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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 23, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing).

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, one report of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association for the following activity: the bilateral mission to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Cabo Verde, held in Dakar, Senegal, and Cabo Verde from March 16 to 21, 2025.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “First Nations, Inuit and Métis Identity and Participation in Federal Procurement”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

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PETITIONS

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by many Ukrainian Canadians

who support fellow community members who fled Ukraine following Russia's brutal aggression in their journey to become permanent residents. Since 2023, under the watch of the Liberal government, the family reunification pathway for Ukrainians has seen an abysmal approval rate of just 1.6%. Fewer than 400 of the more than 23,000 applications have received final decisions. Thousands more cannot even access this limited program.

While Ukrainian Canadians are calling on the government to create a dedicated, one-time permanent residency pathway for those here under the CUAET agreement, the undersigned are urging the Liberal government to prioritize and expedite family reunification applications so that families can be reunited without further delay.

• (1005)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with mental illness should be provided with treatment and support. Mental illness is a complex that can include suicidal thoughts as a symptom. The lives of many Canadians with mental illness are at risk when they are eligible for medical assistance in dying.

Therefore, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the House to support Bill C-218, which would reverse the law extending eligibility for MAID to those suffering from mental illness.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, finally, I present, on behalf of the citizens of Canada, a petition on religious charities. They play a significant role in the charitable sector and in the life of our country. More than 30,000 charities fall under the purpose “advancement of religion”, roughly 42% of the charitable sector. These religious communities foster vibrant social networks, mobilize outreach, spark local volunteerism and foster community resilience.

Government Orders

Therefore, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the government to reject the finance committee's recommendation to remove advancement of religion as a charitable purpose.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in the House on behalf of the NDP to talk about this important piece of legislation, Bill C-12. Regrettably, while I am the third NDP member to have an opportunity to rise in the House, it is because the Liberals do not rise to talk about their own piece of legislation because they do not want to talk about it.

This is good for us because it gives me an opportunity to be able to talk about it on behalf of the constituents of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie as well as several representatives of civil society organizations who are very concerned about the impacts of this piece of legislation on asylum seekers and refugees. I will be discussing this during my speech, but first allow me to provide some background.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister gave an important pre-budget speech at the University of Ottawa. What we saw was a Liberal Prime Minister who, in Canada, takes a very strong Canadian nationalist, protectionist, elbows up line. He talks about defending our sovereignty, our jobs and our companies. However, when the Prime Minister is in the Oval Office in Washington, he completely changes tack. He no longer demonstrates the same strength, the same character, the same determination. He seems to be kowtowing, pandering. The Prime Minister seems to be doing everything he can to appease U.S. President Donald Trump. He is doing everything he can to make him happy. As we have seen on several occasions, despite the Prime Minister's tough talk when in Canada, nothing ever happens.

The current Prime Minister was elected largely because of his platform to stand against U.S. President Donald Trump. Instead, he keeps backing down and making overtures to please the American president. Why is the Prime Minister suddenly trying to revive the Keystone XL pipeline? After promising to make web giants,

GAFAM, pay their fair share, why is the Prime Minister now backtracking just because the American president does not really like the idea of taxes being imposed on these big corporations that are making billions of dollars in profits at Canadians' expense? The Prime Minister is not standing up. He does not have his elbows up, ready to lead the fight.

What we are seeing today with Bill C-12, which is a new incarnation of Bill C-2, is the same backpedalling and the same attempt to pander to Donald Trump's administration. That man obsesses over certain things. He is anti-migrant, anti-refugee and anti-asylum seeker, plus he is concerned about borders. He is also concerned about drug trafficking, which is entirely legitimate. Opioids and fentanyl are having devastating effects on our communities, and serious measures must be put in place at the border, particularly when it comes to the Canada Border Services Agency. However, the government is playing along with Donald Trump's game, attempting to give him guarantees so that he might eventually negotiate with us. After six months, all we are seeing is setbacks that hurt Quebeckers and Canadians and, in this case, will hurt thousands of people whose fundamental rights will be violated by the Liberal government in an attempt to pander to the American president.

There are people in this field who work for more than 300 civil society organizations and who have already spoken out against the Liberal government's Bill C-12. I am going to quote them, and I am going to use their line of reasoning to discuss them today, because I think it is important. These are people active on the ground, who know the reality of the situation. They know exactly how this will impact the lives of certain people, including parents, families and children. In some cases, these consequences are very severe.

I am going to begin with the Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes, or TCRI. It has this to say:

Bill...raises major concerns for migrants, especially migrants who claim asylum. The measures that the government is proposing could prevent vulnerable individuals from obtaining important protections.

These protections existed, or still exist, but they are under threat.

● (1010)

Restricting the right to asylum: The bill introduces two new grounds for inadmissibility. First, a claim will be deemed inadmissible if it is filed more than one year after entering Canada, effective June 24, 2020. The one-year deadline is determined from the first entry after that date, not from the date of the last entry.

If someone came to Canada on a visitor visa as a journalist or a temporary worker, for example, after June 24, 2020, and returned two years later, the one-year period would begin from the first entry, even if the situation in their country has changed and returning to that country would now put them at risk. The government refuses to listen to any new information. Too bad if someone arrived three years ago for the first time. Starting June 24, 2020, the one-year deadline starts at that point. It is absurd.

Second, an asylum claim filed more than 14 days after an irregular entry at a land border will now be deemed inadmissible, as will claims filed less than 14 days after such entry. However, the individual will not be removed to the United States. They will only have access to the pre-removal risk assessment (PRRA).

Government Orders

These deadlines do not take into account the realities experienced by migrants (trauma, vulnerability, lack of access to information and legal support, etc.);

These deadlines are completely arbitrary. It seems that everything is being done to send these people home. That obviously makes Donald Trump happy.

The new rules would apply as of June 3, 2025, even before the bill is officially passed. That means that people who applied legally could have their claim determined to be ineligible retroactively;

That is also extremely serious. Retroactive measures may be implemented as soon as the bill is passed.

People whose claim is determined to be ineligible would have access only to the PRRA, a procedure that does not provide the same guarantees as the refugee determination process and whose approval rates are very low, approximately 2% to 4%.

New step in the asylum claim process: The bill introduces another review between the determination of the asylum claim's eligibility and the referral to the Immigration and Refugee Board, or IRB. [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC] will be responsible for conducting this review. [It will gather the information and documents related to the asylum claim.] It will have the power to reverse the eligibility decision and to ask the IRB to determine whether the claim for refugee protection has been withdrawn. These new powers raise several concerns about access to a fair process, especially since many important aspects of the review will be determined by regulation.

We do not know what that will look like yet.

Increased government powers [particularly for the executive]: The bill would allow the government to suspend certain claims en masse or cancel immigration documents in the name of "public interest", bypassing [the transparency] obligations usually associated with the adoption of government decrees.

We have no idea what "public interest" means. Massive powers will therefore be concentrated in the hands of the executive, which will be able to cancel existing claims in a global, massive, and discriminatory manner.

Confusion between migration and security issues: By conflating immigration, asylum, and the fight against organized crime, the [Liberal] bill reinforces the perception of migrants as a threat and justifies a repressive rather than humanitarian approach.

This is extremely serious in the context of rising populism, the far right, hate speech, discrimination, and racism. It is this kind of conflation that Bill C-12 continues to fuel today.

The TCRI also calls on the federal government to respect its obligations, including the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Canada is a signatory, and the 1967 Protocol, which enshrines the principle of non-refoulement. This principle prohibits returning a person to a country where their life or freedom is or would be threatened.

The Supreme Court's 1985 ruling in *Singh* also serves as a legal benchmark. The Supreme Court found that anyone present in Canada, including asylum seekers, have access to Charter protections, including the right to a full hearing.

On behalf of this organization, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers and 300 other organizations, I am asking the House to think carefully and to ask the federal government to scrap Bill C-12.

• (1015)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Madam Speaker, I understand that the New Democrats are having difficulty with the legislation, but I think we need to recognize that the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party have made a commitment to Canadians to strengthen our borders, and the legislation is a very important aspect. They also made a commitment to stabilize immigration-related issues, and asylum is one of those issues. There is a holistic approach. We are also looking at budgetary measures to support it: for example, the 1,000 RCMP officers and, from my perspective, more importantly, the 1,000 Canada border control agents.

I wonder whether the member could provide his or the NDP's thoughts on the 2,000 additional RCMP and CBSA personnel in total.

[*Translation*]

Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, obviously, the CBSA experienced major staffing cuts under Stephen Harper's government. However, the Liberals have done nothing to remedy that situation over the past 10 years. Giving border officers back their powers and resources would help in the fight against auto theft and against the trafficking of fentanyl, drugs and illegal weapons. That is a good thing.

That said, why did it take the Liberal government 10 years to do something about this? The NDP wants to know. The other question I have today is this: Why does the Liberal plan involve attacking refugees and asylum seekers by violating their fundamental rights and taking away the recourse they may be entitled to?

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am happy for the opportunity to ask my colleague a question this morning.

I found it quite funny to hear him criticizing the speech given by the Prime Minister yesterday. From what I saw, the Prime Minister said nothing. Therefore, I do not have much to criticize, except the fact that he said nothing. Now back to the matter at hand.

We are obviously all concerned about the rights of people who apply for asylum and whose lives are threatened. However, we need to recognize that there were problems at the border. These include the fact that at one point, there were human smuggling networks, which are probably still operating. They would cross at Roxham Road and demand exorbitant sums from poor and vulnerable people. We feel that strengthening border security is important. Of course, it needs to be done right.

At this second reading stage, does my colleague not think that we should vote in favour of the bill and send it to committee to make the necessary adjustments and take the necessary precautions so that individual rights are respected?

Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, criminal smugglers who exploit people trying to find a better life and a better future here must obviously be prosecuted. We need to have the tools to do that.

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However, what I am saying, and what the NDP is saying, is that we must do it in a way that will not affect the remedies and procedures that protect these people's rights. As it stands now, Bill C-12 is fundamentally flawed. There are 300 organizations that are calling on us to vote against the bill, because it would allow the executive branch to suspend the processing of certain immigration applications. This does nothing to crack down on smugglers. All it does is penalize people who are trying to come here. The executive branch will be able to cancel visas, work permits or PR documents whenever it feels this is in the public interest. However, there is no definition of what constitutes the public interest.

These are arbitrary powers that the Liberals want to give themselves so that they can tell U.S. President Donald Trump that they are strong and serious and that they too are capable of turning people away at the border or deporting them en masse.

• (1020)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will just pick up on the asylum issue. If we look back at 2010-2011, we see that there was a bump in the number of asylum seekers, and the government at the time recognized the need for some change.

We have gone through a pandemic; there are issues surrounding international students, led by private institutions and different levels of government; and there is a need for us to respond. The system needs to change.

Would the NDP at the very least recognize that at times we need to change the system in order to protect its integrity? That is what the Prime Minister and the government are doing today; they are looking at Bill C-12 as a way to update the system.

[*Translation*]

Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I believe that Canada has obligations when it comes to taking in refugees. If there is an increase in the number of refugees around the world, it is because there is an increase in crises around the world too, caused by conflict, civil war and the climate crisis.

It is not up to us to determine how many asylum seekers show up at our border. All countries face the same requirement. That is no reason to attack refugees and asylum seekers.

[*English*]

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this morning to speak to Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures. The measures in this bill were first introduced in Bill C-2, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures.

I mention this because Bill C-2 was tabled in the House and briefly debated last June; however, it was loudly criticized by civil liberty groups and privacy groups. It included a number of provisions that were concerning not only to our Conservative caucus but to many Canadians as well.

There were provisions that would have allowed Canada Post to open any mail, including letters, without a warrant. It would have allowed the government to ban cash payments and donations over \$10,000 and would have allowed warrantless access to personal information. It would have allowed the government to compel electronic service providers to re-engineer their platforms to help CSIS and the police access Canadians' private information, and it would have allowed the government to supply financial institutions with personal information if that information were useful for identifying money laundering and terrorist financing.

These provisions were the reason Conservatives opposed the Liberals' attempt at gaining sweeping powers and warrantless access that would violate Canadians' civil liberties. Let us be clear: The Liberals' solution to the problems they created over the last 10 years was to grant them more powers. When the Privacy Commissioner was questioned, he confirmed that the Liberals did not even consult him when trying to grant themselves sweeping new powers to access Canadians' personal information from service providers like banks and telecom companies without a warrant.

The good news is that Conservatives have forced the Liberals to back down from Bill C-2, which clearly would have violated Canadians' individual freedoms and privacy. Conservatives believe that law-abiding Canadians should not lose their liberty to pay for the failures of the Liberals with respect to borders and immigration.

That brings us to the debate today. The Liberals introduced Bill C-12, which took out many of the parts of Bill C-2 that Conservatives fought to have removed. The parts of the bill that remain, which we are discussing today, would begin to take steps on addressing the many issues that have seen nothing but inaction from the government over the past 10 years.

Although there are provisions for the CBSA laid out, let us talk about the very real challenge the CBSA is facing that the Liberals are not addressing with the bill. The government promised to hire 1,000 new CBSA personnel, though according to the public safety minister, it is not his job to hire them, which would explain why the Liberals have waited 10 years to take measures on border security.

Ninety-nine per cent of all shipping containers are not currently scanned to see what is inside. Where is the plan to purchase and deploy the tools to crack down on the amount of smuggling that is happening through our ports?

Our brave men and women who work at the CBSA protect the front line of our nation's defence. They deserve real, meaningful action from the government to help them and to equip them with the tools they need to help keep Canadians safe. They need action from the government. Conservatives believe in the important work they do, and we will continue to offer solutions and clearly defined measures to assist them in doing the work of keeping our border secure.

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Another part of the bill seeks to address fentanyl precursor chemicals that are being used to manufacture fentanyl here in Canada. Though we welcome any efforts to crack down on the drug epidemic facing our communities, it seems the Liberals are more content with simply blaming the chemicals, and not the criminals who manufacture and distribute deadly fentanyl on our streets.

• (1025)

Of all apparent opioid toxicity deaths from January to June 2024, 79% involved fentanyl. The number of emergency room visits for opioid-related poisonings has more than doubled since 2018. Just two milligrams of fentanyl is enough to be a lethal dose and take someone's life. Dealing fentanyl should be punished the same as murder is, because it is effectively murder. If a fentanyl kingpin trafficks just 40 milligrams, that is enough to kill 20 people. There need to be serious deterrents, not simply banning the ingredients that make the illegal drug that people are selling to vulnerable Canadians.

The Liberals continue to push for what they call safe consumption sites near schools. At the health committee, the Conservative member for Riding Mountain and shadow minister for health called on the Liberals to shut down fentanyl consumption sites next to children. However, the Liberal minister refused to rule out approving more consumption sites next to schools and day cares, despite acknowledging that the sites are repositories for rampant fentanyl usage.

The bill does not meaningfully look to defend the victims of the fentanyl crisis either. Since the Liberals took office, all violent crime is up 50% from 2015 to 2023. More money laundering and organized crime have found a home in Canada. The solution the leaders proposed in Bill C-2 was to give themselves sweeping powers to spy on individual Canadians.

Violent crime is up. Organized crime is up. Drug trafficking is up. Even if someone is caught by the Liberal justice system, house arrest is still permissible for some of the most serious offences. While the current government has allowed violent crime to rise all across this country, it allows violent offenders out on bail or house arrest so they can return to the very community they are a danger to. For years, Conservatives have been proposing measures to crack down on criminals and to put the charter rights of victims ahead of their abusers.

Part 11 of the bill would amend the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Customs Act, which would allow for greater accuracy in reporting, tracking and investigating sex offenders. These are welcome changes that the Conservatives have been advocating for years, and they are long overdue. However, the consistent theme the Liberals have presented to Canadians throughout both Bill C-2 and now Bill C-12 is that they are not willing to be held responsible for the last 10 years they have been in government. We hear it often.

While the Liberals would have Canadians believe that they are a new government, just now learning of these problems, they are not. They have been in power for 10 years and are responsible for this mess. Giving them more power to fix it is not the answer.

One thing is very clear: Only Conservatives will continue to stand up for Canadians' individual freedoms and privacy. Only Conservatives will continue to advocate on behalf of Canadians. We will examine the bill thoroughly to ensure that the Liberals do not try to sneak in measures that would breach law-abiding Canadians' privacy rights.

• (1030)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have had a great deal of debate, first on Bill C-2, with well over 18 hours, and now with over six hours, maybe seven or eight hours of debate on the bill that is before us. I bring that up because today is a fantastic day in the sense that the minister introduced bail reform, something that has been anticipated across Canada for months now. There is a very strong desire for bail reform to take place.

I wonder whether the member could provide her thoughts in regard to the issue of bail reform, reflecting on Bill C-12 and the importance of, at the very least, recognizing that at some point in time we need to get things to committee. Would the member not agree that Bill C-12 is getting very close, hopefully, to going to committee stage? Could she also comment on the importance, from her perspective, of having bail reform, ideally before the end of the year?

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, as I noted at the end of my speech, while the Liberals would like to have us believe that they are a new government, they have been in power for 10 years. They continue to blame others for their failures and for their delays, and they have had the ability to do something on bail reform for the last 10 years. What they tend to do is to create some sort of imperative to hurry up now that they are ready, so they say, "Let's get it done." They should have done it a long time ago.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, there are real concerns, but situations are sometimes exaggerated in order to stir up public opinion, and I find that questionable.

My colleague spoke about supervised injection sites, saying that the Liberals are practically deliberately setting them up near schools and early childhood centres. I found her wording a little questionable, although I agree that it is a sensitive issue.

While it is totally inappropriate for supervised injection sites to be located in close proximity to schools and early childhood centres, there are no figures that I know of that prove that fentanyl use increases when such sites are located near schools.

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I would like my colleague to clarify whether she has any data showing that proximity to schools and early childhood centres has a real impact on increasing consumption of products such as fentanyl.

[*English*]

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not think it matters where a safe consumption site is located. I think the very fact that we have those has allowed fentanyl use to increase, regardless of where those consumption sites are located.

According to Health Canada's latest figures, there was a total of 49,105 apparent opioid toxicity deaths reported between 2014 and 2016. We know that we have a fentanyl crisis in this country. It is time that we do something about it, and this is one part of the issue that we are trying to address.

• (1035)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague had a blockbuster of a speech. She has been in this chamber for a long enough time that she can perhaps understand the member for Winnipeg North better than I, as a new member of Parliament, can, but it strikes me as odd that he insists on such urgency for this legislation, when the reason for the delay on Bill C-12 is that the Liberal government was trying to go after Canadian civil liberties with Bill C-2 by allowing the warrantless searches of mail, the surveillance of electronic equipment and the banning of large cash transactions.

I am hoping the member could speak to whether it is, in fact, the Liberals who have obstructed very real border security measures, on which we would have loved to co-operate with the government if it had presented them.

Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's interventions in this place, and I would simply say this: The Liberal government continues to introduce legislation that, at first blush, appears to just be flawed, but upon further scrutiny, the legislation seeks to violate Canadians' individual freedoms and privacy, and the member my hon. colleague speaks of stands up every chance he gets to defend it, which is despicable.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill C-12, the ugly stepchild of the failed Liberal omnibus bill, Bill C-2.

This is, of course, about border security. I am looking through the departmental plan, which was actually signed by the Minister of Public Safety, that covers the CBSA. It talks about human trafficking, and that is what I will be mostly talking about today.

Combatting human trafficking is mentioned five times in the departmental plans. For those opposite, departmental plans are the plans submitted by the government to justify the spending for the money it asked for. It lays out the priorities for the government for the following year. It is not a legal document, but it is a document that supports the request for spending. It was mentioned five times that the government is going to combat human trafficking. It is on page 7 and page 14, and on page 25 it is mentioned twice.

We have an issue with human trafficking in Edmonton, in Alberta and across the country in the construction world. We have illegal labourers being brought in and hired to work on federally funded government projects. A year ago, I presented evidence to the head

of the Treasury Board about this practice. I told them that I would not make it political, and I would not publicize it, but I was providing the information so they could act on it. A year later, nothing has happened. Just last week, CBSA raided the LRT construction site in Edmonton, which is partially funded by the federal government. Illegal workers have been detained and taken off other projects, and the government has done nothing.

The reason I bring this up, and I will refer to the failed Liberal former minister for infrastructure and the environment, Catherine McKenna, who basically said that, if one lied loud enough in the House of Commons, people will totally believe it. That is my worry about this departmental plan. If the Liberals repeat it enough that they are going to fight human trafficking, people will totally believe it, but the evidence is that they are not. Again, I delivered documents to the government about illegal labourers and human trafficking on federally funded projects. I offered to work with the Liberals, but nothing was done. Fast-forward a year, and just last week, we decided enough was enough. We tabled a motion in the operations committee to study this issue. Can members guess what happened? The Liberals shut it down and blocked the study on human trafficking on government-funded labour sites.

I want to thank my good friend Rob, who is with Building Trades of Alberta, for championing this issue and bringing it to light. It has fought against this for years, because it is a double-edged sword, a double-sided problem. We have people being abused with human trafficking, and on the other side, we have Canadians, journeymen, ticketed trained union members, who cannot get work on government-funded projects because they are being undercut by workers who were trafficked, brought into Canada illegally, and employed illegally on these projects.

Rob and Building Trades of Alberta, as well as other trade unions, have done yeoman's work. I actually attended a site with them on the Henday, the ring road around Edmonton. We interviewed workers and, miraculously, every single worker we spoke to was a subcontractor to the main contractor who won the bid from the government. Every single worker, Latin American, was a subcontractor. They had no employees of their own, but miraculously, every single one of them just happened to have their own company, working independently and, of course, working for cash under the table.

Legitimate companies cannot win bids on these government projects. Unionized companies are getting outbid because these other construction companies will bid and then subcontract out the entire job to shadowy construction companies that fill the entire job with illegal labour. They pay cash, sometimes \$10 an hour. These workers have no protection. They are not eligible for workers' compensation because they are being paid under the table. They are not eligible for unemployment insurance because they are not paying into the system. However, legitimate companies and legitimate trades people are getting shut out. It is getting to a point, as I said, where legitimate companies do not even bother bidding on government projects any more.

● (1040)

Here are some of the things that are happening. General contractors and major government-funded infrastructure projects are using multiple subcontractors to conceal that many of the workers are being paid cash under the table. These are contract carpenters, labourers, cement masons and other undocumented workers. They may be brought in from Facebook sites, so they will come in with visitor's visas or family visas, overstayed student visas, overstayed tourist visas or expired TFWs. They could also be on EI and working on the side. Again, there is no protection.

Anyone who has ever worked in construction, which I did as a youth, building houses, knows it is dangerous work. Injuries happen. One thing I have to say about the union movement across Canada for trades, and especially in the oil sands, is that it puts safety first. That is not happening at these work sites. There are workers without fall netting, without helmets, without proper PPE. I have provided documented evidence to the Treasury Board that companies are also faking journeyman papers and faking workers compensation papers.

What is happening, from the illegal worker's point of view, is that the employer had told them they did not need safety tickets. Counterfeit tickets are provided for a journeyman, boilermakers, etc. They are paid in cash, so there is no worker's compensation, no CPP deductions and no EI. If injured on the job, they are fired and sent home. We had a documented case where a person fell, broke his leg and was basically told to get on a plane and fly back to Colombia. That is what is happening on federally funded job sites in Alberta, B.C. and across the country. They do not do drug and alcohol testing. There is no avenue for these workers to report workplace safety issues. If they complain, they are threatened with deportation.

I am going to read from a Facebook post. It was posted in Spanish, but I have had it translated. It said, "Edmonton area cash-only projects. Five concrete finishers, six labourers, must have WHMIS, H2S certificates. If you don't have them, we'll provide them for you. Cash." This was for a federally funded project.

I will tell a story about a gentleman who fell. He said that he did not remember falling. He lost his memory for 24 hours and woke up in the hospital. His helmet saved him. It had broken in half, but he got a cut and a bump. He fell 25 feet because he didn't have a safety harness. He broke his shoulder and could not move for two months. Who was it who visited him at the hospital? It was the safety officer from this fake company, who came to threaten that, if

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this were to be reported it to WCB, he would be fired and deported. He said it was terrifying. When he got back after two months, he was told, "Here's your last cheque. Get out." This is happening every day on federally funded projects such as the LRT in Edmonton, the Henday. I had the Library of Parliament put this together. This is billions of dollars, and jobs have been taken away from Canadians, legal Canadians.

This is two-sided. We have Canadians who cannot get work, and we have the government funding illegal workers. We asked the government if we could investigate this at the operations committee, and the Liberals blocked it. A year ago, we gave this documented information to the Treasury Board with our offer saying, "We will work with you. We won't make it political. We won't make it a partisan issue. We'll work with you to fix it." The government chose to side with human traffickers instead of Canadians.

If the government was serious about Bill C-12 helping Canadians and helping border issues, it would act on this issue now.

● (1045)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, throughout the debates and discussions on Bill C-12, we have heard a lot of criticisms toward Bill C-2. The question I have for my friend across the way is this: Do the Conservatives have any amendments that they would like to see for Bill C-12? Are there aspects specific to Bill C-12 that they would like to see amended? If so, would the Conservatives be prepared to share some of those thoughts on specific amendments?

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, first of all, I am disappointed in my colleague across the way. I realize we joust back and forth, often good-naturedly, but this is a serious issue. Human trafficking is happening on government-funded projects. I want a commitment from the government that if Conservatives bring it up again in the operations committee, to put an end to it, his colleagues will not shut down that study.

If Conservatives were to offer an amendment, I would ask the government to amend Bill C-12 to address this flagrant oversight, which allows and encourages human trafficking on government-funded infrastructure projects.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to share his opinion on something a bit ridiculous that is happening in the House today and that goes well beyond Bill C-12.

The government added an extra day to the orders of the day to discuss Bill C-12, which was tabled by the Liberals themselves. However, there are no additional speakers on the Liberal side. That makes me wonder. Are they embarrassed to send people out to speak? Are they afraid to say things they might regret?

Opposition party parliamentarians are being forced to speak to fill a gap of the government's own making. Yesterday, however, at a big press conference, the Prime Minister said he was concerned about the economy and the trade crisis.

The Prime Minister sent a clear message to the press, yet back in the House, during the legislative process, the government seems disorganized, lacking in vision and unsure where it is headed.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the facts I just laid out.

[English]

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I think we should be thankful that there are no Liberal MPs giving speeches. I do not want to hear the member for Winnipeg North any more than this member does.

It is an ongoing issue in the House. The government says it is urgent that we pass the legislation. Yes, it says, it has done nothing for 10 years, but, damn it, this had better get done today. This is just another example that it is not a serious government and it does not take border security seriously. The questions Liberals are posing to us today show that they do not take it seriously. This is just more proof.

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this morning I was watching the news; a bunch of reporters were asking Conservatives, as they were coming into the House, what they thought about the Conservative leader's comments on the RCMP. If we are going to build strong borders, we need to make sure that we have good relationships with our top officials in law enforcement.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Michael Coteau: Madam Speaker, maybe they were busy this morning, and they could not stop because they had to get into the House.

Does the member believe it is important for us to have a strong and respectful relationship with the RCMP, and does he agree with the Conservative leader's comments?

• (1050)

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I will not thank the member for that question, because it is ridiculous.

This is a government whose former prime minister called every single member of the RCMP racist by calling the RCMP systematically racist. I wonder if the member would like to ask that same

question of his colleague from Victoria, who stated that we should defund the police in June 2020 or the member for London West, who attended a “defund the police” rally.

It is pure hypocrisy on the other side, as always.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague digs into numbers and often looks at reports, and I appreciate the nature of his speech addressing human trafficking.

As he stated, this came before committee, and I am wondering if he would like to comment further on what happened in committee and why we are not digging into that very important issue.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, the reason we are at this point is that Conservatives presented this in committee and the Liberals voted it down. I do not know why they are taking the side of corrupt corporations and human traffickers instead of the side of victims and of workers in Canada.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are here today to speak to Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures.

When Canadians are asked what feeling is most important to them, they say it is the feeling of safety. That is the basic feeling that Canadians need to have. Personally, I am currently concerned about what we are seeing in this country, and today I am going to talk specifically about what is happening at the ports.

I will give the example of the port of Montreal, which is being used by a criminal network from West Africa. According to an article on the Radio-Canada website:

Canadian border services have recovered hundreds of stolen vehicles that were destined to be shipped to Africa by a network that also specializes in romance scams.

It may seem odd to mention romance fraud in connection with car theft, but that is the reality we are living in. The article explains:

From Montreal to the ports of Cotonou, Benin, or Abidjan, Ivory Coast: an increasing number of vehicles stolen in Canada are being shipped via this major maritime route.

As reported by Radio-Canada, a West African criminal group referred to as “African organized crime”...by Canadian authorities has settled in Quebec over the past few years.

This network specializes in online romance scams, but it's also involved in money laundering and exporting stolen cars from Montreal.

The vehicles are sent directly to West Africa. “Every week, our teams recover more than 20 to 25 [stolen] vehicles” before they leave the country, said Yannick Béland, a Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) superintendent.

Government Orders

I would like to take a moment to thank all the men and women of the CBSA who are doing such phenomenal work. What they need is additional staff and tools to do their job. One of the tools that the Conservatives would like to put in place are scanners at the ports so they can check the contents of shipping containers.

This is one of our key proposals. It is important because it would provide a way to identify the contents of the containers and cut down on the number of stolen vehicles, which would have a direct impact on Canadians. It would no doubt enable insurers to lower insurance premiums for Canadians, as it would get the job done and reduce the number of stolen vehicles.

As an aside, I arrived on Parliament Hill not quite six months ago, but for eight years before that, I had the privilege of serving as a member of the National Assembly of Quebec. I have seen many bills in my time, and I have to say, I am concerned about the way this Liberal government operates. Right now, the House is also studying a bill to implement affordability measures that will put money back into Canadians' pockets, but it is not as good as what the Conservatives promised. We were more ambitious on behalf of Canadians. Still, Bill C-4 is a step in the right direction for putting money back into taxpayers' pockets.

What we saw yesterday was the Liberals filibustering their own bill. Filibustering means running out the clock to prevent a bill from moving forward. We are seeing this here today. The government added an extra period of time to the agenda so that we could talk about Bill C-12. I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues today, but one of the reasons we are here is that the government is trying to draw out the legislative process. What I saw yesterday definitely met the definition of what the political world calls filibustering.

• (1055)

For the better part of an hour and a half, one Liberal member after another rose to kill time. Does anyone know how many people who were being paid were in the room yesterday? Fifty. There were 50 people here who are being paid with taxpayer dollars. There were public servants there and they were forced to waste their valuable time. Our public servants have a huge amount of work to do, yet the Liberals invite these officials to appear during consideration of bills and waste their time. This shows a lack of ethics and a lack of respect for the public service, for the work we have to do and for the work public servants do. Yesterday, 50 people had to listen to a string of Liberal members filibustering for an hour and a half. I just wanted to raise that issue.

The Liberals are back at it again today, and we are calling them out for it again. The member opposite brought up the fact that the government added an extra day for consideration of Bill C-12. Once again, the government is doing this to drag out the process and keep the bill from moving forward. Is Bill C-12 perfect? No, but we are going to work on it and suggest ways to improve it and make it better, because safety is paramount for all Canadians.

The Conservatives forced the Liberals to abandon Bill C-2, which would have violated individual freedom and the privacy of Canadians. The Privacy Commissioner even confirmed that the Liberals had not consulted him when they moved to acquire sweeping new powers that would allow warrantless access to Canadians'

personal information held by service providers, such as banks and telecommunications companies. Law-abiding Canadians must not lose their freedom in order to make up for the Liberals' failures on borders and immigration.

This bill is important and we will work on it. We know that border security is an issue right now, especially when it comes to fentanyl, a drug that has had devastating consequences for some of our constituents. We must work to strengthen oversight.

The Liberals have brought Bill C-12 here. As I said, we will examine it in detail to ensure the Liberals do not try to slip a small measure through that would violate the privacy rights of law-abiding Canadians.

In this second attempt at a bill, the government is still not dealing with certain issues, like bail reform. It is also not discussing the practice of arresting and releasing fentanyl and firearms traffickers who take advantage of our porous border in order to attack Canadians. This is an ongoing issue. In our view, it is an important one. We will work to improve the bill and suggest some amendments. We have said that we are willing to work to move this bill forward. We are willing to move Parliament's business along for Canadians, but we need a government that is willing to work with us. Regrettably, what I have witnessed here in the past six months is a dysfunctional, disorganized government that does not help Parliament move forward with business.

Allow me to repeat what happened yesterday with Bill C-4: It was filibustering. We spent an hour and 20 minutes studying the bill in detail. Fifty people being paid by the government were there. It was sad to see. Canadians deserve better. Canadians work hard for their paycheques every day. They send us a large amount of money and expect us to manage it efficiently.

We need to work together for Canadians. We need to bear that in mind every day, out of respect for our constituents. That is what we Conservatives want to do here. We are going to make suggestions, because the safety of Canadians is paramount.

• (1100)

[English]

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite spoke about stolen vehicles and the fentanyl crisis.

I want to let the member know that Bill C-12 would support enforcement to crack down on the stealing of vehicles, which is exactly what the member opposite is asking for.

Government Orders

If the member really wants to deal with this issue, then why is there obstruction?

[*Translation*]

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. I do indeed look forward to being able to delve deeper into the amendments that may be introduced during the study of Bill C-12. I hope that it will be in connection with this reality, because the fentanyl crisis we are currently going through is absolutely devastating. It is killing Canadian men and women. Correct me if I am wrong, but I believe a single kilogram of fentanyl has the potential to kill up to two million people. This crisis is unprecedented. It must be taken seriously and I hope that we will be able to get it under control.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start with a comment, and then I have a question.

First, I find it odd that my colleague is talking about filibustering in the House, since I have seen the Conservatives filibuster in committee on a number of occasions since I was elected in 2019, and that has delayed the committees' work. In fact, the Conservatives were often in the news last fall for their filibustering in the House of Commons.

Second, I am wondering how to formulate my question. There are two angles to consider. My colleague mentioned some figures and other aspects related to the fentanyl crisis. However, misinformation and disinformation are the main danger, as is widely recognized around the world. This is becoming a democratic issue. Decisions are no longer based on scientific facts, but rather on empty slogans. People can spin numbers to say whatever they want.

This brings me to my question. My colleague also talked about immigration. Does he recognize that Quebec is doing more than its share and that he should talk to his Conservative colleagues in the other provinces and encourage them to take in more refugees?

