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Chair

Mr. Robert Oliphant

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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• (1530)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.)): Welcome, everyone.

[*English*]

We're beginning again our consideration of Bill C-226, an act to amend the Criminal Code regarding offences in relation to conveyances, and the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. This is the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Before we begin with our first witness, I want to recognize a new member of our committee and make sure folks know René Arseneault, who is now a permanent member of the committee.

Welcome, Mr. Arseneault.

Senator, welcome to our table. I'm glad that you're joining us today.

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu (Senator, Quebec (La Salle), CPC): Thank you very much.

The Chair: We're going to begin.

The first hour is over to the author of the bill. This is Mr. Blaney's time. He has about 10 minutes. I'm fairly liberal—small “I”—with respect to the mover of a bill who's worked hard on it.

You have about 10 minutes, and then we'll turn to the members for questions.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I assure you, I will be very conservative with the use of my time.

[*Translation*]

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Steven Blaney. I'm here today as an MP.

I would also like to greet you, Mr. Chair, as well as the hon. members of the committee.

I am very proud to be with you today. I would first like to congratulate you on the work you're doing on Bill C-226, which deals with impaired driving. Right off the bat, I would say that the approach is non-partisan.

Today, we have the opportunity to advance legislation that will save lives. I think it's really politics at its best, and I'm very proud to be part of it.

I would also like to mention that Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu is here. He will sponsor the bill in the Senate.

If it is the pleasure of the committee, the bill will be referred to the Senate for further study until it is passed and becomes law.

The sooner we pass this bill, the sooner we can say, as parliamentarians of this legislature, that we have helped to save people's lives.

[*English*]

This bill is all about saving Canadian lives in a non-partisan way. You may find part of it was inspired by a former Conservative bill, with additions from the people of MADD, who are with us today. I salute their president.

The thing is that, when working on these files, you always meet with people who've unfortunately experienced the loss of a loved one because of impaired driving. It's the same thing for Families For Justice. I thank Markita and Sheri for being here today. We will have the chance to hear the witnesses in the second part.

• (1535)

You are all familiar with the bill. It's fairly simple. It has three legs. The first one deals with streamlining the judicial process, mainly in two areas: the bogus defence and the last drink. Over time, some loopholes have been used to prevent the law and the sentences from being imposed. It's time to fix those loopholes. That's the first part of the bill.

The second part of the bill is with regard to impaired driving. It suggests implementing mandatory minimum sentences. I know there are discussions on this, but I'll come back to it later on.

The third part is with regard to mandatory screening. This is an addition from the former Conservative bill, which came from a long discussion I had with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and after reviewing legal advice, namely from Dr. Hogg, with whom you are probably very familiar. He stated, clearly, that a public road is a place where the law should fully apply and that it is a privilege to drive a car. When I drive a car, I must have a driver's licence and respect the rules of the road, but I also need to be sober. Not meeting one of those requirements is not complying with the law, and at any time I am in a public place, especially on the road, a police officer should have the power to make sure I comply with the law. I'm not in my living room. I am on the road.

Dr. Hogg clearly demonstrated that this is fully compliant with the Charter of Rights, and that it is also very reasonable in a society like ours. Actually, it is done in many countries around the world. As you know, it has proven to be effective in saving lives.

We are losing three to four lives every day. I come from Quebec City. Last week we lost six members of our community as a result of a heinous crime. There are no words to say how horrible that was. However, this is almost happening on a daily basis in our country, and we can stop this. We can stop this by implementing rules that have been proven to save lives. That's what is in front of you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair, I will continue in French and come back to one particular issue, minimum sentences.

During the last legislature, Bill C-590 and Bill C-652 were introduced by Randy Hoback and Mark Warawa, respectively, two Conservative colleagues I hold in great esteem.

First, I have a recommendation for an amendment to the bill. I would like to include in Bill C-226 the provision for vehicular homicide, which was set out in Bill C-652. We want to prevent reoffenders from hitting people on the road. I am making this suggestion because we have to do everything in our power through the legislation and the Criminal Code to really reduce the leading cause of death on the roads.

My colleague Randy Hoback, who introduced Bill C-590, told me that if a person is caught with double the allowable limit of blood alcohol, a more severe penalty should be imposed.

My remarks are for my Liberal colleagues, and I know they aren't always comfortable with minimum sentences. In April 2015, the hon. member for Papineau supported the private member's bill of my colleague Randy Hoback. I am truly taking a non-partisan approach. You will have realized, of course, that I am talking about Prime Minister Trudeau. At the time, he said:

[*English*]

As a result of this change [vehicular homicide], a conviction would carry additional weight, and hopefully provide a greater deterrent to would-be impaired drivers.

Dear colleagues, my question to you is, can we afford all these rhetorical discussions if we can save one life by making sure that someone spends at least one more year in jail instead of being on the road and risking the lives of others? That's what I pose to you.

I believe as parliamentarians we should send a strong signal to people causing death while impaired, while being under the influence of alcohol. We've seen in the past that the sentence for causing death has increased, but we have to encourage judges and tribunals to impose a fairly reasonable minimum sentence. I feel that four years is really low, but this is sending the signal that this is the bar. We need to push even further for maximum sentences.

Mr. Trudeau further wrote to Families For Justice regarding Bill C-590, a second private member's bill that was tabled by Randy Hoback. He said:

The bill will increase penalties against anyone who drives while severely intoxicated, and will also increase the penalties for impaired driving causing death.

Yes, we can support the bill in a non-partisan way. This is a bill that is crafted to meet one target, saving Canadian lives.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

I'd like to give you an example.

A man wiped out an entire family in Saguenay in August 2015. Some people here have had similar experiences and have transformed their grief into motivation.

Mr. Di Iorio, I admire you. I also admire your daughter's courage and her taxi project. These are very good initiatives. So it is possible to transform this grief into action to prevent other lives from being wiped out. That's precisely the purpose of the bill before us today.

As you can see, I sent a lot of documentation.

[*English*]

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

[*Translation*]

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Hon. Steven Blaney: To conclude, I invite the committee to focus on the victims. We're talking about human lives that would be saved and the need to send a clear and irreversible signal that driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a serious crime. We have an opportunity to impose minimum sentences, particularly in the case of repeat offenders who cause fatalities. It is possible to remove the mechanisms that clog our judicial system and prevent the exercise of justice. As we know, justice that is delayed is justice that is denied.

Lastly, we can take a tremendous measure in terms of prevention with routine screening. Lives have been saved in every country where it has been applied. With that, I would now be pleased to answer your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now start the question period.

Mr. Picard, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Blaney, it's a pleasure to have you with us again today.

First, I would like to congratulate you and the others here today on your efforts toward preventive measures to save lives. I don't think there's any justification for doing otherwise. Your bill is expanded and developed. Having said that, I would like some clarification for myself and the committee.

For example, clause 320.14(1)(b) indicates that your bill proposes to eliminate the last drink defence. The 2012 Supreme Court decision in *St-Onge Lamoureux* can be mentioned here.

Could you please explain the last drink defence and how your bill is akin to the Supreme Court's comments in this respect?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you for your question.

I would like to mention that we all, meaning parliamentarians, politicians and the government, are going to benefit from legislation that would help to save lives.

Part of my bill is intended to eliminate the last drink defence, which means that when drivers claim that they have a blood alcohol level of more than 80 mg per 100 ml of blood at the time of the test because they consumed a certain amount of alcohol immediately before taking the wheel. In other words, those drivers didn't have anything to drink all night, but just before leaving, they quickly drank one glass, got behind the wheel and had an accident. At the time of the accident, those drivers may not have been drunk, but when the police arrested them, they were. However, several of their friends stated that they hadn't had anything to drink all night except for right before leaving.

It has been shown that this defence is a way of circumventing the law and shirking responsibility. The claim is that the alcohol was not yet in the system at the time of the accident. Bill C-226 therefore also seeks to limit the post-driving defence. That's the other mechanism being proposed.

So I encourage you, if you haven't already done so, to invite representatives from the Department of Justice to appear. They will be able to give you further details about this.

This bill has been prepared by Department of Justice officials. So I am confident that the measures being recommended are fully in line with the constitutional requirements. The objective is to reduce the number of judicial proceedings so that a decision can be made and the victims and taxpayers are not penalized. We need to remember that when a case is brought before the courts, all taxpayers are forced to pay the costs.

• (1545)

Mr. Michel Picard: I'd like to go back to the Supreme Court issue.

Thank you for the explanation and summary of the two different types of defence, the last glass and the large quantity that can be taken. The Supreme Court still had very specific positions on this kind of defence.

How does your bill fit with these positions of the Supreme Court?

Hon. Steven Blaney: The bill was drafted so that it responds to the Supreme Court's concerns.

Mr. Michel Picard: Have any of your clauses in particular been drafted to harmonize with the Supreme Court's comments?

Hon. Steven Blaney: As I said, sometimes there is an abuse of process. The bill was designed to ensure that we avoid abusing judicial processes, while still fully respecting the rights and freedoms of everyone.

