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Tuesday, November 1, 2022

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

This issue contains the latest listing of Senators,
Officers of the Senate and the Ministry.

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE HONOURABLE WANDA ELAINE THOMAS BERNARD, O.C., O.N.S.

CONGRATULATIONS ON AFROGLOBAL TELEVISION'S EXCELLENCE AWARD

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, it is my pleasure to rise today to celebrate the achievement of one of our own senators. On Saturday evening, Afroglobal Television hosted their 2022 Excellence Awards, and our honourable colleague Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard was a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Excellence Awards gala — whose master of ceremonies this year was MP and parliamentary secretary Greg Fergus — has a stated mission:

. . . to showcase the achievements of individuals, organizations, businesses and agencies that make a profound difference in the lives of people of African descent, and to transform the communities where they live.

The Afroglobal Television Excellence Awards recognize both Canadian and international recipients and celebrate “the best of Africa & the Global Diaspora.”

Senator Bernard joins an impressive list of past recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award, including the Honourable Zanana Akande, the first Black female minister and member of provincial parliament; and the Most Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller, the first female prime minister of Jamaica.

As we all know, Senator Bernard was the first African-Nova Scotian woman to be appointed to the Senate of Canada, and this award celebrates that achievement — one of many on the list of reasons for recognizing her at this ceremony. They highlighted her other impressive honours: the Order of Nova Scotia, the Order of Canada, the Frank McKenna Award for Leadership in Public Policy and being named among the 100 Most Influential Black Canadians.

The human rights work that Senator Bernard has pursued in the service of African Canadians, and, in particular, African Nova Scotians, is commendable. I am pleased to see the impact that she has made in our home province of Nova Scotia, in this chamber and, indeed, across the country. And I know she is not done yet.

I invite all honourable senators to join me in congratulating Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard, the recipient of the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award of Afroglobal Television's Excellence Awards program. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SUSTAINABILITY OF SPACE-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I rise to call your attention to new facts relating to the national security and hazard alerting systems.

As I prepare to depart for COP27 in Egypt, I have become aware of two recent reports: OECD's *Earth's Orbits at Risk* and the UN's *Global status of multi-hazard early warning systems*.

Before I explain the links between these issues, I want to thank the Canadian Senators Group for their generosity in allowing me to be part of the Canadian delegation to COP27.

While overseeing the preservation of earth's nature and humanity by adopting more sustainable ways of development for us and future generations, we also need to look out and care for its outer space.

Of the more than 50 Essential Climate Variables recognized by the World Meteorological Organization to monitor climate change, 26 can only be observed effectively from space. All efforts to manage climate risk and early warning systems to protect lives, assets and livelihoods are possible thanks to space infrastructure and the data they collect. These systems ensure communities receive early warnings of a disaster, reducing impacts and facilitating the coordination at international, national and regional levels.

The planet's economy depends on space infrastructure, as financial transactions and telecommunication and navigation systems all depend on instruments that orbit in close outer space. Satellites also monitor activity and changes in the Arctic for defence matters. Thus, collecting evidence on the value of space-based infrastructure and the costs of its potential disruption must be a priority for Canada. In 2020, close to 5,000 satellites were in operation, representing global commercial revenue of US \$270 billion.

Regrettably, experts warn us that the sustainability of earth's outer space is now at risk:

. . . **Earth's orbits are getting crowded.** In 2021, more satellites were launched into space than in the entire preceding decade and tens of thousands of satellites should be launched in the next five years.

Orbital debris has increased remarkably in the last 15 years and the socio-economic impacts of a major space debris accident [or collision] could be dramatic . . .

Last year, Canadarm, the robotic arm of the International Space Station, was hit by space debris.

The economic development of earth's orbital space needs the attention of all nations for it to be sustainable. We can play an important role in leading space economy by increasing research, development and innovation in the areas of satellite monitoring, space traffic management and collision-avoidance systems.

Colleagues, I intend to keep raising awareness about space sustainability and explore with you the role Canada can play to support effective and safe operation of space infrastructure. I look forward to your support on this crucial matter to all Canadians.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

WINNIPEG'S ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, important artistic expression emanates from all our regions. Today I celebrate Winnipeg — a unique vibrant hub since the 1820s and home of many Canadian arts firsts. Winnipeg's gritty and innovative creativity drives so much in Canadian creative expression.

Anniversaries are important to celebrate. Founded in 1912, Canada's first civic art gallery, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, is 110.

At 98, Théâtre Cercle Molière — the oldest theatre company in Canada, French or English — born in 1925, has always been and remains a driving force in the cultural life of French-speaking Manitoba.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, at 84, is the second-oldest ballet company in North America and the oldest surviving dance company in Canada, first organized as a ballet club in 1938 by English dance teachers Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally.

The Royal Manitoba Theatre, at 75, is Canada's first regional theatre, founded by John Hirsch and Tom Hendry in 1958.

Winnipeg is indeed the home of internationally acclaimed authors, composers, musicians, dancers, choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers and architects.

• (1410)

Today, I celebrate the golden anniversary of a number of Winnipeg organizations. The year 1972 was a rich, heady and artistically inspiring time in our provincial capital, and that energy continues. Prairie Theatre Exchange — the home of much experimental theatre — celebrates local by presenting plays and readings by local playwrights, and showcasing local and national talent. Manitoba Opera performs classics, commissions new operas and works collaboratively with many opera companies.

The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra brings the best of classical and contemporary chamber music, heralding young and well-known talent. The Association of Manitoba Museums has raised

the professionalism and profiles of Manitoba's large and small museums. These organizations have survived floods, blizzards, COVID, economic downturns, as well as connected with audiences in new ways, mentored young creators and transformed cultural engagement. Each organization is a feature in Canada's cultural constellation.

The year 1972 also saw the formation of the Indigenous Group of Seven artists, including Jackson Beardy, Daphne Odjig, Norval Morrisseau and Alex Janvier. Their first public exhibition was at the Winnipeg Art Gallery that year. Colleagues, I was there. Winnipeg's excitement was infectious. As a Manitoban, I am so proud of their pioneering work, their contributions to Canada's arts constellation and the support they give to our city and province.

I congratulate all involved — then, since and now — including the leaders, staff, volunteers and donors, for their steadfastness, vision, determination, dynamism, professionalism and engagement. Canada and Manitoba are richer for it in myriad ways. Winnipeg's artistic innovations continue, defining our spirit and insights, regardless of weather and mosquitoes!

FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, November is Financial Literacy Month. This year's theme, Managing Your Money in a Changing World, is all about making Canadians more financially resilient, and providing them with the tools to adapt and persevere through both predictable and unpredictable financial difficulties.

[*Translation*]

Those financial difficulties have been amplified by the pandemic, and Canadians are under considerable stress due to rapid economic changes and the rising cost of living.

[*English*]

About 15% of Canadian adults believe they have strong financial literacy skills, while 39% rate their knowledge as poor. That means that two in every five Canadians feel they do not have the knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible decisions about their finances.

Becoming more financially literate and successfully building financial resilience are important steps that can help alleviate the anxiety many Canadians have about money management. The Government of Canada has launched many initiatives to support lower-income adults. One such project is the Canadian refugee initiative in Montreal which proposes to financially empower racialized immigrants and refugees — using a series of tailored workshops, annual tax clinics and coaching to ensure financial wellness. This is a significant initiative, especially considering that recent immigrants are reported to have lower financial literacy scores than the Canadian-born population.

[Translation]

The Union des consommateurs has also received federal government funding to provide financial empowerment activities and services to over 25,000 low-income Quebecers to improve various aspects of their financial well-being.

[English]

In recent weeks, much has been said about hard-to-reach populations, which is why it is increasingly more important to engage Canadians through various means, including easy-to-read, credible and simplified digital resources offered in a multitude of languages. Indeed, statistics show that young adults are more likely to seek financial advice using the internet than any other medium.

Although financial literacy is an important skill for all Canadians to have, I want to particularly emphasize the value of an early start to financial education for our youth. They are the future of this country. We must supply them with the right tools in order to form healthy banking habits and to grow their financial confidence so they can become financially resilient and responsible adults.

Honourable colleagues, during Financial Literacy Month, it is important that we destigmatize and encourage conversations about money. This will help relieve a significant burden for many Canadians, and it could have the added benefit of helping them get on the path to building financial resilience. Thank you. *Meegwetsh.*

[Translation]

ATLANTIC LOOP

Hon. Percy Mockler: Honourable senators, it is a privilege to make a statement in this august chamber about an issue that is of concern to all of Atlantic Canada.

We are concerned, alarmed and, yes, anxious about a project that is close to our hearts.

[English]

This project is the Atlantic Loop in Atlantic Canada. Honourable senators, we were told many times that the Atlantic Loop could be a nation-building project in Atlantic Canada. For our information, other nation-building projects this country has taken on include the national railway, the Trans-Canada Highway and air transportation from coast to coast to coast.

These projects rightfully needed federal support to see them realized, as well as to benefit the nation because of their existence. As a matter of fact, Ottawa has taken a leadership role in ensuring other strategically important but economically challenged projects proceed, such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline.

We need the same kind of leadership — the government's leadership — in supporting this nation-building project, the Atlantic Loop.

I want to share this information with you: Currently in Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick generate most of their electricity employing local, good, high-paying, skilled workers in the process, while the Atlantic Loop could be a game changer for us. It is imperative, honourable senators, that the federal government ensures that the full transition to net zero does not leave any provinces behind.

Honourable senators, Atlantic Canada's economy — particularly New Brunswick's economy — is highly electric, intensive and trade-exposed, meaning that industries use a lot of electricity and export their products to competitive global markets. These industries, Your Honour, cannot pass on rising input costs, so the federal government has a role to play. Honourable senators, NB Power leads the nation in carbon reductions by a provincial electricity company. It is to be noted that NB Power has achieved an 80% reduction from its peak emissions in 2011 and a 77% reduction from its 2005 emissions.

Honourable senators, as I conclude, the Atlantic Loop is in jeopardy, and, no doubt, many questions must be answered if we are going to be part of this nation-building project in Atlantic Canada. Thank you.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

SPECIAL REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Special Report of the Auditor General of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 8(2).

CRIMINAL CODE CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SEVENTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, presented the following report:

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has the honour to present its

SEVENTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Wednesday, June 22, 2022, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

MOBINA S. B. JAFFER

Chair

(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 989.)

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

(On motion of Senator Gold, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

• (1420)

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO EXTEND
DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF THE FEDERAL
FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Thursday, April 28, 2022, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in relation to its study on the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention be extended from December 16, 2022, to February 28, 2023.

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COST OF DELEGATION TO THE FUNERAL OF HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, it has been just over a week since we learned of the extravagant hotel bill that Canadians will be footing for Canada's delegation to the Queen's funeral, which included a charge of a \$6,000-per-night room at London's Corinthia Hotel for five nights.

Senator Gold, I remind you that it was the current Prime Minister who promised Canadians transparency and accountability. Yet, on this expense, he remains tight-lipped about who stayed in the premium room. Now, if he is not ashamed of who stayed there, why won't he tell us who it is? We now know definitely that it was not the Governor General as per a statement released by her office last week.

It is bad enough, Senator Gold, that Canadians are on the hook for this luxury invoice. By the looks of it, the only way to get to the bottom of this expense would be for someone to hire a private investigator.

Leader, will you give Canadians the transparency that they were promised by telling this chamber who stayed in that hotel room?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. As I have mentioned on other occasions, and as we know from reports, the official Canadian delegation was a large one, as would be expected of Canada as a leading member of the Commonwealth. All members of the delegation, including two Conservative prime ministers, stayed at the same hotel, which was a hotel that was able to accommodate the size of the delegation during a period of extremely high demand, as senators would appreciate.

As always, this government made every effort to ensure that the spending on official trips is responsible and transparent.

Senator Plett: Senator Gold, are you suggesting that one of these former Conservative prime ministers stayed in that room? That's who you're talking about. We understand there was a large delegation. They didn't all stay in that room. This wasn't a party room. The whole delegation didn't stay there, although they should have. For \$6,000 a night, the whole delegation should have stayed there.

Leader, I doubt that this is what Canadians expected when it comes to accountability and transparency. Your government's claim to this expense as being appropriate and transparent — and, indeed, your claim to that — is appalling and shocking.

Senator Gold, since your government feels comfortable in its choices being appropriate, and if you are not ashamed of what your government has done, you should have no problem about being transparent and telling us who stayed in that room. I'm

quite happy to ask former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper if he stayed in that room. I have a pretty good idea he is not going to tell me about how big the delegation was. He is going to tell me what room he stayed in.

What room did the Prime Minister stay in? Which room was the Prime Minister in at this hotel?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your supplementary question and for the diligence with which you are pursuing this issue. I don't have the answer to your question, and I'm sorry that I cannot satisfy you. I'm sorry that you are shocked, but that is the answer that I am able to provide.

FINANCE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: My question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, we now have the public accounts for the last fiscal year. Thank you for your help in having them released earlier compared to last year.

The annual Departmental Results Reports are intended to determine if the money spent by government and reported in the public accounts yielded the results intended. The government released last year's Departmental Results Reports in March of this year, 11 months after the fiscal year ended. They were released much too late to be useful.

My question is this: Given your success in having the March 2022 public accounts released earlier compared to last year, when will the government release the Departmental Results Reports for the last fiscal year?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Senator Marshall, for your kind words. The public accounts in 2020-21, indeed, were tabled within legislative timelines. But as the honourable senator would know, and colleagues as well, I hope, over more than the last decade, in cases of a fall election, public accounts typically are tabled in December. This year, the public accounts were also revised due to a court decision on September 29. I am assured that the Auditor General reviewed the revision, and maintained an unmodified opinion.

My understanding, senator, is that the government is tracking to table the public accounts this fall.

Senator Marshall: Yes. What I was looking for, Senator Gold, is when will I get the Departmental Results Reports? I'm reviewing the public accounts, but I need the results reports to see — you match up the performance with the actual money that was spent. So that's what I'm looking for: a date.

Senator Gold: I appreciate that, and I apologize that I misunderstood the question. I'll have to inquire about the dates, Senator Marshall. I'll try to get an answer as quickly as possible.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: My question is for Senator Gold, the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, last week Statistics Canada released a report that noted that more than 8.3 million people, roughly 23% of our population in Canada, is today either a landed immigrant or were at some point. Most of them, we know, will go on to become citizens.

Today, we learned that the government has a new target for immigration over the next three years: By the year 2025, we will be bringing in 500,000 immigrants per year. I think this is a good thing. Immigration done well benefits us all.

But the really encouraging thing, Senator Gold, in all of this is that immigrants are no longer simply choosing "MTV" — Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver — but going to other places. The Maritimes is a big winner. Wonderful. However, it does not appear that the government is matching the increase in immigration with an increase in settlement funding.

In Nova Scotia, for example, where the increase is significant, the number of immigrants between 2018 and 2021 increased by 51%. Congratulations, Nova Scotia. But the funding for their primary settlement agency, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, or ISANS, increased only by 7%. The agency reported to *The Globe and Mail* that they were having significant challenges keeping up with the pace of demand.

Can you tell us, Senator Gold, if the government is planning to — in a parallel — increase the funding for settlement agencies in Nova Scotia and, indeed, across Canada to keep pace with the increase in immigration?

• (1430)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. The government knows that newcomers to Canada play a critical role in our future, both as a society and as an economy, and contribute in so many important ways.

To enable newcomers to settle in places other than the three cities you mentioned, and ensure newcomers settling in small towns and rural communities have access to essential services during their first year in Canada, the government has announced an investment of more than \$35 million to expand resettlement capacity and settlement services across the country. This investment includes \$21 million to add nine new Resettlement Assistance Program service providers in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick. These organizations aim to help reduce pressure on the 32 existing Resettlement Assistance Program service providers across Canada and provide those newcomers with an opportunity to settle in small- and medium-sized towns and in rural communities, where affordable housing is more readily available.

These services help all newcomers, specifically refugees and other vulnerable newcomers, learn the language, gain employment and thereby contribute to their communities so that they can reach their full potential as quickly as possible.

In addition, I'm advised that \$14 million will be invested in case management services for 14 existing service providers so that they can assist more vulnerable newcomers with support and referrals so they can settle better into their new communities. This includes a pilot project aimed at bolstering francophone case management in the Prairies.

Canada's success as an international leader in settlement and integration is a result of the extraordinary effort of our service provider organizations across this country. The government is pleased to be providing ongoing support to them.

Senator Omidvar: Thank you, Senator Gold, for that fulsome answer. I'm glad to have given you advance notice of it.

I do have an area of concern, though. In the next three years, the government is planning to increase immigration in almost every category, but by the year 2025, its target for refugees will decrease by roughly 2,600 or more.

Given all the turmoil in the world, given the 100 million displaced people in the world, our own pride in being a country of refuge, Senator Gold, are we turning our back on our own brand?

Senator Gold: No, I don't think Canada is turning its back. It is always a matter of ongoing consideration and review as to what the right number and profile of newcomers are. I think that Canada's record is an exemplary one. Again, without burdening the chamber with more facts and figures, the government continues to invest significant resources to make sure that those who do come — along with partnership, by the way, of the provinces, territories, municipalities and non-profits — are integrated as quickly and fully into Canadian society as possible.

FINANCE

GREEN BOND PROGRAM

Hon. Clément Gignac: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, last week it was reported that Ottawa is lending, via the Crown corporation Canada Infrastructure Bank, close to \$1 billion to Ontario Power Generation for the addition of a modular nuclear reactor for the Darlington nuclear site. Following that announcement, Ontario Power Generation has adopted a \$300 million Green Bond Framework that includes financing for nuclear power to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

Interestingly enough, or disturbingly enough, the federal government has specifically excluded nuclear power projects in its Green Bond Framework released last spring.

My question for Senator Gold is the following: Could you explain to me how come the federal government, on the one hand, supports the financing of nuclear technology in Canada via the Canada Infrastructure Bank but, on the other hand, refuses to include nuclear solutions in its very own green bond offering to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, senator. My understanding is that Canada's Green Bond Framework is fully aligned with the international green bond standards and the expectations of the market, which is an important factor in designing such a framework. This framework, which includes the nuclear exclusion, is consistent with the green bond frameworks from other sovereign issuers, including France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom.

I'm advised that while investments from the green bonds will go towards projects that meet the framework's criteria, the government continues to support innovation and environmental improvements across the country to ensure that Canadians, communities and businesses can adapt properly and effectively to a net-zero economy. In that regard, Canada recognizes and supports the important role that the broader energy sector plays in this transition.

There is the international framework that governs green bonds, but there is also the government's commitment, as exemplified in this investment, to encourage innovation and all measures that could help us transition to a net-zero economy.

Senator Gignac: Is it something that the government could reconsider? I think the regime has changed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and energy security is important. This is an approach that maybe could be reconsidered. I have information that the European Union is currently reconsidering that aspect because green bond issuance is important for capital markets.

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. It's a fair question. I will look into that, but allow me to say the following, though: As colleagues may know, the Government of Canada issued its inaugural Canadian-dollar-denominated green bond just this year, and this inaugural green bond, the first of many such issuances, will create new financing opportunities that will speed up projects ranging from green infrastructure to nature conservancy while also helping to grow our economy and the jobs that flow from that.

As in all government programs, there is a commitment and a willingness to revise and reconsider, and I'll certainly follow up with your question and hope to have an answer soon.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: My question is to the government leader in the Senate.

Senator Gold, today Employment and Social Development Canada announced that it was launching consultations to:

. . . build a pan-Canadian school food policy that is responsive to the evolving needs of children and families, while also setting a foundation for a future where more children in Canada have access to nutritious food while at school.

The release states that one in five children in Canada are food-insecure. However, in Nunavut, that number is, sadly, closer to three in every five children.

On top of that, food costs two and a half to three times more in our territory than anywhere in Southern Canada. As you know, there are also logistical hurdles to getting nutritious food into the territory, given that all 25 communities are fly-in only and face significant challenges due to weather and lack of infrastructure, such as shorter, unpaved runways.

My question, Senator Gold, is this: Will your government commit that it will not only consult with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Inuit but also ensure that any school food program breaks with the usual per capita funding model in recognition of the additional challenges and barriers Nunavummiut face when trying to access fresh and nutritious food?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. You raise an important issue. Those of us in the chamber who have had, as I have, the privilege of visiting the North, Iqaluit and others, know first-hand, albeit at a distance, what the challenges are. You only have to walk into a grocery store and look at the sticker prices to know how challenging it is to get affordable, nutritious food, and that is in a major city compared to the more remote locations.

• (1440)

The government is committed to improving food security in the North through a whole-of-government approach that includes working with provinces, territories and Indigenous leadership in communities. In this regard, Nutrition North Canada is a key part of the government's response to the food security issue.

It's committed to working with, as I said, the provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners and stakeholders to develop a national school food policy and to work towards a national school nutritious meal program and has begun to work on implementing this commitment. It has begun informal consultations with stakeholders and experts and plans to engage with provincial and territorial governments as well as with Indigenous partners. I fully expect that the issues you raise have been raised and will continue to be raised in the process of these consultations, and the government will listen seriously to those considerations and concerns.

Senator Patterson: Thank you for that answer, Senator Gold. Nunavut is the largest region in the country, larger than Quebec or Ontario, but with the smallest population. We are always nervous about per capita funding, which can be very punitive when it comes to fairness in our region.

I would like to ask if you would specifically pay attention to this danger we see of having per capita formulas prejudice our ability to meet the worthwhile needs of this newly announced program.

Senator Gold: I certainly will make a point of underlining that particular concern when I report to the government.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Last year, Quebec reported 26 femicides, two thirds of which occurred in a domestic violence context. Every year, the Quebec courts handle more than 20,000 cases of domestic violence, and in 90% of cases, women are the victims. Every year, police in Quebec receive more than 60,000 reports of domestic violence. In Canada, last year, 173 women were killed in a domestic violence context, not to mention the children.

In its seven years in office, why hasn't Justin Trudeau's Liberal government passed legislation to make women in Canada safer?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question.

The government has implemented plans and strategies to fight gender-based violence and violence against women. It is working on developing a national action plan to hopefully put an end to gender-based violence.

The government has also invested money in more than 1,200 front-line organizations providing essential services to survivors of gender-based violence. In Budget 2021, the government built on this work by investing more than \$3 billion over five years to advance these initiatives.

There are several ways to address this significant, tragic and unacceptable problem. The government continues to work on this issue.

Senator Boisvenu: Senator Gold, please convey the following message to the Prime Minister: He may have adopted a strategy to reduce violence against women in Canada, but it has failed.

In 2021, in Quebec, a repeat offender awaiting trial on a domestic violence charge, a man with a lifelong record of 51 crimes, including 11 domestic violence convictions and three sexual assaults, was released after violating parole three times. A few days later, he murdered his wife.

Senator Gold, why, for the past seven years, has every bill passed by the Liberal government contributed to making women less safe, including Bill C-5, which will be passed soon? Please explain to me why every single bill has eroded women's safety, making them less safe than they were seven years ago.

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I would like to start by making a distinction and pointing out that the tragedies that you mentioned are completely unacceptable.

At the same time, what you said is not necessarily true. The Government of Canada does not believe that that was the effect of the measures that were in place, those that are currently being debated — we will begin third reading of Bill C-5 tomorrow — or even those that were proposed and implemented to make women and other victims safer.

On the contrary, research clearly shows that mandatory minimum sentences and other such initiatives did not meet their objective. Bill C-5 and the Government of Canada's other criminal justice initiatives help guarantee Canadians' safety while respecting the rights and freedoms of all citizens, whether it be in matters relating to parole, conditional sentences or other measures in the bill that you mentioned.

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos: My question is for the government leader in the Senate, Senator Gold. Over the last several weeks, we have found out that China's Communist regime has been operating police stations right across Canada, and at least three that we know of in Toronto. Of course we know that, government leader, because the Communist regime has publicly bragged — imagine, they've publicly bragged — about how they've "convinced" many Canadians of Chinese descent to return to China to face these trumped-up charges.

Of course, I use the word "convinced" in quotation marks because we know what "convinced" means: They're returning because of threats to the safety of their loved ones who remain in China. This is especially concerning in light of the Chinese Communist Party's increasingly aggressive use of their national security law to reach beyond China's borders when dealing with these centres.

