of the impact this transfer would have on all the people who have been directly affected by Bernardo's crimes. It genuinely appears to us that no one involved in this process stopped to consider, even for a moment, the requests, wishes or feelings of those people. Even the victims' families were not informed of his move until after it had already been completed.

Therefore, we are here to demand that the rights of his many victims be considered and respected now and moving forward. We are here to demand that decisions like this transfer, and any decisions that have the potential to retraumatize victims, cannot and will not happen in the future without careful and thoughtful consideration of these victims' rights.

It is also obvious to us that no consideration was given to Bernardo's original sentencing or designation as a dangerous offender in the determination of his prison security classification. Based on his crimes and behaviour, Bernardo was originally sentenced to 25 years in a maximum security institution, the harshest punishment possible and one—I think we can all agree—that at the time took well into account the rights of his victims and their families.

However, his most recent parole board hearing in 2021 found that he still displayed no remorse, no empathy and no insight into his crimes. Research shows that as a sadistic sexual psychopath, he likely never will. Therefore, it should follow that his original sentence should still stand. Bernardo is not an average prisoner who may be rehabilitated through programs and support. He should therefore be managed by his initial sentence. Bernardo should be moved back to a maximum security prison to honour the original sentence, which so clearly put the rights of his victims in high regard.

Going forward, any possible decisions regarding his incarceration should involve consideration of all these factors: his initial sentence, his dangerous offender designation and—perhaps most importantly—clear and comprehensive communication with his victims and their families. We can do better for his many victims, and we must.

Thank you.

• (1710)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Murray.

We'll move into questions now.

We're going to start with Mr. Baldinelli for six minutes.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today. Specifically to Ms. Penner, Ms. Murray and Ms. Chwalczuk, thank you for sharing your stories. I can only imagine how difficult this was for you and how difficult it must have been when you heard of the transfer decision that was made. It must be like a nightmare that you can never escape from, and that has been reflected in the comments that you have made.

First of all, if I could, I'll pose this question to all three. What was your reaction when you heard the news about the government transferring Paul Bernardo from a maximum to a medium security prison?

Ms. Chwalczuk, for example, in your comments you said that it created a new sense of trauma under a magnified light. I was hoping that you could just expand on that.

All three witnesses could comment.

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Absolutely. In that moment of sitting in front of the TV and realizing that there was nothing.... There was no warning. There was just nothing but absolute fear and anguish and tears and rage. Everything that we thought, that if he stayed in maximum, we might have some sort of peace of mind inside, knowing he was where he belonged forever, and then knowing in that moment that it was over.... It's so hard to put into words. It was just absolute anguish.

Ms. Marcia Penner: For me, there were a number of emotions. Everything resurfaced and brought us back to when we were 16 years old and when Kristen was taken so horribly away from us. It left us in despair.

There was feeling of hopelessness and injustice. We were feeling like our justice system had failed us again. How something like this could take place with someone as purely evil as Paul Bernardo.... I understand that there are rules in place and that there are criteria that have to be followed. I also know that there are exceptions to those rules.

It brought forth a horrible sense of trauma and unsettlement. We felt unsafe again, and it is a feeling that is very hard to describe, but one that I don't wish on anybody.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Go ahead, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Laura Murray: Thank you.

As I said in my statement, many other victims, I'm sure, other than ourselves, have developed many different mental health issues. For myself personally, I have complex post-traumatic stress disorder, so when Marcia called me to tell me, it really did feel like I was taken back to that moment in time, and I emotionally felt what I had felt when it was initially happening.

That is what happens when you have a flashback. Essentially, it was like being 15 or 16 years old again and hearing about the moment when she was taken from us, feeling how we felt when we were told she had been found. It really takes you back to that and it pulls out all of those emotions that you try to suppress. It happens every single time, every time his name is brought up in the media. This is really the experience for most of us. It's a retraumatization; it brings us right back to that same moment, and we experience the feelings all over again.

• (1715)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Thank you, Ms. Murray.

I'll pose this question to all of you.

During the period of incarceration of Mr. Bernardo and then when the transfer decision was made, did you feel heard or empowered at all by the Correctional Service of Canada or the federal government throughout this process? Have your views been listened to? Have they been taken into consideration? Have you had an avenue to share your concerns?

We'll start with Ms. Penner.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you.

I feel like I had an opportunity to approach the CSC and Ms. Anne Kelly, but unfortunately I don't feel that I was heard at all.

I had resources, as I mentioned in my address. Dr. Book was very kind in providing a meta-analysis as well as a letter for us. We gave her ample examples of why such a move was not conducive to anybody—the victims, the families, the public society....

I do not believe that we have been heard. I do appreciate Mr. Baldinelli. I reached out to you and, quite frankly, you are the only one who has heard us and taken any action in this to do the right thing and to right this horrible wrong.

In short, that is my answer.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Thank you.

Ms. Murray, please comment.

Ms. Laura Murray: Essentially, the three of us tend to work as a unit, and so we did attack this at the same time together. Further to Marcia's comment, I did send some emails myself independently. I just sent one to Prime Minister Trudeau's office indicating who I was, what the situation was, and how we were feeling, and I did not receive a response...or I think I did. It was a general response, so I'm definitely not feeling heard in that way at all.

As Marcia said, we did receive a response to our email to Anne Kelly. We were not satisfied with that response, but we did receive one.

As for you, Mr. Baldinelli, you have been wonderful. Mr. Poilievre has taken a wonderful interest in this, and I will say personally that when the three of us were in Ottawa, we really felt heard. He gave us his undivided attention and very much listened and seemed to hear what we were saying, while we were speaking, so we really appreciated that. There have been other members of the Conservative Party—Michelle Ferreri. I have been corresponding with her quite a bit through emails. She is a wonderful advocate. She listens to us. She hears our concerns. I really wanted to say thank you to those individuals as well.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Ms. Chwalczuk, could you comment? Then I think my time is done.

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Thank you.

They have both touched upon how we have collaborated as a team on all of this. I did as well send communication through to the Liberals, with no response as well. I would also like to say thank you to Mr. Poilievre and to thank you for being the driving person behind us, the person who is actually listening with your heart and trying to get us somewhere. That means the world to all three of us.

Thank you.

• (1720)

The Chair: We're going to move on to Mr. Schiefke now for six minutes, please.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Chwalczuk, Ms. Murray and Ms. Penner, I want to thank you for being here today.

I want to begin by acknowledging how difficult it must be for you to have to relive this, to a certain extent. I extend the appreciation of all members of this committee, regardless of political stripe.

We very much appreciate your being here and sharing your testimony with us so that we can move forward and find a way to do things better.