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, my colleague is talking about numbers, and numbers do not lie. Right now, unemployment is rising across the country, and youth unemployment is at its highest level in 25 years. We need economic immigration to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

That said, the Liberal government's decision to throw open the borders created a crisis, which we are seeing in the housing sector, the health care system, and other areas. This crisis is connected to what has happened. The important thing is to have economic immigration that will help Canadians develop and to make Canada one of the strongest countries in the G7.

• (1105)

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I heard him mention that he is new to the House.

Since this government came to power, many bills have been introduced. In my speech yesterday, I called this a pothole repair operation. It is like the government is going around trying to fix potholes all over the place. For 10 years, the Liberals created holes everywhere and caused all sorts of problems, particularly when it comes to immigration and the Canada Revenue Agency. Bill C-12

is just one more step in the repair operation. The government is filling a hole, but it is not addressing the root cause.

Does my colleague agree that just filling in potholes does not make for good roads? Filling in holes will not fix the root cause of the problem, which is a Liberal government that has been in power for far too long.

Eric Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He is a seasoned parliamentarian.

Yesterday, we spoke about the CRA. Spending has increased 70% over the past nine years, and yet 80% of people are still not getting any answers. That is not good.

What was the government's response to this issue? It said that it was going to increase the budget instead of identifying the problems and working to improve them. Unfortunately, that is the Liberal approach.

[*English*]

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-12.

As a Conservative member of Parliament, I am proud to stand and express my concerns with this legislation. I have heard from my constituents, and they have made it clear to me that the Liberal government is not going far enough to fix the messes it has created at our borders.

Conservatives negotiated the split of the original bill, Bill C-2, ensuring that one of the most egregious infringements on Canadians' privacy and freedoms was sidelined, while advancing measures that strengthen our border security and protect our communities. Bill C-12 is a step in the right direction, but make no mistake: It is only here because Conservatives held the line against Liberal overreach.

Let me start with the context. Bill C-12 was born out of the Liberals' bloated Bill C-2, introduced in June 2025. The original bill included warrantless access to personal information and the forced re-engineering of tech platforms for surveillance, and it even allowed Canada Post to open mail without judicial oversight, measures the Privacy Commissioner himself confirmed were drafted without his consultation.

As my colleague said, "Conservatives have successfully blocked the Liberals' infringements on individual freedoms and privacy in Bill C-2", emphasizing, "Law-abiding Canadians shouldn't lose their liberty to pay for the failures of the Liberals on borders and immigration." If law enforcement suspects something suspicious, they can get a warrant. It is that simple. Thanks to Conservative pressure, those poison pills are gone from Bill C-12, allowing us to focus on real security enhancements.

Government Orders

Let us dive into the substance of Bill C-12, which draws from the supportable elements of its predecessor.

Part 1 would amend the Customs Act to empower the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, to use private facilities free of charge for examining exported goods, mirroring its current authority over imports. This is crucial in combatting the export of stolen vehicles and contraband, which has surged under Liberal watch. According to the CBSA's own reports, auto thefts have become a multi-billion dollar industry, fuelling organized crime with thousands of vehicles shipped overseas annually. By extending the CBSA's reach, this provision would ensure that our borders are not a one-way street for criminals.

Part 2 of the bill would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to create a temporary accelerated scheduling pathway for precursor chemicals like those used in fentanyl production. This would fill a critical loophole, but let us be clear that it is long overdue. Fentanyl has devastated Canadian families, with Health Canada data showing that in 2024, fentanyl was responsible for 75% of opioid overdose deaths, a staggering increase of 32% since 2016.

Figures from January to March 2025 indicate that 63% of opioid toxicity deaths involved fentanyl, contributing to thousands of preventable tragedies. I must note that Canada will need to do a lot more than pass this bill to fix the problem.

While this part would ban precursors, it falls short by ignoring tougher sentencing for dealers, as Conservatives have long demanded. Still, it is a tool that law enforcement needs, and we believe in giving our first responders the tools they need to save lives.

Part 3 would formalize exemptions for law enforcement officers from drug charges during legitimate investigations under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and Cannabis Act. This is straightforward common sense. Our officers should not fear prosecution while undercover fighting the very cartels flooding our streets with poison.

• (1110)

In part 4, amendments to the Oceans Act would enable the Canadian Coast Guard to conduct security patrols and share intelligence with defence and security partners. With increasing threats from smuggling and foreign interference, this would bolster maritime security without the overreach seen in Bill C-2. Canada has massive borders and we need to work with like-minded partners to enhance our protections and preserve our sovereignty.

Parts 5 through 8 address immigration integrity, a realm where Liberal mismanagement has been catastrophic. In particular, part 7 would extend authorities to cancel or suspend immigration documents in the public interest, and part 8 would introduce a one-year cap on refugee status filings while tweaking the safe third country agreement, the STCA.

Parts 9 and 10 target money laundering and terrorist financing. Part 9 would amend the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act to hike penalties, mandate compliance agreements with FINTRAC and expand registration to more entities. Let us not forget that money laundering in Canada is a big

problem. It exceeds \$100 billion, as reported last year. That is something the government has not paid attention to or has totally ignored dealing with or talking about.

The bill would also allow FINTRAC to share info with the commissioner of Canada elections. Part 10 would add the FINTRAC director to the financial institutions supervisory committee.

These steps intend to combat the financial networks behind organized crime, which have thrived amid Liberal soft-on-crime approaches. Also, let us not forget, and let us make sure Canadians listening understand, that the government's soft-on-crime approach has put a tremendous pressure on Canadians' lives and inflation, because money laundering creates an underground economy, which is known to be happening on Canadian soil.

Finally, part 11 would update the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Customs Act, clarifying reporting, allowing physical characteristic records and permitting the CBSA to share travel data with law enforcement to prevent sexual crimes. This would protect vulnerable Canadians, which aligns with Conservative priorities. It is time we start doing more in this House to protect vulnerable Canadians.

This bill would cost money, but the real cost has been the Liberals' 10 years of failures: record overdoses, strained immigration systems and eroded public trust. The Conservatives look forward to the committee stage, where we will call for amendments for tougher sentences, real enforcement and protections for legitimate refugees. Only the Conservatives will deliver tougher sentences for lawbreakers and order at the border and will allow legitimate refugees to find sanctuary here.

In conclusion, Canadians deserve secure borders without sacrificing freedoms. I wish there were more Liberal speakers on their own bill. Unfortunately, they refuse to do that.

• (1115)

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the very foundation of the protective services at our borders in this country is based on our relationship with the men and women at the front line who are providing the service to protect Canadians. The Leader of the Opposition recently showed massive disrespect toward the RCMP as an institution. I want to give the member opposite the opportunity to clarify his party's position on that relationship with the RCMP.

Government Orders

Does the Conservative Party believe the RCMP, our frontline workers and the people who provide protective services are essential for stronger borders, yes or no?

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I would like to send the member a mirror today, because he and his government need one. They should look into the mirror to see what their former prime minister did and what he called the RCMP. Other members on his side have asked to defund the police. I am not sure why they did that. Maybe a mirror is needed today.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I understand why the Liberals and the Conservatives are squabbling, but I still think that there are some worthwhile aspects to Bill C-12.

I am thinking, for example, of a situation that the Bloc Québécois has often spoken out about in recent years, and that is how refugees who entered the country irregularly between official border crossings and hid for 14 days were given the right to claim asylum, despite the safe third country agreement. Bill C-12 seems to remedy that.

There are a few measures like that one that I thought the Conservatives would be happy about, even though they are naturally inclined to oppose anything proposed by the Liberals, sometimes with good reason.

I would like my colleague to comment on this specific measure that remedies an existing problem, namely, one way illegal refugees kept getting to stay in Canada.

[*English*]

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I did address the issue of legitimate refugee claims, and we know that Roxham Road has been a devastating story for Quebec and for Canadians in general. We definitely have to deal with the serious issue of fake refugee asylum claims being made in order to come to Canada. I agree that we need to work harder on this, and that is why I mentioned the words “legitimate refugees” in my speech.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, on the same line of questions, would the member comment on how the Liberal government, and in fact from the response to the infamous tweet heard around the world, managed to break the system through the conflation of economic migrants and refugees.

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, every time I meet with constituents, the topic of immigration comes up. The government has left a mess by opening the floodgates to get all kinds of people into Canada, millions and millions of them, without even thinking about the economic impact on Canadians, such as there being no schooling or housing available and no health care or social supports. The Liberals have left this mess, and now we know the impact on Canadians is shown every single day. This is a mess that belongs to the government, and no matter what it does, it is not going to be able to fix it. Bill C-12 is a very small attempt, if the government ever gets serious about doing this.

• (1120)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's response to the previous question

about the RCMP was that the Liberals needed a mirror. The leader of the official opposition said that the RCMP was “despicable”. I am using the words of the leader of the official opposition. He owes Canadians an apology. Liberals do not need to look in the mirror. What we need from the leader of the Conservative Party is a public apology to Canadians. Does he not agree—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton Manning has 10 seconds to respond.

Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I extend my offer of another mirror to this member.

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know it is not exactly tradition to ask for a round of applause in this House, but our Conservative caucus deserves one today. That is because when the Liberals first introduced the bill in its original form, we fought long and hard against this disaster. It was because of our pressure that the Liberals backed down on the worst of it.

Thanks to the work of our Conservative caucus, the government has not given powers to Canada Post to open any mail, including simple letters, without a warrant. Our work stopped the government from banning cash payments and donations of more than \$10,000. We stopped the government from having the ability to access personal information without first seeking a warrant. We stopped the government from being able to use Canadians' personal banking information if it suspected that someone was involved, in any way, in money laundering.

This is a list of groups that were insulted by the ham-fisted first attempt at the bill. In June, 300 organizations were opposed to the government overreach included in the first version of the bill, and it is quite a list. It included the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the BC Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Labour Congress, the United Church of Canada, the Migrant Rights Network, the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International and OpenMedia. They are all opposed. It is hard to believe how many people the Liberals could possibly offend. They have to work hard to cause this kind of outrage.

However, we are not done. There is more. The bill was also opposed by the HIV Legal Network, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, Climate Action Network Canada, the Centre for Free Expression, the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association and the Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council. Even with this newer, improved bill, there is still opposition from the likes of Amnesty International Canada and other organizations.

These groups are working to protect civil liberties, data privacy and refugee rights, and they all strongly oppose the legislation. They say it tries to fast-track, rather than address, many aspects of the previous bill, which was called Bill C-2.

Government Orders

It is shocking that the Privacy Commissioner said the Liberals did not even consult him before the bill was considered. They did not consult him when they were trying to grant themselves sweeping new powers. They wanted to access Canadians' personal information from service providers, including banks and telecoms. We are talking about access to vital personal information without so much as a warrant.

That is the kind of overreach that the Liberal government would have love to see. I know Canadians are rightly suspicious of government overreach, and they should be. We have seen how the Liberal government tries to take an inch and turn it into a mile.

For example, let us look at what the Liberals are doing to law-abiding gun owners. The government is attacking law-abiding gun owners. In a typical Liberal overreach, the government is trying to force these good citizens to give up the legally purchased and owned guns that they use for hunting and sport shooting. This is the type of government control that alarms Canadians, and it is typical of the Liberals. They want an inch, and it somehow turns into a mile. Conservatives will continue to fight on that front. We will continue fighting so that law-abiding gun owners are not punished for wanting to hunt or go sport shooting.

At the same time, the government still refuses to have mandatory prison sentences for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes. We know that the vast majority of gun crimes are committed using guns that have been illegally smuggled across the border. It is not grandpa with his gopher gun who is committing crimes, yet the Liberals want to go after law-abiding gun owners. Can Canadians believe that? It is incredible. It is almost unbelievable.

• (1125)

Here is another classic example of the Liberal government's overreach: its ridiculous EV mandate. If the Liberals get their way, by 2035, under the EV mandate, Canadians will not be able to buy new gas-powered or diesel-powered vehicles. Can we imagine that? This mandate is a punitive tax on drivers, because those EVs are very expensive, but it is so typical of these "Ottawa knows best" Liberals.

The thing that gets me is that, right now, hybrid vehicles are actually fairly popular in Canada. This mandate would outlaw—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): May I interrupt the hon. member? Someone's phone is ringing, and it may disturb the interpreters.

We found it.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Kerry Diotte: Madam Speaker, the vehicle manufacturers of Canada are dead set against this EV mandate, as are all the major car manufacturers. I have talked to representatives from the industry, and they are all dead set against it. How does it even make sense that in a climate as cold as Canada's, the government would force such an insane law upon us?

I have a friend who has a Tesla. He loves it in the summer. He barely even drives it in the winter because when he turns on the heater, as he tells me, it sucks so much of the battery that he worries he will not be able to get back and forth from work. Now the

government has paused the mandate for a year. That is true, but it needs to be killed completely, and Conservatives will continue to fight this government overreach.

Now, let us get back to the legislation at hand. The Liberals claim that the new bill, Bill C-12, would crack down on precursor chemicals, which is great. Those are the chemicals that are used to manufacture illegal drugs. At the same time, the Liberal health minister has recently refused to rule out approving additional legal drug consumption sites.

This summer I toured the area around a major drug consumption site in my riding of Edmonton Griesbach with the Edmonton Police Service. To say it was a disaster is an understatement. These sites are allegedly, supposedly, used by addicts to safely inject drugs, including fentanyl, but the reality is that they are just not working. Unfortunately, on my tour, we noticed someone right outside the consumption site in my riding of Edmonton Griesbach injecting drugs. This site, I might add, is located not that far from a day care. What the Liberals are doing with these sites is shocking and appalling.

I have talked with police, and they say that these sites increase the amount of drug activity in the area. The drug dealers are naturally drawn to the area; they know they can sell their wares there. It is like a magnet for them, and we can see the sad, dejected people who are struggling with this illness. It has resulted in a spike in violent crime in the area, including murders. In addition, for all the people who argue that there is so-called safe supply, there is nothing safe about injecting drugs into one's system, especially fentanyl.

It is especially bad in Chinatown. My Edmonton riding includes half of Chinatown, and it is really tragic to see the effect on a community that was once thriving, vibrant and very safe. There was a bakery there that had been in business for 60 long years, but because of the kind of crime linked to these injection sites, the store had to close. They could not keep the addicts out of their shop. They had been broken into. Crime was rampant, and it caused this Canadian small business to close. That is so sad.

Now in Chinatown, the most common sight seems to be "for lease" and "for rent" signs, and it was once such a safe, thriving neighbourhood. I have seen the tragedy of people slumped in the streets, obviously struggling with addiction, and it is largely due to these consumption sites that the Liberals like to encourage. It is shocking that they encourage these sites.

Government Orders

Does it not make sense that, if we truly are a caring society, rather than pushing people into these sites, we do the humane thing and help people recover? Do we not owe that to the most vulnerable in our society? Do we not owe them that, as opposed to, in some cases, watching them die on the street?

As I have mentioned, the original version of the bill, Bill C-2, included significant changes to the immigration system. My riding has a significant amount of immigration casework. I live in a very diverse riding. I recently hosted an event to welcome new Canadian citizens in Edmonton, but we know the Liberals have been very poor on that front. They have broken the immigration system. Conservatives will continue to fight on all these fronts.

• (1130)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the things I have noticed from Conservatives is that they like to make a statement. It is somewhat misleading, and I am being kind. Let me give a specific example. The member makes reference to safe injection sites, which are under the jurisdiction of provincial governments. Other Conservative members have made reference to injection sites' being around, for example, schools and playground areas.

The Conservatives try to blame this on the federal government, yet it is a provincial and municipal, in particular provincial, responsibility. The Conservatives are suggesting the federal government should override provincial jurisdiction, but instead of trying to be bold and say what it is, they try to give the false impression that Ottawa is responsible for the matter.

I am wondering whether the member can provide his explanation as to why the Conservatives tend to want to mislead Canadians on important issues.

Kerry Diotte: Madam Speaker, it is not misleading; the Liberals agree with the sites wholeheartedly. More recently, the health minister refused to rule out injection sites, even near day cares. It is shocking.

I rode with the frontline police officers who have to police around these sites, and they are just disgusted. It has made their lives so difficult, and if the Liberals had some leadership, they would be vehemently opposed to these things in order to support our good law enforcement people.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will give my colleague a chance to put on his earpiece so that he can understand one of the two official languages of the House.

My question is about the number of officers the government promised to hire. In April, during the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to hire 2,000 more officers: 1,000 CBSA officers and 1,000 RCMP officers. Last week, six months later, he repeated what he had already promised during the election campaign.

I would like to understand the Conservative Party's position. Are the Conservatives prepared to say that this situation is unacceptable? We are constantly being promised hires that never material-

ize. I would like to hear the Conservatives' opinion on the number of officers to be hired and when these hires should be made in order to further secure our borders.

[*English*]

Kerry Diotte: Madam Speaker, it is so typical of the Liberals that they promise and promise but do not fulfill. We have a problem at the borders. We saw what happened with Roxham Road, for instance: People poured in, and now we are facing challenges for housing, for schooling and for many things. "Overpromise and underdeliver" is the motto of the Liberal Party of Canada.

• (1135)

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are looking at another border security bill, and I am reflecting back on what we have seen over the past 10 years in my riding of Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies.

There was the largest drug lab bust ever in Canadian history in the community of Falkland, which some referred to as being in the middle of nowhere. I would argue that it is actually in the middle of everywhere, only kilometres off the main highway, Highway 97, which runs north-south completely through the province of British Columbia, and only minutes away from the Trans-Canada Highway, exactly halfway from Vancouver to Calgary. It is the middle of everywhere, yet after that drug bust, we have heard little more than that one arrest was made. There was a massive drug bust, the largest in Canada, and only one arrest.

Would the member say this is an example of the Liberals' failure to address our border security and the drug problem in Canada?

Kerry Diotte: Madam Speaker, I could not have said it better myself; that is exactly it. The member nailed it. We have a serious problem with fentanyl, and the Liberals are doing very, very little to address this very grave problem.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the citizens of Calgary Centre and speak about the new bill that is before us.

The actual title of the bill is an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, but I say we should call Bill C-12 the short Liberal title, "We broke the immigration system, and we messed up public safety, border security and law enforcement, but do not worry; we are back to fix it because we know what we are doing." In other words, it could be called "I break it then fix it. It is my version of job security", or "If I did not break it first, how would anyone know how good I am at fixing it?"

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It is the classic Liberal playbook: They break the system then hold a press conference to announce they are fixing it. They light the fire then show up with a watering can and call it leadership.

The issues we have to address in the bill are based on several parts of the bill. Bill C-12 has numerous parts to it, but a couple of objectives: security of Canada's borders, of course, and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system. For the sake of the public who may be following, I will break down further what is known as an omnibus bill.

The bill is composed of 11 parts that would amend various statutes, including the Customs Act, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Cannabis Act, the Oceans Act, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and its regulations, the Retail Payment Activities Act, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act.

There is a lot for me to unpack. There is an option for me to spend 10 minutes talking about a plethora of sources and what we can do with the bill going forward. It started with Bill C-2, much of which was pressed on the government by the Trump administration in the United States, which forced us to look at some of the security measures that were not happening in Canada at that point in time. We were pushed to the wall to actually accomplish some things.

The bill came back to the House. The opposition, my colleagues, revisited it, and the Liberal government has taken out of the initial bill a bunch of the quite offensive parts that would really have impeded civil liberties. The government has come back with Bill C-12, which would actually address some of the issues that have long been simmering in Canadian society and have caused significant problems.

Bill C-2 was an error, a Liberal misstep, and now we need to rectify it. If the Liberal government really needs help drafting the kind of legislation that actually works, my Conservative colleagues and I are willing to write the legislation for them to make sure we get the security we need in this country, both in the immigration system, which we have seen explode in the last number of years, and in the border security realm.

There are a number of things going on in the bill for me to pick from. Let us note that it is a fix for the Liberal government's first attempt at the bill, but we must go through fixes in the House at times, and we are willing and happy to do that with this legislation.

I would like to speak to the issues of the illicit drug trade, organized crime, money laundering and human trafficking. For 10 years, the Liberal government has been duly informed of these attacks on Canada's expectations of maintaining peace, order and good government in this country. There are problems that have been evident for a long time.

Money laundering was addressed in budgets delivered by the government, but it never took any action. Dealing with organized crime and the illicit activities that go with it were always kicked down the road. It has been all talk and no action. Let me say that ignoring the avails of organized criminals is, by default, accepting the consequences of organized crime.

• (1140)

Opioids like fentanyl are ruining the lives of Canadians. Fifty thousand Canadians have perished over the last eight years from the use of fentanyl and opioid-related drugs. This has visited misery upon their families, upon our streets and upon our society in general.

Let me share a personal story. Last January, across the street from my office, I went to pick up my dry cleaning, and there was a young man dying on the sidewalk. I was the first person on the scene. I got on my knees and did everything I could to get that man's heart beating. One thing runs through a person's mind: their kids. I have four boys, and that is what ran through my mind at that point in time, that this could be one of my sons.

The situation is a scourge. I do not know the man's backstory but, for 20 minutes, I helped revive him, and I begged other people to help me. That experience does not leave a person. This is something we need to think about, as far as how it impacts all of society.

[*Translation*]

Imagine losing your sister, brother, or even one of your parents. Imagine losing a loved one with whom you will never again share a meal, a laugh, or a memory, a loved one whose dreams you will never see come true and who you will never get to see grow older. This is what thousands of Canadian families are experiencing every day as they are struck by the scourge of fentanyl. Things could be different, but the current government is failing in its primary mission, which is to protect the public.

[*English*]

Tent cities are growing in every major city in Canada. I represent a riding downtown. The Canadians who live in tent cities are not safe; they are not secure. This is not a future that we see for our kids. It is not a future for any Canadian. The scourge of addiction and homelessness should never have been ignored. This is about priorities, and the priorities for Canadians are very clear.

There seems to be comfort in ignoring the obvious. Obviously, criminals are profiting. What is the number of car thieves considered statistically normal before society pushes back? There are higher insurance costs, higher policing costs and escalating violence; the crimes are not victimless.

One of my proud moments as the member of Parliament for Calgary Centre was my opposition to a second so-called safe consumption site in downtown Calgary, at a place called the Calgary Drop-in Centre, where homeless people can go in Calgary. It is right next to Chinatown, a very important part of downtown Calgary, and to a new development called East Village.

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East Village is an area that was built to bring families back downtown. There are lots of nice towers with three-bedroom condos in them. During that time, families were actually leaving because they did not want to raise families on streets that were trafficked by the drug pushers and criminals looking to profit from people's addiction. Imagine one's kids in that type of area.

Think about the homeless people themselves, who have to go through a gauntlet of death in order to get to a homeless shelter. This was never a solution. It was brought forward as a potential solution by the provincial UCP, the United Conservative Party government. The New Democrats, provincially, were all onside, and I will correct my colleague on the other side: The federal Liberals were onside.

I was the lone opposition for some time. Certain members of city council came to join me in that fight, and in the end, there was no safe consumption site opened at the drop-in centre, which serves some of the people in Calgary who need our help the most.

The solution was never a solution. We need to get back to what the real solutions are. The real solution is, of course, to win at the source, and that source is the criminals who are moving this scourge upon our population: the drug pushers, organized crime and the people who are making money at the expense of society.

I propose that we move the bill eventually to committee and actually make those changes that would make the laws more strict for the people who are actually causing the death and destruction in our society and that would make sure we make them pay. Crime should not be a risk-free, profit venture. We need to end this as quickly as possible and make sure the criminals are accountable for their actions.

• (1145)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to deal with strengthening Canada's borders and to deal with immigration and the area of stabilization, in particular dealing with asylum seekers. Bill C-12 would do just that. It is a fulfillment, in good part, of a commitment that was made.

We are looking for co-operation from opposition members, because this is a minority government, in recognizing that this legislation is a significant move forward. I would suggest that this bill, combined with the commitment of having 1,000 new border control officers and 1,000 new RCMP personnel, would provide more security for Canadians by securing our borders and making our streets a safer place.

Would the member not agree that to get the legislation through, we need a high sense of co-operation? Are there any specific amendments the member would like to see with respect to Bill C-12?

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is an important question.

As the member across the way will understand fully, we are co-operating very clearly on getting Bill C-12 to committee. Without the offensive parts of Bill C-2 in it, we are moving this bill forward. However, a number of issues only have half measures, and we need

to make sure they fully address the problems faced by Canadians, not just those visited upon us by the new U.S. administration, which is pushing the government to act. We understand that and we are willing to get this bill to committee. Can we make changes to the drug-pushing laws? Can we make changes to the half measures, as opposed to the immigration asylum system, that are part of this bill?

We would love to see this bill roundly discussed and those amendments clearly made at committee. We will be working toward that end.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is also concerned about the fight against crime. We have a few ideas on the table. We have talked about removing the religious exemption for hate speech from the Criminal Code. We have also talked about a bill to ensure that trials for intimate partner crimes are not abandoned because of the Jordan decision.

The member spoke about street gangs. My colleague from Rivière-du-Nord has introduced a bill on that subject to facilitate the seizure of property belonging to individuals convicted of a gang-related offence.

Has the member looked at those bills? To what extent would he be willing to work with the Bloc Québécois on these important crime issues?

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is a good question.

Our job is to work with all other parties to improve the bills that are presented to us. That is our job. The member is talking about another bill. It is important to take a look at it and take it under consideration.

• (1150)

[English]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals want to talk all the time about the 1,000 RCMP officers they are going to be hiring. I submitted an Order Paper question to discover how many RCMP officers we are capable of training in one year. Currently, we are training 34 per year, and that could ramp up to 58 per year. Given that, it would take 20 years to get the 1,000 RCMP officers the Liberals claim they are hiring operational.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any comments about these bait-and-switch announcements the Liberal Party puts up all the time.

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. I thank my colleague for arriving with the data. It is important because making announcements is something we have talked about. As I said in my speech, it is all talk and no action. It is the same with the Canadian Armed Forces and the notion of improving the Canadian Armed Forces and getting back to a base. The Liberals talk about increasing the numbers, yet recruitment does not show any increase in the numbers whatsoever. It is the same with police. The Liberals talk about having 1,000 more police and border officials at customs, yet the hiring practice does not seem to be happening at all.

The government seems to want to stack a whole bunch of bureaucrats in Ottawa at the thought level without any of the people who have to deliver the services to Canadians at the ground level. That is a mistake of the current government. We need more action and less talk.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise again in the House of Commons to represent the people of Peace River—Westlock.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-12, which sounds a lot like Bill C-2. Bill C-2 has been replaced by this bill. It was less than a month ago that I stood in this place and gave a speech on Bill C-2, during which I outlined a number of deficiencies that I saw with the bill. When I heard the Liberals would be reintroducing Bill C-2 as Bill C-12, I mentioned a number of things for consideration as possible fixes and the concerns I had with the bill. I was hopeful they had the opportunity to listen to my speech and would address a number of the concerns I had. Unfortunately, it does not look like the Liberals listened, once again.

I want to address a number of things that were asked of us. At the time, the member for Winnipeg North pointed out that Canada Post needed to be able to open people's mail without a warrant, but then he said it was with a warrant. Interestingly, that has now been dropped. I guess that was something the Liberals recognized as a problem. I talked about the banning of cash payments and donations over \$10,000 and said we had concerns with that, and that piece has also been dropped. Kudos to the government on that. The pressure from Conservatives caused that to happen as well. Then we talked a lot about concerns regarding warrantless access to information. These are some of the most dangerous parts of Bill C-2 and they have been dropped, and I am pleased about that.

At the time that I gave my speech, about a month ago, I was reprimanded and chastised by the members opposite, who said that we should get out of the way and let the bill pass quickly. We saw right away that there were major concerns with Bill C-2. I remember, in particular, that I was challenged on allowing Canada Post to open people's mail, as if we needed this to fight the fentanyl being mailed out. I am interested in knowing if members opposite still hold those positions and why these things have been dropped. I can tell the minister that my constituents and those across the country thought this was a dangerous inclusion in the bill, and I am happy to see that it is gone.

We have always worked hard to fight for everyday Canadians, and one of the other areas of concern was about the \$10,000 donations. We see that the government continually goes after the freedoms that Canadians enjoy in Canada, and we see its subtle and dogged attack on things like charitable organizations in this country, whether it is through the recommendations that came out of the finance committee last year about stripping religious organizations of their charitable status, the Canada summer jobs changes or the charitable attestation changes. Now we see a ban on cash donations. The Conservatives will always stand up for the charitable sector and the good work it does.

The bulk of my speech last month was about the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the changes being made to it. I had not had the time to look at it in detail. As members know, when

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there are amendments to a piece of legislation in the abstract, it is often difficult to see what they are, but since then, I have had a chance to put them in their place in the act and see what kind of effect they would have. I was concerned at the time about the passport markings the Conservative government had put in place and the ability to revoke the passports of folks who are registered to the sex offender registry, and there has been zero action by the government over the last 10 years on either marking passports or revoking them.

• (1155)

I have been digging into this a bit, and I discovered that one of the issues is that the RCMP, which holds the registry, is unable to share this information with other levels of government, other organizations and other law enforcement agencies. The bill says that we could share it with other law enforcement agencies, but the challenge is that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is not law enforcement. The folks who issue passports are not law enforcement, so the bill is unclear. I do not think it will solve the problem of passport marking and the revocation of passports based on the registered sex offender list. This continues to be a problem.

I reached out to stakeholders who work in this space, like the folks from Ratanak International, based out of Vancouver, who flag this for me regularly. Registered sex offenders, convicted sex offenders, here in Canada often go abroad, likely to perpetrate more crimes. Countries around the world are pleading with Canada to alert them that a registered sex offender is coming or to prevent them from coming in the first place by withholding their passport.

I noted last time in debate the reality that a passport has, in the opening page, an endorsement of the individual. It endorses the individual and asks those viewing the passport to give the person free passage through their country. I am not convinced that folks in the sex offender registry are necessarily entitled to a passport. The law has been changed already so we can revoke these passports, but the Liberal government has failed to do this over the last number of years.

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The RCMP was able to share with me how many notifications it had of sex offenders travelling. I see there is an update to the notification process. In 2022, the RCMP was notified 1,700 times. In 2023, it was notified 2,200 times. In 2024, it was notified 3,300 times. That was for registered sex offenders travelling abroad. However, the RCMP noted that it is unable to track the number of sex offenders who leave the country, given that if a sex offender does not register to do this, the RCMP does not know. We often know when they come back, as they seem to get flagged in the system then. As they come in, border security gets notified, but we do not know how many leave. Also, the RCMP was unable to ascertain how many times a registered sex offender failed to register when they left, because it does not track this.

For most of the last decade, countries, particularly the United States, have been begging and pleading with us to share this information with them. I think the bill would cover that. The changes the bill would make would allow our law enforcement to share with American law enforcement that a registered sex offender is travelling across the border. It is a particular annoyance for the Americans, and I understand that at a time when we are trying to mend relationships with the United States, rectifying this particular annoyance is the thing to do.

I would point out that I had flagged this for a number of years prior to this situation. I noted that, proactively, the United States has been sharing this information with us. In the first half of 2022, 165 Americans convicted of child sexual offences were allowed entry into Canada. We know this because the U.S. has a whole system to notify Canada that these folks are coming. Another question is whether we can stop them or refuse them entry, but that is another question altogether.

I look forward to seeing some of the questions I have about the bill clarified in committee. I also look forward to seeing if we need an amendment to fix the passport issue.

• (1200)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am actually encouraged. The member seems to have a deep amount of respect for the RCMP. He cited statistics and so forth, and he talked very positively about the RCMP.

I want to share with him something that appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press last week, on October 17. It references how the leader of the Conservative Party called the leadership of the RCMP “despicable”. This is something his leader said about the leadership of the RCMP. I agree with the member, who talked about how reliable and valuable the RCMP is in terms of providing service to Canadians. In fact, it is recognized worldwide as a wonderful organization from a legal, security and intelligence—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to give the member for Peace River—Westlock a chance to respond.

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, it is mighty rich for the member opposite to be so concerned about the reputation of the RCMP now, given that his former leader, Mr. Trudeau, said the entire operation was systemically racist. In terms of the comments that my leader made, I particularly remember the commissioner of the RCMP be-

ing pressured by Justin Trudeau to release the names of the firearms that were used in Nova Scotia.

The actions of the leadership of the RCMP, I think, are indefensible in many instances.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before I ask my question, I just want to say that I find it rich of the Liberals to add a day of debate on Bill C-12 and then not put up any speakers for the day. When it comes time to ask questions after a speech, we can debate the ideas that were presented, but we cannot deny the fact that the Conservatives are addressing the issue on the agenda. I find it especially deplorable that the Liberals are not taking advantage of an opportunity they created to discuss the bill before us, their bill, which is highly questionable at that.

In that regard, the previous version of the bill, Bill C-2, included a part 16 on the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. It authorized the collection of personal information for individuals suspected of funding terrorist or criminal activities. I understand that this was a special circumstance, but did my colleague think it was acceptable to include such a measure in the previous version of the bill?

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I thought I gave a thoughtful speech challenging some of the things that are right in the legislation, and the defence of the RCMP.

One other issue that I want to bring up in regard to the leadership of the RCMP is the case of Rhonda Blackmore. There are a lot of questions that concern me around this situation, with the treatment of Rhonda Blackmore and her removal as the head of F Division. There are questions about the leadership of the RCMP, and they continue to be unanswered. I look forward to seeing what responses come from there.

• (1205)

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the subject of enforcement and crime in this country, I want to highlight and get the member's thoughts on another act of vandalism that we saw in Edmonton against a church. This was St. Clare's Parish, with some very offensive graffiti sprayed on the church. Stained glass windows were broken. I know that in this member's own riding, there have been instances of attacks on churches.

When it comes to our police officers, I know many are very frustrated by the fact that they try to enforce the law, yet the government has let them down by creating a framework in which criminals are repeatedly released on bail.

I wonder if the member wants to share his thoughts on these acts of vandalism against churches and how we can support police officers who want to enforce the law.

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I am heartbroken by the vandalism that has happened to churches across this country. Since 2021, arson or attempted arson has been committed at about 130 churches. This is another story of how it seems to be okay to vandalize churches across the country. I want to condemn that in every possible manner.

I look forward to a government that will defend the rights of religious people in this country.

Mike Dawson (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the people's House on behalf of the good men and women of Miramichi—Grand Lake. My constituents are honest people. They work hard; they follow the rules, and they expect their government to do the same. They believe the purpose of government is not to manage their lives but to protect their freedoms, the freedoms that their parents and grandparents fought to defend. That is why they see through the government's latest deception.

Bill C-12, the so-called strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, sounds like something impressive. However, as in most Liberal bills, the title and the truth are strangers. The bill does not strengthen our borders. It strengthens the hands of a tired government that has lost control of spending and is losing control of our streets. It does not fix the broken system; it covers the cracks with slogans. It does not make Canadians safer; it makes them easier to watch, easier to tax and easier to silence.