Mr. Michel Picard: Let's change the subject. Let's talk about taking samples and refusing to comply. Can you comment on that? What is your understanding of what the criminal intent is?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Can you clarify your question, please?

Mr. Michel Picard: There is a debate among jurists concerning the criminal intent required for the commission of an offence to refuse to comply with an order to take a breathalyzer.

Hon. Steven Blaney: These are basically the same provisions as the ones in the actual act. There is only one difference in the bill.

Imagine that a person is driving his vehicle and a police officer wants him to be screened. Screening tests can't be used in court. Currently, the police officer must be able to show that the person seems to be intoxicated in order to screen him. As we know, repeat offenders, reckless drivers and people with addiction problems are able to hide the signs.

As for what you brought up, this bill maintains the same presumptions at the police level. On the other hand, it allows police officers to be able to ask a person to show that the alcohol level is lower than the allowable limit, whether the person shows signs of being intoxicated. It will make it possible to increase the effectiveness of road blocks in a phenomenal way and will allow us to intercept people who, although they hide their intoxication, are a danger to public safety.

Mr. Michel Picard: I have to choose between two questions because I have only about a minute left.

I would like to better understand the mechanics of the driving prohibition order. For example, convicted individuals must serve a prison sentence and are prohibited from driving for three years. They don't always serve their full prison sentence.

Does the prohibition begin before or after they are in prison? Does it start at the beginning of their incarceration? I'd like to clarify how the driving prohibition order works.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I'm quite flexible on these issues. These are provisions. As I said earlier, the bill is fairly complex, and we must give ourselves some time to study it.

I invite you, as parliamentarians, to provide the time needed to properly align this bill with provincial legislation to enable the provinces to properly implement the terms and conditions in this regard.

Mr. Michel Picard: Mr. Chair, since I have only 25 seconds left, I'll give it to my colleague opposite.

Thank you, Mr. Blaney.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you very much, Mr. Picard.

[English]

The Chair: Now we'll have Mr. Miller and Mr. Clement.

• (1550)

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blaney, it's good to have you here. I'm sure nobody's going to be too hard on you here today.

I want to first give you credit for dealing with an issue that is ongoing in Canada, and certainly Canada isn't the only country. A lot of innocent lives have been taken because of some people's bad choices.

I want to point out your bill. There's a part of it that I will get to that I have a problem with, but I don't have an issue with minimum sentences. If you commit some crime—and this is a crime when it happens—you should expect to have a minimum sentence. In general, I fully support harsher sentences for people who commit this, as well.

A number of civil rights groups have reached out to me, and probably to other members around the table, about the bill's component for random breath tests. They've all implied that this would be an infringement of the constitutional rights. You have a lot of good stuff in the bill. My question is this. If it came down to whether your bill became law or not, would you consider amending it by taking that portion out of the bill?

Hon. Steven Blaney: First, I want to thank you, Mr. Miller—I will not say Larry today—thank you very much. You have raised a very important and critical point. My answer to you is that this bill is built, I would say, like a chair. Taking out one leg of the chair impacts the whole efficiency of the bill. This bill has a strong deterrence part—the mandatory minimum sentences—that has many benefits. I would say that if a person represents a threat to society, the longer this person is behind bars, the longer this person can get rehabilitation or help for, I would say, overcoming what I would call, probably, an addiction.

That's the first part.

The second part is, as I've mentioned, the streamlining of the process. We may have the best laws in town or in the world, but if our judicial system is jammed by bogus defence, there's a denial of justice.

A third aspect is this. How can we make sure that, from the start, we prevent those people—and I could include myself—from driving while being impaired? Well, all the questions lead to one answer. The only way we can prevent someone from getting the key of his car and turning it on is through the fear of being caught by the police.

[*Translation*]

We are human beings. It has been shown that the most effective prevention to keep someone who is intoxicated from driving is the fear of being stopped by the police.

[*English*]

That's the core and everybody agrees. That's why this bill got such overwhelming support from police officers, from families, from justice, from MADD. It is clearly demonstrated. They will be probably able to explain in a way better manner than I can that if you

feel you could get caught by the police when driving while being impaired, you won't do it.

Mr. Larry Miller: Thank you. I'm going to turn the rest of my time over to Mr. Clement.

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Thank you, Larry.

Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Blaney—Steven—for being here to discuss this very important bill. I think it's important that we continue, even in our efforts as members of Parliament, to highlight these issues. I'm sure there's not a community in Canada that has not been touched by a tragedy of this nature, so I want to thank you for bringing these issues to bear.

Let me first talk about the sentencing regime that you have suggested. It does target recidivism, obviously, by having these increased penalties.

Just unpack that a little bit for me. How do you feel that our recidivism rates can be reduced when you convict the impaired drivers the way that you want to convict them?

• (1555)

Hon. Steven Blaney: I thank you, Tony, for your question.

The main problem with recidivists is that they are a victim themselves in some way of a drug addiction, which is alcohol. They need support. They can get support with our rehabilitation system when they are in a federal prison. The problem we have experienced over the years is that we have seen some cases where recidivists would actually get their driver's licences back the day after they had an accident causing death. You will say this is not happening. I hope not.

What we need is to send a strong signal with those mandatory minimum sentences, and I gave the example of the current Prime Minister being fully supportive of it in the case of severely intoxicated drivers. We need to send the signal that Canada does not accept the fact that this is the largest cause of criminal death and that we want to join those countries that have put in place measures that are preventing those accidents, those crimes, from happening. That's why I've laid out some mandatory minimum sentences, depending on the nature of the accident, targeting impaired driving causing death.

One other thing that's in the bill, which I invite you to consider and to support, is the consecutive sentences. Again, this accident that took place took the lives of many and has to have consequences that fit the crime.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dubé.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Blaney, like all my colleagues, I thank you for your work on this. Everyone shares the opinion that impaired driving has negative consequences. You are certainly very busy at the moment with other issues. So thank you for taking the time to look into this. It shows that you consider it very important.

I want to go back to minimum sentences, which is a very important issue. We could certainly debate it because we don't necessarily share the same opinion. I have read many studies that question the effectiveness of these measures.

Some say that the proposed measures could have an effect that isn't in line with your intentions. By removing the discretionary power of a judge, we could ensure that some people who drive while impaired and who are involved in accidents causing death would not even go to prison. Indeed the judge could find the minimum sentence too harsh in a particular case.

Aren't you afraid that by removing the power of judges to make their own decision, there is a risk of having an effect that goes against your intention and the intent of your bill?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you for your question, Mr. Dubé.

Once again, I am pleased to take a break from the leadership race because I think this topic is a very relevant one. In fact, today I presented my themes on justice, with Senator Boisvenu's support.

To answer your question, it is complementary. This is consistent with my political actions in the past 10 years. In all sincerity, I want to emphasize that my political experience with Mr. Harper has made me very familiar with the plight of victims. I wasn't necessarily aware of this issue previously. Very early in my years as an MP, I had the opportunity to meet people who had experienced personal trauma. That does not leave me indifferent. That is why we have moved forward.

Going back to your question on minimum sentences, know this. Currently, a sentence for a charge of impaired driving causing death is approximately seven years or seven and a half years. The last sentence that was brought to my attention was seven and a half years. I suggest that we have a four-year threshold. That's really a floor. In fact, you might blame me for proposing a minimum sentence that is too low. Actually, I don't see how we could go lower than a threshold like that.

This sends a signal to our judicial system that a minimum threshold has been established and that, depending on the nature of the crime, it can go much further with the consecutive sentences, as proposed in the bill.

Know that I have full confidence in the judicial system. However, as parliamentarians, we have to send signals that reflect the public's disapproval and disgust toward a certain responsible inertia, even today, with the fact that four people will die on our roads. That's four deaths too many. From that perspective, it seems entirely relevant that we propose measures and minimum sentences that are very conservative.

• (1600)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: We are also shocked by the fact that these people are losing their lives under such circumstances. Unfortunately, we will have to maintain our disagreement about the

minimum sentences. That being said, there is Bill C-73, which is a sort of precursor to your bill and was introduced by your government in the previous Parliament.

At the time, one of my Liberal colleagues put a question to the officials from the Department of Justice appearing before the committee about whether there were legal opinions on the constitutionality of the bill.

The question wasn't asked to express agreement or disagreement. You mentioned the slowness of the system on some occasions and the difficulty of being caught in it.

Challenging the constitutionality of the bill may delay its implementation. I think all of us have an objective to find a way to adopt policies that protect the population while being constitutional.

Given that you were in power at the time, are you able to complete what hasn't been possible during this period or provide us with your own opinion on the constitutionality of the bill?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes, absolutely. Thank you for the question.

As you mentioned, two of the three main elements of this bill are the same as the one I introduced with my colleague Peter MacKay and which was the subject of legal confirmation. As for routine screening, I would say that it is a legal type of Kalachnikov. That's really what Mr. Hogg thinks. I've already had the opportunity to share this opinion, and I can provide it again.