Senator Gold, why is your government allowing this activity on Canadian soil? I know the RCMP has launched an investigation into these police stations, but why is it even necessary? Why hasn't your government shut them down already and, more importantly, called in the Chinese ambassador once and for all?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Protecting the national security of Canadians is a priority for this government. It's a mandate that this government has and is acting on with seriousness.

I'm glad, Senator Housakos, that you mentioned that the RCMP is investigating these matters. The RCMP will, where appropriate, take the necessary steps and appropriate charges will be pressed.

Global Affairs Canada officials stated the following:

The activity that's being alleged would be entirely illegal and totally inappropriate, and it would be the subject of very serious representations . . .

It is appropriate in matters of this kind that we entrust, in this case, the RCMP to do the proper investigation. Regarding other measures that may be taken diplomatically, the government is regularly reviewing its options.

Senator Housakos: I agree it's illegal and highly inappropriate, and I'm glad the RCMP is doing what they're doing. But why isn't your government doing what all other Five Eyes nations are doing, such as giving them more legislative tools and authority from their parliaments and congresses, to make sure this is dealt with?

Senator Gold, do you remember the expression, "A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian"? Doesn't that matter anymore? There are many Canadians of Chinese descent living in this great country who deserve to live in peace, freedom and safety.

• (1450)

Why does your government not care enough about them to afford them protection from the Communist regime of China? Why is your government aiding and abetting those thugs? Why doesn't your government take action?

At the end of the day, we've seen on a number of occasions how the Communist regime tries to intimidate parliamentarians in this Parliament. We've seen it in the past, where the Chinese ambassador has attempted to intimidate. Now we see them intimidating Canadians of Chinese descent on our soil.

I'm glad the government is concerned, and I'm glad you're happy the RCMP is investigating, but what is this government doing in terms of tools to get to the bottom of this issue?

Senator Gold: Senator Housakos, I'm glad you're glad.

There were a lot of statements and assumptions that you made. Again, it's very difficult to answer these questions when there's so much thrown in there that is so clearly incorrect. To imply that the government doesn't care about Canadians of whatever origin is simply not true. To say that the government is aiding and abetting borders — in fact, I try my best to respect the traditions of Parliament and to find parliamentary language, but I am often driven to despair. Even though I am the son of an English teacher, I cannot find parliamentary language sometimes to fully express my reactions to some of these insinuations.

The Government of Canada is taking its responsibilities to protect Canadians seriously, whether in the diplomatic efforts, behind the scenes or with regard to the deployment of our law enforcement resources. Canadians should be proud that this

government respects the democratic traditions, the separations of powers and the discretion that is sometimes necessary in matters of diplomacy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COST OF LIVING RELIEF BILL, NO. 2 (TARGETED SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS)

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Hassan Yussuff moved second reading of Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to begin the debate on Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

Canadians across our country are feeling the effects of the rising cost of living caused by the global inflation. The government has responded with legislation that will quickly provide relief to those who are struggling most. This proposed legislation aims to bridge the gap for Canadian families. If passed, this bill will give an estimated 1.8 million Canadians an extra \$500 to cover their rent through a one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit. In addition, the bill creates the “Canada Dental Benefit,” which will provide needed dental care for children under 12 from low- to middle-income families, helping an estimated 500,000 children.

If passed, this legislation will not only help with the immediate effects of rising inflation but be a very good first step to a long-term Canadian dental-care program.

I will begin my speech by talking about the Canada dental benefit and will finish by talking about the one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit.

Dental care is essential to maintaining good oral health, especially for our youngest children, whose teeth are still developing. Yet, the reality is that professional dental care is out of reach for many Canadian families across this country. Seeing a dental professional can be expensive, and approximately one third of Canadians do not have insurance to cover the costs. This means that many parents have to postpone or forgo important dental care for their children at a time when their teeth are developing.

Unsurprisingly, research has shown that Canadians from low- and middle-income families have worse oral-health outcomes than those from higher-income families. This is the type of health inequality that the bill being introduced here today is trying to mitigate.

In 2018, more than one in five Canadians reported avoiding dental care because of the cost. That is roughly 6.8 million people. The consequences of putting off dental care — or worse,

avoiding it completely — can be severe. Left unchecked, dental problems can lead to many health issues, including chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. That, in turn, increases public-health spending in cost-intensive health-care systems such as cardiac, cancer and emergency services.

We heard testimony at the National Finance Committee from Dr. Walter Siqueira, Dean and Professor at the University of Saskatchewan, who warned us about the dangerous health effects of not having proper oral health. It is clear that poor oral health places a significant burden on society as a whole. These direct and indirect costs affect all of us, and we all stand to benefit when we improve access to dental care professionals.

When it comes to children, the stakes are even higher. The consequences of poor oral health in childhood can last a lifetime. Many oral diseases can begin in the preschool years. It may surprise you to learn that tooth decay is actually the most common childhood chronic disease in Canada and around the world. In Canada, the treatment of dental problems is the leading cause of day surgery under general anaesthesia for children under the age of five.

Childhood is also a critical time for establishing good dental hygiene behaviours. Seeing a dental professional during these formative years can be instrumental in developing healthy habits that last throughout one’s life.

There is no doubt that inadequate access to dental care during the critical years has a significant effect on children, and that effect is more pronounced in certain groups. Research data shows that dental diseases are more commonly found among children from low-income families, Indigenous children and children with disabilities or special health-care needs.

It is clear that some Canadian children are falling between the cracks. If we do not act now, those children may have to live with the consequences of poor oral health for the rest of their lives.

It does not have to be that way. With the right care, we can prevent minor dental issues from growing into major ones. For children whose whole lives are ahead of them, the benefits of accessing dental care early are immeasurable.

With that in mind, the proposed Canada dental benefit is designed to help the youngest Canadians first, specifically children under 12 from low-income families who do not have access to private dental insurance coverage. The benefit would provide eligible families with payments of up to \$650 per year per child under 12 years of age. The benefit would also be tax-free.

I first want to address the issue of adequacy because I know several senators had questions and concerns about whether \$650 per year is enough. I will make two points. First, this program is not to be a replacement or substitute for existing private or public plan coverage. The intent of this interim program is to help ensure that basic oral health care is available to children of low- and middle-income families when they cannot access it through private or public coverage.

How was the \$650 amount determined? Health Canada officials, in collaboration with the Chief Dental Officer of Canada, examined average costs of dental care for a range of basic care needs for children, including exams, X-rays, fillings and preventative care like fluoride and sealants. Based on the cost of those basic treatments and measures, they came up with the benefit amount to help fill the gap to ensure basic oral health-care needs are met for children.

My second point is that the dental benefit program is an interim program, not a long-term solution to children's oral health-care needs. More in-depth discussions will take place over the next two years between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, along with main stakeholders including dental health-care professionals, to help inform a better and longer-term solution.

If the proposed legislation is passed, eligible families could apply for the Canada dental benefit as soon as later this year.

• (1500)

Health Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency have committed to working together to ensure that Canadians receive their benefit payment as quickly as possible. Parents and legal guardians of eligible children will apply through the Canada Revenue Agency's My Account or through their contact centres, after which they will receive an upfront payment that will allow them to take their children to the dentist. Money provided through the benefit will be used to cover oral health care services delivered by any regulated, independently practising oral health care provider in Canada.

To qualify for the benefit, applicants will need to meet certain criteria. They must have a child under 12 years of age in their care who does not have access to private dental care. They may be asked to provide information about the employer to help verify whether or not they have access to private dental insurance for their children. They must have an adjusted family net income under \$90,000 per year. They must have filed their most recent income tax return. They must be a parent or legal guardian who receives the Canada Child Benefit for eligible children. They must have spent or have a plan to spend money on dental expenses for the child that wouldn't be fully reimbursed under another public program. They must provide information about the dental care visit and the dental care provider for which the benefit will be used.

Children who are receiving oral health care services through other public programs, such as those provided by provinces and territories or the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program for First Nations and Inuit, may also be eligible for the Canada dental benefit. However, they would still have to meet the other criteria. Most importantly, they would have to have out-of-pocket expenses that would not be fully reimbursed under these programs.

There have been some questions and concerns raised about whether you must pay up front and then wait for reimbursement. I want to be clear that the money disbursed through the Canada dental benefit would be provided to eligible applicants up front

before they access dental care. By providing an upfront payment, the proposed benefit recognizes that many eligible recipients do not have the financial flexibility to wait for reimbursement.

In the case of someone who has paid for care before applying for the benefit, that person could still apply to receive the benefit after the fact, as long as the care was received during the eligible period and was not reimbursed by another program and they are eligible at the time they apply.

The Canada Revenue Agency is well equipped to deliver this program with its extensive secure infrastructure and long-standing experience delivering benefits to Canadians. The agency is also well equipped to guard against fraud and ensure the program is being accessed as intended.

The CRA will take steps to implement additional verification and security measures up front to help ensure benefit payments are deliverable only to individuals who are entitled to receive them in the first place. In some cases, the CRA could request additional information or contact an applicant's employer or dentist's office to validate eligibility.

The CRA continues to enhance the security of its digital services to protect Canadians from fraudulent activity. Security features include multi-factor authentication and making email addresses mandatory for those who use CRA's My Account. The CRA will lean heavily on a range of existing tools for administering other government programs as set out in the draft legislation to conduct compliance, verification and collections activities.

I want to stress that the Canada dental benefit is just a start. This benefit is an interim solution to provide urgent support to those most in need. The benefit would provide immediate financial support to families, allowing them to begin addressing their eligible children's dental care needs as soon as possible.

While the Canada dental benefit is in place, the Government of Canada will be taking the necessary steps to build a comprehensive, longer-term dental care program. That includes engaging with key stakeholders, such as industry and experts in oral health care delivery.

This past summer, for example, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada launched a Request for Information with industry representatives. As you know, health care is a shared responsibility between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories. As always, the Government of Canada recognizes and respects the mandates and jurisdictions of our provincial and territorial partners.

All provinces and territories currently provide some form of supplemental coverage for dental services. These programs vary in scope and may only be available to specific groups, such as seniors, children or those receiving social assistance. But provincial and territorial programs do not cover dental care for children under 12 equally and, in some cases, the programs focus only on emergency needs.

Some children under 12 who are also covered by provincial and territorial programs may still be eligible for the Canada dental benefit if the family meets all the criteria to qualify for the benefit. If a family still has out-of-pocket expenses over and above those covered by the provincial and territorial programs, they can apply for the Canada dental benefit to cover these extra expenses.

For example, in Quebec, their program only covers up to the age of 9 — not 10 years old and not 11 years old — unless the parents are on a social assistance program to access any types of benefits. Additionally, the Quebec program provides no prevention measures such as cleaning for children up to the age of nine.

Our recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated clearly that we can work together on health care priorities. As a result, we know we have the momentum we need to think big and to tackle larger system challenges. By building on the investments made to date and through collaboration across governments, it is my hope that governments will continue to look to find ways to work with their provincial and territorial colleagues to develop a shared vision for the future, one that includes expanded access to dental care.

Canadians deserve a health care system that delivers results, and they expect their governments to work together to deliver value for their tax dollars.

Honourable senators, if passed, this bill will help bridge the gap for hundreds of thousands of Canadian children who cannot afford dental care. It will ensure that all children under the age of 12, no matter where they live, will have access to some dental benefits. The dental benefit act also proposes an interim benefit because we recognize that children whose teeth are still developing must be a top priority.

With this in mind, I would like to speak about timelines. Through Budget 2022, the Government of Canada committed to help the youngest Canadians access dental care before the end of the year. In order for this to happen, the proposed legislation must receive Royal Assent as soon as possible, so I'm urging all honourable senators to support Bill C-31.

As I previously mentioned, Bill C-31 also includes a one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit. It will give Canadians an extra \$500 to cover their rent. The Canada Revenue Agency will process the applications and payments on behalf of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion. In other words, it will operate separately from the existing Canada Housing Benefit, which is delivered by the provinces and the territories across the country.

Honourable senators, this one-time payment will have a far-reaching impact. The government estimates some 1.8 million people across the country will receive it, including an estimated 700,000 low-income renters in my province of Ontario.

Is this benefit meant to be a long-term solution for the affordable housing challenges we face in our country? Absolutely not. This short-term benefit is meant to deal directly with the short-term problem of rising inflation that is disproportionately hurting low-income renters.

According to the October report from Rentals.ca, the average rent is now about \$100 more than the pre-pandemic peak level in the fall of 2019. The \$500 rental benefit will help cover some of this increase over the short term, but I think we can all agree that more needs to be done in the long term to help Canadians deal with housing affordability.

• (1510)

We have already heard the broad strokes of the one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit. Now, I'd like to spend some time answering some of the questions that my colleagues on all sides of the Senate may have.

First, let me explain who is eligible for the benefit. Individuals will be eligible if they have completed their 2021 tax return and if, based on the return, they have an adjusted net income below \$20,000, or below \$35,000 for families.

To be eligible, people must be residents in Canada for tax purposes in 2022. Their principal residence must be situated in Canada on the latter of December 1, 2022, or on the day the act is in force. They must have paid rent for their own shelter in Canada in 2022, and paid at least 30% of their adjusted net income on rent.

People must apply for the benefit via the Canada Revenue Agency's, or CRA, secure My Account portal, or by calling the CRA contact centre.

The government expects that people can apply for the one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit by the end of 2022, and their application period will be open for 120 days. To ensure Canadians get the benefit as soon as possible, the government will encourage applicants to sign up for direct deposit, which can be done through the CRA My Account secure portal, or through many Canadian financial institutions.

Those applicants who are eligible, and who have signed up for direct deposit, will receive their payment quickly — in five business days. Those who haven't signed up for direct deposit can expect to receive their payment by cheque within 10 to 15 business days.

Your Honour, some people might be worried that this benefit will impact other benefits they rely upon. I can assure them that the nature of the one-time payment of \$500 would mean that this is non-reportable from an income tax perspective. It will not reduce their other income-tested benefits, such as the Canada workers benefit, the Canada Child Benefit, the Goods and Services Tax credit and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Our government will work with the provinces and territories to ensure the benefits they administer will not be negatively impacted by this benefit.

Your Honour, the government designed this benefit so that it will make a difference for the families who need it the most — without creating more inflationary pressures on housing costs. That is because this relatively modest, one-time payment is paid directly to low-income renters.

We know that many homeowners are also struggling to make ends meet, but in this legislation I believe the government is taking a targeted approach by focusing, specifically, on the renters' households where this investment can have the most impact. That is because research shows that renters are four times more likely to experience core housing needs than homeowners.

Your Honour, I conclude with this last important point: The one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit is only one of the measures in the tool kit of solutions addressing housing affordability. We know that reaching housing affordability calls for a significant investment over the long term. It calls for a comprehensive plan that benefits all Canadians, no matter where they live along the housing continuum in this country. This plan exists; it includes measures to put Canada on the path to doubling housing construction over the next decade. It will help Canadians save for and buy their first home. And it will ban foreign ownership and curb speculation, both of which make housing more expensive for Canadians.

Central to the plan is Canada's National Housing Strategy. This 10-year strategy, backed by more than \$72 billion in investments, is making a real difference in the lives of Canadians, and the strategy keeps expanding to address housing affordability from every angle.

Your Honour, I trust I have been able to clear up some of the most pertinent questions about the one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit. In conclusion, I know that Canadians are counting on all of us to deliver what they are asking for and what they deserve, including safe, adequate and affordable housing — an affordable place to call home.

No child should have to suffer poor oral health simply because their family does not have the means to pay for dental care. Painful dental problems do not have to be part of childhood — not when professional dental care is widely available in this country.

I hope we can all agree that every Canadian who needs medical care should get it, regardless of their ability to pay. A Canadian seeing their dentist should be no different. Canadian families in need have waited too long to access essential care for their children. This legislation has the potential to make a powerful difference in the lives of children — and the adults they will eventually become. By acting now, to ensure better access to dental care for our youngest Canadian citizens, we are investing in the health of the whole cohort of Canadians. There can be no doubt that such an investment will pay dividends for many years to come.

I hope we can count on colleagues from all sides of the Senate to support this bill and the much-needed financial relief this bill will provide for those who need it the most. Thank you kindly.

[Translation]

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Would Senator Yussuff take a question?

Senator Yussuff: Yes.

[Senator Yussuff]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: First of all, Senator Yussuff, thank you for agreeing to sponsor this bill.

My question relates to the part about housing. In his review of Bill C-31, the Parliamentary Budget Officer noted that 86,700 tenants in Quebec will not be eligible for the \$500 allowance because they spend less than 30% of their income on rent. Yet these are Quebecers who are generally disadvantaged, because they live in subsidized low-rent housing known as HLMs, which stands for "habitations à loyer modique." Quebec is the most affected province, because there are more low-income housing units there than elsewhere in the country.

Across Canada, 118,000 people will be excluded from the program for the same reason.

Senator Yussuff, should the 30% income criterion be removed or modified to include more tenants in need?

[English]

Senator Yussuff: Thank you for the question. My understanding is that amendments were made to the bill at the final moment in the other place. But, to be certain, with regard to the specific nature of your question, three ministers will be before the committee tomorrow. I will raise this question on your behalf in order to receive the proper answer to ensure I do not mislead you in my response. Thank you kindly.

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Yussuff, thanks for your speech. In my province of Saskatchewan, my understanding is that very low-income families receive dental coverage for their children, and many Canadian families, of course, with health plans through their employment, receive dental coverage for their kids. What does the Government of Canada estimate is the percentage of Canadians, not otherwise covered by dental coverage, who will receive this particular benefit?

Senator Yussuff: First, senator, thank you for the question. Clearly, as you know, there are different programs at the provincial and territorial levels, across the country, that help families access certain aspects of dental care.

In the province of Saskatchewan, it is estimated that some 49,500 families will be able to access this program that the government is putting forward. Across the country, there is an expectation that close to 700,000 families might be able to utilize this program, or have it supplement the provincial or territorial benefits, to give their children the proper care they need and deserve.

Senator Batters: Senator Yussuff, it appears that the government leader will, unfortunately, not be giving a second reading speech, so we will not get the chance to ask him questions about this bill. Therefore, I have to ask you this, as you are the sponsor of this important government bill. We have a mental health crisis in Canada right now. I personally haven't heard the same about a dental health crisis. No doubt it's important, but I don't think it rises to that same level.

The Trudeau government, in the last election, made a very significant promise on mental health care, promising to establish a Canada mental health transfer to the tune of \$4.5 billion, with the amount of \$875 million that should have already been allocated and transferred. None of that money has flowed yet. Why did the government choose to spend this money on this particular aspect and not on mental health?

• (1520)

Senator Yussuff: Once again, senator, thank you very much for the question. As you know, mental health is an issue we all have to be concerned about as parliamentarians. The government has already made significant commitments to the provinces during the COVID period. They transferred money to the provinces to help deal with mental health issues. I'm sure that as provinces, territories and the federal government continue to talk, there will be additional support for the provinces in regard to the mental health needs of Canadians right across the country.

But equally so for many working families, while you did not hear about their need for dental health support, working families have been struggling with these issues for quite some time. Based on the estimate the government provided, I know for a fact that, at the end of the day, many families will be assisted. I don't think we should prioritize dental care and dental support for working families over that of mental health. They are both equal. If you ask a family struggling with these issues, at the time you approach them, they will tell you what their priorities are.

While I recognize mental health is an important issue, we need to find ways to continue to support our provinces to ensure that Canadians can get the services they need. We should not somehow distinguish in terms of priority. When a family is struggling with an issue, that will be their priority. I know that for many working families in this country, dental care is a significant priority because they can't afford to access dental care in this country.

Hon. Clément Gignac: Senator Yussuff, I want to congratulate you as a sponsor for your involvement. I think many of us — not to mention the majority of us — agree that we have to do something. Back in the 60s, the Royal Commission on Health Services, 1961 to 1964, did, in fact, mention that those services should be part of the national system.

Having said that, many provinces offer a different program. Interestingly enough, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has mentioned that at the cost of \$700 million, Quebec residents will receive only 13% since Quebec has been pretty generous with the system they have in place.

In precise dollars, over the next five years, Quebec will receive \$92 million, which is equivalent to Alberta but with a much bigger population. So my question is this: Since you probably have contact with the cabinet minister, do you think it will be a good idea to offer an opt-out clause for provinces under certain conditions in that the provinces will receive the money but have to respect some conditions? I think that would be much more efficient since dentists are provincially regulated and the provinces have contact with the dentists.

Senator Yussuff: Thank you for the question. As you know, the Quebec program only allows those under ten years of age to access dental care under certain conditions and is income tested.

In the next two years, the federal government and the provinces will be in some serious deliberations about what a national program should look like. I'm certain that at that time, as they have done throughout history, Quebec will negotiate a way to be compensated for a program that has some national standards.

Given this is an interim measure, I think it's fair for families who have children under the age of 12 to know they will get this benefit, and it will help them get the care their children need. But in the long-term, as the federal government, provinces and territories negotiate, I hope we can have some national standards. Of course, if Quebec meets those standards, by all means they should be compensated.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Colleagues, we have five senators and 13 minutes left. We will proceed with one question per senator, and if there is time, we'll go back for a second question.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Senator Yussuff, thank you for your comments here today. I think everybody, in general, agrees with the intent, which is that kids may need help on this issue. I share your concern that it may encourage some private providers to diminish their own contributions to dental care.

One of the other things — and I think it's particularly important in the wake of what we have learned about fraudulent Canada Emergency Response Benefit, or CERB, claims during the pandemic — is that in this bill, in fact, while people are going to be required to keep receipts, there is an explicit instruction to have no audit of the program in year one. So, once again, we won't know whether the program is being used appropriately. Are you concerned about that yourself?

Senator Yussuff: I'm happy to take Senator Wallin's question and more importantly, of course, respond. Fraud is always an issue we should all be concerned about regardless of what program the government rolls out.

Individuals have to give attestation that the money they are going to receive will go for their children's dental needs. They will have to identify the dentist that is providing the service. They will also have to tell the government directly in their application whether or not they have insurance coverage. In addition to that, they will have to keep the receipt. At any time, the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, could conduct an audit. It is true that the individual is not required to submit receipts prior to accessing the benefit.

Over time, I think that we will learn how Canadian families access this benefit and whether or not there has been fraud because the CRA will have an opportunity to do some audits and give some data that will help deal with that to a large extent.

I am not worried. I say this because I come from humble beginnings. Working people struggle with the same challenges we all struggle with, like how to access things some of us have had the privilege of accessing. I'm a senator now, so I have dental benefits. At the age of 18 when I worked in the workplace for the first time in my life, I had access to dental benefits. But I know that privilege is not a right. Working families should be able to access the same thing that I have had for a good part of my life. There might be some who want to defraud the program. I am hoping enough deterrent is built into the legislation that it will deter those who may choose to commit fraud. However, as Canadians, I think we should have faith that poor, working families will do what is right to ensure their kids get the care they need.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Thank you, Senator Yussuff, for your speech and sponsorship of this work. You don't need to convince me for a second about the importance of dental care. I worked in the field for a number of years. When I got this job four and a half years ago, it was the first time in my life that I had dental benefits. It's a privilege too many Canadians can't get.

I am worried about the accusations of fraud more than anything, so I would like to just ask: Has there been a consideration? For two years, I've been working with CRA to help them correct a problem they made. Their administrative capacity is very limited. Is there the ability for Canadians to upload their receipt? That would limit the pool of those where an audit would be required. I just think having that capacity — has that been considered? If not, would you please make sure it's considered during the study of the bill? I think having that in the program would limit the risk of fraud, but it would also help reduce the pool of those where an audit would have to occur in the future.

Senator Yussuff: Thank you, Senator Deacon, for the question. As you know, the minister has broad powers under the legislation. The minister will be before the committee. I will be honoured to raise this in terms of the capacity of CRA to upload receipts at the end of the day. It's not currently required, but yes, it is true the minister could make a ministerial decision to alter or change the direction in regard to requiring receipts for individuals. The acknowledgment is very clearly in the legislation that audits could be conducted, and the CRA will have the authority to do so.

Hopefully I have enough time, Senator Deacon, before the minister appears before the committee. I will specifically ask the minister your point and get back to you.

Hon. David M. Wells: My questions were asked by Senators Wallin and Deacon. I withdraw.