I come from a part of the country where words still matter. When a man gives his word, he keeps it. When he breaks the law, he goes to jail, not on vacation. The government has broken its word again and again to families who cannot afford a home, to victims who cannot find justice and to newcomers who did everything right and are still waiting years for an answer while illegal migrants go to the front of the line.

The same government that cannot guard our borders now wants to guard our bank accounts. Of course the Liberal government wants to guard our bank accounts: It has not tabled a budget in 18 months, and it has spent all of its own money. The same people who cannot stop fentanyl from coming in want access to Canadians' private data going out. The government calls that progress. It is the fox guarding the henhouse.

Let us talk about safety, because that is what is really at stake here. In my riding, we have seen the human cost of the Liberal government's failure in law and order. Families are shattered by addiction, my own included. No family is left untouched. In our communities, police are doing their best, but they have fewer and fewer tools to support them in doing their jobs and enforcing our laws.

Fentanyl is flowing across an open border faster than compassion can bury the dead, yet the same government that refuses to jail fentanyl dealers wants to lecture the rest of us about fairness and kindness. Compassion without courage is cowardice, and the government has made a policy of cowardice.

Catch-and-release bail remains the law of the land. Drug dealers and gun traffickers get house arrest. Meanwhile, law-abiding hunters and farmers are treated like criminals for owning tools their families have used for generations. This is not justice; it is a failure.

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My constituents know the Liberal logic has failed us for a decade now, but Conservatives are focused on real change and law that will protect law-abiding Canadians. That is why we are proposing a shift in the Criminal Code to reflect castle law, the notion that a person's home is their castle. We thought that might be easy to sell to the Prime Minister, given that he spent a good part of the last decade living in castles in Europe.

Canadians do not want fentanyl traffickers watching Netflix on their couch. They want them behind bars where they cannot poison children. While the government lets criminals walk free, it punishes the people who play by the rules. The government punishes the same people who plough the roads at 5:00 a.m., coach a hockey team at 7:00 a.m. and still find time to shovel a neighbour's step before work. Those are the people the Prime Minister looks down on. Those are the people he calls "fringe". He is focused on telling them what kind of car they can drive, but those are the people who built this country and who continue to build it.

Let us talk about immigration. Conservatives believe that Canada is made stronger by those who come here legally, who work hard, who learn our languages, who share our values and love our flag. Immigration must be founded in law, not luck, and in fairness, not favouritism. Under the Liberal government, our system has become a revolving door for those who exploit it and a brick wall for those who respect it. There is no compassion in chaos. There is no justice in disorder. There is no sovereignty without security.

Bill C-12 does nothing to fix any of this. It is a window dressing for failure. It is one more photo op for a government that governs by headline and has not tabled a budget in 18 months. My constituents in Miramichi—Grand Lake expect the Liberal government to spend as much energy dealing with the public safety crisis happening in our communities as it spends on recognizing the terrorist state of Palestine half a world away.

The people of Miramichi—Grand Lake do not ask for much. They do not expect perfection. They expect honesty and hard work. They expect a government that protects their children before it protects its own image. They expect the Prime Minister to spend more time defending Canada's borders than defending his own reputation. Instead, they get a government that values surveillance instead of safety, mistaking kindness for weakness and patriotism for extremism.

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• (1210)

The truth is, the bill would give more power to the bureaucrats and less protection to citizens. It would not stop the drug flow, the repeat offenders or the crime in our communities. It would just tighten Ottawa's grip on loosening Canada's borders.

Conservatives will not be fooled, nor will ordinary Canadians. We will fight for real security, the kind that guards both our borders and our freedoms. We will restore mandatory prison time for violent offenders and traffickers. We will end catch-and-release. We will secure our borders, protect our privacy and rebuild Canadians' faith in institutions that are supposed to serve them.

The only thing more dangerous than a government that refuses to defend its borders is a government that no longer believes Canada is worth defending. However, there is hope. There is another path, one led by a man who understands that freedom and order are not opposites but partners. This man is the Leader of the Opposition, and under his leadership, Canada will again have borders that are strong, streets that are safe and a government that minds its own business instead of that of others.

The people I represent are ready for that Canada, a Canada in which government protects what matters and leaves the rest to the good sense of the people. They are ready to trade slogans for strength, control for courage and Liberal wokeism for Conservative common sense, because they know the Liberal government has forgotten that freedom is not granted by politicians but is inherited by patriots.

Bill C-12 is not a solution; it is exactly the problem. The bill is just another example of a government that has lost its way. On behalf of the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake, on behalf of every Canadian who believes in borders, law and liberty, I will vote against the bill. Only Conservatives will restore a Canada that is once again strong, sovereign and free, but not free for the taking.

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about Conservatives not being fooled and then went on to talk about how the Leader of the Opposition is the right person to take leadership in this country and move it in the right direction. However, the Leader of the Opposition clearly stated that he had no trust in the RCMP, and he basically insulted our protective services across this country, which do a lot of work to keep us safe and protect our borders.

How can we build a foundation of trust to build a stronger border service if the Conservatives do not even trust the men and women who are put in charge of protecting us?

• (1215)

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, this is rich coming from the other side. The Liberals had a prime minister who called the RCMP racist.

On this side of the floor, we respect all frontline workers, especially the police officers, men and women who go into danger every time they take a shift and get in their car. On this side of the floor, the Conservative Party respects all police officers and frontline workers across Canada.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for speaking on Bill C-12, but unfortunately I get the feeling that both the Conservatives and the Liberals have forgotten that the public elected a minority government, in other words a government that should work diligently, with as little partisanship as possible. It should take into account the fact that there is no majority in the House and that we have a duty to talk to each other and work together.

Let me explain. The Conservatives supported a Liberal gag order on Bill C-5 last June. Even though it was a major bill, a gag order was nevertheless quickly imposed. Now the same thing is happening with Bill C-12, a bill that even the government acknowledged caused many people a great deal of concern in its previous version, Bill C-2. People in Shefford have reached out to me about this issue, particularly about envelopes being opened, because they are concerned about their freedom.

At this point, the Liberals are no longer taking part in the debate on this important bill, Bill C-12. Changes have been made, yet no other Liberals are speaking. What is my colleague's take on what Canadians must be thinking, since they gave this Parliament a minority government?

[*English*]

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for giving me the opportunity to speak to the bill further. There is a lot here. The government has chosen to make the bill about a number of unrelated matters: immigration, public safety, law enforcement and, most concerning, the increased surveillance of ordinary, law-abiding Canadians.

At home we have a saying: "If your dog barks at you, someone is feeding it." Canadians are starting to wonder just exactly where the government's loyalty is. Is the government loyal to law-abiding tax-paying Canadians or fentanyl traffickers? Is it loyal to law-abiding tax-paying Canadians or repeat violent offenders? Is it loyal to law-abiding tax-paying Canadians or Hamas terrorists? Is the government loyal to law-abiding Canadians or illegal immigrants who arrive unannounced at our borders and claim asylum?

The mistakes are starting to pile up. Every chance it gets, the Liberal government picks criminals over Canadians, and they have had enough of the Liberal government.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find this line of questioning from the government quite interesting. I will quote a member of this chamber who, when speaking about the RCMP, said, "there is systemic racism within its ranks". That was the member for Winnipeg North in September 2024.

Are the Liberals no longer convinced that the police are worthy of criticism now? I would be curious for my colleague to address that.

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, it is funny to listen to the Liberal government talk about wanting an apology from the leader of our party and how terrible it is for the RCMP when the former prime minister of Canada called the RCMP racist.

On this side of the floor, we always respect frontline workers and RCMP officers, especially in this day and age, with the bills the government has passed over the last 10 years, the trouble it has caused and the unsafe position it has put these police officers in. It is shameful.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House to speak. I will be speaking to Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system. What a laughable title from a government that has made such a mess of both our borders and our immigration system.

Let me talk about the mess the government has made of immigration. I want to share three short stories.

The first is the case of Mr. Khant from earlier this year. He was a permanent resident, originally a citizen of India. He pleaded guilty to attempting an indecent act. That is a bit of a legalistic way of saying that Mr. Khant tried to purchase sexual services from a minor. Unfortunately for Mr. Khant, the person he tried to purchase sexual services from was the Peel Regional Police human trafficking unit, as part of Project Juno. Rather than a jail sentence, Mr. Khant received a conditional discharge. Why would that be? In the words of the court, "Mr. Khant is a permanent resident seeking Canadian citizenship and professional licensing. A conviction would not only delay his citizenship by four years but could also prevent him from sponsoring his wife and obtaining his engineering licence."

If people commit crimes in Canada and they are not Canadian citizens, they should no longer be in Canada.

Just over two weeks ago, there was the case of Mr. Sajeevan, an Indian citizen in Canada on a student visa. He was a roommate with several others, including several female roommates at a home in Barrie. His bedroom was in the basement beside the laundry room, which was shared by all the residents. The laundry room was beside the bathroom, which was also shared amongst the roommates.

Over a period of many months, Mr. Sajeevan used a peephole in the laundry room to spy on his female roommates in various states of undress. In July of this year, Mr. Sajeevan pleaded guilty to voyeurism, despite some initial agreement on sentencing and some very troubling victim impact statements from those who had been spied upon. The court went on to say, "The emotional and psychological harm caused is palpable...Mr. Sajeevan's offending has had a significant and enduring impact on his victims." The court called it "more than curiosity; it was sustained predation".

Despite all that and despite the serious nature of the crime and its effect on its victims, which the court acknowledged, the court went on to accept "serious collateral immigration consequences". The result was a jail sentence of only five and a half months. Why? That

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is a bit of a strange number. Why five and a half months, when in fact the court said the proper sentence should be somewhere between six and 12 months?

It was because a jail sentence of six months would have made him inadmissible to Canada. In other words, he would have had to leave Canada if he were to receive a sentence of six months. However, we did not get that because the Liberals have so screwed up our immigration system.

Last is the case of Mr. Biron, a permanent resident from the Philippines. In 2021, over four years ago, he pleaded guilty to sexual assault against a minor and was sentenced to 20 months in prison. Beginning in 2022, he was advised that he could be inadmissible to Canada because of the serious nature of his crimes. For over four years, he has fought his deportation. How can it be that a non-citizen who has pleaded guilty to sexual assault against a minor is still in Canada after four years?

Bill C-12, despite being called a fix to our immigration system, does nothing for this. These are not isolated incidents, because we know that, despite the strong border rhetoric and the fix to immigration allegedly coming from the government, we have lost track of hundreds of serious criminals in this country. The cherry on the top of this is that the very minister responsible for our public safety is himself interceding on behalf of members of terrorist organizations.

Let me turn to the border and talk about what a mess the government has made of our borders. Fentanyl, of course, is still making its way into Canada. In fact, earlier this year, in the town of Georgina, in my riding of York—Durham, the York Regional Police broke up the largest drug trafficking ring in our town's history, under Project Madruga, through which 1400 grams of fentanyl were discovered. To put that into perspective, two milligrams is enough to kill a human adult. The York Regional Police said that they had never seen a drug trafficking problem or ring of this size or scope in Georgina.

● (1220)

The government promised during the election to hire 1,000 new border officers, but we have discovered that was just another empty Liberal promise. More than six months later, they have hired only a few dozen and, in fact, do not have a plan to hire any more. The CBSA says that it has turnover of between 600 and 700 officers a year, so even at normal speeds, it would take over five years to hire 1,000 new officers. The Minister of Public Safety himself admitted in an interview that it would take five years to hire 1,000 new officers, and that is not even talking about the backlog and vacancies the CBSA has. The Customs and Immigration Union says there is a 3,000-officer vacancy rate and shortage on the border force.

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Last, I want to talk about civil liberties because, for all these messes, whether it is the mess on the border or the mess in our immigration system, for some reason, it seems the Liberals' response is always to attack our liberty. The monstrosity that is Bill C-2, from which Bill C-12 emerged, is just one more example of the pattern of the Liberal disregard for the freedoms and liberties of Canadians.

To be clear, I want to make a point that our freedoms, my freedoms and everyone's freedoms in Canada do not emanate from Parliament or princes. We have freedom and liberty, because we are made in God's image and are human beings endowed with those by our creator, but Bill C-2 remains before the House. It would allow law enforcement to snoop on Canadians without judicial authorization. It would allow Canada Post to open mail without a warrant. As a lawyer, I know that a warrant is a basic protection that we, as normal, average citizens, have fought for hundreds of years to maintain to protect us from the arbitrary power of the state.

Bill C-2 is not the only attack on liberties that Canadians have endured under this government. Bill C-8, which we have discussed, would give unprecedented power to the government to kick Canadians off the Internet, on "reasonable grounds" in respect of "any threat". What is "any threat"? I have been here for just over six months, and I have already been accused several times, by members from the opposite side, of spreading misinformation because they do not like my opinion. Am I now a "threat" to the government, and will I be kicked off the Internet? There would be no warrant, no trial and no due process.

Another example is Bill C-9, which has more unprecedented power for the police to control and to police speech on the Internet. Over all, it seems like, of the legislation the Liberals have introduced thus far, the majority trample on our liberties as Canadians.

This is the Liberals' pattern. They might have a new leader and call themselves a new government, but they exhibit all of the same habits as they had before. Whether it is with Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-9 or now Bill C-12, it seems for every societal problem, there is another Liberal bill ready to erode our freedom, my freedom and the liberty of all Canadians.

● (1225)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, less than an hour ago, we had the Conservative member from Peace River—Westlock say, "The actions of the leadership of the RCMP are indefensible in many instances." We have had the member for Bow River say "management weakness" in reference to the RCMP. We have the leader of the Conservative Party being quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press as saying, "the leadership of the RCMP is...despicable".

I believe that Canadians need to have an apology, at the very least from the leader of the Conservative Party, and I am wondering if the member who just spoke echoes the same sentiments as the three individuals I just quoted. What are his feelings about the RCMP? Should his leader not apologize to Canadians?

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I would like the member opposite to have some reflection on the members of his own caucus, who through the last several years, have called to defund our police. The

member for Victoria, in 2020, posted on social media that the police should be defunded. The member for London West attended a "defund the police" rally in her riding.

Do not tell us about support for the police. In the last election, the police unions endorsed and supported the Conservatives, not the Liberals, because they know we support them. We are tough on crime, and the Liberals are not.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I share many of my colleague's concerns.

In Quebec, we have suffered and continue to suffer from a lack of border security due to the Liberal government's lax attitude and abdication of responsibility. Not to name names, but Roxham Road is where 150,000 people over five years have crossed irregularly through fields with the help of smuggling rings.

When we pointed this out and raised the fact that the safe third country agreement needed to be reviewed, the Liberal Party told us that it could not possibly do that because it would be too bureaucratic and that the agreement could not be changed. It is not right to take people into a country, handcuff them and leave them with the RCMP.

Given this egregious example of bungling, I would like my colleague to tell me what he now thinks of the Liberal government and its inaction.

● (1230)

[*English*]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for pointing out yet another example of the Liberals' mess in our immigration system. We have people coming across irregularly and illegally, and that is unacceptable. We cannot have a government that allows people to skip the line and break the rules over those who are trying to do things the right way and trying to come to Canada for the right reasons. It is totally unacceptable.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals keep trying to give themselves the power to watch, interfere with and generally babysit Canadians. What are your thoughts on the reasons for that?

The Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the member for York—Durham, I will remind members to go through the Chair. We do not use "you" or "your".

The member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Liberal government, as we have seen over the last 10 years of it being in power, simply does not trust Canadians. The Liberals do not have faith in Canadians that they can run their own lives or decide what they want to read or watch online or on the Internet. Instead, for every societal problem the Liberals see, it is more government intervention, more government censorship and more government bureaucrats telling them how they should lead their life.

I am part of this party because we believe in Canadians. We believe Canadians are smart enough, wise enough and capable enough to run their own lives without any instruction from the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have one quick question.

For my information, could my esteemed colleague tell us whether Roxham Road is still open?

[*English*]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, our border is not secure. The Liberals have promised 1,000 border agents to protect our borders from illegal immigration, fentanyl and other criminal issues, including gun crimes. However, the Liberals' response is that maybe they will get to it in five years, that maybe in five years, they will hire the 1,000 new border officers.

No, our border is not secure.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I heard about Bill C-12, I was hopeful. I was hopeful because I believed that the Liberals had listened to what both Canadians and Conservatives have been saying about Bill C-2. On the surface, it looked like there was some reason to hope. Bill C-12 is a repackaged and less offensive version of Bill C-2. It does remove the most egregious of the sweeping new powers that the government sought to grant itself and other government agencies. It no longer proposes to restrict Canadians' use of cash, and it no longer proposes to allow Canada Post to open Canadians' letters.

The Conservatives in the House gave voice to Canadians in speech after speech and forced the government to back down from a bill that would have violated Canadians' individual freedoms and privacy. We are prepared to do our job once again with Bill C-12 as the country's loyal official opposition. The Conservatives will examine every clause and every line of the bill to make sure the Liberals do not erode Canadians' rights.

After listening to the Prime Minister speak on television last night, on television instead of in the House, in front of an audience that even the Toronto Star described as being made up mostly of Liberal staffers, where he does not have to answer our questions and where he does not have to debate, I realized something else about Bill C-12: It might be better, but it would not do what the people of Nanaimo—Ladysmith so desperately need it to do. It would not do what British Columbians need it to do, and it would not do what grandmothers across the country who are raising their grandchildren because of fentanyl need it to do. It would not actually secure our borders. It would not actually treat those in our communities who are in the thrall of fentanyl. It would not actually bring safety back to our communities.

While the bill would fill a loophole by banning precursor chemicals used to make fentanyl, it fails to address the sentencing of those who traffic in it. There are still no mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl dealers. There are still no serious penalties for those who profit from destroying our lives and our communities. Bill C-12 would make some incremental improvements, but they are beyond insufficient. Criminals who traffic in fentanyl and

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firearms will continue to use our porous border to victimize Canadians, and they will continue to walk free soon after being arrested.

I will give the government credit where it is due. Bill C-12 is way better than Bill C-2, but let us be honest. These measures fall far short of what Canadians deserve.

The Liberals continue to permit drug consumption sites near schools and day cares. Last week, I had a call from a constituent about a proposed wet housing site that would back onto a kindergarten in my riding.

At the health committee, my Conservative colleagues called on the government to shut down fentanyl consumption sites near the places where kids learn and play. The Minister of Health refused to do so. She would not rule out approving more of these sites, even after acknowledging that they are now repositories for rampant fentanyl usage.

Last night, the Prime Minister looked Canadians in the eye and spoke yet again of the need for transformational change. He spoke of a rupture, of sacrifice, of responsible choice and of generational investments. Well, the addictions crisis is still in full bloom in Nanaimo, and the numbers are still staggering across Canada. There were more than 50,000 deaths in the last decade. There are more victims of the addictions crisis than there were Canadian deaths in the Second World War. Some 79% of accidental opioid deaths in 2024 involved fentanyl, up 40% since the Liberal government came into power.

The number of emergency department visits linked to fentanyl has more than doubled since 2018. Superlabs in Canada are now producing massive amounts of fentanyl. These are not small operations pressing pills in basements. These are industrial labs producing drugs on a massive scale.

● (1235)

In a country of 41 million people, it is simply disingenuous to argue that with the multiple drug busts in the 96 million dose range, these drugs are meant for domestic consumption. We have to face the reality that drugs are being produced in Canada for both domestic consumption and export. Bust after bust is described as the largest, most sophisticated illicit drug lab in the country. Police seize kilograms of fentanyl; kilograms of meth; illegal unregistered firearms, many of them loaded; silencers; explosives; and millions of dollars in cash.

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This is what we are up against. Productivity in Canada is down, and we have a massive wage gap with the United States, except for criminals. Organized crime has set up an innovation sandbox in Canada that boggles the mind. The criminals know how to use AI, how to improve efficiencies and how to find synergies, and they are eating the government's lunch. Why? It is because the Liberal government, for all the Prime Minister's rhetoric, only seems willing to tinker around the margins with tiny pilot projects and token funding announcements.

Yesterday, we had another one of these, with the Liberals proudly announcing \$4.3 million in funding, including \$442,000 and change for the city of Nanaimo, to address these issues. I will take their money, but I will vote with my conscience. For those following Nanaimo's news, \$442,000 is barely enough to build a fence around city hall. It is nowhere near enough to meet the need in a community that has been devastated by the addictions crisis. In Nanaimo, we need the government to spend less and invest more. We need hundreds of millions of dollars in investment for real solutions, not a few thousand dollars of spending for a press release.

If someone gets diagnosed with cancer, they get a full continuum of care: a diagnosis, a prognosis, surgery, chemo, radiation and follow-up for life. If someone gets diagnosed with addiction, they get Narcan. They might get patched up, if they are lucky, and then they get dropped off on the curb. This is not a system of care; it is abandonment. We need triage beds. We need detox beds. We need treatment spaces, recovery centres, sober-living houses and long-term maintenance programs. We need real treatment and recovery options so people can come home to their families, clean and healthy, and we needed it a decade ago.

The Prime Minister started his tenure in the House with lofty comments about Athens and Rome, but now he seems content to fiddle while Nanaimo burns. The Prime Minister is absolutely right. We need transformative change, but he is unwilling to deliver it.

I challenge the Prime Minister to come down from his ivory tower and engage with us in Nanaimo. I know he comes to my riding. He has family there, but I challenge him to spend less time jogging around beautiful Westwood Lake and more time talking with the people who deal with the addictions crisis on the front lines on our streets. He talks a good game about collaboration, but he does not collaborate. He talks about transformational change, but he is not even having the conversations that would allow him to make it. Bill C-12 is proof of that.

The Conservatives forced the Liberals to back down from the worst parts of Bill C-2, and we will continue to hold them to account on Bill C-12, because Canadians do not want more photo-ops, press releases or the seventh announcement of the 1,000 border officers the CBSA has never heard of and has not been given actual instructions to hire. They want real change. They want safe streets, healthy communities and a government that values their lives more than it fear losing an election.

Grandmothers want to stop raising their grandchildren. Addicts want hope, and communities want to stop living in fear. That is what the Conservatives are fighting for, and that is what a Conservative government would deliver.

• (1240)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just months ago, there was a national election, and the Liberal Party, in particular the Prime Minister, received more votes than have ever been cast for the Liberal Party in the history of our party. A very solid mandate was delivered.

To the member's comments on "tiny" projects, there is \$60 billion for five of them, one being a multi-billion dollar project in the province of B.C. They carry out through the Prairies, going all the way to the east.

This is a Prime Minister who not only has a vision, but is implementing that vision, and today is a good example. The election platform said to deal with border security. That is what Bill C-12 is all about. It said to deal with immigration stabilization. That is what Bill C-12 is all about. It is the Prime Minister who is making commitments while the leader of the Conservative Party is bad-mouthing the leadership of the RCMP.

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about the Liberal Party's receiving more votes in the last election than it has ever received before. Well, the Conservatives also received more votes in the election than we have ever received before.

When it comes to transformational change, the Prime Minister will make that change for his buddies, but there is no minister of mental health and addictions in the government, and people in my riding are dying because of it.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend. I know that grandmothers are raising children. I have been to funerals for folks who have died where I worked before as a police officer. There are mothers who carry naloxone in their purse to make sure they have enough to revive their child if they end up overdosing. That is not a Canada I want to live in.

Last week, the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime was on television, talking about hiring 1,000 CBSA officers, and she had no clue as to how many officers are retiring or leaving the job and how many are needed to replace them, aside from the 1,000 the Liberals are promising.

With whom does the buck stop? Conservatives and the Canadian public have had enough.

• (1245)

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, it is a good reminder that I have naloxone in my truck, in my car and in my house. We have it in our community offices. It is ubiquitous in our lives.

When it comes to the CBSA officers whom the government has promised more times than I can count, not only has it not hired those officers but there is also no money in the main estimates or the supplementary estimates (A) for those CBSA officers, and the departmental plans for the next three years show cutting both dollars and positions.

I have no idea where the buck stops, but something needs to change.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech.

This bill discusses security at the border, as well as security in our communities. Recent media reports indicate that young people are increasingly turning to guns to protect themselves against criminal groups. That is concerning.

As usual, we come back to the issue of prevention and education. When criminal groups cross our borders and try to recruit vulnerable young people, young people who are susceptible to joining these groups, I think that we need to have a discussion that rises above partisanship.

What does the Conservative Party think about this phenomenon that is increasingly taking root in our communities?

[*English*]

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I have two teenagers, so when it comes to young people and their future, it is on my mind as a parent, as it is on the minds of parents in our communities.

The current generation of youth is working so hard and facing so many obstacles. If we want to keep them out of gangs and out of trouble, we have to provide them with opportunity. That is one of the things that drives me.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak in the House, as always.

Today we are talking about Bill C-12. It is a fairly large omnibus bill that would amend many different acts, and it goes into many different areas of national policy. It is a second attempt by the government to put forward a bill that would address a number of problems that are well known and well identified, problems that Conservatives have identified for years. The government has finally acknowledged the existence of some of these problems and is trying to fix them.

The Liberals came out with Bill C-2, literally the second bill tabled in the current Parliament. It was a disaster; it fell very flat. Nobody wanted the bill. It contained some terrible measures, including a bizarre outright ban on certain cash transactions, as well as warrantless mail opening. Who was asking for this?

I suppose the government does deserve credit for listening to Conservatives, who had encouraged it through opposition to these measures to try again, so here we are with a new bill. It is a curious mix of ideas plagiarized from the Conservative Party in its previous platform, symbolic announcements that were not fulfilled with follow-through, and some steps for improvement on things that need

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to be done. I will talk about only a few of them, as it is a huge omnibus bill.

With respect to the border, yes, Conservatives support export tracking in our ports. This is something Conservatives have for years called for. We talked years ago about the crisis of auto theft in our country and the need to have the ability to scan container ships for the thousands of cars stolen from Canadian streets. Members may remember that the then minister of justice had his own ministerial car stolen at least twice, maybe even three times; I do not remember for sure. This is the level of problem we have that the Liberals are trying to solve. We would support that. In addition, with respect to drugs, we certainly support changing the classification of precursor chemicals to controlled substances.

However, I will point out that while the Liberals are taking credit for strengthening our border protection, something Conservatives had for years called for, the departmental plans for the CBSA and the RCMP do not support the announcement material that has come along with the bill, which we see if we take a cursory look at both the main estimates and the supplementary estimates. The supplementary estimates are there to make adjustments when changes in law, announcements or things like that come about, so the government can plan ahead.

The government's current plan for personnel with CBSA would be a net reduction of 600-odd personnel through to 2028. Once again, the Liberals have an A for announcement, but right now it looks like an F on follow-through, which has been the MO of the government for so long.

With respect to fentanyl, we heard some heart-rending testimony from members of the House on the scourge of opioid addiction, with people dying in our streets. There is also the trafficking of fentanyl. Yes, we agree with the changes the Liberals have made in the bill; they are important and supportable.

However, the government is not enforcing the laws we have already. People who traffic in drugs are not getting the full weight of Canadian law as it is. We have a bail not jail regime that the government deliberately brought in as a consequence of its bills, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 from former Parliaments, and that would not be fixed by the bill before us.

● (1250)

With respect to changes that would be made to the Citizenship Act and to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, again, this is a problem long in the making. There are right now 290,000 asylum claims in the queue. By comparison, at the end of the years of the former Conservative government, there were about 10,000 claims. We have jumped from 10,000 people to 290,000 people in the queue for adjudication of asylum claims.

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It is no surprise how we got there. We got there from the tweet heard around the world, the #WelcomeToCanada tweet that explicitly encouraged economic migrants to cross into Canada in order to then apply for asylum. The conflation of economic migrants with migrants seeking asylum in Canada as refugees has been completely intermeshed under the government. It is just a disaster for everyone. It is not fair for all the people in the queue to have this queue.

For the people in the queue, there is an industry now in which we have seen that human trafficking is a factor. People have made a business out of helping economic migrants, desperate people indeed, come to Canada from a safe third country, mostly the United States. We called upon the government repeatedly to make exactly the point that is contained in the bill, to apply the safe third country agreement to the entire land border. It is very late coming to this.

There is so much in the bill that it is hard to really do justice to any of it, but I want to spend most of the rest of my time on a very curious change that the bill would make. There would be an amendment to the Oceans Act that would place the Coast Guard under the ministry of defence, for budget purposes. It would still report, as an institution, to the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Transport and now also to the Minister of National Defence.

This change is an accounting trick the Liberals have done to try to fulfill the important obligation Canada has to NATO to increase its spending to at least the old agreed-to target and now to 5%. However, that would not change the capability of the Coast Guard; it would change reporting mechanisms and just move the budget from one column to another. Moving an expense budget from one column to another would not make Canada more safe and secure.

The ships would continue to be unarmed. They would continue to not meet NATO's own definition of a defence force. The closest things to armaments on these ships are shotguns used to scare off polar bears in Arctic patrol conditions, like firing a banger that is designed to make noise to scare away a predator. I am not even certain that I understand in what circumstance this would happen; perhaps it would be when going ashore, I guess, in the high Arctic.

That would not make Canada safer. It would not meet our actual NATO duty to defend our territory or to be deployable and help other countries. In this omnibus bill, the Liberals have snuck in an accounting trick just to help government members pat themselves on the back for increasing defence spending, when they would be doing nothing of the sort. All they would be doing is moving a number from one column to another.

The bill is a great example of the type of legislation we have become used to, where the government has a nice title and a nice announcement but no actual efficacy or improvement for national policy.

• (1255)

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning when I turned on the television, there were a bunch of Conservatives coming into the building, and everyone was moving so quickly. I thought, “Is a race going on, a marathon?” No, the Conservatives were trying to avoid the media, because their leader has doubled down on the statement that he does not have confidence in the RCMP's leadership. To me, that sends a very negative

message. He called them “despicable”. That sends a very bad message to Canadians when it comes to border control.

Does the member opposite believe that the RCMP's leadership is despicable? Does he believe the RCMP plays a massive role in our protection when it comes to the border, yes or no?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, it is typical that the Liberals do not want to debate my speech.

This is pretty rich coming from a government that had plenty of time to call the RCMP racist as an institution and is now switching from the debate at hand.

I will take the next comment or question and leave it at that.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is just sad. The Liberals are adding another day of debate on their bill, Bill C-12, but they are not rising. They are not giving speeches. They are just sitting there. When it is time to ask questions, theirs have nothing to do with the bill. I would ask the government to get serious so we know we are not doing our job for nothing.

I have a question for my colleague. I put this same question to his colleague earlier. Bill C-2 contained some measures and parts that we found worthwhile and that could have been discussed in committee, but they were all removed from this version of Bill C-12. For example, part 16 allowed access to the private information of a person suspected of using proceeds of crime to finance terrorist or criminal activities. We thought it was a worthwhile measure, one worth discussing.

Does my colleague agree that this type of measure could have been included in Bill C-12 and that we could have examined it productively and constructively, contrary to what the Liberals are doing today?

[*English*]

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, the member raised a very important problem. Canada has a very serious problem with terrorist financing and money laundering, and the government needs to do something about it.

Bill C-2 especially and Bill C-12 are very large bills. I did not get to that in my speech, but the Liberals made a mess of Bill C-2. Bill C-12 does not go all the way to fixing it and does not address the serious problem of terrorist financing and money laundering that my colleague mentioned.

• (1300)

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to drill down on my colleague's comments on the Canadian Coast Guard. In Bill C-12, part 4 talks about making the Canadian Coast Guard the responsibility of another minister, but it never defines the minister as being the Minister of National Defence. The member referred to it as an "accounting trick" and talked about how the Canadian Coast Guard does not have any armaments, weapons systems or surveillance equipment to do the job defined under Bill C-12, which is surveillance and security patrols.

In the Oceans Act, which part 4 would amend, there is still a responsibility to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and to the Minister of Transportation. Does the member believe that having divided authorities will undermine the Coast Guard's ability to work as part of our security apparatus?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, that is a fantastic question. I do not know the answer to it. It is a great question that the government will have to answer when this bill gets to committee.

I mentioned in my speech the reporting to the Minister of National Defence, but the member is correct that the bill does not specify that. That was my presumption. Who will be in charge of the Coast Guard when this is all done, if Bill C-12 passes unamended? It is not clear to me from what we can see so far. This will have to be studied at committee.

The member's point is so important: Nothing has changed. The ships are not suddenly armed or equipped with surveillance technology and equipment. They are the same ships, unarmed, and are currently purposed for civilian use. Changing and adding a new minister and moving the expense from one column to another will not make Canadians safer.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House, and today we are talking about Bill C-12.

For those who do not know what Bill C-12 is, it is the Liberal government's attempt at a do-over of Bill C-2, the border security bill. When Bill C-2 first came out, there was an outcry from the Conservative Party and civil liberties organizations across the country because of the numerous infringements of the Canadian Charter Rights and Freedoms. It would have been violated by Bill C-2, so the government was forced to take out some of these offensive violations.

Part 4 would allow Canada Post to open mail without a warrant. Part 11 would ban cash payments and donations over \$10,000. Part 14 would allow warrantless access to Canadians' personal information on reasonable suspicion, which is a very low threshold. Part 15 could compel electronic service providers to re-engineer their platforms to help CSIS and the police access personal information, like a digital snoop.

Part 16 would allow the government to supply financial institutions with personal information if the info was useful for money laundering and terrorist financing purposes. Again, if there was a reasonable suspicion, they could get all of someone's financial information. What could possibly go wrong when the Liberal government gets someone's financial information? I think we learned that

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with the Emergencies Act when the government froze the bank accounts of Canadians. It is no wonder Canadians do not trust the government.

I am happy to see all of these violations of people's civil liberties were taken out in the do-over. That is the good news.

The bad news is that the government continues to go against people's charter rights and freedoms. We see a continual pattern of behaviour with the government. With Bill C-11, it tried to shut down people's freedom of speech. Bill C-18 tried to mess with the freedom of the press. The freedom of religion issue is constantly coming up, with the Liberals trying to remove charitable status from churches and the Canada summer jobs program. We have to get to the details of this bill to make sure no funny business has been snuck in at the last minute. It is clear the government continually wants to take away the freedoms of Canadians.

Some improvements could still be made to this bill, and I want to talk about a few of those. The first one is in part 1. Part 1 would amend the Customs Act to allow the CBSA to use facilities free of charge for enforcement and access to goods for export, as it does for imports. The dilemma for me is that with the size of the fentanyl issue, the crime issues and the lack of security at our borders, there is no limit on how long somebody's warehouse or space could be seized to use for this kind of enforcement. Of course, that would come at the expense of whoever owns a warehouse or storage space.

