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# Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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Chair: Robert Morrissey





## Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)):** Good morning, committee members. It is 11:01, and the clerk has advised me that we have quorum. Those witnesses who are appearing virtually have been sound-tested and approved.

With that, I will open meeting number 13 of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Pursuant to the motion adopted on September 18, 2025, the committee is meeting on youth employment in Canada.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members and witnesses are appearing by Zoom, as well as participating in the room.

I'll review a few items before we begin.

Everyone has the option to participate in this meeting in the official language of their choice. In the room, please familiarize yourself with the interpretation device. Those appearing virtually, if you click on the globe icon at the bottom of your screen, you can choose the official language of your choice. If there is an interruption in translation services, please get my attention by raising your hand, and we'll suspend while they are being corrected. As well, members in the room, please silence your devices so that they do not ring during the meeting. To ensure the safety of our interpreters, avoid tapping on the microphone boom. As well, please direct all questions through me, the chair. Wait until I address you by name before you proceed.

Today, we have two one-hour panels with two witnesses appearing in each one. In the first panel, we have, as an individual, Pierre Fortin, professor, department of economics, Université du Québec à Montréal. The second witness, who is appearing in the room, is Ms. Tiessen, chief economist with The Canadian Shield Institute for public policy.

Welcome.

Each one of you will have five minutes or less for an opening statement. When you get to five minutes or a little over, I will thank you and will expect you to conclude your comments shortly after that.

We'll begin with Professor Fortin for five minutes or less.

Professor, you have the floor.

• (1105)

[Translation]

**Pierre Fortin (Professor, Department of Economics, Université du Québec à Montréal, As an Individual):** Mr. Chair and members of the committee, I want to begin by thanking you for your kind invitation. I'm very honoured.

As a macroeconomist, I'll look at youth unemployment as a whole.

[English]

The first thing to observe is that the national unemployment rate in Canada has increased by two points in the last 30 months, going from 5% to 7%. This is due first to high interest rates and then to greater trade uncertainty. The hiring rate has slowed down, and many workers have been hurt.

If we are focusing on the youth labour force, there are four questions to ask. First, by how much has its unemployment rate increased? Second, by how much has this increase exceeded that of the unemployment rate of mature adults? Third, how much higher than in the past has this excess of youth unemployment been, and fourth, why so?

I will offer answers to these four questions.

[Translation]

Between the summer of 2023 and the summer of 2025, the unemployment rate for older adults increased by 1.2 percentage points. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 24 increased by 4 percentage points. Therefore, the increase in the unemployment rate in this category is three and a half times higher.

There's nothing new about this trend. When hiring slows down, youth unemployment always rises more than that of older adults. The labour market always follows the last in, first out rule.

[English]

Is this time different? Is the 2023-25 magnification factor of 3.5 times for the increase in youth unemployment worse than in earlier job setbacks?

Definitely yes. Checking on this with Statistics Canada data, in the 40 years from 1976 to 2015, the magnification factor for youth unemployment was a modest 1.2 times the mature adult rate on average, but then, in the last 10 years, from 2016 to 2025, this factor has risen to 2.6 times on average and has included the above-mentioned shoot-up to 3.5 in the last two years.

Why has the spillover of the job decline on the youth unemployment rate been so large since 2016? The most likely cause is the explosion of immigration to Canada, especially since 2022.

Each year, about three-quarters of any new cohort of immigrants enlarges the pool of people who are looking for a first or a second job. In recent years, the huge increase in immigration has blown up the total number of new workers who compete for entry in the labour force and who are the most vulnerable to rising unemployment whenever the economy slows down.

In the labour force in 2016, there were about 25 new mature immigrants for every 100 youths, but by 2025, the ratio had gone up from 25 to 70 new mature immigrants per 100 youths. This is a story about supply and demand. The inevitable consequence has been that the unemployment rates of both groups have increased sharply to nearly 12% for new immigrants and 15% for youth respectively in recent months.

In other words, it is the open door immigration policy enforced during 2016 to 2024 that has made both the new immigrants and the young natives suffer from sky-high unemployment rates as soon as jobs have become scarcer.

• (1110)

Thank God our immigration policy has now begun to turn around toward a more moderate pace. The youths and the immigrants will benefit.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I understand that Ms. Bednar is going to give the opening report for the Canadian Shield Institute.

Madam Bednar, you have five minutes, please.

**Vasiliki Bednar (Managing Director, The Canadian SHIELD Institute):** Thank you, Chair. I'll share the time with our chief economist.

Good morning. My name is Vass Bednar. I am the managing director of The Canadian Shield Institute for public policy. We're a new think tank focused on securing economic sovereignty for Canada. I'm also the former chair of the expert panel on youth employment, which was back in 2016-17. I am joined by our chief economist at Shield, Kaylie Tiessen, who is able to be in the room with you. We've both been following this file for many years.

You may be wondering how economic sovereignty connects to youth employment. We, like you, want to ensure that young people can fully participate in, shape and benefit from our domestic economy. We're worried about what current trends mean for the sense of belonging that young people feel and their ability to build the lives they'd like. If the substitution of AI tools and technologies for new hires is effectively erasing a rung on the career ladder, a place where Canadians can learn and fail and grow, we do risk alienating a generation. Employers have changed too. They spend less on training and don't really offer jobs that require no experience. This leads us to that classic question of how young people gain experience in the first place.

Ironically, generation Z is ready for the AI economy. They are adaptive. They are digitally fluent. They are willing to learn. However, we are starting to see evidence that we're automating away many of the opportunities that can let them prove that. As you know, the youth unemployment rate has risen sharply, even without an official recession. That is unusual. It is a strong signal that something structural is breaking down in how young people enter the workforce. New data from Desjardins, Statistics Canada, the private sector and, yes, The Canadian Shield Institute all point to a disturbing trend: For the first time since the 1990s, young Canadians are both working less and earning less when they are working.

We see three forces at play. First, that entry-level ladder is missing rungs. Global job postings for roles that require zero to two years of experience are down nearly 30% since last year, 2024. Employers are automating junior tasks, cutting public sector internship budgets and inflating credential requirements so that young workers just don't qualify. They are also reducing apprenticeship opportunities in skilled trades even as the labour shortage becomes more acute.