• (1530)

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: The \$70,000 to \$30,000 group is a huge span, and the children will have different needs. At the lower scale of \$30,000 to \$40,000, this group may not have basic

needs met and a lack of resources like lack of internet, phones, babysitting and transportation, which were the problems I had to deal with when I was delivering dental care. It limits their access to care. To add Canada Revenue Agency to this will be another obstacle for them.

How will the government ensure this group will be able to access dental benefits equally? What happens if they use the money to meet their basic needs?

Senator Yussuff: Thank you, Senator McCallum, for the question. As you know, there are many challenges that working families face throughout this country. You stated some of them clearly and eloquently.

This program is not for other needs. It's specifically for dental care needs for children. A family can't access this benefit and use it for something else. It is meant as a bridge toward a larger program that, hopefully, the federal government, the provinces and the territories, will provide in the next two years.

There are some challenges, like in every community, for families, such as transportation and what have you. Families will have to lean on access to other programs to help with those particular needs. Specifically, you cannot apply for this program and then use it for something else. That is clearly understood. Of course, families will have to make an attestation that they are using the money for dental needs and not for something else.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator, thank you for your speech and thank you for being the sponsor of this bill. It's obviously a bill with a specific objective. At the end of the day, the current needs of our society — especially as the economy continues to face challenges with both the inflation rate and an economic standstill that is on the verge of a recession very soon, I would venture to say — continue to grow exponentially.

There are a lot of challenges and a lot of great causes out there that currently governments don't fund. I'll give one example, autism, which is facing and crippling families right across the country. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Canadians are touched by this. There's no support on the provincial level by health care systems; there's no national strategy at this particular point.

This is a great program. We're adding a few billion dollars into the pot, but where does it end? How many other causes is the government willing to champion and write out cheques for, like autism, for example, and many others I could list if we want to get into the debate?

Senator Yussuff: Thank you, Senator Housakos, for your question. A long time ago, creating a hierarchy of rights and privileges meant the ones with the loudest voices would succeed. I don't for one minute disagree with you that families that are struggling with autism need help. They should get that help because these are children who should have an equal opportunity to thrive and participate in the schooling system and get a leg up on life. Those are needs that we need to think about and how we address them, with both the federal and the provincial governments working together to make sure that happens.

On the issue of dental care, I think we take for granted the impact this has on working families. It truly is profound. I know stories — I will get into them at second reading — of individuals who lost their teeth because they were poor and didn't have access to dental care. Getting a decent job without having proper teeth is a problem.

I've been fortunate. I didn't have to go down that road. But I know far too many kids don't have the same opportunity in life. I think giving them a good oral dental care experience at an early age can prevent a lot of health issues that they struggle with later in life.

Of course, the government has set this as a priority, as they have with many priorities. However, as Canadians, we still need to build a country that's more equal. This is one step on that path. On the issue you raised about autism, I hope we can do a better job to ensure Canadian families have better support from their national, provincial and territorial governments to deal with the needs of families who require it.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: First, I want to compliment you on both your speech and your remarks. Obviously, this bill is very important for working Canadians. Too many children are growing up without dental care. You outlined the concerns about getting a job, social inclusion and so on. It becomes a class issue if you don't have your teeth fixed, and everybody else in your classroom does.

Second, I want to add this is a benefit of the coalition between the NDP and the Liberals because it has been a long-time commitment of the NDP to initiate this program. The Liberal government wanted to do it for many years and now has done it. This is great cooperation between the two parties in the House of Commons.

Would you share my view that we should strive for a standard of care for all Canadians that is equal to the assistance senators currently receive for dental, health care, drug coverage and pension coverage in this country?

Senator Yussuff: Thank you, Senator Downe, for your wonderful question. In this chamber, we have a lot of privileges. If Canadians could only enjoy them, we would certainly have a far more equal country. One day, maybe.

Senator Downe, I remember vividly in your province when a good friend of mine named Wes Sheridan was crafting the dental program to support working families in P.E.I. He was writing his budget and he told me what he was doing. I was so proud of his leadership because it allowed many poor kids in the province of P.E.I. — one of the smallest provinces in our country — to say they deserve the same thing that other provinces could afford despite the fact they didn't have the same level of revenue. They saw it as a priority.

I do believe we have a long way to go. If Canadians can have the same benefits as senators have in this chamber, I hope that's where we will get to one day. Until then, we will have to continue to build it incrementally until we get there. Thank you very much.

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, I rise today as opposition critic to speak to second reading of Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

The objective of this legislation is twofold.

Part 1 of the bill enacts the dental benefit act and authorizes the Minister of Health to make payments out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund in relation to dental care services for children under 12 years of age.

Part 2 enacts the rental housing benefit act and authorizes the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to make payments out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund in relation to a one-time \$500 payment to eligible individuals.

I will speak first to the new dental benefit act.

Oral disease is one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S. The science that has developed over the last 20 years shows a growing body of evidence that links oral health with overall health and well-being. In fact, if you look at the scientific peer-reviewed journals, you will see studies that show a causal relationship between oral diseases in children and increased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases in adulthood.

A paper entitled "The effects of oral health on systemic health," published in the journal *General Dentistry* in 2017 by Dr. Shawn Kane of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of North Carolina, best sums up the many studies on this subject:

A shared trait of periodontal disease and these medical conditions is that they are chronic conditions that take a long time to develop and become clinically significant. Primary prevention—treating the patient prior to the onset of symptoms, myocardial infarction, stroke, diabetic complications, or significant periodontal disease—is the challenge.

Complications associated with these conditions cause significant morbidity and mortality and are incredibly costly to the healthcare system. Unfortunately, a lack of access to primary medical or dental care prevents some patients from engaging the system until a negative event has occurred.

• (1540)

Dental care is a critical element in caring for one's overall health, and we understand that preventative care is important. A 27-year follow-up study of 8-year-olds found that poor oral health in childhood was associated with poor heart health in adulthood. The Finnish study's lead author was clear:

This emphasizes how important good oral hygiene and frequent check-ups with a dentist starting early in life are for general health . . .

Furthermore, studies show that the use of dental care in childhood influences use of dental care in adulthood. In fact, childhood developmental literature indicates that early childhood experiences have a profound influence on later life. Pediatric dental textbooks emphasize that children learn from their experiences and are socialized toward oral health behaviours by their parents. There is support in the literature that having a childhood dental visit was associated with positive attitudes and beliefs about dental care in adulthood and with preventative and restorative dental visits later in life.

Honourable colleagues, I fully agree with the principles that govern this legislation, but I do not agree with the design of this benefit, as I shall explain. Part 1 of Bill C-31 provides for the establishment of the new dental benefit, which will provide up to \$650 a year for dental care per child under 12 for parents with adjusted family incomes under \$90,000. This application-based, interim benefit will be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency.

I have three main concerns with Part 1 of this bill. The first is the jurisdiction and the exacerbation of existing inequities among provinces and territories. The second is the administration and design of the program. The third is the potential impact on services currently in place.

On jurisdiction, dental care is not within the federal one: It falls squarely within provincial jurisdiction. This is why the government should have had agreements in place with the provinces before it proceeded with a dental plan. Honourable senators, most provinces and territories already provide dental care coverage programs for children, primarily those from low-income households, but there is a wide variation in existing dental coverage for children across the provinces. I did review existing dental coverage for children in Canada. To the best of my knowledge, the following information is up to date, but if there has been a change in the province or territory that you represent, please do share that information with me.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, all children under the age of 13 are eligible for the Children's Dental Health Program, which covers examinations at 6-month intervals, cleaning treatments at 12-month intervals, routine fillings and extractions and sealants.

In Prince Edward Island, the School Oral Health Preventative Program provides preventative services to children from a dental hygienist, including an annual oral health risk assessment, oral health instructions, topical fluoride application, placement of sealants, cleaning or polishing of teeth and referral to a dentist if necessary. Further, the provincial dental care program offers sliding-scale coverage for families who are receiving social assistance or who meet certain financial thresholds. Children are eligible for an annual exam, annual cleaning, sealants, fillings and extractions.

In Nova Scotia, children under the age of 15 are covered once per year for a routine dental exam, two routine X-rays, a preventative service such as brushing and flossing instruction or cleaning appointments, fillings, necessary extractions and nutritional counselling.

In New Brunswick, the Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision program provides regular exams, X-rays, extractions, and some preventative treatments such as sealants and fluoride treatments for children under the age of 19 of low-income families that do not have private insurance.

In Quebec, all children under the age of 10 are eligible for annual examinations, emergency examinations, X-rays, local or general anaesthesia, fillings, extractions, endodontics, prefabricated crowns and oral surgery.

In Ontario, children under the age of 18 from low-income households are eligible for the Healthy Smiles program. The program covers check-ups, cleaning, fillings, X-rays, scaling, tooth extraction and urgent or emergency care.

In Manitoba, the Employment and Income Assistance Program provides families with income support, including support to cover the costs of basic dental services. Eligibility is based on the cost of a family's monthly basic needs compared to their financial resources. More services are available for children in the Winnipeg health region specifically.

In Saskatchewan, children in low-income working families who meet the standard of an income test or are receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement are covered for most dental services. Children from families receiving Saskatchewan income support are eligible for supplementary health coverage, including a range of basic dental services.

In Alberta, children under the age of 18 from low-income households, and 18- or 19-year-olds who are living at home and attending high school, are eligible for the Alberta Child Health Benefit. The benefit covers basic and preventative services like fillings, X-rays, examinations and teeth cleaning.

In British Columbia, children from families with annual adjusted net incomes of \$42,000 or less are eligible for the Healthy Kids Program. The program covers \$2,000 of basic dental services every two years, including exams, X-rays, fillings, cleaning appointments and extractions.

In the Yukon, the government provides diagnostic, preventative and restorative dental services to all children, from newborn to Grade 12. Children receive dental exams, X-rays, oral hygiene instruction, cleaning and scaling, fluoride application and sealants. Many of these services are provided in schools. If necessary, fillings, crowns, extractions or other emergency dental services are also covered.

In the Northwest Territories, infants and children aged 0 to 4 years are eligible for primary oral health services in Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Norman Wells at no cost. These services include oral health assessment, oral health screening, oral health education, fluoride varnish application and referral to an oral health professional. Children in junior

kindergarten to Grade 12 in these communities are eligible for the school-based Oral Health Program at no cost. Dental hygienists or dental therapists complete oral examinations, offer preventative and therapeutic treatments, provide oral health education and make referrals to dentists.

In Nunavut, children enrolled in the children's Oral Health Project are eligible for free dental screenings. Following the initial screening, sealants, temporary fillings, extractions, fluoride varnish and referral for additional treatments are made available. Services are provided in a variety of settings, including health centres, schools, daycares and community centres.

Honourable colleagues, I include all this information to demonstrate that existing dental benefits throughout the country are detailed, specified and diverse. While I understand that the new Canada dental benefit is said to act as a top-up to existing benefits, my concern is that it ignores the provinces' existing programs.

Unlike the provincial and territorial plans, there are no specifications around the dental procedures that the federal benefit is to be used for. The federal benefit can be used for preventative care, diagnostic care or restorative care — essentially anything that the parent and the practitioner determine is needed for the child's oral health. An additional benefit of \$650 will go a lot further to top up care in Quebec — where basic dental services are already covered for children under 10 years old — than in provinces without such coverage, highlighting potential inequities among provinces.

• (1550)

In regard to the administration of the program, the government has told us that the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, will administer the program through CRA's My Account online portal. Parents of eligible children will be required to log in to their CRA account to attest to their child's eligibility and to claim the benefit. Once the application is complete, the benefit will be paid within three to five days, and the attested details will be verified later. Random income tax audits will likely be part of compliance checks.

Honourable senators, parents will be subjected to uncertainty and costly errors if this benefit's application process is confusing or faulty. These are the challenges of a benefit that is application-based and attestation-based. There are built-in risks. Parents will be out-of-pocket after paying the dental expenses upfront in a crisis, or parents will anticipate the dental needs of their children, along with the cost, and apply for the benefit before going to the dentist. Undoubtedly, there will be those who thought they were eligible for the benefit, but discover later that they were not.

Also, the amount of the dental benefit varies significantly, depending on the family net income. The briefing note provided by the government states:

The benefit provides \$650 per child per year for parents with adjusted family net incomes under \$90,000 for dental services received by their children under 12 years of age.

In practice, however, the benefit declines quickly from \$650 per child — if the family net income is less than \$70,000 — to \$390 if the net income is greater than \$70,000 but less than \$80,000. And then the benefit goes down to only \$260 per child if the net income is greater than \$80,000 but less than \$90,000.

This pay-now-and-verify-later program design lends itself to problems and misunderstandings. Just last week, at the Finance Committee's pre-study of Bill C-31, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, Mr. Yves Giroux, cautioned that because the benefit is attestation-based:

... administration will need to be tight. Otherwise, it could lead to abuse. That's one of the concerns that I personally have as a taxpayer.

Furthermore, proactive reimbursement of anticipated costs may lead to situations in which parents, who are already stretched financially, take a risk and use the benefit cheque for rent, groceries, heating or other essential expenses. It may also lead to confusion about which expenses are eligible.

At the Finance Committee's pre-study, Senator Anderson raised a very important point, and I think our colleague Senator McCallum raised the very same point today: Indigenous Canadians who have coverage under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program have to travel sometimes to access dental care, though the care itself is covered. Will transportation or food expenses incurred while travelling to access dental care be considered eligible? It is not clear.

The administration of this program could have been greatly simplified had the federal government collaborated with provincial and territorial governments, many of whom already have direct billing agreements with dental care providers in place.

At the Finance Committee's pre-study, Senator Omidvar asked the PBO, Mr. Giroux, whether it would have been more efficient to transfer money to the provincial governments. He replied:

It certainly would have been better tailored to provincial realities and needs to transfer this money to provinces and territories. However, it would have required what would probably be lengthy discussions and negotiations with provinces.

Furthermore, according to the Canadian Dental Association, regardless of whether they have dental benefits or not:

Canadians with lower household income were less likely to go to a dentist than those in higher income households.

Although the government is providing this benefit, the need to make a cash payment at the time of treatment may remain a barrier. In creating this benefit, did the federal government consider the social determinants of health, or the causes of health outcomes? Did they consider whether a benefit thus designed will actually improve the health outcomes of Canadian children?

Another barrier is the need to file a tax return. As Jennifer Robson and Saul Schwartz at Carleton University have shown — and our colleague has repeatedly helped us recognize — about 10% to 12% of Canadians do not file a tax return and, therefore, do not receive the benefits for which they are eligible. In their article, “Who Doesn’t File a Tax Return? A Portrait of Non-Filers,” Robson and Schwartz note:

Low income is clearly related to the likelihood of not filing. Persons in families with a disposable income below the official Market Basket Measure of poverty were much less likely to file than those whose family income was above the threshold.

As our PBO, Mr. Giroux, remarked at the Finance Committee’s pre-study, more and more benefits rely on the tax system, but in his words:

... the government is not as proactive as you would think it could be in 2022, for example, in reaching out to these individuals who fail to file taxes.

I find these vulnerabilities concerning, and they demonstrate the downfalls of cobbling a benefit together in a hurry rather than taking the necessary time to put a proper plan together.

It is also a concern that the government and the Parliamentary Budget Officer have different estimates for the cost of this program. A briefing note shared by Senator Gold notes that Budget 2022 provides \$300 million in funding for dental care in 2022-23, and \$600 million in 2023-24. The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, however, puts the projected costs for this program at \$247 million in 2022-23 and \$372 million in 2023-24. That is a difference of \$281 million.

At the Finance Committee’s pre-study, Senator Boehm asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Mr. Giroux, whether — as we project into the future and with consideration of inflation — the sum that the government has planned to spend on this program is realistic. Mr. Giroux said:

... there are too many unknowns as to the format and program designs to say whether or not it’s enough money.

Honourable senators, many of you have more expertise in finance than I do, but I ask: Is this quality of program design acceptable? This is an interim benefit. I sincerely hope that if the government introduces a permanent national program, its design is more robust so that we can provide a proper review.

The need for a robust program design is especially relevant given the state of the Canadian economy. On October 20, 2022, the *Toronto Star* reported that Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland told her cabinet colleagues that submissions for new programs must demonstrate how existing departmental resources can be used to fund at least 25% of new operating costs. As this bill demonstrates, the government must improve their program design to ensure that new programs and benefits can be budgeted for appropriately.

Finally, in regard to the potential impact on services currently in place, Canada’s premiers are calling on the federal government to rebalance the health care funding partnership.

• (1600)

Earlier this year, Premier John Horgan of British Columbia called for increased health transfers for existing health programs:

Do I think it would be grand to have a national dental care plan? Absolutely. But we need to start with first principles, and that is stable funding so that we can do the hip replacements, so we can have a human resource strategy for our primary care sector.

In August, when asked about a potential new federal dental benefit, Premier Blaine Higgs of New Brunswick said:

... we’ve been spending a lot of energy over the last number of months and years talking about a crisis in our current health care system. ... Because right now, we have a health care service that is not providing what was intended. So my focus would be on our current situation and let’s get it fixed first.

The Canadian Dental Association has also flagged concerns about how this benefit may impact existing dental coverage. In a brief, they note that two thirds of Canadians have dental coverage, and half of Canadians have employer-sponsored coverage. They say:

It is vital that this dental care ecosystem not be disrupted; the focus needs to be on gaps in coverage, particularly for underserved populations.

Will employers stop providing dental insurance to employees? Will the system that now works well for many Canadians and dental care providers be compromised?

Honourable senators, it is a considerable concern that provinces and territories with real dental programs in place will discontinue them so that the funds allocated to their existing programs can be reallocated to their strained provincial health care systems.

Employers may see this as an opportunity to cut costs on private dental insurance as well. The dental benefit act is a poor substitute indeed for many of the existing programs and insurance plans in this country.

Hopefully, the Finance Committee will hear from the provinces and territories regarding potential impacts to their existing dental programs.

Now, for Part 2 of Bill C-31, the rental housing benefit act, which provides a one-time, tax-free benefit of \$500 for rent paid on a principal residence in 2022. This benefit will only be available to renters with adjusted net incomes below \$35,000 for families or \$20,000 for individuals. But it, too, is an attestation-based application process.

Those who apply must have filed an income tax return in 2021 and then attest that they are paying at least 30% of their adjusted net income on shelter; are paying rent for their own primary residence in Canada, which would include the address of a rental property; the amount of rent paid in 2022; and the landlord's contact information. Lastly, they must consent to the CRA verifying their information to confirm eligibility.

One might legitimately ask how many Canadians even know what "adjusted net income" means — I'm looking to Senator Marshall, because I'm sure she knows — never mind what their own adjusted net income is.

Subsection 2(3) of the bill states:

In section 4, adjusted income has the same meaning as in section 122.6 of the *Income Tax Act*, except that the reference to "at the end of the year" is to be read as a reference to "on the reference day."

There you have it — or do you?

If we next look to section 122.6 of the *Income Tax Act*:

adjusted income, of an individual for a taxation year, means the total of all amounts each of which would be the income for the year of the individual or of the person who was the individual's cohabiting spouse or common-law partner at the end of the year if in computing that income no amount were

(a) included

(i) under paragraph 56(1)(q.1) or subsection 56(6),

(ii) in respect of any gain from a disposition of property to which section 79 applies, or

(iii) in respect of a gain described in subsection 40(3.21), or

(b) deductible under paragraph 20(1)(ww) or 60(y) or (z) . . .

Honourable senators, does this sound straightforward?

You cannot simply look up your earnings for the last year to see if you qualify. You will be better served by going back to your 2021 income tax return to look up Line 23600 — Net income.

But if you have a spouse, you must add your partner's net income to your own. But then, you will still have to subtract the Universal Child Care Benefit or Registered Disability Savings Plan benefit in order to obtain, finally, your adjusted net income. The risk here is not that Canadians will apply for the benefit when they don't qualify, but that they will not apply even though they do qualify.

When one hears on the news that, with the income of \$35,000 or less, you may qualify for the rental housing benefit, most would immediately think of gross income, not net income, and definitely not adjusted net income.

It is entirely possible, and even likely, that people with a gross family income of just over \$35,000 will not even bother to apply for the benefit because they will assume they do not qualify. This would be regrettable.

Indeed, it appears that the government itself is not very clear on how many Canadians will be eligible for this benefit. The government initially committed \$475 million for this benefit in Budget 2022. It has since updated the proposed funding to \$1.2 billion for 1.8 million recipients.

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, meanwhile, has estimated that the program would cost \$940 million for 1.7 million recipients.

Honourable senators, in closing, we must consider how well these programs will serve Canadians.

Important questions about the new dental benefit act include:

Were premiers consulted; and will this new benefit change the administration of current programs in provincial jurisdictions?

Will those who are eligible apply?

Will this program cost what the government suggests in their briefing note, or what the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates in their legislative costing note?

Will the dispersed funds be used as intended?

How will compliance checks work?

And, most importantly, will more Canadian children ultimately go to the dentist because of this benefit, or will existing disparities in care persist?

Important questions regarding the new rental housing benefit act include:

Will those who are eligible apply?

Will the application process be straightforward?

Does the government have a more comprehensive housing strategy than this one-time payment?

Honourable senators, I look forward to clarifying witness testimony at committee hearings, along with debate on these issues in the chamber.

Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Deacon, you have a question?

Hon. Marty Deacon: Will you take a question, senator?

Senator Seidman: Absolutely.

Senator M. Deacon: Thank you. You raised some really interesting questions as you finished off your speech.

As you were speaking and covering a number of things, I was wondering, as we are preparing for it going to committee, if you had to pick one key miss or one key concern — because you do have a number there that you thought through — is there one particular item that you would say, “This is where we need to get it right at committee?”

• (1610)

Senator Seidman: Thank you, senator. It’s hard to narrow down to one miss. As I said, the most important question is: Will this design reach the kids it needs to reach, and will it really improve dental care for these children?

That’s the bottom-line question. That’s the question that senators in committee and in the chamber have to ask when they look at the design of this program. It’s not a program, really.

Senator M. Deacon: With that in mind — and I’m trying to think of some of the other work we have been doing where we’re saying, “Does it do what it means to do? Is it set up to be successful?” — in regard to the review process, what would you see, then, as meaningful, purposeful and knowing that it’s making a difference? What would that look like to you?

Senator Seidman: Thank you, senator. There we have really hit the wall because, as you know, data collection in this country is a huge issue. We discovered that during COVID. Certainly, every province collects their own data. There is not a lot of sharing. The data that is collected isn’t consistently gathered in the same way in every province, so it’s very hard from the point of view of being comparable.

Data is what you use to analyze whether the program is successful or not. In this case, we have an interim, two-year situation. I think it’s a serious problem to ever find out whether the outcome has been achieved. For any long-term program, one would have to build in some kind of data collection system in order to be able to analyze whether you’re really meeting your objectives.

Senator M. Deacon: Thank you.

Senator McCallum: My question is the same as Senator Deacon’s. What are the outcomes of these programs that you have looked into? I looked at those same programs as well, and I’m looking at data such as: How many accessed the program? How many completed care? How many were on maintenance? How many needed continued care? If they did, what was the reason why their teeth required treatment?

Senator Seidman: Thank you, senator. What you’re asking is a really critical question. There is no doubt about that. But the fact is that we don’t have a lot of data to provide those answers. The provinces in Canada are where dental services are currently provided for children, and there are varying degrees of recording this. Dentists don’t keep this information. They can’t. If you ask them, they will say they don’t record this information. Therefore, it falls upon some agency to do this. There isn’t a national agency that records that information because it’s a provincial responsibility.

How to evaluate the success of its outcome is the big question here. There is no doubt about that.

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on Bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing. I support this bill in principle, and today I will focus my remarks on the dental benefit portion of the bill.

I wish to congratulate my colleagues, Senator Yussuff and Senator Seidman, for their excellent speeches. For my part, all this talk about dentists and kids takes me back to my own childhood of being dragged to a dentist. I was very traumatized. I have a vague memory of a lot of persuasion being at play. I think hard candy was involved, but I have my own teeth today, all of them. I’m very grateful that my parents had the means to insist on this essential care. It’s not the same for all Canadians. I speak from a bit of first-hand experience.