In border towns like Sarnia, there is not always a lot of space available at the border, so that could be even more far-reaching. The same is true for Windsor and a number of the other border crossings we have. I think some limits should be put on part 1 to make sure we do not unduly burden private businesses.

Second, let us talk about fentanyl. Fentanyl is a huge issue in this country. About 50,000 people have died of overdoses. The RCMP and CSIS have indicated that there are 400 fentanyl superlabs. I do not know whether they are being shut down, but Justin Trudeau said a very small portion of our fentanyl goes to the States. The reality is we really do not know, because shipping containers coming in from China are not being scanned and are going through the port of Vancouver and down to Seattle.

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The precursors of fentanyl are not controlled or tracked. We do not know where they are going, so the people synthesizing fentanyl in these 400 superlabs are getting those chemicals from somewhere. One thing I like about the bill is that it adds some controls to traceability so we would know where those chemicals are coming in, where they are going and who is buying them. That would be helpful to the police.

I think we should start doing what other ports in the world do, which is scan all the shipping containers. This is very important not just on the fentanyl issue but on the issue of people stealing cars. We definitely need an upgrade in our scanning capabilities.

• (1305)

One of the difficulties I have with putting laws in place in this country is the lack of enforcement of the rule of law. It is fundamental to our democracy, but the law is not really being enforced. We have people committing crimes in the country who are let out because the Liberals put in place Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Bill C-75 says that we have to give the least restrictive punishment, which is really bail or a fine, at the earliest opportunity, which is right away. We have people trafficking fentanyl or creating it in these labs, and even if they get arrested, they are back out on bail. Bill C-5 lets them have house arrest. How convenient is that for drug trafficking? They have to stay home, but people can stop by.

We need better enforcement of the law, because we know the Liberals are going to create more laws like Bill C-9, for example, which is supposed to address the rise in hate crimes. There are already laws in this country that could help in that regard. There were 113 Christian churches that burned to the ground. There is a law against arson. It should be enforced. Illegally blocking the streets is against the law, but the police are not enforcing it. Death cries to Canadians and various religions are hate speech. They are against the law. Again, it is about enforcement. As for shooting up schools, stealing cars, home invasions and extortions, we already have laws on the books for these things, but if we are not going to enforce them, we are not going to cure the problem. That is exactly the problem with introducing this border security bill. If there is no enforcement of any of the things in it, then it is absolutely meaningless.

There are immigration measures in the bill, and we need to take action on immigration because it is out of control. Most Canadians would agree with that. We need immigration to build houses and for the nation-building projects we want. We have an aging population. We need more PSWs, nurses and doctors than can graduate from the educational institutions in Canada. We need people to come here and help build the country. I love the idea from our leader of the blue seal program, to take the 50,000 doctors and nurses who already live in Canada and get them accredited so they can help out. It is definitely a great idea.

For the last century, people have come here to work and to help build the country, and we want to continue that. What we do not need is more freeloaders showing up to claim asylum and have the Canadian taxpayer fork out \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month to put them up in hotels in Niagara Falls. That is more money than we give the seniors who built the country. It is more money than we give to Canadians living with a disability.

Then we see that the majority of these claims, after two or three years of putting these people up, are not eligible after we have spent a huge amount of the taxpayers' money. There are 300,000 of these individuals in the backlog. That is \$15 billion a year taken out of the pockets of Canadian taxpayers for people we did not invite here. I think moving the IRCC office to the Toronto Pearson, Montreal and Vancouver airports to hear their claims right on the spot would be good. Then if they are not eligible, the cost of a plane ticket is a lot less than the cost of putting somebody up for three years.

At the same time, we need to reintroduce the fair and compassionate immigration system we had when the Conservatives were in charge, which did security checks so that we were not letting people into the country who were going to cause the kinds of crime and trouble we are sometimes seeing.

I think the immigration measures in the bill will help out. I do not think they go far enough. My colleague from Calgary Nose Hill has done a great job of defining what ought to be done to fix the immigration system we have. I encourage anyone who does not follow her to listen to what she has to say on that subject.

I want to talk a bit about making the border more secure. The Liberals have announced that they are going to hire 1,000 CBSA agents. The announcement was made months ago and nobody has been hired. We hear now that it might be done within five years. That is not the kind of response we need to get security in the budget.

With that, I will take questions.

• (1310)

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here talking about how to make Canada, our country, safer. We are talking about issues that matter to Canadians. Canadians are watching. There are many people in this room watching today, and people are watching online. It is important for MPs to set a tone in the House to ensure that, at the end of the day, we move forward in the right direction.

The Leader of the Opposition has clearly said that he thinks the RCMP is “despicable”. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition will not even do a security background check to ensure he can have access to certain information.

Do you think the Leader of the Opposition should get the background check and that he should stop calling our top officers despicable?

The Deputy Speaker: I do not think anything. I will let the member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong explain what she thinks.

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Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the member follows me on Facebook or Twitter, but if he does, he might want to review one of the excellent speeches I gave when the green slush fund was before the House and the Liberals were saying that there needed to be separation between the government and the RCMP. I fully agreed, and I gave a number of examples in which there were infringements of the Criminal Code. One of them was when Justin Trudeau contravened section 119(1) of the Criminal Code, which says that a person who holds public office cannot take an action that benefits themselves or their family. In the WE Charity scandal, he gave the charity \$900 million, which benefited his wife, his brother and his mother.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech. We agree on many things.

I would like her to talk about a subject that has not really been broached today, and that is the issue of foreign students trying to exploit loopholes to apply for asylum.

In Quebec, there were 340 such cases in 2020. How many were there in 2024? There were 5,535, an increase of over 1,500%.

When we questioned the Minister of Immigration, she was unable to give us an answer. She read out data from a sheet of paper. That is not reassuring. The government is irresponsible. It is not taking responsibility, and it is incapable of reassuring the universities. It wants them to do the policing, but that is not their role.

I would like my colleague to tell me whether she agrees that the government needs to finally take responsibility for the situation and send a message to reassure the universities about their image, as well as their international credibility.

• (1315)

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, there is no oversight on the part of the government or the Minister of Immigration. I think there are four million students who are supposed to leave by December, but the government has no idea where they are. That is unacceptable.

We need foreign students, because the population is aging and we need a lot of doctors and nurses.

We absolutely need much more oversight.

[*English*]

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Bill Blair, we all know what Prime Minister Trudeau has—

The Deputy Speaker: I need to interrupt the member. He cannot use the first name or the last name of a member of the House of Commons. I will let the member start again.

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of a former prime minister saying that the RCMP is systematically racist. He also tried to take away tools from the RCMP and said that it required cultural change. Bill Blair also said—

The Deputy Speaker: I need to interrupt the member again. That particular member is still a member of the House of Commons, and a member cannot use the first name, last name or full

name of a member of the House of Commons. I invite the member to finish, and I will allow the member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong to respond.

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. According to an article, a former minister said that “Discrimination within Canada's criminal justice system is abhorrent, unacceptable and [distasteful] and related police misconduct is indefensible”. Why does my colleague think the Liberals are so focused on a statement by our leader, which was taken out of context, while they are ignoring everybody else?

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, it is because the Liberals have nothing else to offer. They are looking for a distraction because they have not delivered. They are going to build, build, build at paces we have never seen. Well, I have never seen negative acceleration, but I am seeing it now.

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this House on behalf of the good people of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Today, I am going to be discussing Bill C-12. This is the Liberals' second attempt at addressing our broken border and immigration system. It was introduced in the House recently, thanks to my Conservative colleagues' work and my work in forcing the Liberals to back down on their first border bill, Bill C-2, because of its serious violations regarding the freedom and privacy of Canadians.

As the official opposition, it is our job to scrutinize the government and oppose legislation when it is against the best interest of Canadians. The safety and security of Canadians is non-negotiable, and Conservatives have been clear: Canadians should not have to choose between having a secure border and having their civil liberties protected.

Given the scope and complexity of the bill, Conservatives proposed that Bill C-2 be split into two separate pieces of legislation, with one that is narrowly confined to border and immigration measures, to ensure that all aspects of the legislation receive proper scrutiny. I am pleased that, along with our other opposition members, we were able to successfully force the Liberals to table the new bill, which we will continue to examine thoroughly to ensure that the bill does not include any measures that would breach law-abiding Canadians' privacy rights. Bill C-12 may be a starting point, but I believe it requires significant amendments and vigorous study at committee.

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There is no doubt that tougher and smarter measures regarding borders and immigration are desperately needed to keep Canadians safe. While I am happy that the Liberals are willing to work with the opposition parties to address Canada's border security and immigration issues, it is important to note that much of the urgency surrounding the legislation is a direct result of 10 years of Liberal mismanagement. The Liberals have failed to take our borders seriously, resulting in increased gun smuggling, driving up violent crime; an immigration system that is completely out of control; a fentanyl crisis; and an increase in human trafficking. These are all destroying the lives of Canadians.

While Bill C-12 contains positive provisions to streamline investigations and improve information sharing, it falls short in addressing some of the pressing public safety concerns facing Canadians. The Liberals' failure to secure our border and crack down on organized crime has fuelled a fentanyl crisis and put countless lives at risk. The Liberals' reckless drug legalization experiment, combined with their soft-on-crime bill, Bill C-5, has fuelled Canada's deadly drug crisis. Bill C-5 scrapped mandatory jail for fentanyl production and trafficking, for example.

Last fall, police dismantled the largest and most sophisticated drug lab in Canadian history, capable of producing multiple kilograms of fentanyl each week, along with caches of loaded firearms, explosives and half a million dollars in cash. Fentanyl is not just a drug problem; it is a public safety and national security risk and a crisis fuelled by organized crime and enabled by weak borders.

Part 2 of Bill C-12, as in Bill C-2, would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to fill a loophole in the act by banning precursor chemicals for fentanyl. This is an important first step, but the Liberals are addressing only a small part of the issue and doing too little, too late. Bill C-2 is silent on the tools police and prosecutors actually need to address this crisis. The Liberals' catch-and-release policies are alive and well for those who traffic in fentanyl and firearms. The principle of restraint in Bill C-75 directs the courts to release violent offenders on bail at the earliest opportunity, under the least onerous restrictions. The Liberals' persistence in allowing house arrest for serious offences, which include offences involving firearms, if members can believe it, continues to endanger lives.

It is not just the fentanyl crisis the Liberals are playing catch-up on. Their failure to get serious on our border has allowed for an increase in illegal gun smuggling, driving organized crime in Canada. Gun crime has risen 130% since the Liberals took office. In July, the Prime Minister himself even said, "The vast majority of firearms, illegal firearms, firearms used in crime, come across our border."

• (1320)

According to the Toronto Police Service, 88% of guns used in crimes seized by the Toronto Police Service in 2024 were traced back to the United States, including 94% of the firearms that were seized. That does not sound like a very secure border to me and, unfortunately, Bill C-12 does little to address the issue.

Instead of investing in border security, the public safety minister has doubled down on the Liberals' failed gun confiscation program, which he himself admitted is a waste of money that will do nothing

to keep Canadians safe. The \$742 million the Liberals say they intend to spend on gun confiscation could have gone to hiring 5,000 more police officers or CBSA officers or purchasing 300 port scanners. Instead of including measures in Bill C-12 to ensure border officials have the proper resources needed to secure the border, the Liberals remain committed to targeting law-abiding hunters and firearms owners.

Having a secure border also means having a strong, robust immigration system that serves the needs of Canadians and aligns with our national interests. Parts of Bill C-12 attempt to address some of the challenges our immigration system faces after 10 years of Liberal mismanagement. Unfortunately, I am not confident that these measures by themselves will fix our broken system, which is clearly collapsing under the weight of Liberal mismanagement.

This week, the CBC reported that processing times for Canadian immigration applications have reached unprecedented lengths. Wait times, for example, for permanent resident applications are up to nine years for the caregiver pathway, up to 19 years for the agri-food stream and up to 35 years for entrepreneurs under the start-up visa stream. Even worse than that, if anyone can imagine, the Liberals have lost track of hundreds and hundreds of foreigners in this country who have criminal records and are due to be deported. Guess what, they have gone missing.

This backlog of applications, lack of accountability and inconsistent enforcement all stem from a government that has failed to plan, failed to listen and failed to act. Now, with Bill C-12, the Liberals are scrambling to fix the very system they dismantled, but instead of thoughtful reform, they are reaching out for sweeping powers and vague regulations that permit activities rather than legislating requirements for change.

Conservatives believe in responsible immigration in appropriate numbers to keep up with our health care, housing and job markets. We support measures that streamline processing, reduce backlogs and help newcomers integrate successfully, but we oppose policies that put power in the hands of ministers without proper oversight. Canada's immigration system needs complete, wholesale changes to ensure a secure border and prosperous nation, but those changes are nowhere to be found in C-12.

Like many Canadians, Conservatives want safe communities, secure borders and an immigration system that works for our country, not one that is collapsing under the weight of the Liberal government. The safety and security of Canadians is non-negotiable and, as the official opposition, Conservatives remain committed to implementing the tougher, smarter measures that are needed to keep Canadians safe. We are ready to support provisions in the bill that protect our national security and secure our borders while proposing amendments that would improve the bill and opposing measures that go against the best interest of Canadians.

Bill C-12 introduces significant changes that require in-depth study to ensure the problems are addressed appropriately. At committee, Conservatives will scrutinize, debate and propose amendments to Bill C-12 and work together to ensure it achieves its stated goal of improving Canada's public safety and national security. Conservatives remain committed to securing our borders, strengthening our immigration system and cracking down on crime and chaos in our streets.

• (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have deep respect for the member opposite in being a former law enforcement officer.

We have already had a great deal of discussion about the RCMP today. This is a statement that was made by the member's colleague from Peace River—Westlock. He said, "The actions of the leadership of the RCMP, I think, are indefensible in many instances." Another one of his colleagues from Bow River referred to "management weaknesses". The leader of the Conservative Party said, as reported in the Winnipeg Free Press, that "the leadership of the RCMP is 'despicable'".

What are the member's feelings about the RCMP? Could some of his colleagues have gone too far in assessing the management of—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to give the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner a chance to respond.

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I have many good friends and former colleagues who were or are members of the RCMP. Even now, I ask people from the force whom I meet in different communities about how things are going. They tell me very clearly that there is a disconnect between upper management and them. There are operational issues that are not being addressed by the RCMP leadership. That disappoints me.

The RCMP no longer has the stellar reputation it once had. That concerns me as well. It is our national police service and has great responsibilities on national security, defence and those types of investigations. It is important that it be given the opportunity—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Shefford.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I need some clarification. I am trying to understand what is going on.

On the one hand, the Liberals introduced a bill, Bill C-12, to address concerns that citizens, including those in my riding of Shef-

ford, had about Bill C-2. On the other hand, the Liberals are not speaking today. To add insult to injury, as my distinguished colleague from Drummond so aptly pointed out, they are asking questions that do not really help us understand the changes that were made from Bill C-2 to Bill C-12.

We know that mail searches have been abolished because they are an invasion of privacy, and that restrictions on donations of \$10,000 have been dropped, as has the collection of private data, but can my colleague help me understand and clarify this?

• (1330)

[English]

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question, and I have similar questions. I am puzzled by the government's bringing the bill forward and not putting up any speakers to defend it nor to speak about how they want to improve the bill or how they want to work with the opposition to improve the bill.

My Bloc colleague asked a question that I cannot answer. The government would have to answer why it is not putting up people to speak to its own bill. I do not know.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a little over two years ago, I was involved in an operation, an investigation, with members of the RCMP and the CBSA. We seized over 300 kilos of meth at the Ambassador Bridge. That meth was traced back to a gentleman in Toronto who was found to have another 150 kilos of cocaine, large sums of cash and firearms. He pleaded guilty. There was a joint submission made by the Crown and the defence lawyer for the number of years to be spent in prison, but the man requested that he receive a six-month reprieve so he could wait until his child born before starting his prison sentence. That is outrageous in my opinion.

I would like to ask the member, who has also served in a leadership position in policing, what that sort of thing does to the morale of police officers, CBSA officers and RCMP officers who are involved on the front lines.

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, what has happened in this country over the last 10 years is that the public trust in our entire justice system has waned.

Examples like this, where judges make decisions that might be considered inappropriate, or where the laws of the government have undermined the great work of law enforcement across this country, certainly cause people to ask, "What is the use?" and to say that we need a change in government to fix it.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and to speak to Bill C-12.

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The bill is effectively the second attempt of the government at getting serious when it comes to public safety and dealing with our borders and with drugs. It is frustrating, because Bill C-2 was a giant omnibus bill that the government put forward. The Liberals effectively said, “Don't worry. Just trust us. It's fine”, within days of the bill's coming out, and it was the second piece of legislation the government put forward. It was one of its showcase pieces in the last session. However, civil liberty groups and Canadians came out from coast to coast to coast talking about the massive overreach of Bill C-2.

Bill C-12 is effectively part of the Liberals' listening. It is an improvement on Bill C-2, because it was very clear that Bill C-2 was an intensely flawed bill that would have allowed Canada Post to open people's mail without a warrant, which would have been an overreach on Canadian civil liberties and the freedom of individuals, which is something Canadians hold dear.

Bill C-2 would have gone so far above and beyond, such as banning things like cash payments for anything more than \$10,000. The legislation might not have actually been dealt with for a long time, and with where inflation is, it could have had massive impacts on the way many Canadians choose to do a number of things.

I am happy to see that some of those most troubling elements have in fact been removed. However, one thing we know is that crime is completely out of control in our country. My Conservative colleagues and I hear about it every single day from people in our ridings and from people we run into on the streets here in Ottawa or back home.

One of the most common pieces I hear about in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is the absolute frustration with the catch-and-release policies and our broken bail system. We all hear these stories; I do not think the Liberals are immune. Every single day there are stories of people out on bail who are charged with heinous crimes. In fact earlier this week, an Amber Alert went out for someone suspected of taking a young child. That person was out on bail and, unfortunately, actually killed his ex-wife.

These are the kinds of realities Canadians are facing. People who have been charged and convicted for horrible crimes, violent offences and repeated violent offences, are getting out on bail time and time again.

It is so clear that more needs to happen to protect our communities from the ever-growing crime crisis. This is one of the reasons my Conservative colleague, the member for Oxford, introduced Bill C-242, the jail not bail act: to strengthen bail laws and put public safety first once again in Canada. Basically, his legislation would reverse the Liberal principle of restraint that was brought in with Bill C-75, strengthen bail laws for serious repeat offenders and ensure that criminals with a history of violent crime would no longer automatically be released back into their community. This is one of the big challenges.

The soft-on-crime Liberals for the last 10 years have absolutely destroyed public safety in our country, leaving more and more Canadians unsafe or feeling unsafe. Frankly, feeling unsafe is a problem. Whether someone does or does not break into a person's house at night, if the person is afraid that it is going to happen be-

cause it has happened to their neighbours and to other people around them, then that undermines the social fabric we have enjoyed in Canada.

One of the big frustrations we have as well is that we cannot trust the Liberals to do what they say they are going to do. They said they were going to hire more RCMP officers. They have broken their promise to hire 1,000 more CBSA officers. After that, the Minister of Public Safety was asked point-blank, and he denied any accountability, stating, “I'm not responsible for the hiring.” Well, there is a thing called ministerial responsibility, but the Liberals do not abide by any of that at all; that has become very clear.

• (1335)

We have had a decade of reckless, soft-on-crime policies that make more Canadians feel unsafe. Violent crime has increased by 55%, and gun crime is up 130%. Extortion is up 330% across Canada; that is wild. The Liberals are more focused on a gun grab boondoggle that is going to cost Canadians, on a conservative estimate, \$742 million and that the minister himself admits is a waste of money and resources and is being pursued purely for political reasons.

We did some research, and one of the interesting pieces is that \$142 million could pay for 5,000 RCMP officers. It could pay for 300 port scanners or 37,000 addiction treatment spaces, something that is near and dear to my heart, but instead the Liberals are putting it towards another boondoggle, going after law-abiding gun owners rather than dealing with the real issue, which is that we have a porous border.

One of the big reasons we have a porous border is that we have absolute mismanagement of federal ports by the Liberal government. This mismanagement of our federal ports has turned them into parking lots for stolen cars that then go on to disappear overseas. What we also end up with are drugs and illegal guns coming into our country. What the Conservatives have been calling for is more scanners at the ports, because criminals know those ports are a hot bed for crime.

In fact, according to Peel detective Mark Haywood, the CBSA checks “less than one per cent of containers” leaving this country. Criminals know this, so illegal drugs and illegal guns flood into our country, and stolen cars flood out, further eroding public safety in Canada. On top of this piece that is very troubling about the border, the fire has been fuelled further by a decade of horrific Liberal drug policy and drug experiments.

There has been a dangerous and deadly drug legalization pilot project in British Columbia that removed tools from the RCMP, making our streets completely unsafe, leaving communities to suffer and providing no support to people who are struggling with addiction in this country. There was also the Liberal-NDP so-called safe supply experiment, which gave people with addictions large quantities of government-funded drugs, of hydromorphone and other dangerous narcotics, without any guardrails or pathways to recovery, which fuelled the addiction crisis in our country because the drugs were then being resold in the streets and online, often-times ending up in the hands of teenagers who then started their journey into addiction.

These are just two examples of ways the Liberals have made things worse.

We know that fentanyl is 100 times more potent than heroin; as little as two milligrams can kill a person. Through the lost Liberal decade, Canada has become a fentanyl manufacturing hub. *Breaking Bad*-style superlabs are popping up right across the country. Mass fentanyl production is mass murder, but Liberal laws let the monsters who traffic deadly drugs walk free every single day.

One of the good things I will point out that the legislation brought is that the Liberals are finally taking some action to ban the precursors that allow monsters to produce fentanyl. Chemical precursors are how they make these drugs, so the bill would finally get serious on that, allowing precursors to be banned. This would go a very long way in helping shut them down, but there would still be no mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers. There would still be no new mandatory prison time for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes, despite Liberal campaigns against them and against legal gun owners.

What we will do, from this side, is continue holding the government accountable. We look forward to the bill's going to committee so we can further study it. Conservatives will continue to stand up for Canadian individuals' freedoms and privacy.

● (1340)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had many hours of debate on the issue, and one of the things coming out of the issue is something that has been talked about today.

I would like the member to listen to a quote from one of her own Conservative colleagues, the member for Peace River—Westlock: “The actions of the leadership of the RCMP are indefensible in many instances.” Another colleague, the member for Bow River, said, “management weaknesses” when referring to the RCMP. The member's own leader said that the leadership of the RCMP is “despicable”. What is despicable is how the Conservative Party is putting a black mark on the RCMP as an institution. The RCMP is recognized worldwide as a positive thing.

Can the member provide her thoughts on this issue? Does she—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has the floor.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, do members know what is totally despicable? It is that after 10 years of the Liberals, we continue

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to see crime increase in this country. After 10 years of the Liberals, we continue to see *Breaking Bad*-style superlabs opening up from coast to coast. We continue to see the Liberals call to defund the police, like the member of Parliament for Victoria, who called for them to be defunded.

Good news is on the horizon. The Conservatives are going to hold the Liberals accountable for their mismanagement. We will continue to stand up for Canadians' freedoms and privacy.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

Unlike the Liberals, I have been listening to my Conservative colleagues' speeches all day. I find that they offer interesting perspectives. At the very least, they are contributing to the debate that the Liberals have decided to prolong today. That is to their credit, because we can sometimes engage in discussions with them without necessarily always agreeing with them.

Earlier, I heard my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong talk about the fact that some aspects of Bill C-2 were not included in Bill C-12. She was referring in particular to provisions making it possible to search mail or to access personal information, for example.

I would like to know whether my Conservative colleague agrees that there might have been a way to study some of these provisions in committee. They may have been extreme in the first version, but they could have been useful, particularly in the fight against terrorism and serious crime.

● (1345)

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a very important point. We are not hearing the Liberals debate this bill, and that would be a very important question to ask them. It is really unfortunate that they do not want to talk about the legislation that is before us today.

I think that it is really necessary to address these issues in committee, and I hope that we will have the opportunity to hear from witnesses and experts on the subject in order to analyze the provisions of the bill and ensure that the rights and freedoms of Canadians are respected.

[English]

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been rather enjoyable sitting in the chamber today. If we did not hear one of the Liberal member's questions, we can be assured they will ask it again five minutes later, maybe changing a word here or there. I enjoy how the member for Winnipeg North, in particular, continues to talk about the RCMP.

Government Orders

I want to ask my colleague from northern Alberta if she agrees with the president of the RCMP union, Brian Sauvé, who said the Liberal government's gun grab will be "ineffective" at reducing gun violence. Would she agree with the RCMP, which has been very vocal in criticizing the government's approach to firearms regulations?

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised a very important point. We are blessed to have amazing RCMP members, who serve us from coast to coast to coast. They serve me in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. They are the police of jurisdiction in my home community.

The police union has, and rightly so, called out that the Liberal gun grab will not actually have an impact. That is concerning. It is a boondoggle. It is \$742 million, at a very conservative estimate, and is not going to improve public safety. That is not okay.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always take pleasure rising in this House to talk about government legislation, or any matter for that matter, and I would like to take some time today, in the context of the bill we are debating, Bill C-12, to talk about some of the stuff I have heard.

I have been involved in the debate a couple of times this week, and I must say that some of the stuff I have been hearing coming from the Conservatives in particular is quite alarming.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, they are laughing, so maybe I will put that into context by providing some of what I heard.

To the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, who just asked a question, yes, we have been talking about the RCMP and asking questions about the RCMP, and I apologize if that makes the member uncomfortable, but the reality is that there are questions to be answered on this topic. There are questions to be answered when it comes to the manner in which we are seeing the Leader of the Opposition and, throughout this debate, other members of the Conservative Party, which I would like to get to, talk about the RCMP.

They are saying things that I think are quite problematic and are emblematic of what we are seeing happen in the States. I know some members in this House take pride in that, probably some of the members I will reference in a couple of moments when I note what I have heard them say here, but I want to start with what I heard moments ago from the member for Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee. This was actually in a question he posed, so he initiated the question on it. He said that the Leader of the Opposition's comments in the podcast he was on were "taken out of context".

Let me set the context by telling everybody exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said. He said, "Many of the scandals of the Trudeau era should have involved jail time.... If the RCMP had been doing its job and not covering up for him"—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the chief government whip.

I have a point of order from the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is Bill C-12, government legislation, that is supposed to be debated. The chief government whip may be mistaking the chamber for his Twitter account, but I am not sure—

The Deputy Speaker: That is a matter of debate. There is wide latitude for members to share their thoughts.

I invite the chief government whip to resume.

• (1350)

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I know this is difficult for the member from Elgin to listen to, and I know he is new here, but I am talking about what was said in the House during this debate. If he is somehow suggesting that I should not be able to respond to some of the things I have heard in this debate, that would be an infringement upon my privilege, quite frankly.

For the member's benefit, I will start from the beginning. This is what the Leader of the Opposition said:

Many of the scandals of the Trudeau era should have involved jail time.... If the RCMP had been doing its job and not covering up for him, then he would have been criminally charged.... These would normally have led to criminal charges, but of course the RCMP covered it all up, and the leadership of the RCMP is frankly—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the chief government whip one more time.

I have a point of order from the member for Peace River—Westlock.

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that our hon. colleague wants to talk about this, but the debate today is about Bill C-12, and I wish he would bring it back to relevance. I note that it is the Liberals who—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member.

Members have wide latitude in debating any piece of legislation, and I am sure the chief government whip knows the rules of what is germane to debate.

I will let the chief government whip resume.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on the subject noted by the member for Peace River—Westlock, I will tell members what he said in this debate. The member, who just stood on a point of order, said, "The actions of the leadership of the RCMP...are indefensible in many instances." He said that in this debate on the issue of Bill C-12, so for him to stand—

The Deputy Speaker: I have another point of order, from the member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Steven Bonk: Mr. Speaker, quite some time ago, the member said "in conclusion", and I would not want him to unintentionally mislead the House.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order either.

I will let the chief government whip resume.

Government Orders

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing right now is an intentional direction, most likely from the whip's desk in the lobby for the Conservatives, to interrupt with points of order to try to silence the fact that I am bringing this up. They are so uncomfortable with this issue.

Let us talk about how uncomfortable they are. They will not even talk to reporters about it. Members should have seen the way they were fleeing down the hallways, running past reporters. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, who never misses an opportunity to say something, would not even stop to talk to the media about this. The member for Barrie South—Innisfil said, “Go, Blue Jays, go!” when he was asked a specific question about the RCMP. That is how worried they are about this issue.

It could all be resolved easily if the Leader of the Opposition would stand up and apologize for the comments he made, but he will not do that. I will tell members why he will not do it. It is because he has a history of doing this. He attacked Elections Canada when he was in government. He attacks the media. He attacked the Bank of Canada. He has a reputation for doing this, and he effectively gives a licence to all of his members to do the exact same thing.

I must admit that I was really surprised to hear, moments ago, a former law enforcement officer from the Conservative Party, the hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, say there is a disconnect between the leadership and the rank and file within the RCMP. That is based on something he was told by a buddy of his, who presumably is in the RCMP. What a wildly outlandish statement to make. A statement like that is completely indefensible, unless he can defend it by talking about who made the comments.

The licence the Leader of the Opposition has given to his MPs is to act like this. I feel sorry for the four or five, and probably many more, Conservatives are rumoured to be getting ready to leave the party. I feel sorry for them because they have to be subjected to this. They have to be subjected to the comments from the member for Bow River. They have to be subjected to the comments from the member for Peace River—Westlock, and to the comments we heard from members who talked about the RCMP's lack of ability.

I will tell members one thing. On this side of the House, we will always stand up for the independence of the agencies of this country, including the RCMP. We will not allow our members to engage in this kind of blatant attack on the independence of them, which is exactly what we are seeing from the other side of the House. It is absolutely despicable. I do not know where he is from now, somewhere in Alberta, but the former member for Carleton, the Leader of the Opposition, should get up in the House and officially apologize to the RCMP for his behaviour.

• (1355)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this debate is supposed to be about Bill C-12, so my question is about Bill C-12. It is supposed to enhance border security, because a concern was expressed that has led to a tariff war, basically, with our neighbours to the south. Instead of reacting like the Mexicans did, who immediately put 10,000 resources in place at the border, the government announced getting 1,000 extra guards and have done nothing except put it off for five years.

Could the member explain why?

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question. She said that what I talked about had nothing to do with this debate. As a matter of fact, I quoted several members from her political party who made comments.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is laughing about it now, but I wonder if he agrees with the comments from the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, who said, “The actions of the leadership of the RCMP...are indefensible in many instances.” The member spent years on the defence committee. Does he say the same thing about the members of our military, if he is so blatantly willing to laugh about the fact that members in his party are getting up and talking about the RCMP in this manner?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is recognized around the world as a first-class organization and institution. That is how I am looking at this.

I would like to quote an article from the Winnipeg Free Press. In it, the leader of the Conservative Party said the leadership of the RCMP is “despicable”. He is reflecting on a Canadian institution that holds the highest amount of respect. I believe the leader of the Conservative Party owes all Canadians an apology for those remarks.

Would my colleague not agree that what is despicable are the actions of the leader of the Conservative Party?

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, yes, and at first I thought it was only the Leader of the Opposition, but now he can add another four or five names to that, including the member for Peace River—Westlock, the member for Bow River, the member for Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee and the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, who have all made accusations about the RCMP during this debate on Bill C-12.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing quite a spectacle today. The member for Kingston and the Islands and his Liberal colleagues have just woken up. There is no one to speak to Bill C-12. The member just arrived, though the House has been in session since 10 a.m. Where were his colleagues? I am asking them to take this more seriously, to be a little more diligent. The government put Bill C-12 on the agenda for debate and then it did not send anyone to speak to the bill.

As we know, when someone wants to hide their shortcomings, they talk about other people. That is exactly what my colleague from Kingston and the Islands just did. I would like him to tell me honestly why his party did not send anyone to speak to the bill today. Is there some sort of cancel culture at work among the Liberals that is preventing them from speaking to their own bill?

*Statements by Members**[English]*

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of debate on this issue, including the previous version of Bill C-12, Bill C-2. We have provided hours upon hours of debate on this.

The member is not new here. He knows the way this works. He knows that, if one side stops speaking, all the speeches will continue to go to the other side until somebody from this side wants to get up. That is how a debate works. I have been sitting in the House, listening to the Conservatives attack the RCMP all day long, and I felt the need to get up to defend it. I wish the Bloc would start defending a national organization like that.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

*[English]***RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS**

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Antonia Beck, an inspiring community leader from Burnaby, on the occasion of her retirement as CEO of the Burnaby Neighbourhood House.

Nearly 30 years ago, Antonia helped to establish a small volunteer program, with five people, \$25 and a shared Canadian dream. Today, BNH has nearly 150 staff members and hundreds of amazing volunteers. Through her extraordinary leadership, her dream has grown into a vibrant network serving families, newcomers, youth and seniors. Because of her work, children have a safe place to learn, newcomers have built lasting connections and seniors enjoy a renewed sense of purpose.

Antonia has shown what is possible when we lead with heart. Because of her vision, Burnaby stands stronger, more compassionate and more connected than ever. On behalf of Burnaby Central and the House, I thank Antonia for proving that, when we invest in each other, we strengthen the very fabric of Canada.

* * *

JUSTICE

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during constituency week, I had the privilege of joining a ride-along with the south division police in Cambridge. I have always respected the work our frontline officers do, but seeing their focus and professionalism first-hand was a powerful reminder of the challenges they face every single day.

That night, officers were on alert for Kevin Koehler, a violent repeat offender released after serving only 10 years for choking his elderly roommate to death. Despite a clear warning from police that he posed a significant risk to public safety, he was back in our community, and within just one day, he breached his release conditions. He was picked up the same night, during my ride-along. This is not just frustrating. It is dangerous.

The Liberal government's soft-on-crime, revolving-door justice system forces officers to repeat hard work while communities remain at risk. I thank the south division for allowing me to join its

patrol. I thank all officers across the country for their service. I will always stand with them. They deserve more than our gratitude. They deserve a justice system that has their backs.

* * *

LOCAL BUSINESS IN KANATA

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Kanata, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, an amazing company called Solink, an AI-first, Canadian scale-up and global leader in AI-powered video and data intelligence, celebrated the opening of its newly expanded headquarters, joined by the Minister of Artificial Intelligence in celebrating this milestone.

I first met the Solink team back in 2015, when it was a team of just 20. Today, Solink has grown into a leading technology company, with over 400 employees supporting more than 35,000 locations across 60 countries. Its cutting-edge platform helps businesses harness video and sensor data, while connecting artificial intelligence to the physical world and maintaining the highest standards of privacy.

