



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

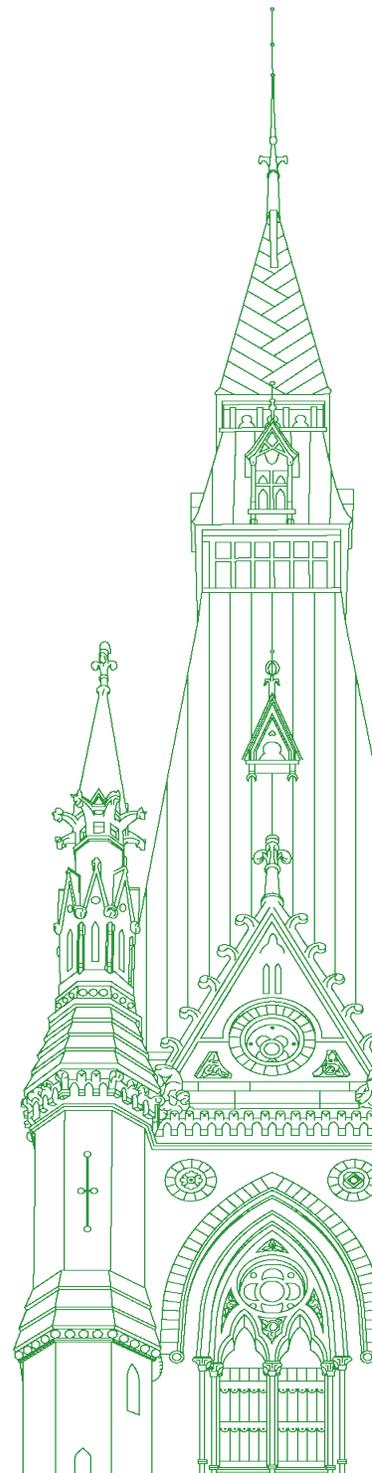
EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 019**

Monday, June 15, 2020

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Chair: Mr. Sean Casey





## Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Monday, June 15, 2020

• (1405)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting 19 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Pursuant to the orders of reference of April 11 and May 26, 2020, the committee is resuming its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's meeting is taking place by video conference and the proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website. The webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entire committee.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, please click on the microphone icon to activate your mike.

Before we get started, I would like to remind everyone, especially the witnesses, to please use the language channel of the language you are speaking. If you're switching between Canada's two official languages, you also need to switch the channel before you do that. It will greatly aid with interpretation.

I would now like to thank the witnesses for coming back today to answer questions. The committee was quite interested in hearing more after hearing your opening statements, and we're glad that you have accepted our invitation to reappear.

We have, from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Angela Bonfanti, senior vice-president, foundation programs, and, from the Canadian Women's Foundation, Paulette Senior, president and CEO.

As you have already given your opening statements on June 4, we're going to begin right away with rounds of questions, starting with the Conservatives and Ms. Vecchio for six minutes.

Ms. Vecchio, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Once again, thank you to the witnesses for returning. I was really looking forward to speaking to you, especially after hearing your testimony.

Paulette, I'm going to focus on a lot of the work you've done because I recognize that you have been part of one of the organizations that has received funding from the federal government. Can

you share with me how you received the funding, how you rolled it out to these organizations and the time frame? If you could, just give me a short idea on how that happened.

**Ms. Paulette Senior (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women's Foundation):** Sure, I'd be happy to do that. Thank you for the question. It's great to see you again.

We have been one of the organizations working closely with Women and Gender Equality to provide funding to the sector. Back in April, we were able to secure \$3 million that we provided specifically to sexual assault centres.

As you've probably heard, the increase in gender-based violence and violence against women, not just in Canada but certainly globally, has been documented far and wide. Women in Canada are similarly impacted. We've been able to distribute \$3 million to 93 sexual assault centres across the country.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Ninety-three? Okay.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** That was completed over a two-week period.

Then, most recently, we were able to again work with Women and Gender Equality to start distributing, as of last week, \$10 million specifically to non-sexual-assault centres, non-shelter, but GVB organizations. In total, we identified, together with WAGE, about 450, and we'll be distributing funds to them over the next week or two.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thanks very much.

Specifically on the 93 sexual assault centres—because I know that the money absolutely needs to go there—how were they eligible? How were they chosen to get this funding? I recognize that there wasn't a normal application or anything of that sort. I have heard from many sexual assault centres that were not eligible. Trust me, I know what a tremendous job you do there, but what does that mean? Were they not part of a network?

How did it work that those centres may have been chosen in places, but some organizations, such as the London Abused Women's Centre, would not have been able to receive funding like that? Can you share a little information on eligibility?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** We distributed funding to sexual assault centres throughout the country, those that were identified by us, but also through WAGE, so if there are those that we have missed that are not connected to hospitals, for example—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** They have to be connected to hospitals...?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Yes. If they're connected with hospitals, they were not on the list.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I think it's important to note that.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Women's College Hospital would be a good example of that, right? They did not make the list.

These were stand-alone sexual assault centres. However, we do have a bit of contingency, so if there are those that we have missed for some reason, we can actually turn around and make sure they get that funding.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Absolutely. I just want to go on to that. Like I said, I've done a few different calls. The money had to get out, and I know that. Your organization as well as Women's Shelters Canada do fantastic jobs here in Canada, but not everybody's part of that network. I have spoken to many, many organizations that were not able to get this funding.

You're saying there's a \$10-million contingency fund. How do people apply? How did they get their names into it? Places like the London Abused Women's Centre and others around the country, how do they now become eligible for it if they were not picked in the first place?

• (1410)

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** First of all, let me say that shelters across the country, gender-based shelters or those dealing with violence against women, would have gotten funding through the national women's shelter, Women's Shelters Canada. That's not within our purview at this time.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes, there was that money, and I note there were 400-some-odd that did, but there were about 500 that didn't.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** That's right.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yours is specifically with assault centres, then.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Yes, and that was the \$3 million. This \$10 million is for organizations that are not sexual assault centres. We've been working with WAGE to develop that list. We have worked for weeks to refine the list. We even got information from all the provinces and territories to work on the list. The full list was 450 GBV organizations across the country. The intent is for these organizations to receive \$25,000 each. If you do the math, you'll know that's more than \$10 million. I believe that work is still being done at WAGE and other government departments to make sure that we can fund the full 450.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** In looking at this, then, specifically, I just want to fill in those gaps. The people who received funding from March 13 onward were only that initial group that would have received the money from Shelters, Indigenous Services, as well as the Women's Shelters Canada, the Women's Foundation and indigenous....

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** That's right.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** All of those other ones have not received any funding yet.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Not as yet.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's one of my concerns. How is money getting out the door? If they have not received it yet, they're been more than three months into a pandemic without these resources.

As you indicated, we have seen sexual assault go up 400 times in some communities. It's hard; we have seen increases of between 45% and 400%, so those are huge things. What can we do? I mean, I recognize it takes time, but we're getting these lists done. How much longer can organizations wait? That's my question.

**The Chair:** Give a short answer, please, Ms. Senior. We're out of time, but go ahead and answer it briefly, please.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** We've started the process already. They don't have to apply; we just reach out to them. We have developed a one-page registration list that we sent to them to include all of their banking information, to confirm their charitable number, etc. We make sure all of that is correct, and then we wire them the money directly. It's a very simple process; there is no application process.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** All right. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Senior.

Thank you, Ms. Vecchio.

Mr. Long, you have six minutes.

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon to everybody. Certainly, in keeping with the theme of things, I don't have any dogs or birds in the background, but I have a couple of mice that just ran through the office this morning.

I want to thank you, Ms. Bonfanti, for being patient with us and coming back. My questions are for you. I certainly want to thank you for the incredible work that CNIB does across Canada. Can you comment on how you feel our government's proposed \$600 top-up for disability tax credit certificate holders would help those the CNIB serves during this incredibly challenging time?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti (Senior Vice-President, Foundation Programs, Canadian National Institute for the Blind):** I'm happy to answer that question, Mr. Long. We believe it is definitely a step in the right direction. Certainly, prior to last week's announcement, we had our concerns about clawbacks provincially and how those could impact individuals' overall income.

The fact these are one-time is a bit of a debate in the community. I don't think anyone's going to get over the magnitude the pandemic has had on their lives in a matter of a few weeks.

We would encourage continued discussions around this great first step. I hope it's followed by many more, just because individuals living with a disability already have to deal with additional challenges in the workforce and in many other areas, whether academic or other types of career fields. It's just going to get worse if we don't allow them to have more resources in their hands to progress and navigate through the storm.

• (1415)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Sure. Thanks for that.

What kind of feedback are you getting from your members?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** It's just that. I mean up until last week I heard very different testimony here around what the government should do, so I think it's definitely welcomed, but again it is very much one time. We're three months into this and I think that the ramifications are going to be long set. We hope there's more where that came from.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thanks for that.

I have one final question: What would your message to parliamentarians be in response to the opposition's refusal to allow the legislation required to implement this benefit to move forward in the House of Commons last week? I know certainly in this office we heard a lot of feedback on that.

Do you have any message to us as parliamentarians?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** It would be to keep working. This is not an easy journey to navigate, and we realize there are obstacles every which way, but do not lose sight of the community that is at the heart here.

