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# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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Chair: Mrs. Salma Zahid





## Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)):** We have quorum, and I call to order meeting number two of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration for committee business. We don't have a gavel today, so I will just be speaking.

I request that all individuals present in this room please follow the public health advice to wear a mask and follow physical distancing. If you are sitting in your chair, you can take it off, but if you go out or walk around, please wear a mask. We all have to follow this protocol.

This is a hybrid meeting. Some members are present here in the parliamentary precinct and other members are appearing remotely.

I want to remind all members to please speak at a pace slow enough for the interpreters to keep up. At the last meeting, we had problems with interpretation, so in order to give the interpreters the time they need to translate, do not speak over one another.

The clerk is attending virtually and is tracking raised hands and keeping a list.

Pursuant to the order adopted by the House on September 23, all questions shall be decided by a recorded vote, except for those decided unanimously or on division. All votes will be recorded.

The meeting is being broadcast and is available on ParlVU.

With regard to the calendar, the clerk has just distributed a calendar with possible meetings. The meeting schedule is determined by the whips of all the parties, so based on the present situation, we will have meeting number three on October 27.

As of the week of November 2, there can be two meetings or one meeting per week. That will be based on what the whips agree on, so after today's meeting, there can be 10 meetings if we have two meetings after next week, or we could have six meetings. Based on that, we will develop our calendar.

In addition to that, I just want to let everyone know that if we decide on a study to be undertaken, for everyone's information, the distribution of witnesses is based on the proportion of committee members, so that will be based on the seats we have: 50% Liberal, 30% Conservative, 10% Bloc and 10% NDP.

If the committee agrees to commence a study, then let us please make sure that all the parties submit their witness lists to the clerk, including witnesses' contact information and the order of priority, not later than 4 p.m. on Monday, October 26, providing that the

clerk contacts Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to send officials to appear on Tuesday, October 27, if we start the meetings.

All witnesses we decide on will appear remotely. No witnesses can be here in person.

I also want to remind members that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has offered to appear remotely and to provide the committee with a briefing session on the department's mandate and activities. It is up to the will of all members if they want to have a complete meeting for that. The other option, if everyone agrees, is to have an informal meeting, which can be arranged based on everyone's availability. It will be up to members to make a decision.

Going back now to where we left off at the time of adjournment of the last meeting, the committee was debating the motion of Ms. Dancho to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the immigration system, and the amendment of Mr. Dhaliwal to amend the motion in paragraph 1. The text of the motion and the amendment were published in the minutes of meeting number one.

These are some of the things I wanted to remind members of. Now I will open the floor for the meeting today.

Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I see that the Conservative Party motion is on the floor and my amendment is on the floor, so I would like to move to withdraw my amendment to the CPC motion.

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

I would need unanimous consent. Do I have unanimous consent regarding Mr. Dhaliwal's proposal to withdraw his amendment?

There are no objections. Okay.

(Amendment withdrawn)

**The Chair:** Thank you. The amendment by Mr. Dhaliwal is withdrawn.

Mr. Dhaliwal, you wanted to say something?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Yes. Are we now going to back to the original motion?

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Yes, thank you, we are back on the motion that was proposed by Ms. Dancho.

We will go to Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know the committee will have other discussions that will strike a chord with all members, so I move that debate on the Conservatives' motion be adjourned.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Martinez Ferrada has proposed to adjourn the debate.

Clerk, do we have to go to a recorded vote?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune):** We need to have a recorded vote unless the motion to adjourn the debate is agreed to unanimously or on division.

**The Chair:** Do we have unanimous consent to adjourn debate on Ms. Dancho's motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We have unanimous consent to adjourn the debate on Ms. Dancho's motion, so the debate on that motion is adjourned.

Ms. Kwan is next.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd like to move the motion that is in my name. Notice has been given to committee members. It is:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship and department officials for 2 hours to provide a briefing to committee members on the impact of the pandemic on Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship staffing levels and the ability to process all immigration and refugee streams locally and abroad.

Madam Chair, this motion calls for the officials and the minister to come before committee for a total of two hours, so that would mean one hour for the minister and one hour for the officials.

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

Ms. Kwan has proposed her motion.

