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Chair: Ms. Lena Metlege Diab



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• (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

[*Translation*]

I call this meeting to order.

[*English*]

If you can't hear me, I suggest you put your microphones on. I have to let you know that I have an infection in both of my ears, so I will do my best.

Welcome to meeting 119 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

The committee is meeting in public to begin its study of Bill C-270, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to pornographic material. The bill was referred to this committee on May 8.

Based on a conversation I had with Mr. Brock last meeting, in which he indicated that the sponsor of the bill will not be attending to be a witness, I need direction. The committee has to tell us how you would like to begin, so we can begin the study, whether the sponsor wishes to proceed with it or not.

I'm ready to give the floor to members.

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wasn't privy to that conversation. I must say I'm very disappointed to hear that.

In the over nine years I've been a member of Parliament, it has without exception been my experience that people who introduce private member's bills are passionate about their issue. They're quite anxious to appear at committee to share their insights into why the issue is so important to them and enlighten the committee members as to why they should support it.

As I'm thinking and talking, I am quite astonished by the fact this individual is not available or not willing to come to the committee to speak to his bill. I've seen him in the House recently, so we know he's around.

Just to make the wishes of the committee crystal clear, I would like to move this motion:

That the committee invite Arnold Viersen, as the sponsor of Bill C-270, to appear for one hour as soon as possible to begin committee consideration of this legislation.

That's the legislation we are tasked with dealing with.

I can't imagine there would be any opposition to this motion around the table, but I guess I remain to be surprised, as I sometimes am, by events at the committee and in Parliament.

There it is. I hope we can deal with this in very fast order, so we can move on to other pressing business. I do have another motion I would like to table subsequently, which I will deal with later. It deals with extending the time for this committee to consider the bill by 30 days, given the delay that has taken place so far.

I would like to deal with the motion inviting Mr. Viersen first. I'd be interested in hearing from other members of the committee on their views.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

I have two hands up. I have Mr. MacGregor first and Mr. Brock second.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Similar to Mr. Maloney, I am perplexed by the reluctance of Mr. Viersen to come and defend his own piece of legislation. Honestly, from my perspective, that's not much of a vote of confidence, if the sponsor of the bill is unwilling to come before a committee.

Similar to Mr. Maloney, I've been here for nine years. Only once have I had the opportunity to appear before a committee to defend a private member's bill. That was just recently, with the national strategy on brain injuries act. I appeared before the Standing Committee on Health. Without a doubt, it was one of the highlights of my career over the last nine years. You get to sit in the hot seat. You get to defend your bill and take questions from members. I don't know why anyone would willingly give that up.

We cannot compel Mr. Viersen to appear. As he is a member of Parliament, we cannot do that. We can certainly formally send the invite.

Again, I just remain completely perplexed as to why the sponsor of a piece of legislation would not take this very rare opportunity.

I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacGregor.

Mr. Brock.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have spoken with Mr. Viersen. He is open to the invitation. Conservatives will be voting in favour of Mr. Maloney's motion.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: I would be interested to hear from Mr. Brock, now that we have that good news, as to when that might happen.

Mr. Larry Brock: I'm not privy to that information. It is not at my disposal right now, but he is open to the invitation.

The Chair: For the purpose of trying to suggest dates here for you with the clerk, I will say that my hope is that the anti-Semitism draft is completed today. We will then have one more meeting to complete the report on Islamophobia.

After that, we are open for new items. At the moment, we have no other items that take precedence over this private member's bill, Bill C-270.

The question is.... We would like him to appear, probably, a week from today. That would be the....

I think I have people putting their hands up.

Mr. Mendicino.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to my colleague, Mr. Maloney, for bringing the motion. Of course, I'll be supporting it.

I also want to thank Mr. Brock for indicating that the Conservatives will be voting in favour of it as well.

I want to seek some clarification, though, Madam Chair, because at the outset of the meeting, you indicated that you'd had a conversation with Mr. Brock, who said to you at the time that Mr. Viersen had no intention of appearing before the committee. I take it from the Conservatives' support of this motion that Mr. Viersen has reconsidered his position and will indeed attend. In light of that revelation, I would just urge that we seek a confirmation of a date from Mr. Viersen as quickly as possible.

The Chair: Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: I was going to say something very similar to Mr. Mendicino.

I don't see any reason that we can't get an answer to the question about next Thursday sometime today, so that we can plan accordingly.

The Chair: Does that make...?

Mr. Brock, as the vice-chair, I guess, and the chair of your caucus on this committee, are you able to undertake to get a commitment today for next Thursday?

Mr. Larry Brock: I can relay the wishes of this committee.

As I've indicated, Mr. Viersen has indicated that he is open to the invitation. I am not a staff member of Mr. Viersen's office. I am not going to waste any valuable time at this committee to stand down and try to locate him or a member of his staff to check his availability.

However, I've taken to heart all of the comments from all of the members, and I will pass them on to Mr. Viersen's office.

The Chair: I respect that. We hope to get an affirmative answer, then, as soon as possible in order to plan our schedule for next Thursday.

Is there anything else on this particular matter that anyone else wants to mention?

A voice: Do you mean on the motion?

The Chair: Yes, I mean on the motion or on Bill C-270.

Mr. James Maloney: It sounds like we have consensus on this motion.

There is a second motion I'd like to deal with more.

The Chair: Should I take a vote?

No, I'll just take account of the fact that it's unanimous.

Mr. James Maloney: I would take a vote.

The Chair: You would like to have a vote.

Can we have a vote, please?

I'm easy today.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 11; nays 0)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Brock.

• (1110)

Mr. Larry Brock: I think it's highly unusual.... Granted, I don't have the experience level of many members of this committee, but I think it's highly irregular, if not unusual and not as per appropriate committee protocol, for any member other than the chair, working with the clerk, to issue a formal invitation to any witness—in this case Mr. Viersen.

I don't think it's incumbent upon me, although he's a colleague and a member of the Conservative caucus.... I think it's a requirement of the chair, working in concert with the clerk, to issue the formal invitation.

The Chair: Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: Mr. Brock's point is duly noted. However, he did inform the committee that he has obviously spoken to Mr. Viersen, because he told us that he was open to the invitation. That doesn't tell us that he's willing to accept the invitation. As a matter of courtesy, since we're all now unanimous in the view that he should attend, it makes sense that he could speak to one of his colleagues, whom he sees and talks to more frequently than the rest of us do, to help us along the way. I don't see that as being unreasonable.

The Chair: Mr. Mendicino.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: I echo the sentiments of Mr. Maloney.

While I'm sympathetic to Mr. Brock's point that he is not Mr. Viersen's scheduler, I go back to your original comment, which was that it was reported at one point that Mr. Viersen had no intention of appearing before this committee, which, in the words of Mr. MacGregor, which I'm paraphrasing, does raise questions about his ongoing support for his own legislation.

Given the objective of the legislation, which would have been studied and examined by this committee were Mr. Viersen, its sponsor, to have appeared, through its questioning of that individual, I do think that, at a minimum, it raises questions about his ongoing commitment to this legislation.

I take the update at face value if he says he's open to the invitation. I certainly would encourage Mr. Viersen to accept that invitation and appear before this committee as quickly as possible, so that we can get on with the business of studying that legislation, given its important objective.

The Chair: I have Mr. Maloney, and then I have Mr. Brock.