We understand there are issues. This is a process, something that is new and these are uncharted waters for us as well. We want the legislation to pass quickly, end of story. We need this to move.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to share the rest of my time with my colleague MP Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Long.

Ms. Bonfanti, thanks for being here. Along the same line of questioning, can you give me an estimate of the number of people who are blind in Canada?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** The most recent number, according to StatsCan, is that there are over 1.5 million Canadians living with significant and untreatable sight loss.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I know that sight loss, being blind, is one of the criteria for qualifying for the disability tax credit the federal government offers. Do we have any idea how many actually qualify?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** No, we do not. The research hasn't been conducted.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Okay. I know that our estimate was that 1.25 million people would be eligible for that disability tax credit, that \$600 one-time payment. How many members of the blind or sight loss community do you think would actually benefit?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** Hopefully all of them would, but we are issuing a number of surveys right now among our community just to understand how these are rolling out so that we can provide that feedback based on actual surveys conducted across the country.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Our government has tried to get money out the door to people in need and has really prioritized efficiency and speed. It's really too bad that this process has been slowed down significantly. Last week in the House I was really unhappy to see that get stalled in Parliament, based on the Conservatives not supporting it.

What is the message to your community out there?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** Frankly, the message comes to us and then we share it with you, but again it is to pass it quickly. It is that there are so many competing priorities for the government in this pandemic. It's the first of our kind. We understand that, but we're too often lost in the mix. The disability community is very often lost in the mix. We run the risk of that happening as time continues to accumulate.

We understand these are new measures. We empathize. This is not easy, but there are real people living at a disadvantage right now who cannot afford any further delays.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** How is this delay going to affect them?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** The delay affects them in many ways. We have a 28% employment rate in Canada among the blind and partially sighted community alone. That is the lowest in the disability community. Already being part of that cohort and already living from... and there are a multitude of diagnoses, not just blindness in many, many cases.

We're already worried about people not being able to make their ends meet at a time where physical distancing is creating new challenges such as not being permitted to go to certain grocery stores due to a lack of education among staff and general Canadians, really not knowing what blindness means. They've had to take additional measures to make sure that they can put food in their fridge, for example. This credit is much needed and we need more.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bonfanti and thank you, Mr. Turnbull.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

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

I thank Ms. Bonfanti for her presentation. I am in contact with many organizations working with disabled individuals in my constituency, so I am well aware of the difficulties they are experiencing, especially during this pandemic. I, too, take issue with some parties not seeing how important this matter is. In fact, last week, we were the ones who asked that the bill be split to provide assistance faster to people with disabilities. I share that desire to help them as quickly as possible.

Having said that, my questions will be for Paulette Senior, president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Women's Foundation. We know that COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the health, behaviours and activities of Canadians, particularly Canadian and Quebec women. We know that confinement has caused a lot of tension and that, for many women, it is cause for concern.

According to a Statistics Canada survey, about 1 woman in 10 fears potential violence in their families. About 8% to 10% of female respondents expressed that fear. At the end of March, the SOS violence conjugale hotline in Quebec reported a 15% increase in calls related to the confinement measures. In her mandate letter, the minister said she wanted to address gender-based violence.

In concrete terms, can you give us examples of measures you would like to see as part of such an action plan? Also, what can we expect?

• (1420)

[English]

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Well, I think the pandemic has really revealed some of the issues that were already there and exacerbated them. It's important that as we move forward, particularly as we start to think about recovery, we consider all of the various elements that have made women, particularly women in vulnerable circumstances, involving violence, poverty and other issues that are compounded by gender inequality.... We really need to think about these measures that will be necessary to support the strive toward gender equality. These are, to me, all aspects of what make up a gender-equal society. The pandemic has really widened the chasm of cracks that were already present.

A national action plan to address issues of gender-based violence needs to consider all of that, and then I think it needs to be resourced appropriately to be able to address them, so that we're not losing ground as we come out of the recovery.

If we look at issues around women who are paid minimum wage, or just above minimum wage but certainly not a living wage, we're seeing that a lot of these women have, during the pandemic, been providing quite a bit of what we have now accepted to be essential services. Whether they are women who are providing personal support assistance or working in grocery stores or other areas that we've deemed to be essential, we think it's important that we consider how we are planning the recovery and how we're thinking through all of these issues we have seen raise their ugly heads even more during the pandemic.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** Empowering women economically means giving them what they need to get out of much more difficult environments and situations of violence. That is kind of what I am hearing in your answer.

As part of the response to COVID-19, the government has introduced financial measures to help families, such as the Canada Child Benefit. However, it is not quite enough to ensure that women have an equal opportunity to succeed.

What measures could the government take to secure a place for women in the economic recovery?

The Pay Equity Act has not yet taken effect. What remains to be done, and why is it important to work on this legislation?

[English]

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** That's a great question. I think it's critical as we look at the measures that are needed to make sure that we can finally have pay equity as an important measure in Canada....

However, there also are other wrongs, such as child care. Now we know that child care is good for everyone, not just for women, but for everyone. As we think about recovery, then we also need to consider the importance of ensuring that child care is available and that it's affordable and accessible, all of the things we've been saying for decades now. It's to make sure that it's available to all in Canada who need it. I think it's important that we think about all of the critical structural measures that need to be in place to support a healthy and strong economic recovery.

• (1425)

[Translation]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** I agree with you completely. In Quebec, we have understood the importance of child care. We have child care. I hope it will be taken into account if we talk about it again. In Quebec, it is already done, it is already part of how we operate.

I will now turn to the current crisis. As you said, many workers were often underpaid, especially women. In fact, most underpaid workers are often female.

Do you feel that recognizing that could lead to a reassessment of certain working conditions, as is the case for healthcare workers in Quebec, and to a reflection on the way in which essential worker positions are valued? We say they are essential workers, but they are often underpaid, much like women.

Is reconsidering their value really important?

[English]

**The Chair:** I'd like a short answer, please. We're out of time.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** This is a truly unique opportunity we have before us in Canada today. I agree that it's clearly and primarily women who are underpaid. We're even seeing it during this particular time. It's women who have been most impacted, because they've lost the most jobs. In fact, 58% of folks who have lost their jobs happen to be women. Moreover, the women in underpaid jobs are not just women, but racialized women, immigrant women and women with disabilities.

All of these particular aspects need to be considered as we think through the recovery from the pandemic.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Thank you, Ms. Senior.

Next we're going to Ms. Kwan, for six minutes, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for agreeing to come back so we can engage in this dialogue.

Ms. Senior, I'd like to ask about the \$10 million the federal government offered to support women's organizations.

Some weeks ago, we had the Battered Women's Support Services before our committee. Angela MacDougall indicated that they did not receive any funding from the federal government, yet their organization was absolutely slammed with an increase in calls. We need to support women who are faced with violence issues.

Would that \$10 million go to organizations like the Battered Women's Support Services?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Absolutely. We received funds last week. We sent out notifications to organizations that they need to fill out the registration form. We have begun to receive those registration forms. On Friday we received close to 80. Those forms need to be completed and sent to us, and then we will subsequently wire the funds. There should be very little delay in their receiving the funds, along with hundreds of other organizations in the country.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** One of the issues that were raised was that the \$10 million is going to be deficient, given the need out there. It was suggested that we should increase the amount to at least \$20 million. What are your thoughts on the amount?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** A lot of effort has been made to ensure that, in this particular round of the \$10 million, they're getting close to the same amount as the sexual assault centres and the shelters, which is around \$25,000 each.

I agree with you that this is a low amount. It's certainly not enough, and it's really only about immediate needs. For BWSS and the Assaulted Women's Helpline here in Toronto, it really is a drop in the bucket. Everyone we've spoken with realizes that, but it's very much welcome.

More is needed, and after speaking with some of the folks at WAGE, I know they've been working hard to add additional dollars to the \$10 million.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** You talked about the programs that need to be in place going forward and that a number of things are needed for women's organizations. As an example, one of the issues that came up, which has been an issue for years and years, is core funding for organizations. Would that be something you recommend?

• (1430)

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Beyond a doubt it is definitely needed. We know, for example, that for organizations that have been responding and providing programs and services to keep women safe in this country from issues of gender-based violence, this is a \$7.4-billion problem, based on the numbers I heard the last time I checked, in terms of the funding that's required, and also for the responses from hospitals and other kinds of services that need to respond.

Therefore, we need to be able to respond, both similarly and robustly, with the funding the sector needs. We support that. It's important to provide core funding to these organizations so that they don't have to spend all of their time, energy and resources continually applying for more and more project funding.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you.

As you mentioned, if there's anything positive that we can take out of this pandemic, it is to plan ahead, and this is our opportunity to do so. Regarding investment into the future and for women in particular, racialized women, low-income earners, immigrant women, etc., dealing with the issue of universal child care and making a national program would be essential, along with ensuring that people are housed in safe, secure and affordable housing.

I'm wondering about women's support. What would you say are the top three priorities the government should focus on with respect to a national stimulus program in support of women and minority women?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** In 2008 the stimulus package that was provided was mainly about what I would call blue-collar jobs. That was appropriate then even though we still didn't get enough funding to actually respond to women's needs.

The impact this time around has really been primarily on women, and particularly women who are earning under \$15 an hour. I think it's important to look at really understanding the importance of a living wage as well as looking at what essential work is and actually paying people accordingly.