In 2016, just eight years ago, a Syrian refugee family with eight children under the age of 15 landed in Toronto. As their sponsor, the first three months were completely hectic for them and for us. We soon discovered a challenge we had not prepared for: the oral health of the eight children. Their teeth were in terrible shape. They were rotten, frankly, because apparently there were rivers of hard candy running through the camps, as opposed to healthy food.

Even to our untrained eyes, we could see there was a problem. However, although the federal government picks up the costs of health care for refugees in the first year of arrival, this coverage does not extend to routine dental care, only to emergency dental care. In other words, the family would have needed to wait for a dental emergency to get the care they needed or until they qualified for the Healthy Smiles program, which was a year.

Left up to our own resources, the sponsoring team had to dig into our pockets, and we relied on the good will of many volunteer dentists.

Oral health for all children, as we have heard today, is very important. Let me quote some further facts for you.

According to the 2010 Canadian Health Measures Survey, well over 50% of 6 to 19 year olds have or had at least one cavity and have, on average, 2.5 teeth affected by tooth decay. Bad oral health is the most common chronic disease in children, five times more prevalent than asthma.

Poor oral health also increases gum disease, and has been linked to cancer — as Senator Yussuff has pointed out — Alzheimer's, diabetes and heart disease. A study has shown that:

Across OECD countries . . . 5% of total health expenditures originate from treatment of oral diseases. Direct treatment costs due to dental diseases worldwide have been estimated at US\$298 billion yearly, corresponding to an average of 4.6% of global health expenditure. . . .

Having good oral health is good for the kids. It's good for our health care system. It's certainly good for the economy.

Colleagues, I know that during questions and debate today, we have talked about concerns that this bill moves into provincial jurisdiction. We know that provinces and territories in Canada have pre-existing dental care programs for children. However, according to the Canadian Dental Association:

While several of these programs have a solid infrastructure in place, others are currently underfunded and, as a result, do not always respond to the individual oral health needs of pediatric patients.

They noted that P.E.I. does oral health fairly well, whereas the outcomes don't seem to be so good in my province of Ontario.

In an ideal world — I do not dispute, Senator Seidman — it would have been preferable to use the plumbing of existing provincial agreements and sign agreements with the provinces to bolster their own programs to get the money faster, through existing machinery, to the people. I do not dispute that. However, as we well know, such agreements are hard to negotiate. They take a very long time. Every agreement with every province and every territory is different, and, inevitably, we would see a patchwork of services.

As we have heard from Senator Seidman, Quebec does this, Ontario does this, Newfoundland does this, et cetera.

With this initial two-year program, the government accomplishes a number of objectives. First, it covers the whole nation regardless of where you live. If you have a child aged 1 to 12 years old, they will benefit from the program. It is contingent only on income levels.

Second, it takes effect almost immediately, bringing much-needed relief to poor people in a timely manner.

• (1620)

Third, I believe it allows the government to assess the efficacy of a two-year initial pilot program, let me call it that, as they consider rolling out the permanent program.

Whilst we are on federal-provincial agreements, let me clutch a bit on the province I live in. Even when agreements are signed, there is no assurance of accountability. In Ontario, parents are still waiting for \$10-a-day daycare program, although the agreement was signed, I don't know, maybe even a year ago. Again in Ontario, we have seen a government accrue a budget surplus of \$2.1 billion when our health care system is in shambles. It is the same government that is using the "notwithstanding" clause to deal with the labour issues. It makes sense to me that the federal government will trust families to make the right decisions for their children. That given a chance, given a little extra money, the extra boost in financial confidence, they will call their dentist and make appointments for their children and use the money to bridge whatever gaps there may be in provincial programs.

To those who say that \$650 is not enough, honestly, you may well be right. But the government has not dreamt up this figure out of thin air. At pre-study at the National Finance Committee, we heard from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the average cost of dental care for children under 12 — remember under 12 they still have milk teeth — is under \$650. The same was confirmed by the Canadian Dental Association.

In comparison to other jurisdictions — you may be interested in this — we are playing catch-up. We are always playing catch-up, I feel. Australia rolled out a very similar program in 2014. Its program functions very much the way this program is designed to function, except it extends to children up to 19 years old. Of course, the gold standard would be the National Health Service in the U.K., which covers all dental costs and encourages parents to start with dental appointments as soon as milk teeth appear.

We all know that this is a time-sensitive program. This interim program of two years will eventually develop into a more permanent program; at least that is the hope of many Canadians. It targets those in highest need. Parents who have private dental insurance are not eligible, and those who are covered by a provincial program are only eligible to have out-of-pocket expenses compensated. Provinces and private plans will always be the first payers, and the federal dental program will come after that. At committee, we were informed by officials that there will be no clawback from provincial governments, as this bill does not touch on or harmonize with any of theirs.

I do have some concerns about the bill. Some of these have been raised by other people, but I think it doesn't matter if we raise concerns again and again; maybe the committee will take note of them. We know that about 10% of Canadians are non-filers. How will they access this benefit? For those who are already in the system and receive the Canada Child Benefit, it is fairly simple. The individuals have a CRA My Account and they simply have to use it to apply for the new benefit. My concern, though, is for the non-filers, and this is not an insignificant number, 10% to 12%.

I don't know who these non-filers are. I know they are low-income, as studies have pointed out, but we don't know if they have children. We don't know if they are working or not; likely they are, but they are not filing their tax returns. I do believe it is time that the CRA address this very important question in a serious manner. To my question to the officials at the committee, I was told that they have a strategic plan called "Get ready," but they don't appear to have set any standards or benchmarks against this plan to assure the people of Canada that they are reaching non-filers, and that non-filers are beginning to file. I would like to see a benchmark, an objective put in place that after the end of their "Get ready" program, on evaluation, at least 3% more are filing. That would be a success.

The second question is about capacity. We know that certain parts of the country, especially rural and Northern communities, do not have good access to dental care. There are shortages in dentists and hygienists. The extra demand from the South — I hesitate to say "South" in the context of Canada, but I think you all know what I mean — creates a concern that supply of dental services and dental professionals may migrate to the South. One unintended outcome could be the loss of dentists and dental hygienists from small and rural communities.

The federal and provincial governments should think long and hard about using an untapped source of workers, and those are internationally trained dental health care professionals. We know that many of these internationally trained professionals come here through the Express Entry program, which favours people whose skills are badly needed. However, when they arrive, they get in what I call "credentialism hell," which takes a great deal of time and a huge amount of resources to pull yourself out of.

This is a national problem which is complicated by the fact that regulated occupations such as dentistry are under the jurisdiction of provincial governments, who, in turn, maintain, "This is not our business — these are self-regulating, independent occupations. We cannot force them to do anything." It is a veritable maze.

However, the issue of capacity in the context of dental care in remote and rural communities could be addressed by providing a restricted licence to those dentists who have passed some portion of their exams as long as they work in a restricted location, restricted practice. Clearly, this would have to be done province by province, but it does provide an impetus for provinces to consider this or other proposals. Perhaps the federal government could even play a role in incentivizing such behaviour. This practice is followed by Australia, for example.

In conclusion, colleagues, the absence of dental coverage for poor people, especially children, is a blemish on Canada's avowed aspiration to be a nation of inclusion and opportunity. This bill takes the first small but very important step in building a healthier future for our children.

Thank you.

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I rise today to address Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

In specific, I wish to speak to the bill's provision with regard to dental benefits for Canadian children. I don't think — especially after what we've heard here today — that there need be any doubt that proper dental care for kids is a fundamental question of public health and disease prevention. We claim to have universal health care in this country, but as long as some families are forced to forgo timely dental care for their children, our boasts are a tad hollow.

I was lucky when I was the parent of a young child to work for a company that provided excellent dental benefits to its employees, but I was not always so lucky. As a young adult, I went for years with no dental insurance. I was working full-time as a journalist, first for a small magazine and then for the CBC, but I had no dental benefits. In fact, I worked full-time as a producer with the CBC for six years with no dental plan and a low enough salary to make trips to the dentist seem like a luxury. As soon as I was hired on by the *Edmonton Journal*, I rushed to the dentist to make up for all those years when I had no cleanings or checkups. I know all too well that thousands of working Canadians and Canadian families simply do not have the means to make regular trips to the dentist a part of their budget.

So I applaud the intentions of Bill C-31. Here we are after all, the day after Halloween. Who amongst us would want to deny cleanings and X-rays and fillings to all the princesses, lions, monsters, firemen and pirates eating their Halloween candy today? But I confess, I do have some misgivings about the jurisdictional complexities of this bill and its interconnection — or lack of interconnection — to various provincial and First Nations dental programs. I want to put those concerns on the record because Bill C-31 is obviously meant to be just the first step in the creation of a more ambitious national dental care program.

• (1630)

Health, as we have all said today, is an area of provincial jurisdiction. As we roll forward, we need to be sure that provinces, to the best of our ability, are at the table as partners.

These are times when certain provincial governments are being even more than usually prickly on this subject.

Last week, on October 27, Alberta's new premier, Danielle Smith, released, via Twitter, a letter to all her ministers asking them to make what she called a "united front" against federal policies that would, in her words, "threaten Alberta's interests," even if that meant rejecting federal government grants for various programs, especially targeted transfers. She further instructed her cabinet to insist that Ottawa respect constitutional division of powers, specifically related to health care and other social programs, and to seek, instead, to accept money only by "unconditional block transfers" to be spent entirely at Alberta's discretion.

She further noted that when unconditional block transfers — money with no strings attached — were not on offer, Alberta would seek to opt out of new federal programs.

And if Ottawa does not, in the premier's words, "honour co-operative federalism," then, said Premier Smith, Alberta would refuse to participate in consultations with the federal government.

Now, please do not confuse me with Premier Smith. We are both, indeed, former newspaper columnists turned politicians, but we have rather different perspectives. I wanted to quote from this letter, not because I share all its views but because I want us to be fully alert to the complicated political tenor of the moment and to be alert to the future challenges of attempting to put together some kind of jury-rigged dental plan using the Canada Revenue Agency to do an end run around provincial jurisdiction.

Giving money directly to families, for all the reasons Senator Omidvar mentioned, does seem like an attractive option, but it comes with real political risks.

Of course, the program laid out in Bill C-31 would be of huge benefit to thousands of Alberta families. Alberta does have the Alberta Child Health Benefit which, as Senator Seidman explains, covers basic and preventative services like fillings, X-rays, examinations and teeth cleaning. But the income cap for a couple with two children is \$36,634, whereas this new federal benefit would be extended to families making up to \$90,000 so that many more working families would be covered.

But if we don't properly coordinate future federal and provincial programs, we are going to end up in a jurisdictional and political quagmire. We don't want to duplicate existing services. We certainly don't want to leave some families worse off than they were before. We also don't want tremendous inequality across the country, where this top-up gives some provinces tremendously strong dental programs and leaves families in other provinces struggling.

Then there's the question of how this program would coordinate with the one offered to First Nations and Inuit families via Indigenous Services Canada's own NIHB — Non-Insured Health Benefits — program, which provides comprehensive dental care, including orthodontics, to Inuit Canadians and those with Indian status.

Now, I've been told that First Nations and Inuit families can still receive the dental benefit proposed in Bill C-31, but only if they incur out-of-pocket expenses that are not covered by the NIHB — and the NIHB covers almost everything — and only if they file their tax returns. You don't need much imagination to contemplate the kinds of complications that might ensue if some families claim the new benefit in mistaken good faith and then have it clawed back via audit. Given the percentage of Indigenous families that already live in poverty, it would be ironic indeed if Bill C-31 actually did little or nothing to help them, or ended up in some way undermining the future of the dental benefits they already have.

I trust that, while this bill is at committee, some of these questions can be explored in more depth. Thank you, *hiy hiy*.

(On motion of Senator McCallum, debate adjourned.)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REGULATIONS

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT—
MOTION IN SUBAMENDMENT—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Duncan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Clement, for the third reading of Bill S-236, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Employment Insurance Regulations (Prince Edward Island), as amended.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Ringuette, seconded by the Honourable Senator Petitcher:

That Bill S-236, an Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Employment Insurance Regulations (Prince Edward Island), as amended, be not read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry to hear from the Parliamentary Budget Officer concerning his office's fiscal analysis on the bill; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than November 15, 2022.

And on the subamendment of the Honourable Senator Black, seconded by the Honourable Senator Dagenais:

That the motion in amendment be not now adopted, but that it be amended by:

1. adding the words "additional witnesses, including" between the words "to hear from" and "Parliamentary Budget Officer" in the first paragraph; and
2. by deleting the final paragraph.

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, do not worry. I don't intend to speak for 15 minutes, although I would like to provide you with some of my concerns.

First and foremost, I can certainly understand the frustration of our very competent Agriculture and Forestry Committee members who, unfortunately, at the time of their meeting on this bill in June, did not receive critical information. As of September, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, provided the financial consequences this bill would have on P.E.I.'s working poor. From my perspective, it is imperative that the members of the Agriculture Committee receive this bill and hear from the PBO. That is why I put forth the amendment.

Honourable senators, since my speech and the amendment that I made a week ago, I have received written letters on this issue. One stated that the PBO report “is untrue and, frankly, misleading.” Another one says that he agrees with the PBO report. Another letter received yesterday from a former witness of the committee says that the PBO report is “a flawed report from Ottawa.”

Colleagues, there’s an old saying that you can bring a horse to the trough, but you cannot make him drink. I believe this is the case for many — maybe too many. I don’t believe it is the case for the majority of my colleagues, though, on the Agriculture Committee.

The key element in the review is having the PBO as a witness. However, regarding the subamendment that we have before us tabled by Senator Black, what he said in his speech seems to indicate that he wishes to hear again from all the witnesses who testified last June:

It is imperative that the committee be able to hear from any relevant source with information on the matter who could inform the committee’s report on this bill. We cannot limit ourselves to just the PBO, given that the information that was released in September by their office is both new to us and to our witnesses that we heard from previously. It cannot be assumed that this information will not have an impact on their perspectives, given that we would return to this bill with the understanding that this report could change our perspectives as well.

That is fine, I would say.

At that one two-hour meeting with two panels of the Agriculture Committee, there were seven witnesses who were invited. Even at that number, I truly believe this could be achieved, even after reinviting all the witnesses in June, within, at most, one meeting for the Parliamentary Budget Officer and another meeting for two panels of seven witnesses. That’s two meetings in total.

• (1640)

I’m trying to understand this unlimited period of time. Honourable senators, I trust the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry will not want to delay this restudy and re-report, as they have an interesting and promising soil conservation study and report that I am also looking forward to reading.

Last but not least, honourable colleagues, I have received a letter from a witness at the June meeting of the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. I should also say that this letter is very adversarial to the speech I gave.

Honourable colleagues, if need be, I will again state in this house that I spent more than a week in carrying out research, and every word in that speech is accurate. I challenge anyone who wants to question any word or research in that speech.

That said, the letter from the witness says, “As an unelected senator, please do not deprive our P.E.I.-elected representative in Ottawa —” that would be the people in the other place, “— the opportunity to vote on this important issue.”

Colleagues, I raised this in my original speech, because my office did the research from 2015 to 2020. The P.E.I. representative in the other place could not vote on this issue because at no time was there a motion or a bill in the other place on which to vote.

Honourable colleagues, I trust your judgment with regard to the amendment and subamendment, and I also trust that the members of the Agriculture and Forestry Committee will do the right thing for the Senate as an institution and, particularly with regard to this bill, the P.E.I. working poor who are facing a very unfortunate winter ahead. Thank you.

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, I confess that my remarks may display a small amount of impatience, and I apologize in advance for that. I have a short speech, and I will come at it through the side door, I think. I hear some of you saying, “Oh, no, not again.”

I understand that there’s a rule in the Senate that senators are not allowed to use props. I want to respect that rule, but I hope that it does not extend to describing a prop that one would have used had one been allowed to use it.

The prop I would have liked to have brought to this topic is a sweatshirt that I own. I wish I had worn it today. On the sweatshirt is written a short, pithy sentence from the judgment of a famous English judge, Lord Denning. Your Honour, you and I and nearly everybody who has studied law has encountered Lord Denning.

The sentence to which I am referring, and which appears on my sweatshirt, is from an old English court case decided in 1954. The case was called *Marsden v. Regan*. Lord Denning began his judgment with the following sentence, which appears on my sweatshirt: “This case ought to have been simple, but the lawyers have made it complicated.”

Some of you are thinking that this could apply to a lot of things about lawyers, not just court cases.

In a small way, I think it applies to the present state of Bill S-236 and our current situation. To be blunt about it, this issue ought to have been simple but I fear we senators have made it complicated.

Here is my point: The Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee did a conscientious study of Bill S-236. The committee’s work was reported to the Senate. Subsequent to that, or during that process, new information came to light, as has been shared with us, regarding the financial implications of the bill that suggested it required further consideration. The committee agrees. Given that the bill has created some interest and concern in some constituencies, most notably in the circumstances of low-income Prince Edward Islanders, it seems incumbent upon us to send the bill back to the committee for further consideration — in light of all of the circumstances — to

hear from appropriate witnesses and have the committee report back to the Senate in a timely fashion. I hope we will act in this way.

As I am trying to honour the sentiment of the prop that I was unable to wear today, that's all I have to say. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne, for the second reading of Bill S-212, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation.

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-212, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation, which was introduced by the Honourable Kim Pate on November 24, 2021.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge Senator Pate's tireless work in defending the rights of criminals. However, you will understand that my criticism of her bill stems from another aspect of the justice system, namely defending victims, victims' families and their rights.

That being said, I have full confidence that your judgment will enable you to find the right balance in order to allow women and children to live in their communities without fear.

Bill S-212 is a major rewrite of the Criminal Records Act. According to Senator Pate, its objective is to make it easier for criminals to reintegrate into society once they have served their court-ordered sentences, so that they can return to a normal life. This will be facilitated by allowing their criminal records to expire.

In her speech, Senator Pate talked about people moving on with their lives. That really struck a chord with me. Committing a crime is not a normal thing to do with one's life. Destroying someone's life, compromising someone's future and tearing families apart are not normal consequences. Victims and their families are condemned to a new normal of sorrow, pain and sadness for their whole lives.

I'd like to share with you something that Madeleine Hébert, the mother of Maurice Marcil, shared with me. In 1979, Maurice and Chantal Dupont were assaulted and murdered on Montreal's Jacques Cartier Bridge, and their bodies were thrown into the St. Lawrence. Here is what Ms. Hébert said:

Since July 3, 1979, I have never stopped being angry. Time stood still on that day; my son is still 14 years old. He will never grow up. I live with his memory, with his presence. He will be with me until I draw my last breath. For more than 20 years, I was closed in on myself. I buried my pain deep inside. I couldn't think about those crimes. Roadside demonstrations made me break down in tears. I couldn't hold a baby in my arms. Those are some examples of how I suffered. . . . The criminals, so they claimed, had paid their debt to society and didn't want to die in prison. But as for me, they gave me a life sentence, and I don't understand how they have the gall to believe they have served their time.

• (1650)

The case of Madeleine Hébert is a good example of the suffering that a victim's family can experience as a result of a criminal act.

When I listen to the speeches given by Senator Pate or Senator Bernard, I'm left feeling as though the victims and the criminals have traded places in our justice system. The criminal becomes the victim, the justice system curtails victims' rights, and the real victims no longer exist.

According to Senator Pate, the provisions of the Criminal Records Act currently prevent criminals from finding work and housing and being rehabilitated in society. She said that landlords and employers can discriminate against criminals, even if there is no public safety justification for doing so.

Honourable senators, I would remind you that the Constitution already protects criminals from any employment discrimination. Section 18.2 of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms states:

No one may dismiss, refuse to hire or otherwise penalize a person in his employment owing to the mere fact that he was convicted of a penal or criminal offence, if the offence was in no way connected with the employment or if the person has obtained a pardon for the offence.

The employer has the right to check the candidate's criminal history, but they can't refuse to hire the candidate solely because the candidate has a criminal record.

Senator Pate's bill completely changes the meaning and purpose of the act, as the new title demonstrates, since the legislation will now be called An Act to provide for the expiry of the records of persons who have been convicted of offences.

In her speech at second reading stage, Senator Pate also said:

This bill will remove unnecessary obstacles to community integration for those with criminal records . . .

In my opinion, the phrase “unnecessary obstacles” presents a flawed and subjective view. At present, under the Criminal Records Act, the Parole Board of Canada must make inquiries when it receives an application for a record suspension. According to the act, these inquiries serve to ascertain, among other things, whether the applicant is eligible to make an application, their conduct since the date of the conviction, and whether ordering the record suspension would bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

This allows the Parole Board of Canada to study each case submitted to it, to ensure that the applicant does not pose a threat to public safety. It also ensures that the board’s pre-eminent criterion is respected, and that is the protection of society.

The offender must act responsibly when submitting an application by paying the fees for the application, ensuring the relevance and accuracy of the information in their file and, of course, demonstrating good conduct.

In my view, in order for an offender to be rehabilitated, they must first take responsibility. After all, the offender chose to commit a crime, and if applying for a record suspension is too hard for them, perhaps they have not taken full responsibility and do not deserve a record suspension.

In society, every day, Canadians have to fend for themselves to find a job, find housing and take care of their health, despite the obstacles they may sometimes face in life. In the legal world, women who are the victims of domestic violence must do what it takes on their own to flee their situation and protect their children and themselves from their abuser. They have to leave home, find a new job, alter their whole lives and, in many cases, pay for the services of a lawyer themselves.

Need I remind Senator Pate that applying for a pardon is a right but that obtaining a pardon is a privilege? The purpose of Senator Pate’s bill is to automate record suspensions with this new expiry process. Offenders will no longer have to apply to the board because their record will automatically expire at the end of the applicable period for the expiry according to law of any sentence. This completely eliminates the whole concept of merit.

This new provision takes an important power away from the Parole Board of Canada members, that of investigating whether a person is a suitable candidate for a record suspension. This is a significant loss of power for the board, and an additional risk to public safety. Currently, the board can decide to suspend a criminal record by considering the applicant’s good conduct, the measurable benefit to society and whether the application will bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

In other words, the board cannot suspend a criminal record solely on the basis that the offender has demonstrated good conduct during the applicable period for the expiry according to

law of their sentence. The board must consider other aspects of the case, and the onus is on the applicant, pursuant to subclause 4.1(2), which states the following:

The applicant has the onus of satisfying the Board that the record expiry would sustain their rehabilitation in society as a law-abiding citizen.

Of course, there are exceptions in the legislation, and some categories of less serious crimes are not covered by the process I have just described, at least not completely. However, the most serious cases, which involve Criminal Code offences that are generally sexual in nature, that involve pedophilia or sexual exploitation of minors, are excluded from the possibility of applying for a suspension.

Senator Pate’s bill completely erases the process I just described. Automatic record expiry erases the board’s usual inquiry process for ascertaining the appropriateness of suspending a record, which the existing law requires for each record suspension application. It would now be up to the board to conduct inquiries prior to a record expiring and to prevent the expiry only if the offender is charged with or convicted of another crime.

The principles upon which the board must base its decision, such as measurable benefit to society and whether the application is unlikely to bring the administration of justice into disrepute, no longer apply.

The onus is no longer on the offender; it is now on the board. This bill provides for the automatic expiry of criminal records based on nothing more than the passage of varying lengths of time after the expiry of a sentence, depending on the offence. Except in some cases, the person seeking a record suspension doesn’t need to apply, and, as such, doesn’t have to make a statement to the Parole Board. That makes it impossible for the board to ascertain whether the offender made a false or deceptive statement or concealed some material particular.

However, if the board’s inquiries turn up a conviction, then there is a clause to prevent the record from expiring. Nevertheless, the bill includes a clause that would still allow the board to authorize the expiry of the record even if the offender has reoffended. It is found in the proposed section 4.1(3), which reads as follows:

The Board must, on application, order the expiry of the applicant’s record if it is satisfied that the record expiry would sustain their rehabilitation in society as a law-abiding citizen and would not bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

That is worrisome because it is a way of condoning and authorizing recidivism. Why would we eliminate the criminal record of an individual who continues to break the law? If we are lax in passing judgment on a repeat offender, then we are encouraging them to do it again.

There is another aspect of the bill that I find alarming and that should concern you, honourable senators, and that is the fact that, under this bill, the records of offenders who committed any of the crimes set out in Schedule 1 to the existing act could now expire automatically.