Solink is a true Kanata and Canadian success story, staying proudly connected to its local roots. I send my congratulations to Solink.

* * *

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mike Dawson (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach Remembrance Day, I am mindful of the sacrifices of those who served our nation. We remember their courage. We honour their duty, and we thank them for our liberty.

I am ashamed that our government intends to restrict public expressions of faith in our military, or in plain terms, to ban prayer. It is cowardice to ask our sons and daughters to put themselves in harm's way but refuse them the right to express their faith in God. To deny those who provide our freedom the right to openly pray is an insult to those who never came home.

Monsignor Hickey of the North Shore Regiment would tell us that a dying man on a foreign shore only asks for one of two things: His mother or his God.

I urge Canadians to wear a poppy, visit a cenotaph, attend a ceremony and say a prayer. I urge Canadians to teach their children to pray and take time to explain to a new Canadian the importance of this sacred day. Please pray for those who served, for those who continue to serve and for our nation itself.

Lest we forget.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

MARIE-REINE LARIVIÈRE

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is Women's History Month in Canada, I would like to pay tribute to Marie-Reine Larivière. Hers may not be a household name, but she has led a noteworthy life.

Who among us can celebrate 58 years of service?

I met Ms. Larivière at the Barilla plant in Hochelaga. In among the impressive machinery, I spotted a tiny woman with bright eyes and a mischievous smile. I walked up to her to say hello. She proudly shook my hand and said that she had been there since 1967.

The real history of the Barilla plant, formerly Catelli, resides not in computers, but in this woman: Marie-Reine Larivière, who refuses to even think about retirement.

Marie-Reine is the epitome of quiet perseverance, never loud but always commanding respect. Her commitment to passing on her knowledge is commendable.

By sharing Marie-Reine's story during this month-long celebration, I am honouring all of the creative, generous women who are involved in their communities.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize the incredible legacy being left behind by the Airdrie Food Bank's executive director, Lori McRitchie, as she takes her well-earned retirement after more than two decades of tireless work in making sure that no one in our community ever goes hungry.

From the small beginnings of a school breakfast program, which eventually merged with the food bank and turned into a dedicated, purpose-built facility designed to help families in need, Lori has been there through every iteration of the food bank, constantly adapting to the ever-changing needs of a growing city. She has demonstrated visionary leadership and unwavering compassion. She has had a profound impact on the fabric of our community. She also leaves the organization in good hands with a strong foundation and a very clear vision for the future, which is a community where no one is hungry.

As we go into the holiday season, I would like to remind everyone that food banks need our help all year long. In the spirit of Lori's legacy, I remind everyone to please give what they can so that no one ever goes hungry. I wish Lori a long and joyful retirement with more time spent with her wonderful family. She has more than earned it.

OIL AND GAS IN CALGARY CONFEDERATION

Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, Kiwetinohk Energy, headquartered in Calgary, achieved a significant energy industry milestone with a new Canadian longest well record of almost 9,500 meters. That is almost 10 kilometres, and yes, members heard that right.

The distance of 10 kilometres is the distance from the University of Calgary to the Glenmore Reservoir, the distance from Parliament Hill to the Ottawa Airport, the average cruising altitude of a commercial plane and longer than Mount Everest is tall. The skilled team drilled more than four kilometres vertically and five kilometres laterally, which means they can access more subsurface oil and gas with less land disturbance. Importantly, it was also done safely/ They worked for more than 25 days to finish.

This is a Canadian energy industry leadership milestone that deserves recognition. It is innovation that will grow our economy, create jobs and generate public revenues in a responsible way.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, lumber jobs remain under threat by the unjustified U.S. tariffs, but workers are not hearing from the Liberals that they are making this a priority in negotiations. The Canadian Lumber Trade Alliance said, "We're deeply disappointed" by the Prime Minister not even mentioning lumber jobs in D.C.

Silence will not help the mill workers I met in Grand Forks last week. They told me they do not know how they are going to make their mortgage payments. The uncertain future of the mill is not just impacting forestry workers. It is impacting teachers, mechanics and the whole community. The residents I spoke with are not just worried about the loss of their jobs. They are worried about the loss of their neighbours.

Grand Forks needs the same kind of softwood agreement Conservatives secured in government and that the Liberals have failed to negotiate for the last decade. If the Liberals will not act for our forestry workers, the Conservatives will.

* * *

[Translation]

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2025

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge a victory that thrilled all of Quebec. Saint-Boniface's volunteer committee, known as the Irréductibles, has been working overtime to win us a historic opportunity.

Statements by Members

On April 5, everyone held their breath as Saint-Boniface was crowned the winner of Kraft Hockeyville 2025, a feat that was highlighted on October 7 with an award from the Association québécoise du loisir public.

The prize for winning Kraft Hockeyville is \$250,000 to renovate the arena, equipment for young hockey players, food donations and the privilege of hosting an NHL game in 2026.

Saint-Boniface inspires us with its team spirit and its incredible ability to rally around a passion for hockey. It is a place where people come together and bond over a sense of belonging and shared memories. Congratulations to Saint-Boniface for being the perfect example of what commitment and teamwork look like.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, we celebrate Small Business Week. I rise to recognize the entrepreneurs who form the backbone of my riding of South Surrey—White Rock.

Before entering public life, I spent over 30 years as a small business owner. First it was Iamagmakers photography, then Ashberry & Logan, The Art of Flowers. I understand small business. There are long hours, financial risks, pressures of making payroll and the personal sacrifices families make. I also know the pride that comes from serving someone's own community and building something lasting. I have had the privilege of visiting many local businesses owners, listening to their stories, and learning about their successes and the challenges they face. Small businesses are pillars in our communities. They deserve our recognition throughout the year.

I thank the business owners in our communities for their dedication and for everything they do to make Canada stronger, more vibrant and more connected. I ask everyone to please support their local businesses.

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CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report exposes yet another example of Liberal incompetence, this time at the Canada Revenue Agency.

Since 2015, the CRA's operating expenses have grown from \$4.1 billion to \$6.9 billion. That is a 70% increase, but Canadians are not getting better service; they are waiting longer than ever.

Last year alone, the CRA received more than 32 million calls, yet one in four of those calls was abandoned before an agent even got around to answering it. Under Liberal mismanagement and incompetence, if finally someone did get through, they were given the wrong information 83% of the time. After nine years of Liberal waste and bureaucracy, even calling the tax agent is an ordeal.

Conservatives will restore confidence, accountability and respect for the Canadians who keep this country running.

With Liberals, why is it that Canadians always pay more, but get less?

* * *

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is some big news coming from Scarborough. Our government is investing billions into Scarborough transit.

The Scarborough subway station will extend line 2 from Kennedy Station to Sheppard Avenue, stopping at McCowan Road and the Scarborough Town Centre. This will cut travel times and connect residents to jobs, schools and services.

This is one of the largest transit investments in the history of my city. Up to \$2 billion is being invested into the Scarborough extension. This means more jobs and more economic growth while reducing congestion and emissions with a cleaner, more efficient transit system.

This is about investing in our community, investing in our city and investing in our future.

* * *

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told a room full of students that they are going to have to make sacrifices. This is the kind of silver spoon attitude young people are sick of.

The only reason this country is in this mess is because the Liberal government shut down our industries and spent more than it could afford. It robbed us. It spent all its money and then borrowed billions of dollars, expecting my generation to pay for it. The Liberals' overspending has driven inflation to the point where we cannot afford the same quality of life our parents had. We cannot afford a home. We cannot afford an education.

We cannot even afford groceries, which are up 4%. In a CBC article in Newfoundland this morning a MUN student said that he used to spend \$400 per month for groceries and now has to pay \$700.

Young people are saying they have to sacrifice having children because of the Liberal government's overspending.

Why does my generation have to make sacrifices so Liberal governments can continue to release deficit budgets with massive overspending, leaving my generation with the bill?

BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS DAY

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in honour of Brain Cancer Awareness Day happening this October 24, I would like to pay a special tribute to an incredible family who is near and dear to my heart.

The Boyle family was forever changed when Andrew Boyle lost his 10-year long battle with brain cancer back in 2022.

Undeterred by such a devastating loss, his amazing wife Danielle, a friend and former colleague of mine, and their two beautiful children Austin and Naomi have channelled their grief into hope and action by becoming remarkable ambassadors for the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada. Their team, Boyle's Brainiacs, have knocked on countless doors in their community, sharing their journey with everyone and raising an amazing \$6,000 for the cause in the process.

Naomi and Austin have raised \$1,000 each. They have not only kept the memory of their late father alive, but also serve as shining examples of youth who deserve recognition in the House.

I say well done to Naomi and Austin. Their dad would be proud.

* * *

• (1415)

COST OF LIVING

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the Prime Minister told a room full of students that they are going to have to make sacrifices.

They have already had to sacrifice their dream of home ownership. Over 70% of young Canadians are worried that they will never be able to afford a down payment. They have paid the price as food costs have exploded, nearly 4%, year over year, in September. They spent the whole summer without jobs. Youth unemployment is nearly 15%, the highest it has been since 2010, outside of the pandemic years.

Two-thirds of Canadians now feel the next generation is going to have a lower standard of living than Canadians have today.

Our youth should not have to sacrifice any more for Liberal failures. They have sacrificed far too much over 10 long years.

The situation is dire, but thankfully there is a solution. A Conservative government will cut taxes on food, work and homebuilding, lower inflation and reduce red tape to get more homes built and restore the promise of Canada.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout my nearly four decades of policing, I was always inspired by the fact that one of Canada's most enduring national symbols was a police officer on a horse, a Mountie, a member of the RCMP.

The RCMP's motto is "Maintiens le Droit", which means maintain the right and uphold the law. The RCMP is perhaps the most trusted institution in our country, and it is a source of national pride.

Oral Questions

The basis of that trust is the fact that Canada is a rule-of-law country, a country where the police are independent from all political interference in their operations, investigations and prosecutions. In Canada, the police are not subject to the dictates of some feckless politician who would seek to compel the police to lock up his opponents without evidence or legal basis.

That is why Canadians were so shocked to hear the Leader of the Opposition so casually call the RCMP "despicable" for maintaining the right and upholding the law. I now know he denies saying what we all heard him say, but I would ask every member of the House to reflect on the impact that such scurrilous remarks can have.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister made a very depressing speech. He said that there were plenty of opportunities when he was young, but that our young people's future will not be as bright as his past. He said that young people will have to make sacrifices.

Young people have been making sacrifices for 10 years, while the Liberals doubled the cost of housing, cut jobs and racked up intergenerational debt.

The Prime Minister is saying that young people will have to make more sacrifices. What do they have left to sacrifice?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do you know what young people sacrificed in the last election? They sacrificed the Leader of the Opposition's narrow, negative, pessimistic view of Canada.

They chose a serious leader and an ambitious government that is building one Canadian economy to create opportunities. This will generate \$215 billion for Canada's GDP, according to the Montreal Economic Institute. We are supporting major projects across the country that will create good jobs for young people and for future generations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently the minister did not hear the speech in which the Prime Minister said that young people are going to have to make even more sacrifices after 10 Liberal years that have already forced them to make at least three major sacrifices. The Liberals have made housing unaffordable. They have killed jobs and they have the worst employment numbers in 30 years. They have created intergenerational debt.

Why are they not tabling an affordable budget now so our young people can have an affordable life?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day in the House, during every question period, it becomes increasingly clear to all Canadians that the Prime Minister, an economist with private-sector experience, is leagues apart from the Leader of the Opposition, a career politician.

What the Prime Minister talked about yesterday is spending less to invest more and delivering a budget that will have a transformative impact on the country through major capital investments to create opportunities for young people across the country.

• (1420)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister made a very depressing speech to Canada's youth. He said they would have to make more sacrifices.

This is more sacrifices after 10 Liberal years that doubled the cost of housing and drove out the possibility that youth could own their own homes, after the sacrifice of their jobs with the worst employment numbers since the 1990s and after the sacrifice of a life-long shouldering of high debt.

Young people need hope, jobs and homes. Why will the Prime Minister not reverse his disastrous decade of policies so that we can restore that hope?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of presenting Red Seals to three new apprentices of IBEW Local 230, Victoria, B.C. They are proud of what they accomplished. They are optimistic about the future, because we are going to put them to work. We are going to build homes. We are building major infrastructure projects in the national interest, with thousands of jobs and thousands of opportunities for apprenticeship.

While the Conservatives come to the House and talk Canada down every day, we are going to be supporting workers who are building Canada up.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three apprentices do not account for the countless job losses and the highest jobless rate in 30 years, outside of COVID, caused by this government, nor does it account for the doubling of housing costs and that 80% of young people believe they will never be able to afford a home.

The Prime Minister tells our youth that they have to sacrifice even more. All he offers is more costs, more debt and more despair. What Canadians actually need is more homes, more jobs and more hope.

Why will the Prime Minister not introduce an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, the Conservatives come to the House and talk down the Canadian economy.

We are supporting our workers. We are going to build, build bold and build now with Canadian lumber, Canadian steel and Canadian

unionized workers. We are defending our workers. We will be there for Canada. I hope the Conservatives join us.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently nobody on the other side listened to the depressing, miserable, hopeless speech the Prime Minister gave to Canadian youth yesterday. He said that Canadian youth need to sacrifice more, when in fact quite the opposite is true. The youth of this country have sacrificed enough. They cannot afford homes, they cannot get jobs and now they have a generational lifetime of debt to shoulder.

What Canadian youth need are homes, jobs and hope. Yesterday, I provided the Prime Minister with a plan to do it. Will he put that hopeful plan in his budget?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only person who is miserable when the Prime Minister speaks is the Leader of the Opposition.

What the Prime Minister is talking about is spending less and investing more: investing in careers for young people, in building major national projects, in being a technology leader in the world today with Premier Ford, leading the world in small modular nuclear reactors.

The young people of this country are proud to be Canadians. They are proud to see a future from coast to coast to coast in this country. The young people of this country have a bright future—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that the minister did not write the Prime Minister's speech yesterday, because it would not have bored and depressed to tears all the poor students stuck in the room where the Prime Minister spoke about how they would have to sacrifice more and about how it would take time to reverse all the misery that has built up over the last 10 years.

Young people want to have homes, they want to have jobs and they want to have hope. They want a budget that is affordable so they can have a life that is affordable. Will the Prime Minister introduce that budget so Canadians can restore the promise of their country?

• (1425)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you can be sure we are going to introduce a budget. The question is whether the Leader of the Opposition is going to support that budget.

Here is what that budget is going to do. It is going to give young people all over this country the ability to stand up and say, "That is where my future lies: in Canada in skilled trades, in technology and in the professions, in careers that are going to give me and my family hope, a home, a community, a job and a future in the best country in the world."

Let us build Canada.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the lead-up to the budget, the government has accused the opposition parties of playing political games. I need them to explain to me how we are playing political games by demanding that the government provide funding for health care, support seniors with the cost of living and address the housing, home ownership and infrastructure crisis.

Our demands are based on the needs of Quebeckers. They are public and they have not changed.

If the government is ignoring those demands, then who is the one playing political games?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois seems to change his mind as often as he changes his shirt. After the election, he told us that he was prepared to work with the government and that he wanted to give us time so that we could help Canadians and Quebeckers.

Now what is he saying before he has even read the budget? He is telling us that he will not vote in favour of it. I would like to know, and I think that everyone in the House would like to know, where the Bloc Québécois stands.

Will the Bloc members at least read the budget before saying that they will not vote for it?

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will tell my colleague what political games and a reluctance to collaborate look like. It is when the Prime Minister meets with party leaders to discuss their budget expectations, when a speech has already been written for that very evening in which he completely ignores their requests. There is not a word about seniors or health care, nor any commitment to transfer money unconditionally to Quebec for infrastructure or for social and community housing. There is nothing about the \$814 million that was stolen from Quebeckers to write vote-buying cheques to Canadians.

Why is the Prime Minister playing political games instead of addressing Quebeckers' needs?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons met with the leader of the Bloc Québécois to talk about the budget. The Minister of Finance and National Revenue met with the leader of the Bloc Québécois to talk about the budget. The Prime Minister met with the leader of the Bloc Québécois to talk about the budget. I myself met with the leader of the Bloc Québécois to talk about the budget.

Even before the budget was made public, the Bloc Québécois told us that it was not interested and that it would not vote for it. The Bloc members will not vote for measures that will allow millions of Canadians to save on their taxes. They will not vote for a budget that will help build hundreds of thousands of housing units.

To me, the Bloc Québécois's position is unacceptable.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons says that if the budget does not pass, it will be the opposition parties' fault. The Minister of Finance and National Revenue is accusing us of playing politics. However, our demands have been a matter of public record for a long time. It was their Prime Minister who chose to ignore all of them in his pre-budget speech last night.

This is a minority government. It should act like one. It should make deals if it wants its budget to pass.

Why is it so hard to just address the needs of Quebeckers?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the needs of Quebeckers are very well represented on this side of the House, which has 44 members from Quebec. These are people who are well-established in their communities, who talk to us about their communities, about issues affecting the forestry sector, seniors and young people and about creating a prosperous future for all young Quebeckers.

We know what a strong and united Canada is. We do not need a lesson from the Bloc Québécois when it comes to Quebec's future.

* * *

[English]

YOUTH

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told young Canadians that there would be more sacrifices in their future. Young people are already facing a bleak future because of Liberal policies exploding housing and food prices and historic highs in unemployment. Past generations sacrificed to make life better for their children, but now young people are being told to sacrifice their future because of elite Liberal policies.

Will Liberals stop breaking their promises and restore hope for the future of this country?

● (1430)

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do members know what youth of this country want? They want a leader who does not spin conspiracy theories, attack democratic institutions and suggest that other leaders be jailed.

On November 4, we are going to table a generational budget. We are going to invest in Canada and build Canada. I suggest the leader opposite sacrifice his ego, put the rhetoric aside and help us build Canada.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, respectfully, that nonsense answer obviously had nothing to do with the question. When we are talking about youth unemployment, I think it is time for the Liberals to sacrifice their tired talking points and actually get serious about addressing the problem.

Oral Questions

Last week, we introduced the Conservative youth jobs plan to unleash the economy, fix immigration, fix training and build homes where the jobs are, so instead of preaching sacrifice, why do the Liberals not propose a youth jobs plan? Better yet, why do they not simply adopt ours?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives are in damage control mode, we are in build mode. On November 4, we are going to table a generational budget, we are going to invest in Canada, we are going to build at a scale not seen since the Second World War and we are going to invest in infrastructure and national projects.

We believe in Canada. We will build Canada's economy into the strongest economy in the G7. I ask the party opposite to come out of the shadows and support our budget.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal Prime Minister told a room full of students that they are going to have to make some sacrifices.

Young people have already sacrificed enough over the last 10 years. They have sacrificed by paying skyrocketing food costs. They have sacrificed with an entire summer without jobs because Liberal job-killing policies have driven youth unemployment to recessionary levels. They have sacrificed the dream of home ownership because the Liberals created the worst housing crisis ever, and last month rents were up by another 4.8% nationally.

Canadians should not have to sacrifice for Liberal failures.

When will the Liberals stop doubling down on the same failed policies and get spending under control so young Canadians can finally afford to buy a home?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that speech really freaked out the Conservatives because it was all about ambition. It was about investing in ourselves. It was about building major projects. It was about the project that Prime Minister Carney announced with Premier Ford—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I do not think I even need to say it. I think everyone knows.

The member may go ahead.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, the speech yesterday from the Prime Minister really freaked the Conservatives out, because they heard the ambition in that speech. Not only did they hear it in that speech, but today, as the Prime Minister stood with the premier, investing in new nuclear to ensure the jobs of today and of the future, they know that the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora has the floor.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told a roomful of students that they were going to have to make sacrifices, but after 10 long years of failed Liberal policies, they already have sacrificed their dream of owning a home and sacrificed their dream of starting a family, be-

cause they cannot afford it. They have watched food prices skyrocket, and housing starts in Toronto are at a 30-year low. Canada has everything it needs to thrive, but it is failing because of the Liberals' policies.

Will the Liberals stop breaking their promises and get their spending under control so young Canadians can finally afford to dream?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the youth in my riding are dreaming, and not only that; they are working and are entering the workforce in extraordinary ways.

Let me talk about the young welder I met at Thunder Bay Hydraulics just a few weeks ago. She approached me the other day and said that because of the programs that the province and the federal government worked together on to ensure that she had work-integrated learning, she was now a welder with that company.

We are investing in jobs. We are investing in youth. Every time we look across the aisle, the Conservatives are voting against the interests of youth. It is very rich for them to talk about this.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told a roomful of students that they have to make sacrifices. Students and young people in this country have already sacrificed enough to the Liberals. They have sacrificed the dream of home ownership, they have paid the price at the pump and for the cost of food, and they have spent summers without jobs. Now the Liberals get up and say that their big achievement is three new apprenticeship Red Seals. They must be kidding me. Canadians have sacrificed enough over the last 10 years; they should not have to sacrifice more for Liberal failures.

Will the Liberals get their spending under control in the November 4 budget and restore the promise of hope for young Canadians?

• (1435)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, young Canadians vividly remember when the Conservative Leader of the Opposition stood up and voted against the removal of interest from Canada student loans that saves young Canadians thousands of dollars every year.

The new government will always stand up for young Canadians. Yesterday the Prime Minister announced that we will double non-U.S. exports by \$300 billion. That means thousands of new opportunities for young Canadians to produce the goods that the world wants to buy.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister told a room full of students that they would have to make sacrifices, but they have already been making sacrifices for the past 10 years. They are sacrificing the dream of owning a home. They are spending too much of their money on groceries. Many of them could not even find a job this summer.

My question is simple. Will the Liberals finally stop breaking their promises, get their spending under control and enable Canadians to put food on the table at a fair price and actually dream of buying a home someday?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition spends his time on YouTube peddling conspiracy theories, defaming the RCMP, attacking the justice system and saying his opponents should be jailed, I am 100% behind the Prime Minister, who will explain how we are going to build the strongest economy in the G7. We will do it by building major projects across the country, by making life more affordable, by cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians and by removing the GST on homes to make housing more affordable.

That is what those of us on this side of the House are doing. That is the difference between an opposition party with a narrow vision for the country and an ambitious and purposeful government.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not that we have a narrow vision for the country; we simply have a fair vision for our young people, who are no longer able to access affordable housing, who cannot find work and who are being hit hard by inflation and rising grocery costs. Those things put very real pressures on their physical and mental health and on their hopes for a bright future.

Just yesterday, in a sombre speech, the Prime Minister asked them to make sacrifices. When will the Liberal government stop crushing our young people under the weight of its mismanagement and allow them to have a better future?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our ambition on this side of the House is a serious one. We want to build the strongest economy in the G7 and unleash the power of the Canadian economy by building one Canadian economy, lowering taxes for 22 million Canadians, eliminating the GST on new homes for first-time buyers to make housing more affordable across the country and investing to build an unprecedented number of homes across the country.

That is our ambition for Canada. That is what we are going to achieve for young Canadians.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa just announced \$2 billion to build a nuclear plant in Ontario. For years Quebec has been offering to sell them real clean electricity, but Ontario and Doug Ford refuse.

Oral Questions

Today, the federal government announced that it will make Quebecers pay for a nuclear power plant in Ontario that will enable it to compete with Quebec's truly clean energy. Quebecers are losing three times over. We are losing in terms of the environment and trade, and we are losing our tax dollars.

Will the government reconsider?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear that we are building a country for the future, and we are doing so with clean energy. As someone from Ontario, I can say that nuclear energy has helped us move away from coal, which means we have clean air for our children.

It is very important to keep working to ensure we have clean electricity across the country. We already have the cleanest electricity, and we are going to keep doing the work.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is not content to force us to pay so that Ontario can compete with Hydro-Québec. It goes beyond that.

If Ontario develops its nuclear sector, it will generate more radioactive waste too. What might happen to that waste? Most likely, it will get stored at Chalk River, where it is stored now, on the shores of the main source of drinking water for millions of Quebecers: the Ottawa River.

The federal government is making us pay hundreds of millions of dollars to put our drinking water at risk. Does the government seriously think we will put up with that?

• (1440)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we should be very proud that 84% of this country's electricity is clean from coast to coast. Our work with provinces across the country continues and we intend to keep at it.

It will be very interesting to see how Quebec will work with Newfoundland on hydroelectricity. Nuclear energy and wind turbines are also very interesting. We are going to keep this work going. It is important for our future.

* * *

[English]

YOUTH

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just told a room full of young Canadians that they are going to have to make sacrifices. After 10 years of the Liberal government, they have already had to sacrifice the dream of owning a home. They have already had to sacrifice their modest expectations of living in a safe community, and they have already had to sacrifice an economy where the cost of living is manageable and good-paying jobs are easy to find.

My question for the Prime Minister is, when he made these comments, what additional sacrifices for young Canadians did he have in mind?

Oral Questions

Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the leader of the Conservatives does not seem to get is that Canadians use hope, hard work and sacrifice every single day to build up our country and our communities. When the failed former MP from Carleton lost his seat, he did not have to make any sacrifices or be accountable. He did not even learn a lesson, clearly. When his constituents fired him, he should have maybe paused and reflected a little bit. Since he did not lose his home in taxpayer-funded non-market housing, I guess that is why he continued to deny it to millions of Canadians.

Maybe that failed and flailing Conservative leader should join some students in a class because it seems like, after 20 years in the House, he can learn a thing or two about hard work.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess one of the things we also have to sacrifice are answers in question period.

After 10 years of Liberal government, we have had a cost of living crisis. We have had an addictions crisis that has left 50,000 Canadians, mainly young Canadians, dead from drug overdoses. Now we have a growing youth jobs crisis, with youth unemployment surging to 14.7%, the highest level in 15 years.

If young Canadians can barely afford to put a roof over their heads and food on their tables when they are working, how are they going to be able to afford it when they are out of a job?

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pardon us if we find it a bit rich that the Conservative Party is going to stand up and talk about youth, when its members consistently vote against the measures the government has introduced that actually matter to young Canadians in this country. They voted against budget measures that actually support young skilled trades workers. They voted against the Canada child benefit. They vote against national school food programs. They vote against programs that are ensuring dental programs and the Canada housing benefit.

We have a plan to build up this country. We have a plan to build major national projects. There is a bright and hopeful future for youth in this country, notwithstanding the fact that Conservatives do not want to join us in those measures to make it happen.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite all of these programs, the Prime Minister still went to students yesterday and gave them a message: They must sacrifice more.

Well, the next generation has sacrificed enough. They have sacrificed the dream of home ownership. They have sacrificed the dream of starting a family. He might as well have said, let them eat cake.

If the next generation has sacrificed enough after 10 years, will the Prime Minister reverse course and get his spending under control so the next generation of young Canadians can afford to feed themselves and own a home?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our new government is supporting young Canadians with the skills and opportunities they need to build their futures. This is why, when the Prime Minister announced on campus just yesterday that we will double Canada's non-U.S. exports over

the next decade, it mattered. We are talking about two-thirds of our economy driven by international trade. It means millions of jobs and more careers in communities across Canada producing the goods the world wants to buy.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the government is doubling is the debt the next generation will have to pay. So-called generational investment is just generational debt and generational inequality. In fact, Habitat for Humanity now says 70% of Canadians say owning a home is impossible, and for those who rent, they saw a 5% increase year over year. This is the result of Liberal policies.

Will the Prime Minister sacrifice his policies rather than the future of the next generation?

• (1445)

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about making generational investments in our upcoming budget, it is because we believe, on this side of the House, youth and young people are the drivers of our future economic growth, and we have a responsible plan to ensure they have the skills and opportunities to succeed. We built on the work we are doing to support apprenticeships and Red Seal trades, co-ops and access to post-secondary education and training. Most importantly, we are creating thousands of new career-starting jobs, investing in major projects and making it more affordable for young people to buy a home.

Housing starts, construction investment and wages are up. This is part of our plan. We have more to do.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public safety minister's job is to keep Canadians safe, yet just today we learned that 32,000 foreign nationals have warrants pending their deportation. This means they are lost. They are wanted. There are 32,000 people, and the minister does not know where they are. We have him on secret recording saying his gun confiscation will not work. We have crime absolutely skyrocketing, and now he has lost 32,000 foreign nationals.

The question is this: When will the Prime Minister fire the public safety minister for failing to keep Canadians safe?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of Canadians is the first and most primary responsibility of the government. This is why we have taken very important measures in order to ensure the safety and security of Canadians, including having the highest level of removals in a decade. Over 20,000 people will be removed from Canada for being here improperly. This is why we have introduced bail reform and sentencing reform just this afternoon. This is why we have Bill C-12, which is going through the House.

I encourage the party opposite to support these measures in order to keep Canadians even more safe.

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JUSTICE

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government was elected with a decisive mandate to keep violent repeat offenders off our streets. While the Leader of the Opposition was attacking the brave men and women of the RCMP, calling them “despicable”, the Minister of Justice was working with provinces, territories and law enforcement to develop solutions-focused bail and sentencing reforms. Today, the minister has tabled Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act.

Can the minister explain how this bill will ensure the safety of our communities and keep dangerous offenders behind bars?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is not a less credible voice when it comes to criminal justice reform than the Leader of the Opposition. In the past few weeks, he has called the RCMP “despicable”. He has attacked Crown prosecutors, and he has suggested his political opponents should be jailed.

The legislation we tabled today will make it harder to get bail for violent repeat offenders and will strengthen sentencing for serious criminals. Criminal justice reform demands a conversation that would engage the adults in the room. The Conservatives have a leadership review coming up; I invite them to choose one.

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THE ECONOMY

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “Some N.L. residents finding it 'hard to survive' as grocery prices continue to rise” is a headline from the CBC today. They go on to say that the price of food in Newfoundland and Labrador is up 4% since last September. Beef leads the way, up 20%.

The Liberal Prime Minister said he would be judged by the prices Canadians pay at the grocery store, so will he get his inflationary deficits under control so that Canadians can afford to put food on the table?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my opposition colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador that Newfoundland and Labrador was the first province in Canada to sign on to the school food program. The Conservative Party was the first party in Canada to not vote for that program. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians value this program. Moms, parents and school educators know what this program

means. This is affordability, just as the suite of other programs are affordability, and the member voted against every one of them.

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, could we have a more heartless response than from the regional minister from Newfoundland and Labrador, where people are known to have good hearts? The minister knows full well that the school lunch program that they created is garbage. It has not fed one child in Canada. She also knows that there are hidden taxes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1450)

The Speaker: Order.

Can the member continue, please?

Clifford Small: Mr. Speaker, could we have a more heartless response than from the regional minister from Newfoundland and Labrador, where folks are known to have good hearts? That minister knows full well that the school lunch program that they created has not fed one Canadian child and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Time is up. I'm sorry.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while my colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador and the opposition want to talk down programs and humiliate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all Canadians, I will reassure Canadians that the school food program is feeding children. It is saving families up to \$800 a year. This is a policy that works. I will always stand for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and Canadians.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, parents are struggling to secure healthy food for their families because of the Liberal government's out-of-control spending. Skyrocketing food inflation is up again to 4%. Liberal food taxes and regulations do not show up on their receipts, but Canadians feel them every time they shop for groceries.

The Prime Minister said he would be judged by the prices Canadians pay at the grocery store. If he is truly the astute economist he claims he is, why is he not getting his inflationary deficits and hidden grocery taxes under control so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Oral Questions

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we go again with the imaginary taxes. They do not show up on receipts because they are not actually there. Canadians know that. They know how to read a receipt, but picking up on the previous question, I just want to remind people about how much good this school nutrition program is doing all across Canada, including, as my colleague mentioned, by providing dignity to families all across this country so that kids can get good nutrition in school and by feeding healthy brains. It is saving families about \$800 a year. As a former lunchroom monitor, there is nothing more painful than watching a child who does not have a lunch, whether they—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the retooling of the CAMI plant at Ingersoll was supposed to be a great success. Taxpayers kicked in hundreds of millions of dollars. The finance minister said this was “proof that Canada’s auto sector is here for the long term.”

Now, 1,200 of the plant's hard-working employees, many of them in St. Thomas, Elgin and London, are out of work. This is all despite the Prime Minister pledging a deal with Trump by July to protect Canadian auto jobs. Today he says there will not be a deal at all.

Auto workers' lives and livelihoods were on the line. Why did the Prime Minister dupe them?

[Translation]

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all understand and we all know that the automotive industry in Canada, in Ontario, is one of the most important industries in the country. We want to keep it that way.

We are doing everything we can to help workers in those industries. In fact, I think it was yesterday that the president of Unifor said that the Minister of Industry was doing a fantastic job on this file. He said so himself.

[English]

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if this is what the Liberals see as an exceptional job, I would hate to see what they view as poor work.

With 3,000 workers in Brampton, 1,200 in Ingersoll, 700 in Oshawa and 300 in Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec, that is the Liberal record of just a few weeks. The Prime Minister promised he would protect auto jobs. I wish he had been more honest and said that he meant in the United States. The Liberals have handed out billions of dollars in subsidies with no job guarantees for Canadian workers.

Last night, the Prime Minister told Canadians we would have to make sacrifices. We already are, and it is not clear for what. When will he do his job and stop selling out Canadian workers?

• (1455)

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the U.S. has changed their trading relationship with the world, and that is having an impact on the auto sector.

The Minister of Industry is out fighting for workers. She has summoned Stellantis and GM here to hold them accountable.

We are going to do whatever it takes to protect workers, defend our auto sector and bring production back to Canada, because Canadian auto workers are the best in the world. We are going to fight for them every single day.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a victory, manage Donald Trump and reach an agreement before July 21. He did exactly the opposite.

The Prime Minister has let down auto workers in Canada and Quebec. Paccar, in Sainte-Thérèse, recently laid off 300 of its employees. There have been 725 layoffs since the beginning of the year, while the Prime Minister was leading failed negotiations with Washington.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister said yesterday in a speech that he wants young Canadians to make more sacrifices. Is it normal for young Quebecers to have to make more sacrifices to keep Washington happy?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just gave the example of the Paccar company. I would just like to point out that the U.S. administration's decision to impose tariffs on trucks, especially those made by Paccar, is completely incomprehensible and abusive. This was done just a few days ago. It gives you an idea of how unpredictable this administration is.

Cooler heads will prevail, and that is what Canada needs to remember in order to negotiate a good deal.

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I clearly remember an election campaign in which the candidate for the job of prime minister said that we needed to go “elbows up” on Donald Trump. He said that he was going to fix things. He said he could take charge of the situation because he had been in charge of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England and he was good at it.

Now, we are seeing job losses in the auto industry. Some 3,000 Stellantis jobs went to the United States, including 725 from Quebec. Are members aware that 10,700 automotive sector employees in Quebec alone are at risk of losing their jobs because “elbows up” has not solved the problem?

