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Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month. This month, we celebrate the contributions that Black Canadians have made to our society.

This year, let us recognize the contributions and achievements of the hon. Jean Augustine. She was the first Black woman MP and cabinet minister. Her motion to recognize February as Black History Month was adopted by the House in 1995. She was a Liberal MP from 1993 to 2006 and served as the parliamentary secretary to the then prime minister, as well as to the minister of state for multiculturalism and the status of women. She is a role model and an inspiration to many Canadians, including me. I want to thank the hon. Jean Augustine for making a real difference in our country.

Happy Black History Month everyone.

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MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians breathed a collective sigh of relief last week when the special committee on assisted death recommended a pause to the government's reckless and radical death-on-demand agenda.

Mental illness should never have been considered as an acceptable reason for MAID. Conservatives have been warning the government for years that extending assisted suicide to those with men-

tal illnesses would lead to the deaths of those who could have recovered.

Liberals ignored us, but even worse, they ignored the advice of mental health experts and advocates that it would further stigmatize mental illnesses and place euthanasia ahead of other solutions to these illnesses. It bears repeating that assisted death is not medicine. It is not the personalized treatment that vulnerable people need and deserve.

While medical science continues to make leaps and bounds, our lawmakers have made decisions that increasingly devalue life. The government must fully abandon its plan to one day permit death-on-demand for mental illness. Those who are struggling deserve treatment and support, not encouragement to end their life.

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CO-OP STUDENTS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the pleasure of welcoming Marcos Farid Somarriba-Castillo, a student from Cairine Wilson Secondary School, along with his parents. It was a particularly significant occasion for him as it marked his very first time at question period and in the House of Commons.

As a parliamentarian, I take great joy in being able to help students like Marcos who choose the co-op program, which provides them with work experience through a co-op placement in my constituency office.

I want to express my gratitude to co-operative education teachers, like Julia Banks from Cairine Wilson, who has gone above and beyond to ensure that students can immerse themselves in a positive work environment.

Marcos's visit serves as a reminder that our commitment to education and mentorship can have a profound impact on shaping the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

QUEBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is only one weekend left to attend the world's greatest and most popular winter carnival, the Quebec Winter Carnival. Visitors will be just in time to watch the parade in upper town this Saturday. Come one, come all, for some dancing and some fun.

Come one, come all, to marvel at everything made of ice, such as cups, sculptures, and even Bonhomme's Ice Palace. Come one, come all, to enjoy the warm, friendly welcome that the 1,500 volunteers, Quebec City residents and shopkeepers are so well known for.

Quebec City is like no other city in North America, and its carnival is unlike any other in the world. Come one, come all, and join in the 70th Quebec Winter Carnival.

Enjoy the carnival.

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[English]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN YUKON

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Lucille Hunter was a prospector, business owner, nanny, cook, and the first female honorary member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers for her decades of devotion to mining. She and her husband, Charles, came to the Yukon over the perilous Stikine trail in 1897, one of only a few Black families to make the trek north for gold. Lucille regularly walked over 100 miles from Dawson City to Mayo to manage her mining claims.

Helping bring such stories to light is a small organization in my riding called Hidden Histories Society Yukon, documenting the invaluable contributions of the Black community to our territory from the gold rush to today. Meanwhile, we are gearing up for the 11th annual Yukon African Music Festival, organized by Yukoner Leonard Boniface, who is also hosting the Yukon International Conference on Diversity and Inclusion.

Black History Month recognizes the outstanding contributions of Black Canadians around the country, including Canada's north. I encourage Yukoners and all Canadians to learn and get involved in the many community events for Black History Month this February and beyond.

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● (1410)

BILL GAIRDNER

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, athlete, author, thinker, businessman, husband and grandfather are a few of the ways to describe Bill Gairdner, who passed away at age 83 last month. He won a silver at the decathlon in the 1963 Pan American Games. He competed in 1964 at the Tokyo Olympics, in 1966 at the Commonwealth Games in Jamaica and in 1970 at the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games.

He married his beloved wife, Jean, in 1979, and they were blessed with five children and 16 grandchildren. Bill was also a

fearless conservative writer, with bestsellers including *The Trouble with Canada* and *The War Against the Family*. He co-founded Civitas in 1996, a key debate forum for conservative thinkers.

I want to offer my sincerest condolences to Jean and the Gairdner family, and to Bill's friends and business colleagues. I join them in their grief and sorrow.

I did not know Bill personally, but I knew his ideas; I read them. Many Conservatives did, so on behalf of a grateful Conservative movement, I thank Bill for the cherished ideas he gave us. May he rest in peace.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear: We are there for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Ten-dollar-a-day child care saves families an average of \$6,300 per child a year. Forty thousand Newfoundlanders and Labradorians received the enhanced Canada workers benefit, and over 47,000 parents received an average of over \$6,000 from the Canada child benefit. More than 5,000 kids have accessed the Canada dental benefit, and 4,300 homes are saving on energy bills from the greener homes grant. One hundred and sixty thousand received the grocery rebate and the doubling of the GST credit. There were over a billion dollars in federal transfers, including almost \$700 million for health care. Let us not forget the pollution price rebate cheques for 295,000 individuals or families every four months.

Our plan is having a positive impact on Newfoundland and Labrador, so I challenge the opposition to be honest and tell the people of the province what it will cut.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each February we celebrate Black History Month, when we honour and recognize the amazing hard work, dedication and challenges of Black Canadians throughout history and beyond.

We also celebrate the amazing work of community organizations that provide continued support and guidance to the Black community. The Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton is one of these community organizations; its continued presence and leadership in ensuring that Black history and culture are recognized, shared and celebrated does not go unnoticed.

Statements by Members

I am excited that this February 26, with Sheridan College, the association will hold the public premiere screening of the film *Finding Freedom on the Sixteen* at Film.Ca Cinemas in Oakville. Most people are unaware of Oakville's ties to the Underground Railroad, and this film tells the amazing story of former enslaved African Americans from Maryland and Louisiana who fled in search of freedom to the small town of Oakville.

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HOUSING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after years of the Prime Minister, life has never been so expensive. Rent has doubled and mortgages have doubled. New home construction was down again last year, and the housing bureaucrats of the government predict that it is going to be down again in 2024. The Liberal-NDP cost of living crisis is forcing Canadians to choose every month between paying their rent, putting food on the table and heating their homes.

Of course, the Prime Minister is performing in his favourite of plays. He criss-crosses the country, taking pictures, spending even more money and delivering worse results. The out-of-touch Prime Minister is paying city gatekeepers all across Canada for a picture and a promise that Liberals will do better. An entire generation of Canadians who are locked out of home ownership are living the pain every day of the government's endless empty promises.

A Conservative government will ignite action in cities by tying federal funding to housing results, not promises. Only a Conservative government will bring it home.

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STORM IN CAPE BRETON

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the extreme weather emergency in Sydney—Victoria following the unprecedented snowfall of more than 150 centimetres this past weekend. Once again Cape Bretoners are faced with the impacts of climate change and must persevere.

I would like to thank the first responders, volunteers, employees at public works and all those who have stepped up to help, including the local Coast Guard College. Their efforts are appreciated, and I ask that everyone continue to lend a hand to their neighbours while helping each other get through this difficult time.

Please know that the federal government is providing support, both financial and human resources, to help with the challenging cleanup efforts. As Liberals, we will always act in situations of emergency. We are here to support people today, and we will be there tomorrow too.

Cape Bretoners are known for their kindness, compassion and willingness to help each other; because of that, we will get through this together.

● (1415)

CARBON TAX

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The Liberals have known for a while now that their carbon tax is a scam, but they refuse to give it up. Their latest idea is to rename it, telling Canadians that it is a good thing that they raise the tax again on April 1.

The Liberals keep ignoring what Canadians have been telling them for years, and they are still offside with their coalition partners in the NDP, who voted with Conservatives to at least give our farmers some relief from the carbon tax cash grab. Instead of reducing costs for the farmers and for the people buying their food by passing Bill C-234, the government would rather work to prevent this tax relief from happening.

There is no reason to think the Liberals are interested in fixing what they have broken. If they get their way, their carbon tax will be higher and higher year after year, even though the minister admitted he is not measuring whether it is reducing emissions. Conservatives stand ready to stop this nonsense. Canadians can count on us to axe the tax and to bring the much needed relief they deserve.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former Speaker of the House of Commons was forced to resign after a scandal that saw an SS soldier recognized in this place last September during President Zelenskyy's visit.

I want to read a few quotes about the former Speaker during the period that led to his resignation. "I can't see, based on the conversations I have had, how he can continue to have the support of Liberal members of Parliament," said the Liberal House leader in calling for the Speaker to resign. "What happened on Friday is completely unacceptable. It was an embarrassment to the House and Canadians," said the foreign minister.

Last week, after months of denial, written evidence in an email came to light that the Prime Minister did in fact invite the same SS soldier to a government reception in Toronto, so where is the same condemnation for the Prime Minister from those cabinet ministers and Liberal MPs who threw the former Speaker under the bus? The Prime Minister and his office are guilty of the exact same sin as the former Speaker, and because he is, he deserves the same punishment for embarrassing our nation once again. Like the Speaker before him, the Prime Minister needs to resign.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

LES COMPLICES ALIMENTAIRES

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot about food prices and food waste. In the riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle, Les Complices alimentaires is offering an innovative way to tackle those issues. Based in the RCM of Jardins-de-Napierville, the organization takes less-than-perfect fruits and vegetables from local vegetable growers, then processes and freezes them. Thanks to solidarity pricing, the organization can distribute them at reduced prices via a network of retail locations throughout the region.

Les Complices alimentaires has just received financial assistance from the Public Health Agency of Canada through the healthy Canadians and communities fund. The organization will use this funding to develop its model so that it can be implemented elsewhere in Canada. This is how we support our communities to make them even more resilient and united.

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[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than 660 million women and girls are living in conflict zones, which is a 50% increase in the last six years. In Ukraine, two-thirds of those who are internally displaced are women. In Sudan, women make up 69% of those displaced, and 90% of the people crossing into Chad are women and girls. In Afghanistan, a United Nations expert said that 20 years of progress for women's and girls' rights have been erased since the Taliban took over, and in Palestine, 70% of the victims in Gaza are women and children. Heartbreakingly, two mothers are being killed per hour in Gaza right now.

Canadian organizations can alleviate this suffering and promote human rights, yet every year, Canada's investment is a fraction of what we have promised. For budget 2024, the government must listen to experts, to those 100 organizations that wrote to it, and do what is best to stand up for those around the world who need our support.

* * *

● (1420)

[Translation]

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after the English-only Grey Cup controversy, and the hockey game in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Punjabi was used in place of French, Louis Riel must have turned over in his grave.

This Saturday, francophones had to endure more disrespect, this time at the NHL all-star game in Toronto, where the national anthem was performed in English only. Need we remind people that Canada is supposed to have two official languages and that its national anthem was originally written in French? Only a tiny little bit of the original French version still gets heard.

That shows contempt for francophones and contempt for Quebecers. More and more, Canada is erasing French from its history and emblems. Quebecers feel a growing sense of exclusion from Canada. The time has come for Quebecers to make the necessary decisions.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under this Prime Minister, the number of auto thefts in Canada has skyrocketed, and this can be directly attributed to the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies.

While the Prime Minister prefers to hold summits and have discussions, for the past three days, the Leader of the Opposition has been proposing common-sense solutions to combat this scourge.

First, we will amend the Criminal Code to keep car thieves behind bars. We will not release them into the community like the Liberals do. We are going to get to the heart of the problem and create a specific aggravating factor when the offence is committed for the benefit of organized crime.

We will provide the CBSA with the equipment and personnel it needs to do its job properly, by significantly increasing the number of border officers to scan containers. We will even do this without dipping further into taxpayers' pockets.

We invite all parties and all members to join us in our efforts to combat crime.

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[English]

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we embark on the lunar new year, Asian communities in Richmond Centre and across Canada are ready to join the world to celebrate the spring festival and to welcome the Year of the Dragon. This is the time when we gather with friends, families and loved ones to celebrate this festive season with the rich tradition of the lunar calendar. The lunar new year is an opportunity to celebrate the traditions that enrich Canada's diverse social fabric.

Let us take a moment to acknowledge and recognize the contributions of Asian Canadians to Canada. As we celebrate the Year of the Dragon, I would like to wish everyone a successful, prosperous and healthy year ahead. To our communities in Richmond Centre and across Canada, happy lunar year. *Bonne année lunaire. Chúc mừng năm mới. Saehae bok mani badeuseyo. Gong xi fa cai. Xin ni-an kuai le.*

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled since he promised to make it more affordable. In fact, we have now learned that, according to Rentals.ca, rent has increased by more than 20% in two years across the country. In other words, it costs nearly \$400 more.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his policies that caused the crisis, stop funding the bureaucrats who are preventing construction and eliminate the deficits to lower interest rates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the Conservative member for Dufferin—Caledon who described our ambitious approach to housing best when he said that our Minister of Housing seems to come out every day with a new program, a new announcement or a new cheque for Canadians. He is right. We have worked hard week after week to conclude new agreements under the housing accelerator fund and to provide new tools to accelerate the construction of affordable housing.

While the Conservative leader insults the municipalities, we remain focused on our goal to accelerate housing construction.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are announcements, programs and cheques, but no housing. That is the only thing missing. People cannot live in the programs and announcements of this Prime Minister, who is not worth the cost. Housing starts are in free fall, down 28% in December relative to the previous December.

Will the Prime Minister put an end to programs that are driving up interest rates and creating bloated bureaucracies so that we can build housing?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservative leader is offering is insults and more insults aimed at elected officials from Quebec. He described the home of a family in Niagara as a shack. He is using the homeless as accessories for political photo ops.

The reality is that a responsible leader will take action to invest in communities and housing. That is what we are doing by eliminating the GST on the construction of new apartments and by making funding announcements, including \$900 million for Quebec to invest in housing.

We are here to invest and build. He is here to hurl insults.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of millions of dollars for bureaucracy. We do not need bureaucracy, which has grown by 50% since this Prime Minister took office. We need housing.

According to his housing agency, there will be a shortage of 3.5 million homes. However, this week, the CBC said that there will be a shortage of five million homes, since we expect massive population growth and a drop in construction.

Oral Questions

Where are those five million families going to live?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he talks about bureaucracy, but, on the contrary, we are investing in municipalities to reduce red tape and speed up housing construction. We have made about 30 housing accelerator announcements across the country to build more housing faster, providing for greater density, better zoning, faster approval to use vacant land and more affordable homes.

We are there to make real investments, while he would rather insult people.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are the same promises he made eight years ago before he doubled housing costs. He is not worth the cost of housing, which is up 100%. In the last two years alone, according to Rentals.ca, rent is up 20% or \$400 for the average family. Now we learn that construction is in free-fall, down 28% last December versus the December before.

Will he stop funding bureaucracy and driving up interest rates, so we can bring homes Canadians can afford?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our housing ambition can be best summed up by the Conservative member for Dufferin—Caledon who said that it seems that every day our Minister of Housing has a new program, a new announcement or a new cheque for Canadians. That is exactly right.

We continue to work hand in hand with Canadians and with municipalities across the country, municipalities he would rather insult, to get more homes built faster. The investments we are making, including things like taking the GST off purpose-built rental housing, which the Conservatives voted against, will continue to create more homes for Canadians right across the country.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people cannot live in announcements and programs; they need homes that have walls, floors and ceilings. The Prime Minister doing another selfie in front of a construction site will not do that. In fact, construction was down 28% in December.

After eight years of the Prime Minister's promises and spending, will he accept our common-sense plan to build homes and not bureaucracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just last week I was in Kitchener–Waterloo making an announcement for the housing accelerator program for Waterloo.

Oral Questions

What the Leader of the Opposition seems to have missed is that we were standing in a freshly completed building for seniors. In fact, \$33 million of funding from the federal government a few years ago allowed that building to be built today.

We are building things today that people are moving into in the coming weeks. We are announcing how we are building things for tomorrow, while he just chooses to insult Canadians, insult mayors and insult our intelligence.

* * *

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government wants a three-year extension on its deadline to comply with a ruling on medical assistance in dying for mental illness. Imagine what will happen if the Conservatives form government. That is not what we want, but the alternative is not much better. Just imagine what will happen if the Conservatives come to power: They would delay MAID forever and a day. They would never act on it.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he is acting as though he is afraid of the religious right?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we could not agree more that a Conservative government would pose a threat to fundamental rights and freedoms. At the same time, when it comes to medical assistance in dying, we understand how difficult and personal a choice this is. We have a duty to protect the most vulnerable while respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. That is why, with regard to advance requests for people with mental health issues and for minors, we have been holding and will continue to hold in-depth discussions and consultations before going any further.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, indeed, there is a solution to consider. With the support of the Quebec National Assembly, Quebec has proposed that the Liberal government's legislation include a conditional provision allowing Quebec or any other interested province to authorize advance requests for medical assistance in dying. If that happens, the three-year extension would then be acceptable because Quebec could proceed according to the values of Quebecers.

Is the Prime Minister willing to agree to Quebec's proposal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, the issue of advance requests was raised a number of years ago and has been identified as one of the important but difficult discussions we need to have as a society.

Could someone make an advance request to receive medical assistance in dying if their condition reaches a certain point, even if they are unable to consent to it? This is a difficult and important issue.

I welcome Quebec's debates on the issue. We are going to pursue our discussions on that.

[*English*]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister could learn a lot from the young women I met earlier today, who are struggling to put food on the table. They are living a struggle that he has never had to face. They are getting ripped off by corporate grocery stores, and the Prime Minister has let it happen for over two years.

Will the Prime Minister get serious now about taking on corporate greed by supporting my bill to reduce the price of groceries?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, with the fall economic statement, we are proposing significant measures to increase competition in the grocery sector. Many of them are ideas that we are in alignment with the leader of the NDP on. We believe in moving forward with greater competition in the grocery sector. That is something the NDP and the Liberals agree on.

It is not something Conservatives agree on; their chief strategist is actually on the Loblaws' payroll. They choose to promote disinformation and misinformation while defending big grocers. On this side of the House, we will stand up for Canadians.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have a history of letting rich CEOs off the hook. We can change that today.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister could learn a lot from the young women I met earlier today who are struggling to make ends meet. They are living a life he has never had to face. While they are being gouged by the major grocery chains, the Prime Minister is siding with the CEOs.

Will the Prime Minister vote in favour of my bill to bring down grocery prices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the NDP's efforts to increase competition in the grocery sector, because we really believe in that. We have included measures in our legislation that correspond to the measures proposed by the NDP. We absolutely believe in increasing competition in the grocery sector. That is something the NDP and the Liberals agree on.

The Conservatives would rather listen to their lobbyist buddy who works for Loblaw and defend the interests of major grocery retailers, instead of fighting on behalf of Canadians to bring down grocery prices.

Oral Questions

● (1435)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, he is not worth the crime caused by his automatic catch-and-release policies for car thieves and his mismanagement of the ports.

Mark Roos had his Dodge Ram stolen. According to the AirTag he put in his truck, it was at the port of Montreal. He knows it is there. However, according to port security, they cannot go find the truck because there are not enough scanners.

Will the Prime Minister agree to my common-sense plan and buy 24 scanners to find the Dodge Ram?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, organized crime is responsible for the rise in auto theft across the country. The Conservative Party's attacks on Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 are simply not the solution or the way to solve this problem.

We will continue to invest in the fight against auto theft with, for example, \$121 million for the Government of Ontario.

We will continue to work with the CBSA to increase its staff. We are there to do our part.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was about scanners at ports.

After eight years, the port authorities are only scanning or inspecting 1% of shipping containers leaving our ports. That led to the case where Mark Roos had his 2021 Dodge Ram stolen. Luckily, he had an Apple AirTag, so he could follow its transit to the port of Montreal, where he knows it to be. He called the cops and the port authority, both of which said that they do not know which box it is in, so they cannot find it.

Why will the Prime Minister not accept my common-sense plan to buy 24 scanners so we can scan the boxes, find the Dodge Ram and give it back to Mark?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this would perhaps be a little more credible from the Conservative Party if it had not cut 1,000 CBSA officers when it was last in government. Conservatives proposed to cut 400 more, if they had the 2015 election.