Second, AI and automation are changing who gets a first chance. Early-career workers in AI-exposed fields like software, marketing and customer services are already seeing job loss. Meanwhile, those in the trade or care sectors, where AI complements rather than displaces human skills, are doing a little bit better.

Third, 40% of Canadian workers, including young and recent graduates, are overqualified for the job they have. This is a statistic that shows Canada's workers are underemployed, not underskilled. If we keep defining this kind of situation for young people as being a skills problem, we will continue to be focused on the wrong solutions.

I'll turn it over to Kaylie for three directions on policy.

**Kaylie Tiessen (Chief Economist, The Canadian SHIELD Institute):** Thanks, Vass.

Behind these stats are the stories we all hear—graduates applying for 500-plus jobs and never getting a response, job fairs with lineups around the block and applicants competing not just with each other but actually with AI screening bots to get seen by a potential employer. The result is what one analyst has called “AI versus AI”—job seekers using AI to tailor résumés for algorithms that screen them out anyway. It's brutal. This is a broken matching system. It erodes confidence and risks creating a lost generation of underemployed young Canadians.

Policy solutions to support youth employment typically focus on the supply side of things, such as skilling, but what if the demand for labour has fundamentally shifted? That's the side of the ledger that policy should be focusing on.

We would emphasize three directions for policy. One, bridge the gap between learning and earning. Co-op and apprenticeship programs see more demand than supply. That means more young people want a co-op than are actually available for young people to take. Firms need to provide opportunities that young people are seeking. Support the implementation of a vocational education and training model for apprenticeships. This has stabilized youth employment in Germany and Switzerland. It's worth looking at.

Two, modernize hiring and labour market systems. Incentivize Canada's businesses, large and small, to actually hire and train youth instead of automating them away. There are other things we can use AI for that would be a lot more useful. Experiment with transparent, randomized lottery pilots for internships and fellowships to reduce gatekeeping and selection bias. Design a nationwide system to assess the skills that young workers actually have instead of relying on credentials that signal something but not everything.

I'm seeing that's our time. We have more to say, but we'll get to that in questions.

Thank you very much.

• (1115)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Tiessen and Ms. Bednar.

We'll now go to questioning, beginning with Mr. Genuis for six minutes please.

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

We've highlighted the Conservatives' youth jobs plan. It's what we've put on the table and proposed to the government in terms of confronting the youth unemployment crisis. The four parts of it are unleashing the economy, fixing immigration, fixing training and building homes where the jobs are.

My questions in this round will be for Mr. Fortin.

First, I want to highlight, Ms. Bednar, that I appreciated your point about the overqualification of many young people. I think it's important to understand that we're dealing with a situation in which there are not enough jobs. There are issues of training misalignment, and there are issues of not enough jobs. Some on this committee would like to focus purely on the idea that we need more training, but in reality, we're seeing a lot of young people who are highly trained. There are misalignments in training, but there are also simply not enough jobs. There's an important role for discussing the issues around training, but the first point of our plan is to unleash the economy so that there are enough jobs for young people.

Mr. Fortin, thank you for your work on this and for your testimony, which highlighted that there is a multiplier, sadly. When the unemployment rate is going up overall, the youth unemployment rate is generally going up by more. You've also highlighted how that magnification effect is getting greater. It has been wider over the life of this government than it was in previous times, but it is progressively widening. That's very alarming to me, and I think that should be alarming to all Canadians, seeing this further magnification. You've attributed that to immigration.

I'd like to start off on the issue of how unemployment overall affects youth unemployment. Again, going back to our plan, number one is to unleash the economy and number two is to fix immigration. It sounds like you need to fix unemployment overall. You need to address the problems of an overall lack of investment and a lack of economic growth if you want to address youth unemployment as well. Would you agree with that?

[Translation]

**Pierre Fortin:** Yes, of course. Right now, the Bank of Canada has reduced interest rates, which encourages economic activity, on the one hand. On the other hand, however, it is clear that the tariff attack on Canada has consequences for companies' tendency to invest more or less.

What needs to be done to stimulate the economy? I think my mother, who is in heaven, would have the best suggestion to make. She would have said that prayer is the way. Right now, not much can be done to control the Americans' behaviour toward Canada and other countries.

In the meantime, it's also a matter of encouraging the Governor of the Bank of Canada to continue to perhaps lower interest rates even further.

• (1120)

[English]

**Garnett Genuis:** I appreciate the acknowledgement that there are some things we can't control. I would say that there are some things we can control, as well, when it comes to the state of our own economy. We're going to be affected by things we can control and by things we can't control. Either way, certainly you've argued that our own domestic policy decisions are affecting that magnification effect.

Could you explain a bit more about how the immigration choices that have been made by the government have led to intensifying competition and therefore to higher levels of unemployment for both newcomers and young people? How are the immigration policies of the government affecting this magnification where, at a given unemployment rate overall, the youth unemployment rate is even relatively higher?

[Translation]

**Pierre Fortin:** Canada's immigration policy launched around 2016-17 has clearly had all kinds of consequences. Until last year, Canada had the highest immigration rate in the world. As a result, the country experienced an explosion in migration, but the government did not anticipate that this would have such a significant impact on the unemployment rate during a slower phase of the economic cycle. As you say, and as I also emphasized, not only young people are affected by this very large entry policy for newcomers, who are obviously looking for a first job here. The policy also affects immigrants themselves. Those are the two groups that are suffering from the increase in unemployment. In that sense, immigrants themselves are victims of Canada's immigration policy.

We know that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship who was in office last year, Mr. Miller, as well as Ms. Diab, who succeeded him this year, have introduced measures to moderate this immigration policy. Obviously, I think it's a step in the right direction. The question is whether it will go far enough to restore the economy to the peaceful level it was at before 2016. We'll see.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fortin and Mr. Genuis.

Ms. Koutrakis, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

My questions will be for Ms. Bednar and Ms. Tiessen.

In your opening comments, Ms. Bednar, you said many things that caught my attention, but for one in particular, I think I would like to give you the opportunity to expand on so that we have a better understanding. When you say there's something "structural" wrong, what exactly are you referring to?

