



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 17, 2020

The Honourable LEO HOUSAKOS,  
Acting Speaker

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## THE SENATE

Thursday, December 17, 2020

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Honourable Leo Housakos, Acting Speaker, in the chair.

Prayers.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (The Hon. the Acting Speaker):** Honourable senators, there has been an agreement amongst senators that we would go directly to Government Business today and bypass Senators' Statements. I do apologize for reading out the senators who are on the list, and if again you would acquiesce and let us skip Senators' Statements.

Thank you.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### THE SENATE

#### NOTICE OF MOTION CONCERNING HYBRID AND ENTIRELY VIRTUAL MEETINGS

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I give notice that, later this day, I will move:

That the provisions of the order of October 27, 2020, concerning hybrid sittings of the Senate and other matters, and of the order of November 17, 2020, concerning hybrid committee meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference and other matters, be in force from February 1, 2021, to the end of the day on June 23, 2021, subject to the following conditions also applying in relation to the order of October 27, 2020:

1. the Senate Administration will, as expeditiously as possible, endeavour to develop a system to allow senators in the Senate Chamber to be able to see, on screen, the senators participating by videoconference;
2. when the sitting is suspended for any reason, the microphones of senators participating by videoconference shall be muted;
3. when a standing vote is underway, senators participating by videoconference must have their camera on for the duration of the vote and each senator must be seen on camera when voting; and
4. written replies to oral questions deposited electronically with the Clerk of the Senate shall be distributed to all senators.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

[Translation]

### LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

#### NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET DURING ADJOURNMENT AND SITTING OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I give notice that, later this day, I will move:

That, in relation to its consideration of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), if the bill is referred to the committee, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs:

1. have power, pursuant to rule 12-18(2)(b)(i), to meet on Monday, February 1, 2021, even if the Senate is adjourned for a period exceeding one week; and
2. be authorized, on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, and Wednesday, February 3, 2021, to meet even if the Senate is then sitting, with the provisions of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

### ADJOURNMENT

#### NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(g), I give notice that, later this day, I will move:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 2 p.m.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

[English]

## LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING ADJOURNMENT OF  
THE SENATE AND HOLD HYBRID OR ENTIRELY  
VIRTUAL MEETINGS

**Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(a), I move:

That, for the purpose of its pre-study on the subject matter of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized:

- (a) pursuant to rule 12-18(2)(b)(i), to meet until February 1, 2021, even if the Senate is adjourned for a period exceeding a week; and
- (b) to hold hybrid meetings or to hold meetings entirely by videoconference, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, past orders or usual practice and taking into account the exceptional circumstances of the current pandemic of COVID-19; and

That the provisions of subparagraphs 7 to 10 of the order adopted by the Senate on November 17, 2020, concerning hybrid meetings and meetings entirely by videoconference, apply in relation to any hybrid meetings of the committee or any meetings that are entirely by videoconference.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1410)

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: second reading of Bill C-7, followed by third reading of Bill S-2, followed by Motions No. 25, 26 and 27, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Does anybody oppose leave for the reordering, honourable senators? Accordingly, it is carried.

## CRIMINAL CODE

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Petitclerc, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, for the second reading of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying).

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time, on division.)

### REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Gagné, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.)

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I apologize for the confusion, I maybe should have risen a minute ago.

I would just like to state for the record that we had an agreement earlier. As you will all recall, Senator Martin could not finish her speech last night and there was an agreement to go this way. There was also an agreement that her speech, as well as those on Bill S-2 at third reading, would be entered into the record.

I would like to make note of that — that her speech would also be entered into the record. Thank you.

## CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

### BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

**Hon. Mary Coyle** moved third reading of Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

She said: I move that this bill be read a third time.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

[Translation]

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed, on division.)

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

### THE SENATE

#### MOTION CONCERNING HYBRID AND ENTIRELY VIRTUAL MEETINGS ADOPTED

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That the provisions of the order of October 27, 2020, concerning hybrid sittings of the Senate and other matters, and of the order of November 17, 2020, concerning hybrid committee meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference and other matters, be in force from February 1, 2021, to the end of the day on June 23, 2021, subject to the following conditions also applying in relation to the order of October 27, 2020:

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3. when a standing vote is underway, senators participating by videoconference must have their camera on for the duration of the vote and each senator must be seen on camera when voting; and
4. written replies to oral questions deposited electronically with the Clerk of the Senate shall be distributed to all senators.