Pay equity is critical as part of that. Child care is an important rung as well, as is addressing gender-based violence. Those are the three that would be critical in that area.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Would you support something like a universal direct payment for all?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I think it's certainly something worth having more conversations about to see what it would look like. I'm not an economist, so I can't speak to the particular details around it, but I think it is worth having conversations about it, because it would ensure the least among us are able to actually have the safe support they need so they're not left to the whims of what happens in the economy or whether organizations are able to get enough money to provide those supports.

It's worth having further conversations around what would best fit our own needs in Canada.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Senior.

Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Next we're going to go Ms. Falk.

Go ahead, please, for five minutes.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I would also like to thank our witnesses for their previous testimony and welcome them back to the HUMA committee.

I just want to mention for the record that the bill the Liberal members on this committee are referring to that was presented last week was an omnibus bill. I was very disappointed when the Conservatives' motion to reconvene Parliament to consider the government's legislation was rejected. I, as well as my Conservative colleagues, am ready every single day to return to Parliament to do the full scope of work that Canadians have elected us to do.

My first question is for Angela Bonfanti with CNIB. I know that CNIB has put forward a list of recommendations to improve accessibility to existing supports, particularly around the Canada emergency response benefit. As has been mentioned already in this meeting, months into this crisis the Prime Minister has announced some supports for persons with disabilities, but unfortunately needs—and we know this—don't wait for these supports to become available. The government is now playing catch-up in this area.

I'm just wondering if you can speak to the importance of flexibility in designing these relief measures and the importance of having an accessibility lens from the outset in creating government programs.

• (1435)

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** I'm happy to answer that question, Ms. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** It's really important for us to talk about the fact that this is not a one-pronged approach. The stimulus is a great first step for individuals. We also need to be talking about accessibility and inclusion from the legislative side of things. We also need to be talking about employers and the incentivization to help ensure that people with disabilities continue to join the workforce as we go.

We were very vocal throughout the development of Bill C-81 around nothing for us without us, and I think that needs to be very much at the helm of anything that is decided by way of managing the pandemic moving forward for this particular group of the community.

Also, there are roughly 90,000 registered Canadian charities out there. Paulette and I are two of many. However, there are few of us that deal directly with Canada's most vulnerable. I believe there is still an opportunity to prioritize any further stimulus for charities dealing with Canadians in difficult situations directly and to look at a potentially long-term support that is scalable so we can catch up with our revenues as we move forward.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

During the study of Bill C-81 in the previous Parliament, we heard repeatedly about the importance of the accessibility lens when government programs are being created, as well as the importance of plain-language communications. The point was well made, I think, that all Canadians benefit from greater accessibility. Certainly, in the area of plain language we can see how it would have improved the government's response, as so many Canadians are now being required to pay back CERB.

A lot of the testimony we've heard has underscored, in my view, how far we are from achieving an accessible Canada. Can you

speaking to the opportunities for the government to help ensure an accessible Canada in its ongoing response to COVID-19 and, as a learning opportunity, where the government may have missed the mark on it?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** I certainly believe there are some elements, including a number of groups of individuals with disabilities. The name of the committee escapes me right now, but my colleague Diane Bergeron sits with Carla Qualtrough on this one committee. So more of that inclusion....

I do agree; I think there was a lot of confusion around the various programs. I think when you peel back another layer and you look at provinces and accessibility to provincial information, and then you peel another layer down and go to the municipality, if all of them aren't working in unison and have that commitment to accessibility, it really makes the piece baseless. I think that's our message. If accessibility and inclusion are at the helm, regardless of whether it's a stand-alone federal government program or it impacts other jurisdictions, we really need to be thinking about that person first.

Yes, the easy flow of information really makes a difference for many Canadians, and not just those living with sight loss. While I think there was a lot of information, and we didn't know what we didn't know, organizations like CNIB have certainly helped those individuals who identify with sight loss to navigate it. That's why we developed over 350 new virtual programs, many of them dedicated to helping people understand what this means for them and what support is out there, one-on-one and in group settings.

We understand that the government can't do it alone. We're here to help. Again, we work directly with those individuals to make sure that if they have questions or they have needs, we are one of the organizations that will help them navigate through these very difficult times.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Wonderful. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bonfanti and Ms. Falk.

Ms. Young, you have five minutes, please.

**Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to go back to you, Ms. Senior, and talk about some of the programs our government has put into place. I'm so proud that we were the government that actually made Women and Gender Equality Canada a full-time ministry. We're really working hard. We put aside \$57 million to help combat human trafficking. I think it's a much broader plan than what was previously announced.

Certainly, we know that the money does take time to get out and that COVID-19 has increased the concerns about making sure the smaller agencies do get the money they need. How do you see this influx of dollars helping in the long term with this tragic circumstance of human trafficking?

• (1440)

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I think we continue to learn from what our grantees are telling us with respect to trafficking. It's an area of work that the Canadian Women's Foundation has been funding for several years. I think the more we learn, the better we are able to protect all kinds of folks who get caught up in this terrible experience. We're able to see it as part of the bigger picture when we talk about gender-based violence, but also the exploitation of women as it concerns sex, as it concerns labour and as it concerns many types of areas.

Sexual exploitation is one area. Labour exploitation is one. Women who are in precarious circumstances will also experience that. Women with disabilities will also experience that. I think it's important that we have a lens to look at the issue with a broad perspective and to learn. The learning that we have been informed by at the foundation continues to help shape the kinds of programs that we are seeing happening in local, grassroots communities across the country. I think it is very important as we forward that we include that, as well, in a national action plan on gender-based violence.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I've been working with the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and also the Minister of Public Safety to see if the funding available for the London Abused Women's Centre and their human trafficking component can be accessed through other sources.

I know that this is a concern of many organizations, but I think what I'm seeing is a government that really is trying to make sure this issue is addressed. I hope that you would agree with that.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Absolutely, I would agree with that. It's important to always be addressing the issue of trafficking, which is one aspect of gender-based violence, but it's also about being able to keep women safe in their communities, and children as well. I think it's important to consider all aspects of that. I know that Public Safety has been the source of the funding. Like many other organizations that are serving folks who are victims of trafficking across the country, I think all organizations need to be supported.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Bonfanti, I'll turn to you for a moment, if I could. I was so impressed when you made your presentation and said that the CNIB had reached out to nearly 10,000 Canadians since the beginning of COVID. I'm sure their concerns have changed over the last couple of months, but just to go back to what we were saying before, it is so important for the government to move forward and to make sure that people with disabilities do get the money that they desperately need.

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** Yes, absolutely. I don't know if there was a question there that you wanted me to answer specifically, but I would absolutely agree. We're at just about 10,000 calls completed. These are unique calls. They are conversations; they're not attempts. We have tens of thousands more in attempts.

What we're hearing hasn't really changed, if I can be honest, over the last couple of months. People are still afraid. They still don't know what this means for them in the long term. They don't know what this means for them and their jobs and their families. Many of

them have young families and have been forced to stay away from work.

Also, we're hearing about a lot of discrimination. It's unintended, yes, and we understand that people are scared for themselves, but we're hearing about people being ostracized because they have to use their fingers to touch an elevator button. Well, they can't see to use their elbows. We're also hearing about people being ostracized at grocery stores because they need a sighted guide. They're showing up at their local grocery stores, which have had to change the whole layout of their supermarket, and they have no idea what's in an aisle anymore, and there's a piece of paper with writing on it in pencil.

In a world where we're trying to be contactless for everything, we really have a huge opportunity to not forget about individuals who see the world through touch. That is a major concern for us. We hear that on nearly every one of our calls. That continues to happen on a daily basis.

• (1445)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Bonfanti and Ms. Young.

We're going to go back to the Conservatives for five minutes.

Is it Mrs. Kusie?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** No, it's Ms. Vecchio.

**The Chair:** Ms. Vecchio, it's over to you for five minutes, please.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thanks very much. I really appreciate that.

Carrying on, Ms. Senior, with what Ms. Young asked about, when we talk about human trafficking, we know there had been some funds through the MAPI that are no longer being provided. Can you share your view on that? Are there any transitions that you're seeing taking part in the programs you're working in with human trafficking during this time when there is no funding available?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I couldn't speak to that issue specifically. I've certainly seen and heard some of the reports in the news, but I can't speak to that. My understanding is that funding was available multi-year through Public Safety, and that's no longer available. I understand that when contracts end, it could be a problem. I think it's possibly.... Even now, during the pandemic, it's difficult to say. As I said earlier, we fund a number of organizations across the country that provide funding to organizations that do work in trafficking, along with other things they do.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** They share their experiences with us from time to time. What they're talking about in terms of needs at the moment is still to be able to keep their doors open, to be able to do their work and to have the funds they need, whether they need that to work from home and have the technology to do that or to provide PPE, but in terms of London, I can speak to them directly.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay. You provide funding to some of these organizations in terms of human trafficking. What is that funding specifically for? Is it to fill a void or a gap that the government doesn't fill, or is it to supply an education piece? What do you direct your funding for, in terms of human trafficking?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** It's for a number of things. It's to be able to understand what's happening in the community, particularly with vulnerable young women, but also with women overall and women who are in specific, precarious areas of work. They may also have some precarity around their immigration status. There are a number of different kinds of folks they're working with. To be able to understand what their specific vulnerabilities are and how that differs across a spectrum is also important because then it informs the kinds of funding that we continue to do.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Looking at your funding, you're giving it to some of these organizations. Is it across the country, or are they specific? Where do you give your funding to?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** It goes to different organizations across the country. A good example would be YWCA in Halifax, where they do a community-based program. They have a number of partners they work with, and they also meet together to share some of their evaluation results. They certainly share their work with each other, and then we get the reports that they share with us, which then continue to inform our work.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Have you seen any of the reports regarding domestic violence or human trafficking during this pandemic? Have you had that lens these last few months?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** We have certainly surveyed a number of our grantees, who have told us some of this information. Some of them have reported even up to a 400% increase in terms of calls. Some of them have talked about having to change their practices, and the increased costs in terms of cleaning and the PPE that they need, which they wouldn't have had in their budgets. There is also the cost of the technology, as I said, in terms of some of them being able to work from home. Some have extraordinary costs in terms of safe practices in the shelter around isolating folks who may actually have contracted the virus.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's wonderful to hear.

