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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 30, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Kingdom of Spain on the Protection of Classified Information”, done at Madrid on September 9, 2025.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 12 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 115, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the sixth report later this day.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled “Pilot Project to Include Inuit Languages on Federal Election Ballots in Nunavut”.

It now being later this day, if the House gives its consent, I move that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

FISCAL REPORTING

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are deeply concerned about the government's manipulation of our national books. These citizens are calling on the government to restore integrity and transparency in fiscal reporting and to stop redefining what counts as capital investment simply to make the deficit look smaller.

The petitioners note that under this new definition, even subsidies, tax breaks and corporate handouts are being rebranded as investments, despite building nothing that the Canadian government owns. Furthermore, the petitioners observe that it is always risky for an entity to change its accounting definitions, let alone when deficits are ballooning, economic conditions are deteriorating and fiscal anchors are being abandoned. Canadians deserve a government that manages its finances, not one that manipulates them.

The petitioners conclude by noting that a change in definition does not improve our economic condition. A government that cannot live within its means will never make life affordable for people who need to live within theirs.

I thank these citizens for bringing this critical issue before the House of Commons at a critical time, and I hope the government will stop manipulating the budget to serve its own political agenda.

Points of Order

• (1005)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would ask that you look at and review the ending remarks. These are political views being expressed by the member of Parliament. Potentially, you can come back and provide some guidance on how to present petitions.

GAZA

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling this petition on behalf of Canadians who are deeply concerned about the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

The petitioners note that under common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, Canada must respect international humanitarian law. The petitioners highlight that article 59 of the fourth Geneva Convention requires occupying powers to allow impartial humanitarian relief and that Canada's international assistance accountability act mandates that our aid uphold human rights and international legal standards. The petitioners say that Israel's current policies violate these obligations.

The petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to reject military aid models, to restore access for UN agencies and NGOs such as UNRWA and the World Food Programme, to permit safe entry for Canadian health care and humanitarian workers and, last, to ensure that all Canadian aid is delivered through internationally recognized neutral and independent channels.

* * *

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[For text of questions and responses, see *Written Questions website*]

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ADMISSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-4

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I would like to follow up on yesterday's government intervention. As my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton said, we reserved the right to respond to the arguments regarding the amendments to Bill C-4.

I would like to talk about what happened at the Standing Committee on Finance on Monday with regard to the amendments that the Bloc Québécois proposed to part 2 of Bill C-4. It is clearly established that a ways and means notice must precede any bill that would result in a tax increase for at least one class of taxpayers. Similarly, any bill that generates or reallocates an expenditure, or a charge against the consolidated revenue fund, must be accompanied by a royal recommendation. Any amendment to a government bill

that goes beyond the royal recommendation associated with that bill could also be deemed inadmissible in committee.

However, a tax credit does not require a notice of ways and means or a royal recommendation to move forward, as evidenced by the many private members' bills that include such action. Amendments that would lower or eliminate a tax are admissible in committee.

Part 2 of Bill C-4, clauses 3 to 13, amends the Excise Tax Act to exempt new homes from the GST for first-time buyers. The news release issued by the Minister of Finance on May 27, 2025, when the notice of ways and means was tabled for the introduction of Bill C-4, describes the measure as follows:

Eliminate the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for first-time home buyers on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving them up to \$50,000, and lower the GST for first-time home buyers on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

The government backgrounder accompanying this release uses the same language and refers to eliminating or lowering a tax. In short, that is precisely what part 2 of Bill C-4 does. It eliminates the GST for first-time buyers of a property that sells for less than \$1 million and lowers it for first-time buyers of a residence that sells for somewhere between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

In concrete terms, under this bill, the homebuyer will pay GST to the seller when purchasing the home, and the seller will pay the GST to the government. The homebuyer will then apply for a GST rebate, which will be paid out once they have proven that they are eligible. The bill lays out a number of different formulas for different scenarios, including the purchase of a completed home, a pre-construction purchase for future delivery or an owner-built home.

However, there are no scenarios where the tax rebate can exceed the amount of GST paid at the time of purchase, resulting in a charge against the consolidated revenue fund. This part of the bill will lower the government's GST revenue, but there is no scenario where it will involve a charge against the consolidated revenue fund.

The member for Mirabel introduced a series of amendments that cover the various scenarios referred to earlier. They would all have the same effect: They would move the date on which the GST is eliminated or reduced for first-time buyers from May 27, 2025, to March 20, 2025. March 20, 2025, was the day the government originally announced the measure that would become Bill C-4.

Witnesses told the committee that many people saw the government announcement and believed that the measure was effective immediately, as is often the case when it comes to taxation. An announcement typically coincides with the tabling of the notice of ways and means, on the assumption that it will be adopted, paving the way for it to come into effect immediately. That is why the member for Mirabel's amendments were introduced.

As is the case with the original version of Bill C-4, there is no scenario where the member for Mirabel's amendments could result in a rebate that exceeds the amount of tax paid and result in a charge against the consolidated revenue fund. In that sense, they are different from refundable tax credits or the GST rebate, whose value can exceed the amount of tax that the taxpayer paid. The excess amount has to be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund, meaning a royal recommendation would be required.

● (1010)

Both part 2 of Bill C-4 and the member for Mirabel's amendment represent fairly classic cases of tax credits or exemptions that have never been viewed as charges on the consolidated revenue fund requiring a royal recommendation.

The example raised at committee by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue as grounds for the chair to rule the member for Mirabel's amendment inadmissible, specifically the Speaker's ruling of February 1, 2024, concerning Bill C-356, has nothing whatsoever to do with the case before us today. That bill provided for some \$100 million to be drawn from the consolidated revenue fund, which we can all agree would require a royal recommendation. Furthermore, Bill C-356 did not make it clear that the GST rebates provided could not under any circumstances exceed the amount paid, whereas this is clearly stated in Bill C-4.

The fact that Bill C-4 was accompanied by a royal recommendation in no way means that it was necessary for the implementation of part 2 of the bill, which has the effect of reducing revenue rather than appropriating funds from the consolidated revenue fund, as the government itself explained in its news release on May 27, 2025.

In our view, if we start considering the elimination or reduction of a tax as an expense, it could set a precedent that might in future severely limit the ability that members currently have to bring forward bills or amendments to that effect, and this in turn would make it very hard for committees to work on any bills with fiscal or financial implications.

Instead of seeking advice from the legislative clerks who were present, the committee chair asked the Department of Finance officials whether the Bloc Québécois's amendments were admissible. However, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017, deals with financial procedures, and the royal recommendation specifically, in chapter 18, with the exceptions to the rule clearly stated on page 836.

Footnote 61 refers to an article by John Mark Keyes entitled "When Bills and Amendments Require the Royal Recommendation: A Discussion Paper and Guidelines". Page 20 lists the cases where a royal recommendation is not required, and among them is the type of amendment proposed by the member for Mirabel.

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In our opinion, the amendment proposed by the member for Mirabel, adopted by the Standing Committee on Finance at its meeting on October 27, 2025, and included in the committee's report was admissible and should be maintained in the committee's report.

● (1015)

The Speaker: I thank the member for Berthier—Maskinongé for his perspective on the matter. I will reserve my decision and come back to the House in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will not be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg North and will take the remaining 12 minutes allotted for my speech. I am sure the member for Winnipeg North will have an opportunity to address the House on this important matter as well.

The bail and sentencing reform act would deliver on that commitment. It would balance firmness with fairness. It would strengthen bail and toughen sentencing. These changes underscore that a strong Canada means strong communities and a justice system that works for everyone.

I worked very hard to make sure I could inform the creation of the bill every step of the way, along with the Minister of Justice. I am very pleased to see the final product that has come out. It has been informed by provinces and territories across this country. It has been informed by chiefs of police and by police associations. I was really pleased to see that many of them have given positive statements in regard to the bill. I would like to quote some of them.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has said, "The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police...welcomes the introduction of the Bail and Sentencing Reform Act (Bill C-14) as a landmark piece of legislation that strengthens Canada's response to repeat and violent offenders, organized crime, and threats to public safety." We have gotten much great feedback just like this from other associations.

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I heard from my own mayor, who came to Ottawa this week and was very pleased. He has been a strong advocate for bail reform for some time but also has constantly pointed out that it takes co-operation at all levels in order to be able to get the results that are needed. I will dive into that a little later.

Patrick Brown, the mayor of Brampton, says, "I welcome the Federal Government's recent announcement today on bail and sentencing reform. This is something that our police, our councils in this region have advocated for aggressively. This is a step in the right direction and shows Ottawa is listening to cities like Brampton. I hope the legislation is passed right away."

There are similar calls from others who are calling upon the opposition to make sure we can co-operate during the process of the legislation through the House. We have heard from Premier Doug Ford as well. He said, "We're glad to see the federal government accept many of our recommendations and take a strong step in the right direction."

There has been an uptick in violent repeat offenders in this province and in others as well. It was important to work with the premiers, to work with their attorneys general and solicitors general, to get the piece of legislation just right.

I know that the mayor of London had many concerns as well. He says, "I applaud the Government of Canada's action and London welcomes these important, positive steps toward strengthening community safety and ensuring our justice system better protects law-abiding citizens. I look forward to seeing this legislation move quickly and working with all levels of government to make our city, and communities across Canada, safer for everyone." Yes, it is very important. I know that members from these regions are here in the House right now.

We have also heard from the mayor of Winnipeg, Scott Gillingham, who states that the "legislation looks to be a big step forward in the fight against serious crime here in Winnipeg."

As I travelled this country through the summer, in consultation on this and other public safety measures, I heard first-hand from law enforcement and many mayors that they were dealing with different issues in different regions, so what we have tried to do in the bill is address all the different factors that have come up. Whether some areas of the country are facing a rise in auto theft and home invasions or other areas are dealing with retail theft and other organized crime, it is important to have a solution that fits and meets the demands of all the different jurisdictions. I am encouraged to see that the final piece of legislation is very strong in this area.

• (1020)

Another thing the opposition often brings up, and which we have heard across the country, is how the principle of restraint is being applied. I referenced in my remarks yesterday as well that the bill would address the principle of restraint in, I feel, the most appropriate way that the House could do so, because the principle of restraint comes from a Supreme Court decision made in 2017 in the Antic case. The principle had been codified and put into legislation previously as well, but it was never intended to be used as a "get out of jail free" card.

The bill clarifies that the principle of restraint would not mean automatic release. We put parameters around it so courts can feel confident in still abiding by the Supreme Court decision but also in being able to go back to the foundational tertiary principles by which bail should be guided. One of the principal ones is public safety.

Public safety should never be compromised. Everything we do in the ministry of public safety and that I have taken on as a responsibility in my new role is to ensure that Canadians can feel safe. As a mom, this has been really important to me when I have heard the growing concern. At times it took a while, perhaps not for people on the ground but for law enforcement and governments, to look at property crime in the same way as we looked at violent crime. Those two things came to a crossroads, and we started seeing more and more property crime committed with violence.

Stories of cars being stolen, at times with kids in the back seat during the commission of a car hijacking, make me wonder as a mom. I started worrying a lot about making sure my child was out of the car before I got out of it. That is not how I want to feel nor how I want any of the people in my community to feel. The bill would take the steps needed to make sure we bring back the confidence of the public when it comes to our judicial system. That is very important to me.

There is another thing the bill would do that is very important, from what I heard from communities across this country. People have felt that there are no repercussions to committing property theft. It is really important that people understand there are repercussions in Canada, so in the bill, we clarify sentencing objectives.

The bill would require courts to give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence for second and subsequent convictions of violent auto theft, break and enters, and organized crime offences. This is a very important measure. It would bring courts back to considering safety as the main concern. It gives this direct guideline and would make it mandatory for courts to look at it.

The bill would also make it mandatory for the courts to go through a safety plan if they do choose to release an individual. The process of going through creating a plan, that exercise, is very important to better understanding whether it is an appropriate plan or not.

Along with that, an offender's history should also be looked at. It is a bit of a surprise and a shock to me that courts would not already be doing so. It is appropriate to look at an offender's past history, but what we heard from Crown counsel and others in law enforcement is that it was not always being done. The piece of legislation before us would mandate courts to do so.

• (1025)

I know that if the bill is passed through the House of Commons, it would have a great impact on keeping our communities safe. I would also like to mention, as I began my speech with yesterday, that we are doing our part as a federal government, but the provinces will now need to do their part as well. For example, Ontario is having over 50% of cases withdrawn or dismissed and sentences being shortened. A story recently came out about a sentence for murder that has been decreased and the person released because of the conditions of provincial jails.

It is really important that provincially appointed judges be able to make the decisions needed to keep the public safe and that they also have a place to put offenders. I now put it on the provinces to do their part to make sure that people are not released into our communities because of these provincial responsibilities that are not being met. It is very important for us to be able to get the results we need.

I am thankful for the extra opportunity to address this very important piece of legislation.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, from my review of Bill C-14, I believe that there is a partial admission by the government that it failed and that it dropped the ball when it introduced Bill C-5. It actually rolled back some of the conditional sentences, so I want to spend a bit of time talking about that.

Given that sex assault is on the rise across this country, why did the member's government see fit to claw back the eligibility of conditional sentences only where the Crown proceeds by indictment versus summary conviction, when the vast majority of sex assault prosecutions in this country are done by summary conviction? Why has the member failed victims?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, gender-based violence sexual offences have been top of mind for our government. In Bill C-75, we have strengthened our position when it comes to the justice system. We would be further strengthening it in the bill that is before us, by not allowing courts to impose conditional sentences that can be served in the community. It is important to make sure the offenders stay behind bars.

In this role, I am here trying to do my job to inform the government to take measures that would protect public safety. As I said, I take that role very seriously, and I believe the bill would address that issue and is a step in the right direction. We also have a gender-based violence bill coming out that would further strengthen our position to make sure offenders get what they deserve.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, let me start by saying that the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-14. However, we still have some concerns about the text of the bill, including the discretion that it gives to judges to reverse the burden of proof for certain crimes. These include some serious crimes for which it would be justifiable for a judge to keep the accused in remand.

However, some crimes on this list, like auto theft, are not necessarily violent crimes or crimes committed by people who pose a danger to public safety. I was wondering, does the government not

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feel that the definition of violent crime it has adopted with respect to this specific reverse onus criterion is a bit too broad?

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I do not believe we have gone overboard at all. I believe we are addressing all the issues Canadians are concerned about. Repeated auto theft in our communities has made Canadians feel unsafe. The proceeds of these types of crimes also go to transnational organized criminal networks. These criminal networks are involved in the gun trade and in bringing dangerous drugs into our country. It is important we clamp down on these criminal organizations.

A step we have also taken in the past is that criminals who are using young people in the commission of a crime like this will serve even more severe penalties. We have already implemented that, but this is another step we can take sure to make sure we can deter that crime from happening.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I think we all know in this room and in the rest of Canada that indigenous and racialized people have some of the highest incarceration rates in Canada.

I wonder if the member can share with us how the bill on reverse onus will have an impact on those who are most marginalized and how their justice will be protected in the bill.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, we know that there is over-representation of indigenous communities. That issue came up as I consulted in communities. It is important to continue to work with policing so that we can make sure that policing methods are done appropriately and not biased and that our courts are not biased when applying these rules and regulations. It is important to continue to have good training for judges as well.

This piece of legislation was created so that we can protect Canadians. I believe in restorative justice as well, and measures need to be taken so that when a person has ended their sentence, they can reintegrate into the community in the best way possible. Our correctional services have done a lot of good work in communities to make sure that there are different systems in place for the communities that have asked for it, and they will continue to do that work.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I like about Bill C-14 is the fact that in the last federal election, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians that he would bring forward bail reform legislation. That is what we are debating today.

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I would double down on that commitment in terms of the very minister who spoke now. She was appointed as the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime. That is a compliment to the degree to which the government is serious about dealing with bail reform legislation.

Would the secretary of state not agree that, given the consensus of the many different stakeholders out there in support of the legislation, a goal to try to build a consensus in the chamber and have the legislation in place and passed before the end of the year would be something Canadians deserve to see?

• (1035)

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, absolutely. Canadians deserve for us to care about their safety and to put victims first. The bill does that. It keeps repeat violent offenders off our streets.

I would also call on all opposition parties to help us get this passed through the House as quickly as possible and get it to the committee process, where we can look at it in detail. I have been disappointed and surprised by the Conservative opposition. We have had other bills that also addressed public safety in this country, such as Bill C-2, but the Conservatives would not agree with portions of that bill, including lawful access, money laundering and searching mail for fentanyl and drugs getting into our country. I am shocked that they do not care about the concerns that Canadians have and that they did not allow us to bring that to pass in this Parliament at this time.

I also call on them to help us pass that original Bill C-2 and those portions of lawful access, which would give police the tools they need to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for York Centre.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not propose to politicize this issue. I just want to speak about the shortcomings of the bill and ask the secretary of state specifically why there is an absence of any stiffer sentences for young offenders. Why is the bill silent on parole? Why is the bill silent on cash bail, something that police associations across the country are talking about?

Most importantly, I am very interested in the diversionary framework introduced in Bill C-75 for offences involving failures to comply with court orders, such as failure to appear, breach of undertaking or even breach of bail. Basically, C-75 allows Crowns to divert, to remove those types of offences from the docket, as they often do. We also heard from the OPP commissioner a couple of days ago in justice committee saying that he thinks the fact that Bill C-75 allows for this kind of diversionary regime framework for offences against court orders undermines the rule of law.

Why does Bill C-14 not fix the travesty created by Bill C-75?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, most of the issues the member opposite has brought up are provincial issues. If they would like to deal with them, they can do so in their provincial courtrooms. When offenders do not listen to court orders, they can enforce those orders. At the provincial level, the court has every right to do so, and it should. When sureties come forward and put up a bond, it should retrieve that bond. Courts are not doing those

things. This is why I said there is a part for provinces to play in this. They have a really crucial role in administering the justice system, and I hope provinces will step forward, resource their courtrooms, train judges and make sure they have space in their jails.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC):

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to an important legislation, which is Bill C-14, bail reform and sentencing reform. However, before I do that, I want to advise that I will be sharing my time with the very effective member of Parliament for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Here we go again with bail reform 2.0. In the 44th Parliament, we had Bill C-48, brought to us by the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau. The bill was in response to several high-profile violent crimes committed by people who were, at the time of the crime, out on bail on charges for other violent crimes.

Let us take, for example, Randall McKenzie, who murdered an OPP officer, Constable Greg Pierzchala on December 27, 2022. That murderer was out on bail at that time, awaiting trial on charges of a violent, weapons-related crime against his girlfriend. We call that intimate partner violence. He was in breach of his bail conditions, of course, having a weapon in his possession, having removed his ankle bracelet and having left his home. That is where he was supposed to be. There had been a warrant for his arrest for about six months, but the police had failed to apprehend him. There were too many people out on bail and not enough police resources. This man was getting away with murder. There were too many people out on bail. That was the problem at the heart of this. This man should have been behind bars in pretrial incarceration.

There were other high-profile cases at that time. I raise this one because it really woke up the public to weaknesses in our criminal justice system. When the public gets concerned over a public policy issue, politicians scramble to get ahead on the story. In a rare show of cross-country, cross-party co-operation, all the premiers of the 10 provinces and of the three territories wrote a letter to the then attorney general and to the former prime minister demanding bail reform. The response to that was that AG Lametti introduced a very weak bail reform bill, Bill C-48, which made it just slightly more difficult for people like Pierzchala's murderer to get out on bail while awaiting trial.

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The accused now had to convince the judge that he could be trusted to be out on the streets instead of the government lawyer having to convince the judge the accused should stay behind bars. We call that a reverse onus. It is a slight improvement, from a law and order perspective. We, the Conservatives, supported the bill because it was a step in the right direction. Provincial politicians and law enforcement agencies across the country supported it too although many expressed disappointment that it simply did not go as far as they had hoped.

Why did the Liberals not go further when public sentiment was clearly on the side of going for the bail reform? The underlying challenge for them was a previous bill from the 42nd Parliament, Bill C-75. It was one of the last enactments of the 42nd Parliament before it rose for the summer. The bill introduced the principle of restraint in bail hearings, the principle that directs a judge to release the accused at the earliest possible time and with the least onerous conditions. This is set out in section 493.1 of the Criminal Code, which states, “consideration [should be given] to the release of the accused at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions that are appropriate in the circumstances”.

This is what happened to Mr. McKenzie, the murderer of Constable Pierzchala. He was out on bail under his mother's supervision, with an ankle bracelet. He was not to leave home, and he had a weapons prohibition. This was all for a man who had been charged and was awaiting trial on charges of a violent crime against his girlfriend with a weapon. How is that even right? How can that happen in this country?

It is easy to point the finger at the judge, as some people did, but the judge was responding to the principle of restraint introduced by the Liberal government in Bill C-75. We hear the Liberals say they had no choice, the court told them they had to do that in a case called *R v. Antic*. Indeed, the Supreme Court of Canada, with Chief Justice Wagner writing, did say that “release is favoured at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous grounds.” It is true that the court said that.

● (1040)

We have always argued, as Conservatives, that the Supreme Court of Canada never directed Parliament to throw open the gates to unfettered bail. It did not direct Parliament to introduce new legislation. It did not direct Parliament to do anything. *Antic* was a case that simply clarified some confusion around the rights of the accused when it comes to bail: the right to be presumed innocent; the right to a fair trial, with the burden of proof on the Crown's lawyer; and the right, of course, to reasonable bail as set out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Antic was not a case in which the court had struck down any legislation under section 52 of the Constitution Act 1982, the so-called supremacy clause. That does happen from time to time, as happened a few years ago in a case called *R v. Ndhlovu*, which was decided in 2022. According to that decision, certain subsections of section 490 of the Criminal Code, the ones mandating automatic registration of anyone convicted of a sexual offence, were unconstitutional and contrary to section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects life, liberty and the security of the person.

The court, in that case, gave Parliament 12 months or 18 months to correct the impugned legislation. I forget exactly how long it was. That was exactly what we did in the last Parliament. All the parties worked together co-operatively to make that happen.

I want to be clear: *Antic* was not that kind of case. The Supreme Court just wanted to clarify things. It was the Liberal government, under Justin Trudeau, with David Lametti at the time, that introduced Bill C-75 and introduced section 493.1 to the Criminal Code. This was of their own volition. This was the Liberals appealing to their base, trying to distinguish themselves from law and order Conservatives.

They are now seeing the effects of that legislation. There is public outcry about what members of the public are calling catch-and-release provisions. They are blaming the Liberals for that. There are widespread calls for bail reform from premiers, police services across the country, police unions and public safety advocacy groups.

What do they do? They introduce Bill C-14, which is before us today. They are bringing in workarounds around their own defective legislation. We ask why they do not just get rid of section 493.1 altogether. It was not mandated. It is not necessary. It is not helpful. It has been harmful to the administration of justice in this country. It is time to get rid of it.

Our judges on bail hearings know what the common law says about the right to bail. They know what the charter says about reasonable bail. They know what the Supreme Court and other courts have said to guide this age-old principle.

Bill C-48, from the 44th Parliament, took a small step in the right direction, a timid step. It did not go nearly far enough. That is why we are here today.

I am more hopeful today with the current Attorney General and Minister of Justice signalling that perhaps Bill C-75 went too far. Perhaps Bill C-5, another enactment, which I did not talk about too much in my speech so far but which relaxed some sentencing rules, had gone too far. Perhaps the two bills have had a negative impact on the public's confidence in the administration of justice. It is time to fix it.

Like Bill C-48, Bill C-14 does not go far enough. At committee, Conservatives will introduce amendments to get Canada back on track, putting public safety first and putting public confidence in the administration of justice first, because that is what Canadians deserve. That is what Canadians right across the country have been demanding for a long time. It is time to get it fixed. We will do our best to make sure that Bill C-14 comes out of Parliament as strong as possible, to protect Canadians.

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• (1045)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that over the last number of months, we have had many Conservatives stand in their place and demand bail reform legislation. The good news is that we are now actually debating Bill C-14. The member knows full well how important this issue was to Canadians in the last election. We have a Prime Minister who has materialized substantial bail reform legislation.

We can take a look at next week's agenda, which has the national budget coming before us.

I am wondering if the member would not agree that setting a goal to actually have the bail reform legislation pass through the system before the end of the year would be a wonderful thing to see, based on the demand for it from the people whom we represent and the consensus that has been built by many different stakeholders.

Would he not agree that the House should give its best effort at passing the legislation before the end of the year?

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I agree that the House should give its best efforts, but that requires the Liberals giving their best efforts, as well, to passing this legislation.

We are going to committee. We are going to request reasonable amendments to this legislation to make it better. I am very happy to have this high-level conversation in Parliament. There seems to be substantial agreement that bail reform is needed. We are happy the Liberals are finally coming to the table, and we hope there is continued co-operation at committee.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has concerns about this bill, but we want to study it in committee so we can propose amendments. The Conservatives will probably want to propose amendments too.

However, an additional concern has emerged. During the committee's study of Bill C-3, members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration voted in favour of a number of amendments. When the bill came back here, the Liberals set out to use the work of the House to undo all the amendments we had worked on in committee.

Is my colleague as concerned about this as I am? This bill will go to committee, where we will do a rigorous job and work hard to amend it. Is he afraid the Liberals will undo all of the committee's work when the bill comes back to the House?

• (1050)

[*English*]

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I share the concern with members of the Bloc Québécois that the Liberals are going to try to prevent any reasonable amendments to this legislation. However, I am an optimistic person.

I will go back to the sex offender registry case that was found to be unconstitutional. All the parties worked together to pass that legislation through. We really did. If the Liberals are taking this bail

reform and sentencing reform initiative as seriously as they say they are, I am pretty confident they will be co-operative at committee and work with us on reasonable amendments.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will ask my colleague to reflect on the issue of the principle of restraint. Obviously, it has not been abandoned in Bill C-14. There have been some attachments and limitations to its application.

Why are provisions of the principle of restraint in jail not bail a better approach for the protection of Canadians?

Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, indeed, Bill C-14 retains the principle of restraint, which has been at the centre of the problems in the administration of criminal justice in the last decade. It is at the heart of the public's loss of confidence in the administration of justice. I think that is a very important principle.

I am sure our amendments at committee are going to focus on the secondary and tertiary grounds, public safety and public confidence in the administration of justice.

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians are tired of watching the same headlines play out every week: another violent crime committed by someone who never should have been released in the first place. They see the revolving door of justice spinning faster than ever and have the right to ask why their safety no longer seems to matter. That is why we are here today to debate Bill C-14, the government's latest attempt to clean up the mess it created years ago through soft-on-crime policies.

Let us not forget how we got here. In 2019, the Liberals passed Bill C-75, which enshrined in law the principle of restraint. It directed police and judges to release offenders at the earliest reasonable opportunity under the least onerous conditions. That single change and that Liberal ideology opened the floodgates to the catch-and-release system we now have in our justice system. Then came Bill C-5, which gutted mandatory minimum sentences and made house arrest available for serious crimes like sexual assault and drug trafficking. When crime inevitably spiked, the government tried to paper over this damage with Bill C-48, a bill it sold as tough on bail but that barely scratched the surface with a handful of new reverse-onus offences and no real change to the culture of automatic release.

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The result has been devastating. Since 2015, violent crime is up 55%, firearm crime is up 130%, extortion is up 330%, sexual assault is up 76% and homicide is up 29%. Those are not just numbers. Each one represents a victim, a family and a community that has been forever changed. Let us not forget the names behind those statistics. Bailey McCourt was murdered by her ex-husband just hours after he was released on bail for assaulting her. Savannah Kulla, a 29-year-old mother of four, was gunned down in Brampton by a man who had already been released on bail. These tragedies are not anomalies. They are the predictable outcome of policies that put ideology ahead of safety.

After a decade of denial, the Liberals introduced Bill C-14, which admits, finally, that their reforms have failed. The bill tweaks the Criminal Code to clarify that restraint would not require release when detention is necessary to protect the public. It adds a few more reverse-onus offences, such as violent auto theft, break and enter and human trafficking, and it slightly tightens conditional sentences for youth custody rules.

While Conservatives welcome any movement in the right direction, let us be clear. Bill C-14 is not the bold reform Canadians deserve. This bill keeps the principle of restraint that caused the crisis in the first place. It does not restore the mandatory minimum sentences that were stripped away with Bill C-5. It does not presume detention for repeat violent offenders. It simply shifts the burden of proof. It still allows house arrest for robbery, trafficking and firearm crimes. Its so-called guidance to judges remains optional, not mandatory. Canadians do not want more guidance. They want guarantees that violent repeat criminals will not be back on the streets to terrorize their communities.

Our Conservative plan, the jail not bail act brought forward by my colleague from Oxford, would deliver those guarantees. It would replace the principle of restraint with a public safety primary clause, making the safety of the public in our communities the governing principle in bail. It would presume detention, not release, for serious violent crimes, such as sexual assault, human trafficking, armed robbery and home invasion. It would restore mandatory minimums for firearms, sexual assault, kidnapping and other serious offences. It would ban house arrest for robbery, gun and trafficking crimes. It would require judges to consider every prior conviction, any outstanding charge and any pattern of offending while on bail. It would bar criminal sureties and enforce surety obligations so that bail means accountability, not just paperwork. It would raise the risk threshold from “substantial likelihood” to “reasonably foreseeable” because, if it is reasonably foreseeable that someone will re-offend, they should not be released.

The Liberals call Bill C-14 a comprehensive reform. I call it an admission of guilt and an admission that Conservative warnings were right all along. They copied our ideas because the evidence left them no choice. They copied them only halfway, because political optics still matter more to them than public safety. They talk about compassion for victims, but every piece of legislation they have passed since 2015 has sided with offenders. They cannot be pro-victim and pro-offender at the same time.

• (1055)

Communities across my riding of Souris—Moose Mountain know this reality all too well. People used to leave their doors unlocked, and now they lock their vehicles, barns and shops every night. Farmers are losing quads or trucks to organized theft rings. Small business owners are watching thieves walk in, clean out the shelves and walk out, only to see those same offenders released the next day.

The numbers tell the story clearly. In Souris—Moose Mountain, violent crime has increased from about 3,500 incidents in 2015 to nearly 4,700 incidents in 2024, a staggering 34% jump. This is not an abstract statistic. Those are hundreds of real families in our rural communities that have been victimized, that have lost their sense of safety and that are asking when the system will finally put law-abiding citizens first.

Every time an offender is released without consequence, confidence in the justice system erodes a little more. That is why our message is simple: Scrap Liberal bail. Canadians deserve more than half measures. They deserve to live without fear in their homes, on their farms, in their shops and on their streets. They deserve a justice system that puts their safety first, not the comfort of repeat offenders.

The government has had 10 years to get this right. Instead, it has chosen ideology over evidence, leniency over law, and rhetoric over results. Conservatives will support sending Bill C-14 to committee, but we will fight for real amendments to eliminate the principle of restraint entirely, to presume detention for major and repeat violent offences, to restore mandatory minimums and to turn judicial suggestions into judicial obligations. Only then can we begin to undo the damage caused by Bill C-75 and Bill C-5.

Canadians have lost faith in their justice system, and they have every right to. We owe it to victims like Bailey McCourt and Savannah Kulla, and to every Canadian who wonders whether their government still values their safety, to make this right.

The Conservative position is clear: Public safety comes first, justice means accountability and no violent repeat offender should walk free while innocent Canadians live in fear. That is why we will continue to press the government to strengthen Bill C-14 or step aside and let Conservatives fix the system for good. Canadians do not want tougher laws. They want safer communities. Only a Conservative government will deliver both.

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• (1100)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is where the member is wrong.

I believe what we have seen is a prime minister who is committed to making our communities safer. We have seen that through the demonstration of two ministers being charged with bringing forward the bail reform legislation we are debating today.

This is not something we just came up with overnight. This is something that had a great deal of consultation, working with different stakeholders. Our judicial system is a shared responsibility. We worked with provinces, territories, indigenous communities and Canadians as a whole. I believe we have delivered first-class legislation that will assist in making our communities safer. I say “assist” because it also involves provinces, municipalities, law enforcement and stakeholders coming to the table.

I am pleased the member indicated he supports the legislation going to committee. It is a relief to hear that.

The question I have for the member is specific. Does he share the same ambition that I have to deliver bail reform legislation, a law, before the end of the year? Would he not agree that this is a goal we should strive to achieve?

Steven Bonk: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member's assessment, but the legislation should have Conservative amendments.

I came from the business world. In the business world, we manage our budgets and our companies by results. I want to take a look at some of the results in the member's home city of Winnipeg since the Liberal bail laws were put in place. There were 24 previous violent offences like shootings and carjackings by someone out on probation. There was a murder while someone was out on bail with 16 arrests, nine violent convictions and 15 breaches. There was a fatal stabbing while someone was out on bail with 11 previous convictions like possession of firearms. I could go on with this list. The results speak for themselves.

We need laws that protect our citizens and put victims first, not offenders.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, today being October 30, 2025, allow me to acknowledge a historic moment in Quebec's history. Thirty years ago today, the Lower St. Lawrence said yes: yes to the country of Quebec, yes to liberty, yes to pride. It very courageously said yes. That same conviction is still very much alive today among the people in my region. We want to be masters of our own destiny because Quebec's independence is the logical next step in our history, our language, our culture, our identity, our very existence.

My question for my colleague is this. We know that the Conservative Party wanted to implement reforms in an attempt to improve certain aspects of security. At the same time, it wanted to challenge a fundamental principle of justice, namely the presumption of innocence. I would like my colleague to explain how he sees a fundamental need versus a fundamental right in our society. What is he

proposing today with regard to this bill introduced by the government?

[*English*]

Steven Bonk: Madam Speaker, although I fundamentally disagree with the premise of that question, I will comment on how we are not talking about first-time offences here. We are talking about repeat offenders who have committed violent crimes over and over again.

The member talks about the presumption of innocence. The presumption of innocence should be that people make mistakes. We have compassion and we all believe that everyone should have a fair trial and a fair crack at the judicial system, but when it has been abused over and over again by repeat criminals committing violent offences, our whole system needs to be looked at again. That is why the Conservative jail not bail act would address the very issues the member is talking about.

• (1105)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the John Howard Society recently called on Ontario to expand its bail system and make it stronger. The society has a 96% success rate in ensuring that bail conditions are met.

I wonder if the member agrees that the work of community-based supervision programs, like the 17 programs across Canada, should be expanded.

Steven Bonk: Madam Speaker, as I said in my other answer, I am a very results-based person. If something is proven to work, I am sure the Conservatives would be very happy to take a look at it and work with it.

I could defer to my colleagues, the shadow minister for justice or the member for York Centre, who have a lot more experience in this field than I do. We are compassionate and we want the best for Canada. If there are ways we can make that happen by working with other parties, we will do it.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie.

It is an honour to rise today as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to speak on behalf and in support of Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act. It is the most significant modernization of Canada's bail and sentencing laws in a generation.

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This bill is about one thing above all else: keeping Canadians safe in their homes, safe on their streets and safe in their communities. It would do two critical things. First, it would strengthen our bail system to ensure that violent and repeat offenders are kept off our streets. Second, it would modernize sentences to ensure that the punishment truly fits the crime.

On bail reform, this bill would deliver exactly what Canadians elected us to do in the last election. We would tighten bail provisions so that the system is no longer a revolving door for violent offenders. The message is clear: The principle of restraint does not mean automatic release. For the first time, courts would have to consider random or unprovoked violence when making bail decisions. They would also have to consider the number and seriousness of outstanding charges, because Canadians know that someone facing 10 charges should not be treated the same as somebody facing one.

For serious crimes, such as organized crime, home invasions and sexual assault, this bill would change the starting point. Through new reverse onus provisions, it would be on the accused to show why they deserve to be released, not on the Crown to prove why they should be detained. This stronger threshold would ensure that those charged with violent or high-impact offences face a tougher path to bail. On top of that, we would direct courts to carefully scrutinize the bail plan of the accused to ensure that it is both credible and reliable before any release is granted.

That is how we keep dangerous offenders behind bars. That is how we restore Canada's confidence in our justice system.

Let us contrast that with what the Conservatives are proposing in their so-called jail, not bail plan. It was not written by legal experts, inspired by victim advocates or made in consultation with police officers. It was written by a career politician who lost a national election and his own seat, and who now wants to sound tough without showing any real seriousness.