The reality is that we restored every single border officer they cut and added 800 more. We are continuing to do the necessary work. We recovered 1,800 stolen vehicles last year. We will continue to do—

The Speaker: I ask members to please keep their comments to themselves until they have the floor to ask or answer questions.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, while Conservatives cut frontline border services officers, along with cuts to the RCMP and cuts to police forces across the country, we invested in them. We are going to continue to do that, with \$121 million for Ontario and more investments for port and border security.

We are going to continue to step up and keep Canadians safe.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister's strength is not math, but the facts are that, when we took office, there were about 12,000 people working as CBSA officials. When we left office, there were over 14,000. To help the Prime Minister with the numbers, 14,000 is more than 12,000.

It is true that we cut back office bureaucracy and high-priced consultants, which he has let balloon. That is why, after eight years, he has increased auto theft by 32%. Will the Prime Minister accept our common-sense plan to cut high-priced consultants and hire more frontline inspectors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but smile when the Leader of the Opposition talks about high-priced consultants, because his campaign is being run by a high-priced consultant for Loblaws. When he stands in this place and across the country, wrenching his heartstrings about the prices that Canadians are paying for groceries, his top adviser is in the pocket of Loblaws, giving him the same talking points as she gave Galen Weston when he appeared at a parliamentary committee. If Canadians are going to believe the Leader of the Opposition, he needs to come clean with who is funding his organizations.

● (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is sure getting desperate if he has to blame Conservative campaign workers for the fact that he raised food prices, especially when the Prime Minister's new marketing director, Max Valiquette, did marketing for Loblaws for four years. Don Guy, the Prime Minister's chief pollster, works for GT&CO, which collects cheques from Loblaws. Dan Arnold, his other pollster, also get cheques from Loblaws. Are they the ones who forced him to quadruple the carbon tax on our food?

The Speaker: Order. I know it is Wednesday and members are very keen to hear the answer to this question, so I will ask them to restrain themselves while the right hon. Prime Minister answers.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can tell it is Wednesday because, this morning, the members of the Conservative caucus got to hear directly from Jenni Byrne, who sits in their caucus with them, giving them advice. That is exactly where they are coming from, when she is actively on the Loblaws payroll while at the same time feeding lines to the Leader of the Opposition about food prices and concocting a theory around carbon pricing and grocery prices that, as the member for Regina—Lewvan pointed out yesterday, has no basis in fact. We see the kind of torque he chooses to pull.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he makes it too easy. He talks about caucus meetings and Loblaws. Get this, Mr. Speaker: The Prime Minister had someone who is his director of caucus services, named Julie DeWolfe, who is now a lobbyist for Loblaws. Not only that, but he digs up a lot of dirt. His chief dirt digger, Kevin Bosch, left his office so that he could go and work as a lobbyist for Loblaws. Would the Prime Minister like us to continue going down the list of all his Loblaws lobbyists?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite something to watch the flailing of the Conservatives right now as they do anything to try to distract from the fact that their campaign manager, the Leader of the Opposition's top adviser, still gets contributions and paycheques from Loblaws. This is an issue, when he has stood up and pretended to care about food prices. When we have heard the exact same talking points come out of Galen Weston's mouth as out of the Leader of the Opposition's mouth on some invented connection between the price on pollution and grocery prices, we know exactly who is behind the Conservative Party.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, former minister Lametti and other members of the Liberal Party openly considered the idea of opening up the Canadian Constitution. As it happens, Quebec is considering—warning, I am about to use a dirty word—a referendum. Yes, it is considering having a referendum on repatriating all powers in the area of immigration.

Why does the Prime Minister not talk to the Quebec government and give it all the powers so that we can finally have an immigration policy by Quebec, for Quebec?

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every country is in charge of its responsibilities in immigration. Canada is responsible for border management and immigration in Canada.

Recognizing Quebec's unique status and the need to defend the French language and Quebec culture, Canada has long given Quebec specific powers that no other province has for the defence of Quebec. We will continue to work with Quebec on immigration.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we agree, Quebec should be a country and should have all the power. We will get there.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister and his minister are saying that they are working hand in hand with Quebec. The Minister of Immigration says that he is working hand in hand with Quebec. However, Quebec's immigration minister wants to hold a referendum to repatriate all immigration powers.

Does the Prime Minister realize that this is a repudiation of the Liberals' immigration policy, a repudiation of their failure in immigration, and a repudiation of his immigration minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we keep seeing how desperate the Bloc Québécois always is to pit Quebec and Canada against each other and look for excuses to hold a referendum.

The reality is that, yes, we are working hand in hand with the Government of Quebec, and Ottawa and Quebec have been doing that for decades to ensure that the immigration numbers are appropriate for Quebec. We will continue to work respectfully, without fighting, despite what the Bloc Québécois wants.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is still not worth the crime. He unleashed the car theft crisis by bringing in house arrest and bail, not jail, for repeat career car thieves and by allowing our ports to become sieves where our cars are stolen from, so much so that we are now becoming world-famous for the Prime Minister's failures. Ghana's Economic and Organised Crime Office says, "We are...in possession of the stolen vehicles. The victims...it's all in Canada," and, "No Canadian agency has approached us directly or made a formal complaint".

Will the Prime Minister take the money from the back-office bureaucrats and consultants and put it into frontline law enforcement to protect our cars?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition likes to make base political accusations. He likes to talk about Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 as the reason there is auto theft in this country. The reality is that Bill C-5 is the bill that keeps mandatory minimum penalties for car theft on the books, and Bill C-75 is the bill that raises the maximum penalty on car theft.

We have continued to step up in terms of keeping Canadians safe. We will continue to invest in the CBSA and in the resources necessary to counter these challenges. We will keep working based on facts and evidence.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the actual facts: Bill C-5 keeps mandatory prison sentences. They were already in place, put there by the previous Conservative government; they were not created by Bill C-5. What Bill C-5 did was bring in house arrest for career car thieves, so they could watch Netflix or perhaps play Grand Theft Auto in their living room and then go out onto the street and steal another car whenever they want.

Will the Prime Minister follow my common-sense plan to end house arrest for career car thieves?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Leader of the Opposition's simplistic world view, someone sitting on their couch at home playing video games goes out and steals an Escalade. That is not what happens. Organized crime is directly involved in the massive spike in auto thefts in this country. That is why we are stepping up on investment in anti-organized crime; investments against money laundering, which that party voted against; and investment in more powers and more resources for Ontario to counter auto theft, as well as more resources for the CB-SA that the Conservatives cut when they were last in office.

We will continue to be there.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, people do steal cars when they are on house arrest, because all they have to do is open the door, walk out and steal the car.

Then there is his bail policy, which allowed the same 40 offenders to be arrested 6,000 times in Vancouver in a year, many of them car thieves.

Will the Prime Minister accept my common-sense plan to get rid of house arrest and bring in jail, not bail, for career car thieves, yes or no?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in all the questions the Leader of the Opposition asked about car theft, he has not once mentioned organized crime, which is the cause of car theft in this country right now. Perhaps he is not mentioning it because, when we brought forward measures to counter organized crime and money laundering, the Conservative Party voted against them. We moved forward with more resources for Ontario, \$121 million, to counter organized crime and car theft, and the Conservative Party voted against.

We will continue to anchor ourselves in facts and data and deliver on keeping Canadians safe.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he wants facts, so here is another fact. Extortions are up 218% since he took office. Why? It is because he got rid of mandatory jail time for extortion with a weapon, so now he allows extortionists to go around with guns, harassing small business owners in Brampton, Surrey, Calgary and Edmonton, where horror stories are unfolding.

Will the Prime Minister agree to our common-sense plan to reverse catch-and-release, so that Canadians are safe from extortion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the situation faced by far too many people across this country around extortion from organized crime is unacceptable, and that is why we are taking action directly with the RCMP and local police forces to counter it.

However, once again we see Conservatives falling into the same far-right American trap in their approach on crime that does not work, that does not keep Canadians safe. It sounds good in sound bites and attacks but does not actually deliver safer communities. It is like their opposition to gun control and their desire to put assault-style weapons back on the streets. They do not keep Canadians safe. The work we do does.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the cold, hard facts. There were two-thirds fewer cases of extortion in the last year of the common-sense Conservative government than there are today. In the 10 years we were in office, the number of car thefts fell by half, and that was because we targeted the worst offenders and kept them in prison, secured our ports and stopped organized crime.

The Prime Minister has only multiplied crime with his catch-and-release policies. Will he follow the evidence and reinstate a common-sense criminal justice—

The Speaker: I hate to interrupt the hon. member, and I do not know if it was picked up on the mikes, but I did pick up some language that was unparliamentary. I would ask all members to please watch themselves.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we heard from the Leader of the Opposition is that under the previous Conservative government, everything was perfect, and what he is proposing is to make Canada great again. That is not what Canadians want. He is pining for a nostalgia that, quite frankly, Canadians do not feel. They remember what he did as Stephen Harper's failed housing minister. They remember the rights of indigenous people violated, the ignoring of environmental responsibilities and the lack of an environmental and economic plan for the future.

We are going to continue—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

*Oral Questions***PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities are being treated unfairly by big airlines, and the Liberal solution is another gentlemen's meeting with a CEO who cares only about his own bottom line.

This is a slap in the face to passengers who have had their human rights violated, having to drag themselves off a plane. Like with the greedy grocery CEOs, the Liberals are just letting Air Canada get away with it.

Will the Prime Minister get serious about holding these CEOs to account to protect Canadians?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to be there to protect vulnerable Canadians. We will continue to make sure that areas of federal jurisdiction like airlines continue to meet all their responsibilities and obligations toward Canadians. This is something we take extraordinarily seriously, and we will continue to ensure that all airlines are respecting Canadians and their rights.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Liberals are skirting their responsibility by underfunding the non-insured health benefits that provide dental care, eye care, mental health and medical travel for Nunavummiut. Their actions are forcing Nunavut to divert funds to this program instead of to their own health priorities. The Liberals need to step up. Their failure to live up to their responsibilities to Nunavut is unacceptable.

Will the Prime Minister commit to his obligations to ensure that Nunavummiut have the health care they are owed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago I was in Iqaluit to talk to the premier of Nunavut, P.J. Akeagok, about how we can continue to be partners as we move forward and ensure that we strengthen opportunities for all Nunavummiut. This is what we are continuing to do.

Whether it was celebrating the historic devolution agreement that we made possible or looking at further supports, including non-insured health benefits, we will continue to be there for the people of Nunavut. We will continue to be there for the people of the north.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the government announced that eligible Canadian residents aged 72 and older can now apply for the Canadian dental care plan. Over 500,000 applicants have been approved for the Canadian dental care program, making dental care more affordable and accessible. This is great news for seniors in Kitchener—Conestoga and across Canada, as more and more seniors have access to affordable dental care.

Can the Prime Minister please update us on the Canadian dental care plan, which will help seniors smile and be an important part of their overall health?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Kitchener—Conestoga is passionate about ensuring that seniors and kids get access to dental care. I am happy to announce that in the first few weeks, over 600,000 seniors have successfully signed up for the Canadian dental care plan.

While the Conservative Party voted against funding dental care for those who need it most, we want to reassure Canadian seniors that on this side of the House we will always have their backs. We will fight for them, and we will make sure that the leader opposite never cuts essential supports to seniors.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled since he promised to lower it. Now, we have a brand new phenomenon: the middle-class homeless. In fact, according to the executive director of the Royal Canadian Legion of Nova Scotia, members of the Canadian Forces are now forced to live in tents and cars and to couch surf. There are 30 homeless encampments in Halifax after eight years of the Prime Minister.

Why would the Prime Minister then plan to go ahead with a \$450-a-year rent increase for our armed forces members, who are already forced to live in tents?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, military members and their families are a priority, and we are taking steps to ensure that they are supported. We are investing \$445 million over the coming years to tackle the supply of military housing.

When the Conservatives had an opportunity to support our military personnel, they chose not to. The Conservatives stood up in this House and voted against supporting our men and women in uniform just last December.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is an outrageous non-response to the men and women who put their lives on the line for this country. He rewards them with a tent, or a couch in someone else's basement to sleep on.

After eight years of this Prime Minister, there has been a 177% increase in Bagotville and a 261% increase in the wait line for military housing. Now, he plans a \$450 rent increase on the people who protect our country.

Should he not be ashamed of himself?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives, who nickel-and-dimed our military service members and veterans through nine years of their time in office, and even dropped military funding to below 1% of GDP.

We will continue to step up, including with \$445 million for military housing in the coming years, as we continue to honour and support the women and men who serve our country with their lives.

• (1500)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, who honours them with a tent to live in? He honours them with a \$450 increase in their rent. Before the Prime Minister, we did not have masses of military members living in tent cities. They could put a roof overhead.

In fact, we did not have 30 tent cities in Halifax. We did not have two million people lined up at food banks in lines that are reminiscent of the Great Depression. We did not have young people forced to wait until age 40 to get a home.

The good news is life was not like this before the Prime Minister and it will not be like this after he is gone.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why does he not just say it straight out? He is planning to make Canada great again.

The reality is that Canada is great. Canada is the best country in the world. Yes, there are challenges and that is why we are stepping up to invest. Whether it is with \$445 million for military housing, dental care for vulnerable seniors and youth, cutting child care fees in half or continuing to step up for vulnerable youth, we are going to be there for Canadians, while he proposes cuts to services, cuts to programs and cuts to the supports that Canadians need.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what the Prime Minister has to say to the two million people lined up around street corners, clamouring for the food bank, after eight years: that things are just going great.

To the people in Montreal who have seen their rent quadruple after his eight years, life is just great for them too. To the Torontonians who have to spend 25 years now saving up for a down payment on an average home, he says things are just great.

How can he possibly fix the misery he caused if he cannot even realize it is right in front of his face?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition may not think that Canada is the best country in the world, but we do. The reality is that we recognize Canadians are struggling right now and that is why we continue to invest in supports for them.

Whether it is cutting child care fees in half, investing in the kinds of jobs and careers we are going to need in the number one battery supply chain country in the world, drawing in significant investments right across the country, or moving forward into a brighter economic future, we recognize that Canadians need support now.

He offers fear and cuts, while we offer support and a brighter future. That is what we are going to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government still owes Quebeckers \$470 million for taking in asylum seekers, who are actually Ottawa's responsibility. The funding announced for housing future asylum seekers is good, but it will not cover the federal government's debt, which has been accumulating since 2021. Every time we raise the issue, the Minister of Immigration ratchets up the rhetoric and insults.

Today, we are appealing to the Prime Minister because this is too important. I would invite Ottawa to take the high road. It is essential if we want to continue offering services to asylum seekers.

Will the Prime Minister finally repay the debt he owes Quebeckers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have often said in the House, Quebeckers have shown tremendous generosity and commitment to the vulnerable people who come to Canada. We are grateful for that, and we are here to help and to invest in Quebec to make it possible to welcome these people.

We recognize that this has created additional costs not only for the Quebec government, but also for social services and community organizations. That is why we are working with Quebec on an ongoing basis to make sure that we recognize its sacrifices and efforts, and to make sure that we thank and reward it for that.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must also ensure that there are not too many asylum seekers entering the country at the same place. Quebec has exceeded its intake capacity. There are 289,000 asylum seekers in Canada, and Quebec has shown that it has taken in 160,000, or 55% of the total number.

Quebec's immigration minister even announced yesterday that she is considering holding a referendum on the repatriation of all immigration powers because she is so frustrated with the federal government's inaction.

Does the Prime Minister understand that when people start talking about a referendum, it might be time for him to wake up?

Oral Questions

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many years, Quebec grappled with the challenge of Roxham Road. We worked with the Quebec and United States governments. We fixed that problem.

Now there is a new issue at airports, but we will be there to help the Government of Quebec and Quebeckers deal with the situation. We will always work together. The Bloc Québécois is the only one looking to pick fights and hold referendums.

We will always be there to work hand in hand and respectfully with the Government of Quebec.

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[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of food after eight years of the NDP-Liberal carbon tax. It has caused food prices to rise 20% in the last two years alone. So much for the affordable food they promised when they signed their coalition with the NDP leader. So much so that the Kanata food bank is now forced to cut in half the number of potatoes it is giving out. They are too expensive and there is too much demand.

Instead of just telling those people who are eating half as much in Kanata that things are great, why will he not follow our common-sense plan to axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Regina—Lewvan recognized yesterday, there is absolutely no data to support any link between our price on pollution and higher grocery prices. There simply is none.

On this side of the House, we are a government anchored in evidence and data, and we will continue to be there to deliver things like the grocery rebate to Canadians to put more money back in Canadians' pockets, even as we put a price on pollution with the carbon price rebate. We will continue to defend Canadians' interests against the cuts proposed by that Conservative.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he wants to know the link between the carbon tax and the food price. Well, I will help him out. Farmers use something called diesel. It goes in their tractors, combines and drying machines. It goes in their on-farm fuels that pay the carbon tax, and he wants to quadruple the tax. Then the truckers who pick up the food and transport it to the grocery store pay the carbon tax. Then the grocer pays the carbon tax to power the heat in that big Olympic stadium-sized chamber we call a grocery store.

If he does not get the link, how is he ever going to fix the problem?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem with the story the Leader of the Opposition just told is there is absolutely no data to support it. He is all about political attacks. He is all about inventing reasons to not take action on the fight against climate change, because his Conservative Party still does not understand that one cannot have a plan for Canadians' future or the future of the economy if one does not have a plan to

fight climate change. Not only are we fighting climate change, we are putting more money back in the pockets of Canadians and building the economy of the future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of no evidence, we actually filed an Order Paper question asking for proof that his carbon tax is reducing emissions, and it came back that there was no evidence. After eight years in government, after years of raising the tax, they have no proof it reduces emissions at all.

However, we know it increases food prices, and this is why Canada's food professor said, "I am recommending a pause on the carbon tax for the entire food industry from farm gate to stores and restaurants."

If the Prime Minister does not have the common sense to axe the tax, will he listen to the food professor and cancel his plan to hike it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is actually reducing its emissions faster than our G7 partners largely because we put a price on pollution.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to make pollution free again. We do not think that is the right path for Canada. We know that investing in reduction of carbon emissions while putting more money back in Canadians' pockets, switching from home heating oil to heat pumps, moving forward in responsible ways as we are investing in supporting Canadians is the way to build a stronger future, but he proposes ideology, cuts and fear tactics.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, the government has made the development of the battery sector a priority and we are seeing results, with hundreds of millions in investments in thousands of well-paying jobs that have been created.

Can the Prime Minister inform the House of the progress on this file?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Laval—Les Îles for his important question and his hard work.

While the Conservative leader does not even believe that climate change is real, we are taking the lead with historic investments in the electrification of our automotive sector and we are investing every day in homegrown talent and ingenuity and in Canadian workers. It is working. Canada is now the world leader in lithium-ion battery manufacturing.

While the Conservative leader would cut these investments, we are proud to invest in Canada and in Canadians.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been eight years since the costly Prime Minister took office, but it was two years ago that he signed a deal with the NDP leader that promised it would bring more affordable food. Since that time, the NDP-Liberals have helped raise food prices by 20%.

Their favourite inflationary instrument is the carbon tax. Now they plan to quadruple the carbon tax on the farmers who produce the food, the truckers who ship the food and, therefore, all who buy the food.

Canada's food professor is calling for a cap on the carbon tax. Will the Prime Minister cancel his 23% carbon tax hike for April 1?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we heard in a parliamentary committee yesterday absolutely no evidence and no data to support the Leader of the Opposition's contention that the price on pollution impacts grocery prices.

The reality is that our price on pollution returns four times a year more money to 82% of Canadians in the areas where it is in play than it costs them. That is how we can both fight against climate change and put more money into the pockets of Canadians.

The Leader of the Opposition is proposing to take away those four-times-a-year rebate cheques from Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats also promised affordable housing when they sold out their constituents and signed on to a coalition with the leader of the Liberals. However, since that time the rent is up well over 20% as they fund more bureaucracy to block homes and deficits that drive up interest rates, so much so that Tim Chen, a student in Vancouver, actually needs to commute to university from Calgary. Yes, he has to fly back to Calgary where he can afford the rent under a Conservative government and then fly over to Vancouver in order to study. How crazy is it that he has to commute across—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition likes to talk about the challenges Canadians are facing, and while we are busy solving them, he is proposing nonsensical solutions.