When will there be a solution to the problem?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that our colleague remembers the last federal election so clearly. Canadians chose a government that was prepared not only to defend and support Canadian industries, but also to negotiate with the U.S. government to reach a deal that is in the best interests of Canadian workers and industries.

Canadians had their say in the last election. They knew full well that the Conservative Party was utterly incapable of standing up to the U.S. government and defending the interests of Canadian workers and businesses.

We are up to that challenge.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, during the debate, the Prime Minister was asked to name the biggest threat to the security of Canada. He answered in one word: "China". Now the foreign affairs minister is talking about a strategic partnership with Beijing, including security. These two things seem contradictory.

Can the minister reconcile these two things, or is this another example of the Prime Minister saying one thing during the election and doing another afterward?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that the public safety and security of Canadians, regardless of the time and place, are always top of mind for our government, including in our diplomatic relationships. At the same time, Canada will continue to become the strongest economy in the G7, and the way we do that is to diversify our supply chains while making sure we protect our citizens at home.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another question about what the Prime Minister called the biggest threat to the security of Canada relates to foreign interference. In the last election, some candidates were vetoed for interference and others were targeted, and millions of Canadians continue to live in fear because of threats from foreign interference.

The foreign influence transparency registry was passed into law last year. The government said it would take 12 months to implement. Sixteen months have passed, and there is still no registry. When will it be up and running, and when will the commissioner be appointed?

• (1500)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to answer this very important question. I look forward to bringing forth the names to the leaders of the opposition parties so that we can have consensus on

Oral Questions

the commissioner. I assure the member opposite that we will have the commission up and running by the end of the year.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has kept its word. The Minister of Justice tabled Bill C-14 to strengthen bail and sentencing provisions. This bill will ensure that no sex offender will be able to serve their sentence at home. Bill C-14, which was developed in collaboration with the provinces, territories and law enforcement, puts victims at the heart of our justice system.

Can the Minister of Justice explain how this bill actually protects the public and holds repeat violent offenders fully accountable?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his very important question.

Our government is taking action to keep Canadians safe. The bill will have tougher consequences for repeat violent and sex offenders and will end house arrest for sex offenders. The bill also strengthens bail rules to ensure that detention is the default for repeat violent offenders.

That would protect victims and our communities. I have worked with the provinces, territories and police forces and I urge all members to pass this bill quickly.

* * *

[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, never before has a government spent so much and delivered so little. The latest example is the CRA. Under the Liberals, the CRA's budget increased by a staggering 70%, yet according to the Auditor General, the CRA has failed to meet its service standard a shocking 95% of the time. How is it possible that every time the Liberals spend more, Canadians get less?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we accept the Auditor General's report, and we will learn from that, but let me be very clear: There were 167 calls made by the Auditor General; the CRA has made 100,000 calls, and we have upward of 90% of calls answered accurately.

Oral Questions

We will improve. We will continue to learn. We will continue to provide a CRA that is responsive to Canadians.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only did the CRA fail to meet its service standard 95% of the time, but last year, 8.6 million calls to the CRA went unanswered. If callers were lucky enough to get through, the CRA gave wrong information 83% of the time. What is the Liberals' solution? It is to increase the CRA's budget even more. They cannot make this stuff up. Have the Liberals learned absolutely nothing after 10 years of failure?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am right here. Canadians deserve timely and accurate service from the CRA; there is no question about that.

However, we have good news. We have instituted a 100-day plan. Service levels and access are up; upwards of 83% of calls are answered within 15 minutes. We are laser-focused on the CRA's delivering good service for Canadians, and that is what we are going to do.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, auditors report that 130 valuable indigenous artworks have vanished from a federal collection overseen by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. Security was so weak that the theft went undetected. The department has no plan to recover the missing art, yet it continues to buy new pieces.

The entire collection is worth over \$14 million and includes cultural treasures.

Could the minister explain this blatant mismanagement and why the Liberal plan is just to spend more money and to ignore the crime?

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working with our partners to address the issue, and I would be happy to work with my colleagues on the other side as well.

* * *

● (1505)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fishing is the economic engine of my community in South Shore—St. Margarets, but many of the people in my riding are concerned about the conservation of lobster and the risks to the industry posed by illegal fishing. The fisheries officers on the front lines are doing everything they can, but it appears that illegal fishing persists.

Can the minister please tell me what she has been doing to combat illegal fishing? Has her plan been working?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, illegal fishing is unlawful. It threatens conservation and has an impact on the livelihood of people in coastal communities. That is why we have strengthened enforcement and added more pa-

trols on the water and at wharfs. We are also working with enforcement partners.

This summer, in southwest Nova Scotia, fisheries officers seized vessels and traps. They returned thousands of lobsters to the ocean and stopped black market sales, including 200 crates of lobsters seized last week.

Our plan is delivering results, and I will do everything I can to keep fisheries safe and regulated.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation rose by 3.3% in Quebec in September.

That increase is the result of hidden taxes, such as the industrial carbon tax, the food packaging taxes and the clean fuel regulations. These will lower Canada's real GDP by \$9 billion between now and 2030.

Is the former governor of the Bank of Canada turning into the Prime Minister of the bankruptcy of Canada?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, every time the member rises, we give him a score. This time, he got eight out of 10.

Despite the howls of my esteemed colleague, I can assure him that Canada's finances are the best in the G7. We have the fiscal room to invest in the future of this country's young people.

My colleague from the other side of the House should join us in voting for the November 4 budget.

* * *

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only is the Prime Minister planning to cut Women and Gender Equality Canada by as much as 81%, but the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives just revealed that 59% of planned job cuts to the public service will impact women.

If the Prime Minister wants to regain the trust of women after forcing flight attendants back to unpaid work at Air Canada, why does he not stop these devastating job cuts?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it may not often be presented this way, but the reason we are so focused on the economy right now is that it is actually a feminist vision of the future. When the economy is doing well, women are better off. They are safer and can actively participate in building our society.

Our government has invested more than any other government in protecting women and LGBTQ+ communities. We will continue doing so, and that is a promise we will always keep.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the 80th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations. Canada has an enviable reputation, but it is from long ago, when we were leaders in fighting for human rights and leaders in peacekeeping. I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs if Canada is rethinking our current position.

Will we continue to ignore the work of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or will we again make efforts to be a country known for peacekeeping and ending the threat of nuclear war?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada believes in a world free of nuclear weapons, and the current arsenals around the world remain far too large. Deterrence is fundamental, and we share the concerns of the hon. member about the unacceptable slow pace of disarmament. We all share a responsibility to protect against these threats, including through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

At the United Nations recently, I spoke about the importance of multilateralism. It is collective action that will get us through these times, including through the challenge posed by nuclear armament.

* * *

● (1510)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of weeks, we have witnessed countless job losses announced in regions across this country. It is thousands in the energy sector, thousands in the forestry sector and thousands in the automotive sector.

I wonder if the member opposite could tell us what the legislative agenda is for the coming week and, specifically, if he will agree to the Conservatives' request for take-note debates on the emergencies in the softwood lumber industry and the auto sector. There has been devastating news over the last number of weeks. We hope the Liberals will agree that this is an important issue that we must be seized with in the House of Commons.

Will the hon. House leader for the Liberals and the Liberal Party of Canada agree to take these matters seriously and allow for take-

note debates on the subject of the job losses in the forestry sector and the automotive sector?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my friend that ministers and the Prime Minister are in Ontario meeting with Premier Ford, members of the business community, and the private sector. We take these matters very seriously. The Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Industry and others continue to work with communities, unions and employers to challenge the decisions the big auto companies have announced, which we obviously regret very much and are determined to make good on for the people of Ontario and the people of Canada.

This afternoon, we will continue with the fourth day of debate at second reading of Bill C-12, concerning the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system.

Tomorrow and Monday, we will debate Bill C-3, which would amend the Citizenship Act, at report stage. Our hope is to deal with third reading of this bill on Wednesday of next week.

Next Tuesday, we will call Bill C-13, an act to implement the protocol on the accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which was introduced by the Minister of International Trade earlier this week.

[Translation]

Next Thursday, we will begin second reading debate on Bill C-14 on bail and sentencing, which was proudly introduced this morning by the Minister of Justice.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1515)

[English]

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join the debate on Bill C-12.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister spoke to young people. This might have been an opportunity for him to apologize for the 10 years of Liberal failures that have led to historically high unemployment for young people. We are now at a point where the employment rate for young people is the worst it has been in over 25 years. Youth unemployment is approaching half a million young people. It is approaching a rate of 15%.

Government Orders

What is the response of the government to this catastrophe created by its own policy decisions? It is to tell young people that they need to give up more, that they need to sacrifice more. This is the framing we see from the Prime Minister. It is not to take responsibility for the failures of the Liberals over the last 10 years, but to blame the victims of bad Liberal policies. The Liberal approach is to constantly frame the problems we face as a country as if they are somebody else's fault and somebody else needs to take action other than the people who made the policies that got us there in the first place.

We have put forward a Conservative youth jobs plan to reverse the harm done by the Liberals. We have invited them to adopt that plan, but not only have they failed to adopt our jobs plan; they have not even put forward a plan of their own. Their policies attacking energy and job creation, which are pushing the essentials of life out of reach, are making young people increasingly worried about their future.

I was at Concordia University in Montreal yesterday speaking to young people about the situation, asking them whether they were better or worse off than the previous generation. Many young people are worried about their future. They have already suffered so much, yet the Prime Minister, rather than taking responsibility for 10 years of Liberal failures, is telling them that they will have to sacrifice even more. It is time for the government to stop blaming others and take responsibility for its own failures.

As we talk today about Bill C-12, the same is true when it comes to public safety and criminal justice. The government is constantly trying to externalize the source of these problems, yet we know that rates of violent crime were dropping prior to the current government coming into office and began increasing as soon as the government came into office. This is because the Liberal government made policy choices around more generous bail for repeat violent criminals. It made policy choices that got us here.

We will certainly study the provisions in Bill C-12 in detail. We look forward to the study that will take place at committee. However, there has been a complete failure by the Liberal government over the last 10 years to take public safety and crime seriously. It has not recognized that it is Liberal bail, Liberal policy choices and bills proposed and passed by the government that got us into this situation in the first place. Rather than calling on other people to make sacrifices, the government should have the humility to recognize its own policy failures and how the choices it has made on the economy, on crime, on immigration and in many areas have led to a situation where young people are more pessimistic about the future than they used to be.

We are here in this House to talk about restoring opportunity for young people and about restoring hope. I believe our country can have a bright future, but it is in the hands of the members of this House to make that future happen. It is not by sticking our heads in the sand like an ostrich that we make a future better for young people. It is by confronting the real data and real challenges when it comes to public safety and youth unemployment and making things better.

We call on the Liberals to adopt Conservative jail, not bail legislation and to adopt the Conservative youth jobs plan. Those are the solutions we need.

• (1520)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spent a lot of time talking about youth and jobs. I am sure he recalls, because he was around then, when Stephen Harper cut the the summer jobs program for youth. If we were to contrast the overall number of jobs, more than double the number of jobs have been created in the last 10 years than were created in the 10 years the member was part of the Conservative regime known as the Harper regime.

November 4 is coming up, and I believe we will see substantive measures to build hope in the minds and hearts of Canadians. It would be a drastic change for us to start adopting the failed Conservative policies that were demonstrated in the past. Even today, a Conservative colleague said the national school program was nothing but “garbage”.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. I will encourage the member to consult the labour force survey, which comes out every month from Statistics Canada and reveals the state of the job numbers.

He may not like spending changes or decisions made by the previous government, but objectively, young people were better off, our streets were safer, crime rates were lower, housing prices and rent were way lower and job numbers were higher. Objectively, we have the worst employment rate for young people in more than 25 years.

The Liberals want to measure success by intentions and government spending. We measure success by results that are available from Statistics Canada. The government should hold itself accountable to results, not rhetoric.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a very specific question.

Bill C-12 provides that railway companies and port authorities must pay for suitable facilities where border services can carry out inspections.

Does my colleague agree that companies, not the government, should pay for these facilities?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues are going to study the specific provisions of this bill in committee. We will have the opportunity to listen to witnesses and expert analysis, and I know that we will be able to respond based on this expertise and propose ideas following the discussions.

[*English*]

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have not been in the House very long, but often when we are up speaking and proposing solutions, we hear a comment from the member opposite about something that happened decades ago.

I am curious to know what hope that offers the next generation, as outlined by my colleague's speech.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are focused on the past. It is a past when, objectively, housing prices were much lower and crime, rent and unemployment were lower. We think that noting the numbers from the past is important, but so is looking to the future and casting a vision that gives young people hope once again.

The reality is that many young people are concerned about what their future will be like because of policies of the Liberal government. It is not enough to manifest hope; we need concrete proposals. That is why we have put forward the Conservative youth jobs plan that would reverse bad Liberal policies and get young people back to work.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hear my colleague speaking and I gather that he is also a father and the head of a family.

In this fast-changing world, we are facing global inflation. Yesterday, the Prime Minister, as the leader of the government, spoke to young people about the realities of life so that they would not be surprised by what lay ahead in the coming months.

As the head of the family, would my colleague tell his children the truth? Yes or no?

[*English*]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do not quite follow the question. I will continue to tell the truth, as I always have in the House, which is to articulate the specific numbers around youth unemployment and crime, to call on the government to make changes that recognize the challenges their policies have created and to make things better.

* * *

• (1525)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been discussions amongst the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House:

- a) when the House adjourns on Thursday, January 29, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, February 2, 2026, provided that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, it shall be deemed to have sat on Friday, January 30, 2026;
- b) when the House adjourns on Thursday, March 26, 2026, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, April 13, 2026, provided that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, it shall be deemed to have sat on Friday, March 27, 2026; and
- c) any standing, standing joint, special and special joint committees, as well as their subcommittees, shall not be empowered to sit on both Fridays.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Government Orders

(Motion agreed to)

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STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise on behalf of the people of Cambridge and North Dumfries in this place, especially to discuss an issue as important as our Canadian borders and keeping people safe.

Everyone watching at home might remember that this is not my first time in the House talking about border security. A few weeks ago, I spoke about Bill C-2, which was introduced by the government with goals similar to those of the bill before us. I expressed my deep concerns with many portions of Bill C-2, including the parts that would allow Canada Post to open any mail without a warrant, ban certain cash payments and transactions, allow warrantless access to personal information, and let the government snoop on people's online activities and see deeply personal financial information from Canadian banks.

While this new piece of legislation, Bill C-12, is intended to address many of the thoughts that I, many of my Conservative colleagues and indeed people from all across Canada had about that old bill, I am grateful that the government listened to our Conservative ideas and the voices of thousands of Canadians, including people in my community, to remove these problematic elements. This proves that the work Conservatives are doing in Ottawa is producing results for the people we serve. Legislation about border security should be about keeping our borders safe, not about completely separate topics like online surveillance, private business transactions and reading people's mail.

Bill C-12 is a small step in the right direction, but it is not without problems. I am really glad that the sections encroaching on Canadians' personal freedoms and privacy rights are no longer in the bill, but let us talk about what else is not in the bill. There is still no action to end Liberal catch-and-release policies, meaning people who smuggle drugs and guns across our borders can still be arrested, get released and go right back to breaking the law all in the same day. The Liberals are still allowing people who get arrested for the most serious crimes to serve what should be multi-year sentences in the comfort of their own homes. There are still no mandatory minimum prison times for fentanyl traffickers, gangsters who commit gun crimes and other heinous offenders.

Government Orders

This soft-on-crime agenda is not just an abstract idea; it is hitting home in my community every single day. Last week, there was a shooting on Dellgrove Circle and Baintree Way. A couple of months ago, bullets struck a home on Park Avenue and Grant Street. Back in June, a house on Roseview Avenue was targeted with six gunshots in broad daylight. These are not supposed to be dangerous places. They are quiet neighbourhoods where families should feel safe. My neighbours in Cambridge did not ask for their streets to become crime scenes. Ten years ago, this would have been unimaginable in a country like Canada and in a community like ours. These are not just headlines; they are real families, real neighbours and real lives disrupted by violence. Every time I hear about another incident, I think of the children growing up in fear and the parents wondering if their street is still safe.

People reach out to me constantly in emails, phone calls, texts and responses to my community surveys. They tell me, "I don't feel safe when I lock the door at night or when I let my kids play out in the yard." They asked me to bring their concerns to the government. I have stood up time and time again in debate and in question period to let the government know just how badly it is failing law-abiding citizens.

What does the Liberal government say in response? For years, the Liberals said, "Hold on, be patient, the legislation is coming soon"; that is, when they did not call us racist, conspiracy theorists or supporters of so-called American-style policies.

For this government, it has always been about doing something tomorrow instead of doing it today, about blaming someone else instead of taking ownership. The Liberals had an opportunity to fix the justice system in this very piece of legislation. They did not. The bail reform could already be reported out of committee by now. It is not; it is just getting started.

• (1530)

The Liberals had an opportunity to vote for Conservative legislation to put the bad guys in jail and end Liberal bail. They did not. They have ignored this problem for years; they have ignored the police officers, the mayors and the frontline workers. People in communities like mine are paying the price. Every day the government delays is another day criminals are allowed to break the law with absolute impunity, no deterrents, no consequences and no accountability. That needs to stop now.

Let us not forget who else is paying the price for this soft-on-crime, hug-a-thug approach: our emergency services, frontline workers, first responders and hospitals. Police are being stretched thin responding to repeat offenders who should never have been released in the first place. Paramedics are racing from one overdose call to the next, often with no time to recover between emergencies. Nurses and doctors are overwhelmed treating the fallout of drug poisonings, violent assaults and mental health crises, many of which could have been prevented if the justice system actually worked.

Our first responders are doing their jobs with courage and compassion, but are being asked to do more with less. They are expected to manage the consequences of failed policies while the government continues to delay action and deflect responsibility. When the system fails to hold criminals accountable, it does not hurt just vic-

tims, but everyone who is trying to keep our communities safe and healthy. It puts pressure on our hospitals, shelters, outreach workers and emergency services. It creates burnout, frustration and fear. These are the people we rely on in our most vulnerable moments. They deserve more than lip service; they deserve a system that works. They deserve a government that stands with them, not one that leaves them to clean up the mess.

While crime continues to rise, it is not the only crisis gripping our communities; the opioid epidemic is another tragedy unfolding in plain sight and one the government continues to mishandle. We see people living in tents in what used to be public parks and green spaces. We see people in doorways, on the sidewalk or the street corner who have lost everything they had because of one mistake. We hear the sirens of ambulances going to help someone who has had yet another overdose. Many people do not make it out alive.

These are not statistics; these are people who get a government in Ottawa that does not offer a helping hand or invest in recovery and treatment, a government that wilfully pushes hard drugs onto our streets through so-called safe supply sites.

There is nothing safe about a government-funded institution that hands out drugs that can literally kill people, all for free. These so-called safe supply sites do not just keep vulnerable people hooked on the poison that is killing them; they also feed the opioid crisis even more because many of the drugs they give away end up on the streets. The health minister testified in front of a parliamentary committee just days ago that not only would she not commit to ending this radical experiment, she would not even commit to ensuring these sites are not placed next to places like schools in our community. That means a safe supply site in a city like mine could be put right around the corner from kids who are literally four or five years old.

It seems like now everywhere has become a drug consumption site. I hear stories from parents who find needles and drug materials in parks and playgrounds, places we never would have dreamed of finding any of these things in just a few years ago. I find it a bit ironic that this bill is supposed to address the fentanyl flowing across our borders, all while the government continues to hand it out here at home and defend a regime that we all know has failed and is failing so many. If we truly want to stop the opioid crisis, then let us stop all the opioids, including the ones the government gives out for free in communities across Canada.

Government Orders

Concerns like these are ones my colleagues and I hope to address at upcoming committee hearings through amendments offered in good faith. We want to make this legislation stronger and better, because stronger legislation means better outcomes for the people we serve.

I would say to the people of my community that they should know that I have one goal in this debate: to keep our communities safe and to finally put a stop to the scourge of crime, chaos, drugs and disorder that is sweeping across—

• (1535)

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cape Spear.

Tom Osborne (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech, and I have one question for her.

The member said that first responders deserve a government that stands behind them. Has she called on her leader to apologize to the RCMP, as he called into question its integrity and reputation, and said it did not do their job, or does she stand behind him?

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite really needs to look in his own backyard and at his own government.

Today, at the public safety and national security committee, the public safety minister doubled down on calling the RCMP racist. If that member wants to be serious about supporting police officers, then maybe the Liberals should back up that tough talk by voting for our Conservative legislation, which police unions from coast to coast to coast have been asking for for years, instead of voting against it at every opportunity.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech.

Can she give me her opinion on the fact that Bill C-12 proposes to integrate the Coast Guard under the defence umbrella, under the umbrella of the Canadian Armed Forces, yet there are no plans to arm the Coast Guard? Does my colleague believe that our Coast Guard is genuinely being integrated into the military?

[*English*]

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot that is happening right now that is nothing more than a smokescreen for our current government.

The things she mentioned are no different than hiring 1,000 CB-SA officers when the agency can barely deal with losses through attrition. When we open the Gordie Howe bridge next year, the shifting of personnel will leave a massive hole in the system. Plus, there is no training capacity for the 1,000 proposed officers. It is just more talk and no action from the Liberal government.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that the Conservatives are the only ones delivering speeches on Bill C-12 and that the only rebuttal Liberals have is an irrelevancy that has nothing to do with Bill C-12.

What does my colleague think? Is it that, now that the only provisions that allow the government to control Canadians have been removed, the Liberals simply do not care about Bill C-12?

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, I think the Liberals are running out of policies to steal from the Conservatives.

It is deeply disheartening to see the Liberals not put up any speakers to defend their own bill, despite the fact that they are supposedly so proud of it. Even with the changes we forced the government to make, the bill still has deep flaws, as I outlined in my speech.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Bloc and across the way to work through the legislation to further fix this government bill to ensure Canadians' rights are being protected.

• (1540)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the member makes reference to the RCMP, but does not concede the fact that her leader, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Conservative Party, and this is a quote from the Winnipeg Free Press, called the leadership of the RCMP “despicable”.

It is disgraceful to have the leader of the official opposition making that sort of a statement. He owes Canadians an apology.

The member has the tenacity to try to throw it back at the government on another issue. Does the member agree that the Leader of the Conservative Party owes Canadians an apology, or does she support her leader's comments?

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, what is despicable is what the member across the way is focusing on after I just discussed Canadian lives that are being lost due to the opioid crisis.

Lives are being lost every single day. What we need is accountability and prevention, stronger border controls to stop deadly drugs from entering the country, better access to real treatment and recovery, and a government that supports families, not failed experiments.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today to Bill C-12, a broad omnibus bill that, in its current form, seeks to make changes on a number of issues related to the border, immigration and crime prevention. I am thankful to my many constituents, and those throughout Canada, who added their voices of disapproval to its predecessor, Bill C-2. They raised their voices against the infringements it sought to place on individual freedoms and privacy. That bill, Bill C-2, wanted to allow Canada Post to open any mail, including letters, without a warrant, ban cash payments Canadians use and ban the donations over \$10,000 that our charitable organizations need.

Government Orders

It wanted to allow warrantless access to personal information. It could compel electronic service providers to re-engineer their platforms to help CSIS and the police access information, and it would have allowed the government to supply financial institutions with personal information if the info were to be used for money laundering and terrorist financing purposes.

Is it interesting to me why people are against this. It is their lack of trust in the government to ever consider allowing it to do these things. We certainly saw that when the government chose to invoke an illegal use of the Emergencies Act. It instructed banks to freeze everyday Canadians' bank accounts because it did not like that they were supporting people who needed gas for their vehicles, food and, hopefully, to find a hotel if there was one left downtown that the government had not bought out so they could not sleep in a warm place.

The Liberals also called Canadians all kinds of names, which I would like to see them apologize for, calling us misogynist, racist, extremist. These are the reasons Canadians made the choices they made to stand up against this bill. They do not trust the Liberals.

Because of the pressure they and so many stakeholders have applied, we were able to force the Liberals to back down, split the bill and introduce Bill C-12. The Privacy Commissioner confirmed that the Liberals did not even consult him when they were trying to grant themselves sweeping new powers to access Canadians' personal information from service providers, like banks and telecoms, without a warrant, although they kept saying there would be a warrant.

I am the member of Parliament for the wonderful people, who call the beautiful riding of Yorkton—Melville home, and as of October 15 this month, I have been here for a decade and have risen in this place to speak and intervene on their behalf. Over this tumultuous decade, the people of Canada, especially our younger generations, have become wary of the intentions of the Liberal government. It has tried, time after time, to usurp the rights and freedoms of Canadians, bully and divide, water down and destroy the very fabric of Canadian identity and quality of life.

The government continues to show its true colours as it holds fast to its efforts to make Canada the first postnational state. It holds fast to ravaging our economy with roadblocks and walls that continue to deter private investment in everything from mining to manufacturing and agriculture. The Liberal government is responsible for what Canadians see today. There is poor border security because of the Liberals. There is continued unsustainable immigration because of the leader. There is also an unprecedented financial burden of generational proportions it has orchestrated. All of this is impacting next generations.

This was all orchestrated by Justin Trudeau and the current Prime Minister, who was the instigator as Trudeau's economic adviser and as the guy ready to finish his art of the deal with values that leave wealth in his hands and nothing for Canada. The exhaustion, attrition, depression and hopelessness felt within our police services, our Canadian Armed Forces, our first responders and our medical professionals are off the charts. The simple reason, the indisputable answer, is that total violent crimes have increased by 50% since 2015 and through to 2023.

I feel like I should have a moment of silence after mentioning each of these violent crimes that are taking place in larger and larger numbers across our nation: homicide, gang-related killings, sexual assaults, firearm offences, extortion, auto theft, horrific violence against children, forced confinement, kidnapping, indecent and harassing communications, human trafficking, and we do not have the numbers yet for 2024-25. This is not the Canada that Canadians have grown up in, and it is not the Canada immigrants who took the proper paths expected to be part of when they came here.

● (1545)

This is in response to the government's failed bail reforms and the removal of mandatory minimum sentences in Bill C-75, Bill C-5's legalization of the possession of drugs and an open season for drug trafficking and fentanyl production in Canada.

Unfortunately, this bill is weak. It would make no commitments to enforcement, take no action on catch-and-release for those who traffic in fentanyl and firearms, and add no new mandatory prison times for fentanyl traffickers or for gangsters who use guns to commit crimes or who use our porous border to victimize Canadians. Instead of focusing on them, these Liberals are trying to confiscate legal gun owners' firearms, and they are having a bit of trouble accomplishing that, from what I understand.

House arrest is still permissible for some of the most serious offences. Safe consumption sites still do not provide addicts with the encouragement and support to move to treatment, and the Liberals continue to put children in danger with no move to shut down fentanyl consumption sites that are near schools and day cares.

I have to say that on this last part, I feel like I am living in that environment. I moved to Ottawa so that I could do my work, and the place I chose was in a good location. Then they introduced the legalization of drugs and put two safe consumption sites in that area, which is close to a school. Every morning now, as I walk to work, what I see on the streets has multiplied extensively, so this is not due to something that was in place before this happened.

There are people on the street who cannot stand up. They are bent over from the use of these drugs. They sleep on the grates to stay warm. They are sleeping in the little crannies between small businesses, and now there is a regular group that comes and picks up the garbage every morning. At 4 a.m., I am hearing the machines that come down the streets and the sidewalks to wash them, because one of the businesses that was there had to finally move, and it was one of the first in the city of Ottawa, because every morning, as I walk to work, they would be out with big pails of disinfectant cleaning the area in front of their business.

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I hear more sirens from police and fire trucks every night, and there are nights when the loudness is so unbelievable, because it travels up through the buildings, that people cannot sleep. I am not blaming the people who are struggling. I am blaming the government for creating the environment that we have today that has added the violence that is taking place with firearms and attacks on people to this form of violence, which has basically caused multiple Canadians across this country to die from the use of fentanyl and caused their families to be in deep distress because of the condition of our country.

• (1550)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fentanyl scourge that is taking place in North America is very serious for downtowns throughout North America, and I think that it is important that we recognize that, as a governing body, we should be doing whatever we can. We are securing borders, which will help. We attempted, though Bill C-2, to be able to deal with fentanyl being distributed through the mail, which the Conservatives oppose.

However, the question I have for the member opposite is this: If there were assurances that a court order would be necessary in order to look into an envelope to check it for fentanyl, would that member support that?

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the issues around fentanyl are Canadian made. The government has allowed the precursors to this drug to come into this country for years without any oversight, knowing full well that this was going to mean we would have gangs and drug producers in this country making this situation far worse. This government has to take responsibility for its behaviour, and as far as that question about the mail, Canadians are still very concerned about those other issues, and they are watching, because I have assured them that they should not feel comfortable and that there is a good possibility that the government is still going to try to take away their rights and freedoms.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, under certain new measures, people who have been in Canada for more than a year will no longer be able to claim asylum.

Does my colleague think that the government should provide a humanitarian carve-out for vulnerable individuals or victims of persecution that occurred after their arrival?

[*English*]

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member and appreciate her question. At committee, these are the things we will have the opportunity to discuss and consider for amendments.

My personal feeling is that a year is an extensive amount of time. What Canada needs to do is get back in control of our immigration environment, and that may very well be part of the challenge. We have to do things in a timely manner. The government does not know how to do that, but Conservatives will.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have had a great deal of discussion about in the chamber is the RCMP. The leader of the official opposition made a profoundly

derogatory statement about the RCMP, saying that its management is “despicable”. I am wondering whether the member opposite supports her leader's comments or whether she believes, as do a vast majority of Canadians, that the RCMP is an institution that has worldwide respect, that the leader of the official opposition was wrong and that he owes Canadians an apology.

Does the member believe in the integrity of the RCMP or in the leader of her party?

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I believe in both.

I want to thank the federal government for bringing attention to this issue and raising the viewership of Northern Perspective. I encourage more people to watch the interview and listen to the full statement that was made. Northern Perspective did a great job of rebuttal on this issue.

I am very proud of the RCMP and the individuals who work so hard in my riding. Conservatives will do all we can to improve their service.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we hear from the Liberal government that it takes fentanyl so seriously that it is willing to go as far as looking into people's mail and violating their privacy, yet under the bill, there would be no mandatory prison time for fentanyl traffickers.

I would love for my colleague to please comment on that.

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, giving a sentence that is worthy of the crime is something the government just does not understand. The reason for the growth in extreme violent crime is that criminals see the opportunities and are quite happy to go to jail and be let out again immediately. Again, the government is not meeting the—

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary McKnight.

Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Calgary McKnight. I want to make it clear that today I am rising to speak to the bill because of my constituents. I have received countless emails in my inbox about the concerns they have about Bill C-12 and Bill C-2. Many of my constituents shared their concerns about provisions in these bills that would needlessly violate individual freedoms and Canadians' rights to privacy, and I want to address that.

Bill C-2 seeks to give the Liberal government broad surveillance powers. It would permit warrantless access to Canadians' mail and to their personal data from service providers. Alarming, these overarching measures were proposed by the Liberals without prior consultation with the Privacy Commissioner.

In some ways, Bill C-2 reminds me of Bill C-11 from a couple of years ago, which would have given powers to government bureaucrats to censor what Canadians can say or see on the Internet. It also reminds me of the Online News Act from 2023, which banned news from social media platforms and put local news groups at a disadvantage.

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What we see, once again, with Bill C-2 is a government that believes it knows better than Canadians, a government that continues to seek control of the information Canadians can access online and to diminish their personal freedoms. Over 300 civil society groups expressed their concerns about Bill C-2, and Conservatives are proud to stand with them to fight against the legislation.

After backing down from Bill C-2, the Liberals have now introduced Bill C-12. Conservatives are examining the bill thoroughly to ensure that the Liberals do not try to sneak in measures that would breach law-abiding Canadians' privacy rights, as they tried to do in Bill C-2.

Before I dive deeper into Bill C-12, I want to highlight two important topics of concern to the people of Calgary McKnight: the rising wave of crime in our country and the drug epidemic, which has claimed over 50,000 lives since 2016.

Since 2015, crime in my hometown of Calgary has gone up by 58%. Firearm offences have gone up by 371%, and extortion has gone up by 353%. As I mentioned previously, the countrywide opioid epidemic has claimed tens of thousands of lives and represents a 200% annual increase since the government began its radical liberalisation of hard drugs. I heard one of my colleagues mention previously that the number of lives lost to drug overdoses in the last 10 year is higher than the number of Canadians who tragically lost their lives in the Second World War.

Conservatives have been calling on the government for years to get serious about crime and to secure our borders. We have urged it to strengthen bail laws, crack down on the flow of dangerous drugs and stop illegal firearms from pouring into our communities. It is deeply disappointing that the Liberals acted on border security only after being told to do so by another country's president. It should not take pressure from a foreign leader for the Liberals to finally do what Canadians have been pleading for all along.

Even in the Liberals' second attempt, Bill C-12 still fails to address several critical issues. It does not include meaningful bail reform but allows the catch-and-release of individuals trafficking fentanyl and firearms. It would not introduce mandatory prison sentences for fentanyl traffickers who are fuelling the deadly opioid crisis. It would not implement new mandatory prison terms for gang members who use illegal firearms to commit violent crimes.

Despite the Liberals' tough rhetoric, it still seems that their priority is going after the guns of law-abiding hunters and intercepting the mail of ordinary Canadians.

● (1600)

Canadians deserve a justice system that protects victims and communities, not repeat violent offenders, but after a decade of the Liberal government's soft-on-crime approach, we now live in a country where violent criminals are released within hours of arrest, thanks to the Liberals' Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. The Liberals repealed mandatory prison sentences for some of the most serious offences, like extortion with a firearm, weapons trafficking and importing illegal guns.

These are not small mistakes; these are deliberate policy choices that have emboldened criminals and eroded my constituents' confi-

dence in the justice system. Conservatives believe in real consequences for repeat violent criminals and in sentencing that prioritizes the safety of Canadians over the comfort of offenders.

The product of the government's soft-on-crime legislation extends far beyond the courtroom. The fentanyl crisis reaches our streets, homes, hospitals and even children's playgrounds. The Liberal government's reckless policies have fuelled a nationwide drug crisis that has overwhelmed communities and left our brave first responders and health workers to clean up the mess. Meanwhile, the Liberal health minister refuses to rule out approving more drug injection sites next to schools and day cares, despite admitting that they are hot spots for fentanyl usage.

Some of the provisions in Bill C-12 appear to be well intentioned. On paper, the legislation seeks to strengthen border security, crack down on gun smuggling and target organized crime networks and trafficking across our country. These are causes that all Canadians can support and that Conservatives have long been calling for.