It is a slogan, not a solution. It is unconstitutional and reckless. It would hand provinces a legal disaster that sees dangerous offenders back on the street the moment the law is struck down, just as six Harper-era laws were struck down, one by one, by the Supreme Court of Canada during the Conservatives' time in government. Their plan would tie judges' hands, trample on the charter and make a mockery of the rule of law. It would do more for political fundraising emails than it would for community safety. Canadians deserve laws made in Canada, not bumper-sticker slogans imported from south of the border.

I will go back to Bill C-14 and its second pillar, which is sentencing reform. Bill C-14 would add new aggravating factors for crimes against first responders, for repeat violent offenders, for organized retail theft and for offences that threaten our critical infrastructure, like copper. It would allow consecutive sentences for serious crimes, like auto theft, arson, extortion and breaking and entering.

Let me be clear that if a person commits a crime or is a repeat offender, they should and would face multiple consequences, full stop. We are clarifying sentence objectives to prioritize denunciation and deterrence for repeat violent and organized crime because

Canadians are tired of seeing serious criminals walk away with light sentences.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

We have worked closely with the Government of Quebec on restricting access to house arrest for sexual offences, including those committed against children. This reform has been welcomed by police forces across Quebec.

I sincerely hope that my Conservative colleagues from Quebec will have the courage to stand up, go against the party line and vote in favour of what they were elected to do, which is to keep their communities safe. I also invite the Bloc Québécois to join us in defending our Quebec values, namely firmness, justice, and the protection of victims.

[*English*]

While the Leader of the Opposition spent his summer targeting his own MP's seat to save his job, the Minister of Justice spent his summer targeting repeat violent offenders to keep Canadians safe. What did that work achieve? It achieved a national consensus, with Conservative, New Democrat and Liberal premiers alike all calling for the swift passage of Bill C-14. When every province and territory welcomes federal justice reform, it is not politics; it is partnership and leadership.

Even municipalities are on board. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities called this bill a step forward for community safety. Police associations, mayors and victim advocates are all on board with and in favour of the passage of this bill. Who would not be? At its core, there are 80 proposed amendments to the Criminal Code to strike the right balance that Canadians expect. It is strong on safety, firm on justice and faithful to the Charter of Rights and the rule of law.

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Unfortunately, when Canadians from across the country are united, Conservatives try to divide them. The Conservatives have been peddling misinformation about one key element, namely, the principle of restraint. Let us be clear that whether or not it is written into the Criminal Code, the principle of restraint has always existed in our laws. It is not me saying that, but the Supreme Court of Canada in the 2017 Antic decision. This is not some Liberal invention, as the Conservatives would like Canadians to believe; it has been established by Supreme Court jurisprudence. It is the rule of law, yet the Conservative Party is now suggesting that we ignore a Supreme Court precedent or, even worse, that we use the notwithstanding clause to overrule the highest court in this country.

On this side of the House, we respect the rule of law and we will never trample on the Constitution simply because we do not like a court's decision. Quite frankly, we also do not go on podcasts and call the brave men and women of the RCMP “despicable”, as the Conservative leader did. We do not hide behind keyboards to attack Crown prosecutors for doing their jobs.

What are we doing instead? We are making it crystal clear to the courts that the principle of restraint would not mandate automatic release and that the requirement for the least onerous bail conditions would not apply to serious or violent offenders, who would now be subject to the reverse onus. That is the difference between responsible, steady leadership and the politics of division and resentment.

Canadians deserve to feel safe and be safe in their communities. We know that keeping Canadians safe requires actions from all orders of government. As many legal experts and frontline officers have emphasized at the justice committee, this work cannot be done by one level of government alone. The provinces must step up to ensure public safety. The federal government is stepping up and doing its part within its jurisdiction through this bail and sentencing reform act, but on its own, it is not enough. We are calling on the provinces and territories to do their part in ensuring that their courts and correctional facilities are well funded and that they have sufficient justices of the peace, Crown prosecutors and court staff to apply these stronger tools effectively to keep repeat and violent offenders off our streets.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will highlight how disappointing it was to hear the parliamentary secretary for justice being so partisan in her attacks. I thought we were getting along so well in the spirit of collaboration. Public and community safety are not a partisan issue. They never should be. Our goal is to make this bill as strong as possible, and her attacks were absolutely not appreciated.

The title of the act is the bail and sentencing reform act, yet there is only one particular charge in this 80-paragraph bill, some 35 pages long, that would address sentencing reform. It is the question of contempt of court. Despite all the rising crime across this country, why did the parliamentary secretary for justice and the minister see fit to address only contempt of court and raise the penalty from six months to two years less one day?

• (1115)

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, to come back to the comments that were made by the member opposite, this is not a partisan issue and it should not be. I totally agree with him.

The member also sits on the justice committee. Once this bill gets to the justice committee, I hope we will be able to work collaboratively to strengthen it by studying it and making all of the necessary recommendations and amendments to ensure that Canadians get the bill—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, they are heckling on the other side and I cannot hear myself speak. Would you please address this issue?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would ask members to wait for the hon. parliamentary secretary to finish her answer to the question.

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, the member opposite, who also sits on the justice committee, will have the opportunity to bring forward his recommendations for and amendments to this robust bill, so we can make it as complete as necessary to serve the interests of Canadians, ensuring—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague made several interesting points in her speech.

First, she said that the Liberals are not going to change the Constitution just because they do not like a law. In that regard, I would like to draw the House's attention to Bill 21, which was passed by the Quebec National Assembly and which the government is challenging all the way up to the Supreme Court because it disagrees with this use of the notwithstanding clause.

There is not just that. My colleague also said that this should not be a partisan debate, when she spent half her speech attacking the Conservatives' positions and saying that they are making this a partisan issue.

I would like to mention, once again, that the Bloc Québécois supports the idea of Bill C-14. We want to send it to committee to debate it because the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois have some ideas for improving it. I think this is an important issue that all parties should have a say in.

There is also another thing that the Liberals are not doing and that they should be doing to keep Quebecers and Canadians safe, and that is addressing the issue of judicial vacancies. They have been slow to appoint judges, which means that the number of detainees and inmates awaiting trial in prison is growing. That does not help address issues of violence.

Does my colleague think that perhaps, at some point, the government could shake a leg and speed up the non-partisan, neutral appointment of judges?

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, this bill includes a number of reforms to the Criminal Code. In addition, the government has been very clear. We want to have more resources in our courts. Specifically, a number of judges need to be appointed. In fact, I mentioned that in my speech. It is an approach and a reform that will of course require additional resources.

However, those resources are the responsibility of the provinces. As members are aware, the federal government writes the laws, but it is up to the provinces to administer the justice process.

[*English*]

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I mentioned already that we all know about the overrepresentation of indigenous and racialized people in the correctional system. This bill would broaden the reverse onus on many of the categories that are indigenous and marginalized people.

I wonder if the member can share what supports will be established for those who are still quite oppressed under the current system.

Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, once again, we have made it very clear that resources will be allocated to ensure that all provinces will be ready to do their work. Mental health criteria will be looked at, so we can ensure the jails are not overpopulated with people who do not benefit from the reverse onus—

• (1120)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act. This is a bill that is of paramount importance for public safety, public trust in our legal institutions, and the fundamental balance of justice and responsibility in Canada.

Bill C-14 seeks to address a concern that is largely shared by Canadians to ensure that our bail system remains fair, credible, effective and consistent with today's reality.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in cases where individuals charged with or sentenced for serious violent crimes have been released on bail, and some of them have gone on to reoffend, with tragic outcomes. This undermines public confidence and weakens the very principle of justice, which is grounded in the safety and security of all Canadians. It is precisely this imbalance

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that Bill C-14 seeks to address while at the same time safeguarding the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill C-14 enhances the rigour of the bail process for the most serious crimes, including random violence, the use of firearms, extortion, breaking and entering, and motor vehicle theft involving violence. It introduces reverse onus provisions for certain offences, which means an accused must justify why they should be released pending trial. This does not constitute an arbitrary limitation of the right to defend oneself against charges, but rather, it is a measured response in situations where public safety must come first.

The enactment of this legislation would require justices of the peace to consider the gravity and frequency of offences when making a decision. This measure will strengthen judicial decisions across the country and provide clear benchmarks depending on the gravity and repeat offending.

Bill C-14 is not limited to punishment; it also addresses prevention. Requiring that primary consideration be given to denunciation and deterrence in cases of repeat violent offences, organized motor vehicle theft, and breaking and entering sends a clear message that there will be zero tolerance for gratuitous violence and organized crime.

This bill also retains the spirit of justice and rehabilitation, which is a hallmark of the Canadian system. It clarifies the definition of “violent offence” in relation to young offenders, while ensuring that mechanisms for bail and supervision reflect the gravity of the offence and the need for rehabilitation. It also protects the public's right to information in emergencies and enables law enforcement agencies to disclose a young person's identity where there is an imminent danger. This is a common-sense, balanced and proportionate measure.

Bill C-14 also introduces new aggravating factors for crimes committed against first responders, the women and men who risk their lives every day to keep us safe. Professionals like police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and correctional officers deserve not only to be recognized, but also to be better protected under the law. This bill turns that recognition into concrete action.

The bill also modernizes the National Defence Act by aligning sentences and principles of deterrence with those in the civilian system, while respecting the specific nature of the military context.

It strengthens how fines are managed, facilitates remote appearances in certain circumstances and makes sentences more consistent for contempt of court offences. These are technical, but essential, adjustments to ensure a more effective and swifter justice system that is more in tune with the reality on the ground.

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Bill C-14 is not a partisan response. It is a call for collective responsibility. Public safety, confidence in the justice system and social stability are not partisan issues, but rather shared Canadian values. This bill reflects the government's willingness to listen to the concerns of citizens, first responders, municipalities, provinces and territories.

• (1125)

It is not a question of pitting justice against compassion; it is a question of reconciling them. By supporting this bill, we are saying that the right to safety is as fundamentally important as the right to freedom.

Bill C-14 is a decisive step toward a more consistent, more robust and more humane justice system. It protects our communities, supports our law enforcement agencies, holds offenders accountable and modernizes our institutions. Supporting this bill means supporting a Canada where freedom is exercised in accordance with the law, where compassion meets responsibility and where justice means safety for all.

I therefore invite my colleagues from all parties to support Bill C-14 so that together we can build a justice system that lives up to the Canadian values of safety, justice and respect for human dignity.

[*English*]

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question with respect to the bill and the clamping down on the availability of conditional sentences. In our respective view, this is a partial admission of the failures of the introduction of Bill C-5, which allowed for conditional sentences to be served for very serious offences. I recognize that Bill C-14 mentions sexual offences and sexual offences against children, but there is another problem in this country, and that is fentanyl. It is a scourge and there is an opiate crisis in our country.

Why did the government choose to not clamp down on the availability of conditional sentences for traffickers of fentanyl? Case law has deemed them to be merchants of death.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, the bill will be studied in committee, where it can be debated and amended. I am asking my colleagues to support this bill so that we can craft a piece of legislation that reflects Canada.

We have implemented measures at the border with the United States to address the fentanyl crisis, but I believe there are still challenges on that front.

However, we need to restore order at home and this bill corrects things in order to maintain order in a way that reflects Canadian values.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question. In my colleague's opinion, what kind of risk could the new bail rules pose in terms of regional or systemic disparities?

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his decidedly technical question.

We are now in the early days of a bill that is going to be read and sent to committee for amendment. We are updating things that were not prepared or adjusted properly during previous Parliaments. We have a new government. We have a new bill.

With the support of the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives and the other parties in the House, I think we will be able to turn this bill into a shared undertaking for Canada and ensure proper justice across the country.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my friend for raising an aspect of the legislation that is so critically important, which is recognizing our first responders. It is something that is important to the member. I know the fine work our firefighters and paramedics do for us day in and day out is also important to Canadians in all regions of the country.

Could the member provide his thoughts on how important it was to have first responders incorporated into this legislation?

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, in my opinion, first responders are very important, given all that they have done from the COVID-19 pandemic to this day. These men and women play a crucial role in our society, all across the country, from coast to coast to coast. I felt it was important that we talk about them this morning in the House to support Bill C-14. I think it is important to include them in this bill.

[*English*]

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, on October 6, the member across the way had the opportunity to vote to scrap Liberal bail, the catch-and-release ridiculousness that criminals are enjoying across this country, some of them repeatedly. I have heard in a few speeches today that the Liberals are claiming criminal justice is a non-partisan issue.

I am just wondering why the member opposite voted against our motion, which would have kept violent criminals behind bars.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if my colleague listened carefully to my speech, but I am pretty sure I talked about regulating bail procedures, because that is very important. This bill updates and fixes things that were not properly regulated before. I believe that we are here not to play partisan games, but to do what is right for Canada.

[*English*]

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege and an honour, as always, to rise on behalf of the people of Elgin—St. Thomas—London South. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for York Centre.

When I was first elected, I was shocked at how quickly crime became the issue I had to contend with as a member of Parliament, because it was the significant issue that galvanized the community of St. Thomas this summer, in many respects. A rather historic building, which happened to be my campaign office in the last election, that was 140-some odd years old was burned down by a serial arsonist out on bail. This was a symbol of a problem that Canadians have seen in communities large and small across the country, which is rampant repeat offenders unleashing what police have called chronic criminality and prolific offending onto the streets.

If we talk to any police service across the country, as I have with the police chiefs in my riding and others through my work on the justice committee, we will hear that a small number of offenders, sometimes 100 people or maybe even fewer, are responsible for 80% to 90% of the calls the police must respond to. A small group of prolific offenders is taxing communities, taxing and straining police resources, and terrifying and terrorizing communities.

They are making it so people do not feel safe walking streets they once could comfortably, safely and freely walk down at any hour of the day or night. People do not feel comfortable letting their children go out to a mall. People are forced to take other forms of transportation because they do not feel safe on public transit.

Just this morning, I saw that London, Ontario, is promoting police officers being on public transit. I am grateful to the brave men and women in the London Police Service, the St. Thomas Police Service, the Aylmer Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police who are forced to deal with this, but they have had to deal with a problem that has by and large been a consequence of federal government policy.

We have heard testimony for several weeks now from police associations, police chiefs and victims' rights groups, and almost all of them have pointed directly to Bill C-75. This was legislation from the Liberal government that, among other changes, codified something called the principle of restraint, a provision of the Criminal Code that makes it easier for repeat offenders to get out on bail under conditions that are very lax.

I bring this up because for months, when we have raised these issues in this House, the government has said not to worry and that bail reform legislation is coming, but this was not a significant priority to the extent that other bills were. We saw Bill C-9, which was the first priority, as far as justice legislation goes, of the government. That came out and was tabled in this House weeks before the bail legislation was. Now we see Bill C-14.

I will say first and foremost that I am grateful the Liberal government recognizes there is a crisis unfolding in our criminal justice system. I am grateful that the Liberal government has finally responded to the calls from law enforcement, municipal governments, victims' rights groups, ordinary citizens and Conservative members of Parliament that action is needed.

What the Liberals have delivered falls short in some very key areas, and I think this is important because they said they needed time because they wanted to get it right. They needed time because they wanted to cover all the bases. We had before the justice committee on Tuesday the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police,

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Thomas Carrique, a very decorated officer. He is also the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and commissioner Carrique said that he was disappointed the legislation did not tackle sentencing in a meaningful way.

The bill was supposed to tackle bail and sentencing, and with the exception of beefing up the penalty for contempt of court, it has not really touched sentencing head-on when we are talking about sentences for violent offences. That is a key shortcoming of this bill.

On the principle of restraint, we have another key issue, which is that the bill offers, and I will read it precisely, the following language on the principle of restraint:

For greater certainty, section 493.1 does not require the accused to be released.

The Liberals are basically giving a little asterisk for judges and police officers to tell them not to worry and that the principle in the Criminal Code that says we must release people at the earliest opportunity and on the least onerous conditions does not mean they have to release them at all.

• (1135)

Everyone knows that. No matter how critical someone is of the justice system, they know that 100% of people do not get bail, although the Liberals have certainly tried to get as close to that figure as possible it seems. This is a clarifying note; it is not a meaningful change. The Liberals are just saying that it does not mean what we think it does, that this section does not mean what police officers have been saying it has done to them and what attorneys are saying it has done to the justice system.

To be fair, the Liberals made some acknowledgement that there is a problem when they expanded the reverse onus. This is something I welcome, but when this bill goes before committee, it is incumbent on the Liberal government to accept the very significant measures Conservatives have already proposed in this House that would be genuinely and seriously tough on crime, measures that would provide real solutions, real resolutions and concrete reforms to fix the Liberal bail system.

For example, the principle of restraint needs to first and foremost be a principle that makes public safety its primary obligation, not the rights of the accused but the right of the public to feel safe and secure in their own communities. This is very important, and it is a direct response to months and months of consultation by Conservative members with law enforcement officials, who have said they feel ignored by the government and that morale has taken a massive hit. Officers feel it is not even worth arresting people, knowing that under the law on the books right now, they are just going to be released.

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For years, Liberal government members, when we have sounded the alarm about this, have said that it is not really an issue. They have attempted to gaslight Canadians into thinking the problem is not as bad as it, which makes me ask the question about Bill C-14 of why now. Are the Liberals finally acknowledging that they got it wrong with Bill C-75, Bill C-48 and Bill C-5?

With each of these bills, there has been a trend. Some members of law enforcement have looked at them and said they looked like they had some good things in them, but years later, when they see the application of them, they realize they did not actually deliver on the promises made and what the government said it would do. That is, of course, a concern I have with Bill C-14, as with any legislation. We need to make sure these are not just things that exist on paper that do not translate in the real world.

We have given the government the answers. We have provided three pieces of legislation in this House already. While the Liberals were still trying to figure out where they wanted to go with Bill C-14, my colleague from Oxford introduced the jail not bail act, Bill C-242. It would put front and centre the role of public safety when talking about bail. It would also prohibit someone from serving as a surety to help other accused offenders get out on bail if they themselves have been convicted of a serious criminal offence within the last 10 years. Reform of the surety system does not appear at all in Bill C-14, which is another shortcoming that has already been identified by witnesses testifying before the justice committee in its bail study.

We also have, from my colleague from Lethbridge, Bill C-246, which would put consecutive sentences in place for sexual offenders. Heinous criminals who have been convicted should be serving their sentences consecutively, which is a proposal we offered to the government. I ask the Liberals to please take our idea and put it in law if they are serious about these measures.

My colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola introduced Bill C-225, which would create new offences pertaining to intimate partner violence, provisions that Jennifer Dunn of the London Abused Women's Centre told the justice committee yesterday should be passed by the House of Commons to protect women. Victims are being failed by the justice system as it is now, and Ms. Dunn said in her testimony that many of the women she sees do not even refer to the justice system as the justice system anymore.

I am committed to working with government members if they are serious about wanting to reform and genuinely fix these problems, but they need to acknowledge their role in creating them. They need to acknowledge what law enforcement has been saying, which is that so much of what we are dealing with on the streets now, which has led to Bill C-14, is a consequence of Liberal laws, notably Bill C-75.

I am committing to the people of Canada, the people in my riding and the members of this House that I will work in the justice committee to beef this bill up to what it should be, but Canadians deserve more.

• (1140)

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

Madam Speaker, it is interesting listening to the member. If he is true to his words, at the very least he will recognize that, at the end of the day, there have been extensive consultations done. That is the reason why, when the Prime Minister made the commitment to Canadians to bring in bail reform legislation, we could not just snap our fingers and have it appear. It requires a great deal of effort.

We now have the legislation before us. We want to see this legislation become law before the end of the year. Would the member not agree, if this issue is so critically important to him and the Conservative caucus, that the best way to ensure we deliver on bail reform, all of us collectively, is by allowing the legislation to move forward? For example, allowing it to get to committee so we can have the discussions the member raised today would be a positive step.

Would the member agree that this is the type of legislation Canadians deserve and that we should make an effort to get it passed—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, I already said, in my remarks, that I look forward to working on this bill in committee. I welcome the member for Winnipeg North joining us for a meeting, if he would like to contribute.

I find it interesting that the member for Winnipeg North said, in a previous intervention in the House, “Bill C-75 actually made it harder to be released on bail.” That is the precise opposite of what law enforcement told us in our consultations.

I would encourage the Liberal government, if it is so committed to this, to support the three bills I mentioned by the members for Oxford, Lethbridge and Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives would love to import the so-called three strikes law. In the United States, a third conviction means life in prison. It is causing the prison population to explode, and it is not reducing crime. Experts tell us that crime stems from the housing crisis, addictions and inadequate services.

Why are the Conservatives so focused on a policy that does not work and does not reduce crime, instead of adopting an approach based on evidence, rigour, accountability and, above all, prevention?

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

This is a debate about the Liberal government's legislation, Bill C-14.

However, on three-strikes laws, we put a motion before the House that would call for one. I would ask my hon. colleague if his constituents agree about this for people who repeatedly flout and violate the law, terrorize communities and are back on the street.

How many strikes does he think are enough before they should be kept behind bars?

• (1145)

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a great speech by my colleague.

I just spoke with a councillor from Prince George yesterday. She is in town for FCM. Cori Ramsay told me a story about being on a ride-along with the local RCMP in Prince George. They caught someone breaking into the local Value Village and had them arrested. She saw the person go to jail. Within an hour and a half, that person was back on the streets again. Then, on the same ride-along, four hours later, the same person was rearrested. That is real life for Prince George and the issue around bail being issued so many times.

Is the member confident that Bill C-14, in its current state, would truly address the “bail not jail” revolving door the Liberals have created?

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, sadly, the member's experiences in his community are not rare. They are the same things I hear from the police officers I work with in my riding and what my colleagues have been hearing as well. This makes it all the more shameful that the Liberal government has ultimately ignored what they have been saying for so long. Even now, it is falling short.

I would love nothing other than for Bill C-14 to work and answer these key concerns, but it needs a lot more. That is why the committee process will be very important. I intend to put forward these solutions, and I hope the Liberals do not obstruct them.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, finally, after years of us pleading with the Liberal government, the Liberals are trying to do something about bail and sentencing in Canada. If the Liberals admit there is a problem, we know there is a problem. The problem is crime and chaos on our streets. Violent criminals, gang violence, guns and auto thefts are terrorizing Canadians. Like many Torontonians, I get up in the morning and wonder if I am going to see my car, which is why I had to buy one of those big clubs to lock my wheel. We used to see those only in the movies but not anymore. This is after my insurance company told me that, unless I install a tracking device at their expense, my insurance rate will go up. How is it possible that the Liberals cannot stop this? The criminals know they can get away with stealing a Jeep and take it to the port of Montreal, where, the very same night, it will be on its way to the Middle East. My provincial counterpart, the Solicitor General of Ontario, had his car stolen.

I love our country very much. I remember what life was like before the 2015 Liberal government. We need two timelines like BC and AD. We need before Liberals, BL, and after Liberals, AL. I remember times before the Liberals, when Canada was one of the safest countries in the world.

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I often talk about my first love. My first love is the city of Toronto. In the time before Liberals, I felt safe walking anywhere in the city of Toronto, on any street, at any time of day or night. Safety and the feeling of safety add so much to our quality of life. After a decade of the Liberals, I do not feel safe anymore in multiple neighbourhoods in the city of Toronto after dark, even in some of the safest neighbourhoods. North York in north Toronto is being terrorized by gang violence, gun crime and drug-related shootings almost daily. It is all done by criminals, and it is all done with illegal guns. The justice committee heard from the OPP commissioner this week that almost all gun violence is perpetrated by criminals with illegal guns, not the legal guns the government seeks to confiscate from law-abiding citizens.

How did we go from being one of the safest countries in the world to this? How did Toronto, one of the safest metropolises in the world, lose that sense of safety? Toronto is becoming Gotham City. It is a combination of many things. It is for sure the economic decline thanks to the Liberals. That is part of it, for sure. People are hopeless. CTV reported, the other day, that young people cannot land a minimum-wage job anymore. I was told by a Toronto police officer that the going rate for stealing a car is \$500. Imagine a young offender stealing one car per night and that is how they are making their living.

It is not just because our economy is in the gutter. Young offenders know that there are no consequences for what they do. I remember first-year criminal law like it was yesterday. What is the purpose behind sentencing? What is the policy? First and foremost, it is deterrence. It is the threat of legal consequences and possibly jail. However, now there are no consequences.

That is where I will start in taking this bill apart. In its current form, it falls very short. The prevalence of young offenders in crime and gang violence is very troubling. Participation in auto theft rings is just shocking. We would think the Liberals would want to do something about it, but no. There is no sentencing reform to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. They closed a loophole and clarified what violence is for the purpose of custody but did not increase any sentences.

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I want to be clear. I do not want a kid who breaks a vending machine to be part of the correctional justice system. However, for murder, for instance, custodial sentences for youth are limited to four years. They do pre-trial custody and get two-for-one. By the time they are sentenced, they are barely in custody for a year. Then they come out as much better criminals and terrorize the community.

• (1150)

There is another issue I would like to flag, and this one is very special to me because we are a democracy and respect the rule of law. One of the big failures of Bill C-75, the previous Liberal crime bill, was that it created a diversionary regime for offences involving failures to comply with court orders. For instance, offences such as failure to appear in court or breach of an undertaking, or even breach of bail, may go unpunished. That is what Bill C-75 by the Liberals provided for. It basically allows Crown attorneys to divert or remove such offences from the docket. Crown attorneys, unfortunately, often do this. Bill C-14 is completely silent on this. We had the OPP commissioner at the justice committee this week. He said that this is an affront to the rule of law, and the Liberals will not correct their own mistake.

Another major failure is not fixing a bail condition that every police association across the country is telling them to do: cash bail. I am going to explain this. Right now, in almost all cases, a surety is not required to post a cash bail. They just make a promise to pay in the event there is a breach of bail conditions. Often, they do not have the money and no one comes after them. It is meaningless. We now have this class of professional sureties that help criminals get out on bail. If they were made to post cash bail, this practice would end. A surety should have some skin in the game.

Finally, on bail reform, here we go again. We already reversed the onus for a number of offences under Bill C-48, but people are still caught and released even with those offences. Reversing the onus is not enough. What is missing is the burden of proof, a definition to direct the courts as to what the burden is that the accused must meet in order to be released. What is very important, also, is that, without such a burden, we do not have consistent application among courts. We have courts in different jurisdictions and different provinces. While they are directed to reverse the onus and place it on the accused, they are not sure what the burden they actually have to meet is. That is something every police force and every police association has brought up, and it is something that I sincerely hope we can address at committee.

Another major problem with the bill with respect to bail reform is the ladder principle. The ladder principle basically directs the court that the accused must be released at the earliest opportunity. The problem, specifically noted by the Police Association of Ontario this week, is that the ladder principle is not eliminated in reverse-onus offences. Just two days ago, my colleagues in the room with us heard testimony from the Police Association of Ontario asking for this very clearly. It said that we need to codify the fact that the ladder principle does not apply in a reverse-onus offence.

Finally, Bill C-14 is completely quiet on parole. In Canada, one is, essentially, automatically eligible for parole after serving a third of their sentence. We heard from a criminal defence attorney last

week in the justice committee. Even he, a criminal defence attorney, thought it was lunacy that we see criminals sentenced to a custodial sentence do a third of their sentence, leave, reoffend, get sentenced again, do another third of their sentence and then leave again. That is a practice that we need to put an end to.

This week, the justice committee heard from Meechelle Best and Ron Best from Manitoba, parents whose daughter was killed by an intoxicated driver in a car accident. He was out on bail and had breached his bail condition. There was a warrant for his arrest. That was not the first time. He had breached bail before and got out on bail again. It was one of the most moving and saddest testimonies I have ever heard.

We cannot bring Kellie back, but we can prevent the next atrocity. We need to fix the bill. I am asking the government, in good faith, to work with us to fix Bill C-14, which is currently a flawed bill.

• (1155)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the latter principle is addressed in the bill, and it would not apply to reverse onus cases.

The member made an interesting comment about young offenders. He said that, when they are incarcerated for a period of a year or so, they come out as even more hardened criminals. I thought that was an interesting observation that he highlighted.

For this bill, we consulted with a lot of stakeholders and experts in this area, and we are trying to get the balance right. I would like to ask the member if he thinks that serving a sentence makes young people become even more hardened criminals. What would be a solution that is appropriate to make sure our young people can live a good, successful life and get out of a life of crime?

Roman Baber: Madam Speaker, I had my first legal gig as a young law student at the community legal clinic at the law school in London. I dealt with a lot of young offenders. This is what I really want to stress: We have to delineate, or separate, those who got into the system because of a good-faith error, such as those who broke a vending machine or those who stole their parents' car on the day of their prom. We do not want those folks in the system. However, there are also the hardened criminals, those who commit repeat violent offences or those who are participating in gangs, who are in the auto theft rings.

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They need to understand the concept of deterrence. It is something they do not understand right now. We accomplish deterrence by increasing the prospect of jail for serious offences. That is required right now, and it is something that Bill C-14 does not do.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have long been troubled by the fact that sureties, and the member raised this issue, do not have to put forward the money themselves, and people do not go after them. It happens that my stepson is a criminal prosecutor for the Province of British Columbia. One thing that is maddening is that, if someone got their mother to put up the bail money, she could lose her house because, although he is the one who broke the bail conditions, she is responsible. I do not know that we can fix this in federal legislation.

I am asking the member quite honestly if managing bail is a provincial matter. How is it that sureties do not necessarily have to put up the money, and that we do not go after it if bail conditions are broken?

Roman Baber: Madam Speaker, I am mindful of the member's concern. We need to remember why we are here. We are here because the Liberal government finally woke up to the fact that bail needs to be fixed. One of the challenges we have is the surety regime. I am here to say that we can look at how other jurisdictions address this, but if a surety is going to be meaningless, if there is no risk of forfeiting that deposit or collecting on that promise, then the entire component of bail in that respect loses all relevance and meaning.

I can imagine situations where parents put up a bit of money, typically not a high amount, depending on the offence, and they do their job and honour their undertaking to supervise their child or sibling to make sure they do not breach their bail conditions. We have to make bail meaningful again.

• (1200)

James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of sitting on the justice committee with the member. He has referred to a defence lawyer and a police commissioner, both of whom came to committee and asked us to pass this bill. My question for him is this: Will he comply with their request to move quickly and agree to support this bill?

Roman Baber: Madam Speaker, this week, I heard the OPP commissioner, Thomas Carrique, agree with me that there are at least four, five or six serious concerns, which I have articulated today, with this bill.

I respect the member opposite. I commit to working with him in good faith in trying to fix this bill at committee.

James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to point out that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

I am pleased to stand on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, as I always am, but in particular I am pleased to speak to a bill of such importance to not only my community but also communities across the country.

Bill C-14 is the result of an overwhelming effort from our Minister of Justice, the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, the Department of Justice and the government. They spent the last six

months travelling across the country to meet with stakeholders in the court system, the law enforcement community, lawyers and the Crown attorney. This is the product of that hard work.

We have seen the response from members of the law enforcement community and from the justice system at large who have come out supporting this bill overwhelmingly. I am going to keep asking the opposition whether its members will do the same. I find it very ironic, frankly, that the Conservatives opposite spend so much time asking for something and then complain about it when they get it, which is what we are dealing with on Bill C-14.

I will talk about two or three major issues.

One issue is an unfortunate piece in all of this, which is the rhetoric. This matter is non-partisan, as a number of my colleagues said earlier today. Unfortunately, it is wrought with members of Parliament trying to score political points on an issue and in an area for which they should be doing the exact opposite. Just this week, at the justice committee, we had a number of witnesses, who were called by the Conservatives, I might add, and this is a point that must be remembered. One of those witnesses asked that there, please, be no politics and no sound bites. There is the rhetoric, the rhyming, the “bail not jail” and the “catch and release”. All of these catchy phrases serve no purpose other than to undermine the integrity of our justice system and strike fear in the hearts of the public, when it should not be doing that. I am asking the Conservatives to stop, and this is an opportunity for them to make that change.

The speaker before me referred to my city of Toronto as “Gotham City”. I do not know. Maybe he still watches *Batman*, but it is just embarrassing when these guys get up to say ridiculous things like that. It does not get to the heart of what we are talking about. It creates an impression that is entirely false.

The other thing I want to address is that, every single time these discussions take place in that manner, it suggests that some members in the chamber are less concerned about keeping our communities safe than others, which is absolute, utter nonsense. To any member who wants to look me in the face, either here or out in the hallway, to tell me that I do not care about the safety of my community and the residents in Etobicoke—Lakeshore, let us go outside and do it right now, because that is absolutely false. They know it is false, yet they continue to do it over and over again. It is completely unacceptable.

Let us talk about an example. Bill C-75, the bill that the Conservatives constantly talk about as the piece of legislation that somehow undermined the integrity of the justice system, did the exact opposite. It strengthened the laws for intimate partner violence. When they talk about Bill C-75, they fail to mention that.

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I have talked to frontline officers in the city of Toronto in 22 Division, and I am very proud of its membership. I work with them on a regular basis. I support them every way I can, and they know that. Bill C-75 codified a decision from the Supreme Court of Canada called the principle of restraint. If members go to section 493 of the Criminal Code, they can read the provisions. Nowhere in that section does it say that courts are to do what the Conservatives suggests they do, which is to release multiple-offending criminals out on the street. It is an absolute falsehood, and they need to stop.

• (1205)

The witness the previous speaker spoke to appeared before committee last night. He is a renowned criminal lawyer in the city of Toronto, who has been practising for decades. His evidence was that the principle of restraint is nothing new. All they did was codify it. I have been making the same arguments on behalf of my clients in courtrooms for decades. Nothing has changed. It is a red herring. Those are my words, not his, but he agreed with me. They need to stop. I would encourage them to actually go read the bill, to go read that section.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

James Maloney: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage members to take some time to read it. Having said that, this bill does enhance the provisions in that section of the Criminal Code.

An hon. member: Jail not bail, buddy. Jail not bail.

James Maloney: Mr. Speaker, there we go. There is the rhyming. It is very productive.

Bill C-14 creates a regime that is going to help our frontline police officers. It is going to help our Crown attorneys, and it is going to make sure they are properly informed on what the principle of restraint actually means so it can be applied properly. When I speak with those frontline officers, unfortunately, the rhetoric of the world permeates their environment as well. What this new legislation would do is explain what the principle of restraint is. It would enhance the provisions of Bill C-75, and it is going to make an existing set of bail laws, which are already very good, better. They are good, because another Conservative witness came before the committee just this week and said that the existing bail laws in Canada right now are very good. The issue is enforcement, which takes me to my next point.

We are constantly being accused by the members opposite of trying to blame the provinces. We are not blaming the provinces; we are trying to teach the members of the opposition some civics. There are jurisdictional boundaries that the federal government has to follow, the province has to follow and municipalities have to follow. We are responsible for amending the Criminal Code. The provinces, which in my case is Ontario, are responsible for funding the court system, hiring Crown attorneys, building jails, and making sure there is the capacity to do what it has to do. Right now, it does not, and every witness who has come before the committee has agreed with that. The problem is that, if we do not work in conjunction with the provinces, or they do not work in conjunction with us, the problem could potentially become more problematic, because the weight of the new laws on a system that is already

overburdened could create a whole new set of problems it is not prepared to deal with.

On Monday afternoon, we had a Crown attorney from British Columbia who agreed with that. We have had members of the law enforcement community who agree with that. We have had defence lawyers who agree with that. Everybody who is in the system agrees with that, because they understand it. This is not a case of pointing fingers and assigning blame. It is a case of people accepting responsibility for their own actions and what they can do. This is what this piece of legislation does.

If the Province of Ontario, in my case, is prepared to work with us, it needs to adopt these laws. In the riding of the justice critic for the Conservatives, there was a decision released just yesterday, or just this week, by a local judge who said, and I am sure he has probably appeared before him, that the system is broken because the jails are over capacity. We cannot even put people in there. The system is under such duress.

Building jails is the responsibility of the provincial government because it is the justices of the peace and the provincial governments that are responsible for this. In fact, this judge, and I would encourage the members opposite to go read the decision, increased the sentence so he could put them in a federal jail because there is capacity. The province is under-funding the system.

We talked about Bill C-48. Bill C-48 was adopted unanimously in the House. It is a positive piece of legislation. It helped the system. It strengthened the system, but we do not have any data on that, because data collection is also the responsibility of the provincial government. We need them to work with the federal government, the municipalities and the police forces so we can get this data, and any changes that need to be made at the provincial level can be done.

This is something that has been admitted by all of the witnesses who appear before the committee as well. To see the effectiveness of these laws, we need the co-operation of the provincial governments. They need to do their part and step up so we can make the system better as a whole.