As it pertains to government policy that is in place or is not in place, do you think the government's policies that are in place currently help the youth? We are putting a lot of effort into skills and a lot of effort into making sure the youth have the supports in place that they require to succeed, whether they come out of a trade school or whether they come out of university. I'm interested to know more about something being structurally wrong.

**Vasiliki Bednar:** One of our observations is that, through policy, we tend to focus, as you noted, on supply side interventions, on what are the skills competitions, skills training and supports for young people.

Our observation is that demand for the labour of young people is fundamentally shifting. If we're not recognizing that shift in demand, if we're not doing more to stimulate and incentivize firms to be hiring young people and providing those opportunities, we are risking leaving a layer of the workforce behind, and that's around some of the commentary with productivity-enhancing technologies that tend to see a substitution against a new hire, somebody who is more junior.

Kaylie, I don't know if you want to add anything.

• (1125)

**Kaylie Tiessen:** I would love to. Thank you very much.

There are a couple of policies that I didn't get to, so I'm going to get to those first, and then we'll go on to a few other things.

Stop assuming that companies will build the opportunities that young workers and new graduates want, and start requiring that firms build the opportunities that young workers want. That's where we need to start going with this conversation. It's not about creating more skills. We have an incredibly highly skilled workforce in this country, including young people. We need to be creating opportunities that actually increase our well-being because we're actually being utilized and challenged at work. It's increasing productivity, as well, in the economy. We need both of those things.

If we look at the role the immigration policy has played in the last few years, we see that we ended up focusing on a low-wage strategy. That's not what we need in order to create better jobs, in order to increase well-being and in order to increase productivity. We need a high-wage strategy that creates better jobs that actually meet the demands of young people and the rest of the workers in this country who want the opportunity to use the skills they have.

For too long, Canada's policy environment has assumed that the demand side for labour is exactly right, while workers, the supply side, have been required to consistently guess what employers want and when they want it. We're always guessing; they're always perfect. It's time to look at the demand side of the ledger and ask employers to consider revamping the types of opportunities they're creating.

There are a couple of other things that we could look at. One is system-wide assessments for skills, competencies and abilities to help governments and employers understand the workforce beyond the credentials that are on their résumés. There are a lot of things that we can do to prove the skills we have, but there are a lot of skills we have that don't have credentials, so let's make sure that we're able to recognize both.

We could also talk about manager training to help employers learn to recognize and leverage the potential skills within their teams instead of just always looking at cost-cutting, which is supposedly efficiency but actually is reducing productivity. They need to build pathways for workers to build skills over time instead of requiring five years of experience right off the bat.

**Annie Koutrakis:** Thank you.

In your opinion, Ms. Tiessen or Ms. Bednar, is this a government policy letdown of our youth, or is it a private sector situation? Does it go back to the current economic instability? Where would you say lies the biggest percentage of blame? I'm saying "blame" for lack of a better word, but I'm not looking to blame. I'm trying to get to the root cause—or possibly one of the root causes—that has led us to this current situation. Is it a government deficiency, is it the private sector or is it a combination of both?

**Vasiliki Bednar:** I suppose we would say that it's so difficult to divorce the youth unemployment context from all of those factors.

Back when I was chairing the expert panel on youth employment, I was already hearing from young people about how they knew that rudimentary algorithmic systems were screening their CVs. They were using white font to put keywords from job postings into their cover letters and their résumés. That was a function of how technology was changing the search for labour. It drove down the cost of looking for a job. You didn't have to find a job posting in the newspaper or post it on a window. Everybody was applying for jobs from the couch, 24-7—you know what I mean—just online, and suddenly it was imposing a huge cost on employers as well. They were just inundated with interest from people, which leads to this disappointment in the hundreds of applications and disappointment that we hear from.... We can never divorce youth employment from the broader context. We know that young people are the last ones in the labour market and sort of the first ones out, but we want to be careful to not totally leave out how other technologies are changing the dynamics of that labour market, the demand for their labour and that interest in their uptake.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

Thank you, Ms. Koutrakis.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us today to shed light on the issue of youth unemployment, which concerns all committee members.

I would like you to elaborate on your opinion or to tell us more about your knowledge of artificial intelligence. It's come up a few times. Ms. Bednar just touched on it when she talked about the screening of résumés, and we talked about it last week, as well. More broadly, what would be the range of factors to monitor, in terms of youth employment? I know that it may go beyond the subject at hand, but I'd like to hear your comments on that, Ms. Tiessen.

Mr. Fortin, you can also add your comments.

● (1130)

**Pierre Fortin:** Right now, there is a boom of major investments in artificial intelligence by North American companies.

[English]

This AI boom is holding up the American economy. It has a lot of expansionary effect on the Canadian economy too.

There is a lot of worry throughout the youth labour market about the future. One of my children is a technological artist. He creates big monsters for video games. Of course, he's very worried about the future of his job, because maybe his employer will switch to AI instead of his own abilities.

What can we do about it? It's probably a good idea to try to encourage businesses and governments to help those young people who are worried about their future get the training that is necessary for them to get a hold on artificial intelligence.

[Translation]

That way, young people would have the opportunity to keep their jobs, but the content of their jobs will be changed. So training is fundamental.

**Marilène Gill:** In summary, AI is already driving job changes. Some jobs that young people would like to have may be in jeopardy right now. The teaching environments have to adapt quickly, as the workplace is already changing.

I would now like to hear what Ms. Tiessen and Ms. Bednar have to say about this.

[English]

**Kaylie Tiessen:** I think the jury is still out on whether AI is actually improving productivity in a particular business or in the economy more broadly. It's something that needs to be studied. We need to make sure we're not automating or erasing jobs that young people could be doing right now with technology that isn't doing the job as well as a person could do it, which means we get worse customer service and worse video games, as Professor Fortin was just talking about with his son. We need to be making sure that the technology we're relying on will create a higher-quality product. I don't think we know that yet.