Oral Questions

Let us talk about the Conservative leader's housing plan. It would not build homes fast enough. It would not reach enough cities. It would create unnecessary bureaucracy. He would also rip up our housing accelerator agreements, which are unlocking half a million new homes, and would put the GST back on apartment construction.

Housing experts like Mike Moffatt say his plan is exceptionally weak and a sign that the "Conservatives don't understand the...scale of the housing crisis."

We will take no lessons from—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the results speak for themselves. When I was the housing minister, rent was \$950. It is now over \$2,000. When I was the housing minister, the average mortgage payment on a newly purchased home was \$1,400. It is now over \$3,500.

My common-sense plan would require cities to permit 15% more homebuilding as a condition of getting federal money. It would require that they build housing around transit stations rather than having empty fields there. It would require the sale of 6,000 federal buildings and thousands of acres of federal land to build.

Why will the Prime Minister not build homes instead of building bureaucracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Canadians just cannot trust the Conservatives, their attacks and their talking points. Why? Because an active paid lobbyist is the one giving them all the advice on how to win their campaign.

The reality is the big business and money behind the Conservatives is once again driving their agenda as they propose cuts to vulnerable Canadians, underinvestments in housing and no solutions to the very real challenges Canadians are facing. They are in the pockets of big business, as evidenced by Jenni Byrne's work for Loblaw's.

Oral Questions

• (1515)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after months of debate in this House, albeit without the support of a single member of the Conservative Party, we voted to advance the new Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. President Zelenskyy and the thousands of Canadian Ukrainians I represent in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre expect our government to be there for them, and we have been every step of the way.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians why this deal is important for Ukraine and Canada? Will he reaffirm Canada's unwavering support for our ally as it fights to defend the interests of democracies around the world?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the President of Ukraine asked us for a modernized Ukrainian free trade deal with Canada that would deal with investments, digital services and a range of things that are necessary for Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery from the war.

The Conservative leader yesterday again shamelessly strong-armed his MPs who represent Ukrainian communities to betray them and play straight into Putin's hands.

On this side, the members for Winnipeg South Centre, Etobicoke Centre, Kingston and the Islands, University—Rosedale, Winnipeg South, Markham—Thornhill, Scarborough Southwest, Ahuntsic-Cartierville and the entire Liberal caucus—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians spend over a billion dollars out of their own pockets on mental health services every year. With the cost of everything only going up, Canadians are making a difficult choice. Do they put food on the table or get the therapy they need?

The Liberals promised \$4.5 billion in mental health funding, but they are still well over a billion dollars short, even with the bilateral agreements.

Our communities need support. It cannot be left to Conservative premiers. Will the Prime Minister commit to delivering direct mental health funding to community-based mental health organizations in the upcoming budget?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the member for Courtenay—Alberni is not proposing that we work around the outstanding government of the Province of British Columbia. We are working hand in hand with provinces to deliver mental health services across the country with our historic health accords, worth \$200 billion, which include significant transfers for mental health and accountability so Canadians can see real results.

We are moving forward and stepping up on making sure that Canadians have proper access to mental health care. We will do it through partnership with the provinces who want to and with clear

data from the provinces that are resistant. We need to make sure we are delivering mental health right across the country.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, whistle-blower information from HSBC documents shows rampant mortgage fraud by people using fake high salaries from fake jobs in China to get mortgages and buy houses in Canada. How is it possible for a person with no income to buy four houses?

These frauds fuel real estate bubbles and the information supports FINTRAC findings on Chinese money laundering in Canadian real estate. How can the Prime Minister make housing more available and affordable when fraudsters are buying up multiple homes? Why is the government ignoring the damage created by money laundering and mortgage fraud in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago, we reinforced and extended our foreign homebuyer ban to make sure that homes in Canada are used by Canadians to live in, not as investment vehicles for foreign entities or foreign owners.

This is part of our broad plan, which invests in more housing, that increases supply and ensures that families are able to afford the future they want to build for their kids in their communities right across the country. We are stepping up on housing. We will continue to do so while the Conservatives have no plan.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Ville Tavio, Minister of Foreign Trade and Development for Finland.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: In addition, in recognition of Black History Month, I also wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Zanana Akande, the first Black woman to serve as a cabinet minister in Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

• (1520)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I believe, or at least I hope, you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, for today's sitting, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, and after 6:30 p.m., no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair, and when no member wishes to speak on the motion for the second reading stage of Bill C-62, an act to amend the Criminal Code, medical assistance in dying, No. 2, or at midnight, whichever is earlier, the debate on the said motion shall be deemed adjourned, the House shall adjourn until the next sitting day, and the debate, pursuant to Standing Order 38, shall not take place.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: There is no unanimous consent.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

On a point of order, during question period, the Prime Minister said that people do not just leave house arrest and steal a vehicle. I would like to table—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I have already heard the noes coming from members.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

The House resumed from February 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:21 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Finance concerning the extension of time to consider Bill C-323, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (mental health services).

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[English]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

Routine Proceedings

(Division No. 628)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty

Business of Supply

McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Lobb	Maguire
McLeod	McPherson	Majumdar	Martel
Mendès	Mendicino	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Miao	Michaud	McLean	Melillo
Miller	Morrice	Moore	Morantz
Morrissey	Murray	Morrison	Motz
Naqvi	Ng	Muys	Nater
Noormohamed	Normandin	Patzer	Paul-Hus
O'Connell	Oliphant	Perkins	Poilievre
O'Regan	Pauzé	Redekopp	Reid
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Rempel Garner	Richards
Plamondon	Powlowski	Roberts	Rood
Qualtrough	Rayes	Ruff	Scheer
Robillard	Rodriguez	Schmale	Seeback
Rogers	Romanado	Shields	Shipley
Rota	Sahota	Small	Soroka
Sajjan	Saks	Steinley	Stewart
Samson	Sarai	Strahl	Stubbs
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Thomas	Tochor
Schiefke	Serré	Tolmie	Uppal
Sgro	Shanahan	Van Popta	Vidal
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Vien	Viens
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Vis	Wagantall
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh	Warkentin	Waugh
Sorbara	Sousa	Webber	Williams
Ste-Marie	St-Onge	Williamson	Zimmer— 114
Sudds	Tassi		
Taylor Roy	Thériault		
Therrien	Thompson		
Trudeau	Trudel	Nil	
Turnbull	Valdez		
Van Bynen	van Koevorden		
Vandal	Vandenbeld		
Vignola	Villemure		
Virani	Vuong		
Weiler	Wilkinson		
Yip	Zahid		
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 212		

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1535)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—AUTO THEFT

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Edmonton Mill Woods relating to the Business of Supply.

The question is as follows. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1545)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 629*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison	Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison	Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli	Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett	Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan	Berthold	Beaulieu
Block	Bragdon	Berthold	Bérubé
Brassard	Brock	Bezan	Blanchet
Calkins	Caputo	Blanchette-Joncas	Black
Carrie	Chambers	Bragdon	Brassard
Chong	Cooper	Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Dalton	Dancho	Calkins	Caputo
Davidson	Deltell	Carrie	Chabot
Doherty	Dowdall		
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)		
Ellis	Epp		
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)		
Fast	Ferrier		
Gallant	Généreux		
Genus	Gladu		
Godin	Goodridge		
Gourde	Gray		
Hallan	Hoback		
Jeneroux	Kelly		
Khanna	Kitchen		
Kmiec	Kram		
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek		
Kusie	Lake		
Lantsman	Lawrence		
Lehoux	Leslie		
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Liepert	Lloyd		

Business of Supply

Chambers	Champoux	Battiste	Beech
Chong	Cooper	Bibeau	Bittle
Dalton	Dancho	Blaikie	Blair
Davidson	DeBellefeuille	Blaney	Blois
Deltell	Desbiens	Boissonnault	Boulerice
Desilets	Doherty	Bradford	Brière
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Cannings	Carr
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis	Casey	Chagger
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Chahal	Champagne
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Chatel	Chen
Ferreri	Findlay	Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Fortin	Gallant	Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Garon	Gaudreau	Coteau	Dabrusin
Généreux	Genuis	Damoff	Davies
Gill	Gladu	Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Godin	Goodridge	Dhillon	Diab
Gourde	Gray	Dong	Drouin
Hallan	Hoback	Dubourg	Duclos
Jeneroux	Kelly	Duguid	Dzerowicz
Khanna	Kitchen	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Kmiec	Kram	Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fisher	Fonseca
Kusie	Lake	Fortier	Fragiskatos
Lantsman	Larouche	Fraser	Freeland
Lawrence	Lehoux	Fry	Gaheer
Lemire	Leslie	Gainey	Garrison
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Gazan	Gerretsen
Liepert	Lloyd	Gould	Green
Lobb	Maguire	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Majumdar	Martel	Hanley	Hardie
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Hepfner	Holland
McLean	Melillo	Housefather	Hughes
Michaud	Moore	Hussen	Hutchings
Morantz	Morrison	Iacono	Idlout
Motz	Muys	Ien	Jaczek
Nater	Normandin	Johns	Joly
Patzer	Paul-Hus	Jones	Jowhari
Pauzé	Perkins	Julian	Kayabaga
Perron	Plamondon	Kelloway	Khalid
Poilievre	Rayes	Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Redekopp	Reid	Kwan	Lalonde
Rempel Garner	Richards	Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Roberts	Rood	Lapointe	Lattanzio
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay	Lauzon	LeBlanc
Scheer	Schmale	Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Seeback	Shields	Long	Longfield
Shipley	Simard	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Soroka	Steinley	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Ste-Marie	Stewart	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Strahl	Stubbs	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Therrien	Thomas	May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
Tochor	Tolmie	McGuinty	McKay
Trudel	Uppal	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
Van Popta	Vecchio	McPherson	Mendès
Vidal	Vien	Mendicino	Miao
Viersen	Vignola	Miller	Morrice
Villemure	Vis	Morrissey	Murray
Vuong	Wagantall	Naqvi	Ng
Warkentin	Waugh	Noormohamed	O'Connell
Webber	Williams	Oliphant	O'Regan
Williamson	Zimmer— 148	Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Ali
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron

Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Sousa

Orders of the Day

St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 179

Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shiplay
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 117

Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Patzner
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

● (1550)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion to concur in the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

● (1600)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 630)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladau
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Dancho
Deltell
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux

Aldag
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon

NAYS

Members

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaine
Garrison

Orders of the Day

The next question is on the main motion.

● (1610)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 631)

YEAS

Members

Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrisey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 211

Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petipas Taylor
Powlowski
Rayes
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeu
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Fillmore	Findlay
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genius	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

Private Members' Business

Gould	Gourde
Gray	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hallan	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Hoback	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khalid
Khanna	Khera
Kitchen	Kmiec
Koutrakis	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lawrence	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Majumdar	Maloney
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Medicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Muys	Naqvi
Nater	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Redekopp	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Rota
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schieffe
Schmale	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan

Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koevorden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williams
Williamson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi— 328

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***POLISH HERITAGE MONTH**

The House resumed from February 1 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 75, under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

● (1625)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 632)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker

Private Members' Business

Baldinelli	Barlow	Kwan	Lake
Barrett	Barron	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Lamoureux	Lantsman
Beaulieu	Beech	Lapointe	Larouche
Berthold	Bérubé	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Bezan	Bibeau	Lawrence	LeBlanc
Bittle	Blaikie	Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Blair	Blanchet	Lemire	Leslie
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Block	Blois	Liepert	Lightbound
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Lloyd	Lobb
Bradford	Bragdon	Long	Longfield
Brassard	Brière	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Calkins	Cannings	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Caputo	Carr	Majumdar	Maloney
Carrie	Casey	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Chabot	Chagger	Masse	Mathysen
Chahal	Chambers	May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Champagne	Champoux	Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
Chatel	Chen	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Chiang	Chong	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	McLean	McLeod
Cooper	Cormier	McPherson	Melillo
Coteau	Dabrusin	Mendès	Medicino
Dalton	Damoff	Miao	Michaud
Dancho	Davidson	Miller	Moore
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Morantz	Morrice
Deltell	Desbiens	Morrison	Morrissey
Desilets	Desjarlais	Motz	Murray
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Muys	Naqvi
Diab	Doherty	Nater	Ng
Dong	Dowdall	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dreeschen	Drouin	O'Connell	Oliphant
Dubourg	Duclos	O'Regan	Patzer
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Perkins	Perron
El-Khoury	Ellis	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Poilievre	Powlowski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Qualtrough	Rayes
Fast	Ferreri	Redekopp	Reid
Fillmore	Findlay	Rempel Garner	Richards
Fisher	Fonseca	Robillard	Rodriguez
Fortier	Fortin	Rogers	Romanado
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Rood	Rota
Freeland	Fry	Ruff	Sahota
Gaheer	Gainey	Sajjan	Saks
Gallant	Garon	Samson	Sari
Garrison	Gaudreau	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Gazan	Généreux	Scheer	Schiefke
Genuis	Gerretsen	Schmale	Seeback
Gill	Gladu	Serré	Sgro
Godin	Goodridge	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gould	Gourde	Shields	Shipley
Gray	Green	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Hallan	Hanley	Singh	Small
Hardie	Hepfner	Sorbara	Soroka
Hoback	Holland	Sousa	Steinley
Housefather	Hughes	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hussen	Hutchings	St-Onge	Strahl
Iacono	Idlout	Stubbs	Sudds
Ien	Jaczek	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Jeneroux	Johns	Thériault	Therrien
Joly	Jones	Thomas	Thompson
Jowhari	Julian	Tochor	Tolmie
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Trudeau	Trudel
Kelly	Khalid	Turnbull	Uppal
Khanna	Khera	Valdez	Van Bynen
Kitchen	Kmiec	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Koutrakis	Kram	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Vecchio	Vidal
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Vien	Vielsen

Private Members' Business

Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williams
Williamson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi— 328

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declared the motion carried.

* * *

LOWERING PRICES FOR CANADIANS ACT

The House resumed from February 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-352, An Act to amend the Competition Act and the Competition Tribunal Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-352, under Private Members' Business.

• (1635)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 633)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan

Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Hardie	Hoback
Hughes	Idlout
Jeneroux	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	MacGregor
Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Masse
Mathysse	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McLean	McPherson
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplay
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zarrillo	Zimmer— 178

NAYS

Members

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Beech
Bittle
Blois
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne

Private Members' Business

Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hanley
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petipas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zuberi — 149

Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gould
Hajdu
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[Translation]

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL REFORM

The House resumed from February 5 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 86 under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

[English]

The question is as follows. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

● (1650)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 634)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Barron
Beaulieu	Bérubé
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champoux
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Coteau	Dabrusin
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dong
Dzerowicz	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Gainey
Garon	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Green
Hanley	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kwan
Lalonde	Larouche
Lemire	Lightbound
Lobb	Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacGregor
Masse	Mathysen
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Michaud
Morrice	Murray
Naqvi	Nater
Noormohamed	Normandin
Pauzé	Perron
Plamondon	Rayes
Rota	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Serré
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sousa
Ste-Marie	Taylor Roy

Private Members' Business

Thériault
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Zarrillo — 101

Therrien
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vignola
Vuong
Zahid

MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)

Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Ali
Anand
Arnold
Arya
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beech
Bezan
Bittle
Block
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Caputo
Chahal
Chatel
Chong
Cormier
Damoff
Davidson
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fonseca
Freeland
Gaheer
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hepfner
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liefert
Longfield

Aitchison
Aldag
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Bains
Barlow
Battiste
Berthold
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Carrie
Champagne
Chiang
Cooper
Dalton
Dancho
Deltell
Dhillon
Doherty
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Fraser
Fry
Gallant
Genius
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Jeneroux
Jones
Khalid
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacAulay (Cardigan)

Melillo
Miller
Morantz
Morrissey
Muys
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scheer
Schmale
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Steinley
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thompson
Tolmie
Uppal
Van Popta
Vecchio
Vien
Virani
Wagantall
Waugh
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zimmer

Miao
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Ng
Oliphant
Patzner
Perkins
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schieffe
Seeback
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Small
Soroka
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Valdez
Vandal
Vidal
Viersen
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williams
Yip
Zuberi — 220

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 89 minutes.

[*English*]

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Housing; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Foreign Affairs.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-40, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation (miscarriage of justice reviews).

[English]

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code (adoptive and intended parents). The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

[Translation]

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities in relation to Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Customs Act, the Railway Safety Act, the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992, the Marine Transportation Security Act, the Canada Transportation Act and the Canada Marine Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

• (1655)

[English]

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise once again to present a petition. Whereas employment insurance, maternity and parental benefits provide parents with critical financial support while they care for and bond with a new child, and having a parent at home longer in the critical first year of a child's life or placement within a family better supports healthy attachment and the well-being of a child, adoptive and intended parents are at a disadvantage under the current EI system.

Bill C-318 would deliver equitable access to parental leave for adoptive and intended parents, and the Speaker of the House of Commons has ruled that the passage of Bill C-318 requires a royal

Routine Proceedings

recommendation. The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to support adoptive and intended parents by providing a royal recommendation for Bill C-318, which was just presented in the House.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members will agree with me that in Kings—Hants, volunteer fire departments have a really important role in our communities. We saw that throughout the last summer, in terms of the roles they played. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of supporters, friends and, ultimately, firefighters from Hantsport, Kings County, Milford and Waterville. They are petitioning the government to support Bill C-310, which proposes increasing the volunteer tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000. It is a private member's bill that I support.

We have seen the impacts across the country that have resulted from forest fires caused by extreme weather. Our volunteer firefighters are extremely important, and I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf today.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

I rise for the 29th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The NDP-Liberal government has done nothing while the rural community of Swan River has been terrorized by a wave of crime that never used to exist in this small town in Manitoba, yet the Liberals give the same copy-and-paste statements to the people of Swan River, with no real solution in sight.

Rural communities like Swan River are petitioning the Liberal government for a tough-on-crime approach. They are calling for jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders, to stop the crime. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community.

I support the good people of Swan River.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you will not be surprised that I am tabling another petition in support of volunteer firefighters and search and rescue personnel from coast to coast to coast.

Routine Proceedings

Over 165 communities have sent in petitions, representing every single party and rural riding in this House. They are calling for the firefighter tax credit to be increased from \$3,000 to \$10,000. It is the least the government can do to support fire departments and search and rescue, for retention and to show search and rescue and volunteer personnel that they matter and that we value the work they do and the sacrifice made by their communities and their employers to ensure that they can get out and protect people in rural Canada.

I hope that all members of the House will support Bill C-310 and the efforts of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, which has been working very hard to get support for this bill.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I will be presenting two petitions.

The first is from members of my community who wanted to express their opinions with respect to medical assistance in dying.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from my constituents, who care greatly about the climate crisis. They are supporting the implementation of strong, clean electricity regulations, along with federal funding, affordability measures and complementary policies to support an emissions-free grid.

• (1700)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition that deals with mental illness and MAID. The petitioners say that mental illness is complex. It can include suicidal thoughts and other symptoms, and people really should be provided treatment and support and not offered MAID.

TRANSPORTATION ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to table petition e-4576, which was signed by 7,610 people.

The petitioners recognize in the preamble that the Island Corridor Foundation is a non-profit partnership that is governed by 14 first nations and five Island regional districts. They also recognize that the population of Vancouver Island is expected to grow to one million people by 2030 and that expanding the congested highways on Vancouver Island is quite problematic.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with dedicated resources and with a nation-to-nation approach to reconcile and resolve long-standing first nations concerns with certain sections of the Island corridor. They also want to see the Government of Canada create a \$1-billion fund to implement the development of the Island corridor.

They want to see the Island Corridor Foundation as a non-profit partnership that is very much in the public interest, and they want to apply the funding to create a modern freight and passenger service on Vancouver Island to retain and develop the strategic asset that was recognized by the B.C. and federal ministers of transportation and infrastructure on March 14, 2023.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to present a petition signed by a firefighting force within my riding. On the very small island of Piers Island, the fire truck is the only internal combustion engine on the entire island.