This clearly shows—and also responds to Mr. Miller's question—that there is no violation of individual freedoms if, on a highway, a person is abiding by the traffic regulations, has a valid driver's licence and is intoxicated.

Obviously, it has nothing to do with someone in his living room on a Saturday night, on his private property and can do what he wants. However, being able to use public roads is a privilege we're given, but that comes with obligations. In that respect, the legal opinion of Mr. Hogg, who I am told is a very well-respected jurist in Canada, clearly established that there was—

Mr. Matthew Dubé: But in terms of—

Hon. Steven Blaney: —no reservations about this.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: —the Department of Justice, do you think you've been able to demonstrate the constitutionality of the bill?

Hon. Steven Blaney: We always make sure that bills meet—

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Right.

That said, since I'm running out of time, I would like to touch on one last point. It will be my last question.

You talked about citizen initiatives for people who are affected by these situations, which is obviously very important. Education is also very important. You also talked about the fear of being arrested. For people to get caught, the police need to be able to enforce these laws. Education, the police and all of this is a matter of resources. Unfortunately, your bill can't necessarily do all of this.

In closing, perhaps you could talk about the need for resources so that the police can do their job and, above all, educate the public. Education is an important aspect of this.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you. I agree with you, but if a roadside checkpoint were set up, pursuant to this bill, which you have the power to pass, every driver could be tested. Effectiveness is shown to increase even when the resources stay the same. It would therefore be possible to stop people, who, as I was saying earlier, were trying to mask the signs of their intoxication. Those individuals would lose their licences because they were inebriated.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blaney.

Mr. Di Iorio, you may go ahead.

• (1605)

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Blaney, fellow members, and representatives of MADD and Families for Justice, I want you to know just how valuable your contribution here today is. Your initiative and efforts are admirable, indeed.

You referred to the experience I had and continue to have, and the way to change that experience. Tomorrow, across the river, in Gatineau, my daughter will lead public consultations on the subject on behalf of the Quebec government. The issue continues to solicit a lot of hard work.

I went through every stage of the experience, but, of course, I'm not here as a witness. The only stage I didn't have to deal with was death. I know that people here today have had to deal with it, and my thoughts are with them. Every stage has consequences and causes pain.

As you know, I'm a lawyer. I have questions, therefore, about the legislative provisions and policy.

In the experience my family and I went through, many things affected me, one being the little regard given to victims. I had to get involved on a professional level, and I would say that being a lawyer made a difference. Had I not been a lawyer, my daughter's assailant would not have been found guilty or sent to prison. Too many elements would have escaped our attention, and our family would've had to hire a lawyer.

Even though I am a lawyer, I did at one point question whether I should have hired another lawyer. Being fortunate enough to have friends and colleagues who supported me, I didn't have to do so in the formal sense.

Mr. Blaney, you introduced a private member's bill. You used to be a minister and part of cabinet. I have a vision of what a comprehensive solution to the problem could look like. The current system has huge gaps in terms of the way victims and families are

treated and the support they receive. That has a direct impact on prevention.

You were part of the government for a long time. Why are you not introducing a more comprehensive solution? I'm not quite sure as to why, but you are repealing or moving some of the sections. First, I'd like you to address that and, then, discuss what a comprehensive solution might look like.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I want to begin by applauding your compassion for victims and recognizing the understanding you have of this issue on a personal level, unfortunately.

Just recently, in fact, I was speaking with victims, and one of them told me that they felt as though they were not being heard and that their input was not wanted. I am very proud of Senator Boisvenu's work on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. I think we have a collective responsibility to address these issues.

I am calling on you because you belong to the government party. A victims bill of rights was introduced. Now it is time to give full force to the principles of consultation, respect consideration, and compensation it sets out.

This bill merely marks the beginning of a new chapter. Clearly, we must do more to support victims. Something I often hear is that individuals who commit vehicular homicide should be punished appropriately. Currently, a sense of injustice exists because sentences are seen as being too lenient. Driving while under the influence is considered a crime. The Criminal Code says so, in fact. As I see it, one way to give victims what they need is to introduce minimum sentences.

This private member's bill is extremely ambitious, particularly in comparison with a bill that seeks simply to establish a tree day, and I say that with all due respect. This piece of legislation is very ambitious, but it relies on the work done in this area.

Again, systematic breath testing will represent a major step towards achieving that overall vision. The legislation before you today, Bill C-226, is a step in the right direction, meaning a step towards a more comprehensive solution that improves the situation of victims.

• (1610)

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Thank you.

I appreciate what you said, as I forgot to mention it. My comments are also directed at Senator Boisvenu.

I want to stay on the topic of victims, but first, I'd like something clarified. Did you ask your caucus for its support on this bill, and if so, did you get it?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Your caucus supports your bill, then.

Hon. Steven Blaney: When my bill was introduced, our justice critic, Mr. Nicholson, gave it his full support.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Congratulations are in order.

Now, back to victims. I want to tell you why I am so adamant about support for victims. The perpetrators of these crimes have no regard for life.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Forgive me for interrupting, but this is a private member's bill. We, the members of the Conservative Party, have the freedom to support or oppose private member's bills involving moral issues. That's entirely normal. I just wanted to clarify that.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: The perpetrators of these crimes have little regard for the safety, well-being, and lives of others. As long as the suffering endured by victims is not front and centre, the severity of the crime is diminished. That is why I place so much emphasis on victims issues.

The public needs to be made aware of what victims experience. They are victimized first when the so-called accident occurs and again when it comes time to go through the judicial process. In fact, it is not an accident, because an accident happens at random, but a crime of this nature is not at all random. There isn't even a term to describe this type of crime.

I am asking you this question as someone who used to be a minister and has intimate knowledge of how government works. Are there methods we can develop to tackle this kind of crime?

The Chair: Sorry, Mr. Di Iorio, but you're out of time.

Thank you very much.

We'll continue with Ms. Watts.

[English]

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Thank you very much.

I appreciate the discussion because at some point in our communities, everyone has experienced the death of individuals, some children, through somebody's choice to get behind the wheel.

I have a couple of questions. When we look at the repeat offender, at how many times they have gotten behind the wheel of a vehicle when they've been drinking, some of the statistics that have come out have been horrendous in terms of how many times they've been before the courts, and they keep driving. I have no issue with the minimum mandatory for repeat offenders causing death.

I want to talk a little about the breath test. If we look at this practically on the ground, we're looking at roadside only, correct?

Hon. Steven Blaney: We're looking at every time a police officer is in a situation of detecting the presence of alcohol. He would not have to have a visual sign that the person is intoxicated to justify testing.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Okay, but is that for roadside conditions or can they just pull anybody over?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes. If you are on the road and are asked to show your driver's licence, it's the same as if you are at the airport and you go through security screening. What we are witnessing and what has been demonstrated in other countries is that this is the way to save lives. This is the way to avoid recidivists going through the holes in the screening process.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: I would take this a little further as well because I know as we embark upon the legalization of marijuana we're going to run into exactly the same issues in terms of people getting behind the steering wheel and being absolutely off their

brains. Would there be amendments to this that would incorporate the marijuana piece, or is it a subsequent...? I honestly don't see the difference. If you are drunk or if you are high, when you get behind the wheel, you could kill somebody.

•(1615)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes, absolutely.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: There have to be measures put in place to cover all of those things.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I fully agree with you.

I was looking at the people from MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, because we had exactly the same conversation. This part of the bill, which is mandatory screening, is setting the base for the next step, which is also drugs. This particular part is addressing alcohol, but it's the same thing. A police officer may have a stoned person in front of him or her, but if the person doesn't look too weird, he cannot test them.

Let's begin with alcohol, and obviously, then, it will be easy to follow, because the precedent will have been set with this bill. We are laying out the basis, for whatever may come down the pike, to do the most to prevent lives being taken by drugged drivers.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Right. I'm not a lawyer, so I will ask this question.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I'm not either.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: We have a few around.

I was under the assumption that, as things currently stand, a police officer could not pull somebody over unless they had probable cause. Is that not correct?

Hon. Steven Blaney: You know, actually, if I have a muffler that's too noisy, someone can take me off the road. What is your question?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: It's about probable cause. If a police officer's driving, they can't currently, as I understand the law, randomly pull people over.

Hon. Steven Blaney: No, that's it exactly and that is the core of the problem. This is why we are losing lives. The police are not able to intercept that person and take this person off the road because it doesn't show. Down the road, this person may cause an accident because this person is under the influence—

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: The reason I ask that—

The Chair: *Je m'excuse.* Thank you very much. I need to move on.

This is the new, tougher chair.

Mr. Spengemann.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Blaney, for joining us today, along with witnesses from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and Families For Justice. Thank you for your advocacy, for your championship of the issue, and for bringing it to us.