What we could be working on instead, and what I'd love to see more technology companies focusing on, is how to marry workers with technology—that has happened over the last 100 years and many years before—to increase productivity over time in our labour market and in our economy. Marrying the two together, instead of just leaving thousands or hundreds of thousands or millions of workers unemployed.... It isn't going to create a high-functioning, thriving economy where people are feeling that they can create the lives they want, that they can use the skills, that they have the skills they desire to have and that they can actually participate in our economy more broadly. We need to be focusing a lot more on how to develop tools that workers use to create higher-quality output instead of just automating away systems that people are right now working in and providing those higher-quality opportunities.

I don't know if anyone has anything else to add.

● (1135)

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** Ms. Bednar, would you like to add anything? If not, I have other questions.

[English]

**Vasiliki Bednar:** Let's go to your other questions.

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** I probably won't have time to hear your answers to my next question, but you can start thinking about it and perhaps answer it in my next speaking turn.

We often talk about entry-level jobs. One thing we have never addressed in committee is the issue of offshoring. I don't know if that practice or concept is relevant to this discussion, but I would have liked to hear your comments on the subject. I won't have time to hear them right away, since my six minutes are already up. However, if you want to add comments during my next speaking turn, or send us your remarks in writing, that would be very useful.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

[*English*]

Ms. Falk, go ahead for five minutes.

**Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here and for sharing their knowledge on this topic.

Professor Fortin, I'll start with you.

You mentioned, in a previous round of questions, that the government didn't anticipate the effects of their immigration policy. I'm wondering how that can be. Would the government not consult with employers and with industry where the labour gaps are? I don't understand how we can have such a massive side effect of a policy, and the government did not anticipate that.

[*Translation*]

**Pierre Fortin:** It's hard to go back to 2016 to figure out where this policy came from, but it seems that the government was heavily influenced by the report of its Advisory Council on Economic Growth, which said that, if we opened the door to immigration, we would have much faster economic growth, GDP would increase faster, as would GDP per capita, and Canada's international stature would improve. We thought that Canada's ambassador to China, when he stood in front of Mr. Xi, would look more serious than if he represented a small country with only 30 million inhabitants.

However, the analysis behind the Advisory Council on Economic Growth in 2016 was flat out wrong. Unfortunately, it was poorly thought out, economically speaking. More or less from 2016 onwards, the government played a bit of a sorcerer's apprentice and caused an unprecedented explosion in migration. It was temporarily halted by the pandemic, but it continued unabated after 2021, which led to the harmful consequences we know about.

The former prime minister himself, Mr. Trudeau, said that this immigration policy had become unsustainable. What's unfortunate is that this became apparent much too late, once a great deal of damage had been done.

[*English*]

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you very much.

Basically, being short-sighted in their policy has had these detrimental effects.

I want to note that Canada is in a housing crisis. We have this situation where people can't get homes. They can't afford homes, if there were some on the market for them to buy. I would even say, just with some of the numbers and the stats that we're hearing, I

think we're on the cusp of a crisis with food insecurity, with families not being able to put food on the tables in their homes.

I'm wondering if these immigration policies and these levels have added to this demand for housing and services. How has that also impacted young Canadians' access to affordable housing and to stable jobs? If we're not able to get a stable job, then we cannot afford a house. How has this affected one another?

**Pierre Fortin:** The answer to this question is yes. One plus one is equal to two. I've looked at the numbers in my own province, Quebec, and I've been able to estimate how many more people in the province of Quebec have been added to the total population relative to what the population would have been if the rate of immigration before 2016 had continued unchanged.

The answer is that from 2022 to 2025, the population of Quebec has increased, due to this immigration policy, by 500,000. Mind you, 500,000 people suddenly in a province like that means something for the housing market. Of course, those guys have to be able to find a place to sleep at night.

Yes, of course, the migratory explosion has had this huge consequence on the housing market. There's no doubt about this. It's just a matter of being able to add one plus one.

• (1140)

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Falk.

Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to start by thanking the witnesses for participating in this study.

Mr. Fortin, I understand what you said about how we approached immigration policies in 2016. I would just like to remind the committee, for the record, that the policies we put in place were, for the most part, a continuation of the policies of the previous government, the Harper government, which focused heavily on economic growth as a solution to Canada's aging and declining population. This is an issue that we continue to face. In 2014, the Harper government even launched an international education strategy to double the number of foreign students. So the 2016 analysis you're referring to continued in the same direction.

Afterwards, we realized that we may have to go about it in a different way. That is why, in January 2024, we capped the number of new international students and, in August, we limited the number of new temporary foreign workers. We've also announced significant reductions in immigration levels. More announcements will be made on this in the coming days. In short, we're working on it.

In all the conversations we've had recently, there seemed to be only one youth unemployment rate. That's not moving us forward, as there seem to be other factors at play. You talked about temporary residents and the fact that there aren't as many jobs for young people who don't have a lot of experience. Other witnesses have told us that employers prefer to hire people with experience.

As an economist, when you look at the employment data, do you see a better way to determine youth unemployment rates that could help us find solutions that are a little more targeted?

**Pierre Fortin:** Your analysis of the situation is absolutely correct. It is true that the 2016 policy generated by the federal government's Advisory Council on Economic Growth was a continuation of the previous policy, but it amplified it considerably. It's also true that there was a change of direction starting in 2024, after the important announcement made by Mr. Miller that mistakes may have been made and that new entries should be moderated in the future. We like immigrants, of course, but we can't take in more than a certain number at a time.

Now, what are the consequences? It is difficult to distinguish the effects of temporary immigration on the labour market from those of permanent immigration. It is very difficult to properly measure the effects in the case of temporary immigration, first of all because Statistics Canada's data is not yet up to date, as the agency itself acknowledges. The people at Statistics Canada are competent and are working hard to get there, but the work isn't done yet. Second of all, there has been a significant increase in illegal immigration to Canada. Last year, Mr. Miller said that there were between 10% and 20% more temporary immigrants than the estimated number.

You don't need a Ph.D. in economics to understand that, if you double the number of people simultaneously looking for work in a situation where the economy is slowing, the unemployment rate will increase for all those people. So we have a higher unemployment rate for both immigrants and young people, who are competing.

In addition, employers often prefer to hire immigrants, as long as they already have work experience in Canada. They also figure that immigrants have a family to support, for example. So when a young person who doesn't yet have a family joins the labour market, even if they have some training, they may be left out.