• (1700)

Schedule 1 to the act contains serious offences, as I said earlier. These include the following: sexual interference with a minor; bestiality in the presence of a person under 16; inciting a person under 16 to commit bestiality; corrupting children; child pornography; and trafficking of persons under 18. These last two offences, child pornography and trafficking of persons under 18 years of age, are the fastest-growing crimes in Canada at the moment.

Schedule 1 lists crimes of a sexual nature, mostly against children. We know that the recidivism rate for sex offenders is very high. Some studies indicate a recidivism rate of 48% within five years of parole, and a re-incarceration rate of almost 70%.

That is why the Criminal Records Act prevents Schedule 1 offenders from being able to apply for a record suspension, with certain exceptions. This will no longer be the case, colleagues, if Bill S-212 passes.

What's even more alarming is that offenders who have been convicted of any of the sex crimes set out in Schedule 1 will only have to wait five years after the end of their sentence for their criminal record to automatically disappear. Yet statistics show that the recidivism rate is 48% five years after parole.

Something else that alarms me are the changes to the revocation or cessation of effect of the board's decision. Under the current act, a record suspension can be revoked or cease to have effect if the applicant has reoffended, lied on their application or was simply not eligible. Senator Pate is trying to amend this process by restricting the possibility of revocation or cessation of effect set out in Schedules 1 and 2 to the act to only those cases in which the offender lied when inquiries were made. It will be hard to make inquiries because, as I mentioned, the bill no longer requires the offender to submit an application. How can the board determine whether the offender is lying if it doesn't have all the information?

In summary, the other crimes and offences that are not set out in Schedules 1 and 2 to the act can no longer be revoked, and in the case of offenders whose record has expired and who reoffend, any new offence will be entered on a new, clean record because the old one will be completely eliminated, so reoffending will be a thing of the past.

This process is a threat to public safety because this lax approach will only reinforce offenders' sense of impunity, and erasing past crimes creates a new injustice and revictimizes victims of crime.

I don't agree with Senator Pate's answer in her speech at second reading to her third question. She said there would be no risk to community safety as a result of the proposed amendments.

As mentioned, the bill as written will have a major impact on the number of cases where an expired criminal record becomes accessible again, due to either revocation or cessation of effect. That will become very rare.

Police and the courts will be deprived of crucial information concerning an individual's criminal past. This will have serious consequences, especially in cases where a judge is deciding whether to order the release of an accused based on certain factors, such as whether the accused has been previously convicted of other criminal offences, as provided for in paragraph 515(3)(b) of the Criminal Code.

The accused's past convictions will be a very important factor that the court could consider in its analysis of the grounds set out in subsection 515(10) of the Criminal Code. For example, the court could come to the conclusion that a person who has been convicted multiple times for different criminal offences in the past might commit another criminal offence if released pending a trial and that the detention is necessary for the protection or safety of the public. In the absence of this information, an individual could be released and considered dangerous.

To make that analysis, it is imperative for the court to be able to access the criminal record of the accused. That is also the case for the appeals courts. I would like to quote a passage from a decision written by Justice Sophie Lavallée, of the Quebec Court of Appeal, in *S.J. v. R.*:

... the appeal judge must take "a look at the past" in order to assess the "potential for compliance with a release order." In so doing, the judge may consider a multitude of factors, including the following: ...

d. the applicant's record with respect to complying with court orders;

I would also like to address the sentencing stage of the judicial process. Here again, I refute the argument proposed by Senator Pate in her November 30, 2021, speech in reference to her second question, which was, and I quote: "Does record expiry make sentences more lenient? The short answer is no."

The courts have clearly illustrated that an offender's criminal history is of great importance at sentencing. In *R. v. Angelillo*, Justice Charron of the Supreme Court of Canada wrote, and I quote:

The objectives of sentencing cannot be fully achieved unless the information needed to assess the circumstances, character and reputation of the accused is before the court.

She continues:

There is no doubt that the court may take prior convictions into account in determining the appropriate sentence. ... The sentence imposed on a repeat offender may well be more severe, but this is not contrary to the offender's right not to be punished again. From the standpoint of proportionality, the sentence imposed in such a case is merely a reflection of the individualized sentencing process.

The same opinion was expressed in *R. v. Simeunovich*, a 2019 decision from the Ontario Court of Appeal. It stated, and I quote:

[English]

The appellant's extensive record was an important factor in this case. It impacted on the appellant's prospects for rehabilitation. It was relevant to specific deterrence. Moreover, the trial judge recognized that the appellant's incorrigibility engages public protection concerns. . . .

[Translation]

Furthermore, *R. v. Cardinal*, a 2011 Alberta Court of Appeal decision, stated, and I quote:

[English]

. . . the sentencing judge made no error in concluding that a record is relevant in considering other sentencing principles. The record is relevant when considering, among other things, denunciation, individual deterrence, proportionality, the risk of re-offending, and whether preventative detention is necessary to prevent further offences.

[Translation]

It is therefore clear that, if an offender's record is unknown to the court at the time of sentencing, because it automatically expired and the offender was not in one of the rare situations where revocation or cessation of effect applied, the judge's sentencing decision will be biased. The offender's profile will be inaccurate because information about their criminal record is unavailable.

In other words, the main purpose of this bill is to reduce future sentences imposed on repeat offenders. That is contrary to the principles of law that guide the Canadian justice system. Worse still, it enables individuals who should be monitored by police because of their criminal records to fly under the radar.

Honourable senators, although I feel that this bill is a threat to public safety and too lenient toward repeat offenders, I respect Senator Pate's hard work and perseverance in the interest of creating a more just and humane justice system. In a democratic society such as ours, it is obviously important to ensure that our justice system respects human rights and treats offenders with dignity and humanity. That is what distinguishes us from authoritarian societies and dictatorships, where justice is not independent and is very often tightly controlled and biased.

I understand what Senator Pate is fighting for and I am well aware of the work we need to do to create a system that is better suited to the reality of Indigenous peoples. However, the problem with this bill and its approach is that it takes a solution to a specific problem and tries to apply it to the entire justice system.

[Senator Boisvenu]

• (1710)

Consider the example of mandatory minimum sentences. A national debate is obviously going on about the appropriateness of some of these sentences, which could have an effect contrary to their objectives.

Personally, I am in favour of looking at these issues and making the necessary corrections, where appropriate. However, when I reflect on Senator Pate's Bill S-213 on this subject, which eliminates all mandatory minimum sentences, I think her approach goes beyond today's debate and ignites another debate that is much more radical and binary. We are being forced to vote for or against mandatory minimum sentences. There is no room for reflection, because our positions become diametrically opposed. On the one side, we have the Conservatives, who are in favour, and on the other, we have the independent senators, who are against.

Looking at criminal records specifically, I don't think it was necessary to totally rewrite the federal law and change its meaning completely, on the pretext that some offenders can't find a job or housing. The current act works well and can, of course, be changed if there is a problem with it in certain cases, such as the one Senator Bernard mentioned. However, it is not appropriate to completely change an act that is working well.

The proof is that the Correctional Service of Canada now has the lowest number of people in prison and the highest number of people under community supervision on record. Historically, the correctional system always had more offenders in prison than under community supervision. Today, in 2022, we have far more people under community supervision than in prison. That means the system is working.

At present, due to the pandemic and the Trudeau government's catastrophic financial management, many Canadians are grappling with inflation, have lost their jobs or can no longer afford shelter because rents are too high or their credit score prevents them from finding housing. Ask them if they are okay with their money being used to pay the costs associated with the expiry of criminal records to make life easier for offenders who can't find work or housing. I don't think their answer will be favourable.

I will conclude my speech by asking you a question, esteemed colleagues: Do you support this bill that allows individuals sentenced for pedophilia, possession of child pornography or obscene material, or trafficking of minors to have their criminal record disappear automatically five years after they have finished serving their sentence?

I believe that as senators, as parents and grandparents, we should already know the answer.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[English]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On Other Business, Senate Public Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 9, by the Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Housakos, for the second reading of Bill S-229, An Act to amend the Language Skills Act (Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick).

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at 15 days, but I am not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-15(3), I move the adjournment of the debate for the balance of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

JANE GOODALL BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Klyne, seconded by the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (great apes, elephants and certain other animals).

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (great apes, elephants and certain other animals). I wish to thank Senator Klyne for his work in reintroducing this bill.

For those of us who believe in a higher being, whether we call them God or Creator, we can fundamentally agree that there are both purpose and intent for all creation. Within this holistic view, humankind is but one of millions of species sharing Mother Earth. Yet we find that the brash actions taken by humans, being one small piece of a very large puzzle, have severely threatened the future of our planet, as well as threatened the other life forms we share it with. All living things have inherent value on this earth, and all our relations merit protection for the value they provide.

Culturally speaking, all our relations also fulfill the intrinsic human need for spiritual rekindling and artistic inspiration. Our relations — the eagle and the beaver — in their natural habitat, that some call the wilderness, have deeply shaped our national identity. Together, they continue to profoundly influence how we view ourselves as Canadians. Likewise, exotic animals hold a similar level of intrinsic value within their native countries.

Yet how do we uphold them? By confining them in artificial habitats far from their homelands, largely for the selfish purposes of human entertainment. In his book, *Thinking Like a Mountain*, author Robert Bateman quotes the great biologist and ecologist E.O. Wilson, “. . . the past century will be remembered less for its technological prowess than for its destruction of diversity.”

Bateman continues:

Humanity needs a new definition of Progress, one that is more elegant and sophisticated, one that values heritage, both natural and human. We need to think carefully about the health and well-being of future generations Our grandchildren . . . will learn the many marvels of earth, air, and stream. They will see the miracle of renewal — how the world and its creature replenish themselves according to the normal cycles and processes of nature. But numerous memories will never be made — because the last couple of generations will have destroyed so much.

Honourable senators, we must recognize the global nature of the issue at hand. Simply put, the animals that Bill S-241 seeks to protect should not be residing in Canada. As Senator Klyne pointed out in his earlier remarks, the vast majority of these animals have no business existing in Canada's unforgiving climate.

To this point, many of these animals — ones that are biologically wired and engineered for life in their respective homelands — are forced to live an existence that is both unfamiliar and unfair, and sometimes dangerous and life-threatening. This includes animals as substantial as the elephant being forced to live indoors for many months of the year because they are not intended to live in Canada's snowy climate. To be frank, what we are witnessing is unnatural and amoral.

Colleagues, the animals that are nearest and dearest to my heart are the ones native to Canada. At home, I am concerned for the wolf, the buffalo, the bear and the sturgeon. It is through my concern for them that I can empathize with the current situation facing these more exotic animals — ones who are similarly imperiled but for markedly different reasons.

How have we, as human beings, become so disconnected from nature? In the book, *Rewilding Our Hearts: Building Pathways of Compassion and Coexistence*, author Marc Bekoff states:

We experience alienation from nature when we learn about or participate in, the wanton killing of wild species, when fields and forests are clear cut and paved over for suburban development, and when ecosystems are ruined by pollution or other human impacts. We experience firsthand our separation from nonhuman animals when we keep them in cages in zoos. And we instill alienation from nature in our children by teaching them primarily indoors at desks and in

front of computer screens. Alienation flows from the belief that humans are superior to all other animals and that we are meant to dominate other species and use the Earth solely for our benefit.

• (1720)

Bekoff continues:

We are also inconsistent in our caring. People are often outraged over specific incidents of animal cruelty — such as the massacre of 49 captive wild animals in Ohio in October 2011 — but they remain unmoved by the slaughter of billions of animals for food and research, or the horrific and ongoing abuse of animals used for entertainment in zoos, aquariums, circuses and rodeos.

Honourable senators, when it comes to Bill S-241, I urge you to practise consistency. This chamber did critical work in passing similar legislation as it pertains to whales and dolphins in captivity. Let us ensure we always take a view that lends itself to compassion for all animals with whom we share this planet. The first step in doing so is allowing this bill to be referred to committee in short order.

Colleagues, I would like to provide a glimpse into a perspective I hold on these matters. To illustrate this, I will quote Judge Berger from the book entitled *Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger Inquiry*, by Patrick Scott:

The native people of Canada, and indeed indigenous people throughout the world, have what they regard as a special relationship with their environment. Native people of the North have told this Inquiry that they regard themselves as inseparable from the land, the waters and the animals with which they share the world. They regard themselves as custodians of the land, which is for their use during their lifetime, and which they must pass on to their children and their children's children after them. In their languages there are no words for wilderness.

It further reads:

The native people's relationship to the land is so different from that of the dominant culture that only through their own words can we comprehend it. . . . The native people's identity, pride, self-respect and independence are inseparably linked to the land and a way of life that has land at its centre. . . . Even native people, who are not themselves hunters and trappers but who make their contribution to native society in other ways, see their identity and pride as people as linked to the land.

Honourable senators, why is it that humans are so closely invested in the concept of confinement? I speak of our tendency to take living things and confine them to unnatural, foreign spaces and then present it as a form of education or business.

Human folly allowed us to normalize the act of confinement on our own brothers and sisters. We have seen this through different media, including residential schools, internment camps, refugee camps and so on. This folly emboldened us to further extend such unnatural confinement to unsuspecting animals.

Can anyone, human or animal, actually live in captivity, or do they merely exist? As someone who faced this bleak reality for 11 years of my life in a residential school, I can unequivocally say that we exist in that environment; we do not live. Nature and biology dictate that humans and animals in captivity shut down to accommodate the terrible confining situation they find themselves in. Such confinement fundamentally alters both physical and mental behaviours. The harm done therein is undeniable.

Colleagues, how we proceed on this long-overdue human-driven issue will reflect what we, as Canadians and as senators, value. Do we not want these magnificent animals to be protected, to remain in their natural habitat and to be a part of our world for seven generations to come?

As I see it, we have two fundamental options before us: First, we can consciously decide that the protection of biodiversity is not important and not our responsibility, despite the fact we are the ones who manufactured this situation. This would be represented by having this bill sit idle.

Alternatively, we can consciously decide that these animals need to be respected and protected. Doing so would include a recognition that the unnatural confines and manufactured environments we have created do more harm than good. It would require us to advocate for the best interests of these animals by allowing for a vote on this bill.

Honourable senators, although we have created the human framework of confinement, we now have the ability to partially correct that error.

As author Marc Bekoff writes in his aforementioned book:

We often have unrealistic expectations, or we define our needs and build our communities such that animals will inevitably become a problem. This reminds me of how some zoo administrators call animals who are not part of their captive breeding program “surplus” animals, and then they kill these animals because they are of no use to the zoo. For example, in early 2014, the Copenhagen Zoo killed a young healthy male giraffe named Marius because he couldn't be used as a breeding machine, and later four lions, including two cubs, were killed at the same zoo so that a new male could be introduced to the remaining females. It's a perversion of logic and morality to breed animals to “save” species only to kill those same animals when they become too inconvenient to care for.

Bekoff quotes Richard Foster, editor of the *Daily Kumquat*, saying:

The blind eye we turn to the suffering of animals is probably the greatest example of cognitive dissonance in the world.

However, colleagues, what we are seeing across the country are citizens who largely reject the notion of animal captivity. There are numerous polls and studies that reflect this trend in beliefs. The onus is now squarely on us to adopt a similarly

enlightened approach. Every day that we sit idle on this legislation is another day that these emotionally attuned animals continue to toil in captivity.

The seriousness of the issue before us cannot be overstated. The suffering we are permitting to occur to such intelligent, cognizant animals must stop now.

Personally, I know the legacy I would like to leave for my children, my grandchildren and those to come. It is to lead with love, to champion compassion and to value life in all its forms. I ask you to embrace the same.

I thank my colleagues for their consideration on this matter. For any senators intending to speak on this bill, I urge you to do so promptly so that a vote can soon take place on this important legislation, and we can send it to committee.

Honourable senators, let us see these animals for what they are — all our relations. Thank you. *Kinanâskomitin*.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I am wondering whether the senator would take a question.

Senator McCallum: Yes, I would.

The Hon. the Speaker: The senator only has a minute left, Senator Plett. Perhaps, Senator McCallum, would you like to ask for five minutes to answer a question?

Senator McCallum: Yes, please.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Plett: Thank you. I apologize for breaking my own rule by having you ask for five minutes, but I didn't know you were that close to your time.

Just one or two questions, Senator McCallum. First, what is your definition of senators sitting idle? The reason I'm asking that — I'll preface it — is because I am the critic on this. When people suggest that we're sitting idle, this last weekend — I didn't keep track of the exact kilometres — I drove probably somewhere around 1,000 kilometres. I visited four different wildlife habitats, if you will. They're not enclosures. They're not zoos. One of them is Parc Safari; one of them is called the Granby Zoo; one is the Ecomuseum Zoo in Montreal; and the last one is Parc Omega in Montebello. Parc Omega is a facility that has over 2,000 acres — hardly an enclosure. The animals are all wild. They have big areas. They have three packs of wolves. Wolves was something that was important to you, Senator McCallum. This bill would do away with those wolves. Wolves are near extinction. You mentioned buffalo or bison. Of course, we're from Manitoba. There are bison there — used to be a lot of bison — but bison are close to extinction.

• (1730)

What do we do, Senator McCallum, when these animals are close to extinction? Eliminating them from these facilities — some that have over 2,000 acres for these animals to roam around, I hardly think it is an enclosure.

I know you didn't willfully intend anything, but a few senators now have talked about wishing people would speak on the issue. I'm planning on speaking on the issue, but I want to assure this entire chamber that I have no intention to speak on the issue until I have done the due diligence that, quite frankly, I believe — I'll get to the question — the sponsor should be doing. From what I hear, he's visited two of the places that I visited. I visited 10. Is that sitting idle, Senator McCallum? What would you suggest we do when animals become extinct and we're saying that they can no longer be in human care? These keepers said they don't like calling it captivity because it's not captivity; it's human care.

Senator McCallum: Thank you for your questions. When I said that senators are sitting idle, I was referring to senators who want to speak on this, and — because it's such a critical issue — asking them if they would speak on it as soon as possible. That was why I said, "sitting idle."

When I look at 2,000 acres to roam around, that is still captivity, especially when you look at the range that wolves have up North where they have thousands and thousands of acres and can move throughout the province. To me, the acres are not enough.

You asked: What happens if they become extinct? That's why it needs to go to the committee — that is what I'm advocating for — so that we can find the answers to these very questions. I am working on the sturgeon with one of the First Nations because it is becoming extinct in its natural habitat due to resource extraction. I'm concerned about it, and I'm concerned that it will lead to further disrespect of wildlife because people are engineering species. When you look at the salmon, they no longer spawn in the space they're meant to spawn in. I worry that many of the animals will head that way because society seems to think they're disposable.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On Other Business, Senate Public Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 22, by the Honourable Yonah Martin:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Bellemare, seconded by the Honourable Senator Dalphond, for the second reading of Bill S-244, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Council).

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE

Hon. Fabian Manning moved second reading of Bill S-249, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for the prevention of intimate partner violence.

He said: Honourable senators, I welcome the opportunity this afternoon to say a few words to begin the second reading of Bill S-249, an act respecting the development of a national strategy for the prevention of intimate partner violence.

For those senators who may not be aware, this is my second attempt, albeit with some minor adjustments, to have this piece of legislation become the law of the land. I first introduced a similar bill to this chamber on April 24, 2018. Yes, I did say 2018, so I am hoping for the chamber's support to see this version of Bill S-249 cross the finish line in a reasonable time frame.

With that in mind, I once again want to begin my remarks today with a quote from Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General:

Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And, it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

It is with mixed emotions that I stand before you today to talk about and seek your support for this piece of legislation. I will use my time to explain the origin and purpose of this bill, but even more importantly, I want to use my allotted time to put forward some of the reasons I truly believe this national strategy is needed more today than ever before — needed even more today, my fellow senators, than in 2018 when I first brought it forward.

On one hand, I am proud to be the sponsor of this bill, though at the same time I am extremely sad and disappointed that we still live in a world where this serious issue is continuing on its ugly path. The cloak of secrecy around intimate partner violence has created a travesty of justice that has prevailed because of fear, stigma and the absence of a law to protect the most vulnerable in our society. It is time for all of us to come together to lift that cloak of secrecy, and to create solutions that will give so many of our fellow Canadians an opportunity to have a choice, where neither one exists today. We are long overdue on seriously addressing this issue, and the fact that we live in the greatest country on earth does not mean that all our citizens live without fear. Many continue to be abused physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually, financially and in many other ways. We have much work to do in addressing the concerns and issues of intimate partner violence. I hope this piece of legislation is a solid building block to doing just that.

My work on this legislation began with a phone call I received in early 2017 from a woman who had summoned the courage to try to make a difference and who has become a very strong advocate for this cause. Through her efforts, she has given a voice to all those abused women who were and still are unable to speak for themselves.

With her permission, I am going to tell you her life story. Hopefully, you will then understand the origin of this bill and why I feel it is so important that we join forces to give a voice to those who have been battered and abused, and to provide them with an avenue where they feel they will have somewhere to turn when the need arises.

This is the story of a brave and courageous woman by the name of Georgina McGrath from the small town of Branch in St. Mary's Bay, Newfoundland. While at the present time Georgina is experiencing a very peaceful solitude on her life's journey, it has not always been that way.

Georgina grew up in Labrador City, and today, at the age of 53, she can honestly say that she is a survivor of intimate partner violence and a survivor of a suicide attempt. She has shared her story in the hope that she can help others who find themselves on the receiving end of a fist and the verbal abuse that often comes with it.

• (1740)

Georgina is a daughter, a sister, a niece, an aunt, a mother-in-law and a friend. Most importantly, she is the mother of two amazing adult children — her 33-year-old son Nathan and her 32-year-old daughter Kelty — and, today, she is the very happy and proud grandmother of 3-year-old Thomas. Georgina is the first to say that she will always be a victim of intimate partner violence, but she quickly follows up with this proud statement: She refuses to ever allow that period of her life define who she really and truly is. I have sat and talked with Georgina on many occasions. I admire her strength, her determination, her passion and her resolve to expose the abusers and have them pay for their crimes, as well as make this country a place where abused persons will have someone to reach out to in times of need.

Georgina had a life that most people would dream about. She owned her own company in Labrador City for eight years and had more independence than most people could ever wish for. At times, she employed up to 30 people, and her financial situation and future looked very bright indeed. She won national and international awards for her work, and she was enjoying life as a contributing member of our society.

That all changed when she met a man who would become her first abuser. From that relationship, she received constant emotional, mental and physical abuse, and, in the end, it was a gun to her head that was the last straw.

Following that relationship, Georgina was diagnosed with PTSD and fibromyalgia. She picked up the pieces of her life and, with the help of friends and family, continued to work at building her company. She had to provide for her two children, and the rewards of motherhood are what gave her the energy and determination to keep going.

She soon became good friends with a man from Ireland who had come to live in Labrador. He spoke in a nice manner, treated her well at the beginning and seemed to be genuinely concerned about the well-being of Georgina and her children. Their friendship grew into a relationship, and eventually they became a couple. She felt comfortable and happy again, let go of her insecurities and was willing to spend the rest of her life with this man. She wanted the relationship to work because failure was not something that she wanted to accept for her private life. They were working away, enjoying life and having fun — and Georgina felt that she had made the right decision this time, and was on track to a lifetime of happiness and security.

About a year later, in September 2013, Georgina and her partner travelled to Las Vegas for a holiday. Sadly, and unfortunately, that is the place where she received her first punch from this man who then became her second abuser. This time, however, she did strike back. The next morning, he looked at her and said, “You know, the best thing about you, GMac?” — that was the nickname he had given her — “You can get up and just forget that anything happened.” At that particular time in her life, that is exactly what she did, because she had become a pro at hiding what was happening to her.

She hoped things would get better, but, sadly, that was not to be. Her abuser continued his reign of terror over the next few months by giving her a black eye, cracking off a tooth and head-butting her so hard that it resulted in a goose egg on her forehead. The increased physical abuse came with a torrent of emotional and mental abuse as well. Georgina strongly believes that all types of abuse go hand in hand.

On August 9, 2014, the night before her forty-fifth birthday, they were both out with some friends when her partner became verbally abusive with her. When they returned home later that evening, he went to the garage, drank a beer and then threw the beer bottle at Georgina’s head. Thank God, he missed. The next day, he sent her flowers and a note expressing his love for her — he signed the card “Yours truly.” Georgina told me it was incredible how good he was at manipulating her, and showing the rest of the world that he was this great and charming guy. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we refer to these types of individuals as “street angels and house devils.” Later that night, he told her that if he really wanted to hit her in the head with the beer bottle, he could have easily done so. It was all about his continuing efforts to have her in his total control.