He said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

### LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

#### COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING ADJOURNMENT AND SITTING OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That, in relation to its consideration of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), if the bill is referred to the committee, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs:

1. have power, pursuant to rule 12-18(2)(b)(i), to meet on Monday, February 1, 2021, even if the Senate is adjourned for a period exceeding one week; and
2. be authorized, on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, and Wednesday, February 3, 2021, to meet even if the Senate is then sitting, with the provisions of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

### ADJOURNMENT

#### MOTION ADOPTED

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 2 p.m.

She said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

### EXPRESSIONS OF GOOD WISHES FOR THE SEASON

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Honourable senators, we have agreement to stand at the end of the business of the day. I know that this being the end of the session before Christmas, I have a request from the leaders of the various caucus groups who would like to have a couple of minutes.

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** Honourable senators, on behalf of the CSG, Merry Christmas and happy holidays. This year — 2020 — has been an incredible and unforgettable year. The challenges of the year have shown cracks in some areas that need to be repaired for our national life. But I think, more importantly, it's confirmed the strength of character of Canadians.

Through it all, the Senate of Canada has done its work. We have much to be proud of. On behalf of our group, I want to add our admiration and thanks to all of the staff who worked together for the benefit of Canadians here in the Senate of Canada. We're a family, working together. This has been made much clearer this year.

All the best to each of you for a joyous holiday season and for a healthy and happy 2021. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** Honourable senators, on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, I'm pleased to join with my fellow leaders to mark the end of our proceedings for the holidays. We'll soon find ourselves at the end of another year, one that has brought what seemed to be one heartbreaking event after another. The word "unprecedented" has been used so often that it seems to have lost all meaning for us, but at the same time there has been light through the darkness. We have a vaccine now. Canadians everywhere have stepped up to help one another and to support local business owners. Frontline health care workers continue to work diligently for those in their care.

• (1420)

The Senate, too, has undergone a temporary — we hope — transformation, allowing us to fulfill our constitutional duties while ensuring the health and safety of senators and staff.

To Speaker Furey, you've helped to shepherd this chamber through the transition, always mindful of the Senate's role and responsibilities and the well-being of those who support us. On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, Senator Furey, I would like to thank you and your staff for their efforts in managing these new hybrid proceedings.

I must also thank all those who make these hybrid sittings possible — the clerks, the pages, the Senate Administration staff, the Building Services staff, the Parliamentary Protective Service, our own office staff and the Information Services staff without whom none of us would be able to join virtually. I know the

effort and long hours that have gone into making the Senate function, and I thank you for all your dedication and hard work. You are an incredible team and we're lucky to have all of you.

Thank you also to my fellow leaders for your continued collegiality. While we've not always seen eye to eye — and that's a good thing — we have managed to come together when it counted and we do the work that Canadians expect of us. That sentiment extends to all my Senate colleagues for your contributions to the successes in this place. I believe that we have done some excellent work over the past nine months to improve the lives of Canadians.

Finally, thank you to my Progressive Senate Group colleagues. Our little group has had a great year. I appreciate your support, your openness, and I value your warmth and your collegiality. I very much look forward to all that we can accomplish together in 2021 and beyond. We are small, but I think we're mighty.

Honourable senators, the past few months have been trying for many. I hope that each one of us takes some much needed rest so that we can return renewed and refreshed to our work for Canadians in the new year.

On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, I wish all senators and all staff a very happy holiday and our very best to each of you for the coming year. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Honourable senators, as we approach the final minutes of our 2020 sittings, I am challenged to deliver a closing message in a year that feels like it never even got started. It occurred to me this morning that I will be offering greetings at the end of 2020 to some honourable colleagues to whom I never got to offer greetings at the start of 2020.

So at the end of a most unusual year, I offer, on behalf of the Independent Senators Group, an unorthodox finale which I dedicate to the hard-working staff of the Senate, from clerks to cleaners, pages to the Parliamentary Protective Service and, of course, to the staff in our respective offices.

I give you, honourable colleagues, with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore, "The Week Before Christmas."

'Twas the week before Christmas, when all through the House  
Not an MP was sitting, not even a mouse.  
The bills had been sent to the Senate with care,  
In hopes that Speaker George Furey was there;  
The senators were nestled all snug in their headphones,  
With visions of amendments engraved on their capstones;  
Clerks in 'kerchiefs, and Black Rod in his hat,  
Got us all ready for a nice long Zoom chat  
When from the canal, there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the chamber to see what's the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow

Gave the lustre of midday to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a most vexing bill — C-7, my dear.