I want to pick up on comments and questions raised by my colleague Ms. Watts. The first one I want to go to with you is the question of randomness and whether randomness is even the right term. The legislation, as it's framed right now, makes reference to randomness only in the title of a paragraph, and it doesn't seem to have any legal import. It basically says, "If a peace officer has in his or her possession an approved screening device, the...officer may, by demand, require the person who is operating a conveyance" to submit himself or herself to a test.

Some people might say few, if any, things in the human mind are ever random. The only way to really achieve true randomness would be to have a machine that's at the point of the decision of whether to test or not. It would then have a button and when you pushed the button, it would spit out a binary yes or no. That would be random. Everything else might be subject to some allegation that it's not random. If an officer, for example, were to pull over only black pickup trucks in a certain neighbourhood, then the complainant might say it's not random and challenge the legislation on the basis of a non-randomness defence.

In your exchange with my colleague Mr. Miller, you said that you want to avoid having the courts jammed up with bogus defences. Is it randomness we're after, or is it really the full discretion of an officer to do whatever she decides at the roadside, regardless of whether reasonable and probable grounds persist, to the effect that anybody at any time could be pulled over, randomly or not, and be subjected to a test?

Hon. Steven Blaney: You raise a very legitimate question. I wish I were a lawyer or an expert or a constitutionalist to better answer your question. What I know is that this paragraph you've raised is really a very critical part of the bill, which actually, as you mentioned, enables a police officer to randomly test to detect the presence of alcohol.

I would align my views with the expertise of Dr. Hogg on that one. I feel that the wording is appropriate.

You know, I'm only a tool here, in your hands, so that this bill can move forward and attain its objective of saving lives. If you feel that, in one way or another, there's a way to amend the bill, I would certainly invite you or any member of the committee to move that along. As Mr. Di Iorio mentioned, for someone who commits homicide, there's no way to qualify a crime that is committed with a car by a person under the influence of alcohol. A previous bill, which actually got support from our current Prime Minister Trudeau, suggested calling it "vehicular homicide". Well, I would say, please feel free to add it.

• (1620)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: To raise the stigma of the offence...

Hon. Steven Blaney: Absolutely. It would have a very strong impact. Just as an example, in a case where a recidivist is caught driving under the effects of alcohol, it would be a break of his conditions. This person would be put in jail. We would at least prevent this person from taking the life of someone else.

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Okay. Thank you for that.

The secondary aspect, which was also alluded to by my colleague Ms. Watts, was the relationship between alcohol and drugs. The bill

captures drugs to some extent. The question is whether it does everything we need it to do, looking forward to legalization and regulation, and potentially also addressing other drugs. The bill as it stands now doesn't define drugs. If you look at the professional transport community, for example, for some folks a stimulant might be helpful at night when they're driving a shift. In other cases, an overstimulant might affect detrimentally somebody's ability to drive.

My question to you is a general one. How do we move in the direction of where we are with alcohol, where we know that alcohol after a certain threshold will relatively uniformly affect people negatively, but we don't know the same for drugs? Caffeine is a drug. There's a bunch of stimulants and a bunch of nerve-calming drugs that people might take after a day of anxiety at the office. If they drive home and get into an accident, they may be subject to the law.

How do we move forward on the science relating to drugs and the levels of inebriation causing detrimental effects?

Hon. Steven Blaney: I thank you for your question. As you know, this is a private member's bill that is focusing on a holistic approach to target impaired driving, mainly with alcohol. Your government, having some views on moving forward regarding drugs, is certainly asking the very same question you are asking.

I can tell you that by implementing this measure, as I was responding to Ms. Watts, the mandatory

[*Translation*]

systematic testing and

[*English*]

random testing, if we do it as we plan to do it with alcohol, it will help to do it also with drugs so that the police officer can randomly, or with full discretion, test someone for the presence of any form of drugs. Of course, this is an area that needs to be explored and strengthened.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Blaney.

Mr. Clement.

Hon. Tony Clement: Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Blaney, I represent a rural riding, and I'm very proud to represent a rural riding. There are parts of your riding that would be the same. I was reviewing some of the testimony before the committee last September, and this is what a Department of Justice official said:

In major cities, a dozen police officers may stop traffic and select five or six individuals to test. In a rural setting, the police force may consist of four or five officers. So it would be a bit difficult to do the same.

I just wanted your perspective. Obviously we want to not only pass a bill, but we want to enforce a bill. How do we do that? Are there any responses you're expecting from the provinces, for instance, to make sure there's a full complement of police officers available to do this kind of thing?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you for your question, Tony.

My riding has an urban part and a rural part. I certainly am proud to get the support from the rural organization there, which is doing outstanding work. In Bellechasse there was a lot of crime. It's near Beauce. In Beauce and Bellechasse there are still some sad cases remaining, but a lot of effort has been made. I come from Quebec, where we have Opération Nez rouge. It's a great model for educating people that if they've taken a drink during, in that case, the Christmas period, they call someone else.

So yes, for the rural part, the bill fully applies in that regard. Again, it's whether a police officer has the latitude to detect the presence of alcohol, even though the person doesn't necessarily show any sign of being drunk, just as they would ask for a driver's licence or to have the person's car inspected. I just see benefits in it for both rural and urban parts of the country. I believe it will help to reduce accidents in rural parts.

• (1625)

Hon. Tony Clement: Could you elaborate a little? I know you've talked to a lot of stakeholders. You referred to that earlier in your discussion. Just talk about how stakeholders have responded to this particular bill in the context of the challenge of impaired driving.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you, Tony, for this very open question. I must say, I was surprised to see that... When I first thought of moving forward, it was actually our colleague Mark Warawa who told me that I should look into this area when I was an early pick for a private member's bill. Thinking about the work we've done in the past.... Yes, the Association of Chiefs of Police is in favour, the families, and the expert associations, and I must thank MADD for adding the prevention part. I believe it is important to somehow promote legislation that has science-based evidence, and it is proven that mandatory random testing is saving lives. I must tell you that there weren't many doors I knocked on where I didn't get support.

In Quebec, there is a special committee that Mr. Di Iorio probably knows very well,

[*Translation*]

the council that deals with road safety.

[*English*]

They've been advocating for those measures for years. Now we have the chance to do it by sending it back to the House with the amendments you feel are appropriate, and sending it to the Senate. Who knows, by spring we could have royal assent. We could put it as an accomplishment of this legislation, and it would be to the benefit of all parliamentarians. Every single member of Parliament will get credit for this legislation being adopted, because they will see that this is a Parliament that works and gets the job done.

The Chair: Ms. Damoff, go ahead.

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

Mr. Blaney, thank you for being here today. I applaud your efforts to reduce the amount of drunk driving we have. It's a non-partisan issue. I'm just not convinced that your bill is the right way to do it. One of the things you talked about was mandatory minimums, and how it would allow people to have the opportunity to get treatment while they are in prison. But the fact is that your government cut

those programs. They don't have the opportunity to get addiction treatment when they are in prison, so they're still getting out and they still have mental health issues. I'm not quite sure how the mandatory minimums equate to getting treatment in prison. I wonder if you could share that with me.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you for your comment. It certainly is the hard way, but when you're in a federal facility, you are prevented from getting alcohol, so already this is a form of treatment, I would say. I strongly believe that rehabilitation programs are important. I've said today that I feel we certainly need to be more efficient in the way we are doing it. I visited a facility in my area, a detox centre, where recidivists or former prisoners have been benefiting from federal programs.

I want to insist that this bill, although not perfect, will bring great relief to the issue we're dealing with. In the past, there was a motion brought that Canada was a distinct society. We ended up saying that Canada was a distinct society within a united Canada. It was brought by the Bloc Québécois, but we, the government, the Conservatives and Stephen Harper, got the credit for it. Feel free to support my bill. You will get all the credit, and nobody will remember that I was the sponsor of it.

• (1630)

Ms. Pam Damoff: When we talk about random breath testing, comparisons are made to other countries. One of the previous witnesses we had talked about how in Canada fatalities in 1981 were at 62%, and by 1999 they dropped to 33%. They're lower now. Comparing it with other countries isn't necessarily comparing apples to apples, because we have already reduced it, in large part thanks to groups like MADD and public education campaigns. We need to go lower. There is absolutely no doubt that we need programs to do that, but it's difficult to show the evidence that this one tool would solve the problem.

Hon. Steven Blaney: No, it's very clear. Look, it's proven. It's proven in every country of the world that, where they have implemented random testing, they have saved lives. We lose four people every day and we will save more lives by implementing random testing. That's proven.

Ms. Pam Damoff: What country only implemented random breath testing without other programs?

Hon. Steven Blaney: There is a large list that I provided to you a month ago.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I know, but Ireland is an example.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I can provide it to you again. I don't have it at hand. I invite you—

Ms. Pam Damoff: Ireland implemented education and a huge budget for enforcement along with random breath testing. They didn't have anything before, so they did see a huge drop. But we haven't seen where that has been the only thing that has been implemented and that's shown as the only tool that can reduce drunk driving.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Are you telling me that you don't want to take the chance?