Mr. James Maloney: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Now that we know that Mr. Viersen's open to the invitation, we're hoping to get an answer as soon as possible. However, this issue of dealing with the bill has taken longer than anticipated for the reasons we're talking about, so I would like to move another motion:

That the committee request an extension of 30 sitting days to the period of committee consideration for Bill C-270.

The Chair: Mr. Brock.

Mr. Larry Brock: We have unanimous agreement on motion number one for the invitation. I encourage the chair to move forthwith to issue a formal invitation to Mr. Viersen.

I now wish to move another motion, and that is a dilatory motion to proceed to business of committee.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): You can't. We're in debate.

Mr. Larry Brock: No, this is a dilatory motion.

I move that we move to the order of business of the day, which is to return to the anti-Semitic study. That is the primary purpose—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'll just correct you, so that you don't think that we're actually doing an "anti-Semitic" study. I just wanted to correct that.

Mr. Larry Brock: I have the floor, Ms. Dabrusin. Thank you for the interruptions.

My understanding is that this is a dilatory motion. The clerk is acknowledging in the affirmative that it is, and I wish to move on to the anti-Semitic study.

The Chair: It's "anti-Semitism". That's what they're trying to....

Yes, we will move on to that. Let me just clear up the record.

The clerk will send another invitation to Mr. Viersen to appear. As you all know, and just as a reminder, an invitation had already

been sent previously for him to appear, but we will send another one again today.

Now, I think what I will do is declare the public part closed.

Some hon. members: We need to vote.

The Chair: Oh, we need to vote. I'm sorry. Okay.

● (1115)

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Let's cut the chair some slack. She's a little under the weather this morning.

The Chair: All right. Can we please vote, then, on Mr. Brock's motion?

(Motion negated: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: I think that takes us back to the motion to request an extension for 30 sitting days.

Mr. Maloney, please.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Chair, we can get back to the order of things that we're discussing, including the study on anti-Semitism, within minutes if we pass this motion.

We have clear agreement from the other side that they want Mr. Viersen to be here. We're simply allowing for an extension of time to accommodate what obviously is a very busy schedule.

We don't need to debate this motion. It's a yes or no. We can get on with it and get back to the business at hand, so if there's any further discussion on this, I can only interpret it as an attempt to prevent Mr. Viersen from attending this committee, because there's no other way to look at it.

The Chair: I have Mr. MacGregor, Ms. Ferreri and then [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: I saw this scenario play out before with Bill S-210 at the public safety committee. There was a Conservative filibuster at the public safety committee, which prevented us from completing our study with witnesses and prevented the committee from doing a clause-by-clause review of the bill. We reached the deadline, and the bill was automatically reported back to the House.

If we don't extend this, we're going to face a similar situation with Bill C-270.

Again, if we just had a simple "yes" vote on this, I think it would be very reasonable to ask for an extension. What I think is completely unacceptable is for this committee to completely abandon its duty to do a fulsome study of each piece of legislation that comes before it. We need to have witnesses. If Mr. Viersen doesn't want to come, that's fine. We can proceed with other witnesses.

I will not tolerate a delay on this bill that prevents us from doing due diligence and a thorough clause-by-clause review. Reporting it back to the House without doing a study would be a dereliction of the duties of this committee. I think we should vote for the extension.

The Chair: Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

What's happening here today, for the folks watching, is an unfolding of what we've seen repeatedly since the time I was elected, but I'm sure it's been like this longer than I've been here. It's a deflection of accountability. That's ultimately the big conversation that has to happen on a bigger scale.

It's ironic that you have Mr. Maloney, who sits on this committee, writing a tweet asking if the leader is gagging us. It is no secret to the public that there are 24 Liberal MPs who have signed a letter asking for the resignation of the Prime Minister. The tie-in to this, when we're talking about this motion, is that there is a lack of accountability and there is deflection across all fronts. That comes from the top down. That is what we see repeatedly, over and over again.

I want to point out that when we're looking at anti-Semitism, I look at Mr. Housefather, who has stood up as a Liberal MP, trying to fight against a caucus that has blatantly insulted him, quite frankly. We have a colleague, Marty Morantz, who is a fierce fighter for the Jewish community.

There is data that reveals that anti-Semitic hate crimes are up 400%. Since when, Madam Chair? Since Justin Trudeau took office. That's since when.

Let's talk about that. Let's talk about the rise in anti-Semitism since Justin Trudeau took office. Let's talk about sexual assaults, which are up 75% since Justin Trudeau took office. Let's talk about sexual violations against children, which are up 119% since Justin Trudeau took office. Let's talk about forcible confinement or kidnapping, which are up 11% since Justin Trudeau took office. Let's talk about indecent, harassing communications, which are up 86% since Justin Trudeau took office. Let's talk about—

• (1120)

Mr. James Maloney: On a point of order, I haven't the slightest idea what this has to do with the motion we're debating right now.

The Chair: I don't either, quite frankly.

Can you tell me the relevance? Otherwise, I'm going to have to ask you to speak on the motion requesting 30 sitting days to study the bill before we send it back to the House.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Can you repeat that again for me, Madam Chair? Repeat it for clarity and my own self.

What's the motion that you think doesn't have relevance to what I'm saying?

The Chair: The motion that you are speaking to, or are supposed to be speaking to, is this:

That the committee request an extension of 30 sitting days to the period of committee consideration for Bill C-270.

If that motion does not pass, we risk not being able to study this bill here in committee.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I think everything I've just said is extremely relevant, Madam Chair, and to the member across the way, I say this: Let's study a bill that is going to help change the Criminal Code, so that you don't have violent repeat offenders under legislation that the Liberals put in place with Bill C-75, which brought in catch and release. The most heinous of criminals, who I know the member opposite—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: On a point of order, is the member suggesting that she's supporting the motion? In that case, we could just go to a vote. We're actually providing the opportunity to Mr. Viersen to be able to speak to this important bill. We're trying to save it by giving the extra 30 days, because he has been so busy; that's what he says. If we're going to talk about transparency, what is he actually trying to avoid by not appearing here today? I think that is the question.

If Ms. Ferreri is suggesting that she's going to support us in allowing us to do the important study of this bill, which we agree—

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Chair, that is not a point of order. That's debate.

The Chair: Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, I think what they're missing is that they're stuck on a person coming to testify at this committee whom the clerk must invite. That is standard procedure. What we are saying, in the committee of justice, is that crime has never been so rampant as under this Prime Minister, under this Liberal-NDP coalition.

Yes, we would like to study bills that will help Canadians feel more safe—

Mr. James Maloney: On a point of order, Madam Chair, this is verging on ridiculous.

The Chair: I'm going to clarify here. I've already said, and I will say it again, that the sponsor of the bill—not another member and not a witness from the outside, but the sponsor of the bill we're talking about—has already been invited by the clerk. That's just so there's no misunderstanding here or any mixing of words.

The clerk will reinvite the sponsor of the bill—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: “Reinvite”? Has he already been invited?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you for clarifying.

The Chair: We have been seized with this bill since May 8.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Okay. Thank you for that.

I think what I would like to circle back to here is that these are the games you see repeatedly by the Liberals.

I want to read this, because this is really what it comes down to. They actually don't care about public safety. I'll read the tweet by Mr. Maloney into the record.

Mr. James Maloney: Good.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: It says, “Justice Committee is ready to study @ArnoldViersen's Private Member's Bill.

“We'd like him to appear to speak to this Bill before the deadline.