• (1210)

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke about principles of restraint, but he failed to mention Jonny, my daughter's boyfriend, who was stabbed to death by a violent repeat offender out on five different charges on bail, including attempted murder, all because of Bill C-75. Way to go.

Will Bill C-14, a bill that admits Bill C-75 was a failure, prevent cases like that of Jonny from happening? If not, will he admit it is a weak bill and needs improvement?

James Maloney: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say how sorry I am. The heart of every member of the House, as I said earlier, goes out to people like that. I want to live in a world where that is not going to happen, just like the member does, and just like Jonny did. However, using these examples to suggest that the entirety of the system is broken is, with respect, unfair and a mis-characterization.

I am not familiar with the details of the case, so I cannot comment on it. The criminal should not have been out on bail. However, I would like to know what the circumstances were in the bail court, how many bail hearings there were that day, what the training of the justice of the peace was and what the Crown attorney's responsibilities were that day, because this is where the system is really under duress and is breaking down. We have to prevent situations like that from occurring ever again.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for his speech. I work with that member on various issues, including those related to Tibet, but we are dealing with something else today.

As my colleague knows, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-14 and wants to refer it to committee. However, we are apprehensive. We will propose amendments in committee. There will be discussions and hard work. The bill may be amended in committee.

Our fear is what will happen when the bill returns here from committee. If it is amended, but the Liberals do not like the amendments, they might use the House of Commons to cancel the amendments to the bill made in committee. That is what happened with Bill C-3. That scares me because, if they can do that, then what is the point of working in committee?

Can my colleague assure us that the committee's work on Bill C-14 will be respected?

[English]

James Maloney: Mr. Speaker, I also enjoy working with the hon. member on important issues like Tibet. His question was an excellent one.

We are prepared to work with all parties at committee to make sure the bill would be adopted in a fashion best suited for Canadians. We are open to amendments; we are always open to amendments. That is what the committee process is for. We respect the process of committees, and we respect the process of the House. The ultimate goal of course is to get the bill passed as quickly as possible, and that includes getting it through committee.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member raised a very important point about data. I heard about that quite a bit this summer. Just the other day, a Conservative member was yelling out at me, asking how many people have been released on bail this year. I said we do not know, because that is not information the federal government has, nor do we know what types of crimes those people who end up being released more often have committed. Several times we have asked the premiers of the provinces to provide this information so we can make the best informed decisions for public safety in our country.

I would like to hear more from the member about how data could provide us with better informed decision-making at the federal level.

• (1215)

James Maloney: Mr. Speaker, that was an excellent question. It gets to the nub of the issue, because without data we cannot make

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further enhancements and the provinces cannot make further enhancements.

As I was saying in my previous response, we need to know the circumstances in which offences are subject to criminals' being released: how busy the courts are, what the workloads are for the Crown attorney and what the capacity is in the court system. This is the data we need as a country. The federal government can play a role in aggregating data, but the data comes from the provinces. It is as simple as that because they control the system. Without that data, further steps become more and more challenging, so I want to thank the member for the question. This is an issue we need to keep pushing forward.

A witness who actually was the commissioner of the OPP came to committee and talked about getting that data, because he said that Bill C-48 was a good bill but that we do not know how good because we do not have the provinces collecting the data.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today to address what I believe is a major issue, one that has been talked about at great length.

I am going to go back to the last federal election. The constituents of Winnipeg North looked to the political entities and made a decision to support certain specific policy ideas and initiatives. The Prime Minister talked a great deal about building Canada strong, about one economy and about looking at ways to expand trade beyond the United States, but the Liberals also spent a great deal of time talking about bail reform.

We understand the concerns Canadians have regarding safer communities. That is why the Prime Minister and every Liberal member of Parliament have spent a great deal of time and energy dealing with the subject. Two ministers were assigned the responsibility of bringing forward bail legislation that reflects what we were hearing at the doors. Ministers have done extensive consultations on substantial issues like extortion, violent repeat offenders, automobile theft, sexual assault and many other crimes that take place in our communities.

The legislation is not only a reflection of what Canadians have been telling Liberal members of Parliament over the last number of months; it is also a reflection of what stakeholders have been telling the government. It has widespread support throughout our nation, I would suggest. That does not mean it is absolutely perfect legislation; I do not think anyone is saying that, but I will continue to advocate that if members are serious when they talk about the need for bail reform, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever that we cannot deliver that to Canadians before the end of the year.

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I do not know how many Conservatives I have heard talking about the importance of bail reform. They are challenging the government to bring it forward. It is here, and we are debating it. I am now going to turn the tables and tell my Conservative friends that if they want to deliver on bail reform, we have the opportunity to do just that.

I would remind all members of the House, but in particular my Conservative friends, that this is not something one political party is talking about; it is something Canadians want, and they want Parliament to deliver it. In a minority situation, that requires a whole lot more co-operation. We have demonstrated that very clearly. Now the opposition has the opportunity to show Canadians it is more than just talk on the issue and will, in fact, respond.

The end of the year is coming quickly. There is other very important legislation before the House. There is Bill C-3, which deals with citizenship, and a Superior Court order has demanded that the legislation has to pass by November 20. Bill C-4 has just come from committee and would legitimize a tax break for over 20 million Canadians. Bill C-14 is before us, and I understand that the official opposition wants and is demanding bail reform legislation, but we all know it does not take much to frustrate the legislation.

● (1220)

We have a budget coming up on November 4, which will also demand the time of the chamber. There are substantial things before us, and that is why I look to my friends across the way, because they will ultimately determine whether in fact we are going to be able to have bail reform before the end of the year. It is up to the Conservatives to make that determination.

Let me encourage members in the strongest way possible that if we want bail reform legislation and the opportunities to have extensive discussions at the committee level, we need the bail reform legislation to pass quickly to committee. This would not take away from democracy within the chamber; in fact I can cite what members said earlier today when I raised the issue about the end: Let us have a goal and pass the legislation, new bail laws, before the end of the year.

Today a number of Conservatives have said that, yes, that is something we can achieve. I am going to call their bluff and challenge them to allow the bill to go to committee. That would mean they could continue to discuss it if they want to once it comes back at third reading, but it would also provide for detailed discussions and debate.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member says that this is the second day. All she has to do is check with some of her colleagues on the private member's bill.

I do not know his riding, but a member talked about passing his private member's bill and about how substantial it is for legislative changes, which it is, and he wanted it passed unanimously that day. He was trying to speed it up, and there is a limit of two hours of debate before it goes to committee. Members cannot have it both ways.

I would be happy if debate were limited to two hours like that on the private member's bill was, but the point is that we are not saying members cannot debate the bill. The bill can be debated in committee. It can be debated endlessly at third reading, but if the Conservatives are genuine and they want bail reform to pass before the end of the year, they need to allow the legislation to pass. They cannot continue to filibuster legislation.

Bill C-2 was debated for over 18 hours. The opposition members are not a bunch of dummies. They understand the optics of filibustering. They understand that if they want to deliver for Canadians on bail reform, they need to allow the legislation to go to committee. Instead of trying to politicize the issue, they need to allow the legislation to deliver for Canadians. We need to put the interests of Canadians ahead of political parties; that is what I would say to my Conservative friends across the way.

The federal government is stepping up to the plate in a real and tangible way. Stakeholders have been very clear on that. We have worked with provinces, other stakeholders and average Canadians. The legislation before us is a true reflection, and that is why it is receiving the type of support it is. It needs to go to committee.

However, it is not just the federal government that needs to step up. I will read a quote from the Winnipeg Free Press from September. It is referring to the government in Manitoba:

The NDP has spoken frequently about its commitment to safer communities. It has announced more funding for police and has supported federal efforts to tighten bail laws.

But those measures mean little if there are not enough prosecutors to move cases through the courts in a timely manner...

The cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of investment. Failing to fund the Crown's office means risking collapsed trials

The point is that the federal government, the provincial government and law enforcement officers who do their job through municipalities all need to deliver for Canadians.

● (1225)

The Prime Minister and government have now presented substantial legislation to reform the bail system. That would have a profoundly positive impact on making our communities safer. I ask the Conservatives to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. There is a lot of back-and-forth in that exchange. Let us try to keep the heckles to a minimum.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

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Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not even know where to start with the member opposite, but I would point out that the bill is an admission of Liberal failure. We are calling for the repeal of Liberal bail law. We are calling for jail, not bail for repeat offenders.

We have heard from communities across this country. One example is the city of Vancouver, where 43 individuals caused 1,100 police interactions in one year. It is not that we have a lot of criminals in this country, but the criminals we do have are prolific because the Liberals keep letting them out on bail. What does the member have to say about that?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I say that it is grossly exaggerated in terms of how the Conservatives often approach crime-related issues. It appears that they are more concerned about partisan political shots, as well as slogans like “jail as opposed to bail” in order to raise money, than they are about the interests of Canadians. We saw that in the type of question we just had.

At the end of the day, the responsibility for the types of things the member just made reference to is not just on Ottawa. Provinces need to step up, and municipalities need to step up. We need to work together. Obviously, we need to put Canadians' interests ahead of political—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Winnipeg North for doing such a great job getting our Conservative colleagues all worked up. It happens every time: As soon as he gets up to give a speech, emotions run high in the opposition benches. It livens things up a bit in the House of Commons, and we should be grateful to him for that, even if we do not always agree with what he says.

As we have been saying all morning, I think we all agree on the principle of Bill C-14. We also agree that it needs to go to committee so that we can improve it and discuss certain points that concern us.

The Bloc Québécois agrees with the idea, as I said, but we have made some suggestions for reducing crime in Quebec and Canada in order to make neighbourhoods safer. Crime is not committed only by petty criminals. We also have to think about criminal organizations.

One of the Bloc Québécois's recommendations was to create an organized crime registry and another was to facilitate the seizure of assets. We are discussing reversing the burden of proof, but that burden of proof could be reversed in relation to property obtained by crime, so as to avoid being unable to recover property obtained by crime—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I appreciate the kind words.

The Bloc party is in a very interesting position. Eventually, Bill C-14 will go to a standing committee. There is a chance that we are not going to be able to get a consensus on all issues, which means that at times there will be the need for a vote. I suspect that any political entity sitting around the committee table would play a very important role and make sure there is some balance. We would be looking for opposition parties to co-operate and look at how we could deliver the best legislation possible to serve Canadians, going out of the committee. I would encourage my friends in the Bloc to work very closely with the ministers.

• (1230)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am saying this from the bottom of my non-partisan heart: The last exchange was unfortunate. I have been in Bill C-14 debates; the hon. Minister of Justice spoke yesterday, and there have been some really respectful exchanges. I want to mention something said yesterday by the hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, himself a criminal prosecutor with lots of experience. He said that he was enjoying the fact that the Minister of Justice is open to change, and they are having good exchanges and an openness to try to find consensus.

Therefore, I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary if he thinks it is a good idea to pretend that we do not actually have reasons to work together in this place and just attack the Conservatives for rhyming. I hate the rhyming too, by the way.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments. Yesterday, the shadow critic was here, and there was a wonderful experience of just watching and listening and of a sense of co-operation. I then posed a question of the shadow critic. In his response, he was open-minded in terms of potentially even seeing the bill become law before the end of the year, and that was encouraging.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss the government's proposed changes to bail and sentencing in Bill C-14. In order to better understand the bill, we need to reflect on how we made it to this point, because while the Liberals are now acknowledging that bail reform is needed, they are hoping Canadians will forget that they have been in power for a decade and introduced the legislation that severely jeopardized the safety of Canadians.

Before I go on, I want to say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Peace River—Westlock.

For years now, Canadian families, communities and neighbourhoods have witnessed the catch-and-release crime wave that has swept across our nation. The Liberals talk about the need for judicial independence, yet with Bill C-75, they took what used to be a judge's decision on granting bail, after weighing and considering previous case law, and put their thumb on the scale by codifying the principle of least restraint, which directs courts and police to release accused persons “at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions”.

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For six years, the Liberals have told Canadians that they have not ruined the bail system and are not responsible for catch-and-release policies that have led to a spike in crime. Let us look at some stats from when they have been in power. From 2015 to 2023, auto theft went up 45%, extortion went up 357% and gang-related homicides went up 78%. Cars are being stolen from people's driveways while they sleep. Violent home break-ins have become so bad that police issue warnings for families to leave their keys at the door in the hopes that home invaders would not come further into the house and endanger the people living there. Mr. Speaker, talk about creating a new norm, not only of fear but of helplessness, as Canadians feel that they are left to fend for themselves.

To make matters worse, the Liberals added Bill C-5, which allowed for repermitting conditional sentence orders or house arrest for serious offences, including sexual assault. In many cases, this allows violent abusers back into the homes and communities of the people they are a danger to. It also allows for kidnappers, human traffickers and people who abduct children under 14 to be given house arrest. Letting a violent abuser back into the very home of the people they are a danger to is not compassionate, despite what the Liberals have claimed over the last several years.

Earlier this month, the Prime Minister said that letting violent sexual assault abusers off on house arrest was wrong and that they intended to fix it. It took three years for the Liberal government to figure out that letting people convicted of sexual assault serve house arrest was a bad thing. No intimate partner, family or community should have to live in fear that someone who commits sexual assault could be given house arrest. While the Liberals have continued to put the rights of violent criminals ahead of those of victims, Conservatives believe in putting the rights and protections of victims first.

Members opposite me from the Liberal benches will now say that they are bringing forward positive changes and that Canadians should be satisfied. They will say that repealing the principle of restraint in Bill C-75 would not solve the problem since there is precedent set by court rulings, but what they fail to own up to is that they are the ones who created the precedent in the first place.

In Bill C-14, the Liberals are proposing a change to clarify that the principle of restraint does not require release. Why would the government need to clarify that its legislation does not require violent offenders to be released unless it currently does just that? Having said that, I note that this clarification does not repeal the "least onerous conditions" set out in the Liberals' catch-and-release bail laws; rather, it still provides a pathway to release and remains the directive that is to be applied.

Let us be clear: Conservatives have been advocating for changes to the broken Liberal bail system. We have advocated for tools our judges can use to keep repeat violent offenders off the streets. We have advocated for changes so that the brave men and women who serve as first responders and police officers do not have to arrest the same repeat violent offenders over and over again.

• (1235)

While Bill C-14 does provide for outcomes that would prevent the overly broad catch-and-release policies that allow for repeat vi-

olent offenders to be withheld, it falls short of an actual repeal of the policy that made it possible in the first place.

For years now, together with my colleagues, I have stood in this place and shared the stories of what is happening in our communities and of the victims of the Liberals' soft-on-crime approach. Their broken bail system started six years ago. It has taken six years and too many devastating accounts for the Liberals to finally act and put forward any changes that would reverse course on their disastrous bail legislation. What is the excuse for not acting sooner?

Members should make no mistake: Conservatives have been right on this all along. We have never lost sight of the victims of violent crime or those who protect our communities.

Our first responders and police officers put their lives at risk every single day to keep us safe. Firefighters do not need to risk their lives putting out yet another fire caused by arson that is tied to an extortion investigation. Nor do our police officers, when they have to arrest the same violent offenders who are out on bail dozens of times over. Nor do our nurses and doctors, when they work to treat the sick and wounded but have been victims of violent assaults in the hospitals they work in.

To add insult to injury, the Liberals repealed mandatory minimum sentences on violent firearm offences, including robbery with a firearm, extortion with a firearm, weapons trafficking and importing illegal firearms. How does it make our communities safer when we know that the people who commit offences like these do not have to serve a mandatory prison sentence? It does not.

If we remove the mandatory punishment for committing a crime, we watch the incidents of that crime increase. If we direct judges to grant the least onerous conditions for bail, which lets criminals out the same day they committed a violent crime, and we watch them continue to commit violent crimes.

That is why Conservatives put Bill C-242, the jail not bail act, before the House. While the Liberals have signalled that they will not support the bill, it is an opportunity to take action that would protect victims.

Bill C-14 was inspired by the measures put forward by Conservatives in calling on the government to change course on its disastrous bail policies. However, it is still a half measure that, after three years, refuses to acknowledge the pain caused by allowing sexual offenders to be given House arrest, while claiming to be standing up for the victims of the Liberals' own policy.

Even though the Liberals have proposed that violent sexual offenders will no longer be eligible for house arrest, they are also proposing, with the bill, that kidnappers and human traffickers will remain eligible for house arrest.

Conservatives have pushed, and will continue to push, for legislation that cracks down on crime rather than encouraging it. We disagree with the Liberal government's decision to keep the directive for judges to release offenders on the least onerous conditions, and we will seek to ensure, through amendments, that kidnappers, human traffickers and those who abduct children under 14 do not get to serve house arrest in the communities they are a danger to.

I look forward to hearing the testimony that will be provided at committee once the bill is sent there. I welcome the members opposite to ensure that they will be doing the same.

● (1240)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to bring forward bail reform legislation.

For a couple of days, we have been debating the bail reform legislation. We want to be very crystal clear on this particular point. At the end of the day, we have an opportunity to have bail reform legislation, which is supported in every region of the country and, most importantly, is in high demand among Canadians. We could have the legislation in law before the end of the year, passing through the different stages.

The only thing that could prevent this is the Conservative Party. Will the member provide her personal thoughts on seeing the legislation pass?

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals desperately want to avoid accountability for creating the issues their disaster bail system, through catch-and-release legislation like Bill C-75 and Bill C-5, has created. While they are now telling Canadians that reforms are needed and we need to get this done quickly, it took them six years to clarify that the principle of restraint does not require a release. If Bill C-75 had not let violent repeat offenders out on bail, they would not have needed to clarify it.

Conservatives want solutions, and we will work to strengthen this bill to address the areas where it falls short.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women is currently studying a motion that I moved because I was worried and wanted to know whether the justice system is currently responding to the concerns of victims and survivors of violence.

In particular, I proposed a study to review section 810 of the Criminal Code. Working with the Conservatives, we finally managed to get another study added to the agenda on bail and sentencing. My colleague and I worked together on this study that is now before the committee. That said, I want to talk to my colleague about another matter.

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The Bloc Québécois does indeed want to study this issue in committee. As I said, we recently introduced a motion in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Yesterday, the witnesses all told us about the criminalization of coercive control, a subject that is even more important than what we are discussing today. Survivors and victims are calling for this. What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in my response to the member opposite, we are committed to looking for solutions that will ensure violent criminals remain in jail and that they are not prematurely released back into the community to cause more crime.

This bill falls short on a number of issues. The principle of restraint, which I have spoken about, remains in place. This keeps the culture of release in place, even though tragic cases like Bailey McCourt's illustrate the very real costs of releasing known violent offenders back into the community.

I look forward to the interventions that will be made on this bill at the justice committee.

● (1245)

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my colleague's response to the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader about trying to make this bill better.

You said it best when you said the government has had six-plus years to get this right. The election is almost seven months removed. Why do you think the government left out such substantive pieces of reform, particularly in the areas of sentencing and bail reform? Why did it purposely leave out significant details when our opposition party has been giving it suggestion after suggestion for the last seven months?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): As a reminder, all questions must go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, this tends to be the modus operandi of the current government. It introduces legislation that is deeply flawed and does not address the problems for which it is supposed to be a solution.

These policy choices of the Liberal government created the chaos we have on our streets, weakened deterrence and super-charged catch and release. If the Liberals were truly serious about addressing the issues brought forward by Conservatives and Canadians, they would have included those things in Bill C-14.

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Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, drugs, stolen vehicles and church burnings are all things that have risen under the Liberal government since it came into power over 10 years ago. If we listen to the Liberals, they say Canadians have never had it so good and that crime is at historic lows.

We could make a graph of crime. The interesting thing about graphs is the time scale. If we look at it over the last 100 years, yes, crime is now at an average rate and lower than it was 100 years ago. However, the population of Canada was completely different then. It was much smaller. With respect to the sample size of crime per capita, which is how it is referenced most of the time, if we change the denominator by a factor of millions, it changes the rate significantly.

If we were to take a time scale of the last 30 years, it would be a very interesting graph to look at. There was a declining rate, which stabilized in the nineties. In the late to mid-2000s, it started declining again, and it declined rapidly for a period of time leading up to 2015. From 2013 to 2015, the rate on that graph dropped dramatically. Interestingly, there was a complete reversal. We could have expected it to flatten or something like that, but it did not flatten; it turned around immediately. Something very interesting happened in 2015. The Liberals got elected to power in this country. Since then, that incline took off and has continued to climb.

Let us go back to the 100-year average. Again, the time scale matters. We are back to an average, so when the Liberals say that, I am not here to dispute it with them. However, I would say that in a rolling average of five years, we are way past that. Those are the statistics. We know what they say about statistics.

The reality on the ground is that people feel it. People know this. They understand this. The police in Toronto are telling people to leave their keys near the door so that if somebody comes to steal their vehicle, at least they will find their keys quickly and not disturb the rest of their house. This stuff is happening in our country. We do it.

We hear from the Liberals all the time that “jail, not bail” is just words and not actions. It means something. People understand what it means. I acknowledge that Bill C-14 came from the last election. It came out of the campaign we fought for, with jail, not bail. Those are our words, but they mean something. They give a political will to what we would do if we were in power.

I referenced earlier today that in Vancouver, 43 individuals caused 1,100 police interactions in one year. Many of them were out on bail. We have one case after another of violent crimes committed by people who are out on bail, often for the second or third time.

The members of the RCMP in my constituency, who do very good work, are completely frustrated. They work very hard to build a case and get a conviction. They arrest somebody, and within four hours, these people are back on the streets. In one case that was brought to me, there were something like 72 charges by the time the guy got to the first court date. He had been arrested three times and charged with multiple offences each time he was arrested, just to be let out again.

• (1250)

The most interesting story I have heard is probably the one from Westlock a number of years back. It was not covered in the news, so I do not know if it is true or not. A spike belt, which is used to stop fleeing vehicles, was used three times inside of 48 hours, and the police used it on the same person. They were pursuing a stolen vehicle, they used a spike belt and they arrested the person in the stolen vehicle. She got out on bail and immediately stole another vehicle. The police used the spike belt on that one, arrested her again and put her in jail overnight. The next morning, she was out on bail and, again, she stole a vehicle and the police pursued her and used a spike belt.

This was a number of years ago. I point that out because it seems that stolen vehicles no longer rise to a certain level. The police do not have the resources to even pursue them. It just does not happen anymore where I come from, because it is such a common occurrence, and it is occurring all across the country.

One of the things that I find interesting is that, for as long as I have been a member of Parliament, vehicle theft has been quite a problem in northern Alberta. I do not think the trend has changed. I think it has held steady, but what has changed is that folks living in the big cities are now experiencing vehicle theft *carte blanche*.

Now, after the Liberals have caused all of these problems, they suddenly want to talk about bail reform. I would say the reason they want to talk about it is that we have made the case that the bail system is broken in Canada, but we are not asking for reform. We are asking for Liberal bail to be repealed. We do not like the Liberal bail system. We think the Liberal bail system sucks and it should be repealed entirely. We have put forward our vision for what bail ought to look like.

Most people think the Canadian bail system does something it does not do at all. People watch movies all the time and they hear about how someone made bail. Their family or friends had to scrape together \$10,000 to get them out of jail. That does not happen in Canada. People are not putting up money to get bail. They are being released with a promise to pay. Sometimes it is \$1,000 and sometimes it is less. By the third time they get out on bail, they may have forfeited \$2,000, but they have not forfeited any actual cash. These were forfeitures of promises to pay. They were forfeitures of IOU notes, essentially. We need to have bail that works in this country.

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I do not know where the Speaker was last week. I was sitting at committee when my phone made a very loud noise. I thought I had my phone on silent, so I was quite embarrassed by it. All of a sudden, I noticed that my phone was not the only phone making a lot of noise. Everybody's phone was making a lot of noise, and it was an Amber Alert. Subsequently, I found out that the Amber Alert had been issued because somebody had abducted a child, and that person was out on bail. We had already arrested this person for another crime and let them back out on bail, and now they were committing another crime. It interrupted our meeting, so I got to hear about that one in particular. That is very tangible for this place. I hope it will have an impact on my colleagues on the other side.

Bill C-14 is an admission by the Liberals that the bail system is broken in this country. It is an admission that our slogan of "jail, not bail" for repeat offenders worked when we brought it to the Canadian public. They are stealing our homework again, and I am happy about that, but I wish they would go the whole way by repealing Liberal bail and bringing in a bail system that works in its entirety.

I have lots to say on this. I spoke extensively on Bill C-75. I was asked to be a witness at the Senate committee meeting on Bill C-75. I had lots to say about that. I would love to have a long chat about consecutive sentencing and how this bill also touches on that, and I am hopeful that the Liberals will ask me about it in the questions that follow.

• (1255)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member based the premise of his speech on auto theft in the province of Ontario, which I assume is the province he was referring to. In 2007, Manitoba's automobile theft rate was the highest in the country, virtually three times as high as in Ontario. I do not need to tell the member that it was the Conservatives in government in Ottawa then, but that is a secondary issue. The primary issue is who resolved it. It was the provincial government, working with MPI and Winnipeg law enforcement officers. That is what resolved the issue.

Would the member not agree that, at the end of the day, this is a shared responsibility? We have done our job in working with stakeholders and presenting this legislation. Would he like to see it pass before the end of the year?

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member listened to my speech. The whole first part of my speech outlined the graph of crime in Canada and how there is a distinct V in the crime statistics. I understand that correlation is not always causation, but it corresponds with when the Liberals came to power.

On consecutive sentencing, when the Liberals brought in Bill C-75 and got rid of consecutive sentencing, the member for Winnipeg North argued extensively that consecutive sentencing was against the charter and was cruel and unusual punishment. Today, he is defending a bill that would reinstate consecutive sentencing.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I are especially concerned about human trafficking. We

are all on the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Bill C-14 contains a provision to establish a reverse onus, particularly for some offences related to human trafficking or human smuggling.

Will this new provision really bring about significant changes to deal with this scourge, which may need to be addressed in a much broader manner?

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Shefford for her great work on the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

One of the reasons I ended up at the Senate committee hearings on Bill C-75 was that I was in the role of the all-party co-chair. I was there with Senator Christmas at the time, who was the other co-chair back then. We pointed out that Bill C-75 not only ended consecutive sentencing for human traffickers, who in many cases traffic many victims, but also allowed for house arrest for human traffickers. Human traffickers are often operating from their house. Putting them back in the same environment where they operated from is totally ludicrous.

While we appreciate the acknowledgement that the Liberals have failed with the introduction of Bill C-75 and that there is a need for repealing Liberal bail, there are many other things we need to do.

• (1300)

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill would still allow serious offenders, including those guilty of robbery, trafficking and firearms-related crimes, to serve time at home under house arrest. This is a loophole in the bill.

Can the hon. member tell us why the government left this loophole in Bill C-14?

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, these are things we have been pointing out for a very long time. I do not know why the Liberals left in these loopholes, other than they do not want a wholesale change to our justice system. On the one hand, they want to say this is a new government doing new things, but on the other hand, they always have a niggler in the back of their minds that since these are the laws they brought in, they cannot wholesale admit that the whole system is not working, because they engineered it only 10 years ago.

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Guelph.

Government Orders

I rise today to speak to Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act. This bill would amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act to improve public safety, strengthen accountability for repeat violent offences and serious property crime, and modernize procedures that affect victims, police and the courts.

Across the country, Canadians are calling for a justice system that better protects communities, supports victims and holds repeat and violent offenders accountable. That is why our government is acting through our three-pillar approach to strengthen public safety and confidence in the justice system. Pillar one is about strengthening our legal frameworks, including the bail and sentencing reform legislation we are talking about today. Pillar two is about increasing the capacity and resourcing on our front lines by adding 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA officers and, importantly, by creating the financial crimes agency to pursue complex, financial and organized criminal offences so we can follow the money. Pillar three is about supporting a continuum of care through social and mental health supports, addiction services and supportive housing and by working with local organizations that provide prevention, outreach and rehabilitation programs to help people avoid entering or re-entering the criminal justice system. Strong laws, strong enforcement and strong community supports are what are needed to tackle both the causes and consequences of crime.

The bill we are debating today would strengthen Canada's justice system by ensuring that repeat and violent offenders face greater accountability and would make it harder for individuals with serious or repeated charges to receive bail. It would also tighten sentencing for organized and repeat property crime and would prioritize community safety while maintaining fairness and rehabilitation.

While Bill C-14 would make 80 amendments to the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act, I want to focus on a few key areas that are highly relevant to my constituents in West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. They include creating tougher bail conditions, with judges having to consider both the number and the seriousness of an accused's outstanding charges when deciding when bail is appropriate, making it harder for repeat offenders to be released back into the community. The bill would also create a new reverse onus for break and enters so that the accused would have to demonstrate why they should be granted bail, rather than the current onus, which has the Crown proving why bail should be denied. The bill would also create stronger sentencing for organized property crime. Organized retail crime would be treated as an aggravating factor in sentencing, and courts would have to prioritize deterrence and denunciation when sentencing for repeat break-ins and property offences. Together, these reforms would target repeat and organized offenders, strengthen deterrence and help increase public confidence in the justice system.

Residents across Canada, including in West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, want a justice system that keeps people safe, supports victims and remains fair and efficient. On the Sunshine Coast, and particularly in Sechelt, concerns about crime have become one of the most pressing issues for residents. Recent RCMP reports have shown that violent crime in Sechelt has risen

by 26% this quarter, with increases in uttered threats and weapons-related offences. Property crime and break and enters continue to affect families, seniors and small businesses, particularly in certain regions, and these incidents are often the subject of community meetings and local news stories.

I want to acknowledge the understandable frustration when people see the same individuals cycling through the system and not seeing meaningful deterrence or accountability. People deserve to be safe and feel safe in their neighbourhoods and to know that repeat offenders are being held to account. I have personally participated in community meetings and town halls on this matter, and I want to let the community know that I hear these concerns and they are being acted on.

Bill C-14 would directly respond to them by strengthening bail for repeat violent offenders and introducing tougher sentencing for serious and organized property crimes. These reforms would help ensure that those who repeatedly endanger public safety face real consequences while we maintain fairness and rehabilitation where it is due.

The bail and sentencing reform act would strengthen public safety by tightening how bail and release decisions are made. It would clarify that the principle of restraint does not require release when detention is justified. I can tell that this principle has been the subject of a lot of misunderstanding, particularly in this House, but it is important to clarify that this principle of restraint in bail decisions was not created by legislation. It came from Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence. A previous government codified this principle, but even if it were repealed, it would remain good law because of court decisions that have interpreted the Charter Rights and Freedoms accordingly.

Government Orders

• (1305)

Bill C-14 would provide clarity by ensuring that restraint does not mean automatic release. It would also direct peace officers and judges to tailor release conditions to the actual risks posed by the accused, ensuring detention remains appropriate for repeat, violent or organized offenders. This would strengthen public confidence while maintaining fairness and, importantly, charter compliance.

Reverse-onus provisions would be expanded to cover a broader range of serious offences, including extortion involving violence; breaking and entering a dwelling house; human trafficking; smuggling; alleged choking, suffocation or strangulation; and when an accused faces a serious violent charge with a weapon and has been previously convicted of a similar offence within 10 years. These updates build on reforms introduced last year through Bill C-48, which expanded the reverse onus to include repeat violent offenders using firearms and those charged with serious offences involving weapons. Bill C-14 would extend these provisions to cover serious and organized property crimes and other offences that have caused growing concern in communities in my riding and across the country.

Courts would be required to impose conditions when folks get bail for offences such as break and enters, including geographic restrictions, curfews and prohibitions on break-in tools. For violent and organized crime offences, mandatory prohibitions on firearms and other weapons would apply unless safety considerations make that inappropriate.

To strengthen accountability for repeat offending, judges would also be required to consider both the number and the gravity of an individual's outstanding charges when determining whether detention is necessary to maintain public confidence in the justice system. The bill would also expand the circumstances under which release documents can be cancelled and would modernize arrest and review procedures for breaches of bail conditions, ensuring the justice system remains responsive, consistent and focused on protecting public safety.

These changes matter for communities like Sechelt, where residents and small businesses continue to feel the effects of repeat and organized crime. Bill C-14 would help ensure that release decisions reflect real risk and that accountability is built into every stage of the process, giving law enforcement and communities stronger tools to keep people safe.

Bill C-14 would also strengthen sentencing to ensure that penalties reflect the seriousness of repeat and organized crime. It would direct courts to treat as aggravating factors repeat violent offences, crimes against first responders, organized retail theft and fraudulent return schemes, and interference with essential infrastructure. It would also introduce consecutive sentencing for repeat break and enters and violent crime offences, with clear guidance to prioritize deterrence and denunciation for repeat and organized offences.

Conditional sentences would be restricted for sexual assault and other sexual offences, particularly those involving victims under the age of 18. The bill would also restore driving prohibitions for manslaughter and criminal negligence causing death or bodily harm, would increase penalties for contempt and would improve fine-enforcement tools by working with provinces and territories.

Locally, the Sunshine Coast RCMP, the Sunshine Coast Community Services Society and others play key roles in prevention, early intervention and support for victims and vulnerable individuals. Their work very much complements Bill C-14's goal of accountability by addressing the root causes of repeat offending through mental health supports, domestic violence prevention and community policing initiatives.

Bill C-14, importantly, would accomplish all of these measures in compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It would maintain judicial discretion and focus on the highest-risk patterns that affect our communities, including repeat violence, serious offences with weapons, organized criminal activity, as well as the repeat property crime that undermines community confidence.

In closing, I can tell members that this legislation responds directly to the concerns I have heard in my riding. It would target repeat violence and serious property crime, support first responders and victims, and strengthen confidence in our justice system while remaining fair. However, nothing in this bill will matter unless the work is done in partnership with provinces and territories, including the British Columbia government, to ensure the system is properly funded so it can be administered properly, to ensure there is proper training for all justices of peace and to ensure we have capacity in our jail system. It is critical that the prosecution service in each and every region understands the community interests that are at stake in the decisions being made at bail hearings. Bill C-14 would help give them the tools to do their jobs properly.

I encourage all members of the House to support this important piece of legislation to get to committee.

• (1310)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue; in fact it is one the Conservatives have been sounding the alarm about for many years, urging the government to take action on it.

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Would the member acknowledge the failures of previous Liberal bills, notably Bill C-75, which law enforcement officials have said has directly allowed for the catch-and-release bail policies that have necessitated the response from the government in Bill C-14?

Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my speech that there has been a mischaracterization of what the principle of restraint is, as well as of the impact of the inclusion of it in Bill C-75. As I also mentioned, this is a principle that was well articulated in the Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence, and it simply was legislated through that legislation.

The Conservatives talk about how the principle of restraint is the source of all issues, any issue we see in the commission of criminal activity across the country, but in getting rid of it, we would still have the principle that is established through the jurisprudence. Through the legislation before us, we would actually be helping to further define the principle so it could be best utilized to ensure the best and proper administration of justice at each level.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bill talks about giving “primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence of repeat...offences”, particularly in the case of organized crime. Has my colleague had a chance to look into that?

The Bloc Québécois has proposed measures that we think would be much more effective in addressing organized crime. They include cutting off their financial resources and creating a registry of these criminal organizations. What does my colleague think about that?

Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I think that this bill makes good progress in the fight against organized crime. As I said in my speech, we announced the establishment of a new financial crimes agency. We have made a lot of changes to our laws in recent years, we have a new registry for companies, and I know that, if we can work together with the provinces and all members of the House, we will come up with even more ideas to better address this difficult problem.

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the member mentioned that the principle of restraint existed long before Bill C-75 and that it is still within our common law as a Supreme Court decision. That is a very important note, because there has been a lot of misunderstanding of the issue.

I would like the member to clarify and get into that a little more, because the opposition Conservatives have announced that they would use the notwithstanding clause to get around the Supreme Court decision.

• (1315)

Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, the principle of restraint was established through the Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence in interpreting how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should apply to bail hearings.

We are very committed to making sure we would be passing legislation that is compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There has never been a federal government that has promised to in-

voke the notwithstanding clause pre-emptively, for legislation. It is a very dangerous idea to go down that road.

It is there to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, and it is important that the highest laws of the country are respected. There is a way to do both. There is a way to make sure we are strengthening our criminal justice system while respecting those fundamental rights. I believe that the piece of legislation before us would do exactly that.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak to the bail and sentencing reform act, one of the most comprehensive updates to Canada's bail and sentencing laws in decades.