Go ahead, Mr. Regan.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I just want to say that my experience has been generally that we see ministers at committees about twice a year. However, the government does know how important it is for ministers to be accountable and to discuss the files that are before them. Of course, the government has made a number of changes to make sure Canadians are safe during this period, but also it's important for us to hear about these issues as they relate to immigration, so I intend to support this motion.

**The Chair:** Ms. Dancho is next.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I agree with MP Regan. Jenny Kwan's motion is excellent.

Given the pandemic and this once-in-a-century health and economic crisis, I think it's very important that we have the minister of immigration come to committee as soon as possible to give the immigration committee an update on the state of immigration, the many streams and, as the member has outlined in her motion, the ability to process all immigration and refugee streams locally and abroad.

I very much support Ms. Kwan's motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Serré is next.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to be sure I understand the motion before we adopt it. The minister was here in July, and we're considering inviting him back. Do we want to invite the minister again when we examine the estimates? Is that redundant? Is the idea to invite as many witnesses as possible?

I'd like some clarification on the motion in that regard.

[*English*]

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

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** I'd like to address the member's comments.

My understanding is that this appearance by the minister would focus on what went on during the pandemic. How did the department handle the situation? What obstacles did it encounter? How many employees went into work and how many opted to work from home? What equipment was provided to them? Those are all questions specific to the pandemic.

The estimates study is another component, although the two aren't mutually exclusive. That's how I understood it.

• (1545)

[*English*]

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

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have had the opportunity to deal with many ministers over many years, particularly when it comes to immigration. This ministry is very key in many ridings, including in the Lower Mainland, where Jenny Kwan and I come from. I'm sure that's true in other parts of the country as well.

The minister is very enthusiastic about this and is always willing to have a conversation with members. This is a good motion. I'm sure the minister would be very happy to appear. I would support this motion as well.

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

Ms. Martinez Ferrada is next.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As Ms. Normandin pointed out, the pandemic created a unique set of circumstances that required the department to take specific steps in order to process immigration cases. That wasn't easy given the situation.

I think it's worthwhile to hear what Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did to advance immigration cases in light of the pandemic, so I fully support inviting the minister, his staff and department officials to discuss the issues and the way things were handled in the face of the pandemic.

I will say it's unusual for the minister to appear so many times before the committee, so I would like it on record that the minister will be appearing a number of times. He appeared before the committee in the summer. I want to be sure that we give our full attention to the appropriate witnesses and studies and that everyone realizes we need to hear what the witnesses have to say in order to make progress on immigration issues.

I, too, support the motion.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have Ms. Kwan.

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

I want to thank all the committee members who spoke in support of this motion.

As outlined, because we're in unprecedented times with the pandemic, I think it is really important to have the minister and officials come here to tell us what is going on with IRCC. While they have taken some measures with some of the programming, there are still a lot of gaps in terms of problems that are existing, so it would be really good for committee members to understand the situation. Then we can determine how best to go forward in providing studies that have impacts on the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship portfolio.

This is not meant to replace the minister's coming before the committee on immigration levels numbers, for example, or on the budget, but rather, because of the pandemic, I think it's important for the committee to get an update and to get the lay of the land from the minister and officials on where things are at.

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

Next on the list we have Mr. Regan.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Sorry, Madam Chair. Ms. Kwan just covered it, because she mentioned that the minister is going to be coming in on the main and supplementary estimates and also on staffing levels, so that's two times already that he's coming in. She's covered that. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I see no one further on the list, and we have a motion moved by Ms. Kwan. It is:

That the Committee invite the Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship and department officials for 2 hours to provide a briefing to committee members on the impact of the pandemic on Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship staffing levels and the ability to process all immigration and refugee streams locally and abroad.

Clerk, can we have a recorded vote, please?

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

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

● (1550)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Upon reflection on our first committee meeting and very much looking to working as a team and dealing with the many very difficult and sensitive immigration issues we have, we've revamped and refocused the motion from the last committee meeting to be more specific after receiving feedback from the last committee. I would like to put forward that motion now.