The measures to inspect more cross-border cargo to tighten tracking of money laundering and to intercept the flow of fentanyl and hard drugs are steps in the right direction. If implemented correctly, these measures could help protect our communities from the violence and drug addiction that have taken root under the Liberal government's watch.

I look forward to the bill's being thoroughly scrutinized to ensure that it can deliver positive results without trampling on Canadians' rights.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the government were elected just a number of months ago. During the election campaign, there was a commitment made by the Prime Minister, saying that we are going to secure Canada's borders and we are going to look at stabilizing our immigration. Bill C-12 would do just that. It is a significant step.

There are also other measures, such as increasing the number of RCMP and border control officers. Collectively, the bill would make a huge difference, and I am glad to hear that the Conservatives are open to allowing the bill to go to committee so we can at least make it go through a process.

I believe that Canadians expect the politicians here in Ottawa to work co-operatively to make things of this nature happen. I wonder whether the member could provide his comments on working co-operatively.

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Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, under the previous Conservative government, the CBSA budget was increased by 45%, and staffing levels rose by 26%, strengthening Canada's front line of defence. We invested in the tools, personnel and technology needed to keep Canadians safe and to stop illegal smuggling.

We will never apologize for our strong Conservative record with respect to securing Canada's borders. Conservatives stand should to shoulder with the men and women in law enforcement who protect our borders and our communities every day. We will always support the people in uniform who risk their safety to keep Canadians safe.

I call on the Liberals to finally deliver on their promise to hire 1,000 new RCMP and CBSA officers instead of leaving our front lines understaffed and overworked.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the public safety critic for the Bloc Québécois, I can say that we have studied Bill C-12 at length. We have also heard from a lot of witnesses. I am an MP who is capable of weighing the pros and cons. Bill C-12 contains some good measures, such as the one that gives the Minister of Health the power to identify precursor chemicals to fight the opioid crisis.

Does my colleague think that giving the Minister of Health the power to quickly identify precursor chemicals is a good idea?

[*English*]

Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, in June, the Liberals tabled Bill C-2 without even consulting the Privacy Commissioner or considering its impact on Canadians' rights. Frankly, this is unacceptable. People's lives are at stake, and Liberals are introducing bills through trial and error. I hope we can work together to form a productive outcome for Canadians.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his wonderful speech pointing out the frailties and shortcomings in this bill that still need to be talked about. My question is quite simple. The Liberals still seem to be pushing for safe consumption sites, including by schools, day cares and play zones, as you said in your remarks.

How do you feel about this disconnect—

The Deputy Speaker: I will interrupt the member. Members have to speak through the Chair; they cannot use the word “you”. I invite the member to continue but to refer to “member”, “colleague” or any other terminology.

The member can continue and finish his question.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Mr. Speaker, how does my colleague feel about this disconnect when, on one hand, the Liberals say they want to work hard on fentanyl and its consumption, but at the same time, they are not willing to stop safe consumption sites close to schools and day cares?

Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal approach of expanding safe injection sites and safe supply programs has only fuelled addiction, crime and overdoses, leaving first responders and health

care workers to clean up the mess. We believe in investing in treatment, recovery and enforcement, so Canadians can rebuild their lives.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are here to talk about Bill C-12. I am going to focus my speech. As many of my colleagues in the House know, I do a lot of work with our first responders and our veterans. I do a lot of work dealing with mental health throughout our country, so I will be spending a majority of my time talking about fentanyl and how it has had just an incredible, devastating impact on our country.

I would be remiss if I did not do this first. We have first responders all across our country who put their uniforms on every day to run into burning buildings, to run toward danger. Whether it is a nurse, a paramedic, a firefighter or a police officer, they are there to serve us and our families. They are there to make our communities safe.

One of my very good friends, somebody I deeply respect, Mr. Paul Hills, is in Ottawa today and has been here for the last week. I have worked tirelessly, shoulder to shoulder, with him to stand up for our first responders, who face threats of violence and violent acts each and every day. I am just honoured to call him a friend. I know that we are not allowed to acknowledge people in the gallery, so I will not look up to the gallery, but perhaps my colleagues could do me a favour and just provide a round of applause.

He has worked tirelessly to get Bill C-321 passed. The bill would change the Criminal Code to recognize, at the time of sentencing, that if the victim of violence is a health care worker, a nurse or a paramedic, that would be an aggravating factor in sentencing. He has been here working tirelessly with our Senate and with all of our colleagues on all sides. I send my heartfelt thanks to him.

Furthermore, I cannot speak to Bill C-12, about strengthening our borders, if I do not recognize and talk about Brianna MacDonald, whom I have talked about in this House before. At 13 years of age, she lost her life in a homeless encampment due to an overdose. She turned 13 on my son's birthday last year, on July 15, and she was found deceased on my daughter's birthday, a month later, August 23, in Abbotsford in a homeless encampment. Her parents did everything to try to get her off the drug and get her off the streets. She was 13.

Government Orders

We cannot talk about this bill or any bills when we are talking about strengthening our borders or making our communities safe without mentioning Brianna or Tyler Dunlap, or the nephew of our colleague, who mentioned her nephew passed away from an overdose. I lost my brother-in-law to an overdose. I lost my uncle to drugs. I have a brother on the streets now who is gripped with this crisis. I cannot leave that at the feet of the government because he has been on the streets for a long period of time.

However, I ask those who are watching and those who are in the House today to take a look around our communities. Do they look the same as they did 10 years ago? The answer is no. There has been an increase in crime.

Fentanyl flows across our porous border. We are absolutely powerless to stop this drug from flowing across our border. That is why we are standing here to compel our colleagues, to plead with our colleagues across the way in the government, to protect our youth, strengthen our borders and ensure that law enforcement has the tools it needs to stop illicit drugs from reaching our communities. Right now, whatever we are doing, it is not working.

• (1610)

Over 50,000 Canadians have lost their lives since 2016. Those are just the numbers that we know. In my home province of British Columbia, overdose is the leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 18. I say it in every speech because it bears repeating time and time again. Do members want to know what the second leading cause of death is? It is suicide.

Our country is gripped in a mental health crisis and all we look at are band-aid solutions. That is not blaming the current government or previous governments; it is blaming us collectively as leaders, whether provincial, federal or municipal. We are failing Canadians. Bill C-12 does nothing to affect that.

I was elected 10 years ago on Sunday. One of the first debates I undertook in the House was on the suicide epidemic in At-tawapiskat First Nation. I remember listening to the debate and hearing some of our colleagues who had been in the House a lot longer than I had at that point say that their first debate, years earlier, was on the suicide crisis we had in Canada. We have done nothing; they are band-aid solutions.

Collectively, as a Parliament, we passed my motion to bring a three-digit national suicide hotline to Canada: 988. We did that in the last session. However, there is so much more we need to do. When we see Bill C-12 and bills like Bill C-2, an omnibus bill with much ado about nothing, we question why.

Those who are new in the House, I remember being in the same seats as some of them in the back rows of both sides. I came here with great intentions and had great hopes for all, but we are failing. I cannot remember who said it, but one of our colleagues said that the time for talk is done; we need action.

Over seven and a half million Canadians are without a doctor. Our borders are broken and we are going to bring more immigrants into Canada, but they are not going to be able to get a doctor. They are not going to be able to afford food. They are not going to be

able to afford a house or a roof over their heads. Where is the compassion in that?

Our police officers and first responders are taxed. How far are we falling when it is okay to firebomb an ambulance, to stab a paramedic or to knock a nurse out when they are just trying to help us, heal our broken bones or hold our hand as we take our last breath?

I challenge all of our colleagues here. We get heated during question period, but when we talk about things that matter, like the mental health of Canadians, the health and wellness of Canadians, I think we could all agree that there is no health without mental health and that our addiction crisis is real. Bill C-12 does nothing to stop the scourge of fentanyl, drugs or guns coming over our borders.

We can do better. The government needs to do better. The provinces are calling for it. The attorneys general are calling for it. The municipalities are calling for it. The police agencies are calling for it. I challenge all of us, but I challenge the government, because that is its legacy after 10 years. It says it is new, but it is the same old, same old. I know there are good people on that side, so I challenge them to speak up, those members, those colleagues, and to challenge the guy in the front desk to do better and be better.

• (1615)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, Justice; the hon. member for Northumberland—Clarke, Housing; and the hon. member for Larnark—Frontenac, Public Safety.

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the way for his speech. We have had the great pleasure of working together over the last 10 years on multiple files, one of which he mentioned in his speech.

He referenced somebody who may or may not be on the Hill and in the chamber today. While this is not about Bill C-12, I did want to flag to him, which I think he will be happy to hear, that in the legislation tabled this morning, Bill C-14, on page 19, in proposed subclause 39(1), injury to first responders was added. That was in a private member's bill he brought forward in the last Parliament. I just wanted to let him know that.

As he is very passionate about this, would he be willing to work with our government to make sure that when we hopefully get Bill C-12 to committee, we have some amendments—

The Deputy Speaker: We have to give a chance to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George to respond.

Government Orders

Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I just read the notice that the government has taken up excerpts of our bill, Bill C-321, but I have not had a chance to look at whether they go far enough. We know the Senate just passed Bill S-233 last night. It is back in this House as we speak. My understanding is that Bill S-233 is complementary to the new bail reform bill. We also know that Bill C-321 passed at all levels in the last Parliament, and only due to the election call did it fail to get through. Time and time again, we need to send a message to our first responders and those who wear uniforms that we care for them and that we will protect them through thick and thin.

I look forward to working with our colleague across the way.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke at length about fentanyl. I extend my condolences to all who have lost loved ones to the fentanyl crisis.

What are my Conservative colleague's thoughts on the federal government strengthening co-operation with the Government of Quebec and the United States in order to effectively tackle this crisis and end cross-border smuggling of these synthetic drugs?

[*English*]

Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is the only way to get anything done. We have to have a multi-tiered plan to work on this. Because we have a nation filled with different jurisdictions, like the provincial jurisdictions, regional jurisdictions and others, we have to work with these groups and each province to make sure we are doing something.

Moreover, we need leadership at the top. Somebody has to take the reins and say, "This is how we are going to do it", and convene meetings to get this going. What we are doing right now and what we have done to this point are not working.

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague brought up the issue of youth death and its major causes. He named overdoses as number one, and the second is suicide. In many cases, youth suicide is caused by addiction issues.

Does the member mean that the number of deaths related to drugs is bigger than the overdose numbers?

Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, in Canada, we have a black hole when it comes to statistics. We know that those numbers are likely much higher. The numbers we have are only the ones that are reported. Due to the stigma surrounding addiction and suicide, many cases are unreported. I believe those numbers are actually higher.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about an important point that affects me personally as a father. He asked us to speak frankly, objectively and with leadership.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister spoke frankly with some young university students and told them where the country is headed, where we are headed.

Would my colleague be prepared to broach this type of subject with our government frankly and truthfully, in an upfront way, and support our government in this process?

[*English*]

Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is new here, so I will forgive him if he is not aware of my record. I am who I am. My stripes have never changed, and he can ask any of his long-standing Liberal colleagues that. My record stands for itself.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we consider any bill, we need to ask a fundamental question: Who will this bill benefit? Will this measure that the government or the House is proposing make our programs more effective, make our services more compassionate and make our country fairer? When we look at Bill C-12, a bill that aims to strengthen our immigration system and our country's borders, I think that the answer is clear. It is a resounding yes.

This bill strikes a critical balance between a compassionate and a rigorous approach. It also strikes a balance between openness and security. It seeks to improve the way the government serves Canadians, newcomers and those seeking protection in our country, in Canada. It strengthens our security, supports our prosperity and enhances co-operation between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. In short, this reform is necessary. It is a compassionate and responsible reform.

Now I want to talk about the benefits for asylum seekers. The proposed measures will fundamentally modernize our immigration and refugee system. The aim is to better meet the country's needs while protecting the most vulnerable, those who seek refuge in Canada, often risking their lives to do so. These measures reflect a clear commitment to a sustainable immigration system, one that is rooted in compassion but that reflects our country's actual capacity to welcome, house and integrate newcomers. Canadians want our asylum system to remain a symbol of hope. They want a fair system that protects those fleeing war, persecution, hardship or climate hazards elsewhere in the world but that remains firm toward those who seek to abuse it.

Bill C-12 creates a single online application process that is simpler, faster, more transparent and integrated. Thanks to better coordination between departments, cases will now be "decision-ready" when they are referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. The result will be fewer delays, less confusion and, above all, greater fairness.

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The bill also changes how late or irregular claims are handled, especially those filed more than a year after someone arrives in Canada. Asylum seekers will now have 14 days to submit their claim and will not be automatically sent back to the United States. These claims will be referred to a fair removal process that includes a pre-removal risk assessment. This will ease the pressure on our system while ensuring fairness and dignity in every case. By simplifying the process, we are making the system more compassionate, but we are also making it more efficient and effective. Behind every asylum claim, there is a face, a human being, a story, and, above all, hope.

I will now address the issue of integration with the territories and provinces. An effective system also relies on collaboration, coordination and communication. Bill C-12 promotes a closer partnership between the federal government, the provinces and the territories. It modernizes the communications framework to enable the rapid and secure exchange of information on immigration, citizenship and passport services.

Every day in my riding, Bourassa, I see how newcomers enrich our neighbourhoods. They contribute to our economy, our culture and our community vitality, including through their sporting achievements. I have spoken about this often here in the House.

By improving information sharing between Ottawa, the provinces and local organizations, we are sure to succeed. This strengthened partnership will make our system more effective, fairer and more compassionate, as I said earlier.

I will now talk about the public safety benefits. The safety of Canadians remains a top priority. We have seen human smugglers and criminal groups take advantage of irregular crossings to get around our system.

• (1625)

Bill C-12 sends a clear message: Canada is still a welcoming country, but it is not naive. People who enter irregularly will have their cases dealt with through a fair removal process rather than by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. This measure protects the integrity of the system and strengthens public confidence. In short, these reforms ensure that our system remains both fair and secure.

I would like to conclude by saying that I believe in this bill and hope that everyone in the House shares the same view. If there is one thing I can say about this bill, it would be that the government is acting responsibly and trying to strike a balance. The most difficult part of making these decisions is maintaining a balance between openness and constant vigilance. I would also say that this bill is a major step forward and that it makes our immigration system more modern, more consistent and more compassionate, while maintaining that balance. It strengthens public safety while maintaining the humanitarian tradition that Canada is so proud of.

This bill reflects the vision of a Canada that is open, yet orderly; welcoming, yet vigilant; caring, yet responsible. That is the balance I was talking about. I am convinced that this bill will make our immigration system stronger and more deserving of Canadians' trust. I therefore ask my colleagues to support this important, balance-oriented legislation, and I thank them for their attention.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, would the member opposite agree with me that there is a clear duality in the intent of the Liberal government and that it is failing to walk the talk by leaving out minimum mandatory jail time for fentanyl traffickers and for gangsters?

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, there is no duality. Rather, we are trying to strike a balance between openness and vigilance. That is very important. No one can say that the government has done nothing, quite the opposite. We invite our colleagues to come and discuss the matter in committee, because we simply must get the bill passed. What we are striving for is balance, not a duality.

[*English*]

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Mr. Speaker, would the member agree with me that there is no minimum mandatory jail time for drug traffickers, for fentanyl traffickers and for gangsters in this bill? Also, the bill does not mention anything about stopping safe consumption sites from being close to schools and day cares. Young families are being impacted on a daily basis. How is the government going to stay true to its intent of making sure the legislation protects those who are affected by it?

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that my colleague's question is irrelevant, but it strays a little outside the scope of the bill. I can still give him an answer, though. This bill does not compromise national security. Quite the contrary, it strengthens identity and background checks, and it helps all stakeholders play a more proactive role in the fight against fentanyl trafficking.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with regard to border security, the Bloc Québécois and the unions have long called for patrolling between border crossings to be allowed, not because we want to replace the RCMP, but to increase flexibility and the possible scope of action on the ground. Will the government commit to amending the regulations to allow patrolling?

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, the main purpose of this bill is to establish greater coordination and collaboration between the federal government, the provinces, the municipalities and the regions. With that coordination, I do not think a single thing needs to be added, because every border and every region has completely different constraints. Coordination and collaboration are what is most needed, and that is what this bill delivers.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]*

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government says it is going to hire 1,000 more officers for the CBSA, but hiring 1,000 CBSA officers barely deals with the losses currently happening through attrition. When we open the Gordie Howe Bridge next year, the shifting of personnel will leave a massive hole in the system. In addition, there is no training capacity for these 1,000 proposed officers.

Can the member explain how we are going to be able to meet the goal of 1,000 new officers being proposed?

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Public Safety has already answered that question. He has already made it clear that we are committed to strengthening recruitment in this field and to providing the necessary resources to combat trafficking at our borders.

At today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, the discussions were reassuring, and we are working to increase resources to combat trafficking at our borders.

- (1635)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[English]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that it pass on division.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I suspect that if you were to canvass the House at this time, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. so we can begin private members' hour.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*[English]***KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ACT**

Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.) moved that Bill C-223, An Act to amend the Divorce Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I feel enormously honoured to stand here today with significant amendments to the Divorce Act in a bill entitled the “keeping children safe act”.

This bill would give children a voice in divorce proceedings and stop the increasing and egregious practice of disregarding children's views and preferences under the pretense they have been manipulated or alienated by a parent. It would prevent judges from restricting a child's time with one parent to improve the relationship with the other parent, and it would prevent courts from forcing children to attend so-called “reunification therapy”.

This bill would require legal advisers to remedy the effects of domestic violence and coercive control rather than discount them or even punish disclosures. It would change the existing premise in family courts that children are property that must be split equally between parties in a divorce.

I want to thank the National Association of Women and the Law, and particularly Suzanne Zacour, for first raising with me the extreme and widespread issues in family court about a year ago. NAWL introduced me to survivors, parents accused of alienation and children forced into bizarre programs that seem like the conversion therapy this House banned four years ago. I was horrified. I brought them all to testify at the status of women committee last year during our coercive control study, and I am sure all members who were there during their testimony will remember it vividly.

NAWL worked with me throughout the summer and early fall on crafting this legislation. I note that the government is calling for some amendments, which do seem reasonable to me, to maintain the integrity of the system while staying true to the main concepts of this law, as I have just outlined.

While I was working on this bill, I got so many calls from victims and survivors who wanted to share their stories with me that I could not find time to hear them all. There was one woman in Hamilton who was about to lose her child due to accusations of parental alienation, so I went to her house. I met with her and her nine-year-old daughter. They clearly had a loving relationship. They were both terrified that the police would show up to force her into the custody of her father, whom she did not know well, had never lived with and about whom she had disclosed a disturbing story that suggested sexual abuse.

Private Members' Business

The transfer did not happen that night, but the next day when the mother and daughter were at the hospital dealing with anxiety, that is when it happened, and the mother wrote to me afterward. She said, "12 cops made me force her down seven floors, kicking and screaming, and told me I would be arrested in front of her if I did not take her to her father's truck. I can't make her last memory of me being physically forcing her into danger, and I also can't fight for her if I get arrested."

This mother has not had any contact with her daughter for months upon months. She says that this bill would break the chains of our silenced children and set them free from abuse and slavery.

Children's opinions cannot be left out of a divorce. They are part of the divorce. They should have a say. Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. Article 12 guarantees children the right to express their opinions on matters affecting them and emphasizes the need for them to have an opportunity to be heard in any judicial proceeding that affects them.

Canada ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1981. That is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, also known as CEDAW. Last year CEDAW called on Canada to prevent the use of parental alienation allegations. They said in a news release, "Shelters, researchers, service providers, legal professionals, and experts all agree that parental alienation accusations are being weaponized against victims of domestic violence."

Many survivors point to the 2023 report on violence against women and girls and its causes and consequences, by UN Special Rapporteur Reem Alsalem. She argued that all countries should adopt legislation to prohibit the use of parental alienation allegations in custody disputes. She said the following about parental alienation:

1) It has been dismissed by medical, psychiatric and psychological associations, and in 2020 it was removed from the International Classification of Diseases by the World Health Organization. Nevertheless, it has gained considerable traction and has been widely used to negate allegations of domestic and sexual abuse within family court systems on a global scale.

2) The report demonstrates how the discredited and unscientific pseudo-concept of parental alienation is used in family law proceedings by abusers as a tool to continue their abuse and coercion and to undermine and discredit allegations of domestic violence made by mothers who are trying to keep their children safe.

● (1640)

Let us look at what other countries are doing. In Brazil, parental alienation is actually a civil offence with potential criminal implications. The University of Manchester did a study that found that in Brazil, irrespective of abuse reported by mothers and children, fathers maintained direct contact with children. Multiple mothers lost custody and even all contact with their children. Five out of eight criminal investigations into child sex abuse, child rape and domestic violence by fathers were closed once there were parental alienation allegations. There has been so much controversy over the harms to women and children that this year, Brazil has a new bill to remove the concept of parental alienation from the country's laws.

Spain is the opposite, with legislation that specifically prohibits accusations of parental alienation. Ireland this year vowed to follow Spain's example. In the U.K., family law prioritizes the best inter-

ests of the child, and allegations of domestic abuse take precedence over allegations of parental alienation.

In the U.S., responsibility falls to individual states. Arizona, California, Colorado, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Utah have all implemented President Biden's 2022 Keeping Children Safe from Family Violence Act, which prohibits remedies associated with parental alienation. Several U.S. cases have made the news, including a story last year in *The Denver Gazette* where a man facing criminal charges for repeatedly raping his three daughters got court-ordered reunification therapy while his wife went to jail for objecting.

Parental alienation was a concept developed in the late 1980s by psychiatrist Richard Gardner. He said at the time that it often involves malicious and false sexual-abuse allegations made by the mother against the father to gain sole custody and remove the father from their children's lives. It was all about fathers' rights, regardless of circumstances and regardless of abuse.

The American Psychological Association says, "there have been no well-controlled empirical studies that confirm the phenomenon, nor have a standardized assessment process and specific diagnostic criteria been established for it."

The APA is concerned about this concept's influence in legal settings.

The remedies for parental alienation that the courts have been ordering have been found to be seriously damaging to children. Reunification therapy is also called reintegration therapy, multi-faceted family therapy, multi-modal family therapy, reconciliation therapy and therapy for the intractable resist/refuse dynamic. There is a proliferation of names used interchangeably, adding to the ambiguity and controversy of these approaches. Possibly most concerning is the lucrative nature of these therapies, causing an explosion of so-called experts. Last year, in the *Family Law Quarterly*, Chadwick and Sloan wrote:

Undeterred by a lack of sound scientific evidence, a cottage industry of reunification camps has capitalized on the popularity of the concept of parental alienation, charging thousands of dollars to allegedly deprogram children who have been alienated from a noncustodial parent.

Orders can include transport agents who will remove a child from a home, courthouse or wherever they happen to be and send them to the camp. To avoid human trafficking implications, guardianship of the child is transferred at each point in the operation. The children often do not consent to this treatment, which violates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Canadian health care consent acts.

Other remedies to parental alienation are equally harmful, including forced contact with a parent estranged for good reason, immediate custody reversals, prohibition of contact between mother and child, police enforcement and cost orders against mothers deemed to be alienators. That is why this bill would do more than just ban allegations of parental alienation in family court.

Witness after witness who appeared at the status of women committee last year disclosed how rampant parental alienation allegations are in Canadian courts. Abusers do not stop trying to control and dominate just because their partner has left; in many cases, the abuse gets worse. Carrie Leonetti, professor at University of Auckland law school, told committee that violent fathers are more than twice as likely to seek custody of their children after separation than non-abusive fathers. They are awarded custody approximately 70% of the time.

• (1645)

She said:

In the past two decades in family courts, the pendulum has swung from believing children and protecting them to disbelieving, silencing, and punishing their disclosures...re-entrenching fathers' rights at the expense of women's and children's safety. The ideology of "parental alienation" has been the driving force behind this retrograde shift.

She said that "parental alienation is gender bias masquerading as junk science" and that more than 90% of those accused are women and most of those are victims of intimate partner violence. She said, "Judges and psychologists are obsessed with the idea that, when children disclose abuse by fathers, resist being in their care, and ask for protection, it is their mothers who are the real problem."

Now people in Canada are being told by professionals not to claim abuse or seek protection because it puts their child at further risk. We heard this at committee. The Ottawa Victim Services and the Elizabeth Fry Society of New Brunswick told us many victims feel "the price for leaving the violent environment is even higher than the price for staying at home". Witnesses said reunification therapy was akin to forced reprogramming of children, often resulting in psychological trauma, not a healed family relationship.

One researcher told us that children are silenced and that mothers are found to be "alienating" for normal reactions to abuse or normal behaviour such as not having pictures of their ex-partner in their house. Another warned that several U.S. providers of reunification therapy are moving into Canada because states are adopting child safety laws like the one I am presenting today.

One mother who was labelled an alienator told us, "Not one mode of contact is permitted. Imagine not even being able mail your child a birthday card or Christmas presents for years.... Children are not permitted to say last goodbyes or attend funerals." Child survivors of the therapy told us, for example, "When we described emotionally abusive episodes, our dad told the therapist they didn't happen. The therapist told us that we needed to think of things from our dad's perspective, that we weren't remembering things correctly". They were blamed for the abuse.

A professor from the University of Calgary told us, "sometimes the people who are testifying as experts in parental alienation cases are the same people who run the reunification camps, and they stand to profit directly from those camps." Another professor from

Private Members' Business

Stockton University told us that a "cottage industry" of lawyers and mental health professionals who profit from parental alienation accusations in custody disputes often resist any limitations on the use of such claims. She said that this is done by people without particular training or qualifications, and that it is not a regulated industry; it is just very profitable.

I mentioned how much outreach I started receiving when I was working on this bill and since it has passed first reading, I can say that hundreds of organizations have indicated their enthusiastic support, like Women's Shelters Canada, the Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Gender-Based Violence, YWCA Canada and dozens upon dozens of women's shelters across the country.

These are some quotes sent to me on social media.

One person said, "This is so, so necessary. I couldn't stop weeping reading this bill. Our children must be heard and the court system must be transformed from being yet another tool for abusers to abuse, control, demean and devalue their victims." Another person said, "This change cannot come soon enough. Anyone who is surviving the Family Court System learns quickly that 'children's rights' don't exist. They value parental equity above all. The term 'parental alienation' is thrown out by an abuser like a vengeful 'hail Mary'." Another said, "You don't know me, but thank you so much. I am a sexual assault survivor and this Bill is going to change lives and protect so many kids from abuse." The woman from Hamilton I mentioned earlier said, "My daughter was silenced and placed under the control of someone she explicitly said she feared. Bill C-223 gives children their voices back."

These changes are desperately needed and I implore all members to support this bill.

• (1650)

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, thank you for fighting for the well-being of children, and I certainly appreciate your passion and obvious dedication to your private member's bill. Through the many terrible cases you described, and regardless of the bias you explained, there are certainly accusations of parental alienation from both mothers and fathers.

Private Members' Business

What provisions are there in the private member's bill to ensure, in the many cases in which there are no examples of sexual, mental or physical abuse, that the equal rights of both parents are protected, regardless of their gender?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We will address the questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it should be about equal rights for parents. It should be about the best interest of the child. That is the whole point of the bill. Judges should be able to look at all the evidence, and children should be appointed a lawyer. We heard in committee that they were not allowed lawyers when they were attending court; they were not allowed their voice. We were told that the letters they wrote to court were not listened to.

Divorce court should not be trying to repair the relationship with a parent from whom the child is estranged without, at the very least, looking at why the child is estranged from that parent.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for her speech and her bill.

I heard some of the testimony she referred to at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, but that was during a study on the criminalization of coercive control. I remember that the committee members, including my colleague, said that this issue merited separate study so that it could be examined in greater depth.

Does my colleague think it would have been a good idea to conduct a study on the issue of parental alienation before drafting her bill?

Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, after it passes second reading in the House, the bill will be sent to committee and we will examine it in detail. I think that is very important.

I know that the member opposite was present during the study and that she feels compassion for the victims who came forward. That is very important.

I am not an expert, so I am not saying that this bill is perfect as is. However, I think the committee will be able to bring the values within it to the fore.

• (1655)

[*English*]

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if you could speak a little more about what this would mean for children, their agency and their well-being. I know you have heard from many survivors of this reunification therapy. I wonder if you could expand on that. I think that what you are doing is going to protect so many children from future abuse and that it is going to have a really meaningful impact on their lives.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Again, questions should go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her work and support on this, and for all the work she has done for children in Canada over the years.

This is all about protecting children. We heard from several children who went through the so-called reunification therapies. Some of them were sent across the border to the United States and given therapy inside a woman's apartment. They were told that they did not really witness the things they witnessed, that they were remembering wrong and that they had to give their father a chance. They were forced to kiss their father, look their father in the eye and say they loved them. There were so many things that violate the rules that we have in Canada about rights for people and the agency that children have. We cannot force them into these therapies.

I think reunification therapy is fine as long as all parties are in agreement and fully cognizant of what they are agreeing to.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is never a wasted opportunity to stand up in the House to talk about something so important, so vital to all of our lives: the strength and stability of family. It is a simple word, but it means so much to all of us.

We all know, as members of Parliament, that our families are our bedrock, our biggest support system, our cheerleader at the best times and, let us be honest, our therapist at the worst times. Often, they are the reason we get into politics in the first place. I would not be here if it were not for the encouragement of my granddaughter. It is family that inspires me to tirelessly fight for a better Canada, not just for my family but for all families. I will always be a wife, a mother and a grandmother first and above all else.

Everybody in Canada deserves to have their loving family at their side and to experience a relationship based upon love, trust and mutual support, but unfortunately, many people have a different experience with family. Divorce has always been and will continue to be a difficult and trying time in our lives. It touches all of us in some way. We may have been impacted when we were kids or as adults in marriages of our own. Even if we are lucky enough to not have to face it ourselves, we witness it happening to our close friends or other important people in our lives. However, the facts are the facts: It does happen.

When a divorce unfortunately does take place, the legislation here in Ottawa should be designed to protect people, especially children. I do not know my colleague, the member for Hamilton Mountain, very well, but I know she also cares deeply about families. I hope to work with her on this issue and other issues as well.

However, rather than just talk about divorce after it has already happened, I think it is also important to address the root causes and systemic issues that lead to divorce in the first place. What causes divorce? It is well documented that stressful lives certainly do not help, and we all hear that life is certainly getting more stressful for people in this country, including in my community. The evidence is all around us.

Private Members' Business

It is hard to afford the necessities of life that we need, like food, housing and home heating. A full 25% of Canadians are now considered food-insecure. They are not asking for luxuries; they are asking for the basics, but the price of everything, including fruit, vegetables, meat and coffee, is going through the roof. The grocery aisle has become the luxury aisle.

We just received new statistics about food inflation here in Canada: It is two times higher than the acceptable level that the Government of Canada has set as its own target. The government has to give itself a failing grade yet again. It is a fact that Canadian families are expected to spend \$800 more in groceries this year than they did last year. This comes at time when half the people are only \$500 away from insolvency, but they are paying \$800 more for groceries. Members can do the math on that one.

What comes from that? Well, it means either cutting back or going into debt just to get the everyday essentials, and that is happening more and more. What can also happen? Divorce can. The stress of finances and empty stomachs can overwhelm relationships, stealing the joy of marriage and family. The average Canadian has credit card debt of nearly \$5,000, and Equifax found that 1.4 million people in this country missed a payment last quarter. The hole just gets deeper and deeper. For every dollar that Canadians earn, they owe \$1.74 in debt. We all know that this simply is not sustainable.

What can the government do to help eliminate financial distress, which is a large factor for many divorces? Bringing inflation under control is a big thing. We know what causes inflation; it is out-of-control government spending that drives up the cost of everything for Canadians. Instead of reining in the spending, the government is spending more money than even Justin Trudeau did. We have heard this story before, and we know how it ends: more people using food banks, more stress, more skipped meals and more burdens on families.

What else can we do to bring more financial stability to families and reduce the stress that places an extra burden on Canadians from coast to coast? How about providing stable, good-paying jobs that make people feel financially confident to get married, support a family, buy a home and get settled in a safe neighbourhood?

People in my community are on edge more than ever. Each day, we see headlines about job losses and companies packing up and moving south. The news came out of Windsor, out of Oshawa and out of Ingersoll. Everyone is worried that it is going to come out of Cambridge next, with the loss of thousands of jobs from our auto sector that form the cornerstone of our city. As unemployment goes up, divorce rates go up too. It is a proven statistical fact.

• (1700)

We are talking about divorce, but in order to get divorced, one has to be married in the first place. There was a time not that long ago when the only major expenses to worry about were the wedding ring, the dress and maybe the honeymoon. The weddings many dream of are now just fears of debts to be incurred.

With housing costs at record levels, doubled in just 10 years, and student loans that do not lead to good-paying jobs as promised, people do not even think about the cost that comes with raising kids

of their own. The essential Canadian dream of growing up, getting married, buying a home and starting a family is becoming just that, a dream, an idea to be fantasized about but never actually achieved.

I knocked on thousands of doors in Cambridge and North Dumfries during the last election campaign. This was the number one issue by far that young people talked to me about. They are working harder than ever. They want to succeed. They are doing everything they were told to do, like getting a degree and cutting back on expenses, but still the dream never becomes a reality. How can it become a reality when they are forced to live in their parents' basement as a 30-year-old adult?

For the lucky few who can get married, have kids and settle down, life is no less stressful. The days are busy with work, home and trying to match the energy of youth without feeling exhausted. Then add on the stress of paying for groceries and the mortgage. Just getting by is already heavy enough. Then throw on more Liberal failures, and the tension reaches a breaking point, ruining the marriages of many Canadians.

There are times when both parents need to work, but they cannot because child care is unattainable and still unaffordable. Parliament's independent watchdog just released a scathing new report about child care in this country, saying it has led to endless waits, a shortage of spaces and a rationing of child care. The report found that less than half the required number of spaces have been created in the last three years, and we are nearly 70,000 spaces short of our target. Those are not just statistics on a sheet of paper; those are 70,000 families that cannot access the services they need and were promised by the government. However, they are still forced to pay higher taxes for something most do not receive. Financial stress keeps building, putting further tension on relationships.

Marriage begins with vows that say "till death do us part". Government failures that increase family struggles turns it to "till debt do us part". These government failures drive up inflation and the cost of living. They drive down the rate of marriages and the growth of families. This all becomes a breaking point that drives up the rate of divorce, made even worse when divorce proceedings bring in the CRA.