[Translation]

Are you telling me you will not support a bill that could save Canadians' lives?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said? You can say it in French; I didn't have my earpiece in.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I just find it awkward that you would not be willing to move forward legislation that will save Canadian lives.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I do want to put forward legislation that would save Canadian lives.

Hon. Steven Blaney: There is one in front of you.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. In terms of the constitutionality, we had a number of witnesses who appeared before us who spoke to that fact. We had the Privacy Commissioner and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and they all talked about the fact they did not believe that this would pass. I know you have one—

Hon. Steven Blaney: If I may, it is proven that the legalization of marijuana could take even more lives on the road. I would be very careful. This is an honest effort to save lives in terms of alcohol, which has been approved by every single organization that is involved in the fight to reduce the loss of lives on the road due to alcohol. Moving forward with legislation that could take even more lives with drugs, I am not sure that is really respectful towards all the families who have lost a loved one because of alcohol.

I believe we have a moral responsibility as parliamentarians to stop the political game at times and do what is needed in this country to save Canadian lives.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I agree with you.

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, that's the end of this round of testimony.

We'll take a break for a couple of minutes and give people a chance to thank Mr. Blaney.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you.

The Chair: Then we'll have the change of witnesses.

• (1630) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We will regather for our second hour. I very much thank our witnesses, both Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD, and Families For Justice for joining us.

We're going to be doing the two presentations back to back and then have questions from MPs. We're going to begin with MADD. I understand that Patricia is going to begin and then Andrew will go second. Take it away. Thank you.

Ms. Patricia Hynes-Coates (National President, Mothers Against Drunk Driving): First of all, I want to thank you for this opportunity to come here to speak on behalf of MADD Canada, my family, and victims of impaired driving. My name is Patricia Hynes-Coates. I'm the national president for Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

Like so many volunteers who've reached out to MADD, I too have lost a loved one. On August 16, 2013, my stepson, Nicholas Coates, was killed by an impaired driver. He was riding his motorcycle to work that day when he was struck by a pickup truck. The man who struck Nicholas had been drinking the night before and the morning of the crash.

Nicholas was a son; he was my stepson. He was a brother, an uncle, a fiancé. He was a hard-working, remarkable young man. He was a civil engineer. He was only 27 years old. Nicholas's loss has devastated so many people. It has forever altered our family, his friends, and his community. His death was completely senseless. There's no way to describe the pain that Nicholas's whole family is going through or how deeply it is felt every waking hour. It feels like a lifetime since I've heard his laughter or seen his smile, yet it still seems like it was only yesterday. We are left with only the broken pieces of who we once were.

The day we brought Nicholas to his final resting place, his dad and I vowed that his life would not be lost in vain. We promised him that we would fight this fight to combat impaired driving, and we promised him that we would bring changes so that no other family would have to suffer a loss from this senseless crime.

It is that promise to Nicholas that has led me here today. I am here to provide a voice for those who can no longer speak for themselves. I am here to speak on behalf of Nicholas and victims of impaired driving. As a mom, a grandmother, and a wife, I know fully well that once we lose someone, we can't bring them back. I live in constant fear for my other children, for my grandchildren, and for the lives of all Canadians, so I am here to encourage the government to move forward with mandatory screening as outlined in Bill C-226. Giving the police the authority to conduct mandatory screening will significantly reduce impaired driving rates. This is one of the most effective tools we can introduce to prevent road crashes and save lives. The introduction of mandatory screening in Canada will be a major step forward in our fight to stop impaired driving.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of my family, and I would now like to turn this over to our CEO, Andrew Murie.

• (1640)

Mr. Andrew Murie (Chief Executive Officer, National Office, Mothers Against Drunk Driving): First of all, I'd like to thank your national president, Patricia, for her courage in sharing her story and for being here to represent thousands of victims of impaired driving across Canada.

MADD Canada has submitted two documents to the committee for consideration, giving full detail on our background positions.

In my remarks here today, I will focus specifically on what we consider the most important issue in Bill C-226, and in fact what we consider to be the most important impaired driving countermeasure available, random breath testing, or as we like to refer to it, mandatory screening.

The other measures in the bill that we support are evidentiary and procedural changes which, if enacted, would address some of the technical concerns with the existing law, questionable court decisions, and other obstacles to effectively enforcing and prosecuting impaired driving. Fewer impaired drivers would evade criminal responsibility due to factors unrelated to their criminal conduct, and those convicted would be subject to more onerous sanctions.

With regard to Canada's record on impaired driving, in 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States released a report indicating that Canada has the highest percentage of alcohol-related crash deaths, 33.6%, among a study of 20 wealthy nations. This is an embarrassment for our country and a clear indication that our federal government needs to move forward on impaired driving legislation.

While MADD Canada strongly supports and promotes new legislation that focuses very specifically on deterrence, we need to deter people from driving when they've consumed too much alcohol. We need to deter people before they cause a crash that kills or injures someone. What we need to do is to authorize police to use mandatory screening.

Before proceeding to the merits of mandatory screening, I need to correct some misperceptions about the term we have talked about, "random breath testing". Random breath testing best practices mandate that all vehicles are checked and that all drivers stopped must present a breath sample. RBT operates the same way as mandatory screening procedures at airports, at Parliament Hill, courts, and government buildings. Some witnesses have claimed that RBT will open the door to police harassment, discrimination, and the targeting of visible minorities. We have found no such concerns about police impropriety in the RBT research literature or in practice.

With regard to Canada's current system of what we call SBT, selective breath testing, only drivers reasonably suspected of drinking can be tested. Studies have shown that the SBT system misses a significant portion of legally impaired drivers. They miss 90% of people with blood alcohol concentration levels between 0.05 and 0.079, and they miss 60% of drivers with BACs over our current legal limit of 0.08.

In its 2009 report, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights stated that the current methods of enforcing the law lead to police apprehending only a small percentage of impaired drivers, even at roadside traffic stops designed to detect and deter impaired driving. This does not speak well for the deterrent effect of Canada's impaired driving laws.

As a member of Parliament, Mr. Bill Blair, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, stated in Parliament on June 9, 2016:

The realization that they cannot avoid giving a breath sample at roadside will have a very significant deterrent effect on people who may choose to drink and drive. I would like to advise the House that this deterrent effect has been demonstrated countless times in many other countries.

I'd like to use the example of Ireland. When Ireland brought in RBT in 2006, they had 365 fatalities. In 2015, that number had dropped to 166, a 54.5% decrease. There were 907 serious injuries in 2006. In 2015, there were 365, a 59.8% decrease. There were 18,650 charges in 2006. In 2015, there were 6,900 charges, a 63% decrease. Not only does it save lives, not only does it stop serious injuries, it also reduces the volume of impaired driving charges in our courtrooms. Any witness who comes forward saying it will clog up the...it just doesn't happen. It never has. It never will.

• (1645)

Canada would likely see crash reductions in the range of about 20% because Canada has adopted a lot of the measures that some of these other countries have adopted as well. There's still room for significant improvement in Canada as well. We estimate the 20% reduction would prevent more than 200 deaths and stop 12,000 serious injuries in this country.

We also estimate that RBT, in its first year in Canada, would save the system \$4.3 billion. We've done a number of surveys on public support for RBT. The interesting thing is once RBT is enacted, public support goes up. Australia brought in RBT 1985 to 1990. By 2002, 98.2% of Queensland drivers supported RBT. There is already broad support for RBT in Canada. In a 2009 survey, 66% of Canadians supported legislation authorizing police to conduct RBT. In 2010, an Ipsos Reid survey found that 77% of Canadians either strongly support or somewhat support the introduction of RBT. When informed of RBT's potential to reduce impaired driving deaths, 80% agreed that RBT is a reasonable intrusion on drivers in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Our legal director, Professor Robert Solomon, concluded that RBT would be found consistent with the charter. Dr. Peter Hogg concurred with our charter analysis. More importantly, Dr. Hogg independently concluded in a formal written legal opinion he sent to MADD Canada that RBT would not violate the charter. It is essential to put RBT in the context of accepted screening procedures routinely used at Canadian airports. In 2015, an estimated 131 million passengers got on and off planes in Canada. It is not uncommon for them to take off their shoes, their belts, their jewellery, carry-on items swabbed for explosive residue, be scanned for weapons, and submit to pat-down searches. It is not uncommon to wait 10 or 15 minutes to be subject to these screening and search procedures. Such procedures are accepted because they serve a public safety function.

Put bluntly, far more Canadians are killed in alcohol-related crashes every year than by attacks on airplanes. Like airport procedures, RBT is consistent with the charter. In conclusion, MADD Canada would strongly urge Parliament to show leadership and enact the RBT provisions in Bill C-226.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to turn now to Families For Justice. We'll do it alphabetically, so we'll begin with Ms. Arsenault.

You have 10 minutes between you. I tend not to give a warning about your time, so that will be up to you to work out.