When it comes to dealing with women in this pandemic, what should the top three priorities be, looking at this specific issue?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Clearly, gender-based violence has to be at the top of the list, both in terms of response and also recovery, in that context.

We need to ensure that, as the economy starts to reopen and employers call back their employees, there's child care that's simultaneously available. As you know, schools have been closed and they won't be reopened, at least in Ontario, until September. Some camps are also closed, so what's going to be the solution to ensure that women can go back to work?

Then, I would say, we need to address issues around pay equity. A lot of women have lost their jobs, in particular women in low-paying jobs. In addition to addressing issues around pay equity, we need to ensure that their pay is commensurate with the kind of work they're doing, which we know already is essential to a fully functioning, healthy society.

• (1450)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Senior and Ms. Vecchio.

It's over to Mr. Vaughan, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.):** Thanks very much.

Ms. Senior, I have a couple of questions. You detailed some of the lists of federal expenditures, but not included in that was the \$6-million transfer to Quebec under the Quebec-Canada violence against women agreement. Also not included are the indigenous transfers. Your organizations didn't manage those funds, did they?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** No, we didn't. That was done separately.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** All right.

The additional dollars that went to the homeless shelter system, which also supports women who are victims of violence that is not committed by a domestic partner but is rather non-intimate or public violence, also weren't handled by your department. Is that right?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** No, they weren't, but I do sit on one of the committees, which is helping to determine how those dollars are spent.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Right. We need to increase services to women through the homeless sector as we move forward with doubling the funding.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Yes.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** The other question I have for you is about the support that was afforded to the non-profit charitable sector, the \$350 million that was sent through the Red Cross, the United Way—Centraide, in Quebec—and Community Foundations of Canada. Those dollars are also available, in particular, to organizations that serve more marginalized communities within the women's movement, around supporting housing needs, nutritional needs and front-line services to check in on people who are vulnerable.

Your organization provided advice on that, but you're not handling that \$350 million either, are you?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** No, we're not, but we do work closely with Community Foundations of Canada in terms of advising on that as well. I think it's also important to say that organizations that receive funds through the sexual assault pot, the shelter pot or even this \$10 million are also eligible to apply for the \$350 million.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Right.

We have heard repeatedly that we need to hand over money to the provinces. For example, the \$14 billion we pledged last week, which can also include services for women who need support during this time, we've been told to hand over with no rules or regulations that govern provinces, just to hand the dollars over and let the provinces fall where they may. You're in Ontario, and you recognize that the Conservative government in Ontario last year cut \$17 million from the violence against women shelter system. They cut \$1 million from the rape crisis centre, and they've undermined public health work in this area.

If we hand dollars over to provinces, should there be rules and regulations as to how those dollars are spent to make sure that dollars that are aimed at increasing services for women are actually added to the pool, as opposed to displacing provincial funding?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Well, that would certainly be a concern. One of the things that we have said to the federal government and that they have been focusing on is the importance of ensuring that all funding goes through a gender-based analysis plus intersectional review to ensure that we're actually providing those funds equitably across the board. That would be an important aspect to include in any sort of transfer of funds. Even if the funds aren't being transferred, if they're being handled by the federal government, that's always done, so I think that's an important lesson that we've all taken from the past that should be carried on in the future.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** This is of course a concern in a place like Manitoba, where new dollars arrive for the social service sector, in particular around violence against women and particularly around the homeless. During the pandemic, the Conservative government of Manitoba actually cut funding to front-line services as a way of balancing the budget in advance of supporting people in vulnerable places.

From now on, that kind of transfer cannot be made without conditions if we're going to support women and grow services for women rather than simply change who's funding the programs.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I would agree that that's important. In fact, it's something that those of us working in the sector or even in the charitable sector have been saying for many years. It's critically important to ensure a gender-based lens, because that's been the cause of a lot of issues and of our not being able to access significant dollars in order to address a number of issues we're working on. I think government, whether federal or provincial, needs to consider the importance of the charitable sector as a partner in delivering critical programs and services.

• (1455)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Thank you.

Ms. Bonfanti, when we topped up CERB, many people on disability pensions received CERB as part of a supplementary income model when they lost the funds that were their income, which they got from job sites. A number of provinces—B.C. at first, later Ontario and others—have since pulled back on that, but they clawed back the transfer to people on disability. When we put those programs in place, do we need to bind provinces into a support structure to make sure that vulnerable Canadians get the dollars they deserve and that we're not paying vulnerable Canadians to actually finance budget-balancing measures by other orders of government?

**The Chair:** Could you give us a short answer, please, Ms. Bonfanti? We're out of time.

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** Yes.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Thank you. I'll leave it at that.

I just think it's why federal and provincial accord is so critical to making sure that new federal dollars add new services and new supports to individuals. If we don't have that, we lose that support if other governments claw it back to balance budgets, rather than support individuals or front-line groups.

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** I agree.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Mr. Vaughan.

[*Translation*]

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

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will continue with Ms. Senior.

First, the Canada Social Transfer for social services in Quebec provides money directly, and Quebec is in the best position to know the needs of women in shelters. So we continue to have a lot of faith in these transfers.

With respect to gender inequality in the workplace, we know that it is often because opportunities for women are limited, as they need, or might prefer, to focus on motherhood. That can happen. It is therefore another reason why women face negative prejudice about their capabilities in the workplace.

How accurate are these explanations? What measures could remedy the issue? Would a good gender-based analysis provide an accurate measurement of inequality, especially during the economic recovery?

[*English*]

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I'm not quite sure I caught the question; I'm sorry. Are you asking how GBA+ can—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Yes. In our post-crisis forecasts, it will be important to use it to enable women to take their rightful place, to overcome the negative effects and to combat the prejudice against them in the workplace.

[*English*]

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I fully agree that it's important to include that. It would be great to see all provinces put this practice in place.

We know, for example, that in Quebec child care has been a long-held institution that's universally accessible. I think that's great. We'd love to see similar measures in all areas of GBA+ to ensure that it's intersectional across the board and to ensure that people with disabilities, vulnerable Canadians, women and everyone can have equitable access to these resources and to the spending of funds that are transferred from the federal government to the provinces.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** We must be able to measure inequality. Every government economic response must take GBA+ into account. Everyone agrees that it is important, as it allows the various types of inequality to be properly measured.

I will come back quickly to a national action plan to fight gender-based violence. Money is good, but could other partners be included?

Elsewhere in the world, connections are being set up, cellular phones are being made available and other steps, including the involvement of pharmacists, are being used in prevention. So different measures are being adopted in communities to help women more.

[English]

**The Chair:** Give a short answer, please. We're well past time.

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** I've always said that, when we address issues of gender, it's for everyone; it's not just for women. It's the same with violence. It's also about children. We know that during this pandemic, and at all times, when children witness violence, it's a significant issue for the rest of their lives unless they get the kinds of supports they need.

I think it's important that, when we're thinking about a response and a plan to address gender-based violence, we look at all sectors of society, that we enrol different areas of society, whether it's the business sector or the corporate sector, to ensure we're protecting women. We know, for example, that there has been provincial legislation brought in in Ontario to ensure that workplaces have in place measures so that if a woman talks about her experience of violence, her employer has to be able to protect her and respond to that. I think that should be a national measure, so yes, I think it's important to bring in other partners to ensure this is across the board.

• (1500)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Senior.

[Translation]

Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Next we have Ms. Kwan, please, for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to turn to Ms. Bonfanti to talk about disability support. In the ideal universe, the NDP would like to see a universal direct payment for all, yet the government decided not to do that, so we've had to push hard for it to come in with a disability program.

This program will allow for up to \$600 for people with disabilities: \$100 if you are somebody with a valid disability tax credit certificate eligible for both GIS and OAS; \$300 if you are a person with a certificate and OAS; and \$600 if you don't qualify for any program but have the certificate.

I wonder, Ms. Bonfanti, what your thoughts are with respect to the different kinds of support for people with disabilities.

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** Thank you for the question.

Should any such basic income be discussed, again I would bring up the principle of “nothing for us without us”. Oftentimes, these things are discussed and the disability community is not engaged in meaningful consultation, so I would encourage these conversations to continue, but such a program should include additional funding,

for example, for the unique needs people with disabilities may incur, such as expensive adaptive and assistive technologies.

We know that assistive technologies such as a smart phone have been an absolute game-changer for individuals with disabilities, so where in that is the credit considered? It is a multifaceted issue, and we would encourage consultation—in-depth and meaningful consultation—with the disability community before it's brought forward.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Has there been any consultation with your organization on this?