The volunteer firefighters of Piers Island have asked me to present this petition in support of the private member's bill by the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, which has been spoken to a number of times this afternoon. Volunteer firefighters account for 71% of Canada's total firefighting first responders. Right now, we have a good step in the right direction, which we supported at the time, of a \$3,000 tax credit for volunteer firefighters.

Bill C-310 is supported by the petitioners, and it asks that volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteer services have that grown from a \$3,000 tax credit to a \$10,000 tax credit. I am proud to present this petition, and I urge Parliament and the House to get behind it.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, adoptive and intended parents are at a disadvantage under the current EI system here in Canada. All parents are deserving of equal access to parental leave benefits. Bill C-318 would deliver equitable access to parental leave for adoptive and intended parents.

The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to support adoptive and intended parents by providing a royal recommendation to Bill C-318.

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Canadians are very passionate and care deeply about health care. However, the backbone of that system, of course, is our health care workers, and this petition is dealing particularly with our nurses at the many different levels.

The petitioners are asking, in essence, to have their valuable contributions recognized, whether it is through enhancement of salary, credentials being recognized, incentives or the type of workload they have to experience. In general, they are looking for governments at all levels, whether it is provincial or federal, to be more proactive in supporting our nurses.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING COMMENTS BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to the question of privilege that was raised by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle yesterday regarding who was responsible for inviting Yaroslav Hunka to attend events with the President of Ukraine during his visit to Canada in September 2023. I must say that I agree with the House leader of the official opposition on this issue.

Here are the facts. On the afternoon of Monday, February 5, The Globe and Mail reported that the Prime Minister's Office had invited Yaroslav Hunka, a former soldier of the Ukrainian Waffen-SS who received ovations in the House of Commons during Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit on September 22, 2023, to a reception that was held in honour of the Ukrainian President that evening in Toronto at the Fort York Armoury. The article also stated that the Prime Minister's invitation had in fact been sent by Canada's protocol office four days before the reception.

However, when the Prime Minister was repeatedly asked about it in the House in the week following President Zelenskyy's visit, he blamed the Speaker of the House without taking any responsibility himself. He said on September 27, 2023, that the Speaker was “solely responsible” for inviting and paying tribute to former Nazi soldier Yaroslav Hunka. He said, “we all recognize that the former speaker of the House made a serious mistake.” He also said, “the Speaker of this House of Commons invited an individual without apparently doing that Google search, but it is not up to the government of the day to oversee or to have a veto power over those who the Speaker or, indeed, members of official parties choose to invite into this House.”

The then speaker took full responsibility for this situation and decided to resign from that role. Two weeks ago, in an interview with CTV News Northern Ontario, he explained that it is actually the Prime Minister's Office that approves invitations for major international events organized on Parliament Hill, such as President Zelenskyy's address during his visit to Parliament in September. Let me quote him directly: “Normally, it goes to the Prime Minister's Office, and they go through it with a fine-toothed comb, and then the invitation goes out from protocol.”

According to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, it is appropriate to raise a question of privilege when the House has

Privilege

been misled following statements made in the chamber by one of its members, whether they are a member of Parliament, a minister or the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's statements on September 27, 2023, seem to meet the three criteria set out in previous rulings by Speakers of the House under similar circumstances.

First, the Prime Minister's statements were misleading, in that they implied that the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office did not know Yaroslav Hunka and had nothing to do with inviting him to the House when members of all the opposition parties were attempting to find out exactly what role the PMO or the Prime Minister himself had played in inviting Mr. Hunka during President Zelenskyy's visit. As a matter of fact, acting on behalf of the Prime Minister, the PMO itself had invited the Ukrainian former SS member to a reception that very evening in Toronto.

Second, the Prime Minister must have known that those statements were misleading because he would be hard-pressed to claim that he was not aware that the PMO had extended such an invitation on his behalf.

Third, it seems entirely reasonable to believe that the Prime Minister intended to mislead the House because, at the time he made those statements, since the entire world was focused on the Parliament of Canada, the Prime Minister had every reason to hope that he would not be held responsible and that the blame would fall on someone other than himself.

In his apology on September 27, the Prime Minister described this mistake as a “horrendous violation” of the memory of the millions of people who died in the Holocaust and said it was “deeply, deeply painful for Jewish people...Polish people, Roma people, 2SLGBTQI+ people, disabled people, racialized people and the many millions who were targeted by the Nazi genocide.”

• (1705)

This demonstrates how seriously the Prime Minister was taking this matter. Anyone in this situation would have every reason to hope that they would not be associated with this mistake and not be held responsible.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is of the opinion that there is a prima facie breach of parliamentary privilege and that the matter must be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for study.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I happened to accidentally miss the final vote. My vote did not register.

I ask for unanimous consent for my vote on Private Member's Motion No. 86 to be reported as nay.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to submit his vote as nay?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CRIMINAL CODE**

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (for the Minister of Health) moved that Bill C-62, an act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), No. 2, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about Bill C-62. This is a sensitive and very personal subject for so many around the country.

We have debated many of the core issues, but today we are talking about the legislation that proposes to extend the temporary exclusion of eligibility for medical assistance in dying for persons suffering solely from a mental illness by three years, until March 17, 2027.

I want to be clear: The question we are debating today is not whether mental illness can cause irremediable and intolerable suffering on par with that of physical illnesses. We know that it can, and that is not up for debate. We must proceed cautiously and we must get this right. We must ensure that the appropriate measures are in place across this country to affirm and protect our most vulnerable.

We have heard significant concerns from partners, provinces and territories and the medical community, regarding health care system preparedness. In its latest report, tabled on January 29 of this year, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying found that while considerable progress has been made in preparing for the expansion of eligibility for persons suffering solely from a mental illness, an additional delay is needed to ensure that the health care system can safely provide MAID in these types of complex cases.

These concerns must be addressed before we can move forward with extending eligibility to persons whose sole underlying condition is mental illness. While that critical work is happening, we must also take action to ensure that vulnerable people are protected. Unless Bill C-62 is passed by March 17, 2024, the exclusion of eligibility for MAID will be automatically repealed. That means that individuals suffering solely from mental illness could be eligible to receive MAID as of that date, without the system being ready.

Although progress has been made to support the safe assessment and provision of MAID in complex cases, now is not the time to extend the exclusion, as highlighted by the letter we received from provinces and territories.

Over the past few years, the Government of Canada has been collaborating closely and carefully with partners to support the implementation of MAID. We have taken a compassionate and careful approach to this in our support of the safe assessment of MAID in complex cases, including where the sole and underlying medical condition is a mental illness.

I would like to take a few minutes to highlight some of the key areas of progress that have been made. As required under former Bill C-7, we appointed an independent expert panel with a mandate to provide recommendations on protocol, guidance and safeguards

to apply to requests for MAID made by persons whose medical condition is a mental illness.

The final report, tabled by the expert panel in the spring of 2022, included 19 recommendations for governments and health system partners to support the safe expansion of MAID for persons suffering only from a mental illness. The panel noted that the recommendations would benefit all complex track 2 MAID assessments and provisions, even those where mental illness was not a factor. At the same time, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying was also studying the question, and concluded that, at that time, they believed additional work was needed before moving ahead.

Both the reports by the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying and the expert panel highlighted the importance of education and training, consistent professional guidance, enhanced data and analysis, meaningful indigenous engagement and strong oversight. The government has taken these recommendations very seriously and has worked diligently to advance them.

In September 2022, Health Canada convened an independent task group made up of clinical, legal and regulatory experts to develop model MAID practice standards based on the expert panel's recommendations. Its mandate was to create resources that could be used by regulators to operationalize the expert panel's guidance with respect to complex MAID cases, including those based on a mental illness alone. The task group's efforts resulted in a model practice standard for MAID and a companion document, "Advice to the Profession," which were both published in March 2023.

● (1715)

To date, the majority of provinces and territories have indicated that their practice standards for MAID have been updated or are in the process of being reviewed using these materials as a guide. The supporting "Advice to the Profession" document is being used to support and inform regulatory bodies, public authorities and health professional organizations, and is intended to support a consistent and safe approach to MAID practice across Canada.

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In addition, Health Canada has been working closely with the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers, also known as CAMAP, on a number of key activities to support preparedness among practitioners. Among them include funding the development of a nationally accredited bilingual MAiD curriculum to support access to high-quality MAiD training and a standardized approach to care across the country, while recognizing that differences in the delivery of health care services among provinces and territories do exist. As of the end of January, more than 1,100 clinicians have already registered with CAMAP to take the training.

We supported a knowledge exchange workshop on MAiD and mental disorders that took place in June 2023. The workshop brought together MAiD assessors and providers, as well as psychiatrists, from across the country to discuss the assessment of MAiD requests based on mental illness alone, to build a network for ongoing knowledge exchange and to inform future practice. Additional knowledge exchange sessions are being planned for May 2024 and 2025 to support ongoing interjurisdictional lesson sharing and clinical guidance for complex case assessment, including for mental illness as the sole underlying condition.

When it comes to the question of eligibility criteria for MAiD, we must consider all situations and all outcomes. While important work has indeed been done, we have heard clearly from our partners that they need to have sufficient time to implement safeguards and address capacity concerns that are expected to result from the expansion. As my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice, has pointed out, we are trying to calibrate two fundamental ideas: the autonomy of the individual in terms of dignified decisions about the timing of their own passing, coupled with protecting vulnerable communities and individuals.

As the deadline to lift the exclusion of eligibility for mental illness approaches, calls to further extend the deadline have grown louder. We understand from our engagement and outreach with health stakeholders that there are varying levels of readiness to manage and assess requests for MAiD where the sole medical condition is a mental illness. All provinces and territories have indicated that they are not yet ready to move forward. More work needs to be done.

On January 29, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying tabled its most recent report examining the degree of preparedness for the safe application of MAiD for persons whose sole underlying condition is a mental illness. While recognizing the considerable progress that has been made in preparing for the expected expansion of eligibility, the committee recommended an additional delay to ensure that the health care system can safely provide MAiD in these types of complex cases.

I want to be clear: I understand that suffering from mental illness is just as real and just as serious as suffering from a physical illness. That is why we provided a clear timeline of three years before the lifting of the exclusion, which the provinces and territories and our health care partners can continue to work toward, and a firm commitment for parliamentarians to evaluate the progress after two years. That work will continue in earnest, and we can be assured that all the necessary measures are in place to move forward safely.

I understand there will be people who have suffered over many years without finding relief, and for whom MAiD may be a serious consideration based on deep and personal reflection. This new development may truly be distressing for them. I want to say to them that we are committed to moving forward. However, we must do so in the most compassionate, responsible and prudent way possible. The system needs to be ready, and we need to get this right. It is clear from the conversations we have had that the system, at this time, is not ready. As I have said, we have worked hard to make sure that the necessary supports are in place for practitioners and our provincial and territorial partners to permit the expansion of the MAiD eligibility to people whose sole condition is a mental illness. However, they have also been clear that more time is needed to prepare; that is why we are proposing a three-year extension.

● (1720)

The availability of nationally accredited training modules for MAiD assessors and providers would help ensure that providers were clear on the requirements of the legislation and good clinical practice. However, it is going to take some time for individual physicians and nurse practitioners to integrate and internalize these practice standards.

Provincial and territorial regulatory bodies need to complete the work associated with updating standards. They need to ensure that health care clinicians have the training to ensure a safe and consistent assessment before the MAiD eligibility is expanded through the lifting of mental illness as an exclusion. Existing assessment and support mechanisms also need to be examined and revised to ensure that the robust measures needed for these types of complex requests are in place. On that point, we are committed to continuing to support the provinces and territories and help system partners to further strengthen and improve mental health care services and supports, as well as data collection, to better understand who is requesting MAiD and why, and appropriate support and oversight for practitioners.

While the management and delivery of health services, including MAiD, is an area of provincial and territorial responsibility, the provinces and territories have been regularly engaged through a working group to facilitate information sharing and collaboration on MAiD implementation. Through this group, provinces and territories have been and continue to be engaged in the work on the federally led model practice standards and are working collaboratively with all of us on all aspects of MAiD.

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The government has also made significant investments to support the provinces and territories in the delivery of mental health services. Budget 2023 confirmed the government's commitment to invest close to \$200 billion over 10 years, starting in 2023-24, to improve health care for all Canadians. This includes \$25 billion to provinces and territories through tailored bilateral agreements, focused on four key priorities, including improving access to mental health and substance use services and the integration of these services in all other priorities. This is in addition to the \$5 billion committed in 2017 to support mental health and substance use services.

Our government has also invested more than \$175 million to support the implementation and operation of 988, which will provide people across the country with access to immediate and safe support for suicide prevention and emotional distress.

As MAID continues to evolve, we need to ensure that accurate information is available to the public by providing clear information. We also take the concerns raised by those who might face systematic disadvantages very seriously. That is why we have expanded data collection on MAID to provide a better understanding of who is accessing MAID and why, including the collection of data on race, indigenous identity and disability. We can only address potential risks if we can uncover them.

We are continuing to engage with indigenous peoples through both indigenous-led and government-led activities to better understand their perspectives on MAID. This will culminate in a "what we heard" report in 2025. This will support transparency, provide insight into how the legislation is working, and maintain public trust in how MAID is accessed and delivered in Canada.

Finally, both the expert panel on MAID and mental illness and the special joint parliamentary committee highlighted the importance of case review mechanisms and oversight to support the safe assessment and provision of MAID. Most provinces and territories already have systems in place to do this work, but we understand that more can be done. We are working with the provinces and territories to explore enhanced models of case review and oversight, and, in particular, for more complex MAID requests, to support consistency and quality assurance across the country.

I understand that medical assistance in dying is a complex issue about which there are deeply held beliefs and opinions. I understand the concerns that have been raised with regard to the expansion of eligibility for MAID to include circumstances where the person's sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness. This would give medical practitioners more time to become familiar with available training and supports while providing time for the public to become more aware of the robust safeguards and processes in place.

• (1725)

The Government of Canada has also committed to a joint parliamentary committee to undertake a comprehensive review within two years after the act receives royal assent. This measure would further serve to examine progress made by provinces, territories and partners in achieving overall health care system readiness.

In the meantime, our government will continue to work with the provinces and territories to support ongoing improvements of the

system to continue to ensure our laws protect those who may be vulnerable, reflect the needs of the people of Canada, and support autonomy and freedom of choice. That is why, after much deliberation, we have introduced Bill C-62 to extend the temporary exclusion of eligibility for MAID for persons suffering solely from a mental illness to March 17, 2027.

To put it simply, we need more time to get this right. I urge all members of the House to support Bill C-62.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, the arrogance of the government knows no bounds.

In its brief, based on a "review of evidence, the Board of Directors of the Society of Canadian Psychiatry believes the process leading to the planned 2024 MAID for mental illness expansion was flawed, insufficiently responsive to evidence-based cautions and resulted in a lack of safeguards." It is calling on this expansion not to be paused for three years but to "be paused indefinitely, without qualification and presupposition that [any] implementation can safely be introduced at any arbitrary pre-determined date". It urges that it not be "driven...by ideological advocates".

Why are the minister and the government continuing to press on when the experts have spoken? We should not be moving forward in this dangerous direction. It should be paused indefinitely.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, I will acknowledge that there are many different opinions that have been shared on this view by many different experts. As a matter of fact, some of the members of the special joint committee are going to be participating in the debate we are having tonight.

We have to clear that this is not a matter of "if". We are debating "when". It has been recognized, and it is not up for debate, that a person suffering from mental illness, when it is irremediable, continued and impacting the quality of life of the individual, has the right and the dignity to make choices with their health practitioners.

The expert panel noted that there were differing opinions on this and concerns, but when we are debating this tonight, it is not about arrogance. It is about having compassion and understanding the right to an individual's choice and dignity when they have deep, prolonged and ongoing suffering.

• (1730)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was pleasantly surprised to hear the minister say right off the bat that there was no reason to question whether there is such a thing as an irremediable mental disorder, but the Conservative members do not seem very clear on that. I do not know if she noticed the member for St. Albert—Edmonton's reaction when she said it. I would certainly be worried if I were her, because every time the House has held a debate on medical assistance in dying since 2015, we have been unable to reach a consensus. The Conservatives are always opposed to it.

On this bill, however, the Conservatives are in lockstep with the Liberals and in favour of indefinitely postponing access to MAID for people with mental disorders. Why is that? Is the minister not concerned about that? What evidence does she have to explain why, a year ago, the government said it was going to take a year to sort this out, but now it is going to take three years? By then, the Conservative Party may have had the opportunity to take power.

I guess she knows very well that this is not going to happen. I am not talking about the Conservatives being elected; I am talking finally legislating on the issue of mental disorders.

[English]

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, this is why we have put a set timeline on this. We took the expert panel recommendations. There were 19 recommendations in that report, which included system readiness and a comprehensive set of modules for MAID assessors across the country to be able to do this work safely and compassionately. That is the work that we have done on implementation. Eleven hundred practitioners, including physicians and nurse practitioners, have participated in these training modules, but we have also been working with regulatory bodies. We want to make sure that there is quality and a standard of care across the country that sees people in their suffering, especially when they are vulnerable, and especially when mental illness as a disorder has caused such suffering and such harm over the years and over a prolonged period of time. We are very sensitive to the concerns of the member, and we are setting clear guardrails on the timelines for this.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, we need to have a reminder of why we are in the situation we are in. I was here in the 43rd Parliament when Bill C-7 was being debated. I remember very clearly the government's original charter statement, which included its rationale for excluding mental disorder as a sole underlying medical condition. I thought the charter statement was quite reasonable. However, we are in this situation because, when Bill C-7 went to the Senate, for some inexplicable reason, at the eleventh hour, the government did a complete 180° and accepted the Senate amendment. It changed the law before the hard work had been done.

I have been a member of the special joint committee from the get-go, and on that committee, we feel like we have been playing a game of catch-up ever since, having to do the work racing against an arbitrary timeline. That is why we have seen letters from seven out of the 10 provinces and all three territories asking for an indefi-

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nite pause. I hope the minister and the Liberal government can take responsibility for putting Parliament in this position.

I would also like the minister to comment on the fact that there are so many populations, whether they are in rural or remote communities or urban centres, that simply cannot get the mental health care they need. When is her government going to step up to the plate and start servicing communities such as those in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford along with those from coast to coast to coast? That is a huge problem that really needs to be addressed before we entertain any kind of a change to the law.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, my colleague and I are in lockstep in understanding how important a robust and integrated set of mental health services and substance-use services are. They must be available within health jurisdictions throughout the country. That is exactly why last year we committed to \$200 billion to improve the health of Canadians. That is exactly why there are bilateral agreements that are tied to our four key principles, which include mental health. Provinces had to ensure that there were plans as part of their agreements and show a clear commitment to providing mental health services and substance-use services for those who are struggling with those disorders.

That being said, we also want to make sure that our health care systems, when it comes to MAID, have the level of system readiness, consistency and quality assurance across the country. We do not want a pick-and-choose system. We want to make sure that our most vulnerable are safe and that those who make this decision are doing it not only to acknowledge the dignity—

• (1735)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the opportunity for further questions.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of her speech, the minister stated that irremediability is not up for debate. Respectfully, it is the core of the debate about whether MAID can be expanded in cases where mental disorders are the sole underlying condition. The overwhelming evidence from leading experts, including psychiatrists, is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine irremediability. That was the conclusion of the government's own expert panel, at page 9 of the report. The special joint committee heard evidence that clinicians could get it wrong 50% of the time. In other words, it is like flipping a coin with people's lives. Is the minister comfortable with that risk?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Madam Speaker, I will remind the member that we cannot speculate on treatment. Treatment is something that a patient decides with their health care provider. There is a lengthy process of assessments that are done for those who struggle with mental illness.

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That being said, the criteria of eligibility are crystal clear. It has to be prolonged. It has to be determined irremediable, not only by the patient but also by a group of expert assessors. There needs to be a full assessment of what treatments have been engaged. I know there has been some debate in the House in the past asking about future treatments and all of that.

We are looking at an individual and their prolonged suffering. I would ask the member to really contemplate it. Does an individual's own lived experience with prolonged mental illness, and the suffering that goes with it, not weigh in, beyond that of the experts who have not walked in their shoes?