“Arnold: will you appear? Or is Pierre gagging you because you keep fighting against women's right to choose?”

This is the classic Liberal way: Oh, we're losing, so let's talk about abortion.

The last thing I need, Madam Chair, through you, is some Liberal man to tell me about my right to choose.

Mr. James Maloney: Like Arnold.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: What we are here to do is to point out the justice failures of this government. This is the reality they have. They laugh—

• (1125)

Mr. Larry Brock: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Before you go to the point of order, Mr. Viersen was invited by the clerk on September 26 to appear at the meeting of Monday, October 7.

I don't know how many points of order I have here.

Mr. Brock.

Mr. Larry Brock: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The display of several members on the opposite side of this committee room is disgusting. Laughing and mocking the commentary from a colleague on a very important issue is absolutely disgraceful. I want to raise that as a point of order first.

Secondly, they should show a modicum of respect. Instead of catcalling from the other side of the room, they should allow my colleague to finish her intervention. They too will have the floor at some point in time, and we will extend the same respect. That's how this committee should be working.

The Chair: I don't know if I'm supposed to respond to that, but I don't really see any more mocking from one side or the other. I think I've seen enough on my left side as well.

In any case, I'll go back to Ms. Ferreri—

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Chair, I raised the point of order because they were talking over my colleague. That's why I raised the point of order.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: If I may, Madam Chair, I was actually just agreeing with Ms. Ferreri. I don't want a man like Mr. Viersen deciding my right to choose. I was actually showing support.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Ferreri, go ahead, please.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: What I was saying at the beginning.... Obviously, the Liberals want to interrupt me. I get it. They don't want to hear this. They don't want this public. They don't want the record of their Prime Minister, who, quite frankly, most of them don't support.... All you have to do is go to question period and see the empty benches to see what's happening. That is the reality.

The tweet about “gagging” is so hypocritical when you have, literally, a guy.... This was the former parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, who was on record just days ago saying that this man is a full-blown narcissist and a dictator. That is what you're

dealing with. Then, this Liberal member has the audacity to say that we're being gagged by our leader.

I want to talk about the bill at hand, because this comes back to the public safety crisis that's been created in this country under the Liberal and NDP coalition. The bill says this:

This enactment amends the Criminal Code to prohibit a person from making, distributing or advertising pornographic material for commercial purposes without having first ascertained that, at the time the material was made, each person whose image is depicted in the material was 18 years of age or older and gave their express consent to their image being depicted.

That comes back to everybody asking, “What's the relevance of what you're talking about?” This is the justice committee, and the stats.... Just go outside. This is what I can't stress enough, Madam Chair. They've made their position clear on what they're trying to stop here, and it has nothing to do with justice being served in this country. It has nothing to do with the public safety crisis that has happened under the watch of Justin Trudeau and his incompetent ministers. That is the reality of what we're saying. Trafficking in persons is up 84%. There is a direct link to all of this and to young men being exposed to pornography, so of course we want to study this.

I'm going to come back to the anti-Semitism study: My colleague Mr. Brock put forward in a dilatory motion that we get back to studying this. Clearly, the Liberals have no interest in actually delving into the justice that has been destroyed in this country and the public safety that's been destroyed. I want to reiterate that, and I hope that we will have the support of the folks across the way, because we have two studies happening in this committee, on Islamophobia and on anti-Semitism, and clearly these members of Parliament, much like the whole Liberal caucus, are not talking to each other.

I will read this into the record: “New data reveals antisemitic hate crimes are up 400% after 9 years of Trudeau. 2/3 of all hate crimes are against Jews in Canada. When will Justin Trudeau finally take antisemitism seriously?”

That is a direct tweet from my friend and colleague and fierce Jewish advocate Marty Morantz. That is what we would ask here today, to get to the dilatory motion of that.

There is one final piece I want to leave on this, because I know there are a lot of victims and survivors watching at home. Mr. Maloney wrote a tweet, and he said, “My heart is with all the victims who are going through unimaginable pain. It's disgusting to see their tragedy used to score political points. We all need to work with law enforcement to prevent these crimes and support victims. This has nothing to do with 'Liberal policy.'”

Well, Mr. Maloney, I'm not sure how long you've been here, but every single thing has to do with policy. That is the law, and that is politics. These politics and these policies, as you've heard directly from survivors, are killing women, children and innocent people on the street. For you to say, “This has nothing to do with 'Liberal policy’”, through you, Madam Chair, is shameful. It's shameful.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

I have a list here. I will now go to Mr. Jivani.

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since we've confirmed that an invitation to Mr. Viersen has been resent, can we not wait for him to respond to that invitation, and can we move forward on the anti-Semitism study? Is that not an option for the committee? The clerk is confirming that it's being resent. Can't—

The Chair: Yes, Mr. MacGregor, on a point of order.

We have a problem with this.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: I think it might be helpful to all members if you, as the chair, confer with the clerk, just to let us all know what the dates are that we're working with here.

The Chair: That's the problem I've been telling you for weeks. That's what I've been saying, with the clerk, for weeks. We have an issue with the date. If he does not appear or we don't study it, we risk not being able to.

Could you give me a moment? Thank you.

• (1130)

(Pause)

• (1130)

[Translation]

The Chair: I just spoke with the clerk, and I'll try to relay what he just explained to me.

[English]

I'm going to try to explain it, but then I might ask for clarification.

Monday is the date that we have to report it.

Mr. Larry Brock: This Monday...?

The Chair: Yes, because it's the last day that we can vote on the 30-day extension.

If the 30-day extension is not approved now, we risk not being able to do it anymore, because November 19 is the day this has to go back. November 19 is a Tuesday, and normally they're done the Wednesday before. We don't sit the Remembrance Day week. That is November 6, so we are on a very tight deadline. This is not a joke. This is very serious. I've been saying this for weeks, and that's why I was trying to do my best here as the chair.

I think we all believe there is merit in this PMB. Everybody would like to study it, because there is merit in the contents. We are on a deadline now. We risk not being able to do anything with it, so then what? That is the question. The sponsor can choose to pull it back and not deal with it, or I don't know what the option is. I suppose you can amend it any way you want, but how would you do that if you don't study it? Then if it goes to the House without being studied, I think that would be a shame, and that would not be something you would want the justice and human rights committee to do.

We've known this for weeks. This is not new. I know we've been meeting in camera, but I've been saying that now for weeks.

The clerk can explain it a little more, in case....

• (1135)

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jean-François Lafleur): Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll try to help out here.

The thing is that November 4 is the last possible date to adopt a motion for an extension. First, we have to adopt a motion. Second, we have to report it to the House, so it would be on the Tuesday morning. When you report it, the vote is deemed asked and then postponed to the next Wednesday. The next possible Wednesday is November 6.

Since the deadline date has moved a bit but not further to the other Wednesday, if you follow me, the deadline for us to adopt a report to ask for an extension remains November 4, because we can't go any further with this.

For us, it doesn't change anything. We still have to vote, at the latest, on November 6, because if we continue further and try to vote for November 19, the deadline will have passed, and then the bill will be deemed to be referred back to the House without amendment.

Those are the steps and the requirements, deadline, whatever. That's how it works.

I hope I have been clear enough.

The Chair: Mr. Jivani, do you have a question? Do you need clarification on that?

Mr. Jamil Jivani: I do, yes. I just want to confirm that this framing that is happening right now, that somehow the timetable is contingent on a particular witness coming forward, does not actually hinge on this timetable. We could just start studying this, and we don't have to actually wait for a specific witness. Is that correct?