It is as follows:

That, pursuant to standing order 108(2), the committee commence a study to examine the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on Canada's immigration system, and that this study evaluate, review and examine issues relevant to this issue, including the following:

(a) application backlogs and processing times for the different streams of family reunification and the barriers preventing the timely reunification of loved ones, such as denials of temporary resident visas because of section 179(b) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations and the ongoing closures of Visa Application Centers;

(b) examine the government's decision to reintroduce a lottery system for the reunification of parents and grandparents; to compare it to previous iterations of application processes for this stream of family reunification, including a review of processing times and the criteria required for successful sponsorship;

(c) temporary resident visa (TRV) processing, delays faced by international students in securing TRVs particularly in Francophone Africa, authorization to travel to Canada by individuals with an expired Confirmation of Permanent Residency; use of expired security, medical and background checks for permanent immigration;

that the committee hold at least eight meetings to hear from witnesses; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

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

Go ahead, Ms. Normandin.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I've already spoken to my fellow members about one of my concerns regarding an omnibus study motion. I worry we won't have enough time left for more specific studies that the current context demands. Every party has its own priorities for studies, but family reunification is an issue with universal support.

I therefore have an amendment to the motion, to reframe how we study the matter. I'll read the amendment in French, but I do have the translation and it is available, as needed. I'm completely open to friendly amendments. I move as follows:

That the motion be amended in the last paragraph by replacing all of the words before “that the committee report its findings to the House” with “that this study begin no later than October 27, 2020; that this study be held over a minimum of two and a maximum of four meetings; that the witnesses called as part of this study be allowed to testify on one or more of the issues in this motion; that the evidence gathered during this study be deemed to have also been given during subsequent studies to be held during this Parliament, provided that the subsequent studies deal with issues similar to those in this motion”.

I repeat, I am flexible on the date.

Before examining issues that are much more refined, if we decide to do a broader study, we'll need to make sure that it doesn't take up too much time and, especially, that the evidence gathered can be used afterwards. That way, the time we spend on a broader study won't have been a total loss.

That's what I suggest, and now you have my amendment formally. I'm completely open to subamendments.

• (1555)

[English]

**The Chair:** Do you have the translated version of the amendment?

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Yes.

[English]

**The Chair:** Clerk, would it be possible to pass the amendment that has been proposed by Ms. Normandin on to all the members?

**The Clerk:** We'll be in touch with her office now to request an electronic copy in English and French, and we'll distribute it right away.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now we have an amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin on the floor.

We will go to Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Should we vote on all of it in one fell swoop, or should the vote be divided up to address the three different amendments?

[English]

**The Chair:** We have an amendment that has been proposed by Ms. Normandin, so we will have to vote on that amendment.

Next on the speaking list is Ms. Kwan.

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

If I heard the amendment correctly, the suggestion is to reduce the number of meetings from up to eight meetings to two to four meetings. Did I hear the member correctly?

We're studying three substantive topics. One is the family reunification stream, particularly the impact of issues such as denials of temporary residence visas because of paragraph 179(b) and the closures of visa application centres and so on. That's a substantive study, because the family reunification stream, particularly for spousal sponsorship, has been greatly impacted. This is a piece that

I've been wanting the committee to study, in fact, and I'm glad that it's before us in this motion in this format. That's one aspect.

The second piece is the examination of the lottery system. It was very mystifying to me when the minister came out and announced the lottery system after 10 months of putting it on ice, only to go back to the failed lottery system. I'm very interested in understanding what the decision was behind that and then, of course, in comparing that system to other iterations of the parents and grandparents reunification stream.

The last component is to study the delays for international students, which is a significant component as well.

I'm very worried that two to four meetings would be insufficient in doing justice to all of these issues. I get it that we don't want to consume all of the time that the committee has for studies, because there are many areas we want to study, but I am quite concerned that two to four meetings are not going to be able to do it, keeping in mind as well that with those two to four meetings, we also have to give a break for the report and the report writing as well.

The suggestion in the original motion of up to eight meetings does not mean that committees would have to take all eight meetings; it is “up to” eight meetings. If we think about it, for each of the substantive pieces—(a), (b) and (c)—within the motion, if we spend two meetings on each topic, it gives us six meetings, and then, of course, there would be at least one meeting in which we would have to do the report, so that would be seven meetings.