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, here we are again, just as we were last February. We are faced with an arbitrary deadline set by the Liberals for their radical plan to expand MAID for mental illness. The Liberal government is completely unprepared and, therefore, needs to bring in eleventh hour legislation to extend the implementation deadline that it set in the first place.

I cannot think of another time or another issue in which a government has effectively had to bring in emergency legislation twice to extend a deadline for the implementation of its own law. It is truly shambolic. How did we get into this mess, thanks to the Liberals? Very simply, what we have across the way is a radical and reckless government that put blind ideology ahead of evidence-based decision-making. That has been the consistent pattern, in terms of decisions the government has made with respect to this planned expansion. This started with David Lametti, the former justice minister, who accepted a radical Senate amendment back in 2021 to implement MAID for mental illness and then set an arbitrary two-year timeline for implementation.

It should be noted that the charter statement for the bill in which Lametti accepted that radical Senate amendment provided a rationale for excluding MAID in cases of mental illness. The minister said at the time that he and the government were against MAID for mental illness because there were inherent risks and challenges. Indeed, he was right, but then he suddenly flip-flopped and rammed the amendment through with very little debate, one and a half days of debate. There was no parliamentary study, no consultation with experts and affected groups, and no evidence that MAID for mental illness can be implemented safely and appropriately.

The Liberals got it completely backwards. Instead of studying the issue first to determine whether this could be implemented safely, they decided to move full steam ahead and study the issue after the fact. Had they approached this matter responsibly, they would have learned very early on that there are significant clinical, legal and ethical problems with expanding MAID in cases of mental illness.

Among those problems are two fundamental clinical issues. The first is the difficulty of predicting irremediability. In other words, it is difficult to predict whether someone with an underlying mental health condition will get better. That is problematic in two major ways.

One is from the standpoint of the law. Under the Criminal Code, in order to qualify for MAID, a person must have an irremediable condition. More specifically, an irremediable condition is defined

as one in which a person has an incurable disease or illness and is in an irreversible state of decline. If it is not possible to accurately determine that someone with a mental illness is in an irreversible state of decline and will not get better, then how can MAID for mental illness be carried out within the law? It cannot.

● (1740)

More significantly, from an ethical standpoint, if it is difficult to predict whether someone will get better, what that means with certainty is that persons who could get better will have their lives prematurely ended. Such persons could go on to lead a healthy and productive life. This was underscored by evidence heard by the special joint committee on MAID, during both its initial study two years ago and its more recent study this past fall. The special joint committee heard evidence that clinicians can get the prediction around irremediability wrong 50% of the time. In other words, it is like flipping a coin with people's lives. Is that a risk that members of the House are prepared to take?

When I posed that question to the minister responsible for mental health, she essentially answered in the affirmative. She doubled down on her support for an expansion of MAID for mental illness in three short years. Flipping a coin, gambling with people's lives, is what MAID for mental illness will result in.

A second fundamental problem is difficulty on the part of clinicians in distinguishing a rational request for MAID from one motivated by suicidal ideation. That is underscored by the fact that, in 90% of suicide deaths, persons suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder, not to mention that suicidal thoughts are often a symptom of mental disorders. This is why psychiatrists who appeared before the special joint committee said that it is not possible to distinguish MAID for mental illness from suicide. At the very least, MAID for mental illness significantly blurs the line between suicide prevention and suicide facilitation. It fundamentally changes the character of MAID and transforms it into something akin to state-facilitated suicide. This demonstrates just how far down the slippery slope we have gone under the Liberals.

To paraphrase the minister, she said that there are robust safeguards in place in that persons with a mental illness would only be able to qualify after years of receiving treatments and not getting better. However, that is simply not accurate; no such safeguards are found in any legislation put forward by the Liberals. In fact, the expert panel that the Liberals appointed, incredibly, recommended that there be no additional safeguards. Therefore, under the MAID expansion, it is simply not accurate that one must go through treatments or that one must be suffering over an extended period of time in order to qualify. In fact, the Liberals expressly rejected such additional safeguards.

In the face of those political challenges, Conservatives called on the Liberals to put an indefinite pause on this expansion. Likewise, in the lead up to the March 2023 deadline for implementation, the arbitrary deadline set by the Liberals, the chairs of psychiatry at all 17 medical schools called on the Liberals to pause this expansion.

● (1745)

What did the Liberals do? Essentially, they kicked the can down the road. They introduced Bill C-39, which merely extended the deadline for implementation from March 2023 to March 2024. In other words, once again, the Liberals put ideology ahead of evidence-based decision-making, making what amounted to a political decision with a new arbitrary deadline.

Nearly a year has passed, and with respect to resolving the fundamental issues and problems regarding safely implementing MAID for mental illness, where are we today? No progress has been made.

Indeed, when the special joint committee heard from psychiatrists, the message was loud and clear that we should not move ahead with this. It is not safe, and it cannot be implemented appropriately. The responsible course for the government to take is to acknowledge that it simply got it wrong and put an indefinite pause on the expansion.

It is no surprise that, in the face of these challenges, there is a professional consensus against the expansion. We saw that last week, when a survey from the Ontario Psychiatric Association was released. It indicated that a full 80% of Ontario's psychiatrists do not believe the health care system in Canada can safely implement MAID for mental illness. Last week, seven of the 10 provincial health ministers, plus the health ministers from all three territories, called on the Liberals to put an indefinite pause on this expansion.

What did the Liberals do in response? Once again, they kicked the can down the road with Bill C-62, which is before us. They defied experts, the provinces and territories, and common sense. This bill is basically the same bill we were debating a year ago. Instead of a one-year pause, it provides a three-year pause, with absolutely no evidence to indicate that fundamental clinical problems can be resolved. These problems include predicting irremediability and distinguishing between a suicidal request versus a rational request.

We have a government that is telling us to forget the evidence. The minister said it is not even up for debate, that the government does not want to talk about evidence as part of this issue. She basically said to forget about irremediability. The bottom line is that we have a Liberal government that is determined to implement this

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radical policy against a consensus among psychiatrists and other advocates.

Indeed, to get an insight into the mindset across the way, last week, in a press conference, the Minister of Health said that there is a moral imperative to get ready for MAID for mental illness. What is the moral imperative? Is it to give up on people who are struggling with mental illness? Is it to offer death through the provision of MAID to persons who are struggling with mental health issues?

● (1750)

That is what these Liberals characterize as a moral imperative? I say it speaks to the moral bankruptcy of these Liberals after eight years of the Prime Minister.

When the Liberals talk about MAID and mental illness, they are always very vague about what they mean. They know that if Canadians fully understood what MAID for mental for illness meant, most Canadians would be absolutely appalled. The model practice standard, which I believe the minister alluded to, that was prepared by the government's so-called task group of experts provides that a mental disorder would include anything in the DSM-5. Any condition listed in the DSM-5 is what these Liberals are contemplating as constituting a condition that would qualify someone for MAID in the case of mental illness.

What are the conditions listed in the DSM-5? They include personality disorders, depression, schizophrenia and issues when persons suffer from addictions challenges. That is what we are talking about when it comes to MAID and mental illness. It is truly repulsive, it is morally bankrupt to the core and it says everything Canadians need to know about the values of these Liberals.

There is only one piece of good news in all of this, which is that this legislation provides a three-year pause, and what will happen between now and the expiration of those three years is a federal election. Canadians will have a choice. They can choose between a Liberal government that wants to provide death to persons who are struggling with mental illness or they can choose a common-sense Conservative government that will not give up on anyone, will be committed to offering persons struggling with mental health issues hope and health, and will permanently scrap this radical Liberal experiment that gambles with the lives of vulnerable Canadians.

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● (1755)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are two points I want to raise quickly and hear his response on. One, he talked about a consensus in the psychiatric community, and I do not know what consensus he is referring to. There are varied views on providing services and cures to people with mental illness. However, my question is in regard to rights of individuals. We have a decision by a Quebec court that required this Parliament to act on the ruling to ensure the rights of individuals guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms are protected. I would like to hear his views as to how we will reconcile with those rights and what his plan would be to ensure the rights of Canadians, whether they have mental illness or not, are protected under our charter.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would submit that 80% of psychiatrists in Ontario saying MAID should not be expanded in the case of mental illness is approaching a professional consensus. The member I would hope would be concerned by a government policy to expand MAID in cases of mental illness significantly impacting vulnerable persons and that he would question the appropriateness of such a policy in the face of opposition from so many experts.

With respect to the Quebec court decision he alluded to, and I believe he is referring to the Truchon decision, there was no pronouncement of the Quebec Superior Court on the question of mental illness. That was not part of the fact pattern in the case. The plaintiffs were not suffering from an underlying mental health disorder. There is no binding precedent forcing the government to enact this legislation. This is a political decision made by these Liberals.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, as my colleague knows, I have been on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying from the get-go.

If he will recall, in the 43rd Parliament, when this House was dealing with Bill C-7, the government's original charter statement, which provided its rationale for excluding mental disorders as the sole underlying medical condition, was fairly well reasoned, and explained that section 7 and section 15 of the charter can be involved here. However, we have to remember section 1. Sometimes we may need to limit rights.

For me, personally, I am big believer in the charter, but I struggled through this whole process in how to find that balance between an individual's charter-protected rights but also the need of society to sometimes step in and protect the most vulnerable.

Could the member tell us how he personally approached finding that balance, and to also put it in the context that so many people in Canada, whether they are in rural or remote communities or in our urban centres, are marginalized and do not have access to the proper mental health care supports they so desperately need?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with my colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, on the special joint committee.

The manner in which I approached this issue was by following the evidence to determine whether this expansion could be imple-

mented safely and appropriately. The overwhelming evidence is that it cannot. It need not have been this way. We need not be here for a second time on the eve of an implementation date that was arbitrarily set by the Liberals.

We could have studied this issue. We could have heard from experts. We could have heard from other groups about this, without moving ahead with legislation before undertaking that important consultation.

Let me simply say that the Liberal government has gotten it backwards. It has gotten it wrong. What the government should be doing is coming back to this House and putting an indefinite pause on this expansion.

● (1800)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not think the member is fully online on this. There is a Quebec court decision. That decision does put in a deadline that the government does need to respect and respond to.

At the beginning of his arguments, the member was trying to pass the blame. Let me remind the member that it was Stephen Harper's government, the same government which he worked for, back in 2015, that chose to do nothing, ignoring the issue. That was based on a Supreme Court decision.

Would the member not recognize that the issue cannot just be ignored? That is the track record of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, if the member is referring to the Truchon decision, that was not what the Truchon decision provided for.

That was outside the scope of the Truchon decision. Evidenced by that is the fact that when the Liberals responded to Truchon by introducing Bill C-7, mental illness as the sole underlying condition was expressly excluded from the legislation.

This is a political decision brought on by the Liberals.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is always very eloquent when it comes to defending the “no” camp and the pro-life camp. Does his position represent the position of the Conservative party? Is that the official position of the Conservative Party?

I just want us to be able to understand what is at stake in this debate today. Essentially, to him, irremediability is something that can never be proven. That means that, under a Conservative government, people who are suffering intolerably, who are dealing with intolerable suffering because they are victims of a mental disorder, could never be relieved of their suffering.

What I am also hearing is that he claims that he can solve the problem of suffering and irremediable mental disorders by injecting a lot of money into the health care system to make access to health care something that can help these people put all their suffering behind them.

Is that what he is telling us?

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[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, the member for Montcalm is a thoughtful member on this issue.

With respect to irremediability, I am absolutely not comfortable with moving ahead with this expansion if it cannot be accurately determined. We have psychiatrists come before committee and say it is like flipping a coin, that clinicians get it wrong 50% of the time. That is not an appropriate risk. That is evidence of a policy that has not been well thought out, and that is dangerous and will negatively impact vulnerable persons on a matter of life and death.

With respect to the position of the Conservative Party, yes, the position is that a common-sense Conservative government would permanently scrap this radical and dangerous expansion.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, the arrogance and incompetence of the members opposite on this issue is truly alarming and frightening. Are they not aware that 30 legal experts wrote a letter to the former justice minister and cabinet saying, "Parliament is not forced by the courts to legalize MAID".

What does the hon. member make of this argument, from the minister who spoke earlier, that somehow, in her words, the debate is over?

• (1805)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, it is arrogance, it is recklessness and it is incredible. It is incredible in the sense that they hide behind a Quebec court decision. It is a decision, frankly, they should have appealed but did not. It did not pronounce on the question of MAID and mental illness, and they are now using that as the basis to say we need to move forward with this legislation, even though, when they initially responded, they said they were going to exclude mental illness from the legislation. They are trying to have it both ways.

They got into this mess because David Lametti accepted a radical Senate amendment and it has been a three-year mess ever since.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I made a technical error in my vote on PMB Motion No. 86 on the seventh vote today, and I would very much appreciate the House's unanimous consent to allow me to change my vote to no.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I never thought I would end up debating medical assistance in dying in the House again, or reliving what we went through when we passed Bill C-14, a bad law. I never expected that the Liberals would again be in the same position, or show the same lack of courage they did with Bill C-14, which was prescribed by the Carter-Taylor decision.

Quebec passed its legislation on end-of-life care before the Carter decision. In the Carter decision, the court ruled that Quebec had to revise its legislation to include more than end-of-life issues only. The Parliament of Canada, which had never considered this before, was also told that it had to address not only end-of-life is-

sues, but also degenerative diseases like those afflicting Ms. Carter and Ms. Taylor. Ms. Carter had spinal stenosis and Ms. Taylor had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. In its decision, the court ruled that Parliament had to legislate because both women's right to life was being infringed.

Why was their right to life being infringed? The right to life is not a minor right. This should be of interest to the Conservatives, who are pro-life. I am too, in that sense. The right to life was being infringed because these people had to shorten their lives when they would have liked to live until their suffering became intolerable.

As members of Parliament, as representatives of the state and the people, our duty is not to decide what the patient needs when it comes to an issue as personal as their death. The role of the state is to ensure the conditions needed for them to exercise free will, so that they can make a free and informed decision. That is the role of the state. Otherwise, we get into government paternalism.

I invite my Conservative colleague to do some reading in clinical ethics and not to limit himself to what psychiatrists in Ontario are saying. We know that psychiatrists are divided on the issue. In fact, if there is one discipline in which medical paternalism continues to reign, it is psychiatry. We would never have seen the progress that we have seen in clinical ethics if medical paternalism in general still ruled supreme.

What happened for patients to be given back control over their end of life? We find the answer to that question in the bioethics literature. In the past, some doctors who had cancer said they did not want treatment. Now, we have good medical practices, whereas in the past, aggressive treatment was the standard. The doctors said that they wanted to live the two years they had left without undergoing treatment that would leave them bedridden. They claimed that they wanted to spend quality time with their loved ones. It took doctors with cancer demanding that option for patients to be able to discuss these sorts of things with their own doctor. In the 1960s, there were patients who only found out that they were dying of an incurable disease and were in fact at the end of their life when the priest came to their room to administer the last rites. They were not even told that they were terminally ill. That was medical paternalism.

Over time, the right to die was granted. Patients were granted the right to die and the opportunity to refuse aggressive treatment. That is when we began providing the palliative care that is so important to my Conservative friends. Before that, palliative care was called passive euthanasia, and it was not allowed.

Medical paternalism has been gradually set aside. What has this led to?

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• (1810)

It has led to the right to refuse life-saving treatment, to stop treatment. These are all rights we have today.

We have before us a bill that perpetuates suffering indefinitely for people with a severe mental disorder who have been unable to relieve their suffering through treatment. That is no mean feat. They have spent 10, 20, 30 years suffering, trying multiple treatments and being stigmatized by the society in which they live.

We are able to establish the decision-making capacity of people living with a severe mental disorder. For those capable of making decisions, the court told us that it would be discriminatory and stigmatizing if, just because they have a severe mental disorder causing suffering that psychiatry is unable to properly change or relieve, they were told what was best for them and that they should continue to suffer forever, while psychiatry need only provide a palliative care option until the end. That is what we are discussing today.

I will calm down. It is just that I heard some nonsense earlier.

Then what happens? There was Bill C-7, which was rather cautious. It set a two-year deadline for creating an expert panel. Who read the report of the expert panel in the House? Who read it before voting? This is the second vote we are having on this subject. We have to read the report of the expert panel. Indeed, the irremediable aspect is something that is hard to implement. Admittedly, there is an additional difficulty, but the expert report does set out guidelines. That is what this is about.

Then the Liberals show up today with a clause they added that says we are going to work with an expert panel for two years and create a joint committee. The problem is that the joint committees have always been set up at the last minute, too close to the deadline.

When we submitted our report the last time, we were forced to admit that, before moving forward with the issue of mental disorders, we needed to assess the situation in the field. Even though I think the group that was supposed to work on it had developed important guidelines and standards of practice, it was obvious to me that there was still not quite enough time. Everyone told us so, including the Collège des médecins du Québec—I will have more to say later about its criteria and guidelines for proceeding that I find useful.

How is it that, a year ago, the government gave itself a one-year deadline and thought that would be enough time? A lot of work has been done in that year, yet the government is saying we should put it off until 2027.

We heard what the Conservatives just said. We can forget about MAID if they form government; they will put it off indefinitely. That means that people will continue to suffer indefinitely, and that suffering will be intolerable because psychiatry is unable to provide relief other than by rendering them virtually incapacitated. Somehow, people find that morally acceptable. I honestly do not know where the morality lies in that. Some people have very flexible morals. In any case, it has nothing to do with suffering.

When people claim that someone living with depression could have access to medical assistance in dying, it is simply not true.

Just because someone applies for MAID does not mean they will be able to access it. The assessors will do their job. Stefanie Green was saying that a person in a suicidal crisis is not eligible for medical assistance in dying. Someone who raises their hand and says that they want MAID simply because we allow mental disorders to be eligible grounds for MAID would not have access to it because they have not received proper care.

• (1815)

However, there would be an opportunity for prevention, because we could provide treatment at that time. It is wrong to say that 90% of people who have suicidal ideation and commit suicide received proper care. No, they did not receive proper care. Very often, when people commit suicide, no one saw it coming at all.

What are we going to do? What are the Conservatives going to do with people who are desperate and suffering and who currently still have hope that we are going to consider their suffering and find a solution so that things are done properly and by the law? What do they think those individuals are going to do in their despair? Is suicide morally acceptable? Suicide attests to the failure of our system and our society. I will never, ever accept suicide. That is why, when we talk about medical assistance in dying, we are not in the same page at all.

A person who is feeling suicidal is not eligible. Someone who has just been taken into care and diagnosed is not eligible. Applications take structural vulnerabilities into account. Just because someone is poor and does not have access to care does not mean that they will be eligible for medical assistance in dying. They would not be eligible, because they would have to have tried every possible treatment. Someone who unjustifiably refuses treatment that could improve their condition will not be eligible. If accessible and effective treatments are available and the person refuses them, they are ineligible. If the assessors cannot agree that the criteria have been met, the person is not eligible either.

The Collège des médecins du Québec told us that it remains at the discussion stage, that it has established its guidelines and it still needs time in order to eventually get there. Personally, I think one year would have been enough, otherwise we might give up. We could end up being hypocritical and leave it to chance. We might as well flip a coin.

The Liberals need to work hard if they want to win the election. If not, they are going to be leaving the fate of those who are suffering in the hands of people who just told us today that this will not happen on their watch, that they support suffering for life everlasting, and that they know what is moral and right for these people.

The Quebec college of physicians said, and I quote, “the decision to grant MAID to someone with a mental disorder should not be viewed solely as an episode of care. Rather, the decision should be made following a fair and comprehensive assessment of the patient's situation.” We are talking about taking the time to establish the chronicity of the condition.

The college of physicians also set out a second condition. It said, and I quote, “the patient must not exhibit suicidal ideation, as with major depressive disorders”. It might be a good idea for the members of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying to hear that, although they are on the same committee as I am and that was said in committee.

That is a far cry from the grandstanding Leader of the Opposition who stands up in the House and asks the Prime Minister, in prime time, whether medical assistance in dying is the only thing he has to offer those who are depressed and having a hard time making ends meet. That is a bit much.

The third criterion laid out by the college of physicians states that the patient must “experience intense and prolonged psychological suffering, as confirmed by severe symptoms and overall functional impairment, over a long period of time, leaving them with no hope that the weight of their situation will ease. This prevents them from being fulfilled and causes them to see their existence as devoid of meaning.”