In our last meeting, I was able to personally address the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, Commissioner Kelly. I shared with her my gratitude for the work that she's doing to ensure that Canadians are kept safer. We are at a 20-year low in prisoners escaping from correctional institutions in this country, which is good news.

I also took the opportunity—as a father, as a brother, as a son, as a member of this committee, as a member of Parliament—to express my extreme discontent with the way in which one particular aspect of this transfer was handled. That was the way in which all three of you were treated and informed of the transfer: without being given a full day's heads-up, without being given any possibility of counselling, any possibility of being able to absorb the news. That, for me, was unacceptable. I think it's unacceptable for all members of this committee and for all Canadians.

I think that the best use of my time and the best use of our time here in this committee is to ensure that this doesn't happen again, to ensure that whatever we're doing moving forward ensures that victims of crimes of the likes of those committed by Mr. Bernardo are treated with greater respect and the kind of respect that you deserve.

What I want to ask you today—and this is for the benefit of the multidisciplinary working committee that has been established because of this—is this: Based on the way you were treated, based on the way you were informed of the transfer, what should have been done that it wasn't done?

I'll turn it over to whoever wants to go first, perhaps Ms. Penner.

Ms. Marcia Penner: That is an important question and one that we've talked about at great length.

I think that time, ample time, is very important. It's giving the family and the friends ample notice that this is going to happen. That leaves time for processing, questions, rebuttal, counsel. There are certain steps in which it has to happen. If a prisoner of this magnitude is being moved, there are certain steps that have to be done in order to facilitate that move and have the family, the victims and the friends ready for that to occur. None of that....

Obviously, I don't believe that this move should have happened, period. In doing it, though, giving enough time and notice would have been the least, I believe, that the committee could have done.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you, Ms. Penner.

Ms. Murray, would you comment?

Ms. Laura Murray: Thank you.

Obviously, I'm in agreement with Marcia.

One thing I would just like to add is—I think she touched on it briefly—counsel. One of my thoughts with regard to the multidisciplinary committee, seeing that it's supposed to be multidisciplinary, is that I feel very strongly that there should be some trained mental health professionals on that committee. They would then liaise with the family and any other victims or friends who would need to be informed of these things. It really does retraumatize.

You said that you thought that we would re-experience these crimes and this trauma, to a certain extent, when we were notified. In fact, I would say that it was almost to the full extent. That, essentially, is what happens when you are retraumatized: You revert emotionally back to the initial trauma.

I think it's really important that there be some guidance surrounding mental health and how to best handle and support family members of the victims—or the victims themselves, obviously, in other cases. That should really be the first concern: how these family members and victims are going to feel and react, and how you can support them.

• (1725)

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you, Ms. Murray.

Please comment, Ms. Chwalczuk.

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Thank you.

I would say it's communication and time, as they have both touched upon as well. It has to be the first thing that happens. Give time. Give resources. Again, as Laura touched upon, I think it's getting the victims, their families and friends, and anyone who needs it the mental health backing they need to go through this again. It should be made more readily available.

Thank you.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you, Ms. Chwalczuk.

Do I have any time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: I wanted to ask a question of Dr. Roebuck.

At our last meeting, Commissioner Kelly updated our committee on the creation of the multidisciplinary working group. What do you hope to get out of the creation of that committee?

Could you perhaps build upon what has just been said with regard to the notification, the timing and the resources available to victims, and what you hope the committee will achieve with regard to those actions?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you for the question.

To all the witnesses, I'm so sorry for what you've experienced. The way we are treating victims of crime in Canada isn't just. It's not kind, it's not compassionate and it's not respectful.

Our office has made recommendations about notifications of prison transfers all the way back to 2010. They've not been implemented to this point, and we're hoping that this is a turning point.

What we recommended is that there not be any transfers if people haven't been notified at the time of the pending transfer that the decision has been considered and haven't been told how they sub-

mit their feedback and share concerns so that they're taken into consideration in that final decision.

Under the current law, what typically happens is that for all transfers to maximum or medium security, victims aren't notified until two days afterward. The standards we're providing are very poor.

In the multidisciplinary committee, I think what's encouraging is that it looks like there's an intent on CSC's side to try to address a broader range of issues affecting victims of crime. As an ombud for victims of crime, I'm hopeful about the concerns that we've certainly been raising. There are many areas like this where we can do better. We need to pay attention and we need to respond so that we're not causing further harm to people who have already been harmed.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Thank you, Dr. Roebuck.

Thank you to our witnesses who are joining us by video conference.

I want to thank you in advance, Mr. Chair, for being so lenient with the time today.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Michaud, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I too would like to thank our guests for being here today.

I commend you for your courage, ladies. I can't even imagine how difficult it must be to relive those events over and over again. It's in the media. It still comes up a lot. Again, my condolences. I offered them at the first meeting devoted to this study, but I didn't have the opportunity to speak directly with you. My thoughts are with you at this difficult time, as the events are unfortunately resurfacing with this study.

Despite that, you insisted that the committee conduct this study. In a letter you sent on October 5, you asked the committee to launch a study to deepen public understanding of the reclassification and transfer of the offender in question and to restore Canadians' confidence in the public safety and justice systems.

I imagine that you have followed the committee's work so far, and have heard what Commissioner Kelly and the correctional investigator had to say.

To date, are you remotely satisfied with what's been said? Has it provided you with any comfort? Or quite the contrary, do you think that this won't help at all to restore your confidence or that of any Canadian who goes through events like this?

Like my colleagues, I'd like to hear from all three of you. Ms. Penner could answer first.

• (1730)

[English]

Ms. Laura Murray: I'm sorry; I was able to hear everything as it was translated, but unfortunately Marcia and Tennille were not able to do that, so I will attempt to answer the question.

Basically, the member was asking whether the request to have this study undertaken was in the hopes that it would achieve some success in terms of better informing the public of all the things we've been saying. We heard Anne Kelly speak, and the member was wondering if we were at all satisfied with those comments and explanations and if they provided us a sense of being heard, because she understands that this was obviously extremely difficult for us.

I'm not sure if you want to....

The Chair: You're muted. Ladies, if you want to just check your computer and see if you are under the interpretation sign, that might have been the issue. Go ahead.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Is it there now?

The Chair: We can hear you fine.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Perfect. Thank you.

In regard to that question, again, I apologize that I didn't hear that addressed to me. As I had said in my original address, I do understand that Anne Kelly was doing the job correctly in terms of the proper criteria and rules and regulations that they have established and have laid out for her. However, I don't feel heard. I don't feel that the decision that was made was the right decision. I believe that if he escaped from prison he would definitely still be a danger to all of us. I believe he is a psychopath and a sexual sadist who can never be rehabilitated. He was sentenced to maximum security, and that is the facility that he should endure for the entire remainder of his stay.