That's what I'm thinking about. I'm quite worried that two to four meetings are not going to give us sufficient time to deal with all these substantive issues.

• (1600)

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

Next on the speaking list is Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I agree with the opposition member's comments. I think these are important issues. The member also appreciates the importance of examining family reunification. It's an issue several of us have been made aware of. Each of the elements in the motion is worthy of its own study.

It makes perfect sense to take as much time as necessary to study them one at a time. Two meetings won't be enough to hear from witnesses on each of the issues, witnesses who will probably have a lot to say, I might add.

Like Ms. Kwan, I don't support the part of the motion that refers to holding two to four meetings.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

Next on the speaking list is Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was listening to Ms. Kwan's issue about PGP—parents and grandparents—and first of all, I think that under the circumstances we have to give the minister credit. He and his department have worked very hard to deal with the situation, and he has said that the department will process 50,000 applications by the end of December, which is a very good move. Also, even though this lottery system didn't work—I will agree with Ms. Kwan—under the circumstances, I think this is at least the best decision: to accept at least 10,000 applications. This way, he now has also given us a window, from October 13 all the way to November 3. With this, we will have a complete list of how many applicants are out there and have expressed interest. From there, minus 10,000, we will be able to see how much volume is out there. We as committee members can then come up with suggestions to the minister as well on how the new system should look, so that when we accept those other 30,000 applications, those procedures are incorporated. I would delay that meeting almost to the end, after November 3, so that we have those numbers handy.

I agree that we should have more meetings. I would like to bring another amendment, if we see a consensus.

It is:

That the amendment be amended by replacing the words “that this study begin no later than October 27, 2020; that this study be held over a minimum of two and a maximum of four meetings”, with the words, “that this study begin no later than October 27, 2020, and that the committee hold no more than eight meetings to hear from witnesses”.

I think that will satisfy Ms. Kwan's seven meetings and Ms. Martinez Ferrada's proposal as well, and it will also include those two to four meetings. Let me see if there is a consensus for this proposal.

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

You are proposing a subamendment to the amendment that was proposed by Ms. Normandin. Do you have the text of the subamendment?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** I can read it, Madam Chair, slowly.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Madam Chair, I think that's a new amendment, as opposed to a subamendment.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Normandin. Just one second, please. Can the clerk clarify?

Mr. Dhaliwal has proposed an amendment to Ms. Normandin's amendment, so will this be a subamendment or...?

**The Clerk:** Yes. If Mr. Dhaliwal proposes a modification to the amendment that was moved by Madam Normandin, then that is a subamendment. Provided it remains within the scope of Madam Normandin's amendment, then the subamendment would be in order.

**The Chair:** We have a subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal on the floor.

Going on to the speakers list, we have Mr. Allison. Go ahead, Mr. Allison.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would agree with Mr. Dhaliwal. If he would like to propose a subamendment to look at eight meetings, I think that would make some sense. We should have enough time to get everything done before Christmas. As was laid out by the calendar, we have another seven meetings until the end of November, and then we still have a couple of weeks in December, so that also gives us a chance to possibly wrap up a report in the meantime.

I would say that what Mr. Dhaliwal says seems to make some sense.

• (1605)

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

Next on the speaking list we have Mr. Serré.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

I have a question about what may be a friendly amendment for Ms. Normandin, but before that, I'd like to ask the clerk a procedure question.

I was looking through the motions that were submitted to us prior to the meeting. I can't see the amendment there, and I know that the clerk mentioned that he'll get in touch with Madam Normandin's office and then circulate it by email, but in person, in the House—I'm not sure about the rules or procedures these days—can we get a copy here physically, or...?

I just want to make sure of what we're reading. That's one part, but there's another component.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you said you were open to changes. If you're willing to remove just the part about two to four meetings, and we keep in the member's motion—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Serré, on the floor right now we have the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Could we just remove that part?

**The Chair:** No. First we have to deal with that subamendment before we go into the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin.

Right now, we have the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal on the floor.

Next on the speakers list is Ms. Dancho.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Chair, I think Mr. Serré's plan suits Mr. Dhaliwal's quite well; I think they're a little bit two of the same.