September 25, 2014, could have been Georgina’s last day on earth, but somehow, through it all, she survived. The night started out with a movie and a glass of wine but quickly turned into a night of horror. A verbal argument was followed by a punch that quickly turned into a life-threatening beating. He pushed her to the floor, got on top of her and began to choke her. As she lay there on the floor, she could feel the life slowly draining from her body. When he pushed his face close to hers, she instinctively took the opportunity and bit him on the nose. He immediately released his grip and ran into the washroom to inspect the damage Georgina had inflicted on him. She somehow managed to get up from the floor, and then she ran and locked herself in the bedroom, but, in a blinding rage, he put his fist through the door, reached in and unlocked it. He pushed her to the floor again and started to repeatedly hit her on the side of the

head. She managed to push him off, but he was stronger and pinned her to the floor once again and started hitting her on the other side of the head.

Unable to fight back any longer, Georgina lay there, waiting for that one punch that would end her life. He then turned her over and continued hitting her. He told her she was fat, ugly and wrinkly — and that nobody would ever want her. He then got up, went downstairs, grabbed a knife and went into the bathroom. Georgina, once again, somehow managed to get to her feet and, with her mind racing, put her body up against the door while he pushed and pushed. Eventually, he just gave up and, thank God, for some reason or other, he gave the knife to Georgina.

Georgina went downstairs and called her sister while he kept shouting obscenities at her, continuing to call her fat, ugly and wrinkly. During her time on the phone with her sister, Georgina just wanted all the abuse to stop, so she attempted to take her own life by overdosing on prescription medication. She swallowed six times the legal dose. Her sister could clearly hear the desperation in her voice. When she hung up the phone, she lay down on the couch to die. Georgina felt she could not continue any longer. Fortunately, her sister had the fortitude to call 911.

The next thing Georgina remembers is waking up in the hospital and seeing her two beautiful children at the foot of the bed. The abuser came to the hospital and told her that he did not understand why he did what he did to her. He did not acknowledge the fresh bruises on her face and body from the beating she had received from him just hours before. He just wanted her to come back home.

When her children asked the abuser several times what happened, he said it was in self-defence. Georgina’s daughter — who works in the field of child, youth and family services — told him that no one uses self-defence on someone else’s head. The only mark on him was where Georgina had bitten his nose. Georgina had severe trauma, including two ruptured eardrums, damage to both her temples, nerve damage to her face and bruises that took seven weeks to finally fade away. The mental and emotional trauma was unmeasurable.

On that September night in 2014, there was no one to protect Georgina. Basically, across this country of ours, there is no mandatory reporting of intimate partner violence. No person has the legal obligation to notify the proper authorities — not doctors, nurses, counsellors and not even employees of women’s shelters. The police did not investigate Georgina’s case because it was ruled a medical call — not intimate partner violence. There was no investigation into the fact that this man tried to take Georgina’s life before she tried to take her own.

After leaving the hospital and living with the fear of future abuse, Georgina finally took control of her life. It was not easy to take the giant step that would change her life forever. As a matter of fact, it took several weeks for Georgina — with the encouragement, once again, of family and friends — to find the courage to go to the police and press charges. By the time an arrest warrant was issued, the man was on a plane back to Ireland. The coward skipped the country before he could be

brought to justice. Today, there is a Canada-wide arrest warrant for him if he ever sets foot on Canadian soil again. I highly doubt that will ever happen.

If you have never experienced the type of abuse that Georgina and many others, especially women, have endured, it may be easy to say, “Why doesn’t someone in that position just get up and leave?” There are many reasons why a woman does not get up and leave. In most cases, finances may not be available to do so, or perhaps there is nowhere to go, or no one to turn to for support and protection. Perhaps those who have been abused believe that, in some strange way, it is their fault. They are led to believe that they may have provoked the abuse, and that the stigma related to the abuse may be too much for some people to deal with on their own. There is always the fear that it could happen again, that the law does not protect the innocent and that the next time may be the last time.

Judith Lewis Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence — From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, explains the situation quite well:

The guarantee of safety in a battering relationship can never be based upon a promise from the perpetrator, no matter how heartfelt. Rather, it must be based upon the self-protective capability of the victim. Until the victim has developed a detailed and realistic contingency plan and has demonstrated her ability to carry it out, she remains in danger of repeated abuse.

• (1750)

My fellow senators, that is the story of the abuse that Georgina McGrath endured and lived to tell us about. The sad reality, though, is that there are many others who were not so fortunate. Georgina told me several times that she cannot change what happened to her, but if her efforts to address this very serious issue can help another abused person, it will have been worth all the time and effort she has given to this cause. Georgina truly believes there is a reason she survived, and it is to change how we deal with the issue of intimate partner violence — to change the laws or to create new ones so that women, children, men and all abused people in our country will know they do have somewhere to turn to when it seems like the world has turned against them.

Since I began this legislative journey in the Senate, I have met with a large number of victims of intimate partner violence, families of those who have lost a loved one to intimate partner violence, police services, advocates seeking justice for victims, representatives of women’s groups and shelters and several community leaders throughout my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have also talked with several health care professionals, especially those in emergency rooms, who have told me repeatedly of the frustrations they feel about being constrained by privacy laws when they have to deal with the victims of what they know is intimate partner violence. I have held several round tables where the opportunity has been provided for those who want to share their story.

Through it all, I have discovered a very sad reality. Many of the women I have spoken to want to do so privately, and after hearing their stories, I fully understand why. I have witnessed

first-hand the fear in their eyes as they continue to look over their shoulders as they talk to me in whispers. I have respected their wishes for privacy whenever and wherever possible, and I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of these women for trusting me with their life stories. It has an incredible experience and has truly opened my eyes to the suffering and loneliness so many have had to endure. It has given me the resolve to ensure we adopt this piece of legislation so that we can begin the process of finding avenues to address this blight on our society.

I will not stand here today, fellow senators, and in any way pretend to have all the answers to deal with this sad reality that surrounds us, but I truly believe that by working together, we can and will make a difference. Colleagues, there is no other choice.

With the onset of COVID-19, my plans to travel, meet and talk with other concerned individuals and organizations throughout Canada were derailed. I am looking forward to doing just that when time permits me to do so. In my discussions throughout the past several years, I have become much more aware and indeed much more alarmed at what is happening in our country when it comes to the treatment of the victims and the families of the victims of intimate partner violence. I strongly believe that many of our citizens are not familiar with the overwhelming statistics that are available regarding this scourge here in our country. Allow me to bring some of those statistics forward while, at the same time, keeping in mind that there is much more information available, and I encourage my fellow senators and others to take the time to familiarize yourselves with the data that is easily accessible.

In this free and democratic country, on any given night, 4,600 women and their 3,600 children are forced to sleep in emergency shelters as a result of violence. On a single day, 379 women and 215 children are turned away from shelters in Canada, usually because the shelters are full to capacity.

Intimate partner violence has been identified as a widespread public health issue. In 2021, police in Canada reported that 114,132 people were victimized by an intimate partner. That is 344 victims per 100,000 population. It marked the seventh consecutive year of gradual increases for this type of violence, during which 8 in 10 — 79% — of the victims of such violence were women and girls. Specifically in 2021, there was a large increase in the rate of level one sexual assault, which is sexual assault violating the sexual integrity of the victim. In 2021, it was 22% higher compared with 2020. Level two sexual assault in intimate partner relationships, which is committed with a weapon or causes bodily harm, also increased by 6% compared with 2020. Intimate partner violence reported to police most often involved a current partner — 36% of cases — or, in 29% of cases, a spouse, followed by former partners at 21% and ex-spouses at 12%. And 79% of the victims of intimate partner violence were women.

In 2021, 90 homicide victims in our country were killed by an intimate partner. Three quarters — 76% — of these victims were women and girls. The number of victims of intimate partner homicide in 2021 was higher than that of 2020, when there were 84 victims, and higher again than that of 2019, when there were 77 victims.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, increased attention has been focused on the issue of family violence and intimate partner violence. With many individuals having to spend more time at home with household members, often living, working and studying in isolation during those uncertain and stressful times, there was and, in many cases, remains ongoing concern about the safety of individuals living in abusive relationships. This issue has been at the forefront of victim services such as shelters for victims of abuse for quite some time. Some recent reports allude to major increases throughout Canada as it relates to intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 shutdown. Statistics are still being compiled for that period on many different fronts. I am looking forward to receiving that information soon, which I do believe will assist my efforts in having Bill S-249 become law.

Protection orders and peace bonds have proven time and again to fail to protect victims from someone enraged and intent on inflicting harm on them. Along with others, this is one of the main reasons that many incidents of intimate partner violence are never reported to the police. Statistics tell us that only about 10% of intimate partner violence abuse is reported. That is very unfortunate, and we need to create a way for that to change and to see an increase in that number.

While physical assault leads the way, victims are subjected to abuse in so many other ways such as criminal harassment — also referred to as stalking — sexual violence, emotional and psychological abuse, financial and spiritual abuse, reproductive coercion and coercive control. As well, more prevalent than ever before, today we have technology-facilitated violence, also referred to as cyberviolence.

The damage inflicted on the victims of intimate partner violence is best summed up by a woman I met with earlier this summer who told me:

There are many acts of abuse I have endured that have never left a mark on my body but indeed have left scars on me that I can never erase.

Approximately 50% of women over the age of 16 in Newfoundland and Labrador will experience at least one incident of sexual or physical violence throughout their lifetime. This information is found on the website for the Western Regional Coalition to End Violence, an organization based in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Their website also states:

This epidemic of gender-based violence is fostered by a society rooted in an oppressive discourse of patriarchal domination, authority and control. Gender inequality is both reflected in and reinforced by our social, economic, and political institutions as well as our ideologies and the culture of silence that surrounds violence against women and girls. . . .

We recognize that to address gender-based violence, it is essential to highlight the voices of women who have been silenced by marginalization. It is through their experiences of oppression and violence that we can recognize and comprehend the need for improvements and reform of legal, medical and other supportive service delivery for victims of gender-based violence.

Senators, there are three very important statistics that I want to reiterate to you today and ask you to please remember. The first is that in Canada, one in four women will be assaulted in their lifetime. The second is that only about 10% of sexual assaults are ever reported to the police. Third, very tragically, intimate partner violence costs lives: In Canada, a woman is killed by an intimate partner approximately every six days. The reality of these numbers is staggering and should be of grave concern to everyone listening today.

Findings from the 2019 General Social Survey – Canadians' Safety (Victimization) show that there were approximately 432,000 women and 279,000 men in Canada who experienced spousal violence in the five years preceding the survey.

• (1800)

Due to the complexities of intimate relationships, spousal violence is particularly susceptible to under-reporting to police. As a result, self-reporting experiences of violence are an important complement to police-reported data.

Intimate partner violence tends to happen repeatedly for some victims; about 3 in 10 women victims of intimate partner violence report experiencing at least one type of violence —

The Hon. the Speaker: My apologies, Senator Manning. It is now six o'clock and, pursuant to rule 3-3(1), I am required to leave the chair until 8 p.m. unless there is an agreement that we not see the clock.

Is there agreement?

Senator Plett: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no." The sitting is suspended until 8 p.m.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (2000)

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Manning, seconded by the Honourable Senator Batters, for the second reading of Bill S-249, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for the prevention of intimate partner violence.

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, intimate partner violence tends to happen repeatedly for some victims. About 3 in 10 women victims of intimate partner violence recorded experiencing at least one type of violence — physical, sexual or psychological — repeatedly, either on a monthly basis or more often in the previous 12 months.

Overall, one in five, or 20% of women who experienced sexual violence committed by an intimate partner in the past 12 months said it happened monthly or more often than that in the past 12 months. The frequency in which women experience this kind of intimate partner violence is notable, as this type of violence is often also considered to be the most severe.

Certain segments of the population are at greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. In addition to gender, other individual and socio-economic characteristics intersect to impact the likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence.

According to the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces, or SSPPS, the prevalence of intimate partner violence over the last 12 months and over a lifetime was notably higher among Indigenous women, LGBTQ2S+ people and women with disabilities. The following groups of people were more likely than their respective counterparts to have experienced intimate partner violence at least once in their lifetime: LGB+ women at 67%, Indigenous women at 61% and women with disabilities at 55%. It is noted that Indigenous women are more likely to experience each form of intimate partner violence and do so multiple times.

The Labrador portion of my province is home to just about 5% of the province's population, which in 2020 was approximately 27,674 people, with about 43% of those being Indigenous. The latest data from Newfoundland and Labrador's two police services covers the period from 2016 to 2020. It shows the rate of sexual assault in Labrador was between four to six times higher than on the island during that time.

Deirdre Connolly had seen enough. She opened the Labrador office of the Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where she works with survivors, in March 2020. She says the level of resources provided to the region with such a high prevalence of sexual violence is unacceptable.

In 2019, across Canada, approximately 800 victim service programs helped approximately half a million victims of crime. Among all females assisted, 84% were victims of a violent offence, 30% were women receiving services related to sexual assault, and 61% were victims of violent offences by a spouse, ex-spouse, intimate partner or other family member.

Police-reported data provided by Statistics Canada for the 2019 to 2021 reporting period showed that approximately 52% of victims of crimes reported to the police were female. The most common offence perpetrated against females was common assault, which represents approximately 48% of all violent incidents reported to police.

A recent report by the World Health Organization states:

Intimate partner violence has been identified as a major global public health concern, linked to intergenerational violence and detrimental physical, emotional and economic impacts on victims, witnesses and society as a whole.

More than 7 out of 10 victims (71%) of police-reported intimate partner violence experienced physical force. Physical assault was the most common offence experienced by victims of police-reported intimate partner violence at 77%, followed by uttering threats at 8% and criminal harassment at 6%.

Police-reported data show that spouses, current or former, and other intimate partners committed approximately 42% of violent crimes involving female victims. Other family members and acquaintances accounted for another 43%.

Police-reported family violence is defined "as all types of violent crime perpetrated by a family member that was reported to the police."

Colleagues, while it may be difficult for some people to understand, studies have shown that 70% of any type of spousal violence is not reported to police. Many victims of spousal violence experience severe forms of violence; specifically, 25% of all spousal violence victims are sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or knife, and 24% of all spousal violence victims are kicked, bitten, hit or hit with something.

A 2017 Statistics Canada information site, *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, states:

Females were over-represented among victims of sexual assault (88% of total incidents) and victims of "other sexual violations" (83% of total incidents). Other offences reported to police that were committed primarily against females included forcible confinement and related offences (79%), criminal harassment (76%), and making threatening and harassing phone calls (71%). All of the victims (100%) of offences under the "commodification of sexual activity" category were female.

Statistics Canada also reported that:

Rates of almost all types of violent victimization were higher for Aboriginal people Specifically, the sexual assault rate of Aboriginal people (58 incidents per 1,000 people) was almost three times that of non-Aboriginal people (20 per 1,000), while the physical assault rate of Aboriginal people (90 per 1,000) was nearly double that of non-Aboriginal people (47 per 1,000).

Furthermore:

Aboriginal females reported experiencing violent victimizations at a rate . . . 2.7 times higher than that reported by non-Aboriginal females.

And we can never forget that 1,181 Indigenous women went missing or were murdered between 1980 and 2012.

Half of Aboriginal victims of spousal violence reported experiencing among the more severe forms of spousal violence, such as having been sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or knife. This compares with just one quarter, or 23%, of non-Aboriginal victims of spousal violence.

I believe I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to talk about and promote the Moose Hide Campaign. For those of you who may not be aware of the campaign, the inspiration for it came to the co-founders, Paul Lacerte and his daughter Raven, in 2011 during a moose-hunting trip on their traditional territory along the Highway of Tears in British Columbia, where so many women have gone missing or have been murdered.

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence toward women and children. Wearing the Moose Hide pin, such as I am doing today, signifies one's commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in your life and speak out against gender-based domestic and intimate partner violence.

Since the start of the campaign, in excess of 1 million Moose Hide pins have been distributed throughout Canada, which has generated as many conversations about ending the violence against our women and children. I encourage all of you to support the campaign and take a strong stand against the violence.

Another disturbing statistic is that 60% of women with a disability experience some form of violence. Given that only approximately 10% of assaults are reported, the actual number is much higher.

Almost two thirds of spousal violence victims, or 63%, said they had been victimized more than once before they contacted the police. Nearly 3 in 10, or 28%, stated that they had been victimized more than 10 times before they contacted the police.

The total cost of intimate partner violence in Canada has been estimated at \$7.4 billion per year, amounting to \$220 per capita. The most direct economic impact is borne by primary victims. Of the total estimated costs, \$6 billion was incurred by victims as a direct result of spousal violence for items such as medical attention, hospitalization, lost wages, missed school days and stolen and damaged property.

The justice system bore 7.3%, or \$545 million, of the total economic impact: \$320 million was borne by the criminal justice system, and \$225 million was borne by the civil justice system.

• (2010)

While family violence is a concern for all Canadians, women report intimate partner violence to police nearly four times more than men, and are almost three times more likely than men to be killed by a current or former spouse. Almost half — 48% — of women reported fearing for their lives as a result of post-separation violence.

Numerous intimate partner violence death reviews, inquiries and coroners' reports have cited the lack of coordination among officials operating in the family law, child protection and criminal justice systems as a contributing factor in tragic family homicides.

Without mechanisms in place to ensure coordination and communication among these systems, families can be faced with potentially inconsistent or conflicting orders, which may in turn

have implications for the safety of family members, including the most vulnerable — the children. This, in turn, can undermine public confidence in the administration of justice.

While there is no universally accepted definition of family violence, the definition developed by the federal Family Violence Initiative describes family violence as:

... a range of abusive behaviours that occur within relationships based on kinship, intimacy, dependency or trust.

These abusive behaviours include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and financial victimization as well as neglect.

When I first contacted the Library of Parliament to develop this legislation, my goal was to develop a law to address intimate partner violence in Canada. I quickly learned it is not that easy to do. At the present time, there is no federal statute nor provincial statute that obliges physicians to report cases of domestic violence to third parties. There are national, provincial and territorial jurisdictions that have to be dealt with as well. The delivery of health care is a provincial or territorial matter.

While some provinces have codes of conduct regarding the regulation of physicians and other health care professionals and most provinces require physicians to report cases of violence when children are involved, no province has made it mandatory to report cases of intimate partner violence.

Tonight, if a woman arrives at a hospital anywhere in our country with a gunshot wound or has been stabbed, it is mandatory to call the police. Currently, hospitals and health care facilities in some provinces — namely British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories — must report gunshot wounds to the police. Although the reporting obligation in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories also includes stab wounds, the legislation in all these provinces is similar. The obligation to report typically falls to the institution or facility, not the individual physician. In some jurisdictions, the obligation placed on facilities to report could also include physicians' private medical offices and walk-in clinics.

However, honourable senators, if that same woman arrives at a hospital tonight with two black eyes, a broken nose, her front teeth missing or evidence of choking or strangulation from the physical abuse of her partner, there is no obligation or law to call the police.

During the time I have been working on this piece of legislation, I have learned that patient privacy and a victim's fear of what may happen if a police report is made are important factors that need to be thoroughly discussed as we proceed. I accept that these are not easy conversations, but in order to find possible solutions to this increasing problem of intimate partner violence in our country, we need to begin exploring avenues to find a way to assist those who so desperately need our help.

Let us not lose hope of a better way forward. I have been around the political arena for 30-plus years now, and I fully understand that every journey begins with a single step. That is the way I — with the support of people like Georgina McGrath — through Bill S-249, will begin this journey. I hope I have your support.

Bill S-249 calls on the federal government to provide for the development of a national strategy for the prevention of intimate partner violence following consultations between federal ministers and representatives of the provincial and territorial governments responsible for social development, families or public safety, as well as other relevant stakeholders.

We have to begin somewhere, and I truly believe that Bill S-249 is an important first step. We need consistency across and within jurisdictions in both policies and legislation that address violence against women. We need shared understanding of the root causes of violence against women. We need high-level commitment, leadership and accountability from government at all jurisdictional levels. We need clearly defined, time-bound goals measured against detailed, baseline data, and we need adequate human and financial resources to support these processes. We need new commitments and clear targets, and we need national standards with equality of access for all women that respect and respond to diversity. We need to consult with all stakeholders, including front-line workers and survivors.

Ongoing and unchecked intimate partner violence can escalate and produce devastating consequences. The people of my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador are all too familiar with the tragic story of a beautiful little girl by the name of Quinn Butt. Quinn's parents were separated at the time of her death.

In 2019, Trent Butt was found guilty of first-degree murder and arson after the body of his 5-year-old daughter, Quinn, was found in their burned-out home in Carbonear on April 24, 2016.

We also have the incredibly sad story of Chrissy Predham-Newman, who was found murdered in her apartment in St. John's in January 2007. Her throat had been slashed, and she was stabbed 53 times.

Following a lengthy investigation, her estranged husband, Ray Newman, was charged two years later with her murder. Three years following that charge being laid, a judge ruled Newman's rights had been violated during a police interview, Newman was found not guilty and walked away a free man. Later in 2018, Ray Newman was back in the courtroom again, and this time was found guilty of assaulting his girlfriend. She testified that Newman punched, choked and dragged her. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

No one has ever been brought to justice for the horrible death of Chrissy Predham-Newman.

Then, we have still have the unresolved mystery in my home province of the disappearance of Courtney Lake, who was last seen on June 7, 2017. She had been involved in a toxic relationship with a man named Philip Smith, who was charged on April 15 of that same year with assaulting Courtney. Despite a peace bond obtained by Courtney, Smith continued in his attempts to contact her.

On June 7, 2017, Smith appeared in court where he admitted to the assault on Courtney for which he received a suspended sentence. Along with numerous other charges he was convicted of that day in court, Smith was sentenced to two days' time served. Upon leaving the courthouse, Smith was given a probation order to stay away from Courtney and her mother.

Courtney was last seen four hours after Philip Smith left the courthouse on June 7. On June 30, 2017, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary announced they had classified Courtney's disappearance as a homicide and had referred her case to the Major Crimes Unit. Numerous searches by police services, search and rescue units as well as family and friends have failed to find Courtney Lake.

On October 31, 2017, Smith contacted his family saying he was going to kill himself. Concerned, the family contacted the police, and at 3 a.m. on November 1, 2017, they located the body of Philip Smith in the Bellevue Beach area of our province. The families are left with so many unanswered questions.

Under international law, every nation has an obligation to address violence against women. Currently, Canada has no national plan or strategy to deal with violence against women. With your support, Bill S-249 can be the vehicle that changes the way we deal with intimate partner violence in this country.

If you feel the need to do so, I invite you to offer suggestions on how we can improve this piece of legislation. Canada needs a national strategy to ensure all women are able to live free from violence. We owe it to women like Georgina McGrath and the thousands of others who have felt the pain of physical abuse, suffered the anguish of mental abuse and endured the agony of loneliness and despair.

Canada is a wonderful country in so many ways. We have so much to offer, and we are the envy of the world. Let us work together and support this bill, so that all people who have suffered or are still suffering from any form of intimate partner violence or abuse will have hope for a better and safer future.

• (2020)

Honourable senators, I end my speech today the way I began it, by repeating the quote of Kofi Annan:

Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And, it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

Thank you for listening.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Manning, there is at least one senator who wishes to ask a question, but you're out of time. Are you asking for five minutes to answer some questions?

Senator Manning: Yes, Your Honour.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson: Thank you so much, Senator Manning, for that important speech. I look forward to hearing more and seeing what happens in committee.

I wonder if you have had a chance to review the reports of the Family Violence Death Review Committee in Alberta and the many recommendations they made after studying many tragic cases in Alberta. They were looking for patterns across these cases and making recommendations for the prevention of family violence and deaths in particular. I'm wondering if you have had a chance to see those.

Senator Manning: Thank you, senator. I apologize; I haven't had the opportunity. I've been bombarded with different statistics from everywhere and trying to fit it all into a 35-minute speech.

But I have spoken to people in Alberta, in many cases they are people from Newfoundland and Labrador who live in Alberta today, and there is no doubt in my mind that the concern with intimate partner violence is very real in Alberta, as it is in every province in our country.