I believe that those regulations, the criteria, the questions and the testing of these prisoners need to be re-evaluated. Is that the answer? I am not sure. I do know that Paul Bernardo is the worst of the worst. It doesn't get worse, and no crimes get any worse than his.

By moving him to a lower-security facility, they are specifically telling the victims and families that what has happened is not that bad; it's medium. In this way, they are revictimized. They have to go through the whole entire thing again, and it's absolutely wrong. Therefore, I don't feel heard. I think it needs to be changed and I hope that doing this panel will instigate some of that change.

The Chair: Ms. Chwalczuk, do you want to answer? No?

Can you hear us okay?

Ms. Laura Murray: Yes. Tennille is just....

I am just going to say something quickly, which is that I think when we heard there was going to be a review of the transfer decision, it provided us with some hope that sanity would prevail and the committee would find that he was not the model prisoner who should be moved and whose classification should be downgraded to

medium. We watched the explanation from Anne Kelly, and when she said that the findings of the committee revealed that they complied with all the laws and policies, that may well be the case. We obviously aren't privy to all of the ins and outs of that, but she also said that the committee took into account consideration of the victims and they followed all the laws and policies surrounding victim notification. That was really where we dug our heels in and said that's where it's going to have to be changed, because the victim's rights need to matter just as much as the prisoner's rights. The ombudsman's comments have been wonderful, and I think he has summed up so well how victims' rights are not heard in this country and how they need to be heard and the steps this committee is, hopefully, going to be working towards to make that happen.

Really, I think that's what we're hoping for with this panel and with this new committee: It's that the victim's rights will have as much weight as the offender's.

• (1735)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you very much for your answers.

After reviewing the decision, the commissioner of Correctional Service Canada found that it was sound and consistent. The decision was clearly consistent with established standards and the offender met the criteria to be moved from a maximum security penitentiary to a medium security penitentiary.

Do you think the criteria should be changed? Is that what you're wondering too? Are you asking parliamentarians to change them?

I think it's really important for Correctional Service Canada to remain independent, and it, not Parliament, should be making these decisions, but perhaps the criteria need to be reviewed?

[English]

Ms. Laura Murray: I was trying to give that to Marcia because she's said it a few times, just to us.

The criteria as Anne Kelly outlined them for this downgrading or this decision regarding the security classification were that there was a statistical component and there was also the clinical component. Of that clinical component, it was my understanding that it included the ability to manage the inmate, the escape risk and the public risk.

He came out on the ability to manage as medium, the escape risk as medium and the public risk as high, so it was nice that he was rated as high on that and that it was acknowledged. However, I'll take it to Marcia. She had said that if the public risk is high, whether or not he came out overall as medium, we would like to see that high public risk really negate that entire component.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Further to that, I do believe that, yes, if there are three boxes for criteria that need to be checked and one of those boxes does not fit the criteria for a move or a rehabilitated prisoner, then the move is negated. If this prisoner is still a risk to society if he escapes prison, then he is not moved.

I believe there has to be more thorough testing. This prisoner has been in jail for 31 years. I think he knows the ins and outs and knows how to work the system and how to manipulate a test to show that he's going to play nice with another prisoner. That, to me, does not warrant a move.

If this is just a lateral move, as Anne Kelly has indicated, and from maximum to medium there's no difference and it's the same security, etc., then leave him in maximum security where he belongs.

There has to be a more thorough system, more questions asked and more ways that the system cannot be manipulated, and if any of those do not fit, then the prisoner is not moved and remains in the maximum security prison to which he was sentenced.

● (1740)

The Chair: We're going to move on to Mr. Julian, please.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to say to the victims—Ms. Penner, Ms. Chwalczuk and Ms. Murray—that words can't describe what you have been through. It is deeply appreciated that you are taking the trauma of that horrific experience to come before this committee, show such courage and tell us what needs to be changed so this never happens again. I think we all deeply appreciate your wisdom, which I deeply hope will serve to create change in the correctional system.

Ms. Kelly testified here this week. I thought the most important part of her testimony was when she said that the Correctional Service always takes into consideration information relative to the victims when they're making a decision. She said that at any moment during a sentence, a victim can present a new victim impact statement to the Correctional Service. I find that appalling, because it puts the onus on the victims. You have lived trauma. Victims are forced, currently, to guess about whether or not their victim impact statement would make a difference in avoiding a transfer that could have significant repercussions.

I have two questions for all three of you, if you would like to respond.

First, how fair do you think it is that the onus is on the victims to present a new victim impact statement?

Second, had you been given a couple of weeks' advance notice that the Correctional Service was contemplating a transfer of this sadistic, pathological murderer, would you have wanted to file a victim impact statement—so they would be aware the trauma is very real and exists today—and in that way head off the transfer?

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you very much for that question. I feel very passionately about this.

You are absolutely right. First of all, we didn't know we could submit a victim impact statement regarding this. It was never communicated, to the best of my knowledge. I'm not speaking on behalf of the family by any means, but I don't believe anybody knew this was available to them. I absolutely would have done whatever is in my power, as we have for the last 31 years. I would have gone ahead, communicated that and stopped this move.

I also want to briefly say that anybody who has not done a victim impact statement with regard to a parole hearing and things of that nature.... It's difficult. Anne Kelly and her department put that on the victims and families. They put the ball in our court by making it our responsibility to rebut this. I don't think they fully understand what it takes and what it takes out of a person to facilitate a victim impact statement. We relive it, from day one to now, every single time, for every parole hearing and every time something like this comes up. It retraumatizes each and every time.

Hopefully that answered your question.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

I'll ask Ms. Murray and Ms. Chwalczuk.

Ms. Laura Murray: Thank you. That is an amazing question. Thank you for asking it and thank you for acknowledging how difficult this is for us, because it is.

If we had known—I think that was one of your questions—prior to the move, would we have done anything about it? Would we have made our voices heard? Absolutely. That is why we are doing it now and why we began doing it at that very moment. That was, I think, it for us.

I think that it also cannot be on the victim. There have to be other ways to deal with that. Again, the ombudsman spoke to that a little bit, about having the victims registered and ensuring that they are registered, because that is going to facilitate communication. There has to be a way to get those victims registered. They have to know that is something they are able to do.

As Marcia said, I also think that doing the victim impact statement is in and of itself retraumatizing. You're going back and revisiting the entire trauma.