The Clerk: If you want an extension, it has to be, at the latest, on Monday. The rest, on how to manage whether a sponsor would come or not—

Mr. Jamil Jivani: I understand.

The Chair: To Mr. Jivani's question, I believe the answer is no. We have no time, but I just... The 4th is Monday. We can't study it beyond that, because we've lost the time.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: I understand.

Let's just study it, then. What's being presented today is, I believe, a false framing, which is why I'm asking for confirmation that somehow we need a particular witness to agree to appear in order for us to commit to studying this.

Can we not just commit to studying it? Why is there a delay?

The Chair: We still need the 30-day extension, because we've now lost the time. Whether he appears or not is a secondary issue.

We need the 30-day extension, because we've now lost the time.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: That's fine, but I want to confirm that whether he appears or not is secondary.

The Chair: We have no time anymore. It's 30 days.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: I understand.

The Chair: It's 30 sitting days. Isn't that how it's worded? Otherwise, no, it cannot be studied anymore.

I had an original.... I don't know where we go from here.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Chair, can we have a health break for five to 10 minutes, so I can consult with my team, please? Thank you.

The Chair: Yes, we'll take a break for a few minutes.

• (1135) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1145)

The Chair: We will resume.

Mr. Brock, you were next on the list, but perhaps you can tell us where you've landed with the team, if possible.

Mr. Larry Brock: I'm ready to speak. Thank you, Madam Chair.

If all members will recall, for at least two weeks, whenever the issue of Bill C-270 has come up, along with the issue of the availability of the sponsor, I have always confirmed the availability of a number of witnesses, and I may have even provided a list of, potentially, up to eight or nine witnesses.

The push-back I seem to recall receiving on each and every occasion was, "Well, that's fine," but there was never any expression of any interest from the chair or the clerk to ask for that list with a view to scheduling and inviting those witnesses to attend. It was always my belief—and I think precedent certainly confirms this—that a study does not, each and every time, have to commence with the sponsor of the bill. If there are witnesses ready and able to offer insight on this particular topic, on which we have subject matter experts—

• (1150)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Brock. We have a point of order from Mr. Jivani.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: I'm curious if the clerk can confirm if this motion is amendable. Could you just explain whether that's an option here?

The Chair: Go ahead, Clerk.

The Clerk: Are you referring to the motion in front of us from Mr. Maloney?

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Yes, sir.

The Clerk: The motions generally are amendable, and then we would get into the admissibility of the amendment, depending on what's in it. That's all I can say now.

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, can I ask a question? Mr. Brock is saying that he provided you with a list of maybe eight witnesses.

Mr. Larry Brock: No, I didn't say that.

The Chair: Oh, okay. That's what I heard, and I didn't see anything.

Mr. Larry Brock: No, I'm sorry, I did not say that. I said I have access to a list that was generated by the sponsor of the bill, but I never received the impression from you, Madam Chair, or from the clerk, as to your willingness to receive that list. The information that I was receiving was, "That's fine, but the sponsor of the bill has to appear as our first witness." I'm just indicating—and I think precedent is clearly established—that it is not a direction of Parliament. It is not a rule, per se, that a sponsor must always testify first.

When you have witnesses on a study as important as child exploitation material is to this country, and on the proliferation of this disgusting material not only in this country but worldwide, it's incumbent upon us as a nation and as parliamentarians to give it appropriate time to be studied.

I want to raise that, because—

The Chair: As the chair, let me just.... I can't help it. We're lawyers here, right?

On the sponsor appearing first, page 764 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, reads:

Ordinarily the first witness to appear before the committee is either the sponsor of the bill, the Minister responsible for it or the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary.

Quite clearly, we cannot compel.... I have no intention of compelling anybody in this place to do what they don't want to do, but that is the norm. On your list of witnesses, as long as I've been here, even when I was a member on other committees or even this one, I never went to the chair to give them their witnesses. Everything always flows through the clerk. In fact, the chair doesn't see them until everybody else sees them.

That is just to clarify, because you wouldn't want to say anything about me that I'm not going to clarify.

Mr. Larry Brock: As a lawyer, I thank you for bringing that to my attention—

The Chair: You're very welcome.

Mr. Larry Brock: —but, also as a lawyer, I'm very cognizant of how words are statutorily interpreted.

In this case, “ordinarily” is not mandatory. I think we can all agree with that conclusion. “Ordinary” is in the sense that it's customary, but it is not etched in stone that on each and every occasion a private member's bill must commence by way of committee study with the sponsor.

To give but one example, there are precedents where private member's bill sponsors didn't appear at committee. There was a Bloc private member's bill recently, where the sponsor, the Bloc member, did not appear, but witnesses in place of that sponsor did.

Over the last couple of weeks, a study of Bill C-65 and the Canada Elections Act was discussed at PROC, and no minister appeared, only officials. I guess that little example highlights why “ordinarily” is used as opposed to “mandatory” and “must”.

I wanted to emphasize that, Madam Chair, because I think we all agree on the importance of Bill C-270, the content and what it means to this nation, as a G7 nation taking a stand against child pornography and its proliferation and access.

Then, when I read the tweets, as I often do in my spare time—whatever spare time I do have—one such tweet caught my eye, and that was from Liberal member James Maloney. Quite clearly, it started off appropriately about the importance of the study of this bill, but then it denigrated into partisanship, and it even suggested, as my colleague Ms. Ferrari pointed out, that the leader was somehow gagging Mr. Viersen from attending.

Then he circled back to the age-old issue, the divisive issue, the wedge issue. “In case of emergency, break glass.” Clearly, we have a raging fire at the Liberal Party of Canada right now in terms of its standing in Canada and the position of its leader, who is not loved at all by the public. In fact, almost 70% of Canadians polled from coast to coast to coast want him gone and are prepared to pack his suitcase to see him out of politics entirely.

When you have a situation in which you're down 20-plus points in the polls and you have been so for the better part of a year and a half, and no matter what sort of policy you're introducing as a government, no matter what sort of fall economic statement you produce, no matter what spring budget you produce, which ordinarily is a great bump up for any government in terms of its economic outlook for the nation.... Generally, historically, you always saw a bump in support with the release of those economic statements telegraphing to Canadians that there is hope on the horizon, but when you're dealing with the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau, and you've experienced literally for the last nine years a living hell from coast to coast to coast, there has been no bump.

What have we seen in the House of Commons for the last two or three weeks? We've had the foreign interference issue that has raised its head, with, somehow, every member from the Prime Minister to the ministers to the back bench all claiming, “What is the leader of the Conservative Party hiding? He doesn't want to get his clearance.”

Do you know what? Canadians aren't interested in that. Canadians are interested in feeding their families. Canadians are interested in paying their bills. Canadians are interested in actually being able to afford a mortgage, pay the rent and put gas in their vehicle, which are being crippled by the inflationary factors that this government has created and have made life miserable.

• (1155)

Over two million people lined up at our food banks across the nation. I've toured my food bank numerous times. People who proudly gave and donated over the years now find themselves, because of the disastrous fiscal policies of Justin Trudeau, actually the recipients of food banks. That's not unique to my riding of Brantford—Brant. It's probably happening to every member of the Liberal bench, as well as every member in Parliament. It is a fact of life under Justin Trudeau.