• (1145)

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fortin.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Desrochers.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I got a head start earlier when I announced the subject of my next question. Could the witnesses now provide us with details on the issue of offshoring, perhaps by telling us about entry-level positions that are disappearing, unemployment rates and prospects for young people, for example?

**Pierre Fortin:** In terms of offshoring, I assume you are talking about manufacturing companies here that would set up shop elsewhere. If we take an example from your region, it could be a com-

pany in Sept-Îles that decides to go to Chillicothe, Ohio, rather than staying in Sept-Îles—

**Marilène Gill:** If I may, it could also be telecommunications companies. I'm not necessarily talking about companies that are physically here.

**Pierre Fortin:** It could be companies in the service sector.

In any sector of the economy, the problem right now is obviously the American policy, to the extent that we can call it that. As a result of the U.S. President's actions, our manufacturing exports to the United States are facing increasing tariffs. It's not the end of the world yet, but it could be in a few years. In any case, we'll see. Of course, if a company that exports to the United States is charged a tariff of 5%, 10%, 20% or 25% more than before, it is obvious that it will eventually consider whether its next investment will be in the United States rather than in Canada. That's a very dangerous consequence for the Canadian economy right now. Whether in business or in politics, everyone is fully aware of this, including you.

You also have to understand that, for the long term, what you said earlier is absolutely right. It's not just the manufacturing sector; it's also the service sector. One third of all jobs in Canada were in manufacturing 50 or 60 years ago. Now it's only 10%.

It's important to keep an eye on that in the service sector, as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Gill and Mr. Fortin.

[English]

Mr. Genuis, you have five minutes.

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Fortin, you said in response to my colleague that the reason the government screwed up immigration so badly, contributing to very high youth unemployment, was that they relied on the advice of their economic advisory council, the very bad advice in terms of the impact that immigration would have on youth unemployment.

I just want you to clarify. Was the council you're referring to the one led by Dominic Barton, who was at the time a managing partner at McKinsey, and that relied on so-called pro bono analysis by McKinsey?

• (1150)

[Translation]

**Pierre Fortin:** Yes, that's exactly right. The main problem these people had was that they were unable to distinguish between growing and becoming wealthier. An economy that grows doesn't necessarily become wealthier. Over the past few years, Canada has grown its economy significantly. Of course, more people at work equals a bigger gross domestic product. In contrast, Canada's GDP per capita has declined. Why? It's because this policy has encouraged many businesses to recruit cheap labour.

[English]

If you look at some of the studies that have been done by Statistics Canada or the Bank of Canada, they show that there's been a shift toward cheap labour in Canada.

**Garnett Genuis:** Yes. Thank you.

I'll just add to that. It may be an issue of these high-priced analysts not understanding, but it may also be a case of just different interests. We've been critical of this shameful merging of Liberal government power with private corporate interests. The fact is, McKinsey has all kinds of other clients: clients who may well have benefited financially as a result of the policy direction that was taken by the government even while it was causing high youth unemployment.

I'll turn it over to Mr. Reynolds for the balance of the time.

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming today.

When I got out of high school, my first job was at a printing company packing boxes. There were some opportunities for growth there as I worked for that company. They trained me, and I eventually moved on to run one of their printing presses.

My question is for Ms. Bednar.

Do you see a gap between the types of jobs that youth are looking for and the types of jobs that are available to them?

**Vasiliki Bednar:** Anecdotally, yes, in the sense that I spent five years before this job at a university supporting graduate students as they prepared to take on something new.

I don't know that it's something we've necessarily seen directly in the data, but I take your point that sometimes there are jobs available that may be a mismatch or seem out of alignment in terms of how young people want to carve out their career. We've heard that before from groups of young people, that they're able and willing to work, and in their job search, what isn't satisfying.... They can find something. They can place themselves somewhere, but those experiences aren't informative in terms of building the skills they want or exposing them to the kind of career they're hoping for.

**Colin Reynolds:** In your studies and in your experience, are you seeing any industries that do have employment available? Where are there jobs?

**Vasiliki Bednar:** Historically, I think, when we've looked across Canada, economics 101 would look at certain geographies where, if there are vacancies, why it is that young people aren't flooding that area to take up those opportunities. The reality is that, for young people, staying closer to communities where they are as they start to bridge out and build their career is what feels more normal and natural. That is why we suggest that opportunity for more equitable, randomized matching for some positions.

We've seen pilots of this in the U.S. on a case-by-case basis with employers who have set a threshold. In one instance, a simple fast food restaurant chain said, "As long as you have a high school degree or equivalent, we believe that you meet our threshold. We will take in all these applications over a period of time, and we will ran-

domly select and invite you to come work with us. We believe we can train you. We believe you can do this work, if you have this academic credential." It was much more satisfying for the applicants because, when they didn't receive an interview or they didn't hear back, they had a different appreciation for, again, the volume and the interest versus feeling like they were somehow deficient. They question what was wrong with their cover letter, if there was a different sentence they needed or if the format was incorrect.

No, it's not really about that formatting or tailoring. There's just the reality of supply and demand.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

I will go to Ms. Fancy for five minutes to conclude this first hour.

**Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here today.

Within my five-minute round, I would like to talk about solutions. I believe that's the whole purpose of our report: This is how we got here, and let's start looking at solutions.

In reading some of your bios, I was drawn to you, Ms. Tiessen, in regard to your highlighting this morning, in your speech, stable work pathways, access to training and strengthening employment standards. That spoke to me as a former educator trying to get youth their first job and training.

I have three different questions for you today.

The first one is about the precarious work in seasonal economies. I live in Nova Scotia. In regions like mine, South Shore—St. Margarets, where youth employment is often very seasonal and part time, especially in terms of tourism or service sectors. Based on some of your research, what policy measures do you think would best help support young people in transitioning from seasonal work to more stable, year-round employment as they get older?

**Kaylie Tiessen:** That's definitely a million dollar question.

One thing that we definitely need to be thinking about is, if someone is in seasonal employment and they want to move into a more stable job, what the process is and what systems underpin that transition. Do they need to go back to school? If they are trying to support a family, how are they going to go back to school? Perhaps we need to look at improving our employment insurance system to support people as they are training for additional skills to move into a new job. That's one piece of the puzzle.