The experts tell us that they cannot apply irremediability and suffering metrics to mental health, and that prevents them from creating a category as a grounds for MAID. It has to be done on a case-by-case basis. All questions of clinical ethics, in terms of clinical assessment, are examined on a case-by-case basis. Some seem to think that going on a case-by-case basis is hell and that it is not a rigorous process. It is very rigorous.

● (1820)

The fourth condition states, “the patient must have been receiving care and appropriate follow-up over an extensive period of time.” Access to care must have been available. Otherwise, no access to medical assistance in dying will be provided for mental disorders. It seems to me that we heard the same thing in committee. We heard the same criteria.

At some point, we have to have the courage of our convictions. I believe that we have to offer relief to people experiencing intolerable suffering, who have reached their limit. I also believe that we must not make decisions about their life or quality of life for them. They alone can decide what is tolerable or intolerable.

When people talk to me about a slippery slope, they seem to be working on the assumption that all health care workers are evil. However, people who work in health care need to be kind. As far as I know, gaining admission to medical school is not easy. I imagine that the selection criteria are quite strict and challenging. The same goes for nursing.

The fifth condition states, “requests [from social workers] must undergo a multidisciplinary assessment, including by the physician or specialized nurse practitioner in the field of mental health who has treated the individual”. This is in the case of a follow-up assessment, not in the midst an episode. A person cannot get medical assistance in dying simply by saying that their life no longer has any meaning. Making a request does not mean one is eligible.

The Collège des médecins du Québec concluded by saying, “Under these conditions, it would be possible, in the CMQ’s view, to provide individuals suffering from a grievous and irreversible men-

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tal disorder with access to MAID. It is important to prevent situations where individuals opt for MAID out of desperation, because they do not have access to proper care or do not consider the care available to be acceptable, such as an extended stay in a facility without the prospect of gaining more autonomy.”

That is the exact opposite of the nonsense we heard earlier. We were told that this was like a house of horrors, that we were dealing with experts and doctors who simply wanted to harm people’s physical integrity. We have to be careful.

To access MAID, the individual must first make a request, which is then followed by informed consent. When it comes to mental disorders, doctors currently perform a daily assessment of a person’s decision-making capacity if they have a mental disorder and a comorbidity, an additional illness that is hastening their death. Everyone agrees that these people are capable of choosing and consenting to medical assistance in dying. MAID practitioners have long been determining the decision-making capacity of people with a mental disorder. Just because someone has a mental disorder does not mean that their right to self-determination and to make decisions should be violated. That is discrimination and stigmatization.

When people tell me they want to protect the vulnerable, I wonder who could be more vulnerable than someone who has suffered for decades with a mental disorder and has tried every treatment. Who could be more vulnerable than someone grappling with a paternalistic psychiatrist—I am choosing my words carefully—who thinks he knows better than his patient what treatment they need, then chains them to a palliative care pathway and throws away the key because he cannot bring himself to admit that he is unable to provide relief to his patient?

At committee, I put the question to some psychiatrists who told us we were on the wrong track. They admitted that, in 25 or 30 years of practice, they had seen some patients fall through the cracks. Indeed, it is for this small group of people who fall through the cracks in psychiatry that this expansion is necessary. We need to show a little humanity here in the House.

● (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I extend my sincere thanks to the member across the way for the details and the compassion with which he made his comments about patient-centred decisions and things around the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that we protect in the House. Right now, I understand the Quebec legislature is debating the Superior Court decision. I was hoping we would have a more fulsome debate tonight, and I was surprised the Bloc did not support having that debate.

I spoke with a nurse practitioner in my area who comes from Ottawa to Guelph to provide service, and she can only do it as a volunteer because she is not paid by the province to work outside of Ottawa. On the ground, we really have problems building capacity. Something that this bill tries to address is building the capacity of our health care system within the provinces to be able to provide MAID effectively in our communities.

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Could the member maybe reflect on the need for us to work with provinces and their health care systems to build our capacity and, at the same time, to work with legislatures, both provincially and federally, so that we can get this across the line together, and comment on the amount of time that could take?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, that is an interesting question.

I would like to point out to my colleague that the committee had very little time to assess whether the system was ready. We had two or three meetings to determine that and the deadline was ridiculous. However, many people came and told us that the system was ready.

The Quebec National Assembly took a stand in 2021. Bill C-7 was passed after that, after a lot of work had been done and brought to a halt in Quebec. The Quebec college of physicians said that it still needed a little more time. However, there is a big difference between needing a little more time to ensure that everything is done safely and properly and putting off indefinitely the need to deal with the suffering of people with serious mental disorders.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to work the member for Montcalm on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying. We have both been on that committee from the get-go, and we have both been exposed to a wide range of witness testimony and the briefs.

Following up slightly on the earlier question, our responsibility here in the federal scene, of course, deals primarily with just the Criminal Code. Once we complete our task with the Criminal Code, the oversight and accountability of the system falls largely on the provinces.

It is not insignificant that seven out of 10 provinces and all three territories had their health ministers and ministers responsible for mental health and addictions sign a letter, in which they referenced the fact that back in November, they were already raising concerns, and they have clearly called for an indefinite pause. I understand Quebec was not a signatory to this, but the very fact that seven provinces and three territories are, and those ministers are responsible for the oversight of those medical systems, I do not think that is insignificant.

I am wondering if the member for Montcalm can reflect on that. When we have clear direction from ministers responsible for the system saying that they are not ready, how does he respond to those concerns?

• (1830)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. In the supplementary report that I tabled, I note that, if we had had more time, we could have engaged with these people. By engaging with these people, we could have understood exactly what their concerns were.

A certain number of associations did tell us that everything was ready for us to do this. The member knows that. For example, the

Association of Medical Assistance in Dying Assessors and Providers came and told us after Bill C-14 and Bill C-7 were introduced that not all doctors were trained to be MAID providers. There was only a small number and they would be able to meet the demand. When it comes to mental disorders, we are talking about an even smaller number still. The people from this association felt that they were able to do this safely. There was also the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec, the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada, the Nova Scotia department of health, and so on.

It comes down to the way people followed the debate and the way they debated within the governments because they sometimes have other concerns. I would have liked to hear them. The government did not call on us as soon as Parliament returned so that we could do a review and ask all of the questions we had. We could have even gone out into the community to see what was missing, but we were unable to.

Here is what I think: We could do it right now, in the next year. We need to work together, get out there and explain it, see what is going on, and share the guidelines. Then, if we need another year, we can take it. Waiting until 2027 to do this is definitely not a progressive way of going about it.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, from what I understand there are inconsistencies between the processes in the different provinces. Quebec has done its part.

What I am hearing this evening is often what individuals may have experienced. We are talking about human suffering. I know what I am talking about because I have experienced it. Everything my colleague is talking about, everything he got out of all these experts, I experienced it.

Beyond a potential fear of getting to the bottom of things, of figuring out what else is needed to make an informed choice, there is urgency. I would like my colleague to tell me what our dear colleagues here might be lacking to make an informed decision on the fate of human life.

• (1835)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, briefly put, I would say they lack courage. In this place, courage and compassion are lacking, and action is based far too much on ideology.

As I said earlier, only the individual can compare their life in one condition to their life in another condition, and this does not mean comparing two different lives. In that sense, we cannot turn a deaf ear to suffering. We have to listen and we have to act to make sure that these people receive care, of course. That is our goal. However, no matter how difficult it may be to determine whether a condition is irremediable, it would be intellectually dishonest to claim today that psychiatric treatment can relieve the suffering of everyone with severe mental disorders. For those whose suffering cannot be relieved and who request MAID in a considered and coherent manner, with all the safeguards I mentioned earlier in place, we have a duty to listen to what they think and to legislate accordingly.

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[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be standing in the House today to join debate on Bill C-62. Forgive me if I am feeling a bit of déjà vu right now, because it was precisely one year ago, in February 2023, that the House was in a similar position with the earlier bill, Bill C-39.

That bill, of course, extended the delay of the implementation of the acceptance of mental disorders as a sole underlying medical condition to access MAID. That bill kicked the can down the road by one year. As a result, we find ourselves in a position where we are now approaching the deadline of March 17, 2024.

To go into a bit of detail on what Bill C-62 contains, it is not a very complex bill. It should be clear that the bill itself is not re-litigating the issue that was first brought in by Bill C-7. I will get into Bill C-7 in a moment. This bill is seeking to further delay the implementation of MAID for mental disorders as a sole underlying medical condition until March 17, 2027, essentially three years down the road from now.

I also think an important part of the bill is that it inserts a legislative requirement that the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying be reconvened in advance of that change, so that a committee of parliamentarians made up of members of Parliament and senators can review our country's readiness and make a determination in advance of that date.

I have been a member of the special joint committee from the beginning, all the way back in the 43rd Parliament, and, speaking for myself, I am very glad to see that we do have that legislative requirement in Bill C-62 and that, more importantly, the committee is actually being given the time it should have had to study this very complex and sensitive issue in advance of its implementation. That is something we could have been much better served by in previous iterations of this legislation.

I think it is important that we explore a little of the history of how we got to this moment. As a member of this special joint committee, I personally have felt that we have been playing a game of catch-up to the change in law that was made in advance of any serious inquiry into this matter.

Bill C-7, in the 43rd Parliament, was, of course, the Government of Canada's response to the Truchon decision. It specifically created a separate track in the Criminal Code for people whose death was not naturally foreseeable. Previous to that, one had to have a medical condition in which one's natural death was foreseeable, so essentially it was for people who were suffering terminal stage cancer, who were going through a great deal of suffering and so on.

It is important to note, though, that when the government first brought Bill C-7 in, there were already questions at that time, in advance of the legislation, about what we do with people who are suffering from mental illness, who have suffered, in some cases, as my colleague pointed out, for decades, for whom treatments have not worked. What were we to do with that?

In the original version of the legislation, by law, the government was required to have the bill accompanied by a charter statement,

but mental disorders were specifically excluded from the original version of Bill C-7. The government provided what I thought at the time was a fairly well-reasoned charter statement. It was understood that by excluding this, one could potentially engage two prominent sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, namely section 7, which is the security of the person, the fact that everyone essentially has the right to make a decision about what happens to their own body, and section 15, the equality clause, that the law has to treat everyone equally. With reference, those two sections may potentially be engaged by an exclusion.

● (1840)

The government identified the following in its charter statement:

First, evidence suggests that screening for decision-making capacity is particularly difficult, and subject to a high degree of error, in relation to persons who suffer from a mental illness serious enough to ground a request for MAID. Second, mental illness is generally less predictable than physical illness in terms of the course the illness will take over time. Finally, recent experience in the few countries that permit MAID for people whose sole medical condition is a mental illness (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) has raised concerns.

That is what the government's original position on Bill C-7 was.

The House passed Bill C-7 and it went off to the Senate. There, for reasons that remain shrouded in mystery to me to this day, the government decided to accept a Senate amendment, essentially at the eleventh hour, which had significant repercussions for the bill. Essentially, the Senate was reversing the government's original position on whether mental disorders qualified for MAID.

The government accepted that Senate amendment. Of course, Bill C-7, because it had been amended, had to come back to the House, and the government managed to cobble enough votes together to get it passed.

Therefore, we, as parliamentarians, were left with a law that had been changed in advance of the hard work being done to properly consult, research and discuss the issue with expert witnesses and with the health systems that have primary responsibility for the oversight of the change in law.

Yes, an expert panel was convened. The special joint committee was convened. Of course, its work was interrupted by the unnecessary calling of an election in the summer of 2021. Some very valuable time was lost there, because, of course, we then had to reconvene in the 44th Parliament, and a considerable amount of time was lost due to that.

However, it is important to realize that everything that has transpired since then has been as a result of that Senate amendment being accepted by the government. Again, I feel, and as a member of the special joint committee I think my feeling has some validity here, that we have been trying to play catch-up ever since that moment.

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My time on the special joint committee has been difficult. It is not an easy subject for anyone to sit through, because the opinions of the people with lived experience and those who work in a professional capacity really are on all sides of the spectrum and everywhere in between. It can be quite difficult for a parliamentarian to work their way through that to try and understand the complex legal and medical arguments that exist behind this issue, but it is important.

I would say that, personally, my work on the committee has really been a struggle to find a balance between two concepts that sometimes seem to be in competition with each other. I am a firm believer in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think it is a very important document in Canadian history, and I believe that we have to respect an individual's right to make decisions over their own body, but that belief system of mine was always struggling with another concept, which is that sometimes society finds itself in a position in which it is necessary for it to step in and protect its most vulnerable members. I think those two themes were echoed, not only for me but for many of the witnesses who appeared before our committee and in the many briefs we received.

• (1845)

I also want to note that our special joint committee has existed twice in this Parliament. We tabled our second report in February last year, in advance of Bill C-39. The committee's mandate at that time was guided by five themes that we had to look at, and mental disorder as the sole underlying medical condition was one of those. Of course, we were reconvened after the passage of Bill C-39, but as my colleague from Montcalm pointed out, our runway was extremely short. It did not do justice to the amount of time that we actually needed and to the extreme complexity of this issue.

Just to give this clarity for people listening, I believe our first meeting as a committee was on October 31, and we had to conduct some committee business, and elect the chairs and vice chairs. We really had only three three-hour meetings with witnesses, so nine hours of testimony. We excluded, by necessity, a lot of people who I would dearly liked to have heard from, namely administrators of our public health system, elected officials of provincial governments and so on.

Because of the short timeline, we did not even have enough time to properly translate all the submissions that were sent to our committee because, of course, before they can be distributed to committee members, they have to be translated into French and English. That is a requirement that honours the fact that we are a bilingual country. We, as committee members, did not even have the opportunity to review important submissions, and those submissions came from people who had lived experience, who were dealing with the situation at home, but they also came from many professionals whose practice is involved in this specific area.

I have taken a position on this. The member for Abbotsford, in the fall, had introduced Bill C-314, and I did vote for that, so my vote on this matter is quite clear. I have been informed by the fact that at our committee, there has been a significant amount of professional discomfort expressed by people who practice medicine in this area, psychiatrists and psychologists. Sure, some of them may be acting in a paternalistic way, but I do not think that can be ap-

plied equally to everyone. I think for some of them, we have to review their opinions. We have to take them in the context in which they are given. I think we have to afford them a measure of respect, given the fact that these are their lifelong career choices and, in many cases, we can measure their experiences in decades.

I want to take a little time to read from some of the testimony we received from witnesses. We did hear from Dr. Jitender Sareen from the department of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, who was there also on behalf of psychiatry departmental chairs at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, McMaster, McGill, Memorial University, the University of Ottawa and Queen's University. His testimony was that they strongly recommended "an extended pause on expanding MAID to include mental disorders...because we're simply not ready." He was quite emphatic on the point that we are not going to be ready in another year.

Dr. Trudo Lemmens, who is a professor of health law and policy in the faculty of law at the University of Toronto, was there to clarify some constitutional arguments. He was really trying to underline the fact that we have to keep the section 7 and section 15 rights in balance with section 1 and that this issue has not actually been decided by the courts, contrary to what we heard from some witnesses. Previous speakers on tonight's debate have also pointed out that the Truchon decision did not include any reference to mental disorders. That is an important point we have to make.

Dr. Sonu Gaiind, who is the chief of the department of psychiatry at the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, pointed out that:

MAID is for irremediable medical conditions. These are ones we can predict won't improve. Worldwide evidence shows we cannot predict irremediability in cases of mental illness, meaning that the primary safeguard underpinning MAID is already being bypassed, with evidence showing such predictions are wrong over half the time.

• (1850)

Scientific evidence shows we cannot distinguish suicidality caused by mental illness from motivations leading to psychiatric MAID requests, with overlapping characteristics suggesting there may be no distinction to make.

He also commented on the fact that the curriculum used does not teach assessors to distinguish between suicidality and psychiatric MAID requests, and so on.

We also heard from Dr. Tarek Rajji; he is the chair of the medical advisory committee at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. He stated:

CAMH's concern is that the health care system is not ready for March 2024. The clinical guidelines, resources and processes are not in place to assess, determine eligibility for and support or deliver MAID when eligibility is confirmed to people whose sole underlying medical condition is mental illness.

These provide a snapshot of the widespread professional discomfort that exists out there, and I do not think we can discount those voices.

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I would agree that there were also a number of professionals on the other side who did feel we were ready, and that is what makes this such an incredibly complex and sensitive subject to try to navigate as a parliamentarian. Again, we as a committee should have been afforded the time and space to really delve into these issues and to greatly expand our witness list to make sure we were in fact ready.

Members will note that our recent committee report had only one recommendation in it. I recognize that the recommendation was a result of the majority of the committee members. There were some dissenting opinions, notably from the senators who were part of the committee. However, the committee did recognize that Canada is not prepared for medical assistance in dying where mental disorder is the sole underlying medical condition, and we did not attach an arbitrary timeline to the recommendation. Our specific call was that MAID should not be made available in Canada until the minister of health and the minister of justice are satisfied, based on recommendations from their respective departments and in consultation with their provincial and territorial counterparts and with indigenous peoples, that it can be safely and adequately provided.

We keep getting ourselves into trouble by setting arbitrary deadlines for ourselves. Setting up an arbitrary timeline is not an adequate replacement for the qualitative work that needs to be done by these departments. I would much prefer that we satisfy the qualitative requirement in the recommendation, where departments, experts and our provincial and territorial colleagues are in fact saying that they are going to be okay with that.

The recommendation and my reference to the provinces and territories is a great segue to the fact that there was also a letter sent to the Minister of Health. It was signed by seven out of 10 provinces and all three territories. The signatures include those of all the ministers of health and ministers responsible for mental health and addictions in those provinces, including Adrian Dix and Jennifer Whiteside from my own province of British Columbia. They quite clearly say:

The current March 17, 2024, deadline does not provide sufficient time to fully and appropriately prepare all provinces and territories across Canada...

We encourage you and [the] federal Justice Minister...to indefinitely pause the implementation of the expanded MAID eligibility criteria to enable further collaboration between provinces, territories and the federal government.

I will wrap up by saying that this is a very sensitive issue. I do think we should pass Bill C-62 and honour the calls we are hearing from the professions intimately involved in this issue and the calls coming from the provinces and territories. We need to step up to the plate and make sure we have a fully ready system in advance of the changing of any laws.

• (1855)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Before I begin my question, I want to recognize the life of Rino Piva, from our community of Kamloops, who has passed away. He leaves behind his wife of 63 years, Dina, and his children, Laura, Dennis and Mario. I know them all well and wish them all the best in this difficult time of condolence.

I will move on to my question for my colleague. So many times, the Liberal government was told that we could not have MAID proceed in the manner that it did, yet the government pressed on. Why, does he believe, the government just did not listen?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, honestly, I do not know.

I was here for Bill C-7. I thought the government's original position with respect to that bill was quite clear. For some reason, the Liberals did a complete 180 when it came to the Senate's amending the bill. To this day, I do not think I—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give a chance for another question.

The hon. member for Montcalm.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague, who always speaks very calmly and moderately. It is a pleasure to serve with him.

The NDP voted against Bill C-14, which did not address the Carter decision's requirements at all. Bill C-7 met the Carter decision's requirements with additional changes that required hard work, to clarify the issue.

Is the NDP saying no to the idea of one day moving forward on mental disorders, or would it rather put the subject off indefinitely?

We could start working on this tomorrow morning, and I am convinced that within a year, we could come up with something very promising.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I would love to see the committee be given the time and space to adequately explore this issue. I think that was what was lacking from the get-go.

I am not saying a firm “no”; I just have a problem with the arbitrary deadlines. Ultimately I want my decision to be informed by a fulsome discussion that involves a much wider array of experts and representatives of the provincial and territorial governments. That is what was lacking. We have been playing a game of catch-up ever since, and we are seeing the consequences of that through the deliberations on the bill.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1900)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from November 9, 2023, consideration of the motion that Bill C-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (controlling or coercive conduct), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will begin by saying to the interpreters that I will try to talk slowly, but this is something that I am so passionate about, so when I do speed up I will look to the Speaker to say, “slow down”.