It's no small wonder that they want to change the page, distract, divide and talk about anything but the miserable hell that this government is putting Canadians through. We had foreign interference. Now we have the right to choose.

When I see Mr. Maloney, whom I have known for some time and have great respect for, use that tried, old, tired approach to somehow distract Canadians.... It's not working.

Unfortunately, we see this happening now in committee. They don't want Arnold Viersen to proudly talk about why he sponsored this bill and why he's so passionate about victims' rights and child pornography. No. they want to get on their soapbox and talk about a woman's right to choose—every one of those members.

I find it appalling. I find it disgusting and hypocritical when they say, “Oh no, we care about victims' rights—

• (1200)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I just need clarification, because the motion is to extend time to study a Conservative-led bill by Mr. Viersen, and in fact we're actually trying to give him time to appear.

I'm just under...a misunderstanding, but maybe it's been clarified.

Is Mr. Brock saying that Mr. Viersen does not want to appear because he doesn't want to talk about abortion, and that's the reason we're actually avoiding this appearance?

Mr. Larry Brock: That's not a point of order, Madam Chair.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'm sorry. I was just confused.

Mr. Larry Brock: Well, you can ask all your questions when I'm done, and I'm not done, so thanks for the interruption.

Look for an opportunity to pretend to Canadians that they give a damn about victims and are moving the needle when it comes to victim rights and ensuring the safety of victims generally. In particular, in this case, it's children, the most vulnerable members of our society, who often fall prey to individuals who would harm them in the most vile and disgusting ways. That should be the focus. That should have been the substance of Mr. Maloney's tweet, but, no, Mr. Maloney's true inner voice came out.

Because I have such respect for Mr. Maloney, I don't think that was an original thought, and I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt, because I have no doubt in my mind that Justin Trudeau and his cabal at the PMO directed Mr. Maloney as the lead at justice. My friend Mr. Mendicino is smiling. I have no doubt that the cabal at the PMO directed and telegraphed the content of that tweet to somehow weave in that little wedge issue that comes back time after time.

This is notwithstanding the fact that the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada yesterday in question period talked about the Conservative position as being the same Conservative position that has been on the table for the last two decades. It goes in one ear and out the other with respect to this Liberal government, because, "In case of emergency, break glass."

I too want to get to the point where we're studying this, but I'm also deeply, deeply disappointed in Ms. Dabrusin, Mr. Mendicino and Mr. Housefather, all three of whom, again, I have a great deal of respect for. These individuals, Madam Chair, were hand-picked by Justin Trudeau and the PMO to sit on this anti-Semitism study.

The Chair: No, they picked themselves.

Mr. Larry Brock: Well, perhaps they did. I know that Mr. Mendicino is a permanent member. Mr. Housefather was a permanent member, but is not now, and Ms. Dabrusin is not, but they are proud supporters of Israel, and I commend and I applaud all of their advocacy. As my colleague Ms. Ferrari has very aptly pointed out on the record, Mr. Housefather in particular has been a very lonely, brave soldier.

Mr. Mendicino, I have a great deal of respect for you, and I know you've taken a lead. I know your background is not Israeli, but you obviously care about human rights, and you care about the nation.

Israel, the nation of Israel, is a proud ally of Canada and continues to be a proud ally of Canada, and I applaud you for your efforts, sir, but I find it so disappointing to see that all three of you, who didn't want to go back to the anti-Semitism study, voted in favour of Mr. Maloney to distract from the agenda that we had in our notice of meeting to get to the point of hopefully finalizing the final version, known as version number four, which our great analysts spent incredible time, very productive time, putting together. It was deeply disappointing to me and I'm sure to Canadians who are watching this to see three proud Liberal members, who have supported Israel through this entire conflict, vote to not get back to a study that is so important to this nation.

On behalf of the Canadians who are disappointed, I wish to raise that.

• (1205)

We all know how difficult it has been for the three of you in your caucus. You're telegraphed and been dispatched to go to certain parts of the country, voicing your support for Israel, while Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, your leader, sends out another team to talk about—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Chair, I believe the convention—

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Dabrusin. I think it's fair if you have a point of order, because, to be quite frank, he's raised your name a number of times, and—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

I believe, in 30 days—

The Chair: It's difficult for the chair to intervene, but I find that an intervention is probably necessary here.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Also, I believe the convention is that all comments are supposed to be through the chair. I'm not sure, Madam Chair, whether you're feeling all the feelings that are being spoken to.

I personally love that Mr. Brock feels he's waxing poetic about how wonderful I am. That's great. However, I believe we have something we should be studying right now. I think studying how the diaspora here in Canada is dealing with rising anti-Semitism is extremely important.

With that in mind, can we move to the vote or extend the time so we can hear from the Conservative member, Mr. Viersen, on his private member's bill, and then continue on?

Mr. Larry Brock: Again, that's not a point of order.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I ask that all comments be through the chair.

The Chair: That's well taken. Yes, the comments can come through me. Thank you.

Mr. Brock.

Mr. Larry Brock: That wasn't a point of order, through you, Madam Chair.

In any event, as I was indicating, because Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government cannot take a firm stand one way or the other, he's using this to score cheap political points by dispatching members who are supportive of the Israeli regime and members who are opposed to it and citing their support with terrorists and—

Mr. James Maloney: I have a point of order. I take real issue with that last comment by Mr. Brock. I find it deeply offensive for him to be attributing support or non-support over here, when he knows it's wrong.

If you want to be the person who is constantly on the attack, please do so. However, I encourage you to be accurate and use facts. Don't accuse people of things you know are false.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Chair, again, that wasn't a point of order.

Nevertheless, I haven't said one false thing yet, and I stand by my comments. That's exactly what the Prime Minister has done and continues to do.

I note the time. Several of my colleagues wish to have further interventions, so I'm prepared to cede my time.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Housefather, did you have...?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Am I next?

The Chair: Actually, I have Mr. Van Popta and then you.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Okay. Well, I'll wait until Mr. Van Popta has spoken.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Van Popta.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

The motion before us is to extend by 30 days the study on Bill C-270, the stopping internet sexual exploitation act.

I have to ask myself why we need that extension. This bill has been with us since May 8. Madam Chair, I think that's the date you said earlier in today's discussion. Now it's October 31. What has taken so long?

Mr. Brock said earlier that we've been ready for weeks to go ahead with the commencement of the study of this very important legislation. I think it was at a meeting probably two weeks ago that it was.... It must have been a Thursday, because it was suggested that perhaps we could have witnesses at our committee meeting on Monday, just a few days later. I believe that the clerk was absolutely accurate when he said that didn't give us enough time to get headsets out to the witnesses. Some of them were going to come in by video conference, and that would take a bit more time.

I'm just an ordinary member of this committee, so I wasn't part of the organizing of events and the schedule for this fall session, but I had expected that those witnesses would be here on the Thursday. That would have given us enough time to get whatever materials out to them and to get them prepared. Instead, what were we doing on that Thursday? We were writing the anti-Semitism report. This was all done in camera so I need to be careful about what I say about those two studies, but we were studying anti-Semitism, and we were studying Islamophobia.

That goes back to the spring of this year, when a motion was put forward that this committee should study anti-Semitism and its rise in Canada, particularly at Canadian universities. I agree that's a very important study. We all agreed with that, and we wanted to move forward. Then it became complicated when there was another motion put forward to also study Islamophobia, which was also a very important study. We suggested that maybe that could be put off for a later time, but it was decided that we were going to study those two issues at the same time, not as one study, but as two separate studies. That was all on the public record, so I can say that.