Again, I'm going to go back to the mental health aspect and say that when the Correctional Service of Canada or the committee or anyone else is interacting with the victims and their families, it must be somebody who is informed about trauma. Trauma is its own animal. It's very specific and very complex, especially in a situation like Paul Bernardo, with the crimes that he committed and how horrific they were. It's just not the same as other mental health....

I really feel that it should not be on the victims. There should be help available from the Correctional Service or from the committee, from people who are informed about trauma and who know how sensitive it is in nature and who could be there to support victims when they're making these statements. I also think that victim impact statements are very important and need to be heard, but victims need to be supported when making them, because it is very retraumatizing.

● (1745)

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

Ms. Chwalczuk, would you like to answer?

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Yes.

Having known beforehand would definitely have helped. For me specifically, trying to write a victim impact statement has literally turned my world upside down in the last week. I can't imagine asking that of the victim.

Definitely, as Laura said, having somebody there for guidance and to support victims as they go through this is important, but I would agree that the victim impact statements have to happen. They are of the utmost importance. I'm glad that even though it's later, we've been able to do this now.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

I have another question for the three of you.

We heard surprising testimony from the correctional officers and the Union of Safety and Justice Employees that often correctional officers, who know the inmates the best, are not consulted on the evaluation. The security classification can take place without correction officers being aware of it.

Often, as I think you pointed out, the clinical response of a pathological serial killer is going to be different in a formal setting than it might be in the actual prison population. How important is it for correctional officers, who know these inmates best and know their behaviour when they're not being evaluated, to be consulted on the security classification and these kinds of transfers?

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you. It's extremely important to consult the people who are seeing these prisoners day in and day out, seeing the reality of what happens and how they act. It makes little to no sense to me that they wouldn't be consulted.

As I said a number of times—and I don't mean to repeat myself—it's not hard for a master manipulator to trick the system. He's done heinous crimes—abducted, raped and murdered people. This guy has zero morals and zero accountability. The people who see him day in and day out and know exactly what this individual is all about absolutely need to be consulted. They need to be part of the process to give pertinent information and guidance.

• (1750)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll move on to Mrs. Thomas, please.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you again to each of you for taking the time to be with us here today and for taking the time to prepare such helpful opening statements. I realize that it's not an easy process to have to think through that again and to have to share your story and its impact here again, so thank you.

My first question is going to be for Ms. Penner.

In your opening remarks, you made a comment with regard to this transfer taking place without proper notice being given. Then you commented on the government being confronted about this transfer, and the minister at the time denying knowing. You went on to explain that he really did know, so he tried to mislead the public, which is altogether wrong and certainly has consequences.

I'm wondering if you would be able to talk a little bit about the personal consequences it has for you when someone in a public role professes that he doesn't know, but then it comes out that he did. What impact does it have on you to have someone in a position of trust lie about that?

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you for that question. Yes, it has had a tremendous effect on me as well as on Laura and Tennille.

When something of this nature and this severity occurs, something that's so deeply sensitive to all of us, you are left with a feeling of not being able to trust the people you should. Just a brief example would be that if somebody hurts you or commits a crime against you, you can't go to the officials to report that because you can't trust them and trust that the information you're giving them is going to give you good results. That's it. It's a feeling of...

We are relying on you. We need you to be there and to advocate for the people in this society. You are our elected officials. We are the ones who are supposed to rely on you, and you are supposed to be accountable to us. If we can't count on what you're telling us to be true, accurate and in our best interest, then where does that leave us as advocates for our friend Kristen?

It has been our life mission to fight for justice for these girls and to make sure that punishment is received, so this leaves us with a feeling of helplessness. Where do you go? How do we achieve what we're going to achieve if we can't trust the people who are in charge and the ones who are supposed to be protecting us?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Ms. Penner.

I have another question that I'm hoping each of you can take time to expand on or respond to. I'll start by responding to Ms. Chwalczuk's comments.

You said in your opening remarks that Anne Kelly's response brought anger and grief yet again from knowing that he, Mr. Bernardo, may have more rights than the victims he left behind, and that it was very disturbing that the families and friends were left to do nothing but watch.

Over and over again, each of you has commented on the rights of the victim versus the rights of the criminal. I think you've drawn attention to the fact that there is an imbalance there.

On the rights of the victims, the commissioner was here with us in the room. I'm reading a report. It says in the commissioner's directive, CD 705, section 7, that the offender's right is to receive the rationale as well as the information considered regarding the transfer decision, but victims are not entitled to the same. This inequity is further intensified when considering that offenders can seek redress if dissatisfied. This same right is not mirrored for victims.

There are two things going on here. One is that it's being outlined that offenders have the right to know the rationale and to be given information with regard to their transfer, but the victims don't. They are not afforded that same right.

Then the second thing is that if the criminal disagrees with the decision, he can take redress. There are steps he can take. However, if victims disagree with the decision or if they're affected by that decision on a personal level—which, of course, the three of you have been—there is no redress.

My question is this: Does this speak of a system that puts victims ahead of criminals?

• (1755)

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Thank you for your question.

I would say no, in knowing that if we stand and fight and actions aren't taken, it is stopped in that moment and there's nothing more to be done in that moment, versus the fact that a criminal can constantly rebut and refute and keep trying. It seems that there's literally no balance here, as has been said numerous times tonight. It's almost that the criminal has more of an upper hand. That's what we're left to see here.

I hope that helps answer your question.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Do the other two care to comment?

Ms. Marcia Penner: I'll briefly mirror that. Yes, I believe that the criminal has the upper hand. The criminal has more rights than the victim.

We're acting on behalf of our best friend. She didn't get a say in any of this. She's not been able to defend herself in any of this. Everything was taken from her, yet we are having this conversation and we are part of this panel today because we have to fight to have this monster put back where he belongs. Is that fair? It's absolutely not fair. Is it fair that after 31 years we are still having to relive this and fight for our best friend? It's not fair. There is something seriously wrong.

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to move on to Mr. Gaheer now, please.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): That's great. Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

In particular, I echo the comments made by this committee so far. To the friends and family who are appearing, we acknowledge how difficult this process is. We commend your courage for appearing before the committee. We also show appreciation for the fact that you are participating.

My first question is for Mr. Roebuck.

My colleague Mr. Schiefke was actually asked this question earlier, but you weren't given adequate time to answer. We know that at the last meeting the commissioner updated our committee following the review of the transfer in question that she had conducted over the summer. A multidisciplinary working committee was put

in place pertaining to the victims, and we understand that the committee has started its work. We know that the committee has just started its work, but could you provide us with an update as to what's been done so far?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you.