I have the privilege of representing one of Canada's safest communities, with an overall crime severity index that is the sixth-lowest among Canadian cities. It is an improvement from our ranking as eighth-lowest in 2023 and a dramatic improvement from our ranking of 19th-lowest in 2018, but Guelph used to be the safest city in Canada, and we are seeing a concerning rise in some serious crimes.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the people in community organizations that work to prevent crime by addressing root causes and that support victims of crime, and of course Guelph Police Service for its excellent work in our community. It is a collaboration.

People in Guelph and across Canada do not just want an improvement in the statistics; they expect and deserve that their communities should feel safe. They want to be safe. They expect a justice system that protects victims, supports the people on the front lines and holds repeat and violent offenders to account, and I agree with them. People expect all levels of government to take steps to ensure that these things happen. The new government is playing its part.

The bail and sentencing reform act would introduce over 80 clauses of targeted reforms to strengthen both our bail and our sentencing regimes to respond to this reality. This comprehensive and constitutional bail reform is more than a motion or a slogan, and it is not a warmed-over version of failed U.S. policies. It is the result of extensive engagements with the provinces and territories, police, prosecutors, victims' advocates, indigenous partners, and community organizations. Through these discussions, it became clear that one of the most urgent areas for reform was the bail system, particularly for cases involving repeat and violent offenders.

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Let us talk about bail reform first. Over the past several years, people in Canada have seen too many tragic headlines about violent crimes committed by individuals who were already out on bail, sometimes with a long history of prior offences. Police, mayors and victims' advocates have all told us that the bail system was not working as it should in these cases.

The bail and sentencing reform act would address these criticisms head-on. In fact, Michael Gendron of the Canadian Police Association has said, "Front-line police have long called for pragmatic reforms to strengthen Canada's bail and sentencing framework. This legislation is an important and timely step to improve public safety and restore confidence in our justice system."

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police welcomes the introduction of Bill C-14, calling it "a landmark piece of legislation that strengthens Canada's response to repeat and violent offenders, organized crime, and threats to public safety."

Why do we have the support of these police associations and so many mayors and community organizations? First, it is because Bill C-14 would make bail stricter and harder to get for repeat and violent offenders.

The bill would create new reverse onus provisions, meaning it would be up to the accused person to demonstrate why they should be released, and not the other way around. In particular it would create new reverse onus provisions for violent and organized crime-related auto theft; break and enter of a home; trafficking in persons; human smuggling; assault and sexual assault involving choking, suffocating or strangulation; and extortion involving violence. This is intended to help ensure that the people who pose the greatest risk to public safety would remain in custody until it is proven they can be safely released.

The bill would offer clarity to police and courts regarding how to apply the principle of restraint. This includes clarifying that the principle would not in fact require release and that an accused person should not be released if their detention is justified, including for the protection and safety of the public.

At the bail stage, courts would be required to consider key risk factors, such as whether the allegations involve random or unprovoked violence, and the number or seriousness of any outstanding charges that the accused has accumulated while on bail. Specifically, courts would need to assess whether releasing the accused person would undermine confidence in the justice system. They would also have to impose weapons prohibitions at bail for people accused of extortion and organized crime, unless this is not required.

● (1320)

Importantly, in reverse onus cases, the accused would have to present a credible and reliable bail plan. Courts would need to closely scrutinize those plans before granting release.

These reforms are about protecting the public and ensuring accountability for those who repeatedly show disregard for the law and the safety of others in a way that balances the charter rights of people accused of a criminal offence. However, making bail is stricter is only part of the solution.

Our sentencing laws also need to reflect the gravity of violent crimes and the harm done to victims and communities. The bill therefore proposes significant sentencing reforms to make penalties tougher for repeat and violent offending, including car theft, extortion and crimes that endanger public safety. For example, the act would require consecutive sentences when violent auto theft is committed with a break and enter, or when extortion is committed with arson. This means that offenders would serve one sentence after another rather than serving them at the same time, which may result in a longer penalty's being imposed.

The bill would also enact new provisions concerning aggravating factors, and I think we can all agree on that. Sentencing would be tougher for crime against first responders, which would be an egregious crime; retail theft, which is growing and concerning; and offences that impact critical infrastructure such as power stations, water systems or communication networks, on which we all depend.

The bill would end house arrest for serious sexual assaults and child sexual offences, ensuring that custodial sentences are served in a secure setting appropriate to the severity of the crime. The bill would restore driving prohibitions for offences like criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death, or manslaughter. It would also improve fine enforcement to make sure that penalties are meaningful and are able to be enforced.

As all members know, the criminal justice system in Canada is a shared responsibility. I want to thank the provinces and territories, which have been strong advocates for these reforms. They have shared their on-the-ground experience with repeat violent offending, and they have helped shaped a package of measures that is practical, targeted and grounded in evidence. I look forward to seeing provincial investments in courthouses, detention facilities and mental health services to ease existing backlogs and speed up trials.

The proposed amendments are very focused in nature to clarify areas that have led to litigation and uncertainty and to assist the provinces in administering sentences and making some other technical improvements.

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The bail and sentencing reform act is part of a broader modernization of Canada's justice system and action on community safety. Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 would tackle auto theft, money laundering, human trafficking and drug trafficking. We will introduce anti-scam measures in the coming months. We will bring forward further changes to address court delays, strengthen victims' rights and better protect people facing sexual and intimate partner violence, as well as take new steps to keep children safe from horrific crimes. These are all issues that are close to my heart.

Canadians deserve to be safe in their homes, on their streets and in their communities. They deserve a justice system that protects the innocent, supports victims and holds offenders accountable. The bail and sentencing reform act would deliver on that commitment. It would balance firmness with fairness, and it would strengthen bail and toughen sentencing.

These changes would underscore that a strong Canada means strong communities and a justice system that works for everyone. They would occur in parallel with investments in upstream prevention of crime, such as in housing, mental health and youth supports, to reduce petty crime and property crime before they happen. We are cracking down on the people who pose the highest risk to community safety, while investing in prevention so fewer people turn to crime in the first place.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her work.

We have been hearing a lot about the work done in committee and how important that work is when legislation like Bill C-14 makes its way there.

Unfortunately, something happened recently with Bill C-3, which the committee worked on and amended. The bill that came back here was not the same as the original version because we had amended it with Conservative support. However, the Liberal government decided to undo those amendments using House of Commons procedure.

Apparently the government decided not to respect the work done in committee. We are in favour of Bill C-14, but we want to work on it in committee. We have concerns.

I would like assurances from my colleague today that the committee's work on Bill C-14 will be respected and that what happened to Bill C-3 will not happen to Bill C-14.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the House that we are here to celebrate the contribution of the provinces and the federal government. We are working together to ensure that the justice system serves communities and to improve the justice system in Canada and Quebec.

I have confidence in the work of the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. They will be able to call on a number of experts who have already been consulted.

Ultimately, I have confidence in the House and the Parliament of Canada.

[*English*]

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that the Guelph Police Service's board in my hon. colleague's riding was pushing for bail reform years ago, endorsing a nationwide campaign of police service boards joining police chiefs and municipalities, calling on the Liberal government to act on this and to recognize the shortcomings in Liberal government policy that have gotten us here.

I fully share the hon. member's desire for public safety and improved measures to deal with criminality.

Does the hon. member acknowledge that it was Bill C-75 that got us here and made this a crisis demanding a response from the government?

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I am a new MP here. I have been here about six months. I can tell members that the Guelph Police Service does an extraordinary job in the community and in its advocacy.

What is the point, really, of looking back? Here we are today, having heard the feedback of a number of speakers who are experts in this field, who have provided 80 targeted measures.

Here we are today. I am happy to hear the member opposite say that he fully supports these new measures.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned in the House several times today, the principle of restraint was not created in Bill C-75. It was ruled on in a Supreme Court decision, in the *Antic* decision in 2017, although the principle of restraint is something that was applied in courtrooms far before that as well.

I would like to ask the member about the feedback she is getting from her community on Bill C-14 and all the measures that are contained in it.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, we have had these ongoing questions. I was a member of city council for six years before; crime in the community, as well as community safety more broadly, is clearly an issue. I quoted a member of the police association in my remarks. I do not want to take the chief out of context, but their police association welcomes the legislation.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I welcome the new member to the House.

As a potential effect of the bill, it could eventually result in placing more people in detention. From what we have heard from the Liberal government, we are going to have an austerity budget. I wonder if the member could share with us how the government expects provinces and territories to meet the potentially increased demands without the increased budget necessary to do so.

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• (1330)

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, clearly, the legislation came about through extensive consultation with the provinces. They will understand what the impacts of the legislation would be. They are responsible for the administration of justice, so I think that we, and all citizens, can expect investments in courthouses, not only in the physical structures but also the staffing, detention centres and mental health facilities, as well as other supports, really, both in the upstream and postcommitment of offences.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

As always, it is a privilege to rise on behalf of the wonderful folks of Oshawa. I also want to wish all families in Oshawa a happy Halloween tomorrow and remind everyone that on the last Friday in October, we mark poppy day, when Canadians begin wearing the poppy in remembrance of those who have served and continue to serve our country.

A lot of Canadians are living in a country they no longer recognize. Repeat violent offenders are terrorizing our streets. Law-abiding families are locking their doors in fear and are being encouraged to follow a 9 p.m. shutter routine; meanwhile, the same criminals are released over and over again, free to reoffend within hours. This is a direct consequence of the Liberal government's soft-on-crime agenda through bills like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which stripped away mandatory jail time and created a culture of catch-and-release.

After years of pressure from Conservatives, pressure the Liberals once dismissed as fearmongering, they have finally admitted what every Canadian already knows, which is that their so-called justice reforms were a disaster.

We are now debating Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, which is a bill the Liberals claim would fix the very problems they, of course, created. Let us be clear: Conservatives will work to make sure the bill actually scraps Liberal bail and does not just re-brand it.

I would like to mention a post by one of the Durham Region Liberal MPs, the member for Whitby, who wrote, "Justice is no longer a revolving door. With the Minister of Justice...unveiling the Bail and Sentencing Reform Act, our new government is closing the loopholes that once allowed repeat and violent offenders to slip through the cracks."

I thought it would be prudent to repeat some of the comments made on this post by constituents of mine, as well as others in the Durham Region. John said, "'Slip through the cracks'? How did it take you ten years to claim to fix a problem that you created with reduced bail and lenient sentences[?]" Darren said, "Thank you...for doing the Conservative thing. Pierre and team are proud. Looks a bit like Bill C-242, but that's okay, right, elbows up?" Scott said, "You guys installed the revolving door." Derek said, "You know you could have also gotten rid of the bail reform...but instead we got a cut down version of what the [Liberals] voted down last month". James said, "Look at us! We're slapping a bandaid on the problem we created!" Steve said, "Let's break it, then glue some pieces back together. We can say we are the 'New Government'

[and] they will never know!" Kent said, "Look at us taking years to realize conservatives were right the whole time."

In 2019, Bill C-75 enshrined the principle of restraint, directing judges to release offenders at the earliest opportunity, even those with violent histories. In 2022, Bill C-5 eliminated mandatory jail time for serious crimes, such as robbery with a firearm, drug trafficking and sexual assault. The results have been devastating.

Since 2015, violent crime is up 55%, firearm offences are up 130%, extortion has risen by over 300%, sexual assaults are up 76% and homicides are up 29% across Canada.

These are not abstract numbers. I know I mention them often in the House, but this is because there is a victim behind each statistic, a family shattered and a community left reeling.

This summer saw the heartbreaking murder of Bailey McCourt, who was killed by her ex-husband just hours after he was released on bail. Just this month, Savannah Kulla, a 29-year-old mother of four, was shot and killed in Brampton. Her accused killer was also out on bail. May both women rest in peace as we continue this fight in their names and in the names of countless others.

I saw the frustration first-hand this summer in Oshawa when I met with Andrew Tummonds and Tim Morrison from the Durham Regional Police Association. They told me what police officers and civilian members have been saying for years: Our justice system has tied their hands. They arrest the same violent offenders again and again, only to see them released the next day, sometimes within hours.

• (1335)

These officers and civilian members need stronger bail laws and the resources to enforce them, monitor offenders, support victims and keep dangerous individuals off our streets. These are the men and women on the front lines, and they have been sounding the alarm for a long time, long before the government finally decided to have half a listen.

At the Victims and Survivors Symposium in Mississauga last month, the Durham Regional Police Service chief, Chief Peter Moreira, put it bluntly. He said, "C-75, introduced in 2019...fundamentally changed bail in this country". He went on to say:

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You can see the problems with C-75. It has...created this imbalance.... One of the driving principles behind C-75 was to impose the least onerous conditions possible.... That sounds great in concept, but...it needs to be balanced against...the safety of victims [and the community]. We see recidivists being at the core of these very, very serious criminal offences..., people we had the opportunity to [detain, to protect victims] and future victims, and that has not occurred.

Chief Moreira was right. Police leaders across the country have been warning that Liberal policies are putting Canadians in danger. It should not have taken years of tragedy for the Liberals to admit they were wrong.

Bill C-14 represents a rare Liberal admission that their justice reforms have failed. It attempts to patch the damage caused by Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 but still clings to the same failed framework. This shift is not driven by principle but by politics, yet it is a clear vindication of what Conservatives have said for six long years: Catch-and-release has put Canadians in danger.

One of the most heartbreaking and pervasive forms of violence in this country is intimate partner violence. It is nothing short of an epidemic. Every 48 hours in Canada, a woman or girl is killed.

Recently, I spoke with Cait Alexander from End Violence Everywhere, who survived an attack by her ex-partner when he was out on bail. Her advocacy is giving survivors a voice and exposing the gaps in our justice system. As she has said, Canada has become a graveyard of preventable deaths, with innocent women and children paying the ultimate price while begging for reform and safety.

In Oshawa, I have also heard from Victim Services of Durham Region, The Denise House and Luke's Place. They provide life-saving resources, including shelter, counselling and legal support for women and children fleeing abuse.

I want to thank Durham Regional Police's intimate partner violence unit, based in Oshawa, for the critical work it does every day. The officers and advocates, some of them close friends, stand on the front lines of some of the most dangerous and emotionally devastating situations. I thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart. I thank them for the incredible work they do, day in and day out, to serve Oshawa.

When our justice system releases violent abusers back into the same communities where their victims live, it fails those victims completely. Bill C-14 must ensure that repeat domestic violence offenders face real consequences and that public safety, especially for women and children, comes first.

After years of Conservative advocacy and Liberal denial, the government now claims it wants to act. As always, the devil is in the details and Conservatives will make sure, through amendments, that the bill is as strong as possible. Conservatives believe public safety must be the overriding test in bail decisions.

While the government plays catch-up, Conservatives have already been leading. We have introduced and supported legislation to strengthen our justice system, protect first responders and stand with victims.

Bill C-225, a Conservative private member's bill, would strengthen protections for victims of intimate partner violence.

Bill C-221, inspired by Oshawa resident Lisa Freeman, would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to guarantee that victims of crime receive full disclosure.

Bill C-246 would amend the Criminal Code to ensure that sentences for sexual offences are served consecutively rather than concurrently.

Bill S-233, which was recently passed in the Senate and tabled here in the House, and which I was proud to second, would amend the Criminal Code to make it an explicit aggravating factor when assaults involve first responders and health care workers.

● (1340)

Conservatives have been listening. Bill C-14 might sound right, but sound bites do not stop bullies. After all, it took the Liberals six years, multiple ministers and countless victims to finally admit what the Conservatives have been saying since 2019, which is that catch-and-release does not work.

We must protect Canadians and finally scrap Liberal bail for good.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said that Conservatives have been listening. I would like the member to clearly demonstrate that.

We have now fulfilled the Prime Minister's commitment to bring in substantial bail reform legislation, which would make our communities safer. We will continue to work with provinces and municipalities. Let there be no doubt about this. We have widespread support for Bill C-14 among stakeholders, whether policing, provinces, Crowns or others.

If the commitment is there in the Conservative Party, we can have new bail laws in Canada before the end of the year. It requires the Conservative Party to listen to what Canadians have said and allow us to fulfill a commitment we made in the last election.

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, the only response I can give to that is, what took so long? We have had 10 years of Liberal failure and, for six years, we have seen the devastating effects of Bill C-75 and Bill C-5. There is so much that needs to be done. What about all the people lost in all that time for whom we have been advocating? We have been speaking to the police associations. In six years, how many deaths were there? How many assaults on how many women were there?

That is my answer.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Oshawa for her speech. I would like to acknowledge her concern for victims of domestic violence. This is an issue that affects us all and one on which we must all stand together.

That is why I think there are some interesting aspects to Bill C-14. When Parliament resumed this fall, the Conservatives introduced Bill C-242, another bill that deals with pretty much the same subject.

I would like to ask my colleague whether the Conservative Party will work together with the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals in committee to improve the bill before us, to fix its flaws, so that we can find common ground and finally help communities to feel safe. People do not feel safe right now. I would like to know whether the Conservatives will co-operate, even though this is not their pet project, their bill. Will they work seriously to improve it so that something good can come of it?

[*English*]

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, it is a legitimate question. Yes, we had Bill C-242, which is still on the Order Paper. However, the measures in Bill C-242 go far beyond what Bill C-14 would do. Of course, if we can see some marked improvement with Bill C-14, a small step is better than no step at all.

We will certainly put the public safety of Canadians first, as always.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the folks on the other side seem to want to split their time between insulting us, asking us to please vote for their bill and trying to avoid responsibility for the whole mess in the first place.

If Bill C-14 is the great bill the Liberals claim it is, can my colleague explain why it is necessary in the first place? Who caused the problem in the first place?

Rhonda Kirkland: Mr. Speaker, I think my speech was super clear on this.

The problem, in the first place, started with Bill C-75 in 2019 and continued with Bill C-5 and the reduction of mandatory minimum sentences. Canadians have been feeling so completely unsafe in their communities for six years. Police associations have been begging us to change this for years. The comments made by folks in Whitby, under a Facebook post by the member for Whitby, made it clear. The revolving door the Liberals are trying to destroy was created by them, built by them and made to work by them so that serious violent offenders could continue to be released on our streets to murder, abuse and harm Canadians on a daily basis.

• (1345)

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just saw two Liberals stand up. It appears they want to take up time here. Actually, one of them was the member for Winnipeg North. I really enjoy his interventions on the law.

Government Orders

We are talking about the law today. One of my favourite aspects of our banter in the House with the member for Winnipeg North is Bill C-2. It was really interesting to hear him talk. He will often get up and, dare I say, pontificate on the law when it comes to these issues. On Bill C-2, he repeatedly told us, and let us call it pontification again, about how somebody needs a search warrant to get access to mail. However, in the legislation, it clearly says, “The Corporation may open any mail” to see if it contravenes the legislation.

The member for Winnipeg North should be applauded for his zeal in this regard. I love not only how often he says something but also the fervour with which he says it. Unfortunately, the problem is that his officials contradicted this very thing. We spent literally days in the House of Commons debating about mail. I hope that, when the member gives us exhortations on the legal front, he has done his homework this time.

The member tells us he was right the first time. I do not want to say someone is wrong, but I would say he is wrong.

I will go on to something a bit more serious. I learned that a person from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, Fred Sawada, recently passed away. He was an uncle to one of my friends, someone I went to kindergarten with, Kristy Sawada. He was a brother to her father, Jack. They did a lot for the community. They ran service stations, one of which was a few blocks from where I grew up. My deepest condolences go to Fred's family. May perpetual light shine upon him.

I would also like to take this time to recognize Ari Jyrkkänen, a young man from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola who contributed tremendously to democracy. In the last year, he was someone who was of great help to me. I want to give him a shout-out. His father, Ken, is a veteran of our Canadian Forces. We thank him for his service. We thank the family for all they have done. I wanted to give him a shout-out.

I was on the phone with a prosecutor not long ago. One thing they said is deficient in this bill, and perhaps the member for Winnipeg North already knows what I am going say, is regarding section 525 of the Criminal Code. This varies from region to region, but section 525 is on a review of bail. The principle is that nobody should be languishing in custody after charge approval.

Back in the day, for instance, in my prior career, I saw a murder file from 1984, I believe. The file was about this thick, which is what a theft file now looks like. Trial dates were set, I think, on the third or fourth court appearance. In other words, people got to trial. It got done. Now people do not get to trial, oftentimes, for a year and a half or two years. It was this mentality that beckoned the Jordan decision.

Government Orders

I am not here to give a discourse. I am here to raise this issue. We have this antiquated law that says there should be a bail review after 90 days in custody. This is assuming a person has only one file, because section 524 operates this way: Let us say somebody is in custody on an indictable matter, such as robbery. They have a bail hearing at day 81 of detention, which can happen. Counsel can just put it off. The person says they want to apply for bail at day 81. If that person is detained at day 81, by virtue of the operation of section 525 and how it has been interpreted in British Columbia, I am told, that person can then have a review of their bail nine days later.

Obviously, this is completely antithetical to what we intend. If they want to have a review of bail, it should be an appeal of bail. A review and an appeal are two very different things. An appeal is saying that the judge messed up. A review is meant to address this ongoing languishing that we do not want people to do when their matter has not gone to trial yet. To me, this is something that needs to be addressed.

• (1350)

I will go on to sex offences. I am trying to think of how many times I have said this in the House. I rose in the House and questioned former minister Lametti about this very issue of house arrest for sex offenders. In fact, I put it to him in committee that there was a mother who offended against her own child. She facilitated an offence. It was absolutely disgusting. Thankfully, it was overturned on appeal. That mother got house arrest. I have said it no less than, probably, 20 times. I gave a speech on this very issue of house arrest for sex offenders two weeks ago. Every single time, the Liberals looked the other way. "There is nothing to see here. There are no issues." We were constantly told it is the provinces' fault: "Look this way. Look that way. There is no problem with bail. We have it figured out." Former minister Virani and former minister Lametti actually told us there was no problem.

Yes, I am speaking with a great deal of passion, because I cannot say how many victims have suffered as a result of that inaction. The Liberals will say that the provinces are responsible for the administration of justice. Yes. However, Mr. Speaker, do you know what? The provinces interpret the laws we make in the House. Those ministers, along with many of the people in the House right now, told us we were out to lunch. Hopefully, one of them will be permitted to get up on a question. This is on sex offences against children and house arrest. This is absolutely nuts.

Another aspect we need to look at for clarification is in the reverse onus provision itself. I will be candid. Reverse onuses typically have their place, but, again, we have heard from the Liberals so often about them. Here is the issue with the reverse onus: Typically, though not always, when an accused person is in a reverse onus, in my experience, they are actually in two, three, four or five reverse onuses. We could have somebody who is subject to literally 10 reverse onuses, so we have to recognize that.

The second issue with the reverse onus is that, oftentimes, it will apply to indictable offences only. When the issue was changed in sentencing to say that just about every summary conviction offence could get two years less a day, I believe the motivation behind that was to put more things in provincial court, which operates in a more streamlined manner. Okay, that is fine. There is no issue

there, but what that means is that the Crown will proceed by indictment. For those watching, if they do not know the difference, it is felony versus misdemeanour and summary versus indictment. Then we have hybrid offences; the Crown can elect which is which. The whole point was so that the Crown would elect summary.

The reverse onus says that, if somebody has committed an indictable offence, they are in a reverse onus. What about somebody who has 80 convictions, but the Crown expects to seek 18 months of jail, which is fairly serious jail? If they elect to proceed summarily, that person, according to my information, in certain provinces and depending on the jurisdiction, will no longer be subject to the reverse onus provisions. We have a styming of legislative intent there. This is something I really hope the Liberals deal with.

The last thing missing from Bill C-14 is Bailey's law. Let us hope the Liberals do not heckle us on this, this time. The reality is that we need to pass legislation on intimate partner violence. We need to create a specific offence on intimate partner violence. We need to recognize the scourge and the plague that is intimate partner violence. I exhort the House, in the strongest language possible, to pass Bill C-225 with the urgency it deserves.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a strong Canada means strong protections to keep our communities safe. Our new Liberal government is taking a rigorous approach to fighting crime, as evidenced by our many bills, our investments to support law enforcement and our Bill C-14. That legislation proposes more than 80 amendments to the Criminal Code to bring in tougher sentences and stricter bail conditions for repeat and violent offenders.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has urged all parties to pass this bill swiftly to enhance public safety and restore confidence in our justice system. Does my colleague agree with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police that we need to pass Bill C-14 swiftly?

[*English*]

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, I see the Liberals are clapping. I wonder where that type of urgency was when we had our jail not bail act. That bill was endorsed by many of the same organizations that are endorsing this bill.

The Liberals are content to say that we need to pass the bill right away because these law enforcement bodies are telling us that they need it. Where was that urgency from the Liberals when the MP for Oxford put forward his bill, when the police association said it needed the bill? Where were the Liberals then? They voted against it, so it is quite hypocritical of them to say that we need to pass this bill right away, or by the same token, that we do not need to pass things the police chiefs say unless it is Liberal legislation. We will scrutinize this legislation and do our best.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave an excellent speech. He referenced Bailey McCourt, the tragic, preventable homicide that is still on the books in British Columbia, which was a result of a decision made by a judge to release after conviction pending sentence. Bill C-14 does not close that gap. What would the jail not bail act say in reference to that type of process?

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, when somebody is convicted, the presumption of innocence is gone. I have no problem talking about the Conservative position on bail, which is generally that bail has become too loose, and I believe this bill could actually go much further. I also believe that, when the presumption of innocence has been displaced, as my colleague just mentioned, we need to act in a different manner. The principle of innocent until proven guilty has been displaced.

The principle of restraint is still on the books in such situations. I understand and recognize that Bill C-14 addresses the principle of restraint to a certain degree. It does attenuate it, but it does not remove it. I would go so far as to say that the principle of restraint needs to be reworked. It was common law. It needs to be re-dressed.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are currently studying this issue of section 810 and minimum sentences at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. We are conducting a study on this subject. What we are hearing, and what we heard in previous studies is that the use of the Jordan decision must also be regulated with respect to gender-based violence.

Earlier, a Conservative member was talking about Cait Alexander, who came to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and talked about her experience as a victim and survivor of domestic violence. She was calling for the Jordan decision to be regulated because, as things stand, some criminals' cases are thrown out because of delays.

How could the Jordan decision be better regulated to meet the needs of victims and survivors in cases of sexual offences and murder?

• (1400)

[English]

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, my friend's question about the Jordan principle is an incredibly critical question. The Jordan principle will delay charges. We are waiting far too long to institute charges because the clock starts ticking. A sexual offender who offends against a woman may not be charged until day 365 so that the clock does not start ticking. What happens on that day? That delay is crit-

Statements by members

ical to protecting people. I agree with my colleague that we must address Jordan in the House. It is time.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

LISE BACON

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to honour the memory of Lise Bacon, a remarkable woman who passed away yesterday at the age of 91. Her commitment to protecting Quebec culture and the French language have had a profound impact on Quebec.

As the first woman president of the Liberal Party of Quebec, who later became deputy premier of Quebec and the second woman elected to the Quebec National Assembly, she blazed a trail for countless other women who, like her, decided to get involved and make a difference. Her journey is inspiring.

As we observe Women's History Month, her passing reminds us that strong, visionary women like Lise Bacon are the ones who made it possible for others, like me, to dream bigger. Women like Lise Bacon paved the way for the 104 women who are here in the House of Commons today. In my riding of Trois-Rivières, her passing is especially poignant. That is where she grew up and learned the values that guided her entire life: work, respect and service to others.

Today, we thank Lise Bacon for her commitment, her courage and the example she set for everyone seeking a more just Canada and Quebec.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY IN KITCHENER SOUTH— HESPELER

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I represent Kitchener South—Hespeler, home to Toyota Canada, the largest car plant in our great nation.

I remember when its expansion was announced in 1994. Then, as now, the plant was a source of great community pride. Year after year, it wins awards for the quality of its product and its investments in its people. In 30 years, it has never laid off a full-time employee. It employs more than 8,000 of my friends and neighbours. American tariffs are putting those jobs at risk. That is 8,000 families wondering how they are going to pay their rent, get groceries and afford Christmas gifts for their kids if the Liberal government does not achieve some sort of resolution.

Statements by members

Canadians buy more cars than we make. If we would all commit to buying the cars that we make, we could protect those families. I want my friends and neighbours at the Hespeler Toyota plant to please know that every day I am here, I am fighting to protect their jobs. If Canadians fighting for our country in this ridiculous trade war are buying new vehicles, I would ask that they please consider buying one made in Canada, such as the RAV4s assembled in Hespeler.

I ask the Liberal government to please not sleep on this, show some leadership, show some fight, get this resolved and protect our jobs.

* * *

NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister said last week, “Threats from a more dangerous and divided world are unravelling the rules-based international order”. If we do not act now, the pressures will only grow. Our government’s commitment to Canadians is clear: protect our sovereignty, defend our democracy and stand strong with trusted allies.

That is exactly what Canadian NATO parliamentarians did recently at the 71st NATO Parliamentary Assembly fall session in Slovenia. We joined our NATO partners to address the most urgent security threats of our time. We discussed how, as NATO parliamentarians, we need to continue to confront Russia’s continued aggression head on. We discussed and adopted 15 reports on cybersecurity, disinformation and modern warfare, and we passed resolutions strengthening deterrence measures and ensuring a just and lasting peace for Ukraine.

Make no mistake, we cannot allow might to make right. We will defend the rules-based international order. We will support Ukraine until it wins. Our democracy and our way of life depend on it.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last lost Liberal decade killed hundreds of thousands of Canadian energy jobs. More are coming.

In just six months of the Prime Minister, Canadians lost over 18,000 jobs, year over year, in forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and oil and gas. So many young Canadians, especially young men, and indigenous and visible minorities, who work in natural resources at higher rates than any other sector, need hope and change more than ever before. The Prime Minister says that young Canadians must sacrifice more, but he is sacrificing their futures.

This jobs crisis is due to the Liberal anti-development agenda and the Liberals’ just transition Bill C-50, which will kill 170,000 jobs in oil and gas, 1.4 million trades jobs, 642,000 jobs in transportation, 292,000 jobs in agriculture and 193,000 jobs in manufacturing, is still law. If the Liberals are honest, they must scrap all of their anti-development laws to attract investment, bring home jobs and let Canada compete, or is this just another Liberal bait and switch.

● (1405)

[Translation]

MARIA FLORINDA PINHEIRO LEITÃO

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women’s History Month in Canada. It is a time to recognize the outstanding achievements of women who, over generations, have helped build a stronger and fairer country. To the many women in positions of leadership, I want to say that their courage and determination have opened doors for future generations.

Behind every major development, there are also everyday heroines: mothers, educators and workers like my wife and my mother. My mother, Maria Florinda Pinheiro Leitão, is a woman who immigrated to Canada for her children’s future.

Through my wife, I want to acknowledge the efforts of all the immigrant women who have helped build this country.

* * *

[English]

BILL C-246

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, discounts belong in grocery stores, not in courtrooms. Under the Liberals’ soft-on-crime policies, sexual offenders often get discount sentences, where they serve one term for multiple crimes. This practice minimizes the gravity of their actions and denies victims the full measure of justice they deserve.

For example, in Toronto, a family doctor was convicted of nine counts of sexual assault and four counts of sexual exploitation involving three different patients over time. Despite these grave crimes, he received concurrent sentencing, which equated to three and a half years. His patients were supposed to feel safe and cared for, but instead, they were violated and betrayed. While they will carry the trauma for life, their abuser will soon walk free.

It is unthinkable, so I am proud to address this issue with my private member’s bill, Bill C-246, the ending sentence reductions for sexual predators act. This act would ensure that every crime is punished in full and every victim receives the justice they deserve, because this place should always stand with victims.

[Translation]

JACQUES ST-JEAN

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I am rising to pay tribute to the late Jacques St-Jean, a passionate man who devoted 24 years of his life to serving the community of Saint-François in Laval.

Jacques was a man with a larger-than-life personality and a heart of gold. His door was always open and he was always willing to help others. I met him when he was serving as a city councillor. He knew his constituents well and was deeply committed to their well-being.

A sports enthusiast and an extraordinary teacher, he founded a hockey school and devoted his energy to helping young people by passing on key values, such as perseverance, respect and solidarity. This visionary also helped establish the Montreal Heart Institute's EPIC Centre in 1969 and supported many local projects to promote Quebec culture.

His tireless dedication and kindness left a lasting impression on his community, and he continues to inspire all who knew him every day.

I hope my dear friend Jacques will rest in peace.

* * *

[English]

ENERGY INDUSTRY IN CANADA

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the environment minister said that Canada must be “an energy superpower...low carbon, low risk and low cost”, but the government has deliberately chosen to ignore a proven opportunity: waste heat to power. Every day, heat from industries, such as metals, chemicals and cement, escapes unused. Industry makes up over half of Canada's energy use. Much of it lost as residual heat. That is zero-emission electricity, enough to power hundreds of thousands of homes.

Other countries act. The U.S. gives a 30% tax credit. France's is up to 50%. In Canada, it is nothing. The government decided to exclude waste heat to power in its clean technology incentives. This misguided mindset must be corrected now. Conservatives would do what this government will not, which is to manage Canada's energy future with economic sense.

* * *

[Translation]

SONIA PICHÉ

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, culture in the regions is fundamental to creation, dissemination and our artists.

Today, I would like to pay tribute to Sonia Piché, the former director of Théâtre du Marais in Val-Morin. She is now retired, but she can be proud of her legacy as we celebrate the theatre's 25th anniversary.

Statements by members

At the celebration last month, she said, “Culture nourishes people. It does people good. There should be no more doubts about the need for organizations that promote the performing arts, theatre and dance, because these art forms are food for the soul. They're good for people's health.”

Today, October 30, I want to remind the House that Quebec culture is at the heart of who we are as a nation. It reflects our identity and our uniqueness.

Congratulations to Sonia Piché.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

NISA FOUNDATION

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to recognize the Nisa Foundation for its invaluable work supporting women and children in Surrey Newton and communities across Canada. Through its Nisa homes program, led by program director Syma Nehal, the organization provides safe, culturally responsive housing, counselling and wraparound supports to those fleeing violence, poverty or homelessness.

The Nisa Foundation's commitment not only restores dignity but also builds stronger, healthier families and communities. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Syma Nehal and her dedicated team for their tireless efforts to create a brighter, more inclusive future for women and children across the country.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the elitist Prime Minister still has not shared an ounce of remorse for making remarks about students in Canada needing to sacrifice more for their future than they already do.

A poll from earlier this month found that nine in 10 Canadians are concerned about housing. Over half are worried about paying their mortgage or rent, especially Canadians my age.

More young Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque. Food banks are overwhelmed, gas prices are soaring and housing is out of reach. No one should sacrifice their basic needs.

To those told by the Liberal government to lower their expectations or give up on their dreams, it does not have to be this way. They deserve opportunity, stability and a fair shot at the Canadian dream.

The Conservatives will fight for affordable homes, good jobs and a better future, holding the Liberal government to account every step of the way.

* * *

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight women's history month.

*Statements by members**[Translation]*

Women shape our communities across Canada every day.

[English]

In my own family, I have seen women of different generations contribute in so many different ways.

[Translation]

Each one chooses a different path.

[English]

It is challenging for men to fully understand the lived experiences of women.

[Translation]

However, we must show them respect, not only this month, but every moment of every day.

[English]

As a father of two daughters, I want Canada to remain a country that supports and uplifts women and girls.

[Translation]

It is a country that promotes respect for women everywhere.

* * *

TAXATION

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a champion of tax evasion. Last week, at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, we learned that Brookfield is one of the companies that evades the most taxes in Canada. Not that long ago, our Prime Minister was at the head of that company.

Over the past 15 years, the company has paid less than 5% in taxes in Canada, and in the last five years alone, it has evaded \$6.5 billion in taxes. That is \$6.5 billion that Canadians are not receiving, and the Prime Minister has the audacity to say that families and young people will have to make sacrifices.

After weeks of hearing the Liberals congratulate themselves on social programs that Canadians have to rely on more and more, as if that were a good thing, one has to wonder whether the Prime Minister is really able to understand the reality of those who actually pay their taxes here in Canada.

* * *

● (1415)

*[English]***YOUNG POLONIA LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

Hon. Helena Jacek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the fourth Young Polonia Leadership Summit, hosted in Ottawa by the Canadian Polish Congress, in collaboration with the Polish embassy and the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group. This summit brings together over 30 young Polish-Canadian leaders from across the country who represent the future of Polonia in Canada, a community whose contributions have enriched our country for generations.

As chair of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, and with my own Polish roots, I am honoured to be part of it because Poland is Canada's close ally, one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union and our largest trading partner in central and eastern Europe.

Our Prime Minister and Prime Minister Tusk affirmed in August that our countries are committed to strengthening our strategic partnership. This summit supports that effort for the benefit of both Poles and Canadians now and for years to come.