A seasonal worker may not qualify for employment insurance because they don't have enough hours. If you're trying to move from one job to another after your seasonal work has been completed, you might have to move very quickly to try to find different work if you don't qualify for employment insurance in order to do that training and take the time you need in order to find the job that is the right match.

**Jessica Fancy:** Awesome. Thank you so much for that.

This leads me to my next question. It's about job quality versus job quantity. When employers say there's a labour shortage, we also hear from youth that available jobs might not provide livable wages or stable hours. How should federal youth employment programs balance job creation with job quality?

**Kaylie Tiessen:** We need both, especially right now.

Professor Fortin has covered what's happening with the American policies that are shifting what's happening in Canada right now. That's been covered already in this meeting quite substantially. We need job creation, and we need that job creation to be high-quality jobs so that people have the opportunities that lead to life satisfaction and to being able to create the life they're looking for. It also leads to higher productivity in our economy and then helps our economy grow. If we're looking at only low-wage jobs all the time, then we're just looking at the lowest possible growth and productivity gains that we could have, or even declining productivity. I would say it's not an either-or question. We need both.

Inside of that, what about looking at policies that improve stability in jobs? I'm thinking about fair scheduling rules, for example. If you do need to have two jobs in order to make ends meet, you can actually schedule between those two, the way you can also schedule your social life, pick up your kids from school and do those sorts of things. As well, different provinces have varying degrees of minimum wage. What does it mean to provide and ensure that workers in each province actually have enough money to thrive in the economy?

We need to be looking, right now, at boosting our economy from Canada first. If we don't create jobs that actually allow for that economic growth, we're not going to counteract what's happening in the U.S. right now.

**Jessica Fancy:** Nice.

We have about 30 seconds left, and I would be remiss if I didn't talk about rural youth retention.

Where I'm from, we're a predominantly rural community. You talked about keeping our kids first, or Canadians first. In terms of keeping our youth and our kiddos first, what role do local employers and community organizations play in helping young people see a future in their communities? How can we as the federal government support these types of partnerships to keep our kids home?

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Give a short answer, please.

**Kaylie Tiessen:** I would go back to this idea of looking at assessing what skills you have, even if you don't have the credentials to prove it. That means building systems that can help a municipal government or rural employer or someone in an urban area actually

understand what an individual worker is qualified to do and match them with the job that's there.

**Jessica Fancy:** That's wonderful.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Jessica Fancy:** If you have anything else to add, please feel free to give us a written response after this.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Fancy.

Professor Fortin, you had your hand up, but it is the member's time. It's left to them to recognize you or not.

This concludes the first hour.

**Garnett Genuis:** I have a point of order, Chair.

Witnesses can follow up in writing as well. If they run out of time and they have something to add, they can follow up that way as well.

**The Chair:** Yes. They all have the option to do that.

That includes you, Professor Fortin.

With that, we'll suspend while we move to the second hour of witness testimony.

Thank you to the witnesses who appeared this morning.

• (1200) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Committee members, we are ready to resume the second hour of this committee meeting.

I would like to make a few comments to the witnesses appearing.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before you speak. You have the option of participating in this meeting in the official language of your choice by clicking on the globe icon at the bottom of your screen, and you can choose your language. If there's an interruption in the translation services, please use the "raise hand" icon to get my attention, and we will suspend while it is being corrected.

For those in the room, members, I went through the additional comments.

Please speak slowly and clearly for the benefit of the translators.

Each witness has five minutes for their opening comments. When you're at five minutes or a little over, I will thank you, at which time I would ask you to wrap up as quickly as you can.

We have, appearing as an individual, David Binger, care advocate and graduate student, counselling psychology. From the United Association Canada, we have Michael Gordon, director of Canadian training.

We will begin with Mr. Binger for five minutes, please.

Mr. Binger, you have the floor.

**David Binger (Care Advocate and Graduate Student, Counselling Psychology, As an Individual):** Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is David Binger. I'm completing my Master of Arts in counselling psychology at Yorkville University. I grew up in Ontario's group home system. Much of my work focuses on how systemic failures in child welfare directly shape education, employment and mental health outcomes for people from care. Most of the evidence I'll reference today comes from Ontario as that's where I both grew up and conducted most of my research. Still, these patterns reflect structural issues seen across Canada.

In Ontario, research shows that the vast majority of youth leaving care, often cited to be as high as 90%, rely on social assistance within months of aging out. Those who do find work are typically in low-wage, insecure positions, reflecting barriers that begin long before adulthood. Over a lifetime, people from care earn roughly \$326,000 less than their peers, reflecting the cumulative impact of disrupted education, placement instability, unregulated and undertrained staff, neglect and unresolved trauma.

These outcomes are not the result of individual failure, but of systemic design. If we want to improve youth employment for people from care, we must address the structures that shape their beginnings.

My remarks today focus on four upstream areas that urgently need reform: the lack of professional regulation and oversight in care; the harmful effects of privatization and profit incentives; inadequate educational and post-care supports; and the absence of standardized national data to guide evidence-based policy.

On regulation and oversight, in Ontario, the people responsible for caring for vulnerable youth, including group home staff and children's aid society workers, are not required to be professionally regulated through any recognized college. Section 38 of Ontario's Child, Youth and Family Services Act requires that every CAS appoint a "local director with the prescribed qualifications [and] powers", but it does not require that director or anyone else in the organization to hold registration with a professional regulatory body such as the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

When a complaint is filed against a CAS, it must first go through the agency's own internal review, meaning the organization investigates itself. Only limited types of complaints can proceed to the Child and Family Services Review Board, which often refers matters back to the same CAS for resolution. This keeps accountability largely internal rather than independent, creating an inherent conflict of interest and eroding public trust.

Beyond regulation, there must also be greater emphasis on psychological and clinical expertise in group home management. Our administrative oversight has proven inadequate for youth whose needs are psychological, not procedural. Complex trauma cannot be managed just through case files; it requires regulated clinicians capable of guiding therapeutic intervention and stability planning. Group homes should be managed by clinical directors—professionals with counselling and psychology backgrounds who can guide

trauma-informed practice and ensure that interventions are evidence-based.