**Ms. Angela Bonfanti:** On this particular issue—honestly, pre-COVID I'm a bit fuzzy—there has been nothing that has been long-standing, as far as I'm concerned.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I'm going to turn to Ms. Senior for a minute.

On the same question, for women with disabilities, we have a differential of support from this program. What are your thoughts on that?

**Ms. Paulette Senior:** Similarly, I think it's important to consult. We have been a long-time partner of the DisAbleD Women's Network, which is a national network addressing issues for women with disabilities. I think it's really important to consult. I could not...and I don't think it's appropriate for me to actually say what I think. I think it's important to hear from folks who are impacted more specifically before decisions are made.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Senior and Ms. Kwan.

To Ms. Bonfanti and Ms. Senior, thank you again for being so generous with your time and so thoughtful in your responses. We appreciate that you came back and answered the many questions that we posed. It will greatly aid the work of the committee.

We are going to suspend now for two minutes for you to unhook, and then we'll have the members of Parliament back for committee business.

• (1500)

(Pause)

• (1505)

**The Chair:** We are now back in session. We're going to be discussing committee business.

Before we begin, I want to remind all members that we are still sitting in public. I would also ask you, if you want the floor, to please use the “raise hand” function at the bottom of your screen.

If I may be so bold as to suggest this, perhaps we can start with the report from the subcommittee on agenda, which circulated its recommendations electronically, I believe, earlier today.

If we could start with that, we have Mr. Albas, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Thank you.

I was a bit fast to put my hand up, so if your intention, Mr. Chair, is to only have the report right now, then I'll simply suggest that I would like some clarification from you and perhaps from some of the other vice-chairs in regard to number 3, which states:

That all evidence received by the committee as part of its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic be deemed to have been received as part of its study of the review of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit Act.

I would like some clarification. Is it the intention that by this motion we could somehow utilize some of the testimony in the past and that there is some sort of effort here to limit that testimony, where we won't actually do a full study specifically on it at a future date?

I'm hoping that this is just to be inclusive of some of the testimony that we've heard in the past but that it doesn't preclude an actual full study, because, quite honestly, our work, albeit very fulfilling, is not necessarily intentional in following the order from the House that we study the CERB program. I want to hear some clarification, maybe from you and some of the vice-chairs.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas, you're right on the mark. The goal with number 3 is that it will not be necessary to bring people back to repeat what they have already said. It's not meant to be limiting in any way. It's meant to attempt to avoid duplication.

As you've stated, this committee is required to do a full study, and we will do a full study, and for some of the things that we have already heard in connection with the work we're doing to evaluate the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to the extent that it has overlapped, we are not precluded from lifting that testimony and including it in our discussions and in our report on the evaluation of the CERB. It is in no way meant to limit the additional testimony we can hear, including from the witnesses we've already heard from.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you for the clarification.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Chair, I will keep my comments brief.

Your interpretation of the subcommittee meeting summary was the same.

I would also like to say to Mr. Albas that it seems clear to me our COVID-19 study and the CERB report must allow us to continue to receive witnesses.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Mrs. Kusie, please.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To clarify further Mr. Albas's point, I mentioned that, during our subcommittee meeting, I as well as some other members of the subcommittee had some concerns about the report being inclusive of the entirety of the program as well as the effects of it and that therefore we did not feel comfortable proceeding with a report in its en-

tirety at this time, given that we don't know the consequences for those who have taken the benefit but are not entitled to it, even based upon the announcement by the Prime Minister this morning that it's very possible the CERB will be extended even further, as was mentioned in the testimony today. We are really not in a position to do an entire evaluation of it as of yet.

Also, I know that we made the decision as a group to present letters to the ministers rather than do a report, since Parliament is not sitting and we have not been mandated to do a report, as other committees have, and turn it over to the House. As we continue to work through the process of the letters, we can be particular in prescribing that process, because we're slightly concerned that our time in creating the letters, although we believe there should be oversight of the entire committee, should not take so much time as to take away from the long list of witnesses we have.

Thank you.

● (1510)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Kusie.

Ms. Kwan, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to confirm, from my perspective, we thought it was important to continue the work, given that we have a long list of witnesses who have yet to appear before our committee.

In terms of an interim report, the suggestion was to have perhaps a letter with recommendations to the ministers with respect to the response to COVID, and that would be an approach that the subcommittee agrees to. Then, when we complete the entire study in due course, we would be in a position to write a full report.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Is there any further discussion on the report of the subcommittee?

Seeing none, is there anyone who cares to propose a motion to adopt the report of the subcommittee?

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I can put the motion forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Long.

I take it there's no further discussion. The motion is to accept the report of the subcommittee.

Madam Clerk, could I ask you to conduct a vote?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Marie-France Lafleur):** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Ms. Kusie, are you in the queue for the next item, or did you have something else on this?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I was wondering how the subcommittee report would reflect.... Let me just read number 3 again: "That all evidence received by the committee as part of its study of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic be deemed to have been received as part of its study".

To me, number 3 speaks to the concerns that I believe both Ms. Kwan and I had—and she can disagree with me if I'm speaking inappropriately or inaccurately for her. It's "part" of the study of the government's response and "part" of the study to review the Emergency Response Benefit Act, but it does not indicate anything about everything we have received as being completely inclusive and conclusive to the study.

I think that's fine. I just wanted to review that before we vote. I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

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

Go ahead, Madam Clerk.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1515)

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk.

Mr. Albas, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Is now the appropriate time to raise a motion for debate?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Further to my notice of motion on Thursday, June 4 of this year, I move:

That the committee conduct a study of the Canada Summer Jobs Program; that all aspects of program operation in 2020 be examined, with comparison to previous years; that riding by riding data be examined from the government as it relates to the program; that any other aspect of the program that the committee deems necessary be studied; that the witnesses include the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Employment and Social Development Canada staff and other witnesses the committee deems necessary; that this study be completed by September 21, 2020; that the Committee present its findings to the House and that pursuant to Standing Order 109 a comprehensive response be requested from the government.

I move that now, if it's the appropriate time, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** It certainly is.

**The Chair:** It is the appropriate time—

**Ms. Kate Young:** Could I make an a friendly amendment?

**The Chair:** —and your motion is in order. If there are people who wish to speak to the motion, could I ask them to use the "raise hand" function?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Chair, I would like a clarification, please.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We have Madame Chabot and Ms. Young.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Ms. Chabot.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I want to make sure this is about Canada Summer Jobs, because the interpreter spoke of loans and grants. I am no longer sure I have the right motion.

**The Chair:** Was there an interpretation issue during the reading of the motion?

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Are we talking about the motion on Canada Summer Jobs that was just put forward?

**The Chair:** That is correct.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, if you want, I can read it in French.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** It might be a good idea.

[*English*]

Yes, please do that, Mr. Albas, in order to be fair. I think something was lost there.

Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I can't hear you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure if there's something wrong with mine here.

**The Chair:** Okay, can you hear me now?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Your suggestion that it be read in French is a good one, I think, just to be sure.

Thank you.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Okay.

[*Translation*]

That the committee conduct a study of the Canada Summer Jobs Program; that all aspects of program operation in 2020 be examined, with comparison to previous years; that riding by riding data be examined from the government as it relates to the program; that any other aspect of the program that the committee deems necessary be studied; that the witnesses include the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Employment and Social Development Canada staff and other witnesses the committee deems necessary; that this study be completed by September 21, 2020; that the committee present its findings to the House and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, a comprehensive response be requested from the government.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Albas; you did that well.

[*English*]

Next, I recognize Ms. Young, please.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to my colleague across the aisle for bringing this up.

We know that the Canada summer jobs program is very important, and I firmly support studying the dynamics of the program for 2020 as it relates to the previous years. There's no question it will be a worthy study. As we know, COVID-19 has really shaken up the program, and a number of organizations' plans regarding their applications have changed.

However, I'm concerned about the timing and the date of the program, so I would like to propose the following amendment to the motion, and I hope it will be seen by the honourable member as a friendly amendment. I propose that the lines "that this study be completed by September 21, 2020" be replaced with "that this study be completed no later than December 15, 2020".

That will at least allow us to get through most of the program and be able to have a report before the end of the year.

• (1520)

**The Chair:** All right.

Mr. Albas, do you have any comment on whether you consider that to be a friendly amendment, or shall we proceed to debate on it?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I totally appreciate the member of Parliament's suggestion. Usually I would suggest that, particularly for the government, if they want to put forward a friendly amendment, they should perhaps let us know ahead of time so we can consider these things. They've had this since June 4. If she wants to make a formal motion, we'll let democracy decide and then we'll go from there.

**The Chair:** Fair enough. The discussion now is on the amendment to change the date of completion from September 21, 2020 to "no later than December 15, 2020".

Ms. Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Now we have an amendment to change the timeline, but related to the motion, I was wondering if the motion actually incorporates a study of only this year in terms of the Canada summer jobs program and the changes incorporated within it, or whether it also includes, more generally, the rollout of the Canada summer jobs program. There are other aspects of the program that I think would be worth studying, and hopefully the motion is not just for the changes related to the program for this year.

I just need a clarification on that. It ties into the whole timeline issue for me in terms of my consideration.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas, do you want to offer your intentions? Go ahead.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I appreciate MP Kwan's inquiry here. It does say there will be a comparison with previous years. Obviously this year is quite different.