* * *

FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister told us to judge him by the prices at grocery stores, so let us do just that.

Food inflation has blown past the Bank of Canada's target. Canadians are paying over \$800 more for food this year than last, and 39% of Canadians have experience food insecurity over the last 12 months. However, the Liberals are plowing ahead with measures that will make groceries even more expensive. From the industrial carbon tax on fertilizer and farm equipment to the food packaging tax and inflationary spending, the story is the same.

Just this month, representatives of the Liberal government were at an international meeting backing the UN's net-zero shipping tax. Do they not see the obvious? If we tax the farmer who grows the food, those who package it and the shippers who move it, prices will go up.

Seniors are struggling to stay afloat and parents cannot afford to put a nutritious meal on their kids' plates. It is clear that Canadians simply cannot afford another dime in Liberal food taxes.

When will the Liberals stop driving up grocery store prices and finally give families a break at the checkout line?

* * *

*[Translation]***JULIETTE TRUDEAU**

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to pay tribute to Juliette Trudeau, who is retiring after 39 years of devoted service to Parliament.

Originally from Charlo, New Brunswick, Juliette began her career as a legal secretary before moving to Ottawa in 1986. That same year, she came to work for the House of Commons, where she served as a parliamentary assistant and then a ministerial assistant. Since 2006, she has worked in the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, holding various positions, including that of liaison officer at the time of her retirement.

Throughout her career, Juliette demonstrated discretion, impartiality and exceptional judgment. Her superior, the Sergeant-at-Arms, often says she has a “Ph.D. in service to MPs”. Juliette supported generations of parliamentarians with professionalism, kindness and rigour.

As she begins a new chapter with her family and her grandson, Beau, we sincerely thank her for being so dedicated and such an inspiration.

We congratulate Juliette. She will be missed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, elites and insiders have never had it so good. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is telling young Canadians that they are going to have to sacrifice even more. Now we learn what all that sacrifice is for.

We learned today that the Liberals just paid out big bonuses to government officials. The Liberal housing agency, CMHC, whose main job is to make housing more affordable, paid out \$30 million in executive bonuses at a rate of about \$42,000 a pop. Each one of those could have been a down payment for a young Canadian.

Why is the Prime Minister telling young Canadians that they have to sacrifice so he can pay off government insiders?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians made it clear in the last election that they want more homes built, especially for young Canadians trying to buy their first home. That is why this government is moving fast. We are cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers, with up to \$50,000 in tax relief and nearly \$4 billion in savings. This work is building on our first home savings account and the national housing strategy, supporting purpose-built rentals for young Canadians.

While Conservatives are voting down affordability measures, we are stepping up and taking care of young Canadians who are finally getting the keys to their first home.

• (1420)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if flushing billions of tax dollars through big bureaucracies actually worked, we would not be having this conversation. We have been hearing the same thing for 10 years from the Liberal government, and the results for young Canadians are terrible.

Oral Questions

The youth unemployment rate is now 15%. Young people are being forced to move back into their parents' basement. Now the Prime Minister is telling them to sacrifice while he uses their tax dollars to pay off big bonuses for government officials.

Do the Liberals not realize that young Canadians simply have nothing left to give?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what young Canadians want is a great job. That is why we are making investments not only in the things they need, like good jobs, housing and major projects, but also in the skills training they need for picking up those jobs.

Canada's Building Trades Unions does a fantastic job of training young apprentices. That is why in our budget we will propose \$75 million more for Canada's Building Trades Unions and other unions around the country to train our youth who want to do the work. They want to be part of this transformation.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told young Canadians to make sacrifices while Liberal insiders and elites have never had it so good. Canadians are lining up at food banks while the Liberals use tax dollars to hand out bonuses.

CMHC executives got \$30 million in bonuses for helping the Liberal housing crisis. EDC executives got \$60 million in bonuses for the Liberal mismanagement of COVID benefits.

How many more sacrifices do young people need to make so the Prime Minister can keep lining the pockets of his insider buddies?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a member whose leader, when responsible for this file, only built six homes in this country.

Conservatives claim to care about young people, yet every time a measure comes forward to support them, the Conservatives vote against it. They voted against the national housing strategy, against the first home savings account and against expanding mortgage criteria, and now they will not even commit to a GST cut that would save first-time homebuyers \$50,000.

Oral Questions

However, do not worry. Canadians can rely on our government and this side of the House to keep making life more affordable for Canadians.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, housing was half the cost under our leader when he was the housing minister, and if all of those expensive programs worked, 700,000 kids would not be waiting in food bank lines every single month.

Rents have doubled. A P.E.I. senior reported that he is living out of his car because he cannot afford rent, but this is the new normal in Liberal Canada.

The only people eating and living good today are the Prime Minister and his elitist buddies. Why is he putting taxpayer-funded bonuses ahead of struggling Canadians?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I had the privilege of meeting with Minister Barb Ramsay of the Conservative government in Prince Edward Island. Do members know what Minister Ramsay and I talked about? It was how pleased people were that we made the national school food program permanent. In fact, they have been able to drive down hunger through the national school food program, and they are so happy to have a federal partner working with them so that kids can eat and have dignity, no matter who they are and no matter where they go to school.

[*Translation*]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been in power for 10 years and now more than 600,000 Quebeckers are using food banks every month, while the Prime Minister's friends are lining their pockets.

Last week, the Prime Minister had the nerve to tell our young people that they need to make sacrifices, while the executives at BDC and the CMHC are getting tens of millions of dollars in bonuses. Imagine: The Prime Minister is asking young people to make more sacrifices, but he is rewarding executives with tens of millions of dollars.

Instead of telling our young people to make more sacrifices, why does the Prime Minister not ask his friends to make sacrifices and cut their bonuses?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague wants to talk about nerve. I would say to him that the Conservatives have the nerve to stand here in the House and preach virtue, but every time they have an opportunity to vote against programs that really help young Quebeckers and young Canadians, they do so.

Take, for example, the dental care program, which helps tens of thousands of people and young people in his riding access dental care. We could also mention the hundreds of thousands of young Canadians who have access to the national school food program, a program that his colleague called garbage. That takes some nerve.

• (1425)

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members on the other side of the House seem unable to grasp the reality facing ordinary Canadians.

As I said, 600,000 people in Quebec are using food banks. Meanwhile, rents are doubling in every region of the province, and grocery prices just keep going up. On the weekend, *Le Journal de Montréal* reported that pregnant women are now cutting back on protein and vegetables. People can no longer afford to pay their rent. They can no longer afford to buy groceries.

Will the Prime Minister finally get the message and table an affordable budget so that families can afford to live?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is simply astounding the way the Conservatives take every opportunity to vote against programs that truly benefit Quebeckers and Canadians.

Take, for example, the Canada child benefit, which has reduced child poverty in Canada by 38%, the Canadian dental care plan or the national school food program, which the Breakfast Club describes as a huge success that will help the youth of Quebec.

The Conservatives talk a good game, but every time they have a chance to do something, they go missing in action.

* * *

JUSTICE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago, Quebeckers came within a hair's breadth of forming their own country. Now, the yes camp is back in action.

I have a message for all the Quebeckers who were part of that movement. It is time to roll up your sleeves and start again. To all the Quebeckers who, like me, were too young or not even born yet, to those who have changed their minds or who were living abroad, my message is this: Now it is our turn. This is something that should be decided democratically, but the federal government is preventing us from making that choice with its Clarity Act.

My question for the government is this. Will it commit to respecting the will of Quebeckers?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers and Canadians went to the polls a few months ago, and the people of Quebec elected twice as many Liberals as Bloc Québécois members.

I knocked on hundreds of doors and spoke with hundreds of people on the phone, and no one asked me for a referendum. People said that they want life to be more affordable, that they want a budget to build Canada, and that is exactly what we are going to deliver next Tuesday.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is welcome to join the yes camp when he finally realizes that that is where he belongs.

Until then, he is not the one who gets to decide what is important to Quebecers. Quebecers themselves will decide what is important to them, including their future as a nation. The Quebec nation deserves to make all of its choices on its own, like any other nation on this planet.

If the minister is confident about Quebecers' commitment to Canada, he should not be afraid of democracy.

If he is confident that he would win in a future referendum, why does he not simply repeal the Clarity Act?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are facing very significant global challenges.

On this side of the House, we believe, as most Quebecers do, that we are stronger if we face these challenges together, rather than apart. If the Bloc Québécois wants to continue to focus on division, it is free to do that. On this side, we will continue to focus on unity and on the fact that we are stronger together than apart.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are a people like any other, neither better nor worse. We might be a little cooler though.

Like all peoples of the world, Quebec deserves to be sovereign at home, it deserves to have its voice heard in the world, and most importantly, it deserves to make all of its own democratic choices.

The Clarity Act undermines this principle. English Canada retains the right to oversee our democracy.

When will the government repeal this colonialist legislation?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting to hear the Bloc member talk about all peoples when the Quebec government just tabled a draft constitution without even consulting Quebec's indigenous peoples. Quebec did not even have the decency to sit down with the first nations and ask if they could talk before tabling a draft constitution. That is not how collaboration works.

On this side of the House, we believe that Canada is stronger when it is united. We believe in reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We consult with indigenous peoples on all of our environmental legislation.

That is how we will move our country forward.

* * *

● (1430)

THE ECONOMY

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are going without food because of high prices, the Prime Minister's friends are reaping the rewards of government largesse.

When he created the new defence investment agency, the Prime Minister quickly called on his friend Doug Guzman to fill the position of CEO. He gave him a salary of nearly \$700,000. After all, with the Liberals, a friend is a friend.

Oral Questions

Now that he is spending taxpayers' money, not Bay Street money, can the Prime Minister stop asking young Canadians to make sacrifices to make his friends rich?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only question on everyone's lips is this: Will the Conservatives ruin Christmas for Canadians by triggering a snap election? The last election was only six months ago. We were given a mandate, and we will present a plan to build the strongest economy in the G7, a strong Canada, with housing and job opportunities for young people from coast to coast to coast.

Will the member ruin Christmas, or will he support our young people by supporting our budget?

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader is something else. He is putting the burden on the opposition parties to support the type of mismanagement we have seen from the Liberals for the past 10 years, while he is presenting Canadians with a bunch of nonsense.

The government House leader should instead be asking himself whether his government is prepared to present a budget that is affordable to make life affordable for Canadians. That is the question.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. That is the question. Yes, we will present an affordable budget. We will present a budget that lays the foundation for a strong economy and that guarantees a future, housing and training opportunities for our young people across the country.

The only question is this: Will the Conservatives trigger a Christmas election like a bunch of griches, or will they take the opportunity to build a strong Canada with the best economy in the G7 for Canada's young people?

[English]

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, Liberal elites and insiders have never had it so good.

The Prime Minister told Canadians they need to sacrifice. He promised he would spend less, but instead he spends more. The latest example is that the head of the Prime Minister's new defence investment agency, who has never served, will draw a \$700,000 salary. Meanwhile, rent has doubled, food banks are breaking records and seniors are living in their cars.

How much more do young Canadians have to sacrifice so that the Prime Minister can hire his buddies?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the party opposite has been for the last four months, but we have been travelling the country, listening to Canadians.

Oral Questions

On November 4, we will table a generational budget. We will spend less on government operations. We will invest more in Canada. We will invest more in Canadians. We will invest in infrastructure, defence, national projects and housing.

On this side of the House, we believe in Canada. We will build our country and our economy into the strongest economy in the G7.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should tell that to the 700,000 kids lined up at food banks. How much more do they have to sacrifice for Liberal insiders?

Canadians need a government that puts ordinary families first. While Canadians are sacrificing, the Prime Minister is handing out \$700,000 salaries to his high-flying buddies like Halloween candy.

When will the Prime Minister stop using taxpayer dollars to line his friends' pockets and finally give Canadians an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how about the Conservative Party apologizes to all the kids who benefit from the national school food program? The Conservatives called it “garbage” last week, and they claimed that it does not feed a single child.

On the contrary, the program feeds 400,000 kids every year, helping them to learn, to focus and to be ready for a full day of school. This is about giving every child an opportunity, no matter where they live, and no matter where they learn.

I ask the members opposite, now that this is known, will they correct the record and apologize, or will they ruin Christmas with a Christmas—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek has the floor.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, Liberal elites and insiders have never had it so good. The Prime Minister promised to cut high-priced consultants, but he has already broken that promise. In three years, spending on consultants soared more than 30%. The Prime Minister said he would do things differently. According to him, differently means spending more than a record \$26 billion on consultants, another broken Liberal promise.

Will the Prime Minister cut the costly consultants so Canadians can afford to eat?

• (1435)

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question, because we all know, on this side of the House, that the Conservatives never gave a dang about low-income people and never will.

I will point again to a memo to the Conservatives: First, Canadians do not want a Christmas election, and second, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The member can start from the top.

Hon. Buckley Belanger: Mr. Speaker, as the Conservatives speak about the challenges in this country, I am going to ask the Leader of the Opposition what he got as severance when the current member for Carleton defeated him at the polls. How much did he take?

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister and the Liberals are asking Canadians to make sacrifices, and Canadians are lined up at food banks in record numbers, the Liberals' use of well-connected friends and high-priced consultants is driving costs up, as in the benefits delivery modernization programme, which the Auditor General says has ballooned by an additional \$1.3 billion and could hit as high as \$8 billion.

Canadians cannot afford the Liberal government. We are seeing layoffs from coast to coast to coast like we have never seen before.

Why are Canadians being asked to make sacrifices while the Liberals continue to reward well-connected Liberal consultants?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the member who, when asked about his leader's comments on the RCMP, said that he had a lozenge in his mouth.

Will the member take out his lozenge, go talk to the Leader of the Opposition and say, “Don't be a grinch and don't cause a Christmas election, but vote for the budget and make Canada the best economy in the G7”?

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can say that a lot of Canadians feel sick after the Liberals continue to inflict on them their out-of-control spending on consultants. Last year alone, over \$20 billion was spent on well-connected Liberal insiders getting contracts. This year, I think the number is going to go as high as \$25 billion.

Instead of asking young people to make sacrifices, why will the Liberals not cut out their well-connected friends, put Canadians first and deliver a budget Canadians can actually afford?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the member's choice of cold remedy, we will be putting a budget before the House next week. The member will have an opportunity to vote for opportunities for young people, for UTIP grants to unions so we can create unionized skilled trade jobs on major projects in this country, for funding for science and education, and for giving a raise to our military personnel.

I ask the member to please vote for the budget and to not to cause a Christmas election.

* * *

[Translation]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, our forestry industry and its workers came to Parliament Hill to demand that Ottawa support them at long last in dealing with the Americans. They are calling on the federal government to advance them 50% of any future countervailing duties that have to be paid.

This is a no-cost measure, considering that the U.S. tariffs are illegal and that our producers will eventually be reimbursed. However, it is critical for the survival of our sawmills. Yesterday, the minister showed some openness. It is up to her to act on that openness. Will she respond favourably to the industry's legitimate request?

• (1440)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Just last Friday, my colleague from Les Pays-d'en-Haut and I visited the Crête Group plant in the Laurentians to discuss federal assistance.

The Business Development Bank of Canada is providing \$700 million, and another \$500 million is available for business modernization. Softwood lumber is a key sector all across Canada. We will be there to support it during these difficult times.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it looks like the Liberals have been had too. Apparently they believed the Prime Minister when he said there would be a deal with the Americans by July and then said there would be one this fall.

There is no deal, and it is now clear that the Liberal Party will not be saving anyone. This is a rude awakening. It hurts, but they need to understand that our economy is in urgent need of protection. Our forestry industry is calling for support to cope with countervailing duties. It needs a wage subsidy.

When will the Liberals take action?

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We could not agree more. What is happening is unjustified; the tariffs are unjustified. Those of us on this side of the House hope we can work with him and with all members, including the 44 Liberal members from Quebec, to help our softwood lumber industry.

Oral Questions

As the minister said, \$1.25 billion is already available, and we want to do even more for workers in the lumber industry.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the government, Liberals friends and insiders have never had it so good. We just learned that the government's own housing agency doled out over \$3.6 million in bonuses to all but one of their 86 executives. That is about \$43,000 per executive.

Meanwhile, rents have doubled, mortgage payments have doubled and home prices have doubled. I am just wondering if the minister could tell Canadians who cannot find a home how much more he requires them to sacrifice while he pays his executive bonuses?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition keeps talking down our country, we are building it up. They talk down our housing as shacks and Soviet style; they talk down our police as despicable, and they talk down our school food program as garbage.

Meanwhile, here is some good news: The only thing going down is interest rates. We are working hard, building affordable housing and hiring 1,000 new RCMP officers while our national school food program is feeding hundreds.

Why do they not join us in building up the country, instead of tearing it down?

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food bank visits have skyrocketed to 2.2 million this year. Home prices are 54% higher today than they were in October 2015.

CTV reported this morning that a 76-year-old man in Prince Edward Island has been living in his car for the last two months because he cannot afford rent. The Prime Minister has told young Canadians that they need to sacrifice.

The question is very simple: How much more sacrifice does he require from struggling Canadians to pay executive bonuses?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything to build this country up strong.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives are talking it down. They talk down our housing program. They vote against affordable housing. They vote against school food programs. They vote against hiring 1,000 RCMP officers.

The hard work right now is to build this country up. We have a budget coming November 4. I hope they join us in doing the hard work to build this country up and avoid a Christmas election. They should fight for this country.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberals, insiders have never had it so good.

Canadians, including 700,000 children, made 2.2 million food bank visits last year. Seniors are living in cars because rent has doubled. Meanwhile, the government gave \$1 billion to buy boats from Beijing, offshoring Canadian steel and shipbuilding jobs, while executives at the Canada Infrastructure Bank pocketed fat bonuses. They laugh all the way to the bank while Canadian workers cry all the way to the food bank.

When will the Prime Minister stop lining the pockets of insiders and start delivering an affordable life for Canadians?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend, who is also the transport critic. I will tell him that next week, November 4, there is going to be a budget that solves the problem that he and I want solved, which is the problem of Driver Inc. The Minister of Finance announced today that measures are going to be taken to make sure we restore labour standards and fairness to the trucking industry in this country. That is going to be in the budget.

Will this member walk down the aisle and tell the grinchy Leader of the Opposition to vote for the budget, to not ruin Christmas and to build Canada strong?

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not expect the minister to ask me to walk down the aisle with him.

Canadians made 2.2 million food bank visits last year, and seniors are sleeping in cars because rent has doubled. However, the Liberal government sent a billion taxpayer dollars to buy boats from Beijing and handed out eye-popping bonuses at the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Why is the Prime Minister using taxpayer dollars to reward insiders and offshoring Canadian jobs instead of helping Canadians afford food and a roof over their heads?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend once again and tell him that I will walk down any aisle that he wants to walk down if he will just walk down a few steps and tell the grinchy Leader of the Opposition this: “We do not want a Christmas election. We want to support a plan that gives raises to the military and that keeps that the shipbuilding industry in Vancouver humming, building ships for the Coast Guard and the Canadian military.”

All of this is going to be in our affordable, great, economy-building budget on November 4. Will that member do the right thing and tell the Leader of the Opposition that we do not want a Christmas election?

[*Translation*]

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are struggling, it is bonus after bonus for Liberal elites and insiders.

Executives at the Business Development Bank of Canada each received an average of \$216,000 in bonuses. Via Rail executives each received \$110,000 in bonuses. Export Development Canada executives each received \$143,000 in bonuses. The Prime Minister is asking young people to make sacrifices, but not his buddies.

Will this Prime Minister stop asking young Canadians to make sacrifices only to line the pockets of his cronies?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot compete with my colleague's performance, which was very impressive, although we have seen him do better. I congratulate him in any case.

As for his question, if he wants to talk about sacrifices, I find that a bit hypocritical on their part. The Conservatives would sacrifice the Canada child benefit, the Canadian dental care plan, the national school food program and a pay raise for the Canadian Armed Forces.

They know a thing or two about making sacrifices. The Leader of the Opposition was willing to sacrifice one of his own members in order to get re-elected a few months ago. Clearly, they have no problem with making sacrifices.

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[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, money laundering, fraud and financial crimes fuel organized crime, undermine confidence in our financial system and contribute to serious challenges, such as the opioid crisis and rising housing costs in British Columbia.

Our government has taken decisive action in recent years through major legislative reforms, but the sophistication of these crimes means that we must remain vigilant and we must do more. Can the Secretary of State for the Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions update the House on how our government is strengthening enforcement to better detect and disrupt financial crime?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to warn some members in this corner that we have to keep the level of noise down so that we can hear the secretary of state.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this important question.

Last week, our new Liberal government introduced that, on November 4, our very first budget will take decisive action to safeguard Canadians' financial information and life savings. All of us in this House have had cases of heartbreak, especially with seniors being defrauded. That is why we will introduce several measures in budget 2025 to combat financial crimes, such as a federal anti-fraud strategy, a dedicated financial crimes agency and a code of conduct to combat economic abuse. Budget 2025 will build Canada strong by protecting Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

* * *

• (1450)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, the Liberals have been mismanaging taxpayers' money, and the Auditor General has informed us of a prime example of this. Do members know what it is about? It is about the Canada Revenue Agency's 10-year, \$50-million contract for a phone system. Do members know how much that contract has cost to date? It has cost \$190 million and could cost up to \$217 million, or four times more than planned. That is what Liberal management looks like.

Will the Liberals finally realize that they need to stop wasting money and implement measures that allow Canadians to have an affordable life?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to offer my opposition colleague a briefing to help him understand the nature of this contract, which was awarded as part of a tendering process. All of the costs incurred, the \$190 million over 10 years, were included in the initial contract, which was good value for money.

If my colleague wants to know more about this specific contract, then I will be pleased to make sure he is appropriately briefed. Otherwise, I would invite him to go back and review what was said recently in committee, when the president of Shared Services Canada clearly explained the contract.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes indeed, I invite everyone to watch the parliamentary committee meetings on the subject of the Canada Revenue Agency. It revealed a lot about how utterly irresponsibly those people, the Liberal government, managed the Canada Revenue Agency over the past 10 years. What do we have to show for it? Two million Canadians are currently using food banks. Housing costs have doubled since those people came to power. What is the Prime Minister promising young people? More sacrifices.

When will the government understand that it needs to stop wasting money and implement effective measures to allow all Canadians to have an affordable life?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason we are on this side of the House is that we promised Canadians

Oral Questions

and young Canadians a serious plan to grow the economy by creating one Canadian economy and making key investments to build Canada's economy while reducing the cost of living and increasing buying power. That is what we have done from day one, when we introduced a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. That is what we will continue to do on November 4.

I encourage my colleague to support us.

[English]

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the government, Liberal elites and insiders have never had it so good, but the Prime Minister told young Canadians that they are the ones who need to sacrifice. While young Canadians have given up on home ownership, the Auditor General reports that the CRA allowed a telephone system contract to go from \$50 million to nearly \$200 million while it still does not answer the phone.

Will the government deliver an affordable budget that reins in sweetheart deals for insiders, yes or no?

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: Investing in housing is one of the most effective ways to tackle food insecurity. In the last six months in my home riding of Edmonton Centre, I have announced over \$400 million in infrastructure investments and affordable housing. We are not asking young people to make sacrifices or Canadians to make sacrifices; we are asking the Conservatives to support our generational budget so that we can keep building homes and make life affordable for Canadians.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of the Liberal government, elites and insiders have never had it so good. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's message to young Canadians is to continue to sacrifice.

While Canadians are lining up at food banks, billions of their tax dollars keep going to consultants, \$25 billion in fact, consultants who do not stick to budgets or, according to the Auditor General, do not even deliver results.

Why does the Prime Minister not make his friends and insiders sacrifice instead of young Canadians?

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, one of the biggest drivers of food insecurity is the cost of housing. That is why we are focused on getting more homes built. That is how we make life affordable for Canadians.

Oral Questions

We are starting to see progress. Projects are breaking ground, rents are starting to level off and more families are moving into homes they can afford. The Conservatives can criticize all they want, but if they really wanted to help families with affordability, they would support our budget.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the numbers do not lie. Canadians have made a smashing 2.2 million food bank visits, and over 700,000 are children. Canadians are living in their cars. They are struggling. They cannot afford food and they cannot afford homes. These are facts.

Why will the Liberals not admit that their programs are not working and that they will choose their friends and insiders over Canadians every single time?

● (1455)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have noticed that the Conservatives have stopped quoting the report from Food Banks Canada. Do members know why? It is because in that report, what Food Banks Canada said is that there are some promising signs from the federal government, with things like the Canada disability payment, done for the very first time, something those guys voted against; the Canadian dental care plan, which is bringing down the cost of dental care for Canadians; the national school food program; and the national housing strategy, which is focused on market rent housing. That is what they are prepared to throw away—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River.

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ETHICS

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stands to make tens of millions of dollars in future bonus pay from three investment funds that he registered in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. I have a simple question. How many other investments does the Prime Minister have in offshore tax havens?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that all members of this House must abide by some of the strictest, most stringent ethics rules in the world. The Prime Minister has not only met but exceeded his requirements under those ethics guidelines, and he will continue to do so.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, expert testimony reveals that the Prime Minister's company Brookfield is the biggest tax dodger in Canada, having avoided paying a staggering \$6.5 billion in taxes in just five years. As chair of Brookfield, the Prime Minister registered three investment funds in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands from which he stands to make millions.

Again, how much does the Prime Minister have in offshore tax havens?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Canada lives under the most stringent and strongest ethics guidelines for designated public office holders in the world. All members must comply with these requirements. These requirements are met very transpar-

ently, including the Prime Minister's, which are all available for the public to view.

The ethics guidelines in Canada are strong and we should be proud of that.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals speak of a stringent and robust regime, yet the Prime Minister's company Brookfield registered multiple funds to a bike shop in Bermuda to avoid paying taxes in Canada.

The Prime Minister is dodging a simple question so I will ask it again. How much money does he have in offshore tax havens? I want just a number, please.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 28, Canadians had a choice between a leader with world and business experience and a leader with no experience outside of this House. Canadians spoke loud and clear. They elected a leader who is going to build Canada and invest in Canada. They elected a leader who is going to make Canada the strongest economy in the G7.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refuses to come clean about his offshore tax havens. Meanwhile, he lectures young Canadians that they need to sacrifice more. After 10 years of the Liberals, they cannot afford food. They cannot afford rent. They have nothing left to give.

When will the Prime Minister park his hypocrisy, come clean and tell us how much cash he has stashed in offshore tax havens?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the party opposite is focused on its leader, we are focused on Canada. We are focused on building our economy to be the strongest in the G7.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I could not hear. If the hon. secretary of state would like to start from the top, that would be ideal.

● (1500)

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, the party opposite has had a bad week. We understand that. Its members are focused on their leader and a revolting caucus.

On this side of the House, we are focused on building Canada. We are focused on investing in Canada. On November 4, we will come forth with a budget that will invest, build, and build our economy into the strongest in the G7.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have industries, innovators and workers ready to deliver the advanced technologies that our armed forces and allies need, from aerospace to cyber systems.

Can the Minister of Government Transformation explain to the House how buying Canadian will ensure that federal procurement supports the development of a strong Canadian defence and security industry, strengthens our supply chains and builds a more resilient and prosperous economy for all Canadians?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Terrebonne for her excellent question. I am so glad to have her here with us. I know that there are many businesses in her riding that care about buying Canadian.

What does buying Canadian mean? It means prioritizing Canadian companies and having Canadian content requirements. It means helping SMEs so they can get federal government contracts. It ultimately means supporting Canadian companies in sectors like the ones my colleague mentioned, such as aerospace, shipbuilding, artificial intelligence and manufacturing.

We will move forward, because everyone knows that a contract is always better than a subsidy, and that is what will help us build this country.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facade has been exposed. The Prime Minister's claim of being a master negotiator is pure fiction. Every time the Prime Minister meets with foreign leaders, it is Canadian farmers who suffer the consequences.

India has slapped a 30% tariff on Canadian yellow peas. This is when farmers are already suffering from crippling tariffs from China on peas, canola, beef, seafood, pork and other commodities. Now India has taken another step. Every time the Prime Minister travels, it is farmers who feel the pain.

Why is it that Canadian farmers are the ones paying the price for the Prime Minister's vanity tour?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, numerous times I have reiterated in this House the importance of diversifying Canada's supply chains.

Over the past number of months, I have spoken with my counterpart in Pakistan. Pakistan is one of the world's largest importers of canola. This morning, he confirmed to me that Pakistan will open its doors to Canadian canola. In fact, he confirmed to me that orders have already been placed for Canadian canola. This is great news for Canadian farmers.

On this side of the House, we will build Canada strong.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Liberal trade failures, now 80% of Canada's pea markets are facing tar-

iffs. That is a fact. Every time the Prime Minister travels, it is Canadian farmers who are suffering the consequences.

Let us look at the Liberal scoreboard. In China, there are 100% tariffs on Canadian peas and canola and 25% on pork and seafood, and Canadian beef has been blocked since 2021. The United Kingdom does not take Canadian beef and pork. Meanwhile, imports from the United Kingdom of beef have skyrocketed. Now India has slapped a 30% tariff on Canadian peas and 10% on lentils.

Will the Prime Minister stop the photo ops and get tariff relief for Canadian farmers, who are just trying to feed Canadians?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to reiterate that we are actively making sure that countries hear the interests of Canadian farmers, Canadian suppliers and Canadian producers.

Not only is Pakistan opening its doors to Canadian canola, but I raised potash, canola, agriculture and seafood in my recent trip to the Indo-Pacific. The governments with which I spoke assured me that we will continue to work together to build economic supply chains across the Indo-Pacific, which is why the Prime Minister is in the region right now.

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prairie farmers do not want handouts; they want a trade deal. China's unfair tariffs on Canadian canola have cost billions of dollars and punished our producers. The canola sector is bigger than Canada's steel, aluminum and auto sectors combined, yet the government treats it like an afterthought. Now the Prime Minister is in China meeting with President Xi.

Will he finally reach a deal to lift these punishing tariffs, or will he come back once again empty-handed, proving that when it comes to standing up for Canadian farmers, the Prime Minister is all talk and no trade?

● (1505)

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, canola farmers produce the best canola in the world. We know China has imposed unfair tariffs on canola. We are working on it. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture are currently in Asia diversifying our trade, but also resolving disputes, and Pakistan has now opened its doors to our canola.

Oral Questions

In the meantime, we will be there for our farmers with programs to support them during this difficult time.

* * *

SPORT

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are now fewer than 100 days until the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Our government recognizes that athlete health and well-being are foundational to performance, and we want all of team Canada to know that when they are representing the country we all love, we have their backs.

Could my good friend and colleague, the Secretary of State for Sport, share how our government is supporting team Canada Olympic and Paralympic athletes and their coaches?

While I have the opportunity, go Blue Jays.

Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, I announced a more than \$3 million investment in mental health for athletes to support the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic institutes and networks across our country, supported by the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee. We are also supporting game plan, the Canadian national team total wellness program. These investments are critical because our government knows that health, mental health and overall well-being are foundational to the performance and success of our national team athletes in sport and in life.

Canadians are proud of our athletes. With the 2026 Paralympic and Olympic Winter Games fast approaching, Canada's new government is committed to supporting team Canada.

* * *

● (1510)

THE ECONOMY

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian youth are struggling, but Liberal elites have never had it so good. Youth unemployment is at 15%. Young people are writing off the dream of home ownership as simply a fantasy, but the gravy train is chugging along for the Prime Minister's friends.

Seventy-nine per cent of Export Development Canada executives cashed in bonuses averaging \$143,000 each. BDC executives got bonuses averaging \$216,000 each. The Prime Minister's housing agency paid out over \$30 million in bonuses.

Will the Prime Minister ask his elite Liberal insider friends to make sacrifices instead of young Canadians?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a little known fact, because it was not exactly a bestseller, but that man was the Leader of the Opposition's biographer. That would mean he knows some intimate secrets about the Leader of the Opposition.

What I suggest is that he walk down a few stairs, talk to his boss and tell the Leader of the Opposition, the “grinchy” guy, not to steal Christmas from our kids or cause a Christmas election and vote for

the budget, because it is going to help Canadian youth and will build the best economy in the G7.

* * *

HEALTH

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he wants to make generational investments in nation-building projects. New Democrats agree. We also know that a healthy economy is a healthy workforce.

The NDP pioneered dental care and pharmacare because they deliver essential primary health care to Canadians. We believe every Canadian should have head-to-toe health care regardless of their ability to pay.

Will the Liberals acknowledge that universal public health care is nation building and reflect that principle in their budget next week?

[Translation]

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for his question.

I am the Minister of Health and my role, first and foremost, is to defend the Canada Health Act. I can assure my colleague that we will defend universal health care for Canadians, both before and after the budget.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, deep cuts are being planned for the arts and culture sector in the upcoming budget. Festivals and events could lose \$22.5 million, reducing their funding to 2007 levels. The Canada Council for the Arts could face a \$50-million cut.

Arts and culture not only feed our soul but are a major economic driver, contributing \$65 billion to Canada's GDP in 2024 and generating \$17 billion in federal and provincial tax revenue. Funding should be increased to support these made-in-Canada jobs.

Will the Minister of Finance scrap these cuts?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, between 2015 and 2024, the government doubled the funding for the arts and culture sector in this country. It has doubled the funding for the Canada Council for the Arts. We will continue to be there for our artists and for our cultural sector.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Barb Ramsay, Minister of Social Development and Seniors for the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it being Thursday, I will rise to ask the traditional Thursday question.

I know I speak for all Canadian baseball fans, who have a lot on their minds this weekend other than what the government's legislation might be next week, as the Blue Jays come home with the wind in their sails as they look to finish the job in games 6 and 7. I know I am very excited for that, and I want to congratulate all the players, teams and fans for an amazing playoff run so far.

I heard a lot of references to the Grinch in the government House leader's answers today. I will point out that, much like the Prime Minister is making food unaffordable for Canadians, so too the Grinch took the roast beast away from the Whos in Whoville. I know that many Canadians cannot afford "whosits and whatsits", after the government's inflationary deficits have priced families out of being able to buy toys for their children, so I hope it is the government that will remove its Grinch costume and think about an affordable budget for an affordable life for Canadians.

I would like to ask the government House leader what the business for the rest of this week and for next will be for the House, and to ask specifically whether he will show some Christmas cheer and some Christmas charity and allow the House to have a take-note debate on any number of issues that are distressing to Canadians. For example, the official opposition has asked for a take-note debate on softwood lumber, as many Canadian families are heading into the Christmas season out of work from the lumber industry after the punishing tariffs that the Prime Minister has failed to remove.

Will the government House leader schedule a debate on the automotive sector, after thousands of workers in Canada have received pink slips because of the government's failure to get a deal on autos? Will he schedule a debate on agriculture, as our Canadian producers now face tariffs not only from China but also from India, something that the Prime Minister promised to solve? He said he would get a deal and a win for Canada and remove tariffs, but there are actually more tariffs today for Canadian workers than there were when the Prime Minister took office.

Finally, when the budget is introduced on Tuesday, will the Liberals continue to ask Canadians to sacrifice even more so the Liberals can line the pockets of their friends, or will he bring in an affordable budget that allows Canadians to have an affordable life?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a lot in there that was kind of like a Trey Yesavage

Business of the House

slider. We will try not to swing or flail too much at all of those hard pitches from the opposition House leader.

Next week, Canadians will have a choice. An affordable budget for an affordable life that would build Canada strong and build the biggest and best economy in the G7 is one choice they have. The second choice is a Christmas election that no one wants, that would follow six months from the last election and that would deprive Canadians of benefiting from the budgetary plan that the government will be presenting next week.

The opposition serves up green eggs and ham, but on this side of the House there is a plan to build Canada strong and build the strongest economy in the G7.

• (1515)

[Translation]

This afternoon, we will continue the second reading debate of Bill C-14, the bail act. Tomorrow, we will resume debate at report stage of Bill C-3, an act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025).

[English]

On Monday at noon we will go back to debate on Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, and in the afternoon we will turn to Bill C-4, with major tax cuts for all taxpaying Canadians contained in the affordability legislation, at report stage and third reading.

Next Tuesday we will resume debate at second reading of 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.

Tuesday will be a big day. At 4 p.m. the Minister of Finance and National Revenue will deliver the budget speech.