We had witnesses come in on those two studies, again all on the public record. I'm very impressed with the courage of the witnesses

who came forward and spoke very openly about the issues that were facing them, whether it was on the Islamophobia study or on the anti-Semitism study. They came here and gave testimony. It was very heartfelt. We all realized that these are issues that are front and centre for Canada, and that we need to deal with them.

Over the summer months.... I think we had six meetings over six days, three on anti-Semitism and three on Islamophobia. We heard from many witnesses, and then over the summer months the analysts spent some time preparing the draft reports.

We came back in September, and these reports are in front of us.

Madam Chair, until now, we are still drafting those reports. I can't believe how long it is taking to do that. Part of the problem is that on the Liberal side of this committee, it's a different bench depending on whether it's the Islamophobia study or the anti-Semitism study. It is clear to us on this side of the table that those two groups are not talking with each other and that there's conflict in the Liberal caucus about these two very important issues. That's what's been dragging things on and on.

Again, I need to be careful about what I say, because this is all being done in camera. We on this side of the table are trying our best to produce these two reports, so that they can be made public and we can talk about them publicly.

I had expected that was what we were going to be doing today. We were so close on the anti-Semitism report. I think with just a little more discussion, we're going to get them done. That's why I supported the dilatory motion of my colleague, Mr. Brock, to go forward with finalizing that study, and believed that the next day we could go ahead and finalize the Islamophobia study.

• (1210)

Now things are just dragging on and on, not through any fault of ours on this side of the table. We've been doing our best to move these two issues forward.

I think it would be very useful to this committee and to this Parliament if the members of the Liberal Party would talk with each other about these two important issues and resolve the conflicts amongst themselves so that we can go on and get these two studies finished.

I am prepared to go ahead with studying Bill C-270. I've read some of the major speeches that were given in the House at second reading. I'm not really familiar with these issues, and that's why I'm very anxious to delve into the study. However, when reading those speeches, I read about some of the very heartfelt testimony that has been given by witnesses who are victims of pornography. These are usually young girls who are being victimized by owners of porn sites, who are making a lot of money from these poor victims. I think that we need to get on with that study, and I think it is such a shame that the Liberal members of this committee are trying to politicize it.

I, too, would love to hear from Mr. Viersen, to hear what he has to say. However, when I read these tweets from Mr. Maloney, I can't blame Mr. Viersen for being reluctant to come here. He wants to come here to give testimony about the issues that are important. He wants to talk about the matters of Bill C-270, and it is clear that the Liberal members of the House want to talk about something else when he is here. I think that is just unacceptable.

Madam Chair, I think that it is time to move forward on all three of these studies. Let's get the anti-Semitism study done. I think we still have time today. If the Liberals would reconsider the motion of my colleague, Mr. Brock, to go ahead and finish that study, we can then go into an in camera session, and we can finish off that study.

Let's proceed with the other witnesses on Bill C-270. Let's move forward with that, regardless of whether or not Mr. Viersen is going to come here. There are a lot of good witnesses we should hear from. I think it would be best if Mr. Viersen were here, but it's not necessary. We can proceed without him, and I think that's exactly what we should do.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

• (1215)

The Chair: There are two things. The first is that the clerk has never received any names of witnesses, so if you have any, send them over.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: All right. We will do that.

The Chair: The second is that I have requested to see if we have extra resources to sit until 15 minutes prior to question period today, so I'll ask them.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Before I cede the floor, I have just one quick question.

Is there enough time for us to get witnesses on Bill C-270 for at least one day, for one meeting? Is there enough time for that?

The Chair: Let me get back to you on that.

I have a long list, but as I said, I've requested to see if we have.... Because the anti-Semitism report is almost done, I really would like to get back to it and move....

However, I have a speaking list, and I'll just read you the names for everybody: Housefather, Maloney, MacGregor, Dabrusin, Ferri and Lantsman.

Mr. Housefather, the floor is yours.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I am going to speak for one second, but my name has come up multiple times.

First, we've heard about deflection. What we're actually deflecting is the fact that Monday is the last day to extend the ability for this committee to study a bill that is a Conservative bill whose sponsor has refused to appear so far. He has been invited to appear, and he hasn't come. Without extending that, the committee will not be able to properly study the bill.

Then the Conservatives are continuing to talk and not allow us to move to the anti-Semitism study. It's not the Liberals, NDP or Bloc who are talking. It's Conservatives who are refusing to vote to

tend their own private member's bill for 30 days for the committee to study. It makes no sense.

The anti-Semitism study was my motion. We strongly support it. We all want to get to the anti-Semitism study.

I just want to note, in response to my friend, Mr. Brock, that I am not an Israeli. I am a Jewish Canadian. There is a very big difference between being a Jewish Canadian and being an Israeli. I strongly support the State of Israel, but I'm not an Israeli. I just want everybody to use the right lexicon.

However, I appreciate my friends on the Conservative side. We've worked really well together so far on this anti-Semitism study. Let's go to the study. I think we all want to do that.

Thank you.

The Chair: There's still a motion on the floor.

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: My tweet seems to have evoked a reaction from the opposite side.

I want to respond to Mr. Brock.

I can assure you that what you hear from me or see from me in print are my own views and thoughts, and if you think that I take direction from the PMO, I would encourage you to go talk to them—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Brock: Thanks for the invite.

• (1220)

Mr. James Maloney: —and ask them how well James Maloney responds to direction. I'll leave that there.

Let's be clear here, on the other side what I'm hearing is we want to deal with the anti-Semitism study and get it behind us, and we want to deal with Bill C-270. We could have been finished the anti-Semitism report about half an hour ago if they had just voted yes to the motion, which is to do the second part of what they say they want to do. I don't know whether it's hypocritical or ironic or both. It's absurd, what I'm hearing from the other side.

What I heard from Mr. Brock was that the person who introduced this private member's bill gave him a list of witnesses, which I now have to assume means his own name isn't on it.

As for the contents of my tweet, I did not raise this issue. Mr. Viersen did. This is not a break-the-glass scenario, Mr. Brock. The issue is in the public and being discussed because Mr. Viersen raised it. Full stop.

If you guys are serious over there and you want to deal with the anti-Semitism issue and you want to deal with this report, there's a really simple way to do it: Vote yes to my motion, and we can use the remainder of the time we have today to deal with it.

For the record, I'm prepared to come back here after question period and listen to you talk all afternoon if your intention is to just delay and delay, because my goal is to get back to that study, get it completed as quickly as possible and get this bill before this committee so we can do our job.

The Chair: Thank you.

We have services until 45 past, meaning 15 minutes before question period today, if that is the will of the committee. I really would like to finish the anti-Semitism report, because it's done. There's just finishing it up. I leave that to the members. I'm simply the chair.

I now go to Mr. MacGregor.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: My intervention will be very brief.

The only people who are preventing us from concluding the anti-Semitism study right now are the Conservatives. Let's just get that very clear. We could be done right now if we just simply brought this matter to a vote. We are dealing with a timeline issue. We need to study Mr. Viersen's bill at this committee. It's been delayed for one reason or another, but that's beside the point. We need the extra time to call witnesses. It doesn't have to be Mr. Viersen; it can be other witnesses, but we also need the time for clause-by-clause review of the bill before we report it back to the House.