On the second part of the motion, though, it does say "other witnesses the committee deems necessary" and "any other aspect of the program that the committee deems necessary [to] be studied". There's significant flexibility.

What we've said is that we want to study this year in light of previous years, but if a particular member such as you wants to question further a particular aspect that you think is important, I think the motion is quite open for you to do that.

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

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, would you like to speak to the amendment?

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Yes, I thank Mr. Albas for his clarifications.

This year, the context is unique, too unique even, and I will stop there. It is important that we give ourselves time to do our work, but at the same time, we could do it in the next session, where the process will hopefully be faster, as it normally is.

So I agree with Mr. Albas' proposal and with the Liberals' amendment.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Ms. Kwan, you have the floor.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I have one other follow-up question. Perhaps Mr. Albas can advise. How many meetings does he envision would be required for this study?

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I imagine that we have the minister and some officials. That would take at least one meeting, perhaps two meetings, depending how we go from there. I know there is a lot of concern from not-for-profits, businesses and different student groups, so it depends on how many witnesses this committee deems necessary, and also how many meetings we have.

I don't see this being an exhaustive study, but I think there are a number of viewpoints that need to be heard. I certainly would welcome this being discussed at the next subcommittee meeting. There is enough flexibility that if there is a flood of witnesses and we all decide we want to hear from each one of them, we could go on, or we could make it rather tight.

• (1525)

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

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I have a quick question.

Did someone put forward the amendment to change the date?

**The Chair:** Ms. Young did.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I thought she said that it was a friendly amendment. I didn't think she moved it.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Do you want me to...?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I can support it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You are correct, Mr. Albas. I took it that it was going to be moved if it wasn't considered to be friendly, but it wasn't formally moved.

I see Ms. Kwan has her hand raised, and Ms. Chabot wants in.

Let's start with Ms. Kwan, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Chair, I will support the amendment. I think that moving it to December is a reasonable timeline simply because we have a full plate of witnesses before us to deal with the COVID issue.

I think if we get this done by December, there would still be time to provide input to the minister and the government for next summer, which I think is hopefully the purpose of the program.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** As I said earlier, I support the amendment to the motion.

I feel it is absolutely essential that, next summer, the Canada Summer Jobs process start in January or February, as it usually does, so that the jobs are awarded in April.

This year, we are extremely late, hence the importance of giving us a deadline to proceed with the study. The important thing is to be ready for the next session. That one must not be delayed.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Mr. Albas, please.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Mr. Chair, I'm not sure if you called on me.

I just want to make sure—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I had my hand up.

**The Chair:** You're next, Ms. Young.

Mr. Albas, go ahead

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I would put forward a simple amendment to change my own motion from September 21 to October 31, to give committee members a little more time and flexibility. Perhaps that will receive support.

**The Chair:** Clerk, is Mr. Albas able to amend his own motion?

**The Clerk:** Normally not; it would require another member moving another motion.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Housefather, you have a point of order.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Chair, I believe that Ms. Young had put forward an amendment that was on the floor. The clerk has just clarified it, but I don't believe that amendment can be amended by Mr. Albas to change the date to another date.

Right now a date is stated in Mr. Albas' motion. There is a date to change it in Ms. Young's amendment, and I think Mr. Albas can't change it again to another date.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I was ready to rule on it, but go ahead, Mr. Albas, if you're speaking to the same point of order.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** It was gracious that MP Young offered a friendly amendment, which I declined. She did not put forward a motion.

If it's ruled ineligible for me to put forward an amendment, I would simply ask that one of my other colleagues put forward the same amendment, because obviously, we want to get on this right away. I understand that some members want to push it back a little, but I think December is too far.

• (1530)

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

Here's where we are. Mr. Albas is correct: A friendly amendment was proposed, but a formal amendment was not made. Mr. Albas attempted to put forward an amendment, but he can't amend his own motion.

Where we are now is that we have the main motion and only the main motion, and we have Ms. Young on the speakers list.

Ms. Young, you have the floor.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I'd like to put forward an amendment to change the date of the completion of the study so that the motion would read "this study be completed no later than December 15, 2020."

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Young.

Now the amendment has been moved, and the debate is on the amendment.

Ms. Vecchio has her hand up.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Mr. Chair, I'm not sure if we can amend this amendment, and I should know that as a chair.

However, I recognize that one of the biggest things people are talking about is the fiscal program that will start in April 2021. Just from experience, I recognize that this program usually rolls out in the third week of December. It has been late in the last couple of years, but this program is already in the rollout with people already having had to apply by the end of January and beginning of February.

I'm also concerned with timelines, and I hope that Ms. Young would accept, potentially, a deadline of October 31. I'm asking for a friendly amendment that switches that to a deadline of October 31, 2020.

**The Chair:** We have a request, Ms. Young, that you alter your proposed amendment from December 15 to October 31. What say you?

**Ms. Kate Young:** Thank you very much.

I think that even though it doesn't seem like much time, that would almost be two months, the month of November and part of December. I think it's necessary to have that time to hear the impact over the summer months. We need time to work on that report. I really hope that the committee will vote on the amendment which refers to December.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I was going to just say, much as Ms. Vecchio has said, that in order for us to make recommendations for what the government needs to do next time, we need to do it before they start rolling out the next time.

I've already expressed that if we were to look at making some change, let's make it a moderate change, not all the way to the end of December. We're going to be winding up for Christmas, and I don't think the bureaucracy is going to be doing much over that time as well.

My suggestion is that we get this while they're still designing the program before it actually begins to roll out. Perhaps we could vote this one down, and then we'll simply find something that addresses some of the concerns of MP Young, but that also can be productive for the next round of Canada summer jobs.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** We are talking about a new motion with a new timeline, but we have not yet discussed our timeline. I feel it is going to lead to more work for us in the summer period.

For the sake of consensus, I would like to propose November 30, but I do not want to get caught up in procedure by adding motions. It seems to me that we will have time to finish our work by November if we give ourselves an extra month to write the report. I believe we would be well within next year's timeline. I feel September would come much too quickly. As for October, that can be changed.

We are still in the process. I would really prefer not to be, but some jobs are still not posted. I am not taking stock even if I could. I feel it would be good to give ourselves until November to complete our study and prepare our recommendations for next year, and to allow for a month, until December, to write our report. I feel that would be good.

To keep from dragging this out, I will not make another motion, but it seems to me that December is more definitive in terms of the schedule.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Next we have Ms. Kwan and then Ms. Young.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Chair, on the schedule for the committee, aside from the COVID issue, I expect the motion on inviting the minister for the supplementary estimates will likely be injected in there as well. I wonder how that places the other priorities of the committee. One of the issues to be prioritized would be housing related to indigenous communities. How will all of this fit in there in terms of the timeline? I'd like to get a better sense of things.

If we make it October, that will decide what our schedule would look like without considering what the items are that we should be considering on the whole. I support a study for the Canada summer jobs program. I have some issues with it, and I would love to get a study in there so that we can find ways to improve that. If we do it by October, would that displace all of the other stuff? I just want to be able to make an informed decision in terms of what the priorities are.

That being said, I'd also like to ask the analyst a question with respect to timelines. The idea, I think, is to get the study completed and recommendations submitted to the minister for consideration for next year's program. It's too late for this year, so before next year's program, what is the timeline for our needing to complete that study in order to fit our timeline?

• (1535)

**The Chair:** Please go ahead.

**Ms. Elizabeth Cahill (Committee Researcher):** Depending on the timeline, it could be very challenging, because we would want to hear from the correct number of witnesses, and it would be good if at the outset you could establish how many meetings you would like to have. We would also need time to draft the report. It would then need to be translated and be available in both official languages. Then the committee would also have to consider the report. That process of drafting, translation and report consideration could take up to four weeks.

**The Chair:** Ms. Young, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I just want to make sure that we are all aware that the program won't actually end until February 2021, because we've extended it.

At first when I saw the motion, I thought we should extend this study until after it was over, but I understand that we want to get some information before the next program is rolled out. December 15, I think, is a date that's realistic both from the analysts' perspective and to make sure that we get the people in whom we want to hear from.

It's an important study. Canada summer jobs is important to all of us as MPs. I certainly think having the report end on December 15 is the right time, and I hope everyone agrees.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Young.

We're going to Mr. Dong and then Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Chair, I was going to say something similar to what Ms. Young just said. The end of the program is in February and, obviously, we want this report to have some impact on next year's program design. I understand it has to be done perhaps before February.

At the same time, I've heard from my community that a lot of organizations that applied and were approved also have to deal with COVID-19 and all the changes they have to bring forward to their original application to make sure social distancing is practised. Some of them are waiting for further direction from the provincial government.

My point is that I see that a lot of programs, a lot of projects, will not be completed if we decide that the end of October is the date to complete this report. I think it makes a lot of sense for us to have this report completed by mid-December. That way we can include more evidence from those who actually carry out this program for us.

• (1540)

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

Mr. Vaughan, please.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Chair, most of the organizations in my riding that have received the funding are non-profits, and there is a fairly extensive reporting procedure to send back to the department as to who was hired, how they were hired and gaps in the system. We rely on funding partners to provide most of the data and much of the information as to what worked and didn't work on the program so we can remodel it for next year. That's how, for example, youth who were not returning to school but maybe were contemplating that were included in the programs. We broadened the net as we doubled the funding to include more vulnerable youth or youth in vulnerable settings. That information, in terms of the data, in terms of how I make decisions around prioritization in the next year, is critical to my assessing the program and the recommendations I make as an MP, let alone as a parliamentary secretary.