A parent outside the system would not rely solely on a caseworker to address a child's serious emotional distress. They would seek a clinician. Youth in care deserve that same level of professional guidance. Embedding clinical leadership within group homes would greatly improve outcomes and reduce the long-term social and economic costs of unaddressed trauma and systemic neglect.

Outcomes for people from care have always been horrendous, with low graduation rates, chronic poverty and overrepresentation in homelessness and incarceration. Privatization has made these outcomes worse. In 2024, Global News reported in the article "Indigenous kids allegedly called 'cash cows' of Ontario's child-welfare system", that private operators profit from per diem contracts rewarding occupancy over outcomes.

Peterborough Currents and the Ontario ombudsman have reported that unlicensed and privately run group homes are increasingly used despite evidence of poor outcomes and soaring costs, with some unlicensed homes charging up to \$60,000 per child per month, which demonstrates how privatization has failed to deliver either fiscal efficiency or safe, consistent care.

The UN guidelines for the alternative care of children, which interpret Canada's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, state that care must never be provided for religious, economic or political gain, yet Ontario's funding model still ties payments to head counts and per diem rates, undermining both these principles and Canada's international commitment to uphold them.

A 2021 analysis by Rampersaud and Mussell found that each annual Ontario cohort of roughly 500 youth aging out of care generates between \$394 million and \$1.05 billion in lifetime public costs, driven by lost earnings, reduced tax contributions and chronic, revolving reliance on social assistance, housing, health and justice services.

Education is the strongest predictor of stable employment and independence, yet Ontario's living and learning grant bases eligibility solely on a person from care's age at the start of the study period, cutting off support entirely for anyone from care who begins post-secondary education after 26. Research consistently shows that youth from care reach independence later due to trauma, disrupted education and delayed developmental readiness. Policies that impose rigid, arbitrary age cut-offs push them into post-secondary education before they're developmentally prepared and withdraw support before they've had a fair chance to succeed.

- (1210)

With roughly 500 youth aging out each year, Ontario alone has added roughly \$3.9 billion to \$10.5 billion in lifetime public costs over the last 10 years, and \$7.9 billion to \$21 billion over 20 years, purely from stacking cohorts. That's the scale of avoidable loss we could redirect into proven supports. Redirecting even a fraction toward wraparound education, housing, and mental health supports would increase overall outcomes and the labour market. Education isn't charity; it's infrastructure.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Binger.

For the benefit of the committee, are you the person who reached out to me about this study?

**David Binger:** Yes, I am.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Committee members, Mr. Binger reached out to me about the fact that the people who grow up under foster care are often overlooked and that the committee was not considering this. I discussed it with him at length and asked him if he would consider appearing before the committee to put this on the record and to get this perspective. He was a bit reluctant, but finally agreed. His testimony will be extremely important to this committee.

Thank you, Mr. Binger, for appearing. We will go to questions once we conclude with Mr. Gordon.

Mr. Gordon, you have five minutes.

- (1215)

**Michael Gordon (Director of Canadian Training, United Association Canada):** Good morning, Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Mike Gordon. I serve as national director for training for United Association Canada. That's piping professionals from across the country.

We represent more than 62,000 skilled trades professionals and apprentices across ten Red Seal trades, supported by 33 training centres nationwide. Our network delivers nationally recognized industry-driven apprenticeship programs that put Canadians to work in stable, high-demand and future-ready careers. We look to lead through example in an appropriate context. It's noteworthy that I hold several Red Seal qualifications.

For context, youth employment in Canada, as we know, has reached a 25-year low, while skilled trades shortages are at record highs. We have a fix here.

Budget 2025 and the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act outline major federal commitments to empower workers and create high-paying careers. Apprenticeship is a proven, evidence-based solution to connect youth to meaningful, well-paid and, most importantly, sustainable work. We have an immediate opportunity to align these commitments with practical apprenticeship investments that deliver measurable results.

I've broken my short presentation into key topics.

The first topic is promoting apprenticeship. Events such as those held by Skills Canada, where the United Association is a key presenting sponsor, show young Canadians exactly what's possible through hands-on, technical and team-based careers. These events align with the federal goal to empower workers and should be integrated into youth employment and sustainable job strategies nationwide.

The second topic is strengthening apprenticeship outcomes. We have a few things to look at. First, there is tracking the success of pre-entry programs. The single most important measure of success is how many preapprenticeship graduates progress to registered apprenticeship. Apprentices are assigned a registry number upon signing a contract. These numbers should be linked to any pre-entry participant so that we can accurately gauge program success. Government funding should align with programs that show evidence-based results, which means registered apprentices. This must be built into the Canadian apprenticeship strategy to evaluate federal investments and real career outcomes.

Second, the union training and innovation program, or UTIP, recognizes the broad capacity of union training centres to deliver our capacity at every stage, from pre-entry and apprenticeship training through journey person upskilling at the highest level. UTIP-funded training reaches Canadians in every region through facilities jointly funded by both labour and industry. We are accountable to our members by democratic process, not driven by profit, but by purpose, and expected to drive results. Expanding UTIP would help promote apprenticeship as a first-choice career path, not a fallback option.

The third topic is direct entry success stories. Across Canada, enhanced direct entry programs provide strong models of success. Candidates complete structured 12- to 20-week programs that are screened and aligned directly with employer sponsors. Candidates are immediately registered as apprentices, and their hours count towards completion. Federal expansion of direct entry initiatives under UTIP would accelerate results within months.

The fourth topic is microcredentials and the recognition of Red Seal trades. Microcredentials should complement, not compete with, apprenticeship. When a microcredential affects an existing Red Seal trade, participants should be registered apprentices or licensed journeypersons in that trade.

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**Michael Gordon:** I recommend the government embed...

Am I still allowed to talk here?

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Please wait a moment, Mr. Gordon.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor.

**Marilène Gill:** The interpreter mentioned that the text that is being read has not been provided to the interpretation services and that the interpretation conditions currently do not meet the standards. Therefore, interpretation is impossible.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. It's not mandatory to provide a written text.

If you could speak a little slower, Mr. Gordon, we'll continue.