I would also like to inform all hon. colleagues that, as we approach the fateful day when the opposition gets to decide whether it deprives Canadians of their Christmas, Wednesday and Thursday will be days reserved for debate on the budget.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, during question period on October 6, I asked the Minister of Jobs a question about the Driver Inc. scam. In her response, the minister stated that her department had "created a specialized inspection team that has already conducted more than 100,000 inspections and awareness-raising activities in the [trucking] sector."

Government Orders

Today, in the news, we learned that her office has issued a correction and that her department conducted 1,000 inspections, not 100,000. I would like to know whether the Hansard can be corrected, because that represents a difference of 99,000 inspections.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I thank the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères for his comments.

Hansard cannot be rewritten, but his comments are duly noted and will be entered in Hansard.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nunavut.

I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, which proposes amendments to the Criminal Code to strengthen Canada's bail and sentencing laws by tightening release provisions for repeat and violent offenders and ensuring that serious crimes would be met with sentences that reflect their gravity. I would like to focus my remarks today on the proposed changes to the conditional sentence order regime, which is commonly referred to as house arrest.

Conditional sentencing was introduced in 1966 to reduce the overreliance on incarceration and correctional institutions by allowing judges, in appropriate circumstances, to order that a sentence of imprisonment be served in the community under strict conditions. The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed that conditional sentences are designed to combine the objectives of denunciation and deterrence with the rehabilitation and reintegration of the offenders. Judges must impose conditions that reflect this balance.

Such conditions can include curfews, mandatory counselling, abstinence from alcohol or drugs, abstinence from owning weapons, and frequent reporting to a supervisor. Breaching any condition can result in the offender being placed in custody to serve the remainder of the sentence. To qualify for such an order, a number of conditions must be met. Number one, an offender must receive a sentence of less than two years. Number two, the court must be satisfied that serving their sentence in the community would not endanger public safety. Number three, such a sentence must be consistent with the fundamental purpose and principles of sentencing.

The Criminal Code imposes other limitations on the availability of conditional sentences even if those conditions are met. Specifically, conditional sentences cannot be imposed for offences that carry a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment, or for offences related to terrorism or criminal organizations, when prosecuted by indictment and the maximum penalty is 10 years' imprisonment, or

for the offences of attempted murder, advocating genocide and torture.

Bill C-14 proposes to add new restrictions to the conditional sentence regime to ensure that that conditional sentences would no longer be available for serious sexual offences, including those involving children. In particular, conditional sentences would no longer be available for the following offences: sexual assault when prosecuted by indictment; sexual assault with a weapon; threats to a third party causing bodily harm; aggravated sexual assault; and sexual exploitation of a person with a disability when prosecuted by indictment. In addition, any offence that is of a sexual nature involving a victim under 18 years of age would be ineligible for a CSO when prosecuted by indictment.

These proposed changes to the availability of conditional sentences are measured and deliberate. They would maintain the conditional sentencing option for low-risk offenders in appropriate cases, while reaffirming that sexual violence and exploitation demand more significant consequences.

In my view, these changes are important and necessary. Although appellate courts across the country have affirmed that conditional sentences are not appropriate for sexual offending, there have been a number of decisions in which courts have nevertheless ordered conditional sentences for serious sexual offences, including cases involving minors or vulnerable victims. Given the profound harm these crimes inflict on victims and the need for sentences that clearly denounce such conduct, I am supportive of the proposed amendment to restrict conditional sentences in that type of offending.

● (1520)

Additionally, the proposed changes were to respond to concerns raised by a number of partners and key stakeholders, including the provinces and territories, about the availability of conditional sentences for offenders convicted of sexual assault and other serious sex offences, particularly when those crimes involve children or other vulnerable persons. Partners and stakeholders have been clear and consistent in their views. Conditional sentences should never be available for sexual offences of this nature, and especially not for those committed against minors.

Bill C-14 would respond directly to these calls to reform. It represents constructive federal-provincial collaboration to ensure that sentencing laws strike the right balance between judicial discretion, public safety and society's confidence in the administration of justice. The proposed amendments also respond to the lived experience of victims and survivors. Many of them have described the re-traumatization that can result when they learn that an offender has remained in the community after conviction. For survivors, seeing a person found guilty of sexual offences serving a sentence at home can undermine confidence in the justice system and deter others from coming forward.

Let me be clear. Conditional sentences can be an important pathway to accountability and reintegration, but only when the circumstances of the offence and the offender make that outcome consistent with justice and public safety. In some cases, though, conditional sentences are simply not appropriate and send the wrong signal.

In closing, I would like to convey that Bill C-14 represents necessary and responsible criminal law reform. It demonstrates that Parliament can respond thoughtfully to emerging challenges in the justice system by refining the law to reflect both fairness and accountability. It strikes the right balance so that our sentencing framework remains coherent, consistent and worthy of public trust.

For those reasons, I urge all members to support the swift passage of Bill C-14, a set of reforms that reaffirm our collective commitment to a justice system that stands for victims, protects communities and preserves the integrity of the justice system. In doing so, we send a clear message that fairness and safety can reinforce each other and that the criminal justice system in Canada will always remain both principled and strong.

• (1525)

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives worked hard to repeal Liberal bail. We introduced legislation weeks ago. Unfortunately, the Liberals refuses to work with us. They refused to propose amendments, and ultimately, they defeated our bill because it was put forward by us, not them.

Now the Liberals have introduced their own bill and are calling for co-operation. I want to be clear that we will work with anyone and everyone to protect Canadians, but there have been several victims of crimes perpetuated by people out on bail in the interim.

Will the member admit that Liberal bail was a failure and apologize to those victims? Will he admit that the Liberals played politics with Canadians' safety?

Gurbux Saini: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member opposite that we do not play politics and we do not play with slogans. We are here to defend Canadians, and we will do whatever it takes to defend them.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question. What is the factual basis for the government's claim that the bail system is broken? When the Minister of Justice announced Bill C-14, he said that accused persons had a "get out of jail free" card, and that being granted bail was incredibly easy.

Government Orders

The figures show that, in Canada, 71% of inmates in provincial or territorial prisons are currently awaiting trial. These are people who were denied bail. In the 1980s, 75% of people were denied bail and now it is even harder to get.

What is the factual basis for what the government is trying to do?

[English]

Gurbux Saini: Mr. Speaker, may I request that my friend repeat his question? The translation was not working.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We will pause the clock briefly.

• (1530)

[Translation]

I would ask the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj to repeat his question.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. The Minister of Justice said that under the current system, when someone is charged, they have a free pass that they can show and they will be released right away. I want to know the factual basis for that claim.

The figures show that, in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, 70% of people in provincial prisons are currently awaiting trial. By comparison, in England, that figure is 20%. We imprison a lot more people before their trial here in Canada. Another thing worth noting is that people are being put in prison to await their trial far more now than they were in the 1980s.

What exactly is the problem that my colleague and his government want to solve?

[English]

Gurbux Saini: Mr. Speaker, before introducing this legislation, our Attorney General travelled across the country. He met with mayors. He met with police forces. He met with all the other people who are responsible for law enforcement in Canada. These are the things we were told. This is what needs to be done to create confidence among Canadians in our justice system. That is exactly what our legislation will do.

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his work when it comes to protecting people in Surrey, where we both come from. An issue particularly on the rise there is extortion. How would the bill help to make people feel safe in their communities from acts of extortion?

Government Orders

Gurbux Saini: Mr. Speaker, the number one thing to note is that people who take part in extortion would have to prove to a judge that they are worthy of being released, rather than it being the responsibility of the Crown.

Second, we would be able to look into their history, going back 10 years. If they are sentenced, they would have to serve their sentence. If it is two five-year terms, it would not be one term. They would have to serve exactly 10 years.

Those are the things that would make sure criminals do not continue to do what they are doing.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have seen violent crime increase by 55% in the last 10 years under the Liberal government. Sexual assaults are up 60%. Homicides are up 29%. The Liberals keep releasing criminals onto the streets under the least onerous conditions available.

What does the member have to say to victims of crime who have seen this repeatedly across our country? How can he justify not taking faster action to keep criminals behind bars, where they belong?

Gurbux Saini: Mr. Speaker, the legislation has been brought in to ensure that what my friend on the opposite side said does not happen again. We are bringing in legislation to toughen the law and ensure that Canadians feel safe in their homes and that laws are there to protect them.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am honoured to speak to Bill C-14 as the NDP justice critic, and I acknowledge that there is huge public concern about the bail system and that Canadians want to feel safe.

The New Democrats, having read through this bill, have concerns. There are real challenges in our bail system. Some examples include the high detention rate of those charged and awaiting trial. One-third of those charged are never convicted of anything. Jails are full and bursting. This bill does not address resources for provinces and territories, which would have to bear the burden of this bill. While in detention, there is no access to supportive programming, like drug and alcohol addiction programs and any other substance abuse programs. There is a severe lack of data about the number of people out on bail who are reoffending. Of course, we all know there is an overrepresentation of indigenous and marginalized communities in corrections.

Conservatives like to talk about catch and release to stoke fear. Most of these are urban, public disorder problems caused by poverty, drugs, alcohol and mental health problems.

Jurisdictions all over the world, including the United States, have a tough-on-crime approach to bail, which does not make communities safer. We see that all the time in the media. Often, these policies make communities less safe and increase recidivism.

Regarding pretrial detention, I have some facts to share. Over the past 30 years, the rate of pretrial detention in Canada has more than tripled. The rate is far higher in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and most western European nations. The poor, the homeless and those suffering from addiction or mental health issues are more likely to be denied bail and held in detention because of a few factors: They do not have phones, do not have ac-

cess to stable housing and employment, which are necessary to meet the requirements of bail, or lack friends and relatives who could serve as sureties.

More than 60% of those being held in provincial correctional institutions are awaiting trial. Many detainees are never convicted of an offence, and less than 65% of charges result in convictions. Those in pretrial detention have no access to alcohol, drug, or mental health programs. Even short periods in detention lead to higher rates of future conflict with the law. More than 40% of those detained are held for longer than a month. Pretrial detention often has serious impacts that can lead to loss of housing, employment and custody of children.

For those who do get bail, failure to meet conditions set out for bail often leads to additional criminal charges. Too many of those lack the personal supports and resources necessary to meet those conditions.

As I mentioned briefly, there is a serious lack of data and evidence-based information for reform. That is what we are calling for. No jurisdiction in Canada collects standardized data about the number of people out on bail and what their bail conditions were when offences were recommitted while on bail.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association made a submission to the justice committee and included recommendations about data collection. It cited the importance of grounding amendments to the Criminal Code in data and evidence. Regarding legislative reform, it must be done once adequate data has been collected. The federal government must collaborate with provinces, territories and civil society to launch specific initiatives to collect and report standardized data about bail systems to inform legislative reforms. There must also be improved conditions in provincial and territorial jails, because the potential for poor conditions undermines the objectives of preventing crime and ensuring rehabilitation. There is a lack of leadership from the federal government regarding data collection in the criminal justice system.

● (1535)

Another concern is the overrepresentation of indigenous people in the corrections system. Indigenous people are drastically overrepresented in the corrections system.

Government Orders

This bill would establish a broad category of reverse onus bail provisions applying to many offenders. It would have a disproportionate effect on indigenous, racialized and marginalized Canadians. There are, of course, specific Nunavut concerns because of the lack of infrastructure and a travelling court system.

Canadians' concerns about violent repeat offenders are real. New Democrats are also concerned, but rushing ahead with reforms without data and without considering the impact on indigenous and marginalized groups is a huge concern. These broad reforms, without informed data or evidence, are not the solution.

New Democrats have a different approach to bail reform. There need to be pragmatic and achievable solutions to keep communities safe. They need to address the root causes of crime, and justice reform should be targeted, not broadly capture everyone.

We need to provide better supervision for those on bail. Another solution is on-demand drug, alcohol and mental health treatment programs to end the revolving door of criminality.

For these reasons, the NDP believes in supporting and expanding community-based bail supervision programs. For example, the John Howard Society has run bail supervision and verification programs in partnership with the Ontario Attorney General since 2011. These programs now operate in 17 Ontario communities.

The success rate of these programs is over 90% in making sure bail conditions are observed and clients show up in court. The cost is five dollars per day, as opposed to \$184 per day for detention in Ontario, and this has reduced the overall numbers in pretrial detention. These programs ensure those on bail meet their conditions and have opportunities to be connected to alcohol, drug and mental health treatment programs.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association agrees with the NDP that Canada must increase support for community corrections. Additional bail supervisors must be hired, and alternate bail release and supervision programs must be implemented, with a focus on offenders with mental health or addiction challenges.

The NDP is cautious in our approach to this bill, and we will continue to consult with women's groups, civil liberties groups and indigenous groups to ensure their voices are being heard.

• (1540)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on the desires of my constituents when looking at bail reform, I note that the Prime Minister made a commitment to bring in bail reform. That is what we are debating today.

I understand the comments that NDP members have put on the record. I have a very straightforward question. Does the member and the NDP support the principles of bail reform in Bill C-14?

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, as I said, we are quite cautious in our approach.

I am very concerned, especially about the reverse onus sections of this bill. We know that, for example, even the former ministers of justice David Lametti and Arif Virani did not agree with the reverse onus. They felt that it did not increase public safety.

I am quite concerned about it.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised an interesting point earlier, when she spoke about the costs associated with this. Let us not forget that the changes the federal government made to the Criminal Code with respect to cannabis meant that the federal government collected taxes and kept all the money for itself, while the provinces had to bear the administrative costs of these changes.

In this specific case, we are amending the Criminal Code, which is easy to do. However, it will result in administrative costs for provinces, which are already struggling.

Does my colleague believe that, if the federal government wants to make these changes, then it should also provide the provinces with the necessary funding to manage them?

[*English*]

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I am thankful for the important question because I do agree. As I mentioned in my speech, I am quite concerned that if these amendments go through, it will leave the provinces and territories without the resources they need to be able to take care of the people they have to take care of, and they will not be able to. I mentioned the fact that Nunavut has 25 fly-in communities. It has a travelling court. I do not know how it would manage the additional work that would be required to implement this bill.

• (1545)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not 100% clear in regard to the NDP's position in terms of the passage of the legislation.

Given the nature of the support from the many different stakeholders who are out there, would the member not agree this legislation, at the very least, should pass into committee?

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I do agree it needs to reach committee so there can be deeper consultations and conversations about this bill.

Government Orders

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very short comment. The bill has much support. There is tremendous support from the provinces, the territories and lots of municipalities, as well as premiers, ministers from provinces and mayors. Various police associations also show their support for this bill. I would like to thank the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Public Safety, the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime and their teams for working on this bill and spending the entire summer going with us to see all the law enforcement in our ridings.

I really want to thank everybody who put this bill together, and I am looking forward to passing it in the shortest amount of time.

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I do hope there are more consultations with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, with the BC Civil Liberties Association, with indigenous groups and with women's groups, because it is those groups that are not feeling heard with how this bill was tabled. I do hope there will be more work done to hear from those most marginalized communities.

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to share my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

The Liberal government's complacency has numbed not only itself but the country. When leaders stop reacting to lawlessness, Canadians stop believing it will ever end.

In Richmond Centre—Marpole and beyond, I hear it every week: one more violent act, one less ounce of faith. People, and even the officers sworn to protect them, no longer believe their struggle matters. When a community stops expecting accountability, lawlessness becomes the norm. This is not alarmism. It is observation. It is what happens when a justice system meant to serve public safety instead offers repeat violent offenders the benefit of the doubt again and again.

Individuals with multiple prior convictions and individuals with active conditions, who are known to law enforcement, are released often within hours of their arrest only to offend again. Some of them rob. Some assault. Some kill. How did we let this become normal? The answer lies in a string of decisions made here in this chamber.

Six years ago, the Liberals passed Bill C-75, which put into legislation what they called the principle of restraint. This principle made release the default. It instructed police and judges to prioritize letting accused individuals go early and with minimal conditions. The intent, we are told, was fairness, equity and efficiency. The reality has been chaos.

Bill C-75 shifted the weight of our legal system away from public safety and toward procedural leniency. It was not reform. It was retreat. It took a system already struggling to keep up with repeat offenders and made it harder for police, Crown prosecutors and judges to do their jobs.

Do not take my word for it. Look at the numbers in British Columbia, where there were nearly 4,800 bail hearings in just over a year. Detention was sought in less than a quarter of them. Even in cases involving serious violence, detention was ordered less than half the time. The consequences were predictable and tragic.

In the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, we have seen a rise in violent assaults, break-ins and attacks on law enforcement. Officers report rearresting the same individuals multiple times in a matter of weeks. Frontline morale is eroding. Many feel like they are working in circles, handcuffed to the criminals they repeatedly arrest and to the system they are forced to comply with. Our communities, families, small businesses and seniors are the ones left to deal with the fallout.

This is not a local issue. It is a national one. Police chiefs, mayors, premiers and victims' rights groups from across Canada have said the same thing many times, which is that the system is too slow, too soft and too disjointed to protect the people it is supposed to serve. What makes it worse is that for years, these warnings were met without a care.

The Liberal government had opportunity after opportunity to course correct. Instead, it offered half measures, like Bill C-48, which tinkered with language but did not attempt to touch the core issue. With Bill C-14, we finally see an acknowledgement that the current approach is not working, that reverse-onus bail provisions are necessary for serious and repeat offenders, that conditional sentences or house arrest for crimes like sexual assault are a gross misplacement of compassion and that sentencing needs to reflect the gravity and frequency of violent crimes.

This bill contains good elements. Conservatives welcome those changes, but let us be honest: This is not a product of vision. It is a reaction, one that is long overdue.

● (1550)

For four years, Conservatives have been raising the alarm. We have introduced a private member's bill to strengthen bail. We have stood with victims' families, spoken with law enforcement and warned the House that, without reform, the system will continue to fail. Those warnings were brushed aside, and while the government hesitated, Canadians suffered.

Yes, we support Bill C-14, but it is the floor, not the ceiling. Conservatives will be pressing for critical amendments.

First, we must fully repeal the principle of restraint as outlined in Bill C-75. It is too vague. It gives too much weight to factors that have nothing to do with risk to the public. Judges must be empowered to detain individuals who pose a threat, not be told to default to release.

Second, we must restore mandatory minimum sentences for serious violent offences. The repeal of these sentences under Bill C-5 sent the wrong message: that even the most dangerous crimes might not result in jail time. That approach undermines deterrence and betrays victims.

Third, we need to implement a broader presumption of detention for individuals with violent criminal histories. The public has a right to be protected from those who have repeatedly shown disregard for the law and for human life.

Fourth, we must ensure proper support for provincial systems that bear the brunt of these changes. Without investments in Crown capacity, corrections and law enforcement, stricter laws will not translate into better outcomes. This cannot be legislation without resources.

Finally, we need transparency. Canadians should know how often bail is granted, how often conditions are breached and how often violent crimes are committed by those already out on release. This information must be reported and made public. Only then can we hold the system accountable.

This is not about being tough for the sake of being tough. It is about being serious about protecting the innocent, serious about consequences for the guilty and serious about restoring public faith in a system that too many now see as broken. Justice must be firm, fair and focused. It must prioritize the safety of communities over the convenience of repeat offenders. It must send a clear message that if people endanger others, if they repeatedly violate the law, the consequences will be certain and swift. The bill before us is an opportunity to start sending that message again, but only if we are willing to finish the work.

The people of Richmond Centre—Marpole do not want more promises; they want action. They want to know that when a dangerous individual is arrested, the justice system will act to keep them and others safe. They want a government that puts victims first.

Canadians have had enough of revolving-door bail, enough of tragic headlines and enough of policies that offer more exit ramps to offenders than pathways to accountability. Let this be the moment we choose differently. Let us send Bill C-14 to committee for further scrutiny. Let us strengthen it, and let us restore the most basic promise any justice system can make to its people: that their safety matters.

● (1555)

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree on this side of the aisle that we do need changes and improvements, which is why we are introducing this bill. However, as reported in the Winnipeg Free Press this week, Crown attorneys are desperately overloaded and understaffed. Many people are out on bail, not because of insufficient provisions in the law but because they do not have enough Crown attorneys to give them timely bail hearings, which is necessary for the denial of bail.

Does the hon. member not agree that the federal government cannot solve this alone and that we need better participation from the provincial governments?

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Chak Au: Mr. Speaker, I hope that my colleague on the other side listened to my speech carefully. I did mention that we cannot change the system through legislation only. We cannot just use promises to change the system. We can make things work better only if the system is being supported with an implementation plan and with resources. That is why I pointed out that we have to give more capacity to Crown prosecutors, to law enforcement and to the people who are out in the community protecting us.

Legislative change is important, but there has to be capacity building with it.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech. I heard him talk about the issue of sentencing. We know that, in the judicial process, judges are responsible for sentencing. They have the flexibility they need to apply a sentence that fits the crime.

Does my colleague's current emphasis on sentencing and wanting to pass legislation reflect his belief, namely that judges are not doing their job properly?

[*English*]

Chak Au: Mr. Speaker, as we have suggested, the people in law enforcement are trying to do the best job they can. However, the present system has their hands tied. The bail system right now is catch-and-release. Prosecutors, as well as judges, are being told they have to release the accused at the earliest possible moment and with the least restrictions. With those kinds of restrictions, how can the judges and the prosecutors do their job?

What we have also observed in Bill C-14 is that it is silent on those serious crimes that deserve mandatory sentencing. There are two issues: One is the bail system, and the other is that there are no mandatory sentences for serious crimes, such as those committed by drug kingpins.

● (1600)

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was incredible, very insightful and very heartfelt. When I was an MLA in B.C., starting in 2017, we were arguing the same points to the B.C. government. The B.C. government was blaming the federal government, and now we hear the federal government saying that we need more co-operation. It is a back-and-forth blame game.

Could we have gotten ahead of this if, four years ago, the federal government had listened to Conservatives' recommendations?

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Chak Au: Mr. Speaker, I have always felt that we have a system in which the federal government's being ignorant or being incapable of dealing with the issue creates a problem. The problem becomes too big, and the government tries to blame other people. When it cannot blame other people for the consequences, it then tries to do as little as it can to improve the system.

This has been going on for years. As I mentioned in my speech, the Conservatives have warned the House many times that the current system, and the previous provisions as passed by the federal government, were not working. I think we are seeing the consequences today.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I were to encapsulate the bill, I would say that it is far too little and far too late. It is not an act of leadership; it is an act of desperation. It is a half-hearted political band-aid from a government caught red-handed presiding over a public safety crisis of its own making.

For nearly a decade, the Liberals have gambled with the safety of Canadians. They have told us that their modern bail system would be fairer, more compassionate and more enlightened. Well, it has been none of those things. Their ideology has unleashed chaos on our streets, fear in our neighbourhoods and heartbreak in our families.

All 10 premiers, every single one of them, have begged the Prime Minister to fix his broken bail system. Every police chief and every frontline officer who has spoken out has warned the Liberal government that its bail policies are handcuffing police and setting criminals free. Every ordinary Canadian knows, because they can see and feel it, that violent crime has exploded under the Liberal government.

Since the Liberals have come into power, violent crime is up 55%; extortion has skyrocketed 330% across our nation and is closer to 600%, at 582%, in British Columbia; and sexual assaults are up 75%. In British Columbia, the number of sexual violations against children has quadrupled.

These are not abstract numbers; these are shattered lives, broken families and terrified communities. Behind each of those statistics is a name, a face and a story: for example, Bailey McCourt, brutally murdered by her ex-husband, who had been released on bail after an assault conviction; or Savannah Kulla-Davies, a 29-year-old mother of four who was shot and killed in Brampton. Her killer was out on bail. When will the government understand that its compassion for criminals has become cruelty toward victims?

Bill C-14 is not a solution; it is a confession. It is the government's finally admitting that its so-called reforms are a disaster. The Liberals talk about adjusting and clarifying, but no; the bill is a watered down imitation of the Conservative plan the Liberals voted against time after time. They ridiculed it, then they quietly copied it when Canadians demanded action. They are trying to clean up their own mess with a mop made of Liberal spin.

Let us remember how we got here. Bill C-75, the Liberal law that enshrined the so-called principle of restraint, told judges to release first and ask questions later. Then there is Bill C-5, the law that scrapped mandatory minimums for gun crimes and sexual offences

and brought back house arrest for criminals who should be behind bars.

This has meant that convicted sexual offenders have served sentences in their own living room, that a child pornographer in British Columbia got an 18-month house arrest, and that a man who tried to pay for sex with a 15-year-old girl received a three-month term house arrest because a longer sentence might have delayed his citizenship. In 2022, nearly one-third of homicides were committed by people already out on some form of release, whether bail, probation or house arrest.

If that does not bring the Liberals and the administration of justice into disrepute, I do not know what does.

● (1605)

What do the Liberals do now? They bring in Bill C-14, a timid half measure that tinkers around the edges. Yes, it would narrow the principle of restraint and expand reverse onus provisions, which are steps Conservatives have been demanding for years. However, it would not repeal Bill C-75 or Bill C-5, the twin pillars of the government's soft-on-crime experiment.

The bill would not restore mandatory minimums for gun offences, sex offences and repeat violent crimes. It would not create true presumption of detention for dangerous offenders, and it would still tell judges to impose the least onerous conditions possible when granting bail. Tell that to the family of Bailey McCourt and to the children of Savannah Kulla.

Here is the core of the problem. Conservatives believe in due process and the presumption of innocence, but due process does not mean a revolving door. If an accused person can be released, that is fine. However, we must give judges the power to impose strict bail conditions when necessary.

Strict bail is fair, it is safe and it saves money compared to unnecessary incarceration, but the government's ideology ties judges' hands. It says to either grant bail on the easiest terms imaginable or deny it entirely. That is absurd. Half-baked legislation creates half-safe communities.

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Conservatives are not asking for a right turn; we are demanding a U-turn. We are all on the Liberal bus, careening down a dangerous road. The provinces are shouting, the police are shouting and Canadians are shouting, "Turn around." The Liberals just smile, tap the brakes and pretend they have changed direction, while the cliffs keep coming closer. Conservatives will not sit silently in the back seat while the government drives safety over the edge.

The government loves to say it is investing in safety, but the Minister of Public Safety says he is not responsible for hiring RCMP or CBSA officers. If he is not responsible, then who is? Is it the tooth fairy? Canadians deserve a government that takes responsibility, not one that points fingers and shrugs.

Yes, Conservatives will work to strengthen Bill C-14 as much as we can. We will push for real reforms, not window dressing. We will demand that Liberal bail be scrapped once and for all. However, let me be crystal clear: Until the Liberals make public safety their top priority, until they put victims ahead of violent repeat offenders and until they make justice mean something again, Canadians will not be safe.

Liberal leniency has become Liberal lawlessness, and the only way to stop it, the only way to make our streets safe again, is with a Conservative government that believes in law, order and accountability. This is not about politics; it is about every parent who does not feel safe walking their child to school, every woman afraid to take the bus at night and every senior locking their door in broad daylight because they no longer recognize their neighbourhood.

Canadians deserve better, victims deserve better and Conservatives will never stop fighting for them. It is time to scrap Liberal bail, restore common sense and make Canada safe again.

• (1610)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged by the previous speaker's making reference to the fact that the bill needs to go to committee. Even the member opposite, although he has lots of concerns about the bill from his perspective, appears to be saying that in principle he is supportive of it.

The Prime Minister, as an election platform promise, established bringing in substantial bail reform to Canadians. That is what Bill C-14 is all about. There has been a great deal of effort and a phenomenal amount of support from all the different stakeholders behind Bill C-14. As I am sure the member will agree, our constituents want bail reform. I want it, the Prime Minister wants it, and every Liberal MP wants it.

The Conservatives are going to make their determination. Would the member agree that we should pass the legislation before the end of the year?

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, we support measures within the bill and will want to bring in other motions and amendments when it goes to committee. That is essential because, as it is, it is very watered down.

Conservatives believe that public safety is paramount. We believe the principle of restraint must be repealed and replaced by a

public safety primacy clause and that mandatory minimums must be restored for firearms and sexual offences, as well as repeat violent offences, because we do not see that. House arrest must be barred for robbery, trafficking and violent crimes.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague earlier. He was talking about the ideology of the Liberals, who have unleashed fear in our streets. Those are my colleague's words.

I think we need to be careful with ideology. If we engage in alarmist rhetoric, we could needlessly elicit fear in people and end up with laws ill-suited to the public's needs. Sometimes I get the impression that my Conservative colleagues' assertions in this regard are a bit far-fetched.

I have one fairly simple question for my colleague. The bill contains an item that is problematic for us: the reverse onus. In some cases, the reverse onus would even apply to auto theft under the bill.

Does auto theft really require a reverse onus for pre-trial custody or remand? I think not.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I am no judge, but I certainly know that there is an unbelievable number of car thefts. We see it at the ports. Cars leave from the port of Montreal and other ports and go straight to Africa. What is happening? Not much is happening. The situation remains unchanged.

As Conservatives, we believe that legal principles and control measures are needed to put an end to all this. That is not happening right now under the justice system that the Liberals have set up. Crime is rising at an alarming rate.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments. It is important that we make a commitment to pass the legislation before the end of the year.

Again, I would ask the member to provide his thoughts. Does he believe his constituents would like to see the bail reform law in place before the end of the year?

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Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, they would like to see changes in our communities. Despite all of these measures, I am not convinced of how much change there is going to be. Yes, there is going to be some. We need a lot more teeth because we have had 10 years of chaos and crime on our streets under the Liberal government. The government has had somewhat of a deathbed conversion, but I have to question its sincerity.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): 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 Courtenay—Alberni, Fisheries and Oceans; the hon. member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Employment.

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Pickering—Brooklin.

I rise today to speak in strong support of Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, which is a landmark piece of legislation that responds to the urgent call for safer communities and a justice system that reflects the seriousness of violent and repeat offending.

For too long, Canadians have been frustrated as individuals charged with serious crimes are released on bail only to reoffend. They have seen sentences that fail to match the seriousness of such offences as home invasion, human trafficking and violent assault. Bill C-14 changes that. It delivers over 80 targeted amendments to the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act, making bail harder to get for repeat and violent offenders and ensuring that sentences are tougher and more consistent with public expectations.

The first pillar of the bill addresses a weakness in our justice system: bail provisions that have not kept pace with the realities of violent crime and organized criminal activity. Bill C-14 makes it clear that the principle of restraint does not mean automatic release. Courts would now have explicit direction that detention is justified when public safety is at risk. We are also clarifying the ladder principle, ensuring that it would not apply to offences subject to a reverse onus.

In plain terms, for certain serious crimes, the accused would have to demonstrate why they should be granted bail. The legislation introduces new reverse onus provisions for some of the most dangerous offences threatening our communities today: organized auto theft, break and enter of a home, human trafficking and smuggling, sexual assault and violent extortion. For repeat offenders, the reverse onus will apply between conviction and sentencing, closing a loophole that has allowed individuals to reoffend while awaiting judgment.

Bill C-14 would also strengthen the grounds for detention, requiring courts to consider the number and seriousness of outstanding charges when deciding whether release would undermine confidence in the justice system. This is about restoring public trust and ensuring that those who pose the greatest risk are not back on our streets. Moreover, the bill would direct courts to scrutinize bail plans more rigorously, ensuring they are credible and enforceable. It expands conditions of release, including weapons prohibitions for those accused of extortion and organized crime offences, and it en-

courages stricter conditions, such as curfews and geographic restrictions, for high-risk offences.

These changes respond directly to what Canadians have been asking for: a bail system that prioritizes public safety and victim protection.

The second pillar of Bill C-14 ensures that sentencing reflects the seriousness of the offence and strengthens deterrence. Canadians expect that those who commit violent crimes will face real consequences. The bill delivers on that expectation.

First, it introduces new aggravating factors for sentencing, including offences committed against first responders, repeat violent offenders with prior convictions within five years, organized retail theft and crimes interfering with essential infrastructure, such as copper theft.

● (1620)

Second, Bill C-14 would allow for consecutive sentences in cases as the combination of offences demands. For example, a sentence for extortion must be served consecutively to a sentence for arson; a sentence for violent or organized crime-related auto theft must be consecutive to a sentence for breaking and entering of a home. Judges would also be required to consider imposing consecutive sentences for repeat violent offenders, ensuring accountability for those who repeatedly harm our communities.

The bill clarifies sentencing objectives, directing courts to give primary consideration to denunciation and deterrence for second and subsequent convictions for violent offences, auto theft, break and enter, and organized crime-related offences. This is a clear message that serious crimes deserve serious consequences.

Other important reforms include increasing the maximum penalty for contempt of court; ending house arrest for serious sexual offences, including those against children; reinstating mandatory driving prohibitions for manslaughter and criminal negligence causing death or bodily harm; modernizing enforcement of federal fines by allowing provinces to suspend licences until payment is made. These measures would strengthen the integrity of our justice system and protect Canadians from those who repeatedly disregard the law.

Furthermore, we are strengthening the Youth Criminal Justice Act by expanding the availability of custodial sentences. Under these reforms, offences that cause bodily harm would now be clearly recognized as violent offences, ensuring greater accountability for serious crimes and better protection for communities.

Crime rates have risen over the past few years, with notable increases in homicides, sexual assaults, extortion and violent firearms offences. Offenders with multiple prior convictions remain far more likely to reoffend, and they often do so while on bail.

Extortion is a major concern in my riding, and this legislation cracks down on extortion by making bail harder to get and sentences tougher, as well as by ensuring that those who use fear and intimidation face real consequences. It would do so in two ways: by tightening bail laws and by strengthening sentencing for extortion-related offences. The bill would also require consecutive sentences for extortion and arson, ensuring offenders serve one sentence after another rather than all at once.

Communities across Canada have demanded action, and Bill C-14 answers that call. The legislation is not about slogans or political theatre. It is about real, enforceable tools that courts, police and prosecutors can use to keep Canadians safe. It is about restoring confidence in a justice system that too often feels disconnected from the realities of crime in our neighbourhoods.

Bill C-14 was built through collaboration with provinces, territories, law enforcement and victims' advocates. It is charter-compliant and legally sound. It would close loopholes, strengthen accountability and ensure that public safety is paramount.

Canadians deserve a justice system that protects them, not one that leaves them vulnerable to repeat and violent offenders. Bill C-14 delivers that protection. It would make bail harder to get for those who pose the greatest risk, and it would ensure that sentences reflect the seriousness of the crimes committed.

I urge all members of the House to support Bill C-14 and move it forward without delay. Every Canadian deserves to feel safe in their home, in their community and in their daily life.

• (1625)

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-14 still allows serious offenders, such as those who commit robbery, trafficking and firearms-related crimes, to use the option of house arrest.

I know, and the member opposite knows, that communities are struggling with ongoing extortion demands and killings in the community. How would he justify the continuing loopholes in Bill C-14?

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Edmonton should know that when it comes to the reverse onus, this bill addresses that, and people who commit serious crimes will stay behind bars. Also, consecutive sentences will address the issues that are important in his riding. I have travelled to his riding. This is also happening in my riding and across Canada.

The hon. member should not play politics and should not turn this into drama theatre. He should support this bill and make sure

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that Canadians across Alberta, across British Columbia and across Canada feel safe in their communities.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier I asked one of the member's colleagues to give us the facts that the government is working from to call for an amendment to the Criminal Code's bail provisions. I did not really get an answer earlier. We were told that some people were complaining.

I will give the government another opportunity, through the member, to explain to us the current problem with the bail system. What is stopping a judge from denying bail and keeping an accused in prison to protect the public?

[*English*]

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I will give the hon. member two examples from British Columbia. One is the Kelowna example. It is very clear that the person was out on bail when he committed the offence of murder. The other example is an offender from Manitoba who was out on bail, went to White Rock and committed a murder there. These are the types of cases bringing people in my constituency to tell me that we have to reform bail laws to make sure that the onus is on the offender, not the Crown, to prove they should not be kept behind bars.

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even before I was part of the House, I knew this was a very important issue for the hon. member and his constituents. He has raised it many times.

What parts of this bill, when it is implemented, will ease the minds of his constituents when he goes back and talks to them about it?

• (1630)

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his support in caucus and for bringing issues forward.

The major issue facing my constituents and British Columbians right now is extortion. It is the key concern in my riding and across Canada. This legislation would crack down on extortionists by making bail harder to get. Once someone commits the crime of extortion, they should stay behind bars.

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The second issue is consecutive sentencing. For example, if arson or a firearm is used during extortion, the sentences for those offences should be consecutive, not served side by side.

Those are the two issues.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am having tremendous difficulty listening to the Liberals pat themselves on the back like they have done something amazing for Canada. Under their watch, we have seen chaos and crime. The member talked about extortion in B.C., which has seen a 400% to 500% increase.