We're walking between two timetables: the first, if we do it too soon, we don't get the full scope of the program; the second, if we do it too late, we don't have time to make recommendations for the changes. From my perspective, the motion put forward by my colleague Kate Young from London walks that balance very appropriately. We need good data to make analysis and we need time to make the recommendations. If we do it too soon, we just won't have that data and we will put a burden on non-profits to generate that data, which I don't think is appropriate at this particular time.

I will support Ms. Young and hope that we can then set a schedule, which I think speaks to the valid point that MP Kwan made: There is a standing priority of this committee to get to urban, rural, northern indigenous housing, which was prioritized, and with the support of the MP for Winnipeg Centre, I think we need to respect that. I think there are COVID-related issues related to urban indigenous housing that are fundamental to the work that needs to happen immediately. We really shouldn't be delaying that study too much longer.

I will finish with this. I support MP Young's position, but I also think MP Kwan has raised a really important issue. We have an established priority. We need to get to the work this committee needs to do. I hope we can get on to studying the agenda and the number of meetings between now and then so we can start to fill that timetable and achieve what we need to achieve as a committee.

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

Ms. Falk, please.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Mr. Chair, I don't really understand how the proposed date of December 15 is a good balance, as MP Vaughan has just said. In previous years, applications have gone out to employers in December. If this study is going to finish in December, the analyst has said it's going to take about a month to draft and finalize a report, get it into both official languages, so that's going to take us to the middle of January, by which time employers are already going to be applying or have already applied. I think it misses the mark altogether by have the date of December 15.

My colleague Dan Albas suggested earlier, I believe, August or September. I think October hits that balance. Obviously, COVID isn't going to happen every year. This is obviously a different year as it is. If we are able to do October 31, four weeks would take us to November. That way we could get something out with recommendations. I think the October 31 date is far more balanced than

December. If we do this in December, we're going to have employers already applying, unless the government is planning to push it again and maybe have applications be later than in previous years. I think October hits the right balance.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Falk.

Mr. Housefather, please.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Chair, in brief, to respond to what my colleague Ms. Falk just said, the motion as amended by Ms. Young's amendment says that the committee is to report back by December 15, not that the committee finish its work and then it goes to the analysts. December 15 is setting the date by which the analysts will have completed the report, the committee will have amended it and approved it, and it will have been translated and sent to the House. That requires, to be honest, a month, as the analysts have told us. This means we would have had to hear from all the witnesses by the end of October in order to work on the report over the month of November, to have it properly translated and get it to the House by December 15. That is the delay. It's not that we're finishing our work and then starting the report on December 15. It's that the report is submitted by December 15.

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

Is there any further discussion on the motion to amend the date of completion to no later than December 15, 2020? That's the amendment before the committee. Is there any further discussion on it?

Seeing none, I would ask Madam Clerk to do a recorded vote on the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4)

• (1545)

We're now on the motion, as amended. Is there any further debate on the amended motion? I'm seeing none so I would ask Madam Clerk to please conduct a recorded vote on the main motion, as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [See Minutes of Proceedings])

I recognize Ms. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Chair, with that motion's passing, can I move on to the next order of business? I want to put forward a motion that I had put on notice, please.

**The Chair:** I was hoping you would. Go ahead.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** That's what I like to hear. That's the spirit. Thank you, Chair.

I move:

That the Committee call upon the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development, to appear before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities with department officials, separately for one hour each to discuss the spending priorities outlined in the Main Estimates 2020-2021, and that this meeting occur before July 31st, 2020.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie. The motion is in order.

Members, if you wish to speak to the motion, I would ask that you use the “raise hand” function at the bottom of your screen.

We'll move to debate.

Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the mover how she thinks this would work in terms of order of appearance, whether they would appear at the same time, different times or what have you. I'd like her to unpack the more general request for an appearance, which I'm not concerned about, but she sees the structure of that appearance.

**The Chair:** Ms. Kusie, can you clarify that?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Sure.

It's based upon their availability, but since the main estimates have now been released, the motion is quite clear that it should occur before July 31. I recognize that we are currently in the last week of scheduled sittings within the House. I know we're going to have a further discussion as to our meetings going forward, which we started within the subcommittee, but again, this should occur before July 31, with the two ministers slated for one hour each. I feel that's quite clear. It's one hour for each of the two ministers, as mentioned, before July 31.

If there are any more specific questions, I'm happy to take them.

• (1550)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** For clarification as well, would they be appearing with ministerial staff, or how would that look?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes. It states that they're appearing with department officials. Generally, of course, staff usually accompany the minister but do not sit with the minister. Usually it's the minister and the department officials. We are at the point where we've had several appearances by ministers, so I would expect it to follow the format that we have had to this point.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

Mr. Albas, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, again, we have had ministers.... I do understand there being some complexity, because there are four different ministers that we could call for, but as a member, all I would like to see is to have the employment minister with her officials for an hour and then have a second hour with officials, because I always learn something. Then I would like a second meeting with the minister of social development, Minister Hussen, following the same format, whereby he comes for an hour with his officials and then the officials stay for an hour.

We could do that, and I would also be mindful that Mr. Vaughan may decide that he wants to come as a witness, along with the minister, or to appear as a member.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Thank you.

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

Ms. Kusie, please.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes, Mr. Chair, that's what I was referring to previously on the format: one hour with each minister and then one hour with the officials. I guess, then, that's a total of two two-hour meetings.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

Is there any further discussion?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Why do we need the exact date of July 31?

I hear the estimates will be tabled this week.

Look, I will not oppose the motion, but why does it have to be before July 31? It is not clear to me.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie, could you answer that question?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes, I certainly can.

The analysts will be able to clarify this, but I believe we have until the end of August to receive the two ministers. So I have decided to have a meeting with the two ministers before the end of July, because I am sure we will have a deadline. I chose the end of July because, as with the supplementary estimates, I know that there is a deadline.

That is why I decided to go with the end of July, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie and Ms. Chabot, I can let the analysts or the clerk comment, but I can add that the deadline for the House to adopt the main estimates, the subject of this motion, is November 27, 2020.

Having said that, Mrs. Kusie spoke of deadlines for the ministers' availability, and I am not aware of that. I wonder if the analyst or the clerk could add something in that regard to clarify Ms. Chabot's question.

• (1555)

**The Clerk:** I can confirm that the reporting date for the 2020-21 main estimates is indeed November 27, 2020.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I think that's clear enough.

We have Mr. Housefather and then Ms. Kwan, please.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to come back to what I understood the motion to be. I thought the motion specifically said one hour per minister, and then I heard Stephanie answering a question by saying that it would be one hour per minister plus an hour for the officials, but I don't interpret the motion that was put forward to say that.

I simply see that it would be at least one hour for each minister, and I would like clarification on that, because I think it's reasonable to say it's one hour per minister. If they come with their officials, the officials come with the minister. They come together. I don't think the motion asked for that second hour. Two hours or one hour each—I get that. However, if it's four hours and then two hours each with officials, I don't read the motion to say that, so I just wanted clarification.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Thank you, Chair.

I can certainly see Mr. Housefather's interpretation, but my intention was that where it says ministers and department officials, I mentioned both separately for one hour each. I can see where it's not entirely clear. It should be each minister for one hour.

It should have been clearer within the motion; I agree, but I believe we have a precedent within the committee whereby, when we have a minister appear, the minister appears with officials, and our format has been one hour and one hour. That was my intention.

If Mr. Housefather feels it is necessary, then I would ask one of my colleagues to clarify the wording to amend it to make it more specific, or we could just agree as a committee on what my intention was, because I can see how the wording of “separately for one hour each” would mean asking what “one hour each” is referring to. Is it one hour each for the ministers, or one hour for each of the ministers, and then the officials?

As I've said, I've stated the precedent and I've stated my intention, so I would ask if we could come to the consensus that my intention is recognized and understood when voting upon the motion. Otherwise, I will ask one of my colleagues to amend it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Speaking to the motion, I will support the interpretation, and if the interpretation is not one hour for each of the ministers and then one hour for each of the ministry officials, I would be happy to move that amendment accordingly.

That's been the practice, I think, pretty well at every committee, so when I read the motion, even though it could be interpreted either way, when it said “separately”, I thought it meant separately from ministry officials, as opposed to separate ministries.

Of course, I'm ESL, so I could misinterpret anything and everything, I suppose.

Anyway, I would support that version of the configuration.

However, speaking to the timeline issue, Mr. Chair, and July 31, given that the timeline is such that we will have more time until

November, I would suggest that we give it more time, only to allow us to figure out how to schedule all these things that we want to do.

We just passed the motion to finish the Canada summer jobs report by December 15. We have a standing issue with the housing issue and we have COVID, and now we have this. We just have to figure out within that timeline how we can fit it all in. This is not as a means to delay; I think it's absolutely essential for the minister and the officials to come before the committee to speak to supplementary estimates, but some flexibility in terms of the timeline would be useful.