I appreciate Madame Normandin's suggestion on the start date. It's very important that we nail that down today. I see no problem with that.

Also, bringing forward evidence we learn from this study and future studies makes good sense. Why reinvent the wheel every time?

I believe that eight meetings would be good. I know that in my motion I said “at least eight”. I would be willing to say “a maximum of eight”. I think that's fine.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Next is Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like my fellow committee members, I support the member's subamendment. As I was saying earlier, I think we'll need that many meetings to deal with all of the issues covered by the motion.

I agree with Ms. Normandin about using the evidence in subsequent studies and about the start date.

The part of the member's amendment I had trouble with was the number of meetings, so I'm in favour of Mr. Dhaliwal's subamendment.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Normandin is next.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I just want to clarify what my thinking was.

The reason I proposed two to four meetings initially wasn't to wrap up the debate after four meetings. It was actually to give us time afterwards for specific studies on those three issues. The benefit of an omnibus study is that it lays the groundwork, but there seems to be a consensus among the committee members that we should take a deep dive into the three issues right away. I have no objection, then, to amending my amendment so that it refers to a maximum of eight meetings. That is what you suggested, is it not Mr. Dhaliwal?

If so, I'm happy to support the subamendment.

[*English*]

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

We have the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal that we start the study mentioned in the motion moved by Ms. Dancho not later than October 27 and that we have at least eight meetings.

I don't have the text.

Mr. Dhaliwal, is this the subamendment that you are proposing?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Yes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay.

Seeing no one on the speakers list, can we have a recorded vote on the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal?

• (1610)

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** On a point of order, Madam Chair, I wonder if we need a recorded vote, because in the event that we're all agreed, we do not need a recorded vote, I believe.

**The Chair:** I will pass it to the clerk to clarify.

Do we?

**The Clerk:** Yes, all votes must be recorded except when the committee is unanimously agreed or on division.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Do we have unanimous consent on the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** We have unanimous consent.

(Subamendment agreed to [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** We are now back on the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin, as amended by the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

We have Ms. Normandin on the list.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I just wanted to let you know that it should now be in your mailboxes.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Have you sent the amendment?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** The clerks sent it out.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Just one second. I will read it.

I have not received the amendment, so I would ask Ms. Normandin to please read her amendment as amended by the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** With the subamendment, it would read as follows:

That this study begin no later than October 27, 2020, and that the committee hold no more than eight meetings to hear from witnesses; that the witnesses called as part of this study be allowed to testify on one or more of the issues in this motion; that the evidence gathered during this study be deemed to have also been given during subsequent studies to be held during this Parliament, provided that the subsequent studies deal with issues similar to those in this motion.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.



[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** I'd like some clarification on the subamendment we just adopted. It's about the wording "at least eight meetings". That's not what Ms. Normandin said when she read it in French. Could I get some clarification on that, please?

[English]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** There's no translation.

**The Chair:** Is the interpretation back? Okay. We are good now.

Ms. Martinez Ferrada, could you please repeat?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** I just wanted to make sure that the wording for the number of meetings reads "no more than eight" in English, not

[English]

"at least eight". We're talking about not more than eight.

[Translation]

I just want to make sure the wording is accurate.

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Unless I'm mistaken, I said "un maximum de huit" in French.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes. We passed the subamendment proposed by Mr. Dhaliwal that it would not be more than eight.

We have Ms. Kwan on the list. Ms. Kwan, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** I'm fine. That was the point of clarification, that it was "up to" eight meetings. I think we've clarified that. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Now we have the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin, as amended by Mr. Dhaliwal. Do we have unanimous agreement on this amendment? I see that we do.

(Amendment agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

**The Chair:** We are now back to the motion proposed by Ms. Dancho, as amended by the amendment proposed by Ms. Normandin.

Go ahead, Ms. Dancho.

● (1615)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I just want to add, Madam Chair, that I hope all members of the committee will support this motion, and it sounds as though we can. Then we can get to work very quickly, as soon as next Tuesday, for the folks who are separated from their families, and work on many other issues we've outlined in the motion. It's very critical that we commence these studies soon. I would very much appreciate the support of the committee.