Ms. Sheri Arsenault (Director, Alberta, Families For Justice): Thank you.

I want to thank everybody, and I realize there are time constraints. I hope that everybody was sent the link to a quick five-minute video, because that video was meant to depict truly what every family that has lost someone goes through. It's not meant to be just my own tragedy.

We all know safety is a non-partisan issue, and we know it's everybody's concern. I'm speaking to you today not as a legal expert, that's for certain. We're not a vast organization with a lot of resources. I'm just a regular Canadian citizen. Most important, I am a victim. On November 26, 2011, my son and his two friends were coming home when a drunk driver, who was about three times over the limit, went straight through my son Bradley's little car from behind. He drove literally right through his car at 200 kilometres an hour. I don't have to tell you how horrific this was. There was nothing left of my son. He had to be identified by his dental records. He was 18 years old. He had just graduated.

After that, the offender was charged. It took close to three years for it to conclude in court: 31 court appearances. We went through a preliminary trial. We went through a full trial. He was also charged with manslaughter. He killed three young men, and he was given five years for the manslaughter and three years for impaired driving causing death. It took three years for it to conclude, and this April I'm attending his hearing for full parole. He will have served, out of his eight years for killing three young men, approximately two and three-quarter years. Because he's a first-time offender, he will get out on full parole, most likely.

That's why I speak for the mandatory side of things. With the considerations for early parole, for day parole, and then full parole, the time served in jail is really not even close to the four-year mandatory minimum.

We all know that all kinds of people, all walks of life, are willing to get behind the wheel and drive drunk because the chances of getting caught are very low. There are not enough police resources to catch every drunk driver. People like to go out and celebrate. At my son's age, Friday night was a celebration, just because it was Friday. We know people like to go out and celebrate, but the chances of getting caught are so low, and when a terrible tragedy happens the sentences are very lenient.

It seems that our judges perceive a lot of it as a tragic accident, an unfortunate accident. That's how it's been told to me in many courtrooms I've been in for other families. They call it an unfortunate accident. Well, I don't call it that. This is now 2017, and I call getting behind the wheel while drunk "wilful". To me, in this day and age, after 30 years of education, anyone who decides to make that choice is acting wilfully.

That was the one common theme I always found: the sentences are very lenient. With parole eligibility, there's not much time in there.

I'll just try to close quickly so my partner Markita can speak.

Someone over there said that victims are given so little consideration, and that is very true. Offenders have every right in the world. They have a right to an expert defence. They have a right to appeal. The victim has one right. My one right is to prepare a victim impact statement and present it. That is the only right I get.

The real victims—I'm family of a victim—have no rights. My son is in the ground.

• (1650)

In closing, impaired driving is of great public concern. We all know that. I know for a fact that Canadians all want stiffer penalties for this. I want our current government to take this opportunity. If it doesn't get done here, I know future governments will get this done, because it's necessary. We are losing four people a day and close to 200 are injured every single day in Canada.

Thanks.

•(1655)

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Ms. Kaulius.

Ms. Markita Kaulius (President, Families For Justice): Thank you for inviting me to be here today.

My name is Markita Kaulius, and I am the president of the Families For Justice society. Families For Justice is a non-profit organization made up of parents, family members, loved ones, and supporters who have all had a child or loved one killed by an impaired driver in Canada.

My 22-year-old daughter Cassandra was killed on May 3, 2011. She was coming home from a softball game and had the right of way to make a left turn. Cassandra was struck in the driver's side door at 103 kilometres an hour by an impaired driver, and she was left to die as the impaired driver ran away from the collision scene. The driver was speeding through an intersection on a red light that had been red for 12 seconds. Cassandra lost her life because an impaired driver made the choice to drink and then drive while being impaired.

Impaired driving is the number one criminal cause of death in Canada. Each year impaired driving leaves a terrible legacy of death, heartbreak, injury, and destruction. From the point of view of numbers alone, it has a far greater impact on Canadian society than any other crime. In terms of the deaths and serious injuries resulting in hospitalization, lost work time, and rehabilitation, impaired driving is clearly the crime that causes the most significant loss in this country. Stats show it is costing Canadian taxpayers billions of dollars to deal with the aftermath of impaired driving. When the health and social costs for death, injuries, and damages to vehicles are included, costs related to impaired driving from alcohol and other drugs were estimated to be over \$20.6 billion in 2010 alone. Every dollar earned by the liquor industry costs the government three dollars in rehabilitation fees.

Many millions of Canadians continue to drink and drive because they can do so with very little fear of being stopped, let alone charged or convicted. Recent survey results indicate that one could drive once a week for more than three years before ever being charged with an impaired driving offence, and for over six years without ever being convicted.

Among those accused of impaired driving whose cases were handled by a criminal court in 2014-15, at least 16% had been charged in a previous impaired driving case within the past 10 years in the same jurisdiction, regardless of whether they were found guilty or not. Moreover, cases of impaired driving causing death or bodily harm are more likely, at 20%, to involve an accused who had prior contact with the courts for impaired driving offences. The same trend was observed in cases where the accused refused to provide a blood, breath, or urine sample, at 21%.

Over the past 30 years, we've had education. We've had awareness, and MADD continues to do impaired driving campaigns, but we still continue to see impaired driving as the number one criminal cause of death in Canada. On average we're losing the lives of 1,250 to 1,500 people per year in Canada, and over 60,000 people are injured annually.

This is a crime that's 100% preventable. The figures work out to the deaths of four to six people per day in Canada, and roughly 190 a day are injured. The types of sentences we've seen are criminal in themselves. We've seen sentences of one day in jail and 90 days to be served on weekends. We had a crime in Surrey where two girls were killed. One left six children orphaned. It was the gentleman's third impaired driving charge, and he got a sentence of a \$1,500 fine and seven weekends in jail.

Those are no deterrents, and those are the types of sentences we see. These types of sentences let Canadians know that you can drink and drive while being impaired, and should you kill someone in Canada, you will only receive a minimal sentence for taking a life. We believe that, if a life is involved, there should be a minimum mandatory sentence of five years or more for causing a death. The crime is no longer considered an acceptable accident in our society. We agree that mandatory minimum sentences are not for all crimes, but they should be a strong signal for the public to know that, if you kill an innocent person, you will be held accountable for the crime that you have committed in killing that innocent person.

•(1700)

Some may argue that there was no intent because the impaired driver didn't plan to cause a collision on purpose. There are no "accidents" in impaired driving. Accidents happen due to weather conditions or mechanical failures. Impaired driving is a choice. It is a choice made by a reckless individual who makes the decision to put others at risk on the roadway and highway, and they leave a terrible trail of destruction and death.

The victims who died received a death sentence; the families left behind will serve a lifetime sentence. The individuals who caused these deaths are serving the least amount of time. A two-year sentence will get you about six months in jail, and then you're on parole. The victims who were killed received a death sentence. Neither judges nor lawmakers can make these families whole again; however, you, as members of Parliament, can and must work towards preventing the next tragedies.

Currently in Canada if someone is convicted of causing the death of another person by using a gun or a knife, they will be sentenced from seven to 10 years to life. Why is it that after killing someone in an impaired driving collision, our jail sentences are so much less?

Thousands of Canadians are dying each year due to impaired driving collisions. The shock, the loss, the grief, is just as strong as when a loved one has been killed by an impaired driver. These crimes are vehicular homicides; they are not accidents in any way.

As you can see on the screen, that is my daughter's car. She was hit at 103 kilometres an hour. Any vehicle in the hands of an impaired driver becomes a lethal weapon. A speeding vehicle in the hands of an impaired driver is like a 2,000- to 3,000-pound weapon, which they're steering aimlessly down a roadway. It does far more damage than a knife or a gun ever could.

Families For Justice has submitted a petition to the government with over 117,000 names asking for tougher sentences. We would like to see new impaired driving laws, including mandatory minimum sentencing for impaired driving causing a death. Currently, you can kill someone and you would get a \$1,000 fine.

In speaking with other Canadians over the last five and a half years, I know they also want to see tougher prison sentences handed down, because they recognize that the current education campaigns are just not working. We're having too many deaths.

Families For Justice has received support from the RCMP in Alberta in K division, the RCMP in E Division, the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police, the Alberta Federation of Police Associations, the Edmonton Police Service, and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. They all support us in our efforts to bring about changes to Canada's impaired driving laws. Those are the organizations and the very people who are faced with the reality of impaired driving and who deal with the aftermath.

The Chair: I'm going to ask that you wrap it up. I hate to interrupt you, but I do know that the MPs will want to ask you some questions.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: All right. This is difficult.

• (1705)

The Chair: I know.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: Today I wholeheartedly request that each of you take the responsibility and look at what you can do to make communities safer. Every Canadian citizen deserves the right to their life and their liberty and the expectation that they can return home safely at the end of the day without the worry of being killed by an impaired driver.

Bill C-226 is an extremely important bill. As members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security you have the opportunity to make one of the most important decisions on the future laws of Canada.