If I wanted to talk about things from Ottawa that cause people stress, I could keep going on, but I would be here all day. The fact remains the same: The government's policies are making life harder for people from all walks of life and making Canadian marriages harder. This has devastating consequences for our communities, for families of all types and, of course, for children, who often bear the brunt of it all. Our highest priority should be protecting children and standing up for them.

Private Members' Business

I look forward to studying this proposed legislation in greater detail and hearing testimony from witnesses at committee, but let us also make sure we try to tackle the causes of divorce before they happen: stress, uncertainty and strife. Let us give people the best shot at having long, happy, successful marriages.

With all this talk of divorce, I want to say something on a lighter note. Marriage can come with a lot of obstacles that can lead to divorce, but it can also be something to be proud of. I thank my husband Bill for his endless support and all he does. I cannot think of anybody else I would rather have by my side. I thank my family, my children and my grandchildren for their understanding and continued love and support.

I know we all feel the same way about our own families, and I know we want every single Canadian to have an opportunity for the same kind of happiness, love and support that marriage can bring. It is up to us here in Ottawa to bring in the policies that can make that happen. Let us bring back hope and the Canadian dream for everyone.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking this evening about Bill C-223, an act to amend the Divorce Act. It is a delicate subject that requires great sensitivity. There are human tragedies behind this bill, as well as a lot of distress. I am very aware that this bill is a response to the study on the criminalization of coercive control that I proposed to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I will present the background and objectives of the bill. I know that this bill was important to the Liberal member for Hamilton Mountain, with whom I worked at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. It aims to amend the Divorce Act to better protect children and victims of family violence. Its key measures are the requirement for lawyers to assess the risk of violence before acting on a spouse's behalf; the possibility for the court to directly consult with children to find out their views; the prohibition on the court to take into account allegations of parental alienation, unless it occurs in the context of family violence; and a desire to avoid certain myths or stereotypes about violence ending after a separation.

I will elaborate further on the bill and speak to what is happening in Quebec. I will then present some statistics.

First, the intention is commendable, but it is a problematic legislative vehicle. The Bloc Québécois shares the goal of better protecting children and preventing domestic violence, of course. However, the bill goes too far in certain respects, particularly in seeking to dismiss the concept of parental alienation.

This approach risks weakening the tools available to courts to protect children in cases of parental manipulation. Parental alienation is a recognized concept. Despite what was said by some members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women during the study on the criminalization of coercive control, parental alienation is not an ideological invention, but a psychological phenomenon observed and documented by research and practice.

According to a definition recognized by the Parental Alienation Study Group, parental alienation occurs when a child forms a strong alliance with one parent and rejects the other without valid reason. Experts such as Dr. Hubert Van Gijsegem and Jérôme Harrisson acknowledge the complexity of the diagnosis, but confirm its clinical reality. Alienating behaviours are not gender-specific. Both men and women can engage in them. Removing this notion amounts to denying the experiences of many parents and children in Quebec. In practice, courts already require solid evidence and professional assessments before recognizing a case of alienation. There is therefore no systemic abuse. I also know that my colleague from Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon will be able to talk about this a little later.

I would now like to discuss the risks of Bill C-223. By removing all references to parental alienation, the bill prevents courts from examining a well-documented psychological reality, weakens the balance between parental rights and risks further judicializing family conflicts. This could leave some children without protection against manipulative behaviour. The 2021 legislation already provides a very comprehensive framework for family violence. Bill C-223 therefore risks being redundant and unbalanced. Imposing a legal obligation to assess violence in every divorce case could also unnecessarily burden the courts.

Second, there truly is a Quebec perspective. Family law in Quebec is comprehensive and autonomous. Furthermore, family law falls under Quebec jurisdiction, except for divorce, which has been a federal jurisdiction since 1867. This distinction is anachronistic and unnecessarily complex. Quebec already has a strong civil law tradition, a modern and humane approach to family law as well as the unified family tribunal, which is new this year.

What is the unified family tribunal? The justice minister, Simon Jolin-Barrette, created the unified family tribunal. Since October 10, 2025, civil union applications have been heard by the unified family tribunal, which is part of the Court of Quebec. The tribunal can hear and rule on various cases, which illustrates the Quebec government's expertise in and attention to this type of civil litigation. These courts can therefore already rule on all aspects of a separation, such as custody, alimony and parental authority—just not divorce.

The Bloc is calling for Quebec to have control over marriage and divorce so that there is a consistent system that is adapted to our reality. In addition, it would not be a two-tiered system.

• (1710)

We recognize that there are challenges. As I said earlier, we in the Bloc Québécois would have liked a study to be done on the issue of parental alienation. Instead, it was included in a different study, and even my colleague recognized earlier that we could have heard from experts on the subject. A study on the subject could have enhanced our discussions. We support the bill being sent to committee for further study. We are not throwing out the baby with the bathwater. We want to have experts, psychologists, legal experts and social workers come and testify. We want to propose amendments that genuinely protect children during acrimonious divorces and that guarantee their well-being without weakening family law.

However, we firmly reject the idea that parental alienation is an invention used by violent men. We are convinced that it is more complicated than that. We also reject the idea that the justice system is incapable of doing the right thing. Instead, the Bloc Québécois reaffirms its trust in Quebec courts and family professionals. We reiterate our commitment to defending genuine equality before the law, whatever people's gender. We also want to oppose any attempt to politicize psychology as it applies to legal proceedings. We want to do this work seriously in committee with other experts.

Third, I would like to present some useful statistics to inform the discussion about children exposed to their parents' separation or divorce. According to Statistics Canada, 18% of children aged 1 to 17 in Canada, or 1,185,700 children, have experienced their parents' separation or divorce. In Quebec, it was 23%. This illustrates the scale of the phenomenon and justifies the importance of a strong legislative framework to protect children.

I will now present statistics on domestic violence, children, and family justice. According to police data from the Government of Canada, in 2019, 22,299 children and youth were victims of family violence. Of those children, 60% were girls. According to Statistics Canada, in 2015, 16% of victims of violent crimes were children and adolescents, and 30% of those crimes were committed by a family member.

According to the Department of Justice, a review of court files revealed that domestic violence was mentioned in 8% of divorce cases. These data support the idea that domestic violence is prevalent in divorce and separation contexts and that assessing and taking this violence into account is justified.

I am now going to share a few statistics on parental alienation and alienating behaviours. According to the Canadian child welfare research portal, one Quebec study involving 30 shelters found that 45% of accusations or threatened accusations of parental alienation over the one-year study period comprised almost all of the accusations made in the past five years, and that 86.7% of service providers said that this phenomenon was impacting their practice.

An online estimate showed that 11% to 15% of divorces in Canada involve significant parental alienation. According to the Canadian Equal Parenting Council, one study reported that the long-term effects of alienating behaviours include anxiety disorders, depression, personality disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder in adults. This shows that parental alienation is real, that it has serious consequences and that it cannot legitimately be excluded from all legislative debate.

Regarding child custody after separation, according to the Department of Justice, court data revealed that in 62.2% of cases, the child resided primarily with the mother. In 9.4% of cases, the child resided with the father. In 21.3% of cases, the child was in shared custody 40% of the time or more. This helps illustrate the real environment of children after separation and supports the need for the court to have reliable tools, including for detecting alienation and deciding what is in the best interests of the child.

In conclusion, Bill C-223 makes significant advances in terms of family safety. However, the fight against domestic violence must

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not be used as a pretext to gloss over legitimate psychological realities. The Bloc Québécois will act in a rigorous, open and cautious manner to protect children and prevent abuses. We firmly believe in this approach.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that, in Quebec, family law must belong to Quebecers.

• (1715)

[English]

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks this evening by really thanking the member of Parliament for Hamilton Mountain. She has taken on this important private member's bill and taken on this important issue to protect children, to protect families and to protect parents. I cannot express my gratitude enough to her, but I think what is telling is that there are 300 women's organizations across this country that lend their support to this private member's bill. That is an indication of just how important this piece of legislation is to protect children in our country.

I want to share those thanks a bit broader because, as my Bloc colleague raised earlier, this began with a study at FEWO, at the status of women committee. It was also the courage of our members, from all parties, who began the study on coercive control and learned about the issue of parental alienation.

I want to take that a step back even, because this builds on important measures that the House has passed over the last years, notably the changes to the Divorce Act in Bill C-78 and then, more recently, Keira's law. For those colleagues who do not know about Keira's law, it was the first time that judges would be required to study and understand intimate partner violence and coercive control. Keira's law came about because of a little girl in my community who died tragically while on a hike with her estranged father. Jennifer Kagan, her mother, believes strongly that if the judge had learned and understood about intimate partner violence, had learned and understood about coercive control, Keira, who was four years old at the time, would still be alive today.

I want to thank someone else, Pam Damoff, who is no longer here in the House but who served as a former colleague. She really spearheaded this work and made sure that Keira's law became reality and that Keira's legacy would live on.

The member for Hamilton Mountain is taking another step. I first became aware of this when a constituent of mine approached me to ask if we could have a meeting to talk about her situation. She shared with me that her children had recently been taken from her while she was going through divorce proceedings with a former abuser. When the spectre of intimate partner violence was raised, the judge interrupted and said it was parental alienation. What ended up happening was that she lost, entirely, the custody of her children.

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What is really important here is recognizing that this is a phenomenon that is growing in Canada. When I spoke to my constituent about this, I was shocked because I thought the courts were there to protect people from these kinds of things. If someone is a survivor of domestic violence with the courage to leave, to speak up and to try to protect themselves and their children, the system is supposed to be there to support them. She thought the same thing. That is why she shared her story. That is why she was trying to leave and protect her children. Instead, she was punished for that. When we spoke about this, she said that she was not alone, and that she could get a call together of women across the country for whom this was happening.

A couple of weeks later, I sat in on a Zoom call with over 50 women across the country who shared their stories with me. They talked about how their children had been taken from them by police, how their children were scared, how they were not able to have the kind of protection and support that they thought they were entitled to and they thought they would receive, and that they were in utter disbelief that this was happening. They told me stories like the one that the member for Hamilton Mountain shared of children being taken across the border to receive reunification therapy, that they had no idea where their children were because they were not allowed to have contact with them and how desperate, alone and abandoned they felt by the system that was supposed to be there to protect them.

• (1720)

The bill would provide important measures to ensure that the rights of the child, the agency of the child and the well-being of the child are placed at the centre of divorce proceedings. That is something I think all of us, as parents, hope would be the case.

I listened to my Conservative colleague's speech. The bill has nothing that is against the institution of marriage. The bill is trying to centre the rights of children in what is often a really awful situation for them, to give them a voice, to give them agency and to protect their well-being. What the bill would do is exactly that. It would clarify that there is no presumption of shared parenting, with each decision based on the best interests of the child.

It would prevent the courts from blaming women who are victims of domestic violence for not actively working to improve their children's relationship with their abuser. It would stop the practice of disregarding children's views and preferences under the pretense that they have been manipulated or alienated by a parent. It would prevent judges from issuing orders that restrict parenting time with the parent to whom the child is bonded in order to improve the child's relationship with the other parent, and it would prohibit courts from forcing a child to attend reunification therapy.

As my colleague, the hon. member of Parliament for Hamilton Mountain, said, it is not opposed to rebuilding relationships with parents. That is not what the bill is about. It is about ensuring that a child can make active decisions in what is going to happen to them and to their future. That is what we should be focused on in the bill.

I understand that the government has a number of amendments it wants to make. What we should be focused on in the House, and I implore and I encourage members from all parties in this, is that when we are studying the bill, we should always think about what

the objective is. I hope the bill makes it to committee. The objective is to ensure the rights and the well-being of the children, who find themselves in a place that was not their decision and in a situation that was not of their making but that has a huge ramification and impact on their now and on their future.

When we speak to children who have gone through and who have been survivors of reunification therapy, as my colleague said, we find that some of it is fine, but some of it is really worrying. If we think about a child being sent across a border to be in some stranger's apartment and to receive some unprofessional therapy about what they think has happened and what the therapist is telling them has actually happened, we can imagine what that does to them. We can imagine the fear, uncertainty and loneliness they feel.

I am asking the House to support the legislation. I think that what all of us want and what we care about is the well-being of the child. That is what we put front and centre here.

My colleague spoke about the fact that there is a cottage industry that is building up, a cottage industry that is preying on vulnerable children. The fact that there are judges who have decided that, when they hear a child mention potential abuse, their first instinct is to reverse custody, to take a child away from a parent and put them towards another one, is actually quite mind-boggling.

What we want is to have confidence in the courts. The bill would enable that. The bill would give us the confidence to know that the decisions being made about the now and the future of our children in situations beyond their control are being made in their best interest and that they have a voice and a vote in their future.

I thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for bringing forward this important legislation.

• (1725)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-223, which was brought forward by the member for Hamilton Mountain. I think everyone recognizes that the safety of our children and our grandchildren is paramount. My wife and I have four beautiful granddaughters, and I can attest that their parents would do anything within their means to protect them from danger, and my wife and I would stand there with them.

It is instinctive and natural to protect our young. We see it in the animal kingdom. There are bears that come into my backyard and neighbourhood regularly, and no one wants to face a mother bear with her cubs. This is true even with birds, which will protect their nest. It is natural for a society to want to protect its young people, and it is really important.

One thing Canadians from coast to coast agree on is that they have felt less safe and less protected over the past 10 years. Why do they feel less safe? It is because they actually are less safe. Do not take my word for it; look at Statistics Canada. Since the Liberals have come into power, violent crime is up 54%. Extortion has skyrocketed 330% across our nation and actually 582% in British Columbia.

Sexual assaults have gone up 75%, and on the topic of children, sexual violations against children are up 249% in 10 years. People can go to the Statistics Canada website to see this. In British Columbia, for which I am a member of Parliament, it has gone up 400%. This is crazy, out of control and terrible.

There is no doubt that public safety under the Liberal government is a glaring failure. The streets Canadians walk on are less and less safe. The statistics I just mentioned, and anybody can look up those numbers, represent hundreds of thousands, even millions, of Canadians. These are not just numbers but are families, victims and children.

Auto thefts, break-ins and assaults are becoming increasingly regular occurrences. A few years ago I was talking with the agent of an insurance company who said that my neighbourhood was quite safe. I thought that was great, because it impacts insurance rates. In the past year or two, I have been surprised by how many of my neighbours have come to me wanting to see what my security cameras have shown, because of activities that have happened. Recently, and I was not able to get the car's licence plate number, there was a car parked outside with guys in it wearing masks over their faces. They committed a break-in.

This is the experience we are facing across our nation, and it is not good. Why has this been happening? It is because the Liberal government has systematically weakened our justice system. It has prioritized ideological policies over the safety of law-abiding citizens. It has eliminated mandatory jail time for serious offences and has effectively made it easier for repeat offenders to roam free, terrorizing communities.

In Vancouver, the same 40 individuals were apprehended 5,000 times in one year, and that is just for the crimes they were caught for. I have talked to police officers who tell me how frustrating it is to arrest someone and to see them out later that day or the next day, roaming the streets again. They have asked, "What is the use?" It is not their fault at all. They are doing their job, but the legislation has made it so that they have to release criminals under the least onerous conditions.

The reckless Liberal approach has left families feeling vulnerable in their own neighbourhood and unsure if their home or their children are safe.

• (1730)

The Liberals' approach to justice is not just misguided; it is dangerous. It puts the rights of criminals ahead of those of victims and communities, eroding trust in our institutions. Their bail, not jail policies have been like a bullhorn, blasting out to offenders that consequences are optional, that they can go ahead and roam our streets. If they want to steal or do this or that, it is a free-for-all. This is not the Canada I knew growing up, and it is not the Canada it should be right now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. parliamentary secretary has a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to talk about the bail issue, there is Bill C-14. This is a private member's bill, and the member who put it forward put a great deal of ef-

fort and time into it. There are only two hours of debate. I would ask—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The parliamentary secretary knows there is broad latitude in the consideration of legislation, and I know the member will bring his comments back to the legislation at hand.

I will call on the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge to resume.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to Bill C-223, which is on criminal justice, but I think we need to talk about what is happening on our streets. That is important. I expect there will be more points of order. Why? It is because this is very uncomfortable. It is not a personal thing. I know different members over there, and I have respect for them as individuals, but I am talking about policies. I am talking about the direction the Liberal government has brought our nation in, and it is not good.

When I was going door to door talking to thousands of people, I asked how crime has been over the past 10 years and where things were at. Nobody said it has gotten better. It has gotten worse, and Liberal policy is making it worse.

I want to declare, unequivocally, my respect and admiration for our police forces. In my constituency, in Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Mission, it is the RCMP. They work hard and do the very best they can to protect our communities under the legal framework they have. All Canadians owe them a debt of gratitude.

In stark contrast to the Liberal record, the Conservative Party puts forward concrete and practical solutions that reflect the real needs of Canadians. We recently brought forward the jail, not bail legislation the Liberals voted against, even though police forces across the nation supported it. Last year, I brought forward Bill C-411, the anti-arson act, which would have brought in strong consequences for torching our forests and would have brought in mandatory minimums for those burning down places of worship. It seems like it is a free-for-all now to burn down churches or other places of worship under the Liberals. When I asked an OPQ, the government released that there were over 400 instances where places of worship experienced arson attacks. Deaths have occurred because of this.

The Liberals do a lot of talking about criminal justice, but things have only gotten worse, and they are only going to get worse the way they are going.

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This week, on Monday, the Conservative member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola introduced Bill C-255. This legislation represents a meaningful step toward protecting victims of intimate partner violence. It is practical and its solutions will make changes, but the Liberal government, with its habitual obstruction, has stalled and blocked common-sense reforms like the jail, not bail initiative, showing that it prefers photo-ops and hollow promises to real changes.

Canadians deserve more than symbolic gestures; they deserve a government that will fight aggressively for their interests by securing jobs in the auto sector, in forestry or anywhere else. They deserve a government that will make our communities safe again, not one that allows repeat violent offenders to walk free because of political ideology. The Conservatives will fight for a Canada where families can afford to live with hope and dignity, where they can feel safe in their communities and where they can put their trust in their government to be on their side, not working against them.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1735)

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in response to a question that the parliamentary secretary to the minister of public safety answered.

I originally asked the question on October 3. On that date I said:

Liberal bail law, Bill C-75, unleashed crime and chaos on our streets, releasing violent criminals at the earliest opportunity. While out on bail in Kelowna, a man convicted on domestic violence charges just hours before allegedly killed Bailey McCourt with a hammer. The Prime Minister promised Liberals would flip-flop on bail, but the Liberal laws are still in place six months after he took power.

The question was, “Will the Prime Minister scrap Liberal bail or get out of the way so Conservatives can get it done?”

In response to my question, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of public safety stated in part, “We are going to reform the bail system. It is coming. It is just around the corner. The Conservatives are dwelling on this issue, but there is no need. The legislation is coming.”

Families and victims across the country have been paying the price for the Liberals' Bill C-75 since the Liberals passed it into law in 2019. Families and victims are tired of waiting. Some are not here anymore because of what the Liberal government unleashed with Bill C-75. It is completely unacceptable for the Liberal government to tell families of victims of repeat offenders, such as that of Bailey McCourt, which we have heard about across Canada, that there is no need to dwell on the issue.

Not only is that not acceptable to me, it should also not be acceptable to members of the House and members of those families, who have been so devastatingly impacted by Liberal bail policy and the Liberal government's failure to address the problems it has created.

For months now, we as legislators have been witness to the multiple tragic cases of repeat offenders being released within hours, only to re-commit similar crimes, or in worst-case scenarios, commit even more heinous crimes, shortly after they have been released. While Canadians have waited painfully and in agony for the Liberal government to finally fix its reckless bail policies, I hope those same Canadians will see that there are people on this side of the House who are on their side, fighting for them and putting their families first.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tragic death of Bailey McCourt shocked our communities and highlighted the urgent need to strengthen our justice system's response to domestic violence. Her life was cut short by an act of unparalleled brutality. I offer my deepest condolences to her loved ones. Today, we must honour her memory, but words are not enough. Concrete action must also be taken, and that is what this government intends to do.

Intimate partner violence is a serious and unacceptable crime that invariably has profound and lasting consequences for victims, families and communities. Between 2011 and 2021, police reported 1,125 gender-related homicides of women and girls in Canada. Of these homicides, Statistics Canada determined that two-thirds, or 66%, were committed by an intimate partner. These figures are not just data. They represent lost lives, broken families and human tragedies that demand a strong, coordinated response.

That is exactly why this government took action. As far back as 2019, through Bill C-75, the government strengthened bail provisions in cases of intimate partner violence. That legislation introduced a reverse onus at the bail stage for anyone accused of a violent offence against an intimate partner, particularly when the accused had previously been convicted of such an offence, in other words, when the accused is a repeat offender. It also required courts to consider prior convictions for intimate partner violence when determining whether the accused could be released and, if so, under what conditions. Finally, the law expanded the definition of intimate partner to include not only married and common-law spouses, but also dating partners. It is shameful that the Conservatives want to repeal that legislation.

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Our government's efforts do not stop there. Today, the federal government tabled Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act. This bill proposes sweeping reforms to make bail laws stricter and toughen sentencing laws for violent and repeat offenders. It is also designed to support law enforcement and invest in long-term prevention. These reforms are the outcome of extensive consultations with the provinces, territories and key stakeholders, including police departments, law societies and victim support organizations.

Bill C-14 focuses on offenders who pose a serious danger to public safety. When an accused person is seeking bail, in certain situations, the onus will now be on them to prove that they do not pose a risk to the victim or to society. This is known as a reverse onus. It applies to certain offences where the accused choked, suffocated or strangled the victim.

The police must deny release if it is contrary to the public interest or if detention is necessary to protect victims and witnesses. Courts will also have to take into account specific factors, such as whether the violence was random or unprovoked, and whether there are any outstanding charges.

Bailey McCourt's death is a stark reminder that, behind every court case, there is a family and a community forever marked by the loss of a loved one. The—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies.

[*English*]

Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, there is still really no answer. At least the member is recognizing that there is a problem and that there has been a real risk to public safety.

However, the real risk to public safety has been the Liberal government. Victims have waited multiple years and multiple Parliaments to get something restored in terms of keeping violent and repeat offenders behind bars. There is no reason they should have had to wait this long. Violent crime is up 50% and extortion has skyrocketed 330%. We are seeing almost daily or weekly drive-by shootings in our cities.

Why have victims had to wait for this through multiple Parliaments? Criminals are being released at the earliest opportunity and under the least onerous conditions. Victims and their families deserve an answer.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, our government has already taken decisive action to protect victims of intimate partner violence.

Bill C-75 made it harder for repeat offenders to get bail. Under Bill C-48, anyone previously convicted of intimate partner violence is required to demonstrate why they should be released, even if they had previously received a discharge.

Our government is not stopping there. Today, we are introducing new reforms that target repeat violent offenders. They were developed following extensive consultations with the provinces and territories. These measures demonstrate our government's steadfast

commitment to strengthening public safety and ensuring an effective justice system.

[*English*]

HOUSING

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to get up and close things off today. I am looking forward to a good discussion here that is beneficial to the people of Canada, particularly the people of Northumberland—Clarke.

I rose on June 9 to ask a question with respect to housing. I said, “In 2015, housing costs were an average of 38% of Canadian household budgets. Today, it is overwhelming. It is 52%.” This is a dramatic increase upward of over 20%. We are now sitting here in a housing crisis, which continues.

The housing crisis, in some ways, has actually worsened, because we are now seeing people who are facing the renewal of their mortgages, and they cannot afford to stay in their houses. We are seeing an uptake in foreclosures and power of sales, and that has a devastating impact on many families across Canada. However, at the same time, we are seeing people lose equity in the value of their house. We have a problem that, really, only Liberals created. There are people who cannot afford to keep their house, people who cannot afford to buy a house and people who are seeing a decline in the value in their house all at the same time.

The heart of this issue comes down to some fundamental economic issues that have arisen over the last 10 years. We have seen an incredibly bad economy over the last 10 years. If members do not believe me, they can just ask the Prime Minister. In his speech, he talked about how bad the economy has been managed over the last 10 years and how badly his party has done. It almost reads like a Monty Python skit with the former minister of industry now being the Minister of Finance. The one who helped direct us into this economic quagmire has been put in charge of the future, and somehow this is supposed to be a new government, a government that has woken up. I agree with some of the Prime Minister's criticism of the past 10 years, because there can be no doubt, what we need is a new direction where people can afford houses again.

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I will run through a couple of the economic numbers in case people out there are unaware of just how challenging the economy has become over the last decade. We had the third-lowest growth in the OECD among 30 nations, dropping well below the OECD average. In fact, GDP per capita, which is simply the economic output per person, has dropped to almost 0% over the last 10 years. It has really been an economic lost decade, which has put Canadians in a position of earning less and things costing more. At the end of the day, it is not the amount of money we print, it is how many goods we produce and how efficiently. In Canada, we have seen a market loss relative to the rest of the world, which has created an economic nightmare where people are unable to afford the basic necessities of life, everything from food to housing.

Now, we have an entire generation that has nearly given up on the hope of owning a house. What is this Prime Minister's response? He says that we have to make sacrifices. Well, why does he not make some sacrifices? Why does he not donate the billions of dollars he has invested in Brookfield and other countries? Why does he not make some sacrifices instead of telling our young people, "Well, we know you can't afford houses, suck it." This is his response to them. We need to do better.

When will this government finally wake up, change direction and make housing affordable again?

• (1750)

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is taking action to solve Canada's housing crisis. We are making housing more affordable and attainable for Canadians because everyone deserves a place to call home.

Too many Canadians across the country are struggling with the high cost of housing, and the federal government is focused on solutions. We are starting to put money back into Canadians' pockets by reducing middle-class taxes and saving two-income families up to \$840 a year.

We are cutting the goods and services tax on new homes at or under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers, delivering savings of up to \$50,000. We are also lowering the GST on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. We have also made it easier for Canadians to save for their first home by raising the limit on the tax-free home savings account.

Young families and first-time homebuyers deserve the same opportunities to own a home that their parents had. Restrictive planning policies, rising municipal fees and insufficient support for housing at all levels of government have contributed to higher costs, construction delays and a lack of affordable housing.

The Government of Canada is committed to lowering housing costs and restoring affordability. Since 2017, funding delivered through the national housing strategy has reduced or eliminated housing needs for more than 655,000 households. We have created or committed to more than 170,000 new housing units, but we know there is still more work to do, and we are not stopping there.

On September 14, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Housing launched Build Canada Homes. This new federal agency is part of a broader series of federal measures to double housing construc-

tion, restore affordability and reduce homelessness. It will focus on using Canadian-made materials and modern construction methods, such as factory-built housing, to catalyze an entirely new Canadian housing industry, one that builds faster and more sustainably.

Build Canada Homes complements the national housing strategy and Canada's housing plan by adding a bold new federal approach to building affordable housing. It will build on the success of these initiatives while focusing primarily on non-market housing and catalyzing a more productive homebuilding industry.

The Government of Canada is working closely with builders, investors, indigenous partners and all levels of government to implement innovative solutions to address these complex issues. We are using every tool at our disposal and taking coordinated action to help ensure that more Canadians have access to affordable and attainable housing.

Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, Winston Churchill once said that if a country tries to tax itself into prosperity, it is analogous to a man or woman standing in a bucket, pulling on the handles as hard as they can and wondering why they do not go up.

If, in fact, more government spending were the answer, we would have one of the best economies in the world and we would have affordable housing. The reality is, we have a tremendous amount of expenditures. They said not to take their word for it, to take the Prime Minister's word; he said, just last night, that government expenditures have grown by more than 7% on the operational side over the last decade. The Liberals spent and spent and spent.

In fact, the former housing minister, who is now the justice minister, was in front of committee. I asked him how many houses the housing accelerator had built. His answer was zero. That is what government will accomplish. It will spend millions of dollars, but the problem will remain the same.

When will the government finally wake up and get out of the way so that home builders can build homes?

Jennifer McKelvie: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is building on our successes and continuing to make historic investments in housing. Build Canada Homes will leverage public lands, offer flexible financial incentives, attract private capital, facilitate large portfolio projects and support manufacturers to build the homes Canadians need.

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We encourage the opposition to work with us so that we can build the homes Canadians need. As the Prime Minister has said, it is time to build. That means building housing at a scale and pace not seen in generations. That is exactly what we are going to do.

• (1755)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday last week I asked a question regarding automated external defibrillators, AEDs as they are called. I asked about placing them in RCMP cruisers. I just want to talk for a while about some of the things that are hard to discuss in the 35 seconds allocated for a question in question period, in order to explain some of the benefits that would accrue from RCMP cruisers' having defibrillators.

The RCMP, of course, is the largest police force across Canada. It is the de facto provincial police force in every province except Ontario and Quebec, and even in Ontario and Quebec it has a limited presence, in national parks, the national capital region and so on. RCMP cruisers are not equipped with AEDs. By contrast, the City of Ottawa police, the City of Toronto police and the City of Kingston police, in the local area, have defibrillators.

The City of Ottawa police have had defibrillators for over 20 years. In the case of the Toronto municipal police, the defibrillators were installed when the former minister of national defence was the chief of police in Toronto. I spoke to him once about it. He said that he was very proud of the fact that he got them put in. He said that they have saved a lot of lives. Indeed they have.

I, likewise, am responsible for putting defibrillators in a much smaller police force. The last independent police force in my constituency is in Smiths Falls, and I arranged the fundraising drive that allowed defibrillators to be placed in all its cruisers in 2005. In the cruisers of that small police force, they have been used on a number of occasions and have saved some lives, nowhere near the number of lives saved in Toronto because that has a very large police force.

However, whether it is a small police force or a large one, the cops are frequently first responders. When an emergency call goes out, not just for a crime in progress but also for a health emergency, the paramedics are notified, the fire departments are notified and so are the police, and there is a bit of a lottery. Sometimes the police have the closest vehicle. Sometimes they arrive first.

If I talk to an experienced police officer, they will usually be able to say that they were the first person on site at some kind of cardiac emergency. If they are from the City of Ottawa police, the Toronto police, the Smiths Falls police or literally any of 100 other municipal police forces across Canada, they will be able to say they had an AED at their disposal and were able to attempt to save a life. It does not necessarily mean they saved it, but it might mean they did.

The fact is that a significant number of lives are saved, and based on the save rate for various municipal police forces in Canada, we can take that and multiply it by the number of cruisers the RCMP has. If the RCMP had defibrillators, they would perform, on average, 300 saves every year. The cost to equip every police cruiser in the RCMP would be about \$10 million. It would be a one-time cost,

although the defibrillators have a finite life of about 10 years, and there is some upkeep, but it is minor.

For \$10 million, we could save 300 lives a year. There is literally no other measure I can think of that would save that number of lives for that small an expense. This is a government that is willing to spend many billions on other issues, to create a few jobs, for example. Saving 300 lives for \$10 million is a bargain. Why does the government not take action on this?

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac for this very interesting, pertinent question. I thank him for the opportunity to speak to the topic of AEDs in RCMP vehicles.

While the RCMP's primary mandate is for the provision of law enforcement services, it is often called upon to support and fulfill broader first responder roles. The RCMP remains committed to doing so in its efforts to protect the safety of the public it serves, as well as its employees.

This year, the Heart and Stroke Foundation indicated, "Each year in Canada, an estimated 60,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital." The use of a life-saving measure, such as CPR or an AED, on an individual experiencing cardiac arrest doubles their chance of survival, according to both the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

All RCMP officers are required to be trained and recertified in the use of AEDs, along with CPR and first aid certification, every three years. This important training and skills maintenance supports the broader first responder capabilities of the RCMP.

Public access to and installation of AEDs has become more prevalent across Canada in recent years, including in places such as sports and athletics facilities and recreation centres. This enables greater access to AEDs for use as a critical life-saving tool during cardiac emergencies.

While AEDs are not mandated by any federal legislation or regulation, the RCMP recognizes their benefit in specific locations and has adopted a limited AED program. AEDs have been approved for installation and use in certain facilities, including emergency medical response teams, some protective policing details, the divisional fitness and lifestyles program, and in provinces that require AEDs to be available per provincial policing standards.

Adjournment Proceedings

While the idea is interesting, it does need to be carefully considered, as a program such as this cannot be improvised. As the member for Lanark—Frontenac very well knows, RCMP are mainly deployed in rural areas where the response time is longer than in an urban setting. Therefore, the AEDs are less useful than in urban settings.

This just means that they need to be evaluated, and a national rollout would require consultation with partners, as well as an in-depth needs analysis to determine what device is needed. As well, we need to look at varying operational parameters, including climate, temperature and durability, given the vastly different operating environments in which the RCMP provides policing services across the country. Sometimes in the far north, there are below zero or sub-zero temperatures. Finally, there would also be a requirement for an assessment of financial considerations, including additional costs required for the ongoing maintenance and replacement costs of the devices.

Although the RCMP's main responsibility is law enforcement, it frequently assists in broader first responder duties. In doing so, it maintains a commitment to protecting both its personnel and the public. Nevertheless, as far as a deployment of AED in every RCMP vehicle, it cannot be endorsed at this time. Such a program needs more study, including a careful evaluation of costs and benefits.

• (1800)

Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, certainly, we should take our time and think this over carefully.

Ralph Goodale, when he was in opposition, before he became minister of public safety, when the government changed hands in 2015, put forward a private member's motion in 2013, saying:

That in the opinion of the House, the government should address the wide variation in the availability of defibrillators throughout the buildings and facilities owned, operated or regulated by the Government of Canada, and the equally wide variation in the training of appropriate personnel to use defibrillators properly, by

adopting and implementing a policy of: (a) installing an appropriate number and calibre of automated external defibrillators in all such buildings and facilities; and (b) training the appropriate personnel to use such defibrillators properly, with priority being assigned to all RCMP offices and vehicles.

That was 12 years ago, when the man who went on to become one of several now Liberal ministers in his portfolio said this should be done.

How much study does it take? That is a decade, and at 300 lives per year, that is 3,000 lives. We could fill every seat in the House with 10 bodies, because the government has failed to act. That is shameful. I ask the member to defend that record.

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, currently, the RCMP provides contract policing services through police service agreements. The costs for RCMP services are shared between the provincial, territorial or municipal government, and the federal government. With the exception of Ontario and Quebec, RCMP contract policing services are provided to all other provinces and territories in Canada, as well as to approximately 150 municipalities.

It is the RCMP's contract partners, the provinces, territories and municipalities, that establish the level of resourcing, budgets and policing priorities in their respective jurisdictions. Ultimately, decisions made by the government of local jurisdiction can impact the RCMP's ability to allocate funding for the purchase of new equipment. The scale and financial impact of procuring AEDs for the RCMP would need to be assessed, and may eventually be assessed, in consultation with contract partners to determine the extent to which these devices could be deployed.

• (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.)

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