**Michael Gordon:** Okay. I'm sorry about that.

Third, we've mentioned direct entry success stories.

Fourth, we recommend that the government embed the prerequisite that any participant in a microcredential training program that impacts an existing Red Seal trade should first be a registered apprentice or licensed journeyperson. If this is embedded as a prerequisite to funding opportunities, such as UTIP or the sustainable jobs plan or related funding initiatives, then it will maintain integrity and measurable outcomes.

When microcredentials are inappropriately utilized, they can displace qualified trades professionals and their graduates. They may lack direct apprenticeship pathways, and they often enter into the underground economy without licensing or insurance and can pose risks to workers and the public. The only true measure of pre-entry program success is that its graduates become registered apprentices.

To strengthen trade recognition, the government could fund a public-facing database verifying qualifications of Red Seal professionals, similar to Skilled Trades Ontario, which would bring transparency, accountability and public confidence.

Fifth, reinstate apprenticeship grants. With the apprenticeship completion grants having ended March 31, 2025, there's now a gap in simple, effective incentives. Reinstating modernized grants that

follow the apprentice would yield immediate results and support budget 2025's goal to grow the workforce and build high-paying careers.

Remove barriers and build inclusion. We must also address supports that help apprentices stay in the system and succeed, such as affordable child care, parental leave, wellness and mental health supports and culturally aware diversity training.

Women in trades programs work best when child care is successful and predictable. Canada's Building Trades Unions' construction trades hub is an excellent additional resource that is federally supported and helps potential apprentice candidates navigate various resources or potentially look for their career of choice in apprenticeship that they're seeking to align with online. This promotes an—

• (1220)

**The Chair:** Mr. Gordon, thank you. You can raise these points in answers to questions, but we've gone over a bit.

We'll begin the first round of questioning with Mr. Reynolds for six minutes.

**Colin Reynolds:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses.

My first question is for you, Mr. Gordon.

I'm a Red Seal electrician myself, and I'm actually the sitting VP of IBEW 2085, so I appreciate your being here today.

**Michael Gordon:** Thank you.

**Colin Reynolds:** Which trades are you seeing shortages in?

**Michael Gordon:** That varies in different parts of the country. I would suggest that trades that need the mobility of our workforce could be impacted, but we maintain... Maybe I should preface it with this. There's no shortage within our organization because of our joint apprenticeship committee, which aligns and gives us foresight of future industry needs based on job bids and forecasted projects in the public and private sectors so that our contractor and employer partners let us know their needs. We bring on apprentices accordingly, not just reactively but proactively. Therefore, we don't see the same shortages that are outside of our walls.

That being said, we've heard about shortages and surpluses in various facets of our trades outside of our walls. I'm just not equipped to speak on those because of our planning.

**Colin Reynolds:** Obviously, apprentice retention is an issue, which we also see in the electrical industry, as well as completion rates.

What do you think are the biggest barriers for an apprentice to finishing their program, finishing their apprenticeship and getting their Red Seal?

**Michael Gordon:** Those barriers would be getting the right information up front, knowing what they're actually getting into and being pointed toward accurate, good resources.

In my presentation, I mentioned pre-entry programs. Some of these things can be great programs, but when they're placed as a kind of cost of entry into apprenticeship, they get used almost as adult day care centres, for lack of a better term. They put people through because they don't have anything else to do. The people who start are kind of experimenting and they don't see their way through the apprenticeship.

The other thing I would mention is the wraparound supports. We have the highest completion rates in our industry for the pipe trades, exceeding 90% completion for anybody who starts an apprenticeship with us. That is by no mistake. The average rate of completion outside of our walls, which includes us actually, is in the 50th percentile. Including our numbers, that's very dismal. It speaks to the value of the wraparound supports that we have created and to the fact that we keep our promises.

Every person who enters our programs through a pre-entry program, as long as they make it to the end of the training—and it's no harm if they don't; maybe they figured out along the way that it's not for them—becomes a registered apprentice immediately, if not at the start of our programs. We have, again, an over 95% success rate of registration of apprentices for pre-entry. We have to keep our promises at every level.

I would be remiss not to mention the funding disparity at the jurisdictional level for attending a trade school. We have a backlog of people trying to attend trade schools in a timely fashion. We have public colleges that cancel classes on apprentices. When they take time off work and go on EI to be able to tell their employer that they'll look to return after they attend basic, intermediate, advanced, or whatever level of training they're in, and when the school shuts things down because it doesn't have the adequate numbers to be profitable or to cover its expenses, that's detrimental to the system. It's an irresponsibility. We have never done that in the UA. In fact, we offer to deliver that training for free.

• (1225)

**Colin Reynolds:** Do you see value in supporting apprenticeship mobility, essentially standardizing training from province to province and in allowing apprentices to be more mobile?

**Michael Gordon:** I would say there's not only a value but also a danger.

The value is that, currently, we know we have apprentices who will travel from province to province. If the apprenticeship levels of in-class training don't align in the order—and you may have the general content across the board covered—then I could complete two sessions of trade school and travel to another jurisdiction just to find out that the orders are so out of whack that I have to start

again. That is a setback for somebody looking to travel. It definitely would provide an advantage that we've been seeking to harmonize for years under the Red Seal, but we've had great success in just the overall frameworks of the recognition of the outcomes of all training.

I would suggest that when an apprentice is in their home province, they get to know the landscape a bit better. The danger comes when they travel, and they're inherently a little displaced. They don't have the same supports and the confidence going through the system that they have in their home province, so there's a bit of confusion. That's where, again for us, it's a bit different in that we have that collaboration from local to local across the country to be able to provide those wraparound supports and to ensure comfort and stability.

**Colin Reynolds:** Do you think if they were able to move from province to province and find work in a particular jurisdiction, the workflow may then slow down? Would they be able to work in another province to get their hours and then come home to go to school or to get more stable work by being more mobile?

**Michael Gordon:** That is ideally a great way to look at things.

The other part of this is, even in our own framework, when you're an apprentice, you're essentially not identified by the occupational health and safety act as a competent person. You're actually working toward competency. When you're navigating as an apprentice, you're seeking mentors, who are your journeypersons. Those relationships