I'll start with acknowledging that my capable team has advised me that I misspoke on the CCRA. For this whole time, I'm sure government lawyers have been cringing. Please accept my deepest apologies. I said that for medium security and maximum security transfers, victims are notified two days after. It's not "two days"; it's "after". They're notified two days in advance if it's a transfer to minimum security. I wanted to clarify that.

I appreciate, again, the wisdom and experience that you're offering to this committee. Your insights are so valuable. I'm grateful for the respectful way that the committee is listening and engaging.

As for the multidisciplinary committee, you're right that it's fairly new that it's been meeting. It took a while to gather all of the players. There's a plan to meet weekly for I think three to four months for each topic. Each week they're unpacking a different area of the interactions that CSC has with victims of crime.

As I mentioned, it's much broader than just the transfer piece itself. It will explore the response to the ministerial direction to provide notification always in advance. That's my read on it. There have been a few meetings. It will continue into the new year.

This coming week is dedicated to prison transfers.

• (1800)

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: When do you think the first recommendations will be made by this committee?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: I'm not sure. I know that they're gathering along the way. My understanding is that at the end of the committee's engagement, there will be a report. I can say, from what I've seen, that work is being done already on things that the committee is raising and on recommendations that we've made.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: What do you hope comes out of the creation of this committee?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: I have really big hopes.

I don't know that the committee is big enough. It's clear that the CCRA is not fulfilling the needs of victims of crime, and I think it's very clear that victims' rights are so limited in Canada. In the CVBR itself, about 30% of the text is dedicated to disclaimers on when the rights shouldn't apply.

We have to do better. My hope is that this working committee can help with CSC's policies—make them more victim-centred and trauma-informed—but there's a lot more work that needs to happen in Parliament if we actually want to take these concerns seriously.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Chair, how much time do I have?

The Chair: Take your time. Go ahead.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Thank you.

I wanted to ask Ms. Chwalczuk, Ms. Murray and Ms. Penner my next question. Can you tell the committee how you think victim services in Canada can be improved?

I think one of the recommendations made so far is to have advance notice, but in addition to advance notice, if you have any recommendations, how would you want victims to be involved with the Correctional Service of Canada?

Ms. Marcia Penner: I think involving the victims and the families in the decision is extremely integral. I think knowing the full circumstances and the impact of what the perpetrator has done lends itself to information that perhaps is not on paper or that you're not fully understanding.

I think that changes also, perhaps.... There is testing and there's a system in place, and criteria and rules and regulations. My question, I guess, would be.... I am not a professional on this. Obviously I am going from a different standpoint than from being a part of the committee, although I would love to be part of that committee. My question is, could there be exceptions to the rules? Does it have to be the same cookie cutter for each individual prisoner? Each prisoner, each perpetrator, has a different circumstance. Yes, there is a guideline, but could it be more personalized to that prisoner?

I'm not sure of the exact answer or what the solution is to perfect the system, but I do believe that communication and time, with more thorough communication with the people who spend time with the prisoners and more impact from the victims and the families.... All of those things combined make up a very important key component to making it so that the victims and the prisoners both have rights.

I understand that prisoners have rights and I don't negate that or dispute it, but so do the victims, and those need to be just as important and heard.

• (1805)

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: That's great.

I think I speak on behalf of the committee when I say we are very appreciative of your comments. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to move on to Ms. Michaud, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Do I have two and a half minutes?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

Dr. Roebuck, thank you for being with us as well.

Tim Danson, the lawyer representing the families and victims, challenged the reasons put forward by Correctional Service Canada when it said that an inmate's right to privacy takes precedence over the victims' right to be informed. In this case, he took issue with Correctional Service Canada's lack of transparency.

Do you agree with him? Do you think that the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights was upheld in this case? Should it be strengthened?

What do you think about us discussing the offender's right to privacy versus victim rights? One takes precedence. That seems unfortunate.

What could be done to improve victim rights?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you.

I'm sorry, but I will answer in English.

[*English*]

I clearly agree that victims' rights don't currently carry a weight equivalent to offenders' rights, and I think there is a problem with how we think about information, thinking that it somehow belongs to the offenders. There is a lack of understanding of how relevant and how important that is to victims and how central it is to their experience.

If there is an assessment report that talks about some of the reasons or factors connected to a homicide, for the families who lost a child, that is their information. That matters, yet we treat it as if all of this belongs to the offender.

I don't think the problem is necessarily with CSC specifically; I think it's in the legislation and it's in our collective approach to responding to victims of crime. I think we need to strengthen the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights to give it meaningful recourse, and our office would like to see the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights brought into the preamble of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act so that the guiding principles for victims of crime follow through the rest of the CCRA.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: That's interesting. Thank you very much.

On Monday, the assistant commissioner of Correctional Service Canada said that it was important to notify victims' families in advance because certain things had to be taken into consideration in the event of a transfer, such as geographic circumstances.

In this case, we learned from the media that the families had been notified the same day or later, and that some of them had learned about it through the media.

Was this done properly, in your opinion? If we had subsequently learned that one of the victims' friends or loved ones lived near La Macaza, could we have ended up with a somewhat disastrous situation?

I'm only talking about geographic circumstances. Do you think there are other circumstances that need to be taken into consideration, hence the importance of talking to victims beforehand?

[*English*]

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you.

That's a really important question that speaks to clear rights that victims have to protection and participation. The CVBR puts an onus on victims to request information, but the onus is on the state to provide protection and participation, and that needs to be better reflected in the CCRA.

To reply to what we heard earlier about victim statements, if I can differentiate, a "victim impact statement" is what's given at court for sentencing. Once somebody is in the custody of the Correctional Service, there is what is called a "victim statement". It's very similar. You can provide details about how you've been affected, you can request geographic restrictions and you can share safety concerns.

We've requested that this mechanism be streamlined so that people can request geographic restrictions or share safety considerations without having to go through all of the impact on them personally, and it would carry the same weight without their needing to revisit those things.

People can submit victim statements at any point throughout the process. They can submit as many as they want. This is what we're told. I don't know what would happen if everyone submitted them weekly, but as we heard, it's impossible to submit them if you don't know they're required.

Within that existing mechanism of victim statements, or even just the streamlined version, we would like to see advance notification given of a pending decision, with clear information on how decisions are made and on how to share concerns or geographic restrictions that can be taken into that decision.

Finally, currently, CSC will automatically consider any information it has on file for registered victims, but without updates.... Somebody might have registered 20 years ago and they might not be living in the same place. We don't know their daughter just went to university in Kingston. Therefore, people really need to be prompted to share those concerns if they have them so that we can better protect the safety of victims of crime.

• (1810)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Roebuck and Ms. Michaud.

Can we move on to Mr. Julian, please?

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks very much.

Dr. Roebuck, I'd like to continue on with what you were just saying.