● (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Can I take it that you have now moved an amendment to provide for an additional hour for the officials associated with each of the ministers? Can we take that to be an amendment that's presently before us? Was that your intention?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Sure, I'd be happy to move that amendment.

**The Chair:** All right.

We now have an amendment before us. The debate is on the amendment. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** No.

**The Chair:** Seeing none, I would ask the clerk to hold a recorded vote on the amendment to add an hour for the officials from each department in addition to the one hour allotted to the ministers.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Thank you very much.

Now the debate is on the main motion as amended. Is there any discussion on the amended motion?

Mr. Housefather, go ahead, please.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Mr. Chair, I believe when she was speaking, our colleague Ms. Kwan was proposing a second amendment, which related to the date. I don't think you incorporated it as part of the amendment that you then put to a vote, and I don't know that anybody intended that or understood it. I was just wondering, if there was such an intention, whether we could give her a chance to put forward that second amendment on the date by which the ministers need to appear.

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

Ms. Kwan, do you have another amendment?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I'd be happy to move the amendment to change the date to....

Sorry. First I have a question about landing on a date. It was November, I think, the clerk said. Is there a date in November specifically?

**The Chair:** It's the 27th.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** It's the 27th.

**The Chair:** That's the deadline for a report on the main estimates to the House of Commons.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Okay. Then why don't we say by November 15? That will give us some lead time to make sure we get the job done, and then it will give us an opportunity to consider all of the things we need to do within those specific timelines.

**The Chair:** If I understand correctly—and please tell me if I do not—you are proposing a further amendment to the motion to delete the words “July 31, 2020” and replace them with “November 15, 2020”. Is that right?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The debate is now on this amendment.

I see Mr. Albas. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Chair, I think it's important to have the ministers come, and I think that absolutely it doesn't expire until November, but we can say that accountability is a primary aspect of our job, so I don't support pushing it back by that much time. I'll leave it at that.

• (1605)

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

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Seeing none, I would ask Madam Clerk to—

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Sorry, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Kwan.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I just want to add this for the committee members' consideration.

By changing the date to November 15, it is not my intention to say that we should actually do it on the last day, on November 15. I mean “up to” November 15.

The whole idea is to give ourselves some flexibility to figure out what our schedule looks like. Our committee still does not really

have a work plan or schedule of what our meetings would look like, and this is the intention behind that amendment. Most certainly, we can schedule this earlier, but this would give us some flexibility. I hope Mr. Albas did not interpret my moving of this amendment to this date as a means not to ensure that there's accountability.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Kusie is next, please.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I think my concern is similar to what Ms. Kwan has expressed, which is that I don't think we can possibly foresee all the additional responsibility that will be put on this committee between now and the middle of November as we emerge from the pandemic to the new normal.

I see the additional evaluation of CERB. I think we'll have to end up doing some serious labour force evaluations, maybe even some additional support evaluations, so I am really concerned that this will get lost somewhere.

I recognize the flexibility that Ms. Kwan is trying to provide, but I feel we can't see what's ahead of us. As Ms. Kwan has indicated, we have a lot of other things on the table and more being introduced today. As well, we haven't even discussed the second appearance of the Minister of Immigration, which Ms. Kwan brought up previously.

I recognize that we still have a number of witnesses, but we're at a point where we've received a lot of evidence relative to the COVID-19 response, and I fear that our workload will only get greater as we emerge from the pandemic and I want to see these appearances take place sooner rather than later.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Given the explanations provided, I agree with the amendment to move the date to November. I understand that the July date was not a requirement, but I also believe that just because it says “November” does not mean that we have to wait until the last minute. We need to give ourselves the space we need.

Also, Mr. Chair, given the time, I would like to know what is left on the agenda.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

Madam Clerk, please conduct a recorded vote on the amendment.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 7; nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Thank you.

We are now on the main motion, as twice amended.

Is there any further discussion on the main amended motion?

Madam Clerk, please conduct a recorded vote.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0 ([See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk.

Thank you, colleagues.

We're now at 11 minutes past the hour, so I propose we adjourn until Friday, when our next meeting is scheduled.

Have a good week. We will see you Friday.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Chair—

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Chabot.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** We still have to agree on how we are going to operate for the summer. We must not wait until next Friday.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madam Clerk, are we okay to continue and to introduce another item, given the hour and the demands on the House of Commons team? My question is whether I now should put to the meeting a motion to adjourn.

**The Clerk:** I've been told that we can go on for a few minutes.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** All right, Madam Clerk.

We have a few minutes to discuss our work in July and August.

Go ahead, Ms. Chabot.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I presented my arguments at the last subcommittee meeting. Correct me if I am wrong, but it seems to me that the House sits twice in July and twice in August. I propose that the committee meet once in the weeks when the House is sitting, but only from July 20 on. I therefore propose that we take a break until July 20. Then, starting the week of July 20, we would meet once a week during the weeks the House is sitting.

**The Chair:** So you are moving that the committee meet once a week during the months of July and August and that our meetings take place during the same weeks that the House sits.

Is that the motion you are proposing, Ms. Chabot?

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Yes, but it would only be as of July 20 and not as of July 8.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** All right.

Colleagues, there is a motion before you. We have a speakers list forming up.

On the motion with respect to summer sittings, go ahead, Ms. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I'm sorry. On what she said and what you said, I didn't understand them to be the same thing. Did she say twice in July and twice in August? I heard you say "*une fois par semaine*", which I took to mean once a week. Can you please clarify, Mr. Chair, what the motion is?

**The Chair:** Okay. I would ask Madam Chabot to clarify. It's her motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I propose that, beginning the week of July 20, the committee meet once during the weeks when the House is in session.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** It would be once during the week of July 20 and twice in August. In all, it would be three times.

• (1615)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay.

**The Chair:** According to the information I have received from the Clerk, the House will sit during the weeks of July 20, August 10 and August 24, as Ms. Chabot indicated.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay. That's essentially three meetings throughout July and August. Is that correct?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Yes.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay.

[*English*]

I think our hope was to sit a little more frequently than that. As I've said, we don't want to maintain the same level of sitting that we have now.

I want to go back a second, actually. Is the House not sitting twice in July and twice in August? Can the clerk or the analysts clarify that? I thought it was sitting twice in July and twice in August. I think that's where my misunderstanding was. I thought Madam Chabot's intention was for the same weeks that the House is sitting. To me, that would be four meetings, not three. Then I thought I heard the chair say once a week, but maybe I missed the other part, which was once a week when the House is sitting.

First, I will clarify this. Are there not two meetings of the House in July as well?

**The Chair:** There are, and—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** May I make a clarification?

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Yes, there are two, Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** In my proposal, I am removing the week of July 6.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** We cannot work until July 3, for technical reasons.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** The House is scheduled to sit during the weeks of July 6, July 20, August 3 and August 24.

I move that, not as of the week of July 6, but as of the week of July 20, we meet one day a week, in the same weeks as the House.

That means three days, actually, not four, as the House will be doing.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay, I get it now.

[*English*]

As I was saying, I think it was our hope that even though we would not sit as often as we are sitting now, we would sit more than this. I think we were looking towards one meeting a week rather than our scheduled two. We are still in the pandemic. We are still coming out of the pandemic and we wanted to continue our work once a week for that reason.

Our position would be to sit more frequently than three meetings over the summer, to hopefully reduce it to four meetings a month, given that there are four weeks in a month, generally.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kusie.

Go ahead, Mr. Vaughan, please.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I think this sets a reasonable schedule, and I would remind everyone that we can always recall the committee if there's additional work that needs to be done or if the minister's schedule works out in such a way that we can get the estimates done.

We have some flexibility and some ability to be nimble now that we're on Zoom. I think it's a reasonable schedule that reflects the typical summer schedule, with some additional dates that normally wouldn't be covered because of parliamentary process. We usually take the whole summer to be in our constituencies.

I think it's reasonable. Again, I look forward to working with opposition members and colleagues, and if there are issues that require a special meeting, we can always arrange that to respond to the circumstances as they present themselves.

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

Ms. Kwan is next.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I would agree with Ms. Kusie. I too was hoping that we would have a few more meetings than the three as proposed, simply because we have a lot of things on our agenda. We just finished talking about the Canada summer jobs program. We just finished talking about having ministers and officials come. Of course, we need to get on with the housing study as well. We have a lot of stuff on our plate, I think, so I will support the idea of having one meeting per week, meaning four a month. That is a reduced schedule than what we're doing now, but it's a little more than what was proposed.

• (1620)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

Is there any further discussion on the motion? Yes, I see Madame Chabot. Go ahead, *s'il vous plaît*.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** To keep us on course, let us not forget that we are talking about pandemic-related emergencies. The pandemic is not over yet.

I only want to streamline things. The House will not sit every week or every day. Normally the committee would not meet either.

I am proposing that we do our work at the same pace as the House. We should all remember—and I have no problem saying this—that, while it is important for all parliamentarians to follow House business, it is also important that our own teams, including the analysts' and the clerks' teams, have time off for work-family balance and for vacation.

For these reasons, I propose that, as of July 20, we meet in the same week as the House. Yes, I am removing one day, but I think that strikes a nice balance between House business and committee business.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Do we have any other debate or interventions on the motion?

Seeing none, Madam Clerk, I would ask you to conduct a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 4 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

Thank you to the clerk, the analyst and the rest of the support team for sticking with us. Thanks, everyone. We'll see you on Friday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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