We feel that Bill C-226 should be a non-partisan bill, and it should be passed in the interest of public safety for all Canadians. We owe it to the families who have lost loved ones to rededicate ourselves to the task of finding the most effective measures to finally put an end to impaired driving on our roads.

Canadians are counting on this government to not give in to the temptation to simply talk tough in the wake of past tragedies. They're counting on you to stop the next crash, the next injury, and the next death. That means having the debate our country needs, founded on the evidence and guided by the lessons of other jurisdictions and focused on effective deterrents. It is time we measured our progress not in years passed, but in future lives saved.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Let me say that it's difficult for anyone to come to a parliamentary committee to testify. We're a kind of intimidating lot. We don't mean to be.

You were all superb witnesses, so thank you very much. These are deeply personal stories. Thank you for your time.

I'm going to ask the committee about the possibility that instead of having a round of four seven-minute questions, we have four six-minute rounds, and then we can end on time. Would people agree to that?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Chair: Then we can do one tour.

[*Translation*]

We'll begin with Mr. Picard.

My apologies. We'll actually begin with Ms. Damoff.

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm going to split my time with Mr. Picard.

First, I want to thank all of you for coming and sharing your stories. I want to extend my condolences.

As a mom, I can't imagine going through what all of you have been through, and then sitting here. Your advocacy is much appreciated. I want you to know that all of us want to come up with the best policies and legislation that will truly have an impact to reduce drunk driving. I think you said it. In this day and age, it is wilful.

I want to ask MADD. In your submission, you talked about the mandatory minimums, and how you didn't think they would have an impact on reducing impaired driving. Can you briefly speak to that?

Mr. Andrew Murie: When you look at it, this is a very challenging question for our organization, because every victim of impaired driving wants longer penalties for the offender that has killed their loved one. We support that. We have seen that sentences have been going up on a general basis. It's not uncommon now to see double digits in a penalty.

We also base our whole organization on evidence and policy. We can't find any deterrent effect for minimum mandatory penalties. That's one. The other issue is that in our legal analysis we don't believe it would withstand a charter challenge.

However, we continue to support a system where there are longer penalties. The greatest frustration in the system is that it's impossible to explain as an organization that the same circumstances result in a wide variation in penalty. Somehow that piece needs to be dealt with so that there's a reasonable respect. When there are multiple people killed, it's a repeat offender, those aggravating factors need to be taken into consideration and appropriate penalties given out.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'll pass it over to Mr. Picard.

Mr. Michel Picard: First of all, you have my admiration for your fight and the cause you are defending. I can assure you that I looked at your video, not between two meetings, but in a quiet place at home. I took the time to look at all of this.

For sure, we all want to prevent death at any cost, but obviously, we missed some of them. Here we are with a bill that proposes minimum sentencing with an expectation of sending a message somewhere.

I would like to put for your consideration the fact that, for example, in one case we say minimal sentencing may be avoided if people would follow a proven treatment program. What is your take on that?

Ms. Sheri Arsenault: It's loss of life. We're looking at somebody basically using a car as their weapon. It's up to a 5,000-pound weapon. There's some point where punishment and rehabilitation... Just rehabilitation alone, to me, does not send the strong message out to the public that this is not acceptable. We are burying our children.

They can get rehabilitation while in prison. To me there are two factors that are the problem here. One is that right now there is a mandatory minimum. It's a \$1,000 fine. It does not at all seem to compare to other crimes that involve death and loss of life. For some reason, for this crime people just want to talk about rehabilitation, but it doesn't send that message out to the rest of us, the public, that this is taken seriously.

The second problem I find is that our judges seem to have a too wide view of discretion. They have a very complex job. I understand that. In one part of Canada, it might be a 10-month sentence. Elsewhere, for the same crime under almost the same circumstances or the same circumstances, it may be a three-year sentence.

Mr. Murie said he's seeing double digits. There have been three cases I know of that have hit double digits. There are four a day, so it's not that it's very popular to be in double digits. What is popular is the two- to three-year sentence. That's what I see. I see it all the time. I've seen three cases that hit 10 years, and that's in the last year.

• (1710)

Ms. Markita Kaulius: You work that out. That's three or four cases, and that's per four or five deaths. You break that down, and now with time off for good behaviour and early parole, they're actually serving about six months per death. That's it, six to nine months.

Mr. Michel Picard: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Clement.

Hon. Tony Clement: Thank you. I must echo my colleagues. As a dad, I just can't imagine what you've all gone through, but thank you

for having the courage to be here and to be part of our public testimony. It's very important.

I think it was you, Markita, who talked about the education programs. This is not new stuff and we've been at it for decades now. I do take note of the fact that something isn't working with some people. We can talk about alcohol as a disease, and I get that, but something isn't working when people make this choice and the consequences.

Do you have any other thoughts on this and what we can do?

Ms. Markita Kaulius: When we were out collecting names on our petition, I made a point of asking the public, "What do you think of our justice system?" I'm embarrassed to say this and I apologize for saying it, but the number one answer that we got from everyone was "Our justice system in Canada is a joke." I asked, "Well, why do you say that?" They said it was because we don't hold anybody accountable for anything. It's like a revolving door at the courthouse. When you go to a trial, it's not the accused who is on trial anymore; it is the investigation that is on trial, whether the police officer crossed the *t*'s and dotted the *i*'s, whether the machine was calibrated properly, or whatever.

Then we get the sentences that are so low that, I have families telling me how revictimized they are when they go through the justice system, the courts. They come out of the courts and ask, "How is this happening in Canada?" I don't have an answer. I say, "We're fighting, trying to change this." We're talking about 1,200 to 1,500 people a year who are losing their loved ones to this crime that is 100% preventable. We have had the education and awareness, but everybody knows that if you cause a death, very little is going to happen to you. They're willing to take the chance.

Hon. Tony Clement: I take your point.

Do I have a minute to ask Andrew a question?

The Chair: Go ahead.

Hon. Tony Clement: Having been a lawyer and being married to a lawyer, I'm going to tread on eggshells here, but the Canadian Bar Association has said, "In our experience, current legislative powers for police to deal with drinking and driving are adequate."

Then they talk about RBT and they fret that it's going to lead to charter litigation, which would cost money, I suppose, and so forth. They do make the point that the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld some degree of charter infringement using section 1 as their basis for that, but they say that the law must be, "narrowly circumscribed to achieve its goals".

I just want to get your comments on that. You've obviously had to deal with these kinds of issues and lawyerdom's response, so I give you the floor.

• (1715)

Mr. Andrew Murie: As an organization, we knew that mandatory screening with RBT had been very effective in other jurisdictions. We wanted to make sure that it would respect our charter here. That's why we did our own legal analysis. Then we sent that to Peter Hogg for his own interpretation of it, and it was only at that point in time that we felt very comfortable.

Will it get challenged? Absolutely. Parliament is going to have to depend on section 1 for sections 9 and 10(b) of the charter. On section 8, with the searches at airports, and so on, nobody has ever challenged it. I think there's no real question about any charter infringement there, and the court's decisions in the past have been very strong on road safety, public safety, especially when it comes to impaired driving. We have no doubt that it will be challenged, and we have no doubt that it will be upheld.

The Chair: You have a minute and a half. You might want to sell a vowel to Ms. Watts.

Hon. Tony Clement: I have a couple of other questions, but I think they've been pretty well answered by the committee.

We've talked a lot about RBT and your position on sentencing, and so on. Is there anything else about the bill that you want to comment on?

Mr. Andrew Murie: There's one thing I'd like to say, and it deals with your question on education. One of the most effective pieces of education has been around RBT. It kind of works with the three things working together. You go out and tell the public that the police now have this authorization. You publicly educate people. You have the police very visible. They do a lot of sobriety checkpoints and things like that. Then the numbers drop: the fatalities drop, the serious injuries drop, and the number of people charged with impaired driving drops rapidly.

Using education in the proper sequence can make it very effective, with enforcement, with legislative changes.

Hon. Tony Clement: Thank you.

I would note, Mr. Chair, that I encountered a testing site in my riding yesterday, but it was for the snowmobilers, and good for the OPP for doing some testing of snowmobilers. We don't want them to take their lives into their own hands or affect anybody else's life. This is a question of all vehicles. I have the same kind of testing on boats in the summertime in my riding. I just wanted to make that point for the record, too.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: It should be on planes, as well. We recently had a pilot who was impaired, I think.

Hon. Tony Clement: Yes, that's a very good point.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: Could I also just mention, too, that—and I apologize—none of you got my presentation because it wasn't able to be translated in time. However, you will be getting it, and I ask that you please read it. I had to cut back so much of what I really wanted to say. So, I please beg...if you would be able to have the opportunity—

The Chair: They will receive it for sure.

Mr. Dubé.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Chair, if I have your indulgence, I'll pass half of my time to Ms. Watts. Can I do this cross-partisan thing?