We know from the surprising testimony of Ms. Kelly that the onus is on the victims. As we've heard from the three very eloquent witnesses today, the trauma involved in producing a victim statement or a victim impact statement is enormous.

The fact that the onus is still on the victims is something I see as a major shortfall in this situation, so I wanted to come back to that issue.

For example, the Correctional Service is not obliged to follow geographic restrictions, despite it being a recommendation or request from a victim. They're not obliged to follow that. In the case of the transfer of Mr. Bernardo's, a horrific serial killer, no notice was given to the victims so that they could actually provide that victim statement and perhaps that geographic restriction.

How do we put in place a system that actually respects victims and puts the onus on the Correctional Services so that victims are truly respected and aren't forced to go through trauma trying to anticipate when and if an inmate may be transferred?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you.

I think that's exactly what we need. We need ongoing communication and respectful consultation on that type of safety information.

Too much onus is on victims to know what to do or what to ask for. The CVBR really leaves us with rights that people need to ask about, and they don't know that they need to ask. We don't have an equivalent right, up to the charter level. When somebody is accused of a crime, they're provided automatically with information about their rights and about legal counsel, but we don't provide the same to victims of crime.

That's reflected across the country and also in the correctional system. It's something we need to change all the way through.

Mr. Peter Julian: I'll give you three more rapid-fire questions.

First off is the issue that has come from previous testimony from the Union of Safety and Justice Employees and the UCCO for correctional officers. More often than not, correctional officers are not consulted in the evaluation of inmates that takes place, even though they may be aware of behaviour that may indicate a higher risk. Do you believe it's important to have that additional knowledge and information of an inmate's behaviour as part of the prison security classification?

Second, you mentioned the issue around the registering of victims. How can we actually put more of an onus on the Correctional Service to ensure the victims are registered, rather than asking victims to try to navigate a system that is often incomprehensible?

Third, both in that regard of registering and overall, I was thinking about your testimony that 20¢ on the dollar is spent on victims' complaints, versus a dollar for offenders' complaints. What is the resourcing issue that we need to resolve so that victims actually get the supports they need? Does the government need to contemplate providing additional resources so the victims are treated with the respect they deserve?

• (1815)

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Thank you for that question.

I'm still learning how to address the chair, so I apologize.

An hon. member: Try "Your Honour".

Voices: Oh, oh!

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: That's a fancy name.

For the first question, our mandate is limited. We're not able to speak to transfer decisions or how those decisions are made, so I won't speak to that.

Number two is on registration. This is part of what our office advocated with Bill S-12, which has introduced a mechanism whereby at sentencing a judge or the Crown will ask if the victim would like to receive information about the sentence and its administration. A check box is also added to the victim impact statement.

Prior to Bill S-12, nobody had that legal responsibility to even provide that information, so it was haphazard on who would be informed. We've seen kind of systemic racism in who gets access to that information and who doesn't. We're pleased to see some progress on that, but we need to do a lot more.

On resourcing, I do think that's really important. In general, we hear complaints from victims of crime that the people who harm them have access to psychologists or to education and employment skills training, while that same resource isn't necessarily provided to victims.

Right down to the complaint angle, our office hasn't had the capacity to conduct a systemic review since 2017 because of resourcing. That's a core function of an ombuds office that we're unable to fulfill.

I think there's a lot of work to do to provide victims with the types of support that will be more effective in addressing their complaints.

The Chair: Okay. Now we're moving on to Mr. Shipley, please.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you, Chair, and thank you to all of the witnesses for being here today. I'm sure it's a very tough day for you and I appreciate that you're here and doing your bit for your friend.

Mr. Roebuck, I'd like to start with you. My colleague was asking earlier in regard to Ms. Chwalczuk's—I hope I said that right—opening statement, and I was watching you, and you were nodding your head quite noticeably. It looked like you had something you wanted to add, so I'm going to let you add something here.

I'll reread the line: "...knowing that he, Mr. Bernardo, may have more rights than the victims he left behind, and that it was very disturbing that the families and friends were left to do nothing but watch." I was watching you, and you were definitely nodding your head. It looked like you wanted to speak there and you didn't get a chance. What would you like to say about that?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Yes. I'm quite expressive, so thank you for noticing that.

I think it's absolutely true that...it's unequivocal that victims don't have rights equivalent to those of offenders. Even if you look at the government, there is an army of legal professionals who are dedi-

cated to the rights of offenders, to the privacy rights of offenders, and we have such limited equivalence on the rights of victims of crime. That's reflected also when cases go to Federal Court and victims are asking for information. I think it's an important consideration. Who in government is representing the interests of victims of crime? This is why I think we need to strengthen the resourcing there; it's so that we can do the work to make these rights more meaningful.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you for that.

The second question is for you too, sir.

The French and Mahaffy families have been trying to obtain recordings of parole hearings and documents referenced in parole hearings for many years, but have been stonewalled by the government. Should registered victims have access to these materials?

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Absolutely. I think in the Federal Court case in which they have been arguing for access, the judge essentially noted that it's a shame that the media have more rights to access those recordings than the families themselves, and the judge referred it back to Parliament to say that legislative change is required to address that. I think we need to do something about that.

I'll say that when our office investigates complaints, we require a legislative mandate as well, because we are also denied access to parole recordings that are significant to the investigations of complaints. However, we're working on it collaboratively with the Parole Board.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Thank you.

I hate to do this, because we have very limited time—I have only about two minutes left—but I would like to move a quick motion that I hope gets unanimous consent.

I would like to move that the committee extend its study on the rights of victims of crime, reclassification and transfer of federal offenders for one additional meeting to hear testimony from Tim Danson, the lawyer representing the victims' families. Hopefully we can hear him on Monday, December 4.

• (1820)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): What's the length? Is it one meeting or one hour?

Mr. Doug Shipley: I said one meeting.

The Chair: Do you mean for the full two hours?

Mr. Doug Shipley: I did say one meeting. Mr. Danson was prepared for two hours today. He did change his schedule a lot to be available for today. I think it would be right to give him two hours on Monday.

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I think I'm largely in support of the motion, except that I think two hours is far too much time. Mr. Danson was going to participate in this panel, where he would have shared his time with four other witnesses. I think two hours is way too long for him. I'm happy to hear from him, but I think we should limit it to an hour.

In fact, I would make that an amendment. I would move that Mr. Shipley's motion be amended to be one hour.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKinnon.

Go ahead, Ms. Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I agree with Mr. McKinnon. It's unfortunate that Mr. Danson wasn't able to participate in today's meeting, but a single witness for two hours seems a bit long.