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

Ms. Martinez Ferrada is next.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know we discussed the motion quickly, but I just wanted to draw attention to the important issues, particularly, family reunification.

I don't think we're voting just yet, but I do want to make sure that, once the motion receives what I hope will be the committee's unanimous support, we get right to work and talk about potential witnesses for the study.

I know a lot of people have taken an interest in family reunification. A petition calling on the House to address the issue was even presented. It poses numerous challenges that need to be dealt with carefully and swiftly. You certainly have my full support in advancing the issue, which is hugely important to me.

As for the lottery system for the parents and grandparents program, or PGP, I want to point out that no program is perfect. A program is always a work in progress, so I'm delighted that the committee is going to examine the matter. Hopefully, we'll be able to improve it as much as possible for all of those who depend on it.

On the matter of visas and international students, it's clear that the challenges posed by the border can't be overcome quickly with the second wave of the pandemic under way. We'll be dealing with it for months to come, so it's in our best interest to find solutions for universities and international students post-haste. We've already done a lot, and the minister can definitely speak to that when he's here. This is an issue of national concern not just from an economic and educational standpoint, but also from an economic recovery standpoint. I fully support the motion in that regard, as well.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

Seeing no further speakers on this motion, I will wait for the clerk to incorporate into the motion the amendment that has been moved before we go to the vote.

I will now read the amended motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee commence a study to examine the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on Canada's immigration system, and this study evaluate, review and examine issues relevant to the situation including the following:

a. application backlogs and processing times for the different streams of family reunification and the barriers preventing the timely reunification of loved ones, such as denials of temporary resident visas because of section 179(b) of the Immigration and Refugees Protection Regulations and the ongoing closures of Visa Application Centres;

b. examine the government's decision to reintroduce a lottery system for the reunification of parents and grandparents; to compare it to previous iterations of application processes for this stream of family reunification, including a review of processing time and the criteria required for the successful sponsorship;

c. temporary resident visa TRV processing delays faced by international students in securing TRVs, particularly in francophone Africa, authorization to travel to Canada by individuals with an expired confirmation of permanent residency, use of expired security, medical and background checks for permanent immigration;

that this study begin no later than October 27, 2020, and that the committee hold no more than eight meetings to hear from witnesses; that the witnesses called as part of this study be allowed to testify on one or more of the issues in this motion; that the evidence gathered during this study be deemed to have also been given during subsequent studies to be held during this Parliament, provided that the subsequent studies deal with issues similar to those in this motion; that the committee report its findings to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

Can we please go to the recorded vote?

• (1620)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Chair, could you ask if there's unanimous consent?

**The Chair:** Clerk, can we ask for unanimous consent on this motion?

Great. We do have unanimous consent.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I apologize for my lack of committee experience.

Knowing that the committee is going to study the motion as of next week, I was wondering whether we could go into subcommittee now to discuss the motion and the witness list. We could do it with the clerk in the hour we have left.

Is that something I can propose formally to the committee members?

[English]

**The Chair:** The motion has passed.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Yes, I understand that, Madam Chair, but I'm asking whether, once the motion is adopted, I can propose that the committee be adjourned and that we go into subcommittee to examine the motion that was just adopted. I'd like to propose that formally. Can I do that?

[English]

**The Chair:** Can I ask the clerk to clarify what Ms. Martinez Ferrada has proposed?

[Translation]

**The Clerk:** I think I understand what the member is asking.

Usually, a notice of meeting has to be issued before a subcommittee meeting is convened. A standing committee meeting doesn't usually turn into a subcommittee meeting. I can ask the technical team, though.

It may be possible to adjourn the meeting and give notice to convene a subcommittee meeting for the remainder of today's time. According to the order and procedure adopted by the whips, the committee can hold a subcommittee meeting, but the order has to be respected. We have the hour that's left today and October 27 to hold such a meeting.

• (1625)

[English]

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Chair, on a point of order, generally speaking, we always hear—and I may have said it on occasion—that committees are the masters of their own house. I don't know if there would be unanimous consent for this, but in the event that there were unanimous consent, would those difficulties still apply?