I wanted to start off this speech by stating the importance of making sure we add coercive control to the Criminal Code here in Canada. I want to read a story from the CBC on December 7, 2021. The title of it is “Coercive control, the silent partner of domestic violence, instils fear, helplessness in victims”. I will give a bit of background on it.

It is a story about a young woman who was in a relationship that she was trying to leave. Her friends and family knew she was trying to leave this relationship desperately, but unfortunately so did her partner, and with that the partner decided that he would take her life in order to deal with some of these issues.

I want to read from this story, because it is rather graphic:

In the last few weeks before a murder devastated people in her Halifax social circle, Ardath Whynacht began to worry.

“I had a sick feeling in my stomach,” she said.

Whynacht was concerned about two people she knew socially: a high school friend, Nicholas Butcher, and the woman he was dating, Kristin Johnston.

Butcher's friends knew that he was struggling to find work, in debt and depressed. People in their circle knew the two were having problems in their relationship.

Whynacht says she later learned in court that others among her friends knew Butcher was accessing Johnston's private messages. He also followed her movements ... [called] “stalking” behaviour.

Unfortunately these stories do not go away. I have had the honour of sitting on the status of women committee since 2015, with a small break when I went to PROC, but over and over we have talked about violence against women, and we know that violence against women is not just physical, that there is such an emotional piece to it. Coercive control is exactly what we are talking about today.

I want to read to members a second piece, and it is titled, “‘A life sentence’: No escape from abusive relationships when navigating family court system, say victims”. It states, “Victims, experts say courts often fail to recognize and protect people from non-physical forms of abuse”. This entire story talks about the torture, and I am going to use the pseudonym used here, of Sarah:

Sarah says her ex-husband's abusive behaviour slowly escalated after their family court decision in 2022. For instance, she says he began dropping off their kids with her later than the court order stated.

“What I've found is now that we no longer are living together as a family, I can't actually protect them,” she says.

Then, she says, the stalking and harassment began.

When she went to the police, she felt she wasn't taken seriously. Sarah says she was denied a peace bond because her ex-husband hasn't physically assaulted her or her kids recently.

This, to me, is the tragedy of what we are seeing in the justice system, and not just necessarily in the justice system, but in our society. What we are seeing is women being controlled, beaten and violated by men in the majority of these cases. I am not saying that coercive control cannot be reversed and cannot be applied to men as the victims, but we know the majority of these cases are women. What are we going to do about it?

In this House, Bill C-233 was passed unanimously, and I am so proud of the incredible work that we did as a Parliament to ensure that there are judges trained, when it comes to domestic violence issues, because we have to understand that domestic violence is not just physical violence. Of the cases, 30% may show physically, but the majority of these cases that we are seeing when it comes to domestic violence are coercive control.

What does that mean? I think that is what we have to get down to, and this is exactly what the member who has put forward the bill, whom I would like to thank for putting forward the bill, and I want to talk about: what coercive control is and why we as parliamentarians need to take it seriously for the safety of our women and girls.

The definition presented in Bill C-332 indicates:

(a) it causes the person to fear, on reasonable grounds, on more than one occasion, that violence will be used against them; (b) it causes the person's physical or mental health to decline; or (c) it causes the person alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities, including (i) limits on their ability to safeguard their well-being or that of their children, (ii) changes in or restrictions on their social activities or their communication with others, (iii) absences from work or from education or training programs or changes in their routines or status in relation to their employment or education, and [finally] (iv) changes of address.

● (1905)

This was all put forward by Evan Stark, an American forensic social worker, back in 2007. That is why I am really proud to see this definition in Bill C-332. It so important that we have this discussion.

In my role as the chair of the status of women committee, I can speak for every member of that committee on the strength and vulnerability of so many of the victims who have come to speak to our committee, knowing that when they go to the police, if they do not have a bruise, it is not going to be taken into consideration. Coercive control is not in the Criminal Code. Things like harassment are, but coercive control, that idea of controlling another individual, is not.

We have to take it into consideration. Let us look at the first case that I talked about. The young man was reading all of her emails and intercepting those types of messages. The prying into that relationship: That is control. It takes me back to a phone call that I had just last week from a teacher, who was very concerned. A young woman, an EA, had come to the school very fearful for her life. She had never had physical abuse. She had never been violated or anything like that. However, the fear of coercive control was there, because she was being controlled. What ended up happening to this young woman is that she did not go to work, flag number one.

This is important: Putting coercive control into our Criminal Code will give the opportunity for our police to understand what coercive control is. Thus, when they are investigating or going to a scene of a dispute, they can understand and know what they are looking for.

Right now, with its absence from the Criminal Code, how are police officers supposed to recognize it? Does it look like harassment? Are they being stalked? There are various different things.

The one thing we know about coercive control is that it does not just happen once. In physical abuse, someone can actually show and date the abuse, and all those things. They can go to the hospital, report it, show the bruises and provide evidence to the police or the doctors. With coercive control, that option is not there. How do they go and show somebody what another person said or that the person has read all their emails?

There is one thing that I found really disturbing from doing the research that we have done in the last number of years on this. That is the number of women who are not believed. This is really concerning to me. We have to understand that many women are isolated in their homes. We saw that through COVID-19. In March 2020, we saw an absolute increase. By May 2020, I believe, the government was saying that we need to help out shelters more. That is something we all agreed on. We know that, when women cannot leave a place where they are being victimized, they are not safe. That is exactly what happened with COVID.

Coercive control is one of those things that we must talk about. It is not just about the physical. It is about looking at the whole person.

I want to read a part that was received from the federal ombudsman for victims. It is very important that I read this, because when women are talking about coercive control, when we are talking about it, it is cumulative. It is not just one incident. It is something that could have happened yesterday and continues each and every day.

One of the stories I read was talking about a woman who watched her husband driving up the laneway every day. She needed to see his facial reaction, because she needed to know how he was entering that house. Was he happy that day? Was he angry? Those are things that women who are victims of coercive control are thinking about all the time. They are always tiptoeing on glass. The fact is that they are worried about their safety. That is what we see with coercive control.

There is that threat down the road. Today they may not hit them, but they do not know what is going to happen later. We know from

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the Canadian Femicide Observatory that one woman is being killed here in Canada every other day. What is that telling us? We have to change our laws, and we have to take a better look at this.

The federal ombudsman for victims of crime has asked for this to be looked at thoroughly, recognizing that it is a pattern. It is not just a one-time incident.

Therefore, I ask the justice minister and his department, and everybody, to work together to ensure that we save women's lives.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-332, which amends the Criminal Code to make it an offence to engage in controlling or coercive conduct that has a significant impact on the person towards whom the conduct is directed, including a fear of violence, a decline in their physical or mental health or a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities.

It is high time we had legislation on this issue, which is distressing to too many people and too often to women.

It is also important to note that this problem is being fuelled by technological advances, including geolocation trackers, miniature cameras, smart phones and social media platforms. All of these tools make it easier for abusers to continue to inflict harm or further isolate and control their victims, wherever they may be.

Although coercive and controlling violence may a factor in other cases, it is definitely present in 95% of cases of domestic violence as we understand it. Only about 36% of family violence incidents and 5% of sexual assaults are reported to the police. We can therefore assume that there are many more cases of coercive and controlling violence than the justice system knows about.

Based on data reported by police services across Canada in 2018, women in rural areas experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence. The committee also notes that the risk is greatest for marginalized women, including indigenous women, racialized women, women with disabilities and migrant women. Let us not forget the children either.

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First, it is important to define coercive control. Coercive and controlling behaviour does not relate to a single incident, but a pattern of behaviour that takes place repeatedly and continuously. It is currently hard to define this behaviour, in isolated cases, in the Criminal Code. We could talk about harassment, but, again, in isolated cases, it is hard to express. However, repeated and well-defined coercive behaviours could become a criminal offence if this bill is passed. Examples include financial control and implicit or explicit threats against a partner or ex-partner or against their children, belongings or even pets.

Abusive behaviours are intended to cause fear and gain power and control over the thoughts, beliefs and actions of the victim. Despite what one might think, this behaviour often does not involve physical violence and takes away the victim's sense of personal agency.

Generally, the abuser uses isolation, both physical and psychological, as a means to control their partner's contact with friends and family to emotionally bind the partner to them with the shackles of fear and dependency.

The bill that the member for Victoria has introduced is in line with legislative efforts to bring about change on the issue of coercive violence. A few years ago, in 2019, we passed legislative changes to divorce law. However, they apply to married couples only. There are many individuals who were not covered by that legislation, but, more importantly, it did not make this behaviour a criminal offence. While the amendments defined coercive behaviour as part of what is known as "family violence", there was still no criminal sanction associated with it. It is about time we made it a criminal offence.

Having passed first reading and been added to the order of precedence of the House on September 20, 2023, Bill C-332 has come farther in the legislative process than any previous bill on this issue and has the best chance of coming to fruition.

While a number of Criminal Code offences can apply to acts of family violence, some issues have been brought to light regarding the way the current legislation applies to victims of controlling or coercive violence.

Victims have little or no confidence in existing mechanisms. Once again, distrust is even higher among the groups who are most often targeted, namely, marginalized women. Immigrant women, for example, fear that speaking out will result in their immigration application being denied. While aspects of coercive control and controlling behaviour may be present, the police and the justice systems often say that the victim's word alone is not enough to file a complaint. Victims also fear that they will not be taken seriously if they contact police.

Finally, during the study of the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, it was stated that multiple charges against abusive men are regularly reduced to one single charge, usually assault. That charge is then often withdrawn in exchange for a peace bond, the infamous "810 order".

To address this problem, which is close to the Bloc Québécois's heart, we support the objective of Bill C-332, which amends the Criminal Code. However, we do have some reservations, along

with a few proposals and suggestions that would address certain shortcomings that we feel are significant.

● (1915)

First, we should study the possibility of expanding the scope of the bill so that ex-partners and other family members who are not part of the household can testify, in order to address the problem of "one person's word against another's". We could also extend this idea even further by including testimony from outside witnesses such as a neighbour, for example.

Second, we should look at the severity of sentences and the consideration given to children in cases of coercive or controlling violence. Third, the link between the new offence and the impact on family law and child welfare cases should be studied. This bill must link up with what already exists. That is part of the work that will be done in committee on this bill.

Finally, the wording in the NDP members' bills does not necessarily address the issue of victims being retraumatized and having to recount their experiences over again. Furthermore, Bill C-332, in its current form, does not change the way the courts and authorities deal with this issue.

I would like to emphasize one thing. If coercive control were to be added to the list of criminal offences, victims would finally be able to obtain financial assistance. As members know, victims of crime are entitled to financial assistance. A person could receive such assistance if, for example, they want to leave their home for fear of physical or emotional violence. If this bill is passed and coercive violence is added to the Criminal Code, victims of coercive violence will be able to apply for financial assistance to help them move or get counselling. All of the financial support offered to victims of other types of crime could then be offered to those who have experienced coercive control, which can be harmful to victims' mental, psychological and physical health.

When victims are financially or otherwise dependent on their abuser, it can hinder them from taking action and make it difficult to establish evidence. If this bill is implemented, victims of coercive violence will no longer have to be financially or otherwise dependent on the perpetrator of the violence.

Lastly, I would like to underscore another very important point. We see a lot in the news about femicide, and we often observe that physical violence only happens at the end of a relationship. It often involves an act of violence, a total loss of control where a man kills his partner. There are too many cases of femicide. However, we also observe a pattern of coercive control throughout the relationship. By making coercive behaviour a crime, we might help prevent femicide, and that is essential.

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I was very moved by the Latin American campaign *Ni Una Menos* or “Not One Woman Less”. The campaign is designed to get people talking about cases of domestic violence where it is not limited to physical or sexual assaults, but also encompasses the use of violence to control victims, as I defined it earlier.

I am therefore asking my colleagues, parliamentarians, stakeholders and the community at large to support this legislative effort, which is crucial to the physical and mental well-being of victims of domestic and family violence.

The House needs to recognize problems related to coercive control as a priority to ensure that victims get support and protection. We also need to ensure that abusers are held accountable for their actions before it becomes too late for their victim.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, in Parliament, unanimous support is a rare thing to see, but on the issue of coercive and controlling behaviour, we have an instance where all parties agree that there is a need to act.

This bill and the associated recommendations from the justice committee have now twice received the support of all parties at the justice committee, and we heard strong speeches in support of this bill from all parties in second reading debate just before the holiday break. Given this degree of support, it is my hope that Bill C-332 can move forward quickly from this point. As we are all too well aware, this is a minority Parliament, and one which is already well past the normal life of minority parliaments in Canada, so the clock is ticking, and we need to act in the House to make sure this bill still has time to get through the other place before the next election.

There is no doubt among any of us here that there is an urgent need to act to combat domestic violence in Canada, and we have shocking statistics that clearly demonstrate the fact that intimate partner violence is a growing problem across Canada. More than 40% of women, that is more than 6.2 million Canadian women, have reported experiencing some kind of psychological, physical or sexual abuse in the context of their intimate partner relationships in their lifetime. For indigenous women, that number is 61%. For women with disabilities, it is 55%, and for lesbian, bisexual, non-binary and trans women, it is over 67%. These are shocking numbers.

One woman is still killed by an intimate partner every six days in this country, and as femicide in intimate partner relationships is almost always preceded by coercive and controlling behaviour, this bill would save lives.

Some may wonder what caused me to take up this issue in 2020. At the start of the pandemic, I did a call around to police and social services agencies in my riding. I heard universally that one main thing was happening, and that was a spike in domestic violence calls for assistance as a result of the pandemic. In fact, those rates of calls for assistance have not decreased, even as the pandemic measures have eased.

What I heard from police and frontline social services agencies, and in particular from women's shelters and anti-domestic violence agencies, was that this is something we should think of as a shadow pandemic. It was something that was being hidden because women

were being isolated at home during the pandemic, and it was even more difficult for them to reach out for assistance.

The second thing I heard, almost universally again, and in particular from both police and social services agencies, was their frustration at lacking the tools to offer help to those trapped in abusive relationships until there is physical violence. Local police recounted leaving many domestic violence calls without being able to help, yet they were certain they would be called back soon, and that the next call would involve physical violence. Shelters reported seeing the same women multiple times, but without the presence of physical violence, there was no ability to seek restraining orders or get removal of the abusive partner from the home.

Making coercive and controlling behaviour a criminal offence is not really about adding a new offence to the Criminal Code. Instead, it would recognize this behaviour is in itself a form of violence. It would move the point at which victims can get help to before physical violence occurs, instead of waiting until there are bruises and broken bones. Bill C-332 is not by itself a solution to the problem of intimate partner violence, but it is rather a tool for addressing abusive relationships before that violence turns physical.

In this debate, we heard a couple of concerns about the impacts of this bill. Certainly, when I began working on this topic, I did often hear that there is no accepted definition for what constitutes coercive and controlling behaviour. This bill would solve that problem by putting in law a very specific description of what this involves.

I have to say, most of those saying that they did not know what coercive and controlling behaviour looks like were men. From women, I almost universally heard about the kinds of coercive and controlling behaviour they, members of their family or their friends had been subjected to. They had no trouble recognizing this behaviour. In fact, I had to admit to myself that the lens of coercive and controlling behaviour helped explain a lot of the family dynamics from my own childhood.

A second concern we heard in this debate referred to the slow start in making effective use of the provisions in other jurisdictions where similar legislation has been adopted. It was adopted in the U.K. in 2015, in Ireland and Wales in 2019, and in New South Wales in Australia in 2022. Hawaii also has a similar provision. Measures to criminalize coercive and controlling behaviour are also moving forward in a number of other U.S. states.

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● (1920)

Studies looking at the U.K. show that there was a period of time before there was broad knowledge of the existence of the bill and how to make use of it, and this was not just among those who were victims, but also among police, prosecutors and social services agencies. However, this in itself is no reason for further delay. Similar studies show that the rates of charging and convictions in those other jurisdictions have steadily increased as both the public and enforcement agencies become aware of the possibilities in such a bill. So, we will probably go through the same period of adjustment in this country once we pass the bill, but, for me, that is a strong argument to get started now and not an argument for delay. We should remember that this bill in one form or another has now been before the House for three years.

Members will also have heard some concern that the bill would potentially have a negative impact on marginalized women as it might provide another tool to be used against them by their abusive partners. It has been suggested that the abusive partner might be able to accuse the victim of coercive and controlling behaviour. I have no doubt that this will happen, but I have three, admittedly somewhat impatient, responses to this concern. One is that it is in fact marginalized women, so, racialized women, new Canadians and indigenous women, who are most often the victims of coercive and controlling behaviour and often have the fewest resources to escape those relationships. My second response is to agree that, of course, the whole legal system systematically disadvantages marginalized women, but this is a broader reform we need to tackle in the justice system and not a reason to not proceed with this particular bill. Finally, I would say that I have never heard this concern raised by frontline social service agencies and, in particular, I have never heard this concern from those who serve marginalized women or from marginalized women themselves.

We should also recognize the broad community impacts that this bill will have, the positive impacts. Yes, women are the primary victims of coercive and controlling behaviour, but it is equally damaging in whatever context and whatever the gender of those being abused. Studies have shown that coercive and controlling behaviour is an equally large problem in the queer community. As well, we should also recognize that coercive and controlling behaviour does not just impact the victims but also their children in terms of physical safety and mental health. This is a particularly serious concern when relationships between mothers and their children are weaponized by abusive partners, and it is a particular concern when it comes to questions of child custody when someone is trying to leave such a situation.

At this point, I want to stop and thank all of those who have shared their personal experiences with me and my office. This is not an easy thing to do. We have heard from literally hundreds of women over the past four years, some expressing their thanks for recognizing coercive and controlling behaviour as a form of violence, some just for putting a name to what they were going through and recognizing they were not alone, but all of those women expressing their hope that we would press forward with this bill.

One conversation in particular still stands out for me. It was with a woman in my local constituency who holds a highly skilled job and a prominent position in our community. She said she would

like to tell her story publicly to show other women that this could happen to anyone, even to those who we would imagine have all the skills, abilities and resources to avoid or escape a coercive and controlling relationship. She wanted to tell that story, because she wants others to understand that it is never the victim's fault no matter how many times the abusive partner tries to make them believe that it is their fault. However, she cannot tell her story publicly yet as her ex-husband is still using child custody as a weapon in trying to reassert control over her.

To conclude, I did not introduce this bill in the beginning thinking it would pass immediately. I introduced it to try and get attention to the crisis that came about in parallel to the pandemic. However, when this report was adopted by the justice committee, I became hopeful that we could get this bill through, and here is where my thanks go to my NDP colleague for Victoria. She and I have been working closely on this and other important issues involving women and the law and, thankfully, the member for Victoria had a much luckier draw in the precedence for PMBs than me. My number would have been virtually last in this Parliament, but she was able to get it before us now, and here we are today.

● (1925)

Let me just say that I hope we advance this bill quickly. It would be a good way of showing Canadians that we, as parliamentarians, can work together effectively to tackle important problems. It would show that we understand that intimate partner violence is indeed an epidemic in our society. It would show that we are going to devote everything we can to fight it, not just with a new law, but also with a necessary—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to add my voice to the second reading debate on Bill C-332, an act to amend the Criminal Code on controlling or coercive conduct. This bill seeks to strengthen Canada's legislative framework and address intimate partner violence by proposing reforms that would protect victims of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships.

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A lot of people may ask what coercive control is. Coercive control is a form of intimate partner violence. It involves ongoing conduct that serves to subjugate victims and deprive them of their autonomy. We talk about life, liberty and freedom of the person; we have to put this in the context of what gender-based violence is.

I hear from constituents, who often call me in confidence to ask if something is coercive, controlling behaviour. Is it right for an intimate partner to control the finances, down to the last penny, of another person? Is it right for them to control access to their intimate partner, the person they are living with or are close to, and whom they engage with, hang out with, or go and get a coffee with?

We are tackling the broader issue and epidemic, as many of my colleagues have outlined, of gender-based violence, of women being killed, and of femicide occurring across the country, from coast to coast in all communities. As we do this, how do we make sure that we are being more proactive? How do we proactively try to put an end to that violence and that murder? We need to make sure that Canadians, in their homes and across our communities, are able to thrive and really get to their full potential as they go about their lives with that freedom and autonomy.