Will the member not recognize that the Liberal Party, which he has been a member of for many years, has been absolutely sleepwalking this entire time?

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I knew the member when he was part of the provincial assembly in B.C., and he was sleeping all the time while crimes were being committed. Policing is a provincial responsibility, but he did nothing then, and he is doing nothing constructive right now, just making this a political circus.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-14, an act that proposes long-awaited reforms to Canada's bail and sentencing framework.

At the outset, let me just say that Conservatives welcome this legislation. We have been calling for meaningful bail reform for years at this point. We have stood alongside police associations, provincial governments and victims' advocates to push for stricter bail legislation and stricter sentencing laws.

The government's decision to bring this bail law forward is in many ways an acknowledgement that the system is not working as it should and that public safety should once again become the paramount guiding principle of our justice system. While we welcome this step, and it is a step in the right direction, we also recognize that it does not go far enough.

I am also pleased to see that the government has admitted, in its own news release regarding the bill just last Thursday, that there is a direct correlation between the rise in crime and the Liberal government taking office. The news release stated that while crime was down between 1998 and 2014, it went up between 2014 and 2024.

This admission comes after years of Liberal politician after Liberal politician claiming that crime is in fact going down. There have been mailers sent out by Liberal MPs, who for years have been trying to convince the public that rising crime is in their heads. Some former members of this House would cherry-pick certain periods to suggest to their constituents that crime is not actually the problem they think it is.

I, for one, am happy that the Liberal government has finally highlighted the fact that the best way to examine the trend of increasing crime is not to pick one short period for the purposes of political messaging, but to look at it over a long period of time, to recognize the trend and course correct.

As I have stated before time after time in this House, people in Vaughan—Woodbridge do not feel safe in their homes and in their own community. Our community was never like this before, and it

would not be like this today had the Liberal government chosen to act sooner.

In York Region, in 2025, as of September 30, there have been 60 shootings. This is more than double the occurrences to date from 2021, 2022 and 2023. For years, all major stakeholders were largely ignored by the Liberal government, and many of its members still sit in this House today. Premiers, mayors, police chiefs and victims were all ignored for years. Why? Why has it taken so long for the Liberals to act?

I am happy that the Liberals have woken up and have taken many of our ideas, but they need to go further. I implore them to take all of our ideas, please, because behind these numbers are heartbreaking stories of families shattered, communities shaken and victims left wondering why individuals known to be violent were released back on their streets.

How did we get here? It stems largely from legislative and cultural shifts following the introduction of the principle of restraint in Bill C-75 in 2019. Section 493.1 of the Criminal Code directs that an accused be released at the earliest opportunity under the least onerous conditions. That may sound reasonable in theory, but in practice it has too often meant that repeat violent offenders are released despite a clear risk to public safety.

Police, prosecutors and victims have seen the consequences firsthand. Bailey McCourt was murdered by her ex-husband just hours after he was released on bail. A young mother of four, Savannah Kulla, was shot and killed at a Brampton strip mall, with her killer having been released on bail. I have heard the Liberals blame this on the Supreme Court of Canada, but the fact remains the Liberals were never told to change the law.

Bill C-14 proposes tougher standards for bail in serious cases and new reverse-onus provisions for certain violent offences. These are moves in the right direction, no question. However, the principle of restraint remains. The same language that tells decision-makers, judges and justices of the peace to prioritize release under the least restrictive conditions is still very much intact. I would say that means the culture of release will persist unless Parliament goes further and unless there are amendments to Bill C-14.

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● (1635)

Earlier this month, I was proud to jointly second my colleague from Oxford's bill, Bill C-242, the jail not bail act, which addresses many of the areas in which Bill C-14 falls short. The jail not bail act would repeal and replace the Liberal principle of restraint by offering a new directive of public and community safety as the primary consideration in bail. This would end the default of the release culture created by Bill C-75.

It would also do the following: restore mandatory minimums for firearms, sexual assaults, kidnappings, human trafficking, robbery, extortion with a firearm, arson and other serious violent crimes; mandate consideration of full criminal history and outstanding charges; and presume detention for major offences and repeat violent offenders, not just reverse onus. There are several others, which unfortunately I do not have the time to mention in my speech. However, I encourage members opposite to look at that bill intently. I encourage them to examine it and find ways in which to strengthen Bill C-14. They should take our ideas and let us work collaboratively for the benefit of all Canadians.

These changes do not undermine fairness or due process; they simply ensure that the justice system exercises caution where it is warranted and that public safety is the priority of our justice system. Public confidence in the justice system depends on visible fairness, but it also depends on safety. When a young mother is murdered by a partner who was released on bail despite prior violent charges, Canadians naturally ask us how we could allow this to happen. They are not asking for vengeance; they are asking for prevention. They are asking to feel safe in their homes and their communities.

Our police officers, Crown attorneys and victim service workers have been clear that the current framework too often ties their hands. Bill C-14 acknowledges that truth, but now we must complete the work. These bail reforms must also be accompanied by sentencing reforms that reinforce accountability.

The Liberals' Bill C-5, passed in 2022, eliminated many mandatory minimum penalties and expanded the use of conditional sentences, even for certain firearms and violent offences. In my view and the view of many practitioners across Canada, that change weakened deterrence and contributed to the perception that serious crime is met with leniency. Restoring proportionate, consistent sentencing is essential to rebuilding trust in our justice system.

Conservatives will work in good faith to ensure this bill passes as quickly as possible, with the strongest possible protections for Canadians. We are not opposing it for the sake of opposing; we are offering solutions informed by experience from police, prosecutors, victims and those who have lived with the consequences of repeat violent offences.

We also recognize that this legislation has broad support from law enforcement organizations, premiers and community leaders who are eager to see progress. The momentum should not be lost. If the government is willing to accept reasonable amendments, such as elevating public safety to the first consideration and closing the remaining gaps around repeat offenders, then we can together deliver the kind of reform that Canadians have been demanding for years.

In a country like Canada, it should never be seen as contradictory to defend both the rights of the accused and the safety of the public. The balance between those values is what defines a mature justice system.

Conservatives have been calling for action for years, not because it is politically convenient, but because it is right. If we get this right, we will not only make our laws stronger; we will make our communities safer. Let us work together to strengthen this bill so we can end the cycle of violence that has plagued our streets and restore faith in the justice system for the people of this country.

● (1640)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the member talking about our working together, recognizing that it is, in fact, a minority government. The Prime Minister made a commitment to genuine bail reform legislation. The only way we are going to be able to pass this legislation and give Canadians what they want is if we can get the Conservatives to make the commitment to do so.

After it goes to committee, when it comes back to the House, a majority of the members of the House will have to support any amendments brought forward. I look forward to seeing amendments coming from the Conservatives. We will see to what degree they add value to the legislation and if we can achieve that magic number of a majority to pass it.

Does the member share my belief that, with co-operation, we could get this legislation passed before Christmas?

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives would like nothing more than bail reform and sentence reform to be passed immediately. That is why we introduced our jail not bail act. We put forward the serious amendments that are needed to the bail system to facilitate the conditions that will keep repeat violent offenders in prison.

I, for one, am all for having this legislation move to committee. At committee, we hope the Liberal government and our Bloc colleagues on the committee will look very closely at our proposals and at removing the principle of restraint because we do not want to leave that loophole open for repeat offenders to end up on the streets. We want to close that loophole for good and forever.

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[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to my Conservative colleagues since earlier this evening. I know that they are well aware that there is a separation between the legislative and judicial branches, but they seem to be questioning the judges' ability to use discretion with regard to pre-trial custody.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that. Does he agree that a judge is able to determine whether or not pre-trial custody is appropriate? There are some examples in the bill that are quite troubling. I am thinking in particular of car theft. It seems to me that judges should be responsible for determining whether pre-trial custody is necessary for this type of crime.

• (1645)

[English]

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, certainly in the time period we have just gone through, when crime has become increasingly of concern, we are witnesses to the fact that serious repeat offenders constantly out on bail are constantly committing crimes. This is not new. We hear this from police associations, victim advocacy groups, premiers and municipal governments.

Clearly, we have to start with federal legislation, where the Criminal Code belongs, to set the culture and set the conditions to say that repeat violent offenders need to remain behind bars. To do so, we must get rid of the principle of restraint that was enshrined through Bill C-75.

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 23, 2025, following extensive consultation, the Government of Canada introduced legislation with more than 80 provisions to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act.

I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill C-14. I would like to take some time to more specifically outline the proposed changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. In the interest of time, I will use the acronym YCJA moving forward.

The YCJA is the federal law that governs Canada's youth criminal justice system. It applies to youth aged 12 to 17 who come in contact with the criminal justice system. The YCJA recognizes that young persons must be held accountable for criminal acts, although not in the same way as an adult. I know this first-hand as I was a youth worker for two decades. Society benefits when the greatest possible number of youth who come into contact with the criminal justice system are rehabilitated and supported to become productive members of the community.

Since the YCJA came into force in 2003, police have reported that youth crime statistics in Canada have been on a general downward trend. For example, measures of police-reported youth crime decreased by about 31% from 2014 to 2024. This shows that, overall, the YCJA works well.

However, the YCJA has not been amended for many years. Legislative changes are needed to ensure the public is well protected while promoting the rehabilitation of youth. This is why we are proposing targeted amendments to the YCJA in Bill C-14. These amendments are intended to improve the administration of the

youth criminal justice system and further support the continued and successful implementation of the YCJA by the provinces and territories. Provinces and territories are primarily responsible for enforcing and implementing the YCJA. This includes investigating and prosecuting most offences, managing youth justice courts and youth custodial facilities, and providing programming and services for youth.

I will provide an overview of the amendments. First, to address a lack of clarity in the law, the bill proposes to amend the definition of violent offences. This is a key amendment to the legislation as the definition plays an important role in the type of sentences that can be imposed on a young person. This includes which offences are eligible for custody. This amendment would allow youth courts to better assess what constitutes a violent offence when a young person causes bodily harm. It would also provide them with greater flexibility to impose custodial sentences when it would be appropriate in the circumstances of the case.

Second, while many aspects of criminal procedures are similar in the youth and adult criminal justice systems, the YCJA establishes special procedures to ensure that young people are treated fairly and to promote their rehabilitation. For example, as a general rule, the privacy of young offenders, and young victims and witnesses in the youth justice system, is protected through publication bans on their identity. The privacy of young persons takes into account their age-based vulnerability and the need to protect them from the harmful impacts of publication of their information. This is to maximize their chances of rehabilitation and promote long-term public safety.

At present, in certain circumstances, the police can seek a court order to request the authority to publish the identity of youth. The proposed amendments to the YCJA would provide an additional tool for police to publish identifying information about a young person without prior court authorization. This would be in narrow circumstances, in urgent situations where the young person poses an imminent danger to the safety of the public and a court order cannot be obtained within a reasonable time. For example, when there is an active shooter in a public area and they need to be apprehended quickly to protect the public, this would apply.

• (1650)

Another way the YCJA protects the privacy of young persons is by limiting access to their records. The act allows certain persons listed in the act to have access to certain youth records for specific periods of time. However, the law does not currently address access to two types of records, those for cases where one has been diverted from the court system and those for files related to police investigations where there has been no charge or diversion. These amendments are important, as the YCJA encourages the use of measures outside of the formal court system for less serious offences. These measures are often the most appropriate and effective way to respond to youth offending and include options such as police warnings and referrals to community-based programming. The proposed amendments would allow certain individuals to access these records for a period of two years. These amendments would bring clarity to an area of the law where there has been litigation and emphasizes the importance of youth privacy rights.

The bill also includes a number of technical adjustments to sentencing to support provinces and territories in administering youth sentences more effectively. Many of the proposed amendments would also align the YCJA with the Criminal Code in ways that would bring greater clarity to the sentencing provisions applying to youth. For example, the amendments would make clear that any time a youth spends unlawfully at large would not count toward their term of a custodial sentence. For example, the amendment would also clarify that certain probation orders should be served after a deferred custody and supervision order. A deferred custody order is similar to a conditional sentence in the adult system.

Additionally, the amendments would add certain sentences to the existing list of sentences that can be transferred and enforced in different provinces and territories.

The bill would also make a technical amendment in cases where it is alleged that a young person has breached a condition of their sentence while under supervision in the community and the conditional supervision has been suspended.

This would allow the young person to apply for bail pending a decision by the youth court on the breach. The court would then need to determine if bail is appropriate in the circumstances. These amendments echo what is currently being done in practice and align with the Criminal Code.

As I mentioned earlier, the primary objective of the YCJA remains the protection of the public. The proposed amendments would not change this fundamental objective of the youth criminal justice system, which is distinct from the adult criminal justice system and is based on the accountability of young people, their rehabilitation and the prevention of recidivism. This includes referral to community programs or organizations that help them address the underlying causes of the offending behaviour. The federal government continues to support provinces, territories and community organizations in the delivery of youth justice services focused on the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth involved in the criminal justice system.

Because a strong Canada means strong and safe communities, and a justice system that works for everyone, I will be supporting Bill C-14 and encourage all members of Parliament to support the

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bill, as it would improve the youth criminal justice system. We will continue to collaborate with provinces and territories to address the causes of youth crime. Today's young people are tomorrow's adults.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the Criminal Code, which is under federal jurisdiction. However, the administration of justice is largely Quebec's responsibility. We know that there are already problems, particularly around the fiscal imbalance. Additional transfers are needed, including for health care.

Can my hon. colleague acknowledge that there is a fiscal imbalance and explain how Quebec would handle the additional costs related to this bill? Will the federal government commit to transferring money to cover the additional costs that provinces will incur? If so, how much?

[*English*]

Juanita Nathan: Mr. Speaker, during the time of the election, at every home we went to, this is what we heard. Our Prime Minister, Mark Carney, promised, at that time, that we would invest into the criminal system. That is throughout the country. Quebec is also included in that. Provinces will get their share. The implementation of these changes relies on the provinces. They will have to come up with, within their means, how they could impose these changes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I will just remind the member not to use the proper names of members of the House.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the many thoughts the member has shared with us this afternoon on such an important piece of legislation, legislation that was a commitment made by the Prime Minister and Liberal members in the last election. It is great to see we have Bill C-14 before us today, and I am very hopeful we will actually see it become law before the end of the year.

I know the member has a very full understanding of youth and the impact youth have on our communities, especially related to concerns with respect to crime and so forth. I am wondering if she can just share her thoughts about youth justice, if she is comfortable with that.

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Juanita Nathan: Mr. Speaker, like I said, I was a youth worker for 20 years in the city of Toronto, day in and day out, dealing with youth offenders and trying to put them into programs that would rehabilitate them. Most times, we look at why they turned to crime and what is needed in the community for these rehabilitation purposes. As we see auto thefts, home invasions and jewellery heists increase and youth are involved in this, I really feel the amendment to the bail system will actually alleviate these problems, because they are working with adults who are not coming in front and are using the youth to do these deeds. As such, from my experience, when the bail system gets these changes in, and I hope the opposition will help us do this when Bill C-14 comes again, we would definitely see a reduced rate of youth crimes in the community.

• (1700)

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are going through times where youth unemployment is at a record-high number.

Does she agree with me that making youth employment a priority on the Liberal side would have an impact on crime when it comes to youth?

Juanita Nathan: Mr. Speaker, definitely, the economy does impact crime in general, and youth are no different. The budget that is coming in is an austerity budget that is supposed to create a lot of jobs, and youth jobs are included in that. I hope the member opposite will vote yes for our budget this time to help alleviate crime as well.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the good people of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay to speak to the legislation before us, Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act.

Today, the House debates the very urgent and serious subject of Canada's broken bail laws. The member opposite just spoke about Bill C-14 alleviating problems. Let there be no mistake about who broke these bail laws. The Liberal government broke them. The government's bill today is to amend its own laws that broke our bail system. Conservatives have continually spoken across our country of the disastrous catch-and-release, revolving-door policy that the Liberal government used to turn our bail system into what we have today.

In my riding, I think of a notorious case in Penticton, where a local Toyota dealership was set on fire a couple of years ago. This week, the same arsonist was charged in a second case for aggravated assault. He was intimidating the witness for his first trial, and he kicked the victim in the face with a steel-toed boot. This continues on and on in a community that used to be considered incredibly safe and in communities across Canada.

I am also in the process of surveying my own constituents on public safety matters and have received many responses from constituents. The number one issue across my riding, and I believe across Canada, is safety.

A constituent in Oliver named Angela wrote, "There is a repeat offender that lives a block away from my house who is a known drug dealer, who is also well known for break and entries/theft.

He's sent to jail at least once a year and let out the next day. He's on probation but it doesn't stop him. How is this protecting the community if he's constantly released. This isn't fishing, why the catch and release? Why would he stop if he never has to face any consequences."

Angela is right: Catch and release is a failure to uphold public safety and Canadians' rights. It also does nothing to reform the behaviour of offenders if they do not face any consequences. These days, even the Liberal government now acknowledges a 41% increase in the violent crime severity index in the last decade, as well as increases in homicide, sexual assault and extortion offences. It is in its own press releases.

Without Conservatives, the Liberal government would still be proceeding with the disastrous past policies outlined in Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which prioritized repeat violent offenders instead of victims, with too often deadly consequences.

Residents in my region of the Okanagan were shocked by the failure of our bail system to protect the public and victims in the case of Bailey McCourt. Bailey was a young woman, a mother and a survivor of intimate partner violence. This past summer, her former partner was convicted of abusing her. However, within hours of that sentencing, he had left the courtroom, tracked her down in broad daylight and murdered her in public with a hammer. With Bailey at that time was one of her friends, who survived but was left with serious physical and mental traumas that she will now have to live with for the rest of her life.

I know the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola and I have been in contact with both families, and they are clear in their cause that the government must change our laws to protect victims of intimate partner violence so this never happens again.

• (1705)

The McCourt family said in a joint statement:

Bailey deserved to live her life free from fear and violence. She sought help from a system that was supposed to protect her, yet that system repeatedly failed to take the necessary actions to keep her safe. This is not just a tragedy, it is a preventable injustice.

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It is a broken system and a preventable injustice. Too many Canadians have lost their lives to a violent repeat offender who should never have been free to kill, harm or traumatize again. Our bail system has failed them. All Canadians should support the McCourt family's calls to fix our federal laws, which we know the Prime Minister has seen because it was given to him in a letter by Premier Eby this past summer. Does the legislation before us match what the McCourt family is calling for? Unfortunately, it does not.

I will again quote the McCourt family:

We are deeply concerned about the lack of clarity surrounding reverse onus provisions as there are simply not enough details outlining what hurdles an accused must meet in order to be released.... The ambiguity in these measures risks undermining public confidence and safety.

For those without a law degree, reverse onus is a legal provision that shifts the burden of proof from the accuser to the defendant. While this legislation makes some shifts in this category that would help to deny bail to repeat violent offenders, it would not go as far as we need it to. Stronger restrictions should make these offences ineligible for bail all together and prevent automatic release.

This legislation would also not repeal the disastrous Bill C-5 or Bill C-75. It merely tinkers with them. It was the Liberal government that brought in the principle of restraint, which caused judges to provide bail to even repeat violent offenders. Judges were required to apply the least onerous conditions to many criminals charged with violent offences. While this legislation now confirms that restraint does not require release, it would still provide a pathway to release and still retain the directive to apply the least onerous conditions. There is still much risk of release for violent offenders.

There is also nothing in this legislation that would return Canada's criminal justice system to the principle of mandatory minimums to ensure consistent sentencing outcomes for serious crimes. Violent offences committed with firearms, the mass production of deadly hard drugs and sexual violence should come with consistent sentencing. A predictable and fair justice system is one that Canadians can have much more confidence in.

Lastly, house arrest would remain an allowable sentence for those convicted of armed robbery and drug trafficking. This is particularly wrong because the victims of these crimes are often living in the same neighbourhoods as their assailants. It is an insult to public safety to say assailants should be able to serve their sentences in the same neighbourhoods as their victims.

In speaking with the public safety officials in my community, they tell me the Okanagan Correctional Centre is only 20% full. I think it would be better if convicted criminals were placed there than left in their communities on house arrest. The RCMP in our communities are losing faith in the system.

Lastly, I will mention that Conservatives also have Bill C-225, introduced by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, which I seconded, to address the serious issue of intimate partner violence, which the McCourt family wishes to be known as Bailey's law. I am proud to support the law and would call on all members of the House to support Bailey's law as well so that we can pass it as quickly as possible.

• (1710)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about how important bail reform is. I have mentioned on numerous occasions today a commitment that was made to Canadians in the last election. It would appear that all political entities in the House want to see some form of bail reform take place. We have a golden opportunity to have something in place before the end of this year. A lot of that is going to depend on the Conservative Party. Is the Conservative Party prepared to allow the legislation to see its way through? That includes going to committee, where there will be good, healthy discussions and, no doubt, a number of different amendments proposed.

I wonder if the member can provide her thoughts on how important it is that we provide Canadians with new bail legislation before the end of the year.

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, the bill is an attempt by the Liberals to fix the bail laws they took 10 years to break. Of course we are going to work on the bill. Of course we are going to do everything we can to make Canadians safer. I just wish this had been brought forward sooner, and that is what my constituents are saying. It is not fair that for the past 10 years they have been made to feel unsafe in their own neighbourhoods.

Yes, we do look forward to talking about the bill in committee and to making sure it would actually make our communities safer and is not just talk.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what tool is missing from the Criminal Code that judges can use to keep potentially dangerous individuals in remand until their trial?

[*English*]

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, judges are obviously missing multiple tools. In the city I live in, there are people who commit a crime, go to jail, walk out of jail the next day and then throw a brick into a car window. They are sent back to jail, spend the night, get back out and throw a brick through a window again.

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It happens continually, and a lot of the time, judges, who are completely exhausted, are blamed, but they just do not have the tools to keep the criminals in jail. As I said, the Okanagan Correctional Centre is 20% full right now, and there are prolific offenders wandering our streets. We need to make sure judges have the tools they need to keep criminals behind bars.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the frustration victims feel when the same offenders are released again and again, as well as the terrible tragedies that are happening from it. Could she share more on how the revolving door justice system erodes public confidence, overwhelms our police forces and puts victims at greater risk?

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, it has been an exhausting 10 years for communities across Canada. People of all ages cannot even go into a grocery store without wondering whether they are going to be approached by a criminal or be a witness to shoplifting. What are they supposed to do? They do not feel safe in their own neighbourhood. RCMP officers are being overworked and are becoming exhausted. They are doing everything they can to keep us safe, but they are not given the tools to do that.

We need to make sure the people in our communities across Canada feel safe. I look forward to strengthening the bill so it is not just talk. By the way, we are also going to need to put the genie back in the bottle, because it has been 10 years of Liberal bail not jail, so I am sure it is going to take a while.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-14, which was introduced by the Minister of Justice last week. When he introduced the bill, he said it was important to get rid of the “get out of jail free” card. That is really what I want to focus on, even though there are a lot of other things in this rather dense bill with 80 clauses. Among other things, the bill proposes to amend the provisions on interim release.

According to the Minister of Justice, under the current system, an accused person just has to pull out a “get out of jail free” card, like in Monopoly, and they will be released. For the people listening to us, let me start by defining interim release. What is interim release? It is when a person is charged with a crime that is serious enough for the police to take them into custody. That person will have to appear before a judge within 24 hours. Even if the accused has not yet been found guilty, there is a possibility that that individual may remain in prison until their trial. The cardinal principle behind all this is the presumption of innocence.

Section 11 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

Any person charged with an offence has the right

...

(d) to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;

That is a key principle of our criminal law. A person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. This principle implies that, if a person is arrested, they are presumed innocent until a court of law finds them guilty. What follows from the presumption of innocence is the

principle of restraint. According to this principle, the decision-maker “shall give primary consideration to the release of the accused at the earliest reasonable opportunity and on the least onerous conditions that are appropriate in the circumstances”. That is because the person has not yet been found guilty.

Does that mean that our system permits someone who is arrested to simply pull out their card to get released? No, that is not the case at all. Very specific Criminal Code provisions allow for pre-trial detention in certain cases. Sometimes, it can take months before a trial is held. In some cases, a person may be held in custody while still presumed innocent, because the necessity to protect the safety of the public takes precedence over the presumption of innocence, as set out in subsection 515(10) of the Criminal Code.

Here is how it works. Generally, if the Crown prosecutor does not want an accused person to be released, there will be a bail hearing. The accused, their lawyer and the Crown prosecutor will appear before the judge. Normally, the burden is on the Crown if it wants the accused to remain in custody.

What tools do Crown prosecutors have, as outlined in the Criminal Code? There are actually quite a few. The Crown prosecutor may request that an accused remain in custody on the following grounds:

(a) where the detention is necessary to ensure his or her attendance in court in order to be dealt with according to law;

If the person has failed to appear in court in the past, or if the person already had a plan to escape, these arguments can be made and the person can be detained. Here is another argument that Crown prosecutors can make right now:

(b) where the detention is necessary for the protection or safety of the public

It is already written in black and white. The Crown prosecutor may refer to the protection of victims, witnesses to the offence, or children under the age of 18. He or she may explain the circumstances that make it necessary to detain the person, even if they are presumed innocent, even if it will take months, because the public must be protected. The Criminal Code provides the following clarification:

including any substantial likelihood that the accused will, if released from custody, commit a criminal offence or interfere with the administration of justice;

That alone is already a very useful tool for Crown prosecutors. Here is another argument that can be made:

(c) if the detention is necessary to maintain confidence in the administration of justice

This makes it possible to argue the seriousness of the offence.

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That is the current system. That is how things are done in courts across the country right now. My question for the government is, what is wrong with this system? Where is the problem? What is not working? What is missing? We ask these questions and we are not really getting any answers. We have asked government representatives these questions to find out whether they had any facts to prove that the system is not working and the answer is no.

• (1720)

What we do know is that people do not feel safe, and this feeling is legitimate. It must be addressed. People need reassurance. Is there any evidence that our system gives people a “get out of jail free” card? There is no data on this.

When I ask my colleagues questions, they base their answers on cases in their riding or some other riding. Every one of these cases is heartbreaking. Nevertheless, if an individual is charged and released, it is because the judge was of the opinion that there was no likelihood of another crime being committed, no worries about that individual being released. If the individual is released and commits another crime, and members of Parliament point to such an incident here and another there to prove that something must be done, what that basically means is that, logically, as soon as someone is charged, they should be kept in prison. We would have to keep everyone in prison.

There will always be one, two or even fourteen people who will be released and commit new crimes. If we want that number to be zero, it would mean keeping people in prison as soon as they are charged. Where does that leave the presumption of innocence? Basically, they are proposing that we undermine that principle, even without evidence. I find that quite worrying.

I was curious about how things work in practice. I worked for 10 years as a legal aid lawyer. I practised criminal law off and on, but not often. I wrote to one of my colleagues, Hugo Caissy, who has been practising criminal law for about 20 years and is an excellent lawyer. I asked him what he thinks about this bill. He wrote me this:

In reality, the claim that violent criminals are easily released is false. The opposite is true. Release for these defendants is far from guaranteed. Judges consider the accused's history, particularly when it involves crimes against the person and breaches of conditions (probation, undertakings and promises). Moreover, in the case of a breach of promise or undertaking, the burden of proof is already reversed.

...While not perfect, the current system has the necessary flexibility to detain those who need to be detained and release those who can be released with minimal risk.

...

The system could be improved, but not at the expense of individual liberties.

I thought his last point was well said.

Perhaps someone will point out that Mr. Caissy is a criminal defence lawyer. However, the criminal law section of the Canadian Bar Association, which is made up not only of defence lawyers, but also Crown prosecutors, has written an open letter about Bill C-14. The letter states:

...reverse onus provisions and modifications to the ladder principle may not achieve their intended deterrent effect, and we question whether such provisions would be Charter compliant...[especially given the] disproportionate effect on Indigenous accused and [other racialized accused]...

We have testimony from lawyers who work in the courts. We looked at the Criminal Code. Tools do exist. We have no data from the government, apart from a few impressions. However, there are some statistics. What the statistics show is that, first of all, it is harder now to obtain interim release than in the past, and it is harder here than it is in Great Britain. In 1980, 75% of accused persons were released. In 2025, only 25% of accused persons manage to be released. In Canada, 70% of people in provincial and territorial jails are awaiting trial, compared to only 20% in Great Britain. Statistics show that it is harder to be released on bail than in the past, and it is harder here than some other places.

The Bloc Québécois therefore supports the principle of studying this bill. That is why we agree that it should be studied in committee. We believe that we must be vigilant because there is the risk of putting innocent people in prison. What we are proposing is a rational approach. The problem must be documented. It is a sensitive issue, because every single case is one case too many. I have met victims of crime and I am aware of how devastating it can be. However, when we legislate, we must still take a comprehensive and rational approach, so let us document the problem properly and then find appropriate solutions.

• (1725)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question to pose is, why? I can assure the member that after talking to constituents and listening to the mayor of Winnipeg, the premier and individuals who are directly involved with the justice system, I believe that not only is the demand for bail reform very real and tangible, but it is necessary. In the last federal election, there were commitments to make changes. That in itself justifies us having Bill C-14 before us today.

I must say that I look forward to the Bloc's ongoing contribution—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary to give the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj a chance to respond.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Speaker, my colleague says that the demand is real. I know that people are worried, including in his home province of Manitoba. Yes, they do not feel safe, but we have to look beyond feelings.

We have to look at the Criminal Code as it stands and the values that underpin it, including the presumption of innocence. We will study all that. There is a risk that, in responding to a perception of being unsafe based on specific cases that have an impact on people, we may move toward a criminal justice system that puts innocent people in prison if we fail to look at the big picture.

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Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj for his interesting and informative intervention. I think this is the first time I am interacting with him in the House, so I congratulate him on being elected just six months ago. I think he is the only one in the House to have beat a Liberal incumbent. I wanted to point that out. It was the only instance of that.

On this file, obviously he has relevant expertise that he is putting to use. I would like his thoughts on the reverse onus. He mentioned it, he talked a lot about the precedents that are being set. As far as I know, and I am not a lawyer, but a journalist and I covered cases, reverse onus happens in very rare cases. Normally, it is exactly the opposite.

What, in his opinion, explains the government's approach? Does he believe in it?

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Speaker, under the Criminal Code, a person charged with murder is held in custody before their trial. Certain reverse onus provisions already apply.

For example, if a person has been previously convicted or discharged of a charge of intimate partner violence, if it happened before and the person is charged again, the onus is reversed. This makes it much easier for the Crown prosecutor to keep the person in custody.

Reverse onus is a significant legislative change and no trivial matter. Above all, before pursuing this course, the problem must be carefully documented.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague really hammered on the notion of feeling safe, and I get the impression that by using random examples and saying that people released on bail commit other crimes, it may be we politicians, myself excluded, who are somehow exacerbating this feeling people have of being unsafe.

New media may also be making it easier to access this very specific type of case.

I would like to ask my colleague this: How can we truly achieve justice? Are tougher measures and more severe bail restrictions the answer?

• (1730)

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It really is so important, because what people want is reassurance.

Perhaps the first thing to do is explain to people how the system works now, which is why I humbly took some time to explain the current rules. I think one way to provide that reassurance is to help them better understand how criminal law works.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CANADA HEALTH ACT

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.) moved that Bill C-239, An Act to amend the Canada Health Act (accountability), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North for seconding this bill and the many others who jointly seconded it.

It is an honour to rise today to speak in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-239, an act to amend the Canada Health Act to strengthen accountability. This bill is about ensuring that Canadians in every province and territory can see that the federal health dollars invested in their care are being used effectively and are improving access to timely health care services.

I want to begin by acknowledging the voices that inspired this bill. I have heard directly from my constituents in Surrey Newton and from Canadians across the country who are deeply concerned about wait times for primary care, elective procedures and emergency services. Families often tell me about the anxiety of not knowing when they can see a family doctor or how long they will have to wait for critical procedures. These are real concerns, and Canadians deserve a health care system that is accountable to them.

I am also grateful for the support of the Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba, ARNM, which has endorsed this bill. As it stated, "By supporting Bill C-239, ARNM is reaffirming our commitment to a health-care system that is transparent, accountable, and centred on the needs of patients—a system that works for nurses and for all Manitobans." The ARNM's endorsement underscores the importance of this legislation in improving our health care system.

This bill seeks to strengthen accountability under the Canada Health Act while fully respecting provincial jurisdiction over health care delivery. It is focused, practical and collaborative.

Bill C-239 would require provinces and territories that receive full federal health transfers to develop and implement their own accountability frameworks. These frameworks would set benchmarks for timely access to primary care, elective procedures and emergency care. They would establish transparent reporting requirements so that Quebeckers and Canadians can see how these benchmarks are being met and would ensure the public availability of frameworks and annual performance reports on a government website. The bill would also ensure that benchmarks are regularly reviewed and updated so that health systems can evolve based on evidence, best practices and the changing needs of Canadians.

Canadians often hear from politicians that health care is a priority, yet despite billions of dollars transferred annually to the provinces through the Canada health transfer, too many families still face long wait times and uncertainty. These federal investments are intended to support timely, high-quality care, but without clear standards and reporting, Canadians cannot know whether these dollars are producing the results they expect.

This is not just about numbers or statistics; this is about real people in real communities waiting for real care. In my riding of Surrey Newton, constituents frequently share stories of seniors waiting months for elective procedures, parents struggling to find a family doctor for their children and patients experiencing extended delays in emergency departments. These are not isolated incidents; they reflect a system in which accountability and transparency must be strengthened.

● (1735)

Just last week, the Canadian Institute for Health Information published findings that included that in 2024, over one in three adults was not satisfied with how long they waited for non-urgent primary care, and over two in five adults with a diagnosed mental health disorder reported that their needs were only partially or completely unmet. By requiring provinces to set clear benchmarks and report publicly on progress, this bill would empower Canadians to hold their health systems accountable, while giving provinces and territories the flexibility to modify solutions to their unique populations.

Some may ask whether this is federal overreach. Let me be very clear: This bill respects provincial jurisdiction. Provinces still design their own frameworks, determine their own benchmarks and decide how to deliver care within their health systems. The federal government's role is limited to ensuring that when federal dollars are invested, Canadians can see results.

Bill C-239 includes a permissive consultation clause. Provincial ministers may consult with the federal Minister of Health or with ministers in other provinces and territories while developing their frameworks. This encourages knowledge sharing and collaboration, but does not impose federal mandates.

I also want to address our colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and the members from Quebec. This bill fully respects Quebec's jurisdiction over health care. It would not impose federal standards or dictate how care must be delivered. Instead, it would empower provinces, including Quebec, to design their own accountability frameworks and determine their own benchmarks that reflect their populations' needs and priorities.

Bill C-239 would ensure that when federal dollars are transferred, Quebecers and all Canadians can see transparent results. It would offer flexibility, autonomy and fairness, which are values that align closely with Quebec's long-standing commitment to managing its own health system.

Transparency is at the heart of this bill. Each province and territory would have to publish its accountability framework and an annual report showing whether benchmarks have been met and how effectively health care dollars were spent. Transparency builds trust, and when people can see the results of public investments,

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they feel confident that their health system is functioning effectively. It also provides provinces with the incentive to focus on outcomes, reduce wait times and improve efficiency.

Accountability requires consequences. Bill C-239 would amend sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Canada Health Act to make clear that provinces that fail to implement their frameworks or fail to report transparently may face reductions in or withholdings of federal health dollars. This ensures that accountability and transparency are treated as essential conditions for federal funding.

At the same time, the bill would ensure fairness. Any continued reductions must be reviewed annually in consultation with the provincial minister responsible for health. This provides a structured and collaborative approach to enforcement, rather than a punitive one.

Let me be clear about what this bill would accomplish for Canadians. First, it would reduce uncertainty so people can see where their health system is succeeding and where improvement is needed. Second, it would encourage timely care by setting benchmarks, which would allow provinces and territories to focus on reducing wait times for primary care, elective procedures and emergency services. Third, it would promote the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Provinces and territories would report on how federal health dollars are spent, driving better value for Canadians. Fourth, it would increase trust, as transparency fosters confidence that investments in health care are making a real difference.

● (1740)

In short, the bill delivers accountability without compromising provincial autonomy, and it focuses on results Canadians care about. In my riding of Surrey Newton, in fact, across British Columbia and across Canada, constituents have expressed firsthand the challenges in accessing timely care. Seniors worry about delays for procedures. Young families struggle to find a family doctor. We hear these concerns nationwide. The bill responds directly to what Canadians have been telling their elected representatives for years: They want results, clarity and accountability.