[Translation]

Its crackerjack sponsor so lively and with it,  
Senator Petitcherc did not waste a minute.

[English]

More rapid than dinner break her emails they came,  
And she whistled, and shouted, and called us by name.  
“Now, Mute! Now, Unmute! Your video is off!  
On Zoom! On Teams! You are speaking too soft!  
To the top of the order paper! To the top of it all!  
Please, dear opposition, please, do not stall.”  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the chamber top, the speeches they flew,  
With a screen full of faces, and a china cabinet too.  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney came . . . a court extension most sound.  
So we spoke not a word more, and ceased our work,  
We packed our things and turned with a jerk,  
iPads and laptops we finally did close,  
With a nod by the Speaker, from the chamber we rose;  
We sprang to the doors, to our teams gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But we heard HIM exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:  
I MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE! TO  
ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):**  
Honourable senators, I really think that should have been the last line and we should have all been running.

Thank you, Senator Woo, for those comments.

Your Honour, we had to forego Question Period, but I cannot forego my question. I know I am asking this question, really, on behalf of all groups. So I think, Your Honour, with everybody's indulgence, that we'll just think of this as Question Period, and before I wish people good wishes, I'm going to ask Senator Gold this last question of the year.

Leader, I — we — have a very special question for you today. As it's our last sitting of the year and Christmas is just around the corner, I would like for you to please pass on my Christmas list to the Prime Minister.

In the words of Amy Grant and her song, here is “My Grown-Up Christmas List” — not for yourself or for myself but for a world in need, but mostly for Canada.

[ Senator Woo ]

Leader, I would like to see vaccines for everyone. We would like to keep our elders, health care workers and all COVID front-line staff safe. I hope we never run out of PPE again.

I ask for peace, joy and love for everyone. I would like for us all to feel the holiday spirit even though we were apart so much of this year.

Also, to the Canadian Armed Forces, I would like for them to know of our gratitude and, indeed, including all veterans, for your service to us.

For all Canadians to feel safe at home and abroad, for safe drinking water for all, for help for our farmers and small businesses — leader, I've asked you many times and I continue.

Please add heaters for our security personnel who are outside in the frigid cold.

This may be more isolated to one group but maybe others would want to second this — for a few independent, conservative-minded Senate appointments, so if you could ask the Prime Minister for that.

Respect for democracy and government accountability. Answers to written and oral questions and a better flow to Access to Information answers. Also, I would like to ask for help with our virtual hybrid sittings. We really could use it.

And I'd love to know where I can find a PlayStation 5 — not for me but for my grandchildren — as they seem not to be an “essential item” on the store shelves.

Last but not least, leader, a balanced budget — no, wait. Let's not make it too difficult. Just a budget!

Senator Gold, this is my grown-up Christmas list for 2020. Could you please commit to passing this along to Santa — I mean the Prime Minister? You know that we have all been good all year round — mostly.

I know you cannot answer today, leader, as many times you cannot, so we will wait for Delayed Answers as we do with so many of our questions.

With that, colleagues, I also want to add my voice to expressions of appreciation. I will repeat some of them that have already been made. I want to take a moment to thank you. This year has been a very unusual year, as we've all had to adapt to the COVID pandemic that hit our country and the world. There has been a lot of hard work behind the scenes in order to allow us senators to be efficient in our day-to-day duties and responsibilities.

• (1430)

I want to thank the maintenance staff. You have gone above and beyond this year. We don't say this often enough, but this year, you have kept us all safe — we hope. I wish to truly thank you for everything you do.

I also want to send thanks to the following: to other members of the property and services personnel; to all our pages and the excellent work they have done, and for doing what they do in very difficult times; to the broadcasting team — you have adapted to our virtual sittings; to translation and interpretation services; to IT, your patience with us as we adapted to virtual sittings has been remarkable; to Corporate Security and the PPS; to the Clerk of the Senate — Richard, we wish you a special Christmas this year — and your staff, including our table officers, the Black Rod, Communications, the Chamber Operations and Procedure Office, and Committees personnel; the Law Clerk and his staff; Human Resources; to the Chief Corporate Services Officer and her staff; Information Services personnel; Governance and Strategic Planning; and Finance and Procurement.

To all of my colleagues in our Conservative family and caucus, and especially to members of my leadership team, I appreciate your support.

To Senator Furey, I hope you're watching us, Your Honour. We want to thank you for your work, and we want to thank your team.