The Chair: It's a kinder, gentler Parliament, very good.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: No, it's just because I feel it is very thorough. It's not often that we get a chance to speak to folks who have lived first-hand the issues that we deal with. There is an ivory tower side to this place, so certainly thank you, as my colleagues have said, for taking the time and having the courage to do this. It's very much appreciated.

I did want to pick up on something that has been mentioned a few times, and Mr. Clement mentioned it, as well: the question of education. The word "wilful" was used, and I think it is appropriate, unfortunately. Once this debate is over on this particular piece of legislation, and notwithstanding our conclusion, there are folks who will always make, tragically, that choice. I don't think we can ever get it 100%, right, and I think folks recognize that.

In terms of the work that both your organizations have done in trying to work on that education piece, what can we do, as parliamentarians, to feed into that and make sure that these crimes don't happen in the first place, because the damage is irreparable after that?

• (1720)

Mr. Andrew Murie: There are a couple of things. We also work very closely with all the provinces, so some of the effective things that the provinces use are things that they can do under their highway traffic acts. It's worked very effectively in a number of provinces. There's vehicle impoundment. In a warn range of 0.05, they seize the vehicle and it's impounded for three days. It's been very effective with new drivers, young drivers, especially, because they're not driving their own vehicle. Those are the types of things.

MADD's been very involved in some technology developments. We have a system called the DADSS system, which is the driver alcohol detection system for safety. It basically can stop a driver from driving with an elevated blood alcohol level. That pilot will be on test vehicles throughout North America over the next couple of years. Again, down the road, you'll have the ability to put technology in new vehicles that stops anybody from driving impaired.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: Can I just comment as well? In B.C., the province that I'm from, in 2010 they implemented what's called the IRP, the immediate roadside prohibition. If an officer suspects that you may be driving impaired, that officer could pull you over and make you blow into a Breathalyzer to see if you are in the warn range, at 0.05, or if you are impaired, at 0.08.

It's been very effective. Fatalities have dropped by 43%. However, in saying that, in the past six years in B.C. alone, they have given out 170,155 immediate roadside prohibitions, administrative driving prohibitions, and 24-hour suspensions. That's only the ones that they have caught. They said that for every one they catch, they assume a hundred more get away. That's an awful lot of impaired drivers.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: For sure.

Ms. Sheri Arsenault: I'm just wondering if I could say something very briefly on deterrence. Nobody wants these crimes to happen in the first place. That is the truth. General deterrence, to me, helps protect the general population from committing a crime similar to the one.... To me, if the ultimate goal of good sentencing is to reduce crime, then the general deterrence component of sentencing is most effective because it focuses on all of our society. That's why I believe it's so important that first-time offenders have a mandatory sentence because it reflects to everyone that it's taken seriously.

Just one more quick thing. I know we're pushed for time. I think it's unlikely that a five-year or a four-year mandatory minimum sentence for impaired driving causing death would be challenged under section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because I don't believe that this sentence would be considered too excessive, too stringent, or unnecessarily cruel for vehicular homicide or manslaughter. It would be commensurate with other mandatory minimum sentences given for similar violent crimes.

I just had to get that out.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Watts.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Thank you very much. I appreciate all the work.

Just to note, Markita, the photograph you had was on our courthouse steps. Those were of all of the people who were killed, and we didn't have enough shoes to lay out. It was unbelievable.

Andrew, you made a comment that you were not supporting mandatory minimums, yet you want the sentencing to reflect the severity of the crime and continuity of the sentence. To me, that's the polar opposite, because I would think that those two should fit together.

Mr. Andrew Murie: Well, they don't. One of our fears of a mandatory minimum is that it becomes the asking level for the offender in various serious crimes. Four people are killed in an impaired driving crash, and the defence asks for the mandatory minimum. That's where the discussion starts. We don't believe that's the right level to start, even though it's the minimum. We want those penalties to be a lot higher, especially in that kind of tragedy when a number of lives are lost. We believe that, as the penalties are going up way too slowly, the five years don't reflect the damage that's done. We also don't want Parliament to be in control of the minimum penalty because any time you need to change it to reflect society's viewpoints, it needs to be raised.

If we had the ideal situation, it would almost be a grid system whereby all the aggravating factors are taken into consideration and there's such a small margin between tragedies where the circumstances are almost the same, that there's less judicial discretion, but you're still moving that bar upward.

• (1725)

The Chair: Mr. Di Iorio.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

During my daughter's ordeal, I was offered the possibility of removing her from life support. I found that to be a very cruel moment, but when I think about Nicholas, Cassandra, and I'm sorry, Madam Arsenault, I didn't get your son's name...?

Ms. Sheri Arsenault: Bradley.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Bradley. I fully realize you never were given that cruel option so all my thoughts are very heartfelt towards you and your continuing suffering. I want to commend you for what you're doing on a daily basis.

You mentioned things like this is not an accident. I'm still at a loss as to why a sophisticated society like ours cannot come up with the proper terminology. It's 100% preventable. I keep emphasizing the fact about the victims because if you realize there's a real victim, and you're confronted with the victims....

People did that to you. They were never confronted with you except in a very minor role. You mentioned a victim statement. I believe that has to be emphasized. That has to be amplified. That has to be given a real role, because if people are faced with somebody, and the people they harm, I think that would certainly create another level of consciousness that we currently don't have.

I commend Mr. Steven Blaney for his efforts and his journey in carrying on with this bill. But for a moment I would like you to set it aside because what I want to hear from you is about a comprehensive approach. We have a problem in this country, and it's not a small problem. It's 1,500 people dying. If this was a war and we had lost 1,500 people last year, this Parliament would be paralyzed. It would be the sole focus of what we'd be doing.

I want you to consider this in your answers, please. My question is therefore not about Bill C-226. It's about your preference in having the government using all the tools at its disposal and coming up with legislation dealing with this.

My own daughter, who survived, is initiating public hearings tomorrow across the river. Why? Because she's working with the provincial government, and they have tools we don't have in a private member's bill. I would like to hear you on your preference in having our government adopting legislation on this matter.

Ms. Sheri Arsenault: I believe there are many sides to this coin. The random breath testing is one side. Stiffer penalties is one side, also more education. I believe we have to change our cultural behaviour regarding drinking and driving.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: But if I may, I want to hear you on your preference in having the government take action on these matters. That's what I need to know from you.

Ms. Sheri Arsenaault: I would like you to attack it from all sides.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: I think, as the victims' parents, literally we live this nightmare every single day. Every morning and every night I look down a hallway to a bedroom. All of her things are still there. We live this every single day.

One of the hardest things we have seen is that it seems there are no deterrents there. The sentences given out are so low that these people get in, they get the "get out of jail free" card, and they are out in six months. We're still just getting out of the shock.

We approve of random breath testing. If it's a deterrent and a possibility, and the numbers, the statistics, show that it's working, it would be a great deterrent.

● (1730)

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: What about MADD having the government adopting a comprehensive approach?

Mr. Andrew Murie: Sure. At the federal level the most important thing you could do right now is the mandatory screening both for alcohol and drugs because it's not just alcohol but also drugs as well.

The second thing is, by doing that, you're increasing the ability for the provinces to enforce their laws, target all those people who are driving impaired, and give them the sanctions that make the immediate difference. Vehicle impoundment, nobody wants their vehicle impounded. All of a sudden if they have mandatory screening, they can more easily impound more vehicles to get the message across, to get that education piece up.

We also want the provinces in preparation for the cannabis to have zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs up to 25. That also sends a message. If you choose to drive when you're a young person with one of those substances in your body, you get your vehicle impounded.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Mr. Murie, I understand the provinces, but having this federal government addressing the issues in a comprehensive way....

Mr. Andrew Murie: There are two things. One is the deterrent factor—mandatory screening, respectable penalties. The other piece we've talked a lot about, and you have talked about, is the whole other side of supporting victims.

I can tell you the funds that go to organizations that support victims are minuscule. The federal government gives nothing to organizations like ours, so if you really want to start to make the difference with victim voices, then you start to have proper funding for these so we can....

Right now, all the victim services that MADD provides come from donations from Canadians. Federal Parliament does nothing. Provinces do very little in this area.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: What about having Parliament address comprehensive legislation on the issue? Are you open to that?

Mr. Andrew Murie: Absolutely. This bill has made a good start, but there are other pieces that need to be done as well.

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio: Would you welcome the government intervening in these matters?

Mr. Andrew Murie: Absolutely.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: Our organization gets nothing. We get zero. We do everything on our own dime. We get no funding at all.

Ms. Sheri Arsenaault: We're just grieving mums. We're not an organization like MADD. We're just mums.

Ms. Markita Kaulius: We don't take donations. We're just trying to change laws and save lives. I say to many people as well that we've already lost our children, but we're trying to change laws to protect yours. It's not for us.

The Chair: I'm going to take this opportunity to end our meeting.

Thank you for your time and for your persistence. We've heard lots from you, and you can rest assured that your brief will be translated and shared with the committee. Thank you.

Thank you to the committee for a good meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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