Certainly, I hope that groups such as the one you mentioned will bring forward information to the committee. Hopefully, we will learn not only about the concerns and problems that are out there, but I'm also interested in finding solutions. Through their efforts, I hope we can bring that to committee and that some of these suggestions and recommendations will be formalized into our report.

[Translation]

Hon. Renée Dupuis: Thank you, Senator Manning, for this important speech, and thank you most of all for lending your voice to women who have experienced violence, who have found the energy and courage to survive that violence and to help other women.

With respect to Bill S-249, I see in the English version that there is a definition of the term "intimate partner." I think it's a very important definition since it seeks to include both current and previous partners. It doesn't only refer to partners who are currently in a relationship. This definition only exists in the English version of the bill. Could you explain why? It is on the Senate LEGISinfo website. Why not include this definition in the French version of the bill?

[English]

Senator Manning: Thank you, madam senator, for your question. With regard to the French version, I have to apologize; I'll have to depend on someone else to explain the French version of my speech.

There has been as much concern raised with me over the past number of years with former spouses and former partners as there has been with present partners and present spouses. It will be incorporated into the discussions without a doubt. They took the podium from me, and my speech with it.

The fact is that I have heard from many people who are in relationships and concerned about someone coming back into their lives in cases, and they have a peace bond against them for whatever reason.

So there is no doubt in my mind that this will be incorporated into the discussions, because we need to look at the whole picture, including former spouses and partners, as well as ones that we are currently dealing with.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: I wonder if I could ask a question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Manning is out of time again.

Senator Manning, are you asking for more time?

Senator Manning: Yes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator McPhedran: Honourable senators, my question is related to the release in April 2021 of what was called the *Roadmap for the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence*.

Senator Manning, I just wondered if you could help us understand the very important points that you have raised with us tonight — and I also want to recognize the years of work and dedication that you have put into this. Can you give us a sense of where your bill would fit within this road map? It is described as requiring a 10-year plan. How does your bill, and the strategy that it focuses on, link with this national action plan?

Senator Manning: Thank you, Senator McPhedran. As I met with different groups and individuals and talked to different health care professionals, there doesn't seem to be any plan in place. While we have recommendations made from different studies that have been conducted across the country and different provinces, there doesn't seem to be a holistic approach to how we deal with intimate partner violence in the country. I stand to be corrected with regard to exactly what is out there in some areas. We live in a big country.

What I'm hoping to do with my bill is to bring all the players to the table. If the bill is adopted and becomes law, the government would have a certain amount of time to build a national strategy to address some of the concerns I have raised today, as well as concerns I didn't have the opportunity to raise. Hopefully, through it all, we can develop a strategy that addresses issues that we're dealing with right across the country.

As I said in my remarks, I welcome all suggestions, whether from fellow senators here in the chamber, different groups and organizations or individuals across the country. My strongest belief is that it is only by working together and bringing all players to the table that we can find a way to address this very serious issue in our country.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia moved second reading of Bill S-253, An Act respecting a national framework for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today as the sponsor of Bill S-253, An Act respecting a national framework for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

This is a subject that is particularly important to me, as I know it is to many of my colleagues here. It is a subject that I became well acquainted with as a rural family physician.

I would like to express my gratitude to Senator Pat Duncan, who has been involved in this disorder community in the Yukon for decades, and who has shared her experience and expertise on this issue. Thank you, Pat.

I would also like to thank Senator Anderson and Senator Christmas for their sage advice as I worked through this bill.

Colleagues, Bill S-253 was developed through extensive consultation with the Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network — CanFASD for short — which is a collaborative, interdisciplinary research network with partners across the nation.

The network brings together a diverse array of professionals: academics, specialists in women's health, individuals who are involved with criminal justice, developmental pediatricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and Indigenous advisers.

These professionals work with, or as part of, CanFASD's staff and board of directors, as well as its Family Advisory Committee, who have lived experiences as caregivers of people with the disorder across Canada.

• (2030)

I'd like to start by providing context on the subject that this bill is seeking to address. The consequences of prenatal alcohol exposure were first described more than 40 years ago. The term "fetal alcohol syndrome," or FAS, was first used to describe the cluster of birth defects due to prenatal alcohol exposure, including growth restriction, craniofacial abnormalities and intellectual disabilities — all with lifetime consequences.

The term "fetal alcohol spectrum disorder," or FASD, has since been adopted as a diagnostic term to actually describe a much broader spectrum of presentations and disabilities resulting from exposure to alcohol in utero. The impact of alcohol varies with the amount, timing and frequency of alcohol consumed and depends on a number of other factors, including the genetics of

the fetus and mother and the overall state of health of the mother, as well as other social, economic, physical and environmental factors.

The disorder can manifest in a wide variety of symptoms, but those with the disability often face difficulties in areas that include a wide spectrum and wide arena. They include motor skills, physical health, learning issues, memory, attention, impulsivity, communication issues, emotional regulation and social skills. While every individual is unique and possesses their own strengths and abilities, dealing with these challenges can very much be a dilemma for those with the disorder, and one that requires varying degrees of ongoing support from family and other sources.

It's a complex, multi-faceted issue that affects Canadians in all walks of life in all regions of the country. It is, for context, the leading neurodevelopmental disorder in Canada, affecting 4% of the population. That's more than people with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and Tourette syndrome combined.

However, there are indeed two key distinctions when it comes to the disorder. First, it is much harder to diagnose than most other neurodevelopmental disorders, and second, it is preventable.

The fundamental goal of this bill is to promote better outcomes in both prevention and diagnosis as well as to improve support for those affected and to ensure that they can live their lives to the fullest potential without carrying a stigma.

Colleagues, the issue that this bill is aimed at addressing is the lack of a comprehensive, coordinated national framework. As we know, with Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories, it can feel like we sometimes have 13 separate health care silos or that we live in 13 fiefdoms. As it currently stands, access to FASD prevention, diagnosis, interventions and supports across our provinces and territories is patchy and, unfortunately, uncoordinated at best. Making a diagnosis of the disorder requires a multidisciplinary team and involves complex physical and neurodevelopmental assessments.

In 2005, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published an international, collaborative and evidence-based guideline for diagnosis related to prenatal alcohol exposure. Since then, the field has evolved and mushroomed and additional evidence, expertise and experience has emerged. An updated recommended guideline was published in 2016 that underscores the importance of pre-pregnancy counselling and prevention.

The guideline includes standardized screening and referral and early intervention measures, as well as the composition of the core diagnostic team. This team must include a child development psychologist, pediatrician, speech language pathologist, psychiatrist, occupational therapist and a physician overseeing the team, depending on the age of the individual assessed. In the current context of our health care crisis, you can only imagine how difficult that would be.

Colleagues, there are 73 diagnostic clinics across Canada, and those clinics are not evenly distributed. There are provinces that currently don't have a single diagnostic clinic. Even if a province has these clinics, most have lengthy waiting lists or very limited capacity and are almost never located in rural or remote areas. As you can imagine, it can be particularly challenging in these areas to find all the specialists required to properly operate a clinic. That was indeed much of the challenge in my practice lifetime.

There is no consistent, pan-Canadian tracking system in place, so CanFASD, the national research network, relies on smaller provincial studies and extrapolates its data. Less than half of the diagnostic clinics participate in contributing to the national database, typically due to staffing shortages and significant time constraints. As a result, the numbers we rely on from the database cannot possibly accurately reflect the prevalence or distribution of this disorder across our country. This means that there is a significant but ultimately unknown number of Canadians with FASD who are unidentified and therefore undiagnosed. The problem is particularly acute in those populations that have compromised social determinants of health, including those in the child welfare system, justice and corrections and our Indigenous communities.

Colleagues, we are fully aware of the role our esteemed colleagues at the provincial level play across Canada. Some provinces and territories, including Alberta, Manitoba and the Yukon, already have a specific strategy or framework in place to promote FASD prevention, improve measures for diagnosis and increase supports for those affected. These three strategies share broad foundational goals such as increasing awareness of the consequences of drinking alcohol while pregnant, promoting prevention of drinking while pregnant, increasing access to assessment and diagnostic clinics, supporting new research to ensure strategies are informed by evidence-based practices and providing other supports and services for people with the disorder and their families and caregivers.

Other provinces and territories have other past or present strategies that could help inform the federal government with their own FASD framework. For example, British Columbia had a strategy from 2008 to 2018. Saskatchewan has the Cognitive Disability Strategy, which is meant to provide services to address the unmet needs of people with a broader cognitive disability and their families. Ontario's 2017 budget included money for FASD supports, but the strategy was not released. P.E.I. has the *Mental Health and Addiction Strategy 2016-2026*, and there is the *Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia* strategy of 2007, which incorporates FASD into its broader provincial strategies of alcohol awareness and prevention. New Brunswick is building on the experiences of other provinces and territories and is currently developing an interdisciplinary provincial strategy. In my own province of Newfoundland and Labrador, we recognize that the support of provincial FASD networks in the Provincial Alcohol Action Plan has gone a long way. The intent is to reduce harms and costs within our province, and the report was released in July 2022. Nunavut is currently working toward a strategic disability plan.

Senators, this bill is not designed to reinvent the wheel but to build on the existing work that has been conducted. It can go a long way to informing us on a going-forward basis.

Since the early 1980s, a patchwork of awareness campaigns has grown to support women at risk of using alcohol during pregnancy, as well as to meet the needs of peoples and communities affected by the disorder. Informed by research, rhetoric has shifted toward destigmatizing mothers who have used alcohol during pregnancy. Let me say that again because, unfortunately, many women bear this burden and stigma in a lifelong manner. The rhetoric has shifted toward destigmatization, and an effort is being made to ensure that there are early intervention measures readily available. The earlier the diagnosis is made and the earlier interventions take place, the better the outcomes in the long term.

Research, monitoring and evaluation of individual initiatives has also gradually increased.

Given the complex nature of this disorder, it is not strictly a health care issue. Rather, it impacts other areas that are very much the responsibility of our federal government, including, in particular, criminal justice and the economy. As a result, successive federal governments have made some efforts to support specific projects or programs.

• (2040)

For example, in 2003, the Government of Canada released the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): A framework for action. The Framework for Action is a tool to guide future action on FASD in Canada and is the result of national consultation efforts that initially took place in 1999 and again in 2002 to 2003. It stands as a vision for how jurisdictions can work together to improve the lives of those impacted by the disorder and, critically, to prevent alcohol-affected births.

The framework outlines five main goals: increasing awareness of the disorder and the impacts of alcohol use during pregnancy; increasing the capacity for resources and training for response to FASD; creating tools to increase screening, diagnostics and data collection; expanding knowledge and information gathering; and supporting critical action on the disorder.

The framework also specifically outlines the role of the federal government and states that it will continue to focus on developing and strengthening the coordination functions that ensure access to the necessary tools, expertise and resources right across the country.

In addition to forming the basis for action plans at the federal level, the framework was intended to guide interdepartmental work to address gaps and issues that are not currently undertaken in other sectors, including developing a national guideline — a wealthy country like ours should be able to do that — expanding scientific and social science knowledge relevant to both prevention and effective support for those affected; building the

evidence base and establishing mechanisms for knowledge exchange between different jurisdictions; and, critically, increasing awareness of FASD among professionals across the array of sectors who work with people, families, communities and those affected by the disorder.

There is also a companion federal document entitled *It Takes a Community*, which was launched following discussions in 2000 with experts, provinces and territories and First Nations, as well as Inuit community representatives. The framework is based on the values, principles, objectives and needs identified by First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada, recognizing the impact of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and strategizing on how it can be best addressed.

Honourable colleagues, that was over 20 years ago. The advocates, experts and those with lived experience are still calling on the federal government to take a leadership role in these areas.

Improving FASD prevention, diagnostic and other supports has actually thoroughly been studied in both Houses of Parliament. For example, in September 2006 in the other place, the Standing Committee on Health tabled a report entitled *Even One is Too Many: A Call for a Comprehensive Action Plan for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*.

The main thrust of the recommendations put forward can broadly be summarized as a call to the federal government and the health portfolio specifically to develop a comprehensive action plan with clear goals, objectives and timelines. The committee reported that there was:

... little evidence of any progress beyond the 2003 *National Framework on FASD*. Despite the repeated efforts to see a comprehensive action plan ...

The government response agreed that a comprehensive pan-Canadian action plan, developed in collaboration with the provinces, territories and stakeholders, is key to addressing the disorder.

Within our own chamber, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has included recommendations in its report to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment supports, including in the 2006 report *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada*.

As our colleagues Senator Pate and Senator Cotter have pointed out to me — and may hopefully elaborate upon this — a lot of what we know about individuals with FASD comes through their involvement in the criminal justice system.

Our colleagues who are members of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights will recall the 2019 *Interim Report — Study on the Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons: The Most Basic Human Right Is to Be Treated as a Human Being*. Nancy Lockwood, Program Manager at Citizen

Advocacy Ottawa, discussed some of the problems that individuals with FASD encounter in penitentiaries. This helps paint a practical picture. I'll put it in her words:

They are vulnerable to predators. They may experience sensory overload which makes them prone to outbursts and negative behaviours. They largely do not learn from previous mistakes and have difficulty understanding the rules of social interaction. People diagnosed with FASD also have difficulty with organization and time management, meaning they often do not arrive on time — or at all — for probation appointments.

She argued for the development of “alternatives to incarceration such as supervised residential settings and work placements” and “models that emphasize changing the environment not the person.” This sentiment was echoed again in the 2021-released fourth report *Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons*.

Honourable colleagues, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognized, the criminal justice system's inability to properly accommodate individuals with this disorder is an issue that disproportionately affects Indigenous people, who are being incarcerated at an ever-increasing rate, given longer jail sentences and are subject to harsher punishment in prisons than others in Canada.

Under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Action 34 states:

We call upon the governments of Canada, the provinces, and territories to undertake reforms to the criminal justice system to better address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), including:

- i. Providing increased community resources and powers for courts to ensure that FASD is properly diagnosed, and that appropriate community supports are in place for those with FASD.
- ii. Enacting statutory exemptions from mandatory minimum sentences of imprisonment for offenders affected by FASD.
- iii. Providing community, correctional, and parole resources to maximize the ability of people with FASD to live in the community.
- iv. Adopting appropriate evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of such programs and ensure community safety.

I had the privilege of asking Minister Lametti, when he appeared before our chamber during Question Period a few weeks ago, about the screening methods available for FASD for offenders in the criminal justice system. He was unable to give me a clear answer about what options were available. This is an issue that requires further investigation, and we continue to collaborate with his office in this respect.

Outside of the criminal justice context, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognized the need for FASD prevention and treatment, specifically in Indigenous communities. Specifically, Call to Action 33 states:

We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize as a high priority the need to address and prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and to develop, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

The federal government has indeed made several investments in programs that help support First Nations and Inuit communities in preventing FASD births and treating those affected. For example, with financial support from the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, what is now known as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada — the national representative organization of Inuit women in Canada — released the *Inuit Five-Year Strategic Plan for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder 2010-2015*. The plan set out a vision statement, mandate, priorities and strategic directions that would guide how the community would collaborate with governments and other regional and local stakeholders over five years with respect to the problem of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder within Inuit communities across the country.

Since 2014-15, the federal government has put in place a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder National Strategic Projects Fund, which allocates \$1.5 million annually to contribute to national projects supporting prevention, education and knowledge exchange and coordination of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder activities, for a total of \$12 million over eight years. A list of funded projects is available on the program's web page.

• (2050)

The Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada have since built on their tremendous efforts by developing a community-based awareness campaign to promote FASD prevention across their communities. I had the privilege of asking Minister Miller in our chamber a few weeks ago how recent programs were being evaluated and, again, I couldn't get a clear answer. This is another area where we need to continue to dialogue with the federal government.

Despite these government initiatives, studies and report recommendations, many people affected by the disorder do not receive adequate and consistent support and services. The lack of an integrated national strategy, standardized diagnostic and screening tools and comprehensive epidemiological research has meant that progress toward consistent and effective prevention and support has been slow.

Honourable senators, I believe the time is now. We all know that substantive change is incremental — on the Hill it is glacial at times rather than transformative. However, delays in action are

costing us. In considering inflation, recent reliable research has shown that the societal cost of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Canada is significant, topping \$10.5 billion annually. This is without accounting for the ongoing global pandemic and any potential changes to these costs because of the pandemic. These costs are divided up into criminal justice costs, health care costs, educational services, social service costs and other indirect financial losses, including lost productivity.

The bill I'm proposing is very straightforward. The enactment of the bill would require the Minister of Health, in consultation with other ministers and stakeholders, to develop a national framework designed to support Canadians with the disorder, their families and their caregivers. The framework would include measures to standardize guidelines, improve diagnostic and data reporting tools, expand knowledge bases, facilitate information exchanges and increase public and professional awareness, amongst other things. This would be achieved within a specified time frame, with the express intention of working with the provinces, territories and stakeholders, including self-advocates, as well as Indigenous communities and organizations with predominantly Indigenous leadership. In addition to a specific time frame, the framework would be subject to parliamentary oversight.

While there are benchmarks, including timelines, Bill S-253, by design, is not overly prescriptive in what the framework itself should entail. The government must be allowed the flexibility to respect the consultative process of this legislation. This legislation would ensure a coordinated national framework aimed at supporting — critically — Canadians with the disorder, their families and their caregivers.

Honourable senators, a national framework to address FASD is long overdue. Given the complexity of this issue and the breadth of its effects, the existing patchwork of provincial and territorial approaches is simply not enough, as we've seen. Since 2020, the Government of Canada has recognized September as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month, and I'm proud to say that in my own province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the mayor of St. John's, His Worship Danny Breen, has also made this declaration this past September. You may have also noticed on your Twitter feeds that many communities are beginning to recognize FASD. We can and should ensure that the federal government continues to take the appropriate steps to address a pressing, multifaceted issue affecting millions of Canadians.

Honourable senators, we all know this is not a partisan issue. We, as well as our elected colleagues, have heard from individuals affected by the disorder, their families, their caregivers, as well as experts and advocacy groups, that a coordinated national framework would help to improve their lives. This bill would mean one step toward increased, equitable access to diagnostic assessment and support services across Canada so that all Canadians with the disorder can achieve their full potential no matter where they live in this country. It would be one step closer to having a trained workforce that is FASD-informed across health, social, justice and education systems. It would be one step to support economic and social inclusion, and help to reduce the stigma associated with this vulnerable population.

Honourable senators, this bill is one step in the right direction. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY GENERALLY

SIXTH REPORT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the sixth report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *Treading Water: The impact of and response to the 2021 British Columbia floods*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on October 27, 2022.

Hon. Paula Simons moved:

That the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *Treading Water: The impact of and response to the 2021 British Columbia floods*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on October 27, 2022, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of Transport.

She said: Honourable senators, I would say that it is a most excellent report. We worked very hard on it, and it has been well received by the people of British Columbia.

It was not a fortuitous thing, but the release of the report happened to coincide with the arrival of another atmospheric river in British Columbia, so we were able to garner a fair bit of press attention by unhappy accident. I would like to move that we adopt the report. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned, on division.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO STRIKE A SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE LABOUR MARKET—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Bellemare, seconded by the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C.:

That a Special Senate Committee on Human Capital and the Labour Market be appointed until the end of the current session, to which may be referred matters relating to human capital, labour markets, and employment generally;

That the committee be composed of nine members, to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, and that four members constitute a quorum; and

That the committee be empowered to inquire into and report on such matters as may be referred to it by the Senate; to send for persons, papers and records; to hear witnesses and to publish such papers and evidence from day to day as may be ordered by the committee.

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I rise today to support the motion by Senator Bellemare to create the special human capital committee in the Senate.

The labour market, employers and employees are the engine of our economy and the bedrock of our prosperity. In 2021, 15.4 million Canadians were employed full time. Their needs, along with the perspectives of industry, sectors and regions must be reflected in our committee structure. They need a primary place for deliberation in the committee context.

Currently in the Senate, these priorities, such as those we have debated here — gig work, the evolution of the labour market or the impact of artificial intelligence and robotics on the future of work — receive, at best, a passing glance.

• (2100)

Recently, we have had quite a few debates on EI, and the necessity for EI reform has been made clear to many of us. We are also beset by significant labour market shortages by sector, region and season. These issues, colleagues, are not an afterthought. They are in the mainstream.

I therefore agree completely with Senator Bellemare and other members of the Rules Committee about the need to launch such an effort.

Form follows function, as we have all heard, but in the Senate's case, we need the form, structure and arrangements to bring us to wisdom.

Colleagues, so much in the world of work has changed in the last three decades. People no longer get a job and stay in it for life. Entire labour market sectors have been washed out and replaced by others. Apparently, if you're a social media influencer, you are in the highest demand category, while mainstays in our economy, such as manufacturing, are in steep decline, succumbing to globalization and automation. For some, it is the best of times; for others, it is the worst.

The rate and pace of change is furious, and who knows — it may change again if reshoring becomes a reality.

Nowhere else is this clearer than in the world of the gig economy. Statistics Canada has noticed this particular type of work arrangement — “gig work,” as we call it — has increased by 70% to 1.7 million workers. The average wage of a gig worker is about \$4,000.

Now \$4,000 is great if it's a side gig you do on the weekends or in the evenings to supplement your income, but I think we all know what \$4,000 means if that is your only source of income.

These are serious matters, colleagues, and our arrangements in the Senate must reflect evolving matters of national urgency. A committee on human capital will also necessarily intersect with immigration. We have labour market shortages that we aim to fill with immigration. We have little predictability for employers because it takes so long to get a work permit. We have variable routes for different regions and sectors and so-called high-skilled and low-skilled workers. I believe that this new committee will be well placed to give due attention to this matter, because the largest proportion of immigrants who come into the country — and, as I noted today, soon up to 500,000 a year — will be attached to the labour market. But there are remaining parts of the immigration context such as social cohesion, social inclusion, the rights of immigrants, citizenship and racism, and these should all stay with social affairs.

These are very important subjects for nation building. I point this out because I don't want there to be any miscommunication on my part that all of immigration should be covered by the human capital committee — absolutely not.

Colleagues, I also support the creation of this committee because I believe that this would be the small first test and little step on the way to rethinking the entire committee structure.

Although we have added new committees over time, we need to rethink mandates and structures. I have been Chair of the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee for just a year, but I have been a member of the committee for almost four years. That committee, just to take it as an example, has a wide mandate: Social Affairs, Science and Technology. We therefore cover — or should cover — space, physics, chemistry, the health of Canadians, youth, women, LGBTQ2+ communities, the disadvantaged, the disabled, students and education, social cohesion, the labour market and multiculturalism. Senator Seidman will tell me what else I am missing from this list.

This committee also receives a significant amount of government legislation and more and more private legislation from both the Senate and the House of Commons.

I want to underscore the importance of studies from Senate committees, but in particular from the Senate Social Affairs Committee. I want us to remember the Kirby Reports on mental health, which led to the creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. I want us to remember the report on autism, *Pay Now or Pay Later*, which is finally getting its day in Bill S-203. Also remember, colleagues, the reports on poverty, housing, disability and homelessness that have led successive governments, regardless of political stripe, to implement their recommendations.

In more recent times, I remember the study on social finance, which led to the announcement of the Social Finance Fund.

These are just a few examples, but I want to underline that the power and longevity of the Senate lives and breathes in Senate studies.

I also want to address another part of the mandate of the Social Affairs Committee, which rarely gets attention, and this is science and technology. I believe this is a separate stream of knowledge and discourse and, as a general topic, should be

removed from the Social Affairs Committee. Science, in its general form, including basic science, rarely gets studied at our committee. Certainly, in the past — and Senator Petitcher will remember this — the committee has studied artificial intelligence in health care and prescription pharmaceuticals, which incorporated science, but they are related to health and are not what we would call basic science.

However, the committee has not studied general science for over a decade, colleagues.

In 2008, the committee completed a report called *Mobilizing Science and Technology to Canada's Advantage*. It was a report that looked at the federal government's science strategy. However, given the broad range of matters that we are faced with, some things just dropped. In that context, general science has fallen victim to overload. That is a shame. Science is a very present force in our lives, and a new committee that had science more narrowly in its crosshairs would be far more appropriate and necessary.