Colleagues, I want to thank each of the leaders. I'm going to start and name them. It's been a pleasure — it really has been a pleasure — to work with Senator Gold. I know that you have had difficult times as the Leader of the Government, and I want to assure you, as I did this morning, that we are going to spend the next year trying to find a way of relieving you of your duty to this chamber as the Leader of the Government, and maybe we can trade seats.

To our other leaders, Senator Woo and Senator Saint-Germain, working as a team, as has been said, we don't always see eye to eye, but I think, as I said in a tribute a week or two ago, we are all passionate about our work. As long as we're passionate about our work and doing what we believe is the right thing for Canadians, we want to respect each other. I do have that and an appreciation.

To Senator Tannas in Alberta and Senator Cordy. It's been a pleasure working with you. To Senator Cordy, in January we would sometimes be seen on the golf course together in Florida. That won't happen this year, so we'll have to wait until next year.

I also want to thank my incredible staff. Without our staff and without their help — they make us look good. I get so many compliments — and criticisms occasionally — on the speeches I make, but there are not many that I have written. So I appreciate all the work they do. They make us what we are.

Colleagues, I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah and a Happy New Year. And please, all of you, stay safe. Thank you.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, let me begin by adding my voice to the deepest gratitude to the entire Senate family, staff and administration. Senator Plett, you released me of the obligation of listing them all, but do know that your work is so appreciated by all of us. I wanted to express my appreciation to you, first and foremost.

I want to thank the leaders with whom I've had the privilege to work. It's been an honour to do this, and each and every one of you has made my life actually richer. You've challenged me and you have supported me.

In that regard, as a representative of the government, I want to express to you and to all senators the thanks of the Government of Canada, because we have worked together through these extraordinarily difficult times. We have put aside deep convictions, partisan convictions and ideological convictions to pull together to help Canadians. There is something special about the Senate, and you've made it possible. It's as simple as that. We've been able to reach agreement so many times and to keep our word for the well-being of all Canadians.

Don, Pau, Raymonde, Scott, Jane — you've made it possible for me to do the best that I can. I really appreciate it.

To my team, I'm telling you things you know. Senators Gagné and LaBoucane-Benson are remarkable colleagues. This is a team effort, and behind the scenes, our incredible staff in the Government Representative office is not a big group, but we do big things and we do them well. I'm so proud and privileged to work with you all.

Colleagues, we've worked so hard under very difficult circumstances. How I wish we could have been together all the time to go through this together. To those of you online, we miss you and look forward to the time we can return to be physically together to do our work.

While we are apart and during this holiday time, just cherish and love the people you love and who love you. Be close to your families. Whatever holidays you celebrate, whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or however you celebrate this time, cherish it with your families and loved ones, stay safe, get some rest and may 2021 be the start of a new beginning for us all. Thank you.

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** Honourable senators, the Speaker has asked me to extend his best wishes to you and your loved ones as we approach the holiday season, and I join with him in doing so. Both he and I also extend our warmest thanks and best wishes to all those who support our work: our own office staff, the clerks, PPS officers, maintenance staff, Finance, HR, interpreters, stenographers, ISD, technical support, and on and on. So many in this institution help us do our work.

The Speaker and I also want to thank particularly a gentleman who is going to be with us in the Senate for his last day. He has served this institution under very strenuous and difficult

circumstances. Of course, we're talking about our ever-so-dependable interim clerk, although since he has been such a long time here, he's been pretty much our permanent clerk. He has stickhandled us through what is probably the most existential crisis this country and this institution have faced. Richard Denis, as you go into a well-deserved retirement, we thank you for your support and service.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**The Hon. the Acting Speaker:** I hope everyone will be able to enjoy the season, even if you may have to be remote from your loved ones. I hope you will be close to them in spirit. Of course, you can use technology to connect with people.

This has been a hard year for many Canadians and people around the world. The Speaker knows this, and we all support these people in our thoughts and prayers. Let us look forward to 2021 with hope and confidence that we will get through the difficult situation in this pandemic. Please, the Speaker says, and

I agree with him, take care of yourselves, your loved ones, your families, your friends and your communities. It's all very important.

[*Translation*]

I also want to emphasize how difficult this year has been for our country and our fellow citizens. I'd like to extend my very best wishes to all for the new year, 2021. Above all, I wish all Canadians good health, good health and good health.

Thank you, my dear colleagues.

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** With best wishes for a happy holiday, I move that we do now adjourn.

*(At 2:40 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 2 p.m.)*

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