I want to emphasize that the bill is not about partisan politics. Health care is a shared responsibility. By strengthening transparency, the legislation gives all members of the House the tools to work together in support of Canadians' health, while respecting provincial jurisdiction. I would encourage all members to consider the practical, collaborative and results-focused approach the bill represents. It would not dictate how provinces deliver care, but it ensures that Canadians know whether care is being delivered in a timely, efficient and accountable manner.

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Canadians deserve to know that every dollar invested in health care makes a difference. They deserve timely access, transparency and accountability. Bill C-239 would ensure that federal health dollars are tied to measurable outcomes while allowing provinces to maintain control over their health systems. I urge all members of the House, including the members from the Bloc Québécois, to support the bill, which would strengthen accountability, build public trust and demonstrate our shared commitment to improving health care for all Quebecers and for all Canadians.

Let us work together to ensure that Canadians can see the results of their investments and that our health care system continues to deliver the care people need, when they need it.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a Conservative, I have genuine concerns, and I want to make sure all Canadians know about them. Is the bill not going to add more red tape? When red tape is added, delays are added. Provincial health care is already burdened with delays, as we all know.

Has the member consulted provinces on Bill C-239, and which provinces have they consulted?

• (1745)

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I was recently in Edmonton, in fact, in the hon. member's riding. People there were complaining about two major issues, or actually three. The first was health care, because they are not getting the health care they deserve. The second was extortion, and the third was immigration. I can tell everyone that if this hon. member is concerned about the accountability and transparency every Canadian deserves, he should be supporting the bill instead of asking which province we asked for help.

[Translation]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it blows my mind to hear my colleague talk about shared jurisdiction even as he says there is no need to consult the provinces on his bill. What a bunch of nonsense.

My colleague is concerned about accountability. In Quebec and the provinces, accountability happens every time there is a provincial election. Can my colleague recall even a single time, during a federal election, when health care was the key election issue and a federal government was thrown out because it was not doing what needed to be done on health care?

The answer is no. Why? It is because it is not a federal matter.

[English]

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier to the hon. members from the Bloc Québécois, the bill would not impose federal jurisdiction over the provinces. However, when I go to my constituency, or anywhere in British Columbia or elsewhere in Canada, people come to me and say they cannot find a family doctor and cannot get their elective surgeries in time; the wait times are way too long.

People do not know where the billions of dollars the federal government is investing in health care is, money that would make a difference in their lives. The bill would bring accountability and transparency for all Canadians, including Quebecers.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have gone through a number of elections since 1988, at both the provincial and federal levels. I have been a health care critic. I have had the opportunity to knock on literally tens thousands of doors, and I can honestly say that there has never been an election in which the issue of health care has not come up. Canadians take their health care services very seriously.

I appreciate the member's making reference to it not being about federal overreach, from what I understand from the member's comments. It is about the federal dollars that go towards health care. I think it is important for us to be very real with what our constituents tell us: Health care is a concern, as is making sure there is some sense of financial accountability.

The member could provide any further comments he would like.

Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Speaker, I have been elected six times, and during every election I have been through, people have come to me and have not looked at whether a person is a provincial representative or a local one. All people care about is that the accountability for the care they need is open and transparent. As I said, the bill would not intervene in the jurisdiction of any province, including Alberta, but what we need is something about the billions of dollars we invest.

I can tell members that I was recently in Abbotsford, where people were dying in the hallways of the hospital. People do not have a family doctor in Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, where I was travelling the other day. This is not just in Surrey Newton; everywhere I go, it is an issue.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's health care system is broken.

There are 6.5 million Canadians who do not have access to a family doctor. We are short at least 23,000 doctors and 60,000 registered nurses. Emergency rooms are closing across the country. Health care workers are burnt out from millions of hours of overtime. Canadians are literally dying while waiting for care.

Canada's health care system is broken, and instead of repairing the cracks, the Liberals took a hammer to the glass. I am going to warn Canadians that health care in Canada is only going to get worse under the government. Mark my words.

The Liberals are reducing the capacity of doctors and nurses, while at the same time increasing the demand for care. Let us start with capacity. According to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, there are at least 13,000 internationally trained physicians already in Canada who are not working as doctors. According to the health minister's own department, there are 80,000 internationally trained health care professionals in Canada right now who are not working in their field.

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Let us think about that. Tens of thousands of doctors, nurses and specialists are here, trained, qualified and ready to serve, but they have been shut out by a wall of bureaucracy. The reason is simple. Government gatekeepers and licensing bodies are blocking these qualified professionals from getting their licences.

The immigration department fast-tracks international doctors and nurses into this country but then abandons them when they arrive. The Liberals have failed to establish a national competency standard to recognize their credentials, so they get stuck, trapped between provincial regulators and federal inaction. As a result, we have doctors driving taxis and working in factories, while hospitals close emergency rooms and patients die waiting for care.

The government sold these professionals a false bill of goods, and Canadians are paying the price. This bottleneck is only getting worse because the Liberals keep adding more people into a broken system without helping the people who are already here.

Another major barrier is that a doctor licensed in one province cannot automatically work in another province. Let us think about that. A doctor who is fully licensed in one province cannot simply move to another and start working without mountains of paperwork, costs and months of delay. If the federal government truly believed in one Canada economy, it would have introduced a national licence for doctors and nurses, allowing them to work anywhere in the country.

Earlier this month, Canadians were briefly optimistic when the health minister told *The Globe and Mail* that she planned to introduce legislation to remove interprovincial barriers for health professionals, but that hope was short-lived. Within hours, her office reversed course, claiming the minister misunderstood the question. The minister seems to misunderstand a lot of questions when it comes to the health care system.

Another issue is the shortage of residency training spots in Canada. Every year, hundreds of Canadians graduate medical schools abroad, but they cannot get a residency placement in their own country. Why? It is because the federal immigration minister keeps issuing work permits to foreign-sponsored medical trainees, people who come here from foreign countries to train in our hospitals, only to return home afterward.

Countries around the world send their citizens to Canadian hospitals for training. In fact, according to data from the Canadian Post-M.D. Education Registry, Saudi Arabia alone sent over 1,000 trainees to Canada last year. Almost all of them will never work a single day in Canada after their training is complete.

Meanwhile, Canadian citizens who studied medicine overseas, often because there were not enough medical school seats in Canada, are told there is no capacity for them. Why is the federal immigration minister issuing work permits for Saudi students to train in our hospitals, when there are not enough training spots for Canadians?

• (1750)

The Liberals like to claim that record immigration levels will somehow fix our health care system, but that is not what is happening. Thousands of qualified, foreign-trained doctors are already

here and cannot work. Thousands of Canadian citizens who trained abroad cannot get trained. We cannot fix a traffic jam by adding more cars to the road, and that is exactly what the Liberals are doing.

Let us now look at the other side of the equation, which is demand. This year alone, the Liberals plan to allow 395,000 new permanent residents and 673,000 non-permanent residents into Canada. That is over a million people added to a health care system that already cannot keep up. It does not take an economist to understand that adding a record number of people to our country will have an impact on health care.

Here is the real scandal. According to Health Canada, the Liberals have done no analysis, none whatsoever, on the impact that record immigration levels will have on our health care system. Even the health minister admitted this insanity when she said, "Right now, there's no alignment on immigration and the need for doctors".

To make matters worse, Canadians were outraged to learn that the immigration department has been advertising Canada's free health care around the world as a selling point to attract more newcomers. Canada is not a walk-in clinic for the rest of the world. Compassion must consider capacity.

That brings me to the legislation before us, Bill C-239. The Liberals claim that the bill would improve accountability in health care, but if we read it, there is no accountability for results. There is nothing in Bill C-239 that would require provinces to increase access to family doctors, reduce emergency wait times or improve diagnostic services. What it does do is create another bureaucratic framework that provinces must follow or risk losing their federal health transfers. In other words, it is more red tape.

The bill would require provinces to produce reports, frameworks and performance summaries, but nothing that would actually help a single patient see a doctor faster. If provinces do not comply with Ottawa's new paperwork, they could lose health care funding.

Here is the confusing part. Paragraph 13(a) of the Canada Health Act already requires provinces to provide health data to the federal Minister of Health to qualify for transfers. Provincial and territorial governments also submit health care data to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, also known as CIHI.

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What does Bill C-239 really accomplish? The answer is nothing. I was not surprised to learn that the provinces were not consulted on the legislation, because if they were, I am confident that they would have opposed it. Conservatives believe that the way to fix health care is not by creating more bureaucracy but by removing the barriers that prevent qualified medical professionals from working. We believe that the government should establish a blue seal national licensing standard. This would be a competency-based standard to recognize qualified doctors, nurses and other health care professionals all across Canada.

Conservatives also believe that immigration policy must be linked to health care system capacity. It is unfair to the Canadians who are waiting in hospital hallways for care, and it is unfair to the newcomers who were sold a false bill of goods. The Liberals should be focused on getting more doctors and nurses licensed, opening more residency positions for Canadians who studied abroad and reducing red tape, not expanding it. This is how we fix Canada's broken health care system.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I am hearing from my colleague reflects my own opinion. This bill is utterly pointless.

Of course all the provinces want to be able to provide appropriate care to their residents. I am not aware of any premier of Quebec or of any province who is happy with the current situation. However, accountability and transparency would also require the Liberal government to admit that it is paying 21% of the bill. When the government starts paying 79% of the bill, perhaps then it can demand accountability. At present, the declining level of service is the result of the chronic underfunding of health care.

Does my colleague agree with me on that?

• (1800)

The Deputy Speaker: I would just like to remind all members that during consideration of Private Members' Business, there is no period for questions and comments.

If the member wants to continue his speech, he can. The hon. member for Montcalm.

Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, thank you for calling me to order. I did actually think I could ask a question.

I will continue with my speech.

I doubt the member for Surrey Newton consulted the 44 members from Quebec. If he did not consult the provinces, he did not consult members from Quebec either. I would be curious to hear what those 44 members think of Bill C-239, because it does not seem to change anything in the existing legislation. The current legislation does have criteria, two conditions, and that means that we have everything we need in the law to be able to provide appropriate care.

What do the 44 members from Quebec think of the motion unanimously adopted by the Quebec National Assembly? Will they go against the elected members of the Quebec National Assembly, who unanimously adopted this motion across party lines?

Those folks brag every day about representing Quebeckers. I would like to know what they think of the motion unanimously adopted by the Quebec National Assembly in March 2023, which stated the following:

THAT the National Assembly recall that the Canadian government's contribution to health services funding has decreased considerably over the years, as it once represented 50% but is now called on to fund only 24% of costs;

Now it is 21%, to be precise.

THAT it affirm that the Canadian government's most recent offer is clearly insufficient to ensure the sustainability of health services for the population and that Quebeckers will therefore have to assume the cost of this shortfall; otherwise, they will have to endure a decrease in health services;

THAT it denounce the inadequacy of Canada's offer and its definitive nature and the Canadian government's gradual withdrawal from the health of Quebeckers;

THAT, lastly, it reiterate that the current Canadian framework and its fiscal imbalance places Quebec in a difficult situation from a financial standpoint.

I get the impression that not a single Liberal member from Quebec is going to vote in favour of Bill C-239. If they do, they will be going against a motion adopted unanimously by the representatives of the people of Quebec.

I said earlier that this bill was pointless because the Canada Health Act already sets out five criteria, these being public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility. This bill also creates two conditions that are already included in the act. The first condition is to provide the necessary information, which is already covered in subsection 13(a) of the act. There is also a condition about recognizing the amounts transferred, not allowing extra billing and not charging user fees. These conditions are already required and met.

This bill negates what already exists. Perhaps that is due to a lack of knowledge about the Canada Health Act's history and the negotiations and agreements that have taken place over the years.

I will quote from one such agreement. On September 15, 2004, Paul Martin's federal government, in conjunction with Quebec, made the following statement:

...the Government of Quebec's desire to exercise its own responsibilities with respect to planning, organizing and managing health services within its territory, and noting that its commitment with regard to the underlying principles of its public health system - universality, portability, comprehensiveness, accessibility and public administration - coincides with that of all governments in Canada, and resting on asymmetrical federalism [this is what my colleague has not understood], that is, flexible federalism that notably allows for the existence of specific agreements and arrangements adapted to Quebec's specificity...

It is not complicated. Those are the facts. The problem stems from the federal government's disengagement.

• (1805)

Currently, working conditions for doctors, nurses and health care workers are appalling. The initial agreement was that the federal government would fund 50% of health care costs. At the rate things are going, that figure will dwindle to 18%. In fact, this has happened once before. In 1995, when Quebec was reforming its health care system, Paul Martin made sure health care transfers were slashed overnight from 40% to 18%. When I talk about a chronic funding crisis, chronic disinvestment in health care, that is what I mean. How can we expect the provinces to provide quality care when the federal government dumps its deficit on them overnight?

Perhaps the government saw the light in 2004 and decided it would respect an agreement that made sense. However, during the pandemic, Quebec had to go into lockdown for a year because the health care system was too fragile. I thought that as we emerged from the pandemic, the federal government would take a step back and listen to the demands of the Council of the Federation, Quebec and the provinces, which were asking it to increase transfers from 21% to 35%. We are talking about 35 cents on the dollar, not even 50 cents. That translates into investments to buy equipment. There can be no medicine without diagnosis. Access to care depends on the ability to diagnose patients and to have more trained doctors, more trained nurses and fewer agencies. The number crunchers determined that it would require \$28 billion per year, or \$280 billion over 10 years. How much new money has the federal government given for the next 10 years while no longer covering system costs? A total of \$46 billion. That is \$4.6 billion a year for the entire country.

Over on that side of the House, a member stands up to say that people want better care, that there are problems. Everyone knows that. Now we are being told that asking the provinces to allocate the money to specific areas will improve the situation. First of all, that makes no sense, and second of all, it is arrogant. If the member wants to improve health care, he should run for a seat in a provincial legislature. That is what provincial legislatures do; it is their specialty. He can then ask the federal government to provide the necessary resources so that the people on the ground can do their jobs. That is the situation.

I challenge any Quebec MP to vote for Bill C-239 so we can see if they stand up for Quebeckers or not.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first off, let me thank the member for Surrey Newton for bringing forward this legislation. He has recognized a very important issue. I think all members should recognize it. When we think of our health care system, no one in this chamber should be denying at all the true value it has to each and every one of us through the constituents we represent.

I have now campaigned in a dozen-plus elections as a candidate, and I can tell members that in every election I have gone through, health care has been an issue. Anyone who denies that fact I do not think really understands the values that Canadians have and how important health care is to the system.

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When I look at what the member for Surrey Newton is proposing, I appreciate that he said it is not about federal overreach. He is concentrating and focusing his attention on federal dollars and concerns with respect to them. I heard the Conservative critic stand up and say that we should not be concerned because we already have an organization doing what the member for Surrey Newton is proposing, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The only difference between what he said and what the bill implies is that there would be a responsibility for the federal government directly.

We heard the Bloc's concerns about federal dollars. I questioned the Bloc's reflection of history. I have been around for many years, and from what I understand when I was the critic for health care, the way we were going about funding health care during the nineties, because there was a debate on it in Manitoba, meant there would be no federal dollars going toward it. It was Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin who in essence guaranteed there would be ongoing federal cash going to the provinces. Back in the seventies or early eighties, although I am not sure exactly when, there was a tax point trade-off for cash.

I believe all members here, even members of the Bloc, recognize the importance of cash going to the provinces. We have all recognized this, given some of the actions and votes we have had in the past. How many times have we heard when talking about palliative care, long-term care or hospice care how important it is that there be federal dollars going toward them. We have also talked about national standards.

I say all that because at the end of the day, like Canadians, no matter what region we look at in the country, we recognize that all federal MPs have a role to play in contributing to our health care system. If members are prepared to say as members of Parliament that they do not have a role to play at all in health care, they should be transparent on that particular fact and share it in the next general election.

I do not question at all provincial jurisdiction on health care. I question the member who mentioned credentials. There are two issues that I question.

An hon. member: Why do some Canadians not have a doctor?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will give the member the answer. It is credentials. When the member said there are tens of thousands of people whose credentials are not recognized, he is right in that assessment. However, I respect provincial jurisdiction. Just as the member who introduced the bill made very clear, the level responsible for the recognition of credentials is not the federal government, nor should it be. It is the provinces that are responsible for that. That is the problem.

The member made reference to immigration, as if embassies around the world are promoting Canada's health care benefits.

An hon. member: We sure do.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member is right that we do, but so did Stephen Harper.

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• (1810)

Every government I am aware of, over the years I have been a parliamentarian, has talked about the benefits of Canada's health care system. I would challenge the member opposite to tell me of any prime minister who has not been boastful about health care to people who want to come to Canada.

Conservatives try to give the impression that immigration is causing the problems in our health care system. My understanding of immigration and our health care system is that a good percentage of the people who are providing care, whether it is home care services, long-term care, assisted living or in our hospital facilities, are first-generation and second-generation Canadians and permanent residents who have been living in and calling Canada home.

To come to Canada, people need to pass a health exam. There are medical requirements. If someone has cancer, they cannot come to Canada as a permanent resident. Let us not give a false impression that immigrants are the cause of problems in Canada's health care system.

In my home province, the Minister of Labour and Immigration, the Minister of Health Care and the Premier, all three of those individuals, say they want more immigration to Manitoba. This is not because it is crippling the health care system. If anything, it is complementing the health care system, so we need to be very careful. It is not me saying this; these are the provincial politicians responsible for the administration of health saying it.

We should all be considering what the member for Surrey Newton is saying to members of the House, which is that it is about financial accountability and whether there is a role for Parliament to assess that. I think he has done all of us a favour by bringing forward the legislation. I look forward to the debate and comments regarding the legislation.

What I do not support is when members of Parliament say that Ottawa has no role to play in health care. If they are saying that, then they truly do not understand the Canadian identity and what Canadians truly value. When we ask constituents what they love about our country, they will often mention our health care system. It is one of the distinguishing factors we have over countries like the United States and other G7 countries. Our health care is something we should be proud of.

All members of the Liberal caucus are very much proud of that fact, and we respect provincial jurisdiction to the nth degree. This is the reason we have ministers of health who have worked on health care accords and, through those accords, have worked to ensure more accountability.

I will now go back to the Trudeau era, when the Trudeau government made a \$200-billion commitment to health care. I was with the former prime minister and the Premier of Manitoba at the Grace Hospital, where we talked about how Ottawa was going to have a profound and positive impact on health care delivery in the province of Manitoba because we were coming to the province with a considerable amount of money.

We recognize the role that the government plays in health care, whether we are talking about the former prime minister or the cur-

rent Prime Minister, and we will continue to do that. Our new Prime Minister, who was just elected seven months ago, talks about the dental program for Canadians and how we are going to continue to support it. He is committed to advocating for the strengths of mental health. Many of my colleagues talk about the importance of long-term care. Liberals care about our health care system and will continue to care about it into the future.

• (1815)

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the people of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay on the issue of health care, specifically Bill C-239, an act to amend the Canada Health Act with respect to accountability. I would like to thank the member for Surrey Newton for bringing forward the legislation. It is a privilege for any member to bring forward their own legislation to be debated in the chamber.

The legislation before us seeks to establish an accountability framework for the Canada health transfer. Conservatives on this side of the chamber appreciate the member's efforts to bring in greater accountability. Indeed, all Canadians want health care dollars to be spent well.

However, members of the chamber are not elected to applaud good efforts; we are elected to study legislation in the context of the laws and measures we already have in place, to determine whether new legislation would add positively to these measures or only duplicate them. Unfortunately, the legislation before us would only add more bureaucracy to a health care system that needs more transparent accountability, and it would also fail to grapple with the government's own record on health care.

I do not doubt that the member's intentions with the legislation are to spur greater health care outcomes in our shared province of British Columbia. We all know it needs help. However, there is nothing in the legislation that would impose any requirement on provincial governments to improve health care outcomes. It would only require administrative work, duplicating work already being done. Ottawa already has a legacy of duplicating provincial regulations, adding red tape to systems and slowing down results. All we need is another layer of bureaucracy.

For example, the legislation seeks to amend the Canada Health Act. I would point out that paragraph 13(a) of the Canada Health Act already requires provinces to provide the federal Minister of Health with health care information to qualify for health transfers. Additionally, provincial and territorial governments submit health care data to the Canadian Institute for Health Information as well. There is nothing in the member's bill that indicates whether these are the data points he wants provincial governments to table with the federal government to qualify for health transfers.

If so, then the purpose of the legislation seems to be already covered by the Canada Health Act. If not, if it is different information that would be required, then that would only cause provincial health bureaucrats to spend more time collecting data for federal bureaucrats. That would be less time, not more, focusing on delivery of health care. Red tape does not buy more doctors or more health care workers.

Too many residents in my community would like any health care at all delivered, because too often they see “Sorry, we’re closed” instead. At South Okanagan General Hospital, there have been more than 35 random closures in just one year. Imagine someone driving to a hospital because their baby is sick, and it is suddenly closed because there are not enough doctors or nurses. Thousands of constituents do not have access to a family doctor. We hear the same stories from Princeton to Penticton, Osoyoos, Grand Forks and Castlegar.

What is the Liberal government doing for health care recruitment to fill these gaps in communities like mine? It has brought in international medical school graduates but then does not allow them to work in our health care system. According to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, at least 13,000 internationally trained doctors are currently in Canada but not working as doctors. Every year, hundreds of Canadians graduate from medical schools abroad but cannot access a residency training spot back home in Canada.

• (1820)

At the Standing Committee on Health, we recently heard of two cases. First, we heard from Dr. Therese Bichay, who immigrated from Egypt where she practised as a family doctor. She was approved as a priority candidate for immigration to Canada due to her medical training, yet when she arrived, she found the doors closed instead of open. She passed all required medical exams, had her credentials verified and completed the English-language proficiency exam. She is currently working as a physician navigator in the emergency department, yet she cannot work as a doctor. She even told me she would come to my region to be a family doctor, which is in desperate need of doctors.

We are in desperate need of family doctors in so many rural communities, including ours. The Liberal government has failed to support her and the thousands of internationally educated physicians across the country, who are qualified and ready to serve, yet are sidelined and ignored.

Second, we heard from Dr. Scott Alexander, who is Canadian and a doctor, but cannot be a doctor in Canada. He trained at the University of Queensland and even had a job offer from the Australian health care system. He could not get a residency in Canada, even though he spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on his education. He made the sacrifice to return to Canada anyway to work in the health sciences. We thank him for this, but he should be a doctor in this country. In his medical class in Australia, he had 60 Canadian colleagues, and 58 of those colleagues are now working as doctors in Australia rather than in Canada because of the barriers in this country that limit their ability to return home to practise.

This is a broken system that the Liberals have overseen for a decade now without reform. If the member sincerely wants to see

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better health care, and if he wants to see better health care delivery, he should perhaps seek better support from his own caucus rather than establishing a new bureaucracy. If this Liberal member's bill is made into law, what would be the result? It demands that, if a new type of provincial health care data, which is not clearly defined, is not filed with federal bureaucrats, a province may not qualify for a full cash contribution under the Canada health transfer. For me, this raises concerns about whether the federal government is seeking ways to reduce health transfers from provinces via the back door.

We know the Prime Minister himself recently told Canadians that they need to be prepared for sacrifices ahead of the federal budget. Health care should not be one of those sacrifices. The Liberals could, indeed, find plenty of their own wasteful spending and punishing taxes to cut instead. Conservatives will work to improve health care by implementing a national blue seal standard and working with the provinces to create a nationally recognized licence for health care professionals, enabling trained and tested doctors and nurses to work in our health care system, many of whom already live right here in Canada right now.

Conservatives have always, and will always, support a public health care system that Canadians cherish.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing: To me, this bill is deeply offensive and disrespectful. I am a social worker and a member of my professional order. I was a manager in the public health care system for years. One thing I know for sure is that, if my colleagues who work in hospitals, local community services centres and long-term care facilities heard what I heard today, they would be very angry about this disrespect and they would be loud about it. All health care workers are doing their best. They give it their all. Quebec has been through six health care reforms because we are trying to do more with less.

Here in the House, I am being told that this bill will impose standards and demand accountability. Who would create those standards? In Quebec, we are doing our best with the money we have. What I am hearing today is ludicrous. All health care professionals in the public and community networks are worn out because transfers are not keeping up. Municipalities and provinces have made their needs known. They are the ones responsible for providing the services.

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Do our colleagues think that we are not troubled by the fact that not everyone has a family doctor? At the same time, Ottawa is not where things will get fixed. Ottawa will not tell the provinces what to do. It must provide the necessary financial resources to help the provinces. Each province has its own needs. The situation in Quebec is different from the situation in New Brunswick. We do not have the same resources or the same history, and our health and social services are organized differently.

I sincerely hope that I will not see a single member from Quebec supporting this bill. That would be the last straw. I want to speak my truth, so I will say one last thing: I have never wanted to leave the House for the country of Quebec so badly.

• (1830)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour tonight to rise to highlight the urgent need for the federal government to take action when it comes to ship recycling in Canada and especially on the west coast of British Columbia.

In British Columbia, over 900 vessels have been identified that are set to be recycled and retired, and 90 of those vessels are over 500 tonnes. There are no facilities designed to recycle those vessels. In fact, 14 of the 90 vessels are owned by BC Ferries. Those vessels pose an immediate threat to coastal British Columbia's pristine waters, which are critical to our food security, our economy and our way of life.

I am here tonight to highlight the urgent need for federal investment in dry dock and port infrastructure to support ship repair, maintenance and recycling in British Columbia and across Canada.

In my riding of Courtenay—Alberni, Port Alberni is uniquely positioned to serve as a potential hub for this critical work. With the active leadership of Tseshaht and Hupačasath first nations, and I know Huu-ay-aht First Nations is also interested, and the engagement of the provincial government, local government, industry, labour and education partners, a broad coalition has come together to chart a path toward an indigenous-led centre of excellence in sustainable ship recycling. This initiative is guided, of course, by free, prior and informed consent and anchored in the principle of “nothing about us without us”.

The Alberni Valley ship recycling leadership group has agreed on shared principles to ensure that this development meets the highest standards: world-class environmental safeguards designed to meet or exceed the EU ship recycling regulation and align with the Hong Kong convention; transparent community engagement to en-

sure robust social licence; a pragmatic, phased build-out, beginning with scalable, compliant capacity while developing a long-term centre of excellence; and a credible business case, built on demand signals such as a master service agreement potentially with BC Ferries, Seaspan and others, supported by federal and provincial investment, which we are asking for tonight.

Investing in this infrastructure will strengthen Canada's marine and port capacity and create high-skilled, lasting employment, including indigenous hiring pathways through North Island College and local partners. It will reduce environmental risks from aging and derelict vessels, position Canada to meet growing international demand for sustainable shipyard services and ensure Canada meets NATO readiness obligations by securing modern domestic repair and recycling capabilities.

With the Port Alberni Port Authority offering federal water lot and terminal assets, the Province of British Columbia identifying the rural economic diversification and infrastructure program funding as an immediate tool, and partners like the Island Coastal Economic Trust, which is helping steer the working group, the Association of B.C. Marine Industries and the B.C. Environment Industry Association already advancing regulatory and business casework, the groundwork is in place.

What is needed now is a federal commitment to make sure this is a strategic nation-building investment. I urge the federal government to prioritize funding for ship repair, maintenance and recycling infrastructure in the upcoming federal budget.

• (1835)

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the vital importance that marine transportation has to our economy. Our government is focused on building Canada strong and supporting Canadian jobs here at home. That is why we have announced the national shipbuilding strategy, through which we are investing in new ships. While we focus on building new ships, we must take into consideration at the same time that older vessels are reaching the end of their service lives.

[*Translation*]

We recognize that wrecked and abandoned vessels can pose a danger to the environment, public health, public safety and local economies, including the fishing and tourism industries. Transport Canada is aware of the growing demand for ship recycling services in Canada, especially on the west coast, and the importance of access to responsible recycling options abroad. This includes aging government vessels, abandoned vessels and industry-owned vessels.

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[English]

This is the most environmentally sound method to dispose of a ship that reaches the end of its service life. Because ships are so large, skilled operators must use special procedures and equipment to dismantle them safely and in an environmentally sound way. This requires careful planning, safe handling of hazardous materials and strong protections for workers and the environment.

[Translation]

Safe and environmentally responsible ship recycling is a shared responsibility that requires coordinated leadership across federal jurisdictions and departments.

The federal government has jurisdiction over shipping and navigation. It also manages the import and export of hazardous materials and enforces laws that protect Canadian waters.

[English]

Provinces manage property and civil rights, as well as activities above the low tide line, including making and enforcing health and safety rules for local businesses. Municipalities control local zoning and land use and collect waste.

Transport Canada is actively reviewing international developments, including the June 2025 entry into force of the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships and stricter European regulations. We are also considering the need for more ship-recycling capacity in consultation with owners of facilities and fleets.

The government is committed to working with provinces, territories, indigenous communities and industry stakeholders to take into account the views of all Canadians on this important issue, and it will seek further opportunities to do so. We know that it is in Canada's interest to have sufficient, responsible ship recycling that protects our environment, supports economic development and reflects the values of communities across this country and Canada's international commitments.

[Translation]

I thank the hon. member for raising this important issue in the House.

[English]

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, as I identified earlier, 900 vessels are set to retire on B.C.'s coast, and 90 of them are over 500 tonnes. BC Ferries has 14 of those vessels. One of those vessels, the *Queen of Burnaby*, is projected to cost over \$10 million to recycle. Half that money is to tow it to a yard in Halifax through the Panama Canal. Nobody thinks that is okay.

If the government prioritizes funding for ship repair, maintenance and recycling infrastructure in the upcoming federal budget, Canada can help solve an economic leakage. It can help deliver on its trade, defence and environmental objectives while building an indigenous-led, world-class marine capacity on the west coast when it comes to ship recycling.

We have seen what it looks like in Union Bay when it is done wrong. We are trying to bring a solution that plugs an economic leakage, protects our environment and creates well-paying jobs.

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Speaker, for many reasons, we need to access more ship recycling, which must protect workers and the environment. Canada remains engaged in discussions with other countries on the global regulatory framework for ship recycling and any implications for ship recycling here in Canada.

Canada has not yet decided to join the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships or adopt the European approach. Any new approach, of course, will require consultation with our provincial partners, who are responsible for the protection of workers and the management of hazardous waste.

We will continue to work with provinces, territories, indigenous communities and industry stakeholders and to consider the views of all Canadians on this important issue.

• (1840)

EMPLOYMENT

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's forestry and softwood lumber sectors are pillars of our economy. They should sustain thousands of jobs, fuel communities and generate billions in exports, yet under the Liberal government, these industries have been left behind.

Canada's softwood lumber production generates 20 billion board feet per year that is ready for sale. Roughly 90% of that goes directly to the United States, which remains the primary market for Canadian producers. American export access is critical to this industry's survival. The industry contributes over \$21 billion annually to GDP, \$87 billion in total revenues and \$37 billion in exports.

The forestry sector supports over 200,000 direct jobs in 300 forest-dependent communities, more than Canada's steel, aluminum and automotive sectors combined. Despite this, the industry is shrinking. Canadian production has declined 28% since 2017.

In my riding, I recently visited the Interfor mill in Grand Forks, a vital employer for that community, yet just a month later, it indefinitely closed its doors. Do the Liberals understand what this does to a small community? The impact is devastating. Sadly, this mill is yet another example of the damage caused by the Liberals' decade-long inaction on softwood lumber.

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The Liberals like to boast that their Build Canada Homes initiative will save the softwood lumber industry, but the reality is very different. Domestic homebuilding cannot replace access to our largest export market. The industry does not struggle with displaced domestic demand, but with barriers to U.S. markets, and new housing projects are years away from breaking ground because of long permitting and financing delays. The government promised to double homebuilding in 10 years, which sounds ambitious, but it represents just 1.9 billion board feet of new demand, only 3% of the North American market.

Recently, my colleague, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, brought attention to my request for an emergency take-note debate on softwood lumber after the Prime Minister once again failed to reach an agreement during his recent visit with the U.S. President. The Liberal minister responded that he did not think it was much of an emergency, but he should tell that to the families in forestry towns like Grand Forks who have lost their jobs.

Now contrast that with the previous Conservative record. The 2006 softwood lumber agreement, signed under a Conservative government, ended the 2001 to 2006 dispute and returned \$5 billion in unfairly collected duties to Canadian producers.

In 2017, Canadian lumber supplied 30% of U.S. consumption. Today, it is just 22%. Over the same period, Europe's share has more than doubled, rising from 3% to 7%. Every year without a deal means more mill closures, more layoffs and more broken communities.

After a decade of failure, how can Canadians have any faith left in the Liberal government's ability to act?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is on a mission to build Canada's economic strength. We are building big, building bold and building right now.

The cornerstone of our plan is to build 500,000 homes and other major projects using Canadian steel and Canadian lumber. We will upgrade our grid, expand transmission lines and modernize energy infrastructure to power AI. To move our critical minerals and energy resources, we will build bigger ports and create more liquefied natural gas capacity, faster rail and modern pipelines.

To make this happen, we need new skilled workers. We will not be able to double the pace of housing construction without an influx of an additional half a million workers, including tile setters, painters, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, construction craft workers and bricklayers. We also need automotive service technicians, power line technicians, millwrights, truck and transport mechanics and so much more.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Skilled workers are essential to Canada's future prosperity. That is why we are actively encouraging young people to consider a career in the skilled trades. That is also why our government is investing nearly \$1 billion every year in a range of apprenticeship supports.

[*English*]

First, we have the union training and innovation program under the Canadian apprenticeship strategy. This program is focused on improving the quality of training in the Red Seal trades. This helps to ensure that apprentices, pre-apprentices and journeypersons have the best possible learning opportunities through union-based apprenticeship training, through innovation and through enhanced partnerships.

For the apprenticeship service, we have earmarked \$90 million to help small and medium-sized employers bring apprentices on board and create new placements. Further, through the sectoral workforce solutions program, we will fund strategic projects in residential construction and other key economic sectors, including those impacted by U.S. tariffs, with initiatives aimed at addressing acute and systemic workforce development needs, so that we have the workforce we will need.

[*Translation*]

Finally, we have introduced tax measures aimed at reducing costs for tradespeople. The tradesperson's tools deduction and the deduction for tools for an eligible apprentice mechanic allow workers to deduct the costs necessary for their work.

The tuition tax credit allows apprentices to claim expenses related to classroom-based technical training, as well as the cost of writing the Red Seal exam.

In addition, the labour mobility deduction helps workers cover travel expenses.

[*English*]

Together these programs strengthen our skilled trades workforce and make it easier for Canadians to get trained, get hired and build our country. The just-passed One Canadian Economy Act legislation has removed federal barriers to labour mobility, which means that once they are trained, a worker licensed or certified by a province or territory can work in a comparable occupation in federal jurisdiction without additional requirements. Being able to work across Canada expands opportunities for workers, gives employers a bigger hiring pool and strengthens our economy.

The new law also enables the government to cut the approval times for major projects from five years down to two so we can get shovels in the ground faster and so people can work sooner.

I want to thank the Canadian building trades for helping us pass the One Canadian Economy Act. They asked for it, and we listened. Meeting Canada's economic and climate challenges starts with listening to workers. Together we made it happen. They are standing with us to make this Canada's moment.

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate my colleague across the floor's responding, I think she might have mentioned the word "forestry" two or three times. I am not sure she understood that I was talking about the forestry industry.

The Liberals have no idea what a mill closure does to a small community, or they would try harder to get a deal. We are talking about the forestry industry. I do not know whether she would want to repeat what she has to say, and whether that is even allowed.

The government insists that forestry workers, and other people in the towns where mills that are closing are located, have access to support, yet no funds have been accessible to the industry at all. A \$1.5-billion support package or a Build Canada Homes initiative will not offset the damage caused by the government's failure to act.

Can the member tell us when the government will stop hiding behind excuses and get Canadians back to their jobs?

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay for giving me the

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opportunity to talk about the Government of Canada's steadfast commitment to building Canada's economic strength. It is a commitment we take very seriously. We are focused on preparing Canadians for the future.

[*Translation*]

We have great programs in place to make sure that Canadians feel secure about their place in the workforce. We are ensuring that young people have the skills and experience they need to enter the workforce, while enabling older workers to upgrade their skills.

[*English*]

We are developing projects that will create good, long-term construction careers and help build the Canadian economy for the long term, and that includes the forestry industry. We know that all our communities will be the beneficiaries.

• (1850)

The Deputy Speaker: 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 6:50 p.m.)

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