There's a very easy solution, Madam Chair. If the Conservatives stop speaking and allow us to vote on this very simple and reasonable extension, we can do two things I've heard them arguing for. We can get back to the anti-Semitism study, and we can study Mr. Viersen's bill.

The power is in their hands, Madam Chair. I'll let the public judge as to whether they're going to do that or not.

The Chair: Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I actually support calling a vote. I'm going to cede my spot and just let us go to a vote.

The Chair: Thank you.

We still have members on the list.

Ms. Ferreri.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I'm going to take people back to the summer. On July 31, 2024, the status of women committee sat. There's a real overlap right now in terms of what's happening in status of women and the justice failures in this country.

An emergency meeting was called in July.

For people who don't know, committees don't sit in the summer, but this emergency meeting was called because StatsCan released these shocking statistics. Since 2015, when Justin Trudeau came into power, all we've seen is this rapid increase of crime across this country: Total sexual assaults are up 75%; sexual violations against children, which is pertinent to this study, Bill C-270, are up 119%; forcible confinement or kidnapping is up 11%—

The Chair: As a point of order or, I guess, a point of relevance, what is the relevance of that to asking for the extension for 30 days?

To reiterate one last time—I will not do it again; I've done it on and on—if we don't have an extension, the bill cannot proceed to be studied at all. Full stop. That's it. Do we want to study the bill, or do we not?

As the chair, I am asking the committee, and you can vote on it. Either you want to study it, or you don't.

• (1225)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Chair, I am being very relevant. That is exactly what I've been trying to say. We one hundred per cent want to study the failed justice in this country. We want to do that one hundred per cent.

Why am I talking about what happened on July 31, 2024? It's because the exact same thing is happening in this justice committee. We brought forward survivors and victims, which is exactly what we want to do.

The Liberals have gotten hung up on one witness rather than the meat and potatoes of this actual bill—

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Chair, I hate interrupting someone, but on a point of order, I need to call relevance.

The question before the committee right now is whether we agree to a 30-day extension or not. All arguments and comments should be in support of that. We should not be talking about what other committees did during the summer.

I have great tales about what the public safety committee did during the summer, too, but the question before the committee right now is whether we agree to a 30-day extension on Bill C-270.

Madam Chair, I would ask that you enforce relevance, because I want to see commentary specifically for or against that particular point.

The Chair: You don't have to agree on the extension. We can simply vote on it and move on.

Mr. Brock has a point of order.

Mr. Larry Brock: It's not incumbent on any member of this committee to opine on relevance, as my friend and colleague, Ms. Ferreri, is just starting her intervention. There's no time limit. There's no document that specifies that relevant points must be immediately addressed by a member or that they can speak for only a limited amount of time and a percentage of that has to be on relevant points. There's always a degree of latitude exercised by chairs of all committees.

In my view, because the majority of us are lawyers, relevance is very subjective. It's not an objective term. I'm sure at some point in time, Ms. Ferreri, if she is given the opportunity for a fulsome intervention without unnecessary points of order, will loop it around to relevant issues germane to Mr. Maloney's motion.

Thank you.

The Chair: You're welcome.

I guess, because we have all practised law for some period or another, the judge also has the ability to determine whether it's relevant or not. I know that is not relevant.

Ms. Ferreri, either speak on the 30-day extension or please cease to speak so I can give it to another member, because we need to get back to relevance.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Can you turn your name tag around?

Go ahead, Mr. Nater. Thank you.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): How could you not know Mr. Nater?

Mr. John Nater: I've only been here nine years. It's all good.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am a temporary substitute on this committee.

I just want to point out that you did mention that we have all practised law. I just want to clarify that I have not practised law. I am not a lawyer. I come from a political science background. I just want to clarify for the record that I am not a lawyer. I have not been called to the bar. I do not practice law. I just want to make sure that is clarified for the record, Madam Chair.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much for the clarification. I remember the first couple of years we were on this committee, a number of members were clarifying things like that.

Thank you, and welcome, as a substitute.

All right, where do we go back to?

Ms. Ferreri, go ahead.

Are you a lawyer, by the way?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I also am not a lawyer.

The Chair: I will give you a bit of leeway then, but a bit does not mean a lot.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Okay. I would love to be a lawyer.

Listen, it's interesting that they don't want this brought up. It's obvious that they don't want it brought up, because it's the same thing. It's very relevant to what we're going to talk about. Since I have the floor, I'll bring it up.

The NDP and the Liberals don't want to talk about what happened in July, because it was an absolute disgrace to victims and survivors. This bill is about victims and survivors, so of course we want to study this bill.

What happened? Well, it was the same thing that is happening right now. We called an emergency meeting to talk about these stats, and a Liberal member of Parliament hijacked survivors and victims with a motion on abortion. It was the most disgusting, appalling thing we have ever seen. We had victims and survivors and

their parents in tears—screaming, yelling, leaving—and the Liberal member threatening on camera to bring up an abortion motion every single time, just so that we don't have to talk about the failures of Justin Trudeau and what's he's done on crime in this country. That's the reality.

Why is that relevant? It's because it doesn't matter if the sponsor of the bill comes to testify. What matters is that we have experts, victims and survivors come to this committee, this committee on justice, to testify about these stats.

This is not made up, Madam Chair. This is the committee of justice. Nobody at home cares about who said what, when and how. They care about changing the law to protect children in particular, our most vulnerable, and women. We have an epidemic in this country under this Prime Minister, who is blatantly a fake feminist.

● (1230)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Then let's do it.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: What the Liberals are doing here is that they want.... They're stuck on one piece of this conversation. They're stuck because they want one witness to testify, the sponsor, and that has nothing to do with the meat and potatoes.

Mr. James Maloney: On a point of order, now we are off topic, because the very simple point of this motion is to get an extension of time so that we can discuss it. Once we get that extension, then we can talk about who the witnesses are. We can get back to the issue about Mr. Viersen's apparent refusal to come here. We can debate the merits and why he doesn't want to do that.

If they are so interested in getting to the study and doing it, they should end the debate now and vote yes. Then we can get back to the topic that we should be talking about, which is the anti-Semitism study.

The Chair: If there is no extension, we will not be able to get witnesses. We have no time. Are you not listening? Do we have to show the calendar again? We're out of time. We need to extend in order to bring witnesses. Whether it's Mr. Viersen or not is a separate issue; we don't have any more time.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Absolutely, I'm listening. I would throw that back to you too, Madam Chair, and to the members of this committee. That is the whole....

This has become cloaked. What they've done is they've put forward a motion that is cloaked. What they're really looking for is the sponsor of the bill to testify. It's blatant. It's on Twitter—

Mr. James Maloney: You already agreed with it.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: —and that's fine, but they're not acknowledging the survivors and victims, as they have done repeatedly in other committees. That is what I'm trying to convey to you.

It comes back to the anti-Semitism study. It comes back to the rise in crime. It comes back to all the same things over and over again. You have a Prime Minister who tells one group of MPs to say one thing and another group of MPs to say another thing. He himself goes and tells one thing to people in one room and another thing to people in another room, all while public safety...while crime runs rampant in this country.

I will wrap it up there, but I think it is important that folks at home recognize how much the Liberals don't want to speak about what their tried, true and tested tactic is, as my colleague Mr. Brock has brought up multiple times. They just want to deflect and turn it, because the economy is failing; food bank usage is at the highest in history; kids are using food banks in record numbers; housing has doubled; public safety is gone—

Mr. James Maloney: I have a point of order.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: —opioid addiction is—

Mr. James Maloney: Now we're talking about things that aren't even vaguely relevant.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: —[Inaudible—Editor] they don't want to talk about their failed record.