A one-hour meeting would be more reasonable.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Mr. Julian, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian: I agree with the motion and the amendment.

I think it's important for Mr. Danson to appear before the committee. An hour seems reasonable to me.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Are there any further comments from anybody?

Mr. Shipley, go ahead.

Mr. Doug Shipley: I'm a little disappointed. I think two hours is appropriate. I think we've been incredibly lenient with our time today and we filled it with no problem.

I know Mr. Danson has quite a bit to say. I would like to hear him for two hours, but it has to be the will of the room. I was looking for unanimous consent. That was the original motion.

We've definitely given everybody lots of opportunity to speak today. I don't know why we would want to try to cut Mr. Danson short.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. O'Connell.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Chair, if there's going to be further debate on this, I suggest we do so afterwards, out of respect for the witnesses who are here. We still have questions. Debating this motion now, I think, is inappropriate. It would be much more respectful to do so after we finish testimony.

However, if the members opposite.... We could vote on this right now, but if there's going to be more debate, I think we have to get back to the testimony.

Mr. Doug Shipley: I agree. I said I didn't want to waste time on this. I didn't think there would be any debate. I thought this would pass with unanimous consent. The chair mentioned we have a hard

stop at 6:45. There is no debate from our side. We want a two-hour meeting.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): I have a point of order.

I think there's an amendment on the table from Mr. McKinnon for one hour. That's the topic right now: Is there unanimous consent for one hour?

The Chair: Is there unanimous consent for one hour?

(Amendment agreed to)

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

The Chair: Thanks.

Mr. Shipley is done, so we are moving on to Ms. O'Connell.

Thank you for your patience, witnesses.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you so much.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here. I will echo what has already been said in terms of understanding and appreciating how difficult this is. For you to come here and share this with us is extremely helpful. Thank you for that. It has been very helpful to hear your perspectives. It means a lot to us, and I appreciate it.

This is for whoever would like to answer among the friends who are here. I'll leave it up to you in terms of whether all three of you want to respond, or any one of you.

In your testimonies, which were all similarly said, you talked about the need for better communication, more time when decisions are made and the ability to impact those decisions—but you have to first be notified that something has even been applied for, for example.

You talked about having people available with specific trauma training. I found this to be an interesting idea and approach. What are your feelings on this? I thought about this as I listened to your testimony. What would your thinking be about this idea of a support group, almost, as an option in terms of...? Maybe not every offender would require something like this.

Ms. Penner, I think you talked about the cookie-cutter approach. Perhaps not every offender, victim or victim's family and friends would require this, but what if there was an option? Certainly in a case like this, there could be additional supports. There could almost be a support group with trauma-informed services or persons trained in that, as well as people who understand the legal and correctional systems, because part of this.... Even in our own study, we are listening to testimony from the commissioner and getting clarity on what "maximum", "medium" and "minimum" actually mean—not in this case, but in general—and how they are different, and on the classification process. I think that piece too would be crucial. It's not just the trauma-informed services, although that is important.

Would you find it helpful to have some sort of support group that could be accessed by those who want to? I realize I'm creating a hypothetical, but I'm trying to summarize, based on your comments, what actionable items could improve this.

• (1825)

Ms. Laura Murray: I think that's a great idea. I think any kind of support in any platform is going to be helpful.

I think it's important to remember that when you're victimized, you lose your sense of power. You feel helpless. It's having people there who would not only provide you with support for mental health, but who are trauma-informed, because trauma is very specific in terms of mental health.

As you just mentioned, also having people there to help the victims navigate the system would be very helpful. Victims will feel overwhelmed, especially in a system like a parliamentary system or the corrections system. Most victims don't have an understanding of how it works. Many victims wouldn't even know about the victims rights bureau or section. I didn't even know that there was one.

I think that would be very helpful. Some sort of committee they could access that would provide them with mental health support and also with the support to help them navigate those systems would be very helpful.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

If anyone else wants to jump in, please feel free. I'll just add to that.

It was mentioned in all three of your testimonies that you felt voices were muted. I also can't help but reflect that you three have come so well prepared and have expressed yourselves so clearly, but at different stages of trauma it might be very difficult for some people to have the courage to come forward, so it might be useful to have someone to help speak for them in the event that they aren't comfortable or they're not sure how to express themselves. I would hate to see voices muted simply because they're not able, in that moment, to express themselves or to access a system that is not designed for victims and friends of victims.

I'm sure there are others within your circle of friends who share in this pain. You three have spoken, as I said, so clearly. Do you have any experience of others who maybe don't feel as comfortable—I'm sure that this isn't comfortable—in terms of coming forward and speaking up? How can we make sure that those voices are also not diminished?

• (1830)

Ms. Marcia Penner: I think there are a number of people who have been victimized, and they don't have the courage and the resources and the ability to reach out.

Today, being here didn't come easily. It took a lot of buckling down, a lot of phone calls, a lot of emails and a lot of digging our heels in. Luckily, through trauma, there can be some good that comes out of it. For me, it was determination, strength, stubbornness and being determined to make a difference. Not everybody comes out of it with that.

I think it's super-important that there be resources for people who cannot be heard. They cannot let their voices be heard. They don't have the resources. I do know some people who are that way. I try to help where I can and guide them when I can. I think something of that nature is super-important and would make a great difference.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I know I'm out of time, but could I perhaps just ask a question?

Mr. Roebuck, you mentioned in your testimony that you've made recommendations since 2010. Is there any way that you could table those recommendations with this committee? I'm not able to ask you because I'm out of time.

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: In our submission to the committee, we did an appendix of previous recommendations from the office. They were all provided to the committee.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Lloyd is next.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Thank you.

I want to start by thanking all of our witnesses for being here and for your incredible strength and composure, given the terrible context of the discussion we're having today.

You may have read a Global News report a number of months ago that had an ATIP from Correctional Service of Canada officials discussing the transfer.

You're probably aware of this, but when they were discussing the transfer, one of the officials, whose name was redacted, asked when the victims' families would be notified and whether it needed to happen a certain number of days prior to the transfer.

The second official replied that they would only be notified once the transfer was complete, to which the first official responded, "Oh good, I was worried that the circus would begin prior to the transfer."

Then the second official, just trying to pass off responsibility, said, "Nope, he'll be assigned to someone else by the time it hits the fan."

How does that make you feel? Do you feel that anyone at Correctional Service of Canada or in the government has been fully held accountable for this callous disregard for the feelings and the rights of victims?

Ms. Laura Murray: It almost makes us speechless. I can literally feel the energy that has shifted between us sitting here listening to that. I think you nailed it on the head when you said, "callous disregard".

I am actually shocked. I think we're all just shocked that someone who works with offenders and understands the magnitude of some of these crimes that these individuals commit would be able to have such a callous and cavalier attitude towards the impact of any kind of decision regarding an offender.

I think the other part, the conversation that happened in regard to how this was handled, is probably not too shocking, because as we said earlier, it came out in the news that the Prime Minister's Office and the office of Minister Mendicino were aware of the transfer beforehand. They were aware of the subsequent emotion that would come out of it and they were prepared for it, but they didn't want to deal with it, so they chose to deny that they knew. There just has to be some accountability for these people.

I know that some changes have been made in the government since then, but it speaks to the fact that victims are, over and over again, just disregarded.

This is a man who did the worst of the most terrible things that can be done to human beings, and this is the attitude of individuals who are responsible for his incarceration? It's disgusting. There is nothing else to say.

• (1835)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Thank you. I appreciate your candidness.

I'll maybe give an opportunity to the others, but I have just another quick question to think about.

Correctional Service of Canada Commissioner Anne Kelly came and said that the law was followed.

In your opinion, if the correct application of the law as it exists leads to people like Bernardo being transferred to medium security, is the law truly a good law, or is it a flawed law?

I'll just pass that along.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you for that question.

I would answer that it is absolutely a flawed law. This is absolutely not the right decision. It was the absolute wrong decision.

Yes, I agree that on paper the job was done correctly, and all the necessary boxes, as I said, were checked, but is that right? No.

When you hear of the things being communicated and not being communicated and light being made of something this severe, it leaves you wondering if any of this is being taken seriously at all and what the motivations are. What was the real motivation for this move?

I have many speculations. I, of course, am not on the inside. I don't know, but I highly suspect that there are other motivations that encouraged this move. Clearly there is no regard for the victims in any of that, and "flawed law" is an understatement.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Penner. Thank you, Mr. Lloyd.

We can move now to Mr. McKinnon, who's online, please.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As a computer programmer in real life, I need someone to walk me through the talk of trauma-informed questioning and that process. Those are where my questions were going, but I think we're winding up and coming to the end of this meeting, so what I'll do instead is ask if the different witnesses have any closing remarks they'd like to make to wrap it up.

Ms. Marcia Penner: In closing I want to thank all of you for being here, for inviting us, for allowing us to finally speak, to get our

feelings, our concerns and thoughts—not all of them, but a majority—to all of you.

As you all know, we've said this is a very difficult situation. It has been very traumatizing, but we do hold hope that things can be corrected and that this will not happen to anybody else.

That is our goal: to fight to ensure that Kristen always wins, and that the victims will always win, and that we can correct the system and make sure that nobody else has to feel this way or go through any of these traumatic things again.

Again, we want to thank you all so much for allowing us to be here. We appreciate every single one of you.

Thank you.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Thank you.

Ms. Chwalczuk, would you like to make any closing remarks?

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: I as well would like to thank each and every one of you for your most valuable time this evening.

For me, I guess the plea here is just to see change, see a positive change, to see a better outcome for our victims, to make sure that they have just as much right.

I would like to thank all of you for actually making us feel tonight that you're listening, that there's hope that the changes will be made, and that hopefully nobody else ever has to go through this, and that there's some slight hope that maybe he'll go back where he belongs.

Thank you for your time.

• (1840)

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Thank you, indeed.

Go ahead, Ms. Murray.

Ms. Laura Murray: Thank you, Mr. McKinnon. I am in mental health, so I love your question.

I'm just going to say very quickly that trauma is very complex, and that is what really separates it and makes it different from just simple anxiety or simple depression or these types of things. That's why it's so important to have somebody who understands trauma, because there are so many different aspects of it. I suspect if you start reading, you will fall down a rabbit hole, because there is so much to learn about it.

Really, I think that's actually very important for anybody who works with victims to understand. If you are victimized, you are more than likely traumatized, and to understand the victim, you have to understand trauma.

That's probably where I will leave it. As Tennille and Marcia have said, we thank you and we hope for change. Any time you all would like to have us back and have any more input in this process, we are more than happy to do this.

We feel very privileged to be a part of this. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKinnon.

Ms. Michaud, you have two minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know if there's anything to add after that testimony and those conclusions.

Thank you very much for your comments and testimony, ladies. We really appreciate it. I believe it's our duty as parliamentarians to take that testimony and try to improve the system.

Thank you very much, Mr. Ombudsperson. Much has been said about the imbalance between offender and inmate rights and victim rights. You said that you hope this whole situation marks a turning point. There could be positive repercussions in the future if the recommendations you've made since 2010 can finally be acted upon.

I hope that today's exercise will prove useful and that it will, to some extent, help to ease all this pain. As you said so well, we hope that other people won't have to deal with things like this.

Thank you for your contribution.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Mr. Julian, you have the final word.

Mr. Peter Julian: Like everyone else on the committee, I've been deeply moved by the testimony today, and I want to thank you, Dr. Roebuck and above all you, Ms. Penner, Ms. Chwalczuk and Ms. Murray, for your important testimony today.

The reality is that you've received very little support over the course of the last few decades, and I don't believe Correctional Services and the current regulations have served you as victims at all. We are all hearing that message loud and clear. We appreciate your courage in stepping forward. We appreciate your wisdom. We appreciate the recommendations you have given to us and we will be endeavouring to work on a report that targets what needs to be changed in Correctional Services and how it approaches the case of pathological serial killers in a way that fully respects victims at all times.

I think that all members of the committee will endeavour to do the best we can to make the changes so that this never happens again. Thank you for stepping forward to speak to us today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Julian.

For about 30 seconds, we have Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you again, witnesses, for your incredible courage and testimony.

Thank you, Dr. Roebuck. Hearing you today reminds me of something that I'd like your quick feedback on, with a yes or no.

When CSC begins to consider the downward reclassification of an offender, would it be necessary for CSC to contact all relevant victims and offer them an opportunity to submit a victim impact statement at the earliest stage of reclassification consideration and at least three months before any transfer is finalized, and would CSC be obligated to equally consider all factors with reclassification, including victim impact statements—yes or no?

• (1845)

Dr. Benjamin Roebuck: Yes.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Absolutely.

Ms. Tennille Chwalczuk: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, witnesses. As chair, I just want to say, with regard to the courage and strength in your voice here today, that we want to thank you for doing this. You can be proud of yourselves for what you're doing here today. It's not easy coming here under any circumstances, but these are quite difficult ones.

I want to thank the committee for keeping this very professional and for allowing me to kind of go outside the boundaries on timing and things like that.

Keep up the good fight. We hear you. Thank you for attending here today.

Ms. Marcia Penner: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>