**The Chair:** My proposal to all the committee members is that we have moved the motion and we have to start the study on that motion as of October 27.

As I said in the opening remarks, the clerk can be in touch with the IRCC officials to kick-start the first meeting, and we can submit the list of the witnesses to the clerk no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, October 26, provided that everyone can send them in. We can start the study with the officials on October 27.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Chair, on my point of order, what I'm really saying is that Madam Martinez Ferrada has proposed that the committee adjourn and that there immediately be a meeting of the subcommittee on agenda for those members who are on it to work out some of these details.

My question is this: Is that not possible with unanimous consent, or does it require a very short time—I assume perhaps five minutes—to give the notice to the members officially? I would have thought that you could do this by unanimous consent, but what do I know about such matters?

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

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Madam Chair, I don't always agree with my Liberal colleagues, but I would agree with Geoff on this one.

Very clearly, you could go into subcommittee if that's what the committee decides, if everyone's okay with it and you have unanimous consent. I would suggest that in order to not burn another meeting date—because we're limited with our meetings—the subcommittee have a chance to have a conversation now to try to organize the thought process for us and get things started.

**The Chair:** Ms. Kwan is next.

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

I don't have a problem with going to a subcommittee. However, I was hoping to move one additional motion. It was a motion that in the last meeting, with the larger motion that has now been adjourned, was incorporated into a potential study.

This is a motion with respect to having the committee study the safe haven for the people of Hong Kong facing persecution under the national security law. I was hoping to move that motion so that we can put it into the mix.

**The Chair:** Do you want to move the motion now?

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Yes, why don't I quickly do that? It's something the committee members supported last time, so I think maybe we could quickly look at this motion and get it passed. It is as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to examine special immigration and refugee measures in order to provide a safe haven to the people of Hong Kong facing persecution under the new National Security Law; and the Committee report its findings to the House; and that, Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

I think there's urgency to this matter. I'm raising it at this point simply because at the last committee meeting, I had moved an amendment to the large motion that Ms. Dancho had put before us, and it was supported by committee members.

I'd like to move this motion, after which I will be happy to go into subcommittee.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Martinez Ferrada.

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Madam Chair, we supported Ms. Kwan's motion on Hong Kong, and we still do. Afterwards, I'd like Ms. Kwan's support to move into subcommittee to discuss future business.

May I ask that the question be put on Ms. Kwan's motion?

[English]

**The Chair:** Clerk, for clarification, can we go into further debate or do we have to vote on this motion?

**The Clerk:** No, the debate continues until it collapses. However, if no other members wish to speak, then you may call the vote on the motion.

**The Chair:** We have Ms. Dancho on the list.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I'm a bit confused, Madam Chair. Maybe the clerk can clarify. Was Ms. Martinez Ferrada's intervention a motion, and is this a new motion to that motion? I'm not quite sure what Ms. Ferrada put forward. She wanted to go to subcommittee, but was that a motion, and can you propose another motion at that time?

I'm not clear on what's happening.

**The Chair:** There is a motion proposed by Ms. Kwan on the floor, so we have debate happening on that motion.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Then Ms. Ferrada did not move a motion to go to subcommittee?

**The Chair:** No.

Mr. Dhaliwal, did you want to speak?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** No, I'm okay.

**The Chair:** I see no further debate. We have a motion as proposed by Ms. Kwan. Let me read this motion, and then we can go to a vote.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Chair, ask if there's unanimous consent for this motion by Ms. Kwan. If so, then we don't need a recorded vote.

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

The motion moved by Ms. Kwan is this:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to examine special immigration and refugee measures in order to provide a safe haven to the people of Hong Kong facing persecution under the new National Security Law; and the Committee report its findings to the House; and that, Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response thereto.

Do I have unanimous consent for this motion to be moved?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** That's great. We have unanimous consent to move this motion. Thank you.

We have Ms. Normandin on the list.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before we go into subcommittee, I'd like to take five minutes to settle something so we don't have to discuss it later.

In one of the motions I put on notice, I moved that the committee undertake a study dealing with foreign workers and labour market impact assessments. The last time the committee met, we started discussing whether a study involving labour market impact assessments was in order or not.