I'm done, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. James Maloney: We want to talk about the issues that are relevant to this committee, not your ramblings.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Those are all relevant to the committee, Mr. Maloney, every one of them.

Mr. James Maloney: Housing...?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Yes, housing, because guess what happens when you don't have a house? You go commit crime, because you're in poverty. That's how it works.

The Chair: Thank you.

Yes, Ms. Dabrusin. I think Ms. Ferreri is done. She said she was finished.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I think it's very important that we clarify that the unhoused are not necessarily people who commit crimes. I do not think we should speak that way about people who are unhoused.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

For the record, if the member would like to watch the status of women committee, when yesterday.... We're studying intimate partner violence, which directly impacts this. There is a direct correlation between people who are not making enough money.... Under this Justin Trudeau government, they are using food banks in record numbers; they can't access housing; and crime and intimate partner violence—

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Chair, this is so far off topic.

The Chair: This has absolutely nothing to do with what we are studying.

Ms. Lantsman.

• (1235)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like many other people, I'm sitting in my office wondering when this study on anti-Semitism will come forward. Supposedly, this committee was going to look at the report today. It's a study that I sat in on for multiple meetings. It's a study many Canadians came to this committee to talk about. Since that study on anti-Semitism, we've seen gunshots at schools in this country. We've seen the fire-bombing of businesses. We've seen Stats Canada reports saying that 70% of the hate crimes in this country are targeted at less than 2% of the population.

Right now, what people watching at home see is that—

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: I have a point of order.

[Translation]

Madam Chair, what does this have to do with the motion on the table?

We're not asking for a 30-day extension so that Mr. Viersen can come and testify first, but so that we can start this study, so that we can make a list of witnesses, as Mr. Maloney noted, and so that we can study this important bill.

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Chair, I'm going to respond to her.

Are you seriously interrupting a conversation about the anti-Semitism study you're supposed to be having in committee to call relevance on it? That is worse than this government's inaction on anti-Semitism.

Are you actually serious?

The Chair: Come on now. This is not how we run our committee.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

Not only have I sat in the meetings, but I have also been sitting in on the report, which that member has not been doing. We're waiting to do that report. We're all here to do that report.

It's you guys who are filibustering and stopping us from dealing with the anti-Semitism report. You should be ashamed.

A voice: Madam Chair, this is debate.

Mr. Larry Brock: We would have this report done.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: You voted against his motion.

Mr. Larry Brock: You voted in favour of his motion to delay the report.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You're filibustering a discussion about a study that is your own private member's bill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Chair, this is my speaking time.

The Chair: Let's get back to order.

Let's be clear here. There was one motion put forward, which every member voted for. Then we moved on to a second motion to extend for 30 days, in order to bring witnesses in. All I hear is talk about other things that may or may not be relevant.

Ms. Lantsman, the floor is yours. I know you just came in. It's 12:37 p.m. here in Ottawa. I know you weren't here for the first hour and a half.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: You can watch this online, and that's what I was doing in my office. That's why I came here to speak about this. I was expecting the committee to study an anti-Semitism report, just like everybody else who is watching this committee today—just like the witnesses who came here to testify, and just like the members opposite, who are pretending they want, for once, to take anti-Semitism seriously in this country.

Seventy per cent of the hate crimes in this country—

The Chair: Ms. Lantsman, that is out of order and definitely not accurate. I am the chair. You will have to respect me or leave. That's number one.

Number two, I have been here. I have listened since May, when all of the witnesses came in for both studies. I have taken it in, along with all of the emotions that came from the witnesses, staff and members. I'm still standing here, so I deserve respect as the chair. These are not easy studies, and we would like to conclude them. I agree with you. I agree with all of you. I am asking you to all see a way to do that.

If you would like to take a five-minute break, I have no problem with that. Do you think we can come to a conclusion?

Mr. Brock.

Mr. Larry Brock: On a point of order, Madam Chair, I wholly respect your authority with respect to this committee, but you have absolutely no standing and no privilege to exclude a member and ask them to leave. She is duly elected, and you do not possess the powers to force her to leave this committee.

The Chair: Your point is well taken; thank you. However, I also expect every member to respect the position of the chair.

Mr. Larry Brock: Likewise, I ask the chair to exercise neutrality, as chairs are expected to do, notwithstanding your affiliation with the Liberal Party of Canada, and allow members latitude to get their points across without unnecessary interruptions.

Mr. James Maloney: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The suggestion that the chair has in any way been impartial at any point during today's meeting or any of these proceedings is factually incorrect, Mr. Brock, and I think that other members of this committee will agree with me on that point. To bring partisan politics into an accusation against a chair like that is completely unfounded.

● (1240)

Mr. Larry Brock: I wasn't accusing the chair. I was reminding her.

The Chair: I appreciate that, Mr. Maloney; I really do, and I appreciate Mr. Brock, but he wasn't.... If he was, it would be ridiculous based on how I act in this committee and in other committees, so let's move on. I'm okay with it now.

Ms. Lantsman, I'll give you back the floor, but please try to be relevant.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: I'm going to continue, because I couldn't get a point out before you called irrelevance on me, Madam Chair. I know that you may not like the facts of the matter, but that doesn't mean that you can censure a member and in any way ask a member of the House of Commons to leave a committee. I think that's out of line, and I'm going to put that on the record.

All of that is to say that we were going to get to a study on anti-Semitism in which members of this committee heard from witnesses from across the country, and I'll make my point again, because I was interrupted a number of times. Since that study, we have only seen this issue get worse in this country, so it is astounding to me that members of this committee who were part of that study and who purport to take this issue seriously don't want to get to the study.

As such, and to prove that.... First of all, I don't have to prove that the issue has gotten worse in this country, because it has. All you have to do is look at the encampments on university campuses, the shootings in cities and the violence in the streets, but since the committee doesn't want to get there, I have a motion to prove to everybody at home that this committee is blocking the study of anti-Semitism.

The Chair: Ms. Lantsman, we have a motion already on the table.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: I know, and I have a motion, and I'm allowed to move a motion, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Wait, now. Just give me a minute.

You cannot put a motion on the floor if we have a motion already.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: I will then ask for unanimous consent to move that the committee proceed to the consideration of the draft report on anti-Semitism and additional measures that could be taken to address the valid fears that are being expressed by Canada's Jewish community and ones that have been expressed by Canada's Jewish community since that. I'll ask for unanimous consent to move this motion to show everybody at home that this party is not serious about this issue and that this government hasn't taken this issue seriously.

The Chair: I'm going to suspend for a few minutes to get clarification as to whether you're even allowed to do that.

• (1240) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1255)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

All right, folks. Let's get back. It's 12:58.

On Monday, if it's not concluded now, we will be doing the anti-Semitism report in camera. That's for notice, so that everybody knows.

With respect to what has been brought out now, it appears that it cannot be moved in the way that it has been.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: I've asked for unanimous consent. I just want to make sure that I didn't get it.

The Chair: No. It's not that you didn't get it; it's not something that can be done.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Chair, in order to get to the anti-Semitism study that we were supposed to get to today as a committee, I'm going to move to adjourn debate.

The Chair: Yes. The meeting is adjourned.

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