These changes would allow the Senate Social Affairs Committee to focus on health and social affairs, including the science of health. Should these changes be followed through, the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee would become the social affairs and health committee.

I speak for myself as an individual senator. I am Chair of the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee, but please don't misunderstand that I'm speaking on behalf of my committee — not at all. I'm speaking just for myself.

I should add that one of my other frustrations is with committee schedules. I know we have to make a choice of which committees we sit on, but because of the inflexibility of the schedules — and we have readopted the previous committee schedule — it becomes impossible, every now and then, to go to a committee that competes with the slot that you are assigned. I would appreciate some flexibility in the committee schedules as well to allow for cross-fertilization.

I know that these are longer-term projects, but they are extremely important for the future of the Senate.

I believe that starting on this one small step and creating a time-limited human capital committee is an important experiment, and I wish it well. Thank you, colleagues.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Patterson, do you have a question?

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Yes please, if I may.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Omidvar, do you wish to answer a question?

Senator Omidvar: Always.

Senator Patterson: Senator Omidvar, thank you for your speech. I have a bit of experience with special committees because Senator Watt and I managed to engineer a special committee through the Senate on the Arctic. The question then was — and I'm not at all speaking against your motion — are the resources available to add a committee? Are the support services available, and is there time in the schedule?

I just wondered if you have had a chance to explore that with the Senate.

Senator Omidvar: Thank you, Senator Patterson, for that question. That is, in fact, the million-dollar question that we may have to grapple with. But, Senator Patterson, my name is Omidvar which means “hope” in Persian. I think where there is a will, there is a way. There must be a will around this question of reform and restructure. I believe that you, too, are a reformist. I, too, have experience on a special Senate committee. I watched Senator Mercer so brilliantly engineer its creation. I don't think we need to leave it up to political efforts by one or two senators — successful as they may have been.

• (2110)

Senator Bellemare has put this motion on the floor in a thoughtful way. It has been discussed; it has been hammered out at the Rules Committee. I am pretty sure that they have had conversations with the Senate administration, or they are in conversation with them. I will rest on my premise: Where there is a will, there must be a way. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

NET-ZERO EMISSIONS FUTURE

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Coyle, calling the attention of the Senate to the importance of finding solutions to transition Canada's society, economy and resource use in pursuit of a fair, prosperous, sustainable and peaceful net-zero emissions future for our country and the planet.

Hon. Amina Gerba: Honourable senators, I am honoured to speak to you today from the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

I rise today to speak to Inquiry No. 4 introduced in the Senate by our colleague, Senator Mary Coyle, on the urgent need to address the effects of climate change in our country and elsewhere in the world. I thank the honourable senator for reminding us of our duties at a time when, according to a very recent Léger poll, 70% of Canadians are worried or very worried about the effects of climate change.

Colleagues, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP27, will be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, from November 6 to 18.

Parties at the previous conference, COP26, who gathered in Glasgow, reaffirmed the goal agreed to by the international community and known as the Paris Agreement to maintain the target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Glasgow also emphasized the need for urgent scaling up of clearly stated actions, funding for capacity building and technology development to build the necessary resilience and reduce the vulnerability of many populations, if not all, to climate change.

A new UN climate report shows that countries are flattening the global greenhouse gas emissions curve but that these efforts are not enough to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. According to the report, the combined environmental commitments of the 193 parties to the Paris Agreement could cause the planet to warm by about 2.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. The published report also indicates that current commitments will result in a 10.6% increase in emissions by 2030 compared to 2010 levels.

Colleagues, climate change is not a figment of the imagination. It is hitting every continent hard and has recently had a significant impact on our country, on British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and part of Quebec. Alas, climate change is an unfortunate reality. We see its impact everywhere.

We see the impact in Africa, where governments and civil society groups are working harder than ever to build climate resiliency. Experts say that Africa is bearing the brunt of global warming even though the continent produces far less pollution than every other continent. Africa actually accounts for barely 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, but warming trends there are accelerated, with temperatures steadily rising faster than the global average for both land and sea.

The effects of these changes are considerable: rising sea levels, melting glaciers on African mountains like Mount Kenya in Kenya, the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda, and Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, and continent-wide drought. It's worth noting that 14 of the 23 countries that experienced drought-related emergencies over the past two years are on the continent of Africa.

Drought affects both rivers and lakes, like Lake Chad. It accelerates desertification and the degradation of farmland, displacing residents and causing famine. Currently, there are an estimated 1 million climate-displaced persons in Somalia and more than 20 million people at risk of famine in East Africa, according to the World Food Programme.

Climate change is also intensifying flooding on the African continent, with horrific consequences, such as property damage and outbreaks of disease. In Nigeria, unprecedented floods have caused 363 deaths, displaced nearly 2 million residents and destroyed more than 618,000 homes. In South Africa, in April, serious flooding caused nearly 400 deaths.

Without decisive action around the world and in Africa, it is estimated that 100 million Africans living in extreme poverty will be hit hard by the effects of climate change by 2030. One hundred million people is almost three times the population of Canada.

In light of such present and future disasters, one question needs to be asked: Is there an African perspective and are there African solutions to the challenges posed by climate change?

Dear colleagues, at the most recent United Nations General Assembly in New York, Senegalese President Macky Sall, the current chairperson of the African Union, stated, and I quote:

... we also have Africa as a provider of solutions, with its natural, human and agricultural resources, governments on the job, and vibrant and creative youth who innovate, undertake and succeed.

Honourable senators, African countries have implemented a number of initiatives to reduce the continent's vulnerability to the effects of climate change and to increase Africans' ability to adapt. Some of these solutions are inspired by nature itself. They involve using the tools of the natural world to slow the evolution of climate change and address it.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, or UNDP, protecting forests and mangroves could help Africa prevent up to \$500 billion in losses related to climate change. UNDP experts on climate issues in Africa believe that, "[f]or example, the Congo Basin forests are endowed with a significant climate change mitigation potential."

Madagascar recently introduced an aquatic plant known as rambo or grey sedge. This crop is drought-resistant and increases the availability of arable farmland. Comoros and Malawi, meanwhile, have opted for continuous tree planting as a way to cope with the effect that climate change is having on the environment and the people. Seychelles has decided to dig dykes to cope with flooding.

• (2120)

Over the past decade, Africa has made impressive progress in its transition to renewable energy. In fact, many countries have been working hard to increase their capacity to move toward a sustainable energy future. For example, over one third of Morocco's electricity is already renewable thanks to the Noor Ouarzazate solar complex, which is the largest concentrated solar power complex in the world.

That is also the case for the wind farms in Ethiopia and Cap-Vert, which are increasingly reducing their use of fossil fuels and their toxic gas emissions. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency's outlook, Sub-Saharan Africa could meet 67% of its power generation from these energies by 2030.

Some African countries and the African Development Bank are promoting and investing in sustainable transportation. In Senegal, for example, Dakar's public transit system now includes

an express train and a rapid bus transit system with electric vehicles. In 2021, Kenya equipped itself with thousands of electric motorcycles for getting around the city and has been encouraging people to adopt this method of travel ever since.

As you can see, honourable colleagues, African countries are working harder and harder to increase the resilience of local populations and their ability to adapt in order to deal with climate change.

The greatest climate resilience initiative in Africa, however, is the Great Green Wall. It is a flagship program that seeks to combat desertification and fight against food insecurity and poverty. The goal of this program is to change the lives of millions of people by creating a broad mosaic of green, productive landscapes across North Africa, in the Sahel region and in the Horn of Africa. Adopted by the African Union in 2007, the Great Green Wall initiative brings together more than 20 African countries as well as international organizations, research institutes, members of civil society and community organizations. This wall will link Dakar, the capital of Senegal, to Djibouti, covering 11.7 million hectares.

However, although Africa is presenting innovative solutions to strengthen climate resilience, the African continent is facing financial challenges in their efforts to accelerate climate resilience.

It is my hope that Canada will champion respect for these commitments to the continent at the United Nations, the G7, the OECD, COP27, in sum, in every forum where climate emergency is on the agenda. I sincerely hope that Canada will advocate for African countries in these fora and back their calls for support of their policies in this area.

When the Senators For Climate Solutions group was launched, our colleague Stan Kutcher said the following, and I quote:

History will not judge us. . . . It will not remember us for how great our GDP was. . . . It will, however, judge us on how well we supported our most vulnerable and what kind of Earth we left for our children, and climate change will be the focus of that judgment.

Honourable senators, I encourage you all to speak out about this important subject, to share your own opinions and perspectives, and, if you haven't already done so, to join Senators for Climate Solutions.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Omidvar, debate adjourned.)

(At 9:26 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable George J. Furey

THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SENATE

The Honourable Marc Gold

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett

FACILITATOR OF THE INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain

THE LEADER OF THE CANADIAN SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Scott Tannas

THE LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP

The Honourable Jane Cordy



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INTERIM CLERK OF THE SENATE AND CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS

Gérald Lafrenière

LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Philippe Hallée

USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

J. Greg Peters

THE MINISTRY

(In order of precedence)

(November 1, 2022)

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau	Prime Minister
The Hon. Chrystia Freeland	Minister of Finance
	Deputy Prime Minister
The Hon. Lawrence MacAulay	Minister of Veterans Affairs
	Associate Minister of National Defence
The Hon. Carolyn Bennett	Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
	Associate Minister of Health
The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities
The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos	Minister of Health
The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Hon. Mélanie Joly	Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Diane Lebouthillier	Minister of National Revenue
The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan	Minister of International Development
	Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada
The Hon. Carla Qualtrough	Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
The Hon. Patty Hajdu	Minister of Indigenous Services
	Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario
The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne	Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
The Hon. Karina Gould	Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
The Hon. Ahmed Hussen	Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion
The Hon. Seamus O'Regan	Minister of Labour
The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor	Minister of Official Languages
	Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez	Minister of Canadian Heritage
The Hon. Bill Blair	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada
	Minister of Emergency Preparedness
The Hon. Mary Ng	Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development
The Hon. Filomena Tassi	Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson	Minister of National Resources
The Hon. David Lametti	Minister of Justice
	Attorney General of Canada
The Hon. Joyce Murray	Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
The Hon. Anita Anand	Minister of National Defence
The Hon. Mona Fortier	President of the Treasury Board
The Hon. Steven Guilbeault	Minister of Environment and Climate Change
The Hon. Marco Mendicino	Minister of Public Safety
The Hon. Marc Miller	Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
The Hon. Dan Vandal	Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada
	Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
	Minister of Northern Affairs
The Hon. Omar Alghabra	Minister of Transport
The Hon. Randy Boissonnault	Minister of Tourism
	Associate Minister of Finance
The Hon. Sean Fraser	Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
The Hon. Mark Holland	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
The Hon. Gudie Hutchings	Minister of Rural Economic Development
The Hon. Marci Ien	Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth
The Hon. Helena Jaczek	Minister of Public Services and Procurement
The Hon. Kamal Khera	Minister of Seniors
The Hon. Pascale St-Onge	Minister of Sport
	Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec

SENATORS OF CANADA

ACCORDING TO SENIORITY

(November 1, 2022)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
George J. Furey, <i>Speaker</i>	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Jane Cordy	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.
Mobina S. B. Jaffer	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.
Pierrette Ringuette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.
Percy E. Downe	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Paul J. Massicotte	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.
Larry W. Campbell	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.
Dennis Dawson	Lauzon	Sainte-Foy, Que.
Sandra M. Lovelace Nicholas	New Brunswick	Tobique First Nations, N.B.
Stephen Greene	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.
Michael L. MacDonald	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.
Percy Mockler	New Brunswick	St. Leonard, N.B.
Pamela Wallin	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.
Yonah Martin	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.
Patrick Brazeau	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.
Leo Housakos	Wellington	Laval, Que.
Donald Neil Plett	Landmark	Landmark, Man.
Claude Carignan, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.
Dennis Glen Patterson	Nunavut	Iqaluit, Nunavut
Elizabeth Marshall	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.
Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu	La Salle	Sherbrooke, Que.
Judith G. Seidman	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.
Rose-May Poirier	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.
Salma Ataullahjan	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.
Fabian Manning	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.
Larry W. Smith	Saurel	Hudson, Que.
Josée Verner, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.
Jean-Guy Dagenais	Victoria	Blainville, Que.
Diane Bellemare	Alma	Outremont, Que.
David M. Wells	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Victor Oh	Mississauga	Mississauga, Ont.
Denise Batters	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.
Scott Tannas	Alberta	High River, Alta.
Peter Harder, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.
Raymonde Gagné	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Frances Lankin, P.C.	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.
Ratna Omidvar	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Chantal Petitclerc	Grandville	Montreal, Que.
Yuen Pau Woo	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.
Patricia Bovey	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
René Cormier	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.
Nancy J. Hartling	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.
Kim Pate	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Tony Dean	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.
Sabi Marwah	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Lucie Moncion	Ontario	North Bay, Ont.
Renée Dupuis	The Laurentides	Sainte-Pétronille, Que.
Marilou McPhedran	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Gwen Boniface	Ontario	Orillia, Ont.

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
Éric Forest	Gulf	Rimouski, Que.
Marc Gold	Stadacona	Westmount, Que.
Marie-Françoise Mégie	Rougemont	Montreal, Que.
Raymonde Saint-Germain	De la Vallière	Quebec City, Que.
Dan Christmas	Nova Scotia	Membertou, N.S.
Rosa Galvez	Bedford	Lévis, Que.
David Richards	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.
Mary Coyle	Nova Scotia	Antigonish, N.S.
Mary Jane McCallum	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Robert Black	Ontario	Centre Wellington, Ont.
Marty Deacon	Waterloo Region	Waterloo, Ont.
Yvonne Boyer	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.
Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.
Pierre J. Dalphond	De Lorimier	Montreal, Que.
Donna Dasko	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Colin Deacon	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.
Julie Miville-Dechéne	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.
Bev Busson	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.
Marty Klyne	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.
Patti LaBoucane-Benson	Alberta	Spruce Grove, Alta.
Paula Simons	Alberta	Edmonton, Alta.
Peter M. Boehm	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Brian Francis	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.
Margaret Dawn Anderson	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.
Pat Duncan	Yukon	Whitehorse, Yukon
Rosemary Moodie	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Stan Kutcher	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.
Tony Loffreda	Shawinigan	Montreal, Que.
Brent Cotter	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.
Hassan Yussuff	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Bernadette Clement	Ontario	Cornwall, Ont.
Jim Quinn	New Brunswick	Saint John, N.B.
Karen Sorensen	Alberta	Banff, Alta.
Amina Gerba	Rigaud	Blainville, Que.
Clément Gignac	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.
Michèle Audette	De Salaberry	Quebec City, Que.
David Arnot	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.
Ian Shugart, P.C.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
F. Gigi Osler	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.

SENATORS OF CANADA

ALPHABETICAL LIST

(November 1, 2022)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
The Honourable			
Anderson, Margaret Dawn	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.	Progressive Senate Group
Arnot, David	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Ataullahjan, Salma	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.	Conservative Party of Canada
Audette, Michèle	De Salaberry	Quebec City, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Batters, Denise	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.	Conservative Party of Canada
Bellemare, Diane	Alma	Outremont, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Bernard, Wanda Elaine Thomas	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Black, Robert	Ontario	Centre Wellington, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Boehm, Peter M.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boisvenu, Pierre-Hugues	La Salle	Sherbrooke, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Boniface, Gwen	Ontario	Orillia, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Bovey, Patricia	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Progressive Senate Group
Boyer, Yvonne	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Brazeau, Patrick	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.	Non-affiliated
Busson, Bev	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Campbell, Larry W.	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Non-affiliated
Carignan, Claude, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Christmas, Dan	Nova Scotia	Membertou, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Clement, Bernadette	Ontario	Cornwall, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Cordy, Jane	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Cormier, René	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Cotter, Brent	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Coyle, Mary	Nova Scotia	Antigonish, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Dagenais, Jean-Guy	Victoria	Blainville, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Dalphond, Pierre J.	De Lorimier	Montreal, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Dasko, Donna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dawson, Dennis	Lauzon	Ste-Foy, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Deacon, Colin	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Deacon, Marty	Waterloo Region	Waterloo, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dean, Tony	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Downe, Percy E.	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Duncan, Pat	Yukon	Whitehorse, Yukon	Independent Senators Group
Dupuis, Renée	The Laurentides	Sainte-Pétronille, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Forest, Éric	Gulf	Rimouski, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Francis, Brian	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.	Progressive Senate Group
Furey, George J., <i>Speaker</i>	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Non-affiliated
Gagné, Raymonde	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Galvez, Rosa	Bedford	Lévis, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Gerba, Amina	Rigaud	Blainville, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gignac, Clément	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gold, Marc	Stadacona	Westmount, Que.	Non-affiliated
Greene, Stephen	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Harder, Peter, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.	Progressive Senate Group
Hartling, Nancy J.	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Housakos, Leo	Wellington	Laval, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Jaffer, Mobina S. B.	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Klyne, Marty	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.	Progressive Senate Group
Kutcher, Stan	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
LaBoucane-Benson, Patti	Alberta	Spruce Grove, Alta.	Non-affiliated
Lankin, Frances, P.C.	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.	Independent Senators Group

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
Loffreda, Tony	Shawinigan	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Lovelace Nicholas, Sandra M.	New Brunswick	Tobique First Nations, N.B.	Progressive Senate Group
MacDonald, Michael L.	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.	Conservative Party of Canada
Manning, Fabian	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Marshall, Elizabeth	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Martin, Yonah	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Conservative Party of Canada
Marwah, Sabi	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Massicotte, Paul J.	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.	Independent Senators Group
McCallum, Mary Jane	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
McPhedran, Marilou	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Mégie, Marie-Françoise	Rougemont	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Miville-Dechéne, Julie	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Mockler, Percy	New Brunswick	St. Leonard, N.B.	Conservative Party of Canada
Moncion, Lucie	Ontario	North Bay, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Moodie, Rosemary	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Oh, Victor	Mississauga	Mississauga, Ont.	Conservative Party of Canada
Omidvar, Ratna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Osler, F. Gigi	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Pate, Kim	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Patterson, Dennis Glen	Nunavut	Iqaluit, Nunavut	Canadian Senators Group
Petitclerc, Chantal	Grandville	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Plett, Donald Neil	Landmark	Landmark, Man.	Conservative Party of Canada
Poirier, Rose-May	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.	Conservative Party of Canada
Quinn, Jim	New Brunswick	Saint John, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Ravalia, Mohamed-Iqbal	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent Senators Group
Richards, David	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Ringuette, Pierrette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Saint-Germain, Raymonde	De la Vallière	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Seidman, Judith G.	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Shugart, Ian, P.C.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Simons, Paula	Alberta	Edmonton, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Smith, Larry W.	Saurel	Hudson, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Sorensen, Karen	Alberta	Banff, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Tannas, Scott	Alberta	High River, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
Verner, Josée, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Wallin, Pamela	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.	Canadian Senators Group
Wells, David M.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Woo, Yuen Pau	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Yussuff, Hassan	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group

SENATORS OF CANADA
BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

(November 1, 2022)

ONTARIO—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Salma Ataullahjan.....	Ontario (Toronto).....	Toronto
2 Victor Oh	Mississauga	Mississauga
3 Peter Harder, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick
4 Frances Lankin, P.C.....	Ontario	Restoule
5 Ratna Omidvar.....	Ontario	Toronto
6 Kim Pate	Ontario	Ottawa
7 Tony Dean	Ontario	Toronto
8 Sabi Marwah	Ontario	Toronto
9 Lucie Moncion.....	Ontario	North Bay
10 Gwen Boniface	Ontario	Orillia
11 Robert Black	Ontario	Centre Wellington
12 Marty Deacon	Waterloo Region	Waterloo
13 Yvonne Boyer.....	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford
14 Donna Dasko	Ontario	Toronto
15 Peter M. Boehm	Ontario	Ottawa
16 Rosemary Moodie.....	Ontario	Toronto
17 Hassan Yussuff	Ontario	Toronto
18 Bernadette Clement.....	Ontario	Cornwall
19 Ian Shugart, P.C.....	Ontario	Ottawa
20 .....	.....	.....
21 .....	.....	.....
22 .....	.....	.....
23 .....	.....	.....
24 .....	.....	.....

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

QUEBEC—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Paul J. Massicotte	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire
2 Dennis Dawson	Lauzon.....	Ste-Foy
3 Patrick Brazeau	Repentigny	Maniwaki
4 Leo Housakos	Wellington.....	Laval
5 Claude Carignan, P.C.....	Mille Isles.....	Saint-Eustache
6 Judith G. Seidman.....	De la Durantaye.....	Saint-Raphaël
7 Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu	La Salle	Sherbrooke
8 Larry W. Smith	Saurel	Hudson
9 Josée Verner, P.C.....	Montarville.....	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures
10 Jean-Guy Dagenais	Victoria.....	Blainville
11 Diane Bellemare	Alma.....	Outremont
12 Chantal Petitclerc	Grandville.....	Montreal
13 Renée Dupuis.....	The Laurentides.....	Saint-Pétronille
14 Éric Forest.....	Gulf	Rimouski
15 Marc Gold.....	Stadacona	Westmount
16 Marie-Françoise Mégie.....	Rougemont	Montreal
17 Raymonde Saint-Germain.....	De la Vallière	Quebec City
18 Rosa Galvez	Bedford.....	Lévis
19 Pierre J. Dalphond.....	De Lorimier.....	Montreal
20 Julie Miville-Dechêne.....	Inkerman	Mont-Royal
21 Tony Loffreda.....	Shawinigan	Montreal
22 Amina Gerba.....	Rigaud	Blainville
23 Clément Gignac	Kennebec.....	Lac Saint-Joseph
24 Michèle Audette.....	De Salaberry.....	Quebec City

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—MARITIME DIVISION

NOVA SCOTIA—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Jane Cordy	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth
2 Stephen Greene	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax
3 Michael L. MacDonald	Cape Breton	Dartmouth
4 Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston
5 Dan Christmas	Nova Scotia	Membertou
6 Mary Coyle	Nova Scotia	Antigonish
7 Colin Deacon	Nova Scotia	Halifax
8 Stan Kutcher	Nova Scotia	Halifax
9		
10		

NEW BRUNSWICK—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pierrette Ringuette	New Brunswick	Edmundston
2 Sandra M. Lovelace Nicholas	New Brunswick	Tobique First Nations
3 Percy Mockler	New Brunswick	St. Leonard
4 Rose-May Poirier	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent
5 René Cormier	New Brunswick	Caraquet
6 Nancy J. Hartling	New Brunswick	Riverview
7 David Richards	New Brunswick	Fredericton
8 Jim Quinn	New Brunswick	Saint John
9		
10		

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—4

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Percy E. Downe	Charlottetown	Charlottetown
2 Brian Francis	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point
3		
4		

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—WESTERN DIVISION

MANITOBA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Donald Neil Plett	Landmark	Landmark
2 Raymonde Gagné.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
3 Patricia Bovey.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
4 Marilou McPhedran	Manitoba	Winnipeg
5 Mary Jane McCallum.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
6 F. Gigi Osler	Manitoba	Winnipeg

BRITISH COLUMBIA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Mobina S. B. Jaffer	British Columbia	North Vancouver
2 Larry W. Campbell	British Columbia	Vancouver
3 Yonah Martin.....	British Columbia	Vancouver
4 Yuen Pau Woo.....	British Columbia	North Vancouver
5 Bev Busson	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region
6		

SASKATCHEWAN—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pamela Wallin.....	Saskatchewan	Wadena
2 Denise Batters	Saskatchewan	Regina
3 Marty Klyne	Saskatchewan	White City
4 Brent Cotter	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
5 David Arnot	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
6		

ALBERTA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Scott Tannas.....	Alberta.....	High River
2 Patti LaBoucane-Benson.....	Alberta.....	Spruce Grove
3 Paula Simons	Alberta.....	Edmonton
4 Karen Sorensen	Alberta.....	Banff
5		
6		

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 George J. Furey, <i>Speaker</i>	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
2 Elizabeth Marshall	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise
3 Fabian Manning	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's
4 David M. Wells	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
5 Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate
6		

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Margaret Dawn Anderson	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife

NUNAVUT—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Dennis Glen Patterson	Nunavut	Iqaluit

YUKON—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pat Duncan	Yukon	Whitehorse

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