I would therefore like to put forward the motion simply to ask the clerk whether it's in order. Then, we can adjourn debate on my motion. I would just like to get clarification on that and to make sure that is the focus of the discussion right now. The clerk could prepare an answer and share it with us at a later meeting.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Normandin. Are you moving a motion?

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I'm explaining that I would, simply to put the question to the clerk. Afterwards, I would move that the debate be adjourned.

Yes, then, I am moving a motion. I'll read it out.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes. Please read your motion.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Here it is:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Committee undertake a study on administrative costs and delays related to Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) applications under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP); that, during this study, the Committee consider possible solutions, including granting open work permits on a sector-by-sector basis to facilitate labour mobility; that LMIA's be biennial; that the duration of work permits be extended; that three-year work permits be extended annually, etc.; that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

I'd just like to know whether the matter of labour market impact assessments and work permits falls within the purview of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. I would then move that the debate be adjourned.

• (1635)

[English]

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

I will ask the analyst to clarify whether or not the motion moved by Ms. Normandin is under the mandate of CIMM.

**Ms. Julie Béchar (Committee Researcher):** Madam Chair, in the past the committee has studied temporary foreign workers and the LMIA. We do have the authority to invite ESDC to come as a witness and explain these programs.

Does that clarify it?

**The Chair:** Yes. Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Dhaliwal.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** I was wondering, Madam Chair, whether after this we want to bring in a motion for adjournment of the debate or for adjournment of the meeting. That is what I wanted to clarify. As Ms. Kwan was saying earlier, we could adjourn the meeting and go into the subcommittee for committee business.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dhaliwal. We have the motion that was moved by Ms. Normandin. The analyst has provided clarification on that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** I move that debate on the motion be adjourned.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Normandin has moved that the debate be now adjourned.

Do I have unanimous consent to adjourn debate on the motion proposed by Ms. Normandin?

Go ahead, Ms. Dancho.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Can we pause for five minutes between the adjournment and the start of the subcommittee?

**The Chair:** Yes. First we have to go through this and decide about the subcommittee.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Chair, shall I bring in the motion to adjourn the meeting right now?

**The Chair:** One second; we have the question right now, as put forward by Ms. Normandin, that debate on the motion moved by her be adjourned.

Do I have unanimous consent? I see I do.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Okay. The debate on that motion is adjourned.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Therefore, I will now bring in the motion to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** Let me clarify with the clerk.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Chair, I have a question—

**The Chair:** I will ask the clerk: On the question put forward by Mr. Dhaliwal, do we need a recorded vote?

**The Clerk:** Not unless there is no unanimity to adjourn the meeting.

**The Chair:** Do we have unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting? If we don't have unanimous consent, we will have to go to a recorded vote.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I will give my consent, yes, but I have a procedural question before we vote on that.

**The Chair:** Let me check with the clerk.

Can we go into a procedural question before we go into unanimous consent?

**The Clerk:** Ordinarily, the only way to interrupt the vote on a motion to adjourn the meeting is to raise a point of order.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** On a point of order, a very friendly one—

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

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** —I just wanted to clarify that we'll adjourn this meeting and then go right into subcommittee. If that is the case, can we have a five-minute recess between adjournment and subcommittee today?

Thank you.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** If we have to go into a subcommittee, as per the clerk, we have to have 15 minutes. Anything passed in the subcommittee will have to come back to the full committee to adopt be adopted. I just want to clarify that for the members.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Madam Chair, could I also raise a point of order—

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** —mostly for technical clarification?

When we adjourn this committee meeting and go into subcommittee, will the subcommittee be in camera or on the public record? I just need clarification on that.

**The Chair:** The clerk can clarify, based on the routine motions we passed in the last meeting.

**The Clerk:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The committee adopted a routine motion in the first meeting “that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes”:

- a. to consider a draft report;
- b. to attend briefings concerning national security;
- c. to consider lists of witnesses; and
- d. for any other reason with the unanimous consent of the committee;

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Perfect. Thank you. Then it will not be in camera.

**The Chair:** We have unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting. I will clarify with the clerk if we can move on to the subcommittee.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

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