I was the chair of the justice committee when we did this study on coercive, controlling behaviour. We heard stories, from coast to coast, of people who have suffered the escalation of that violence, the escalation of that coercive control and the inability to control, leading to violence.

I think this bill has really good intentions. We listened to experts and their testimony within the justice committee and came to those recommendations. Those were very important pieces of evidence that informed the spirit of this bill. It is about saving lives. It is about preventing, in a proactive way, intimate partner violence as it occurs across our country.

We have seen so many tragic incidents, and we have lots of resources across the country to try to protect and save women from intimate partner violence. For example, in my community, we have the Safe Centre of Peel, which is a phenomenal project that brings community leaders and community organizations together to provide a wraparound service for those who are fleeing violence within my community. It is at its brink.

We cannot continue to fund these programs without also looking to see how we can proactively prevent these incidents from happening in the first place. We want to make sure that, when a woman tries to flee violence, she has the support system she needs in order to do so. We find that fleeing violence is often the most dangerous part for a woman who is trying to seek refuge, who is trying to find safety and autonomy.

I want to give a shout-out to our local chief of police, Chief Nish, who has been a phenomenal advocate for women within the region of Peel, ensuring that we provide safety and security for them.

● (1930)

We are talking about how to prevent it from happening in the first place. Yes, this legislation is very important. Yes, coercive and controlling behaviour precedes what often becomes violent behaviour and often puts women's and children's lives in danger. As

we talk about awareness and making sure we bring our male allies into this conversation, I believe that the spirit of this bill is a step in the right direction. It would help in educating people and ensuring there is legal and criminal recourse for those who are seeking protection. Our legal system should be able to protect them.

There are a number of concerns that I, along with a number of my constituents and people across the country, have raised. One is what coercive or controlling behaviour is. Are people going to say that someone looked at them in a bad way and now they feel they need to modify their behaviour? Is that coercive or controlling behaviour? That is something we need to explore a little more to define those terms. How do we, in a court of law, prove that coercive or controlling behaviour has occurred? Those are things that need to be explored further in this bill.

When we try to ensure the safety of people in our constituencies, we try to do it through a gendered lens that makes sure we take into account the totality of the context of a person's lived experience. As members in the House have said before, we have to ensure that new immigrants coming to Canada have the awareness and ability to be able to protect themselves. Members can imagine a new family coming to Canada, the woman having previously been bound to her home to take care of young kids, not having financial freedom and now having to deal with the frustrations and tensions of moving to a new country and what could be coercive or controlling behaviour.

With bills like this, it is also important for us to provide the supports for the victims alongside the legislation. When we talk about making sure that coercive or controlling behaviour is included in the Criminal Code, we have to make sure we are providing supports to those seeking refuge from that as well. We have to make sure that institutions such as the Safe Centre of Peel are scaled up and located across the country for all who need the support so they can seek refuge and support, not just for themselves but also for their children.

We also want to make sure that this bill is balanced. I am sure there are tensions in every relationship. I am sure everyone has outbursts and exchanges of words, and that is why it is so important to define what coercive and controlling behaviour is in that context and with the evidentiary burden to prove it in court will be. I do not want people to think that raising one's voice or having a heated, open and honest discussion with one's partner is criminal. Those are normal things. However, at what point do we have to push that before it becomes abusive, violent or life-threatening. The issue of gender-based violence is significant in our country. It is a hidden pandemic.

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We need to make sure that we prevent this from happening. This bill is an excellent first step toward getting there. I am looking forward to it going to committee to explore it and make sure we are doing the right thing and finding the right balance of separating it out and making sure that, while we live healthy lives together, we are also preventing violence from occurring. I am looking forward to following this very closely, as I did in the justice committee with this report and its recommendations, and to this bill passing in the House, with the concerns I have raised.

● (1935)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, everyone in the House should feel the urgency and the necessity of tackling intimate partner violence and gender-based violence. As has been said, every six days in Canada, a woman is killed from intimate partner violence. This fact is not new, yet the Liberals, and the Conservatives before them, have not addressed it adequately. New Democrats refuse to stand idly by while countless individuals, primarily women and girls, face physical and psychological trauma and fear for their lives on a daily basis.

Intimate partner violence and gender-based violence are not just private matters; they are systemic issues rooted deeply in ingrained inequalities and power imbalances in Canada. It is women, especially those from marginalized communities, who experience the worst of this violence.

We also know that individuals with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by this kind of violence. People with disabilities experience higher levels of intimate partner violence, and they face unique barriers to accessing support and escaping abusive situations. As the NDP critic for disability and inclusion, too many times I hear from residents who say that there is not enough research done on this, that there is not enough data on this and that there is not enough investment from the government in understanding the impact of domestic violence on persons with disabilities. Therefore, I encourage the government to invest in more research on violence against persons with disabilities, all genders.

I also want to note that indigenous women face higher levels of violence and that the current government has failed to meaningfully tackle the horrific levels of violence experienced by indigenous women, girls and 2 people. The Liberal government could immediately address some of that violence by investing in housing.

In 2019, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre presented a report called "Red Women Rising" at the Metro Vancouver indigenous relations committee. The presenter said that no woman should be homeless on her own land. That really stuck with me, and I hope the Liberals will make the investments needed to ensure that every single indigenous woman and every single indigenous person has a home to call their own.

We cannot achieve an equitable and just society until we address the underlying structures that enable and perpetuate this kind of violence. As a New Democrat, I am committed to dismantling these systems of oppression and creating a society where everyone lives free from violence. All New Democrats are committed to that. A society where everyone has a home and has access to full and universal health care and pharmacare is also something the current Liberal government needs to move on immediately.

I want to acknowledge the work of survivors, frontline organizations and advocates who helped to make Bill C-332 a possibility. I also want to thank my colleagues: the MP for Victoria, for bringing this important piece of legislation forward; and the MP for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, for his work on criminalizing coercive and controlling behaviour. We would not be here without the commitment of those people.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is a form of abuse that so many people, especially women, have experienced and that many are experiencing today, living in fear in their own homes. It is a form of domestic violence that, rather than a single instance, is a repeated pattern of behaviour by the perpetrator. This pattern often includes physical violence and sexual violence, but in many instances, it starts with other types of abuse, like humiliation, threats and attempts to take away the person's support systems and independence. Often, that means limiting transportation options, like taking car keys or intentionally damaging vehicles, and also controlling their access to communication, like taking or breaking cell-phones. It also often involves limiting access to bank accounts, passports and immigration documents.

We know that 95% of people who report physical abuse also report coercive control; they correlate. We need women and girls to know what these abusive red flags are and to know what this kind of abusive behaviour is and that it is unacceptable. It has terrible impacts on the person's mental health. It often means they live in fear of violence all the time. Too frequently, it ends in tragedy.

● (1940)

These stories are all too common. Coercive control is not only a serious issue on its own but also so often it is precursor to physical violence. This is an opportunity to stop physical harm before it happens.

I want to take a moment here to recognize an organization called BOLT Safety Society, a youth-funded, not-for-profit, building safer and equitable communities. I have known the women in this organization for many years. I am happy to say that my office in Port Moody—Coquitlam is called a safe hub. It is a place where women and gender-diverse residents can come and get information about support groups in our community and also to get a wellness kit, if they need it.

I want to thank BOLT Safety for their work, and I want to thank them for raising the issue with young women and diverse genders of what coercive and controlling behaviour looks like. Coercive control is one of the most common risk factors for femicide, even in cases where there were no instances of physical violence before the murder.

Passing this legislation gives victims and police the tools they need to prevent some of the most tragic examples of intimate partner violence. It is time we said, “enough is enough”. Years ago, the justice committee recommended criminalizing coercive and controlling behaviour in Canada, but the Liberal government, despite its claims to be feminist, has not acted. It continues to delay and disappoint.

All parties should listen to survivors, listen to frontline organizations, make sure we support those who experience this kind of abuse and give victims the tools they need to leave the situation.

I am urging every member in the House to take immediate action to protect women and victims of intimate partner violence, and to support this important bill. This is one important step in tackling gender-based violence and working to eradicate intimate partner violence from our communities forever.

● (1945)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Victoria for her right of reply.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, we must tackle gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. I want to thank all of my colleagues who have spoken today and in the past on this bill. Many of us have shared stories of friends and family members who have experienced abuse, as well as constituents we have heard from. This is so common and so pervasive, and so many of us, too many people, have witnessed our loved ones in these situations or experienced it first-hand.

Almost always, this physical violence takes place after repeated patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour, as 95% of victims of intimate partner violence report coercive control. It is one of the most common precursors to physical violence. It is also one of the biggest risk factors for femicide, even when there has been no physical violence.

If we give women ways to speak out and get support early, we can take a meaningful step in ending femicide with this bill.

I had the recent opportunity to meet with Angie's Angels. This is a group including the family members of Angie Sweeney, who is a victim of a murder-suicide that took place in the fall in Sault Ste. Marie. She was a victim of coercive and controlling behaviour, and her death is a failure of this government to tackle intimate partner violence and to protect women.

Angie's story is not unique. I recently spoke to a father who lost his daughter to intimate partner violence, and he said to me that his daughter would still be alive if a bill like this had passed.

Survivors have shared their stories with me, saying that this bill would have been life-changing if it had been in place when they were in the situation of coercive control. One of those survivors is my sister, and I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for her

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courage in allowing me to share her story. I have been blown away by the courage of survivors. Passing this bill would change lives and save lives.

It has been over two years since the justice committee studied this topic and recommended that the government make these changes, but we have seen no action. This is urgently needed. Every six days, a woman is killed by an intimate partner. We cannot wait, so I ask my colleagues to move this bill swiftly through the House to ensure it passes. We have heard from every party that they support this important change, so I am asking that we not have a recorded vote and that it be sent to the justice committee without delay.

Let us come together today and not falter in our duty to protect victims from the insidious grip of coercive control. Let us ensure that we pass this bill and affirm our commitment to ending gender-based violence and preventing femicide, and to justice, dignity and the sanctity of every individual.

● (1950)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I ask that this bill be adopted on division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

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[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I want to speak about the fact that so many Canadians are suffering from losing or potentially losing their housing.

Recently in the House, I asked the housing minister what the government was going to do about keeping seniors in their rental homes as many of the affordable rental homes for seniors are being gutted for luxury condos. Luxury condo developers are buying up land, getting it rezoned and upzoned, and displacing the people who have lived in those homes for 10, 20, 30 years, and sometimes longer.

I was at a redevelopment where a 70-year-old senior asked if I could help find a long-term care home, because a developer had come and bought up that low-rise rental housing and there was nowhere for that senior to go.

I was talking to an educational assistant in her 60s who wants to retire, but is being displaced in my community of Port Moody—Coquitlam. She told me that she has nowhere to go. She has spent her entire career supporting families in this community, sibling after sibling. She loves the community, but is being pushed out by greed.

I think about the fact that the government continues to miss the mark on supporting and protecting rental homes. Conservatives lost 800,000 affordable homes. Liberals have done nothing to make up for those losses and it is affecting people on the ground.

I also want to talk about transit. We know that we need more public transit investment. The Liberal government is so far behind on its investments in communities, it would much rather spend its money on greedy CEOs who want new freezers than make sure that EAs and the seniors who have lived in our communities forever are being displaced. That is where the Liberals are focused. That is what they want to do.

Therefore, I am here today to ask the Liberal government this. Why it is so hard for it to invest in communities and people? Why is it missing the boat on transit? The Metro Vancouver mayors have been here advocating for a transit investment. The infrastructure minister said that they will get it two years from now. That is not good enough. If they do not get the money for two years, they cannot even build for another two on top of that.

What is the Liberal government doing to make sure that communities are kept whole, and that people have a place to live and transit to use?

- (1955)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is quite the contrary. The government has made historic investments in transit infrastructure.

Though my prepared remarks and the question were originally based on housing, I am happy to have a conversation with the hon. member on the transit investments not only in British Columbia, but throughout the country.

The Government of Canada shares the hon. member's concern with respect to housing that far too many Canadians are struggling to keep a roof over their head, and those affected most are our most vulnerable neighbours. That is why we are urgently addressing this issue.

Finding solutions to Canada's housing crisis is one of our top priorities. We are already making deep investments in affordable housing through the national housing strategy. This \$82-billion plan focuses, first and foremost, on providing housing for our most vulnerable neighbours: women and children fleeing family violence, seniors, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, those dealing with mental health and addiction issues, veterans and young adults.

The rapid housing initiative, for example, is expected to create more than 15,500 permanent affordable homes across the country. These homes are being built rapidly to address the most urgent needs of those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Several cities in my colleague's province have already benefited from this funding, including Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby.

The national housing co-investment fund is another program geared toward helping our most vulnerable populations. It provides low-cost loans and contributions to non-profit organizations to build affordable housing. It has already committed funding to build close to 40,000 new homes and repair more than 126,000 existing homes.

In addition, our new housing accelerator fund will provide incentives to municipalities to make the changes they need to get more homes built faster. This will help clear up red tape and make the zoning changes needed to quickly get more shovels in the ground.

At the same time, we know more must be done because, while the NHS is on track to meet its goals, it is not enough. Far too many Canadians continue to struggle to find adequate and affordable housing. We are rolling up our sleeves and working even harder and smarter with partners across the housing sector to make a difference.

The recently announced GST exemption and additional financing available through Canada Mortgage Bonds recently announced by Finance Canada will also help spur construction of purpose-built rentals. This will go a long way to addressing the shortage of rental homes, bringing down rents for middle-income and low-income Canadians alike.

I invite my colleague and all members of this House to work with their communities to make the most of the national housing strategy programs and other initiatives.

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I also invite all members to stay tuned for news of more of the measures we will be introducing to address Canada's urgent housing shortage and bring back housing affordability for all.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I find it really frustrating that the government brings prepared notes, because they can only answer one thing and do one thing at a time.

I want to talk about the fact that in my riding there was the first-ever purpose-built rental building built about five years ago after 40 years. The Liberal government had promised a GST exemption in its 2015 election campaign, and that is why we got that building in Coquitlam. Then the Liberal government reneged on the promise, and it cost the developer \$500,000 in GST. The government received many letters from the developer, and nothing was ever done about it.

I know the Liberals cannot do two things at once, but I want to talk about tradespeople who are being exploited by the government. No lack of doctors—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member would get up to criticize a member for reading from notes, when she was holding a note in her own hand and reading from it; unfortunately that is what we are dealing with tonight.

She did have a very good question on housing, with respect to vulnerable people. I agree; more needs to be done. The government has proposed many measures. I look forward to her community's stepping up and applying. I look forward to more housing announcements throughout the country, especially for seniors, whom she addressed in her question and many of whom are at risk. We are ready to work across the aisle to get the projects built.

• (2000)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, four months ago I was on an airplane, and my phone started going off. I knew what was happening when I saw images of women with blood between their legs, in their sweat pants. Four months ago today, an atrocity of gender-based violence was committed by Hamas against Jewish women, because they were Jewish. It was an extreme example of the use of rape and gender-based violence as a tool of war. These women were used as a tool of extremism and genocide, and the world did not care.

We went through the #MeToo movement. Across the world, it does not matter what religion women are and it does not matter where they are, women's bodies are always used as tools of war and oppression, but this was an extreme example of that. After the #MeToo movement and after the world's lack of recognition of what happened to these women four months ago, I had to wonder whether it is "me too, except if I am a Jew".

Canada's response on this, the fact that the Canadian government was so slow to condemn the rape and torture of Jewish women by Hamas, is a stain on Canada's ability to speak up against gender-based violence, and that has not been addressed in this place adequately in any way, shape or form.

When I asked at the time the question I am posing again today, which is whether the government would condemn, and push the United Nations to condemn, the rape of Jewish women, there was obfuscation. I am just going to say that everybody should be uncomfortable with that in this place. I stood here years ago, making the same case for Yazidi women who were raped, tortured and sold into sexual slavery at the hands of ISIS. They still have no justice to this day. In fact, some of the perpetrators and the sympathizers of the rapists and torturers were welcomed back into Canada with open arms.

Do members know what happens when there is no justice for rapists? That says to do it again with impunity, and that is exactly what happened on October 7. That uncomfortable truth should make the skin of every person in this room crawl with shame.

Rape and torture as a method of war should make nobody comfortable. There should be zero comfort with that, and the fact that the Canadian government took so long, equivocated and put up its finger to test where the political winds were blowing before condemning the rape and torture of women is really disgusting. Therefore, I will ask the government this: Why did it take so long for the government to condemn? I do not even think the government has done that.

What is the government doing? What actions is it taking to reform the UN to ensure that the delay it took in condemning the rape of Israeli women—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question and follow-up from the hon. member. She is right that what occurred was absolutely horrific.

I will reiterate what the government has stated, that we are all appalled by the alarming reports of brutal and targeted sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and against hostages they took on that day. We call for a rigorous investigation that prioritizes the rights, needs and safety of those affected.

Using sexual violence as a tactic of war is a crime. We support Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law. Hamas is listed as a terrorist organization in Canada, and the Government of Canada has a no-contact policy with this entity.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has publicly stated that we believe Israeli women. Sexual and gender-based violence increases and is exacerbated by conflict and crisis settings. Too often, issues faced by women, such as those faced by all women across this conflict today, are secondary considerations in conflict situations. That is why, for over 25 years, Canada has historically led on the biennial resolution on the elimination of violence against women and girls at the Human Rights Council.

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Canada has also supported the UN Security Council resolutions on conflict-related sexual violence since 2000.

Canada has a feminist foreign policy and a feminist international assistance policy that also prioritize the protection and needs of women in conflict situations. This means, for example, that Canada continues to implement the women, peace and security agenda, which helps ensure that women and girls are fully part of our response.

UN Women is a long-standing partner of Canada when it comes to advancing gender equality globally. We value the excellent work of the agency, in many challenging contexts, to promote the empowerment of women and girls, as well as its global leadership on emerging issues impacting the health and rights of women and girls around the world. UN Women, which the original question was about, publicly stated, “We unequivocally condemn the brutal attacks by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. We are alarmed by the numerous accounts of gender-based atrocities and sexual violence during those attacks.”

We expect UN Women, the UN system and member states to draw swift attention to conflict-related sexual violence and ensure that humanitarian response efforts adequately address the needs and rights of crisis-affected women and girls, in all contexts.

In addition, the UN special representative, Pramila Patten, has expressed grave concern about reports of sexual violence against hostages in Hamas captivity and accepted an Israeli invitation to make an official visit to Israel to learn first-hand about the experiences of victims and survivors. Canada welcomed that statement and the visit. We support her engagement on this matter.

As leaders in upholding and advancing the women, peace and security agenda, Canada calls upon its partners to go a step further. We must not only put the security of women and girls first and foremost, but we must also ensure that women's voices are a part of finding a solution.

In conclusion, every woman and girl has the right to live free from violence, regardless of their religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and social and economic status. Let us stand together to protect all women and girls in this terrible conflict and prioritize women's leadership in all aspects of a future peace process.

• (2005)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I believe that the head of the UN Women association that my colleague mentioned made some sort of ridiculous statement about the need for the victims of this sexual violence to do more, saying that they were not doing enough to get justice. No, the world owes these survivors justice.

UN Women has done nothing, zero. Right now, the Canadian government should be condemning UN Women for its inaction and looking to reform the agency to actually get justice for the survivors of sexual violence, be it Israeli women or the women of the Yazidi community, who have seen no justice for the atrocities they have endured.

What material actions is the Canadian government taking to reform UN Women? What leverage are they using to see reforms so justice for women is not platitudes and asking—

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, once again, we are appalled by the alarming reports of the brutal and targeted sexual violence and gender-based violence perpetrated by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and call for rigorous investigation, prioritizing the rights, needs and safety of those affected. UN Women has also unequivocally condemned the brutal attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7, including the reports of sexual and gender-based violence.

The UN special representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, has accepted an invitation to Israel where she will hear the testimonies of survivors of the Hamas attacks and meet with former hostages.

The Prime Minister has spoken about the impact made by Canadian Israeli peace activist Vivian Silver, who was killed by Hamas in Israel on October 7. He praised her dedication to building bridges between Israelis and Palestinians, and he noted that she exemplifies what it means to be Canadian and to be engaged in the world in positive ways.

• (2010)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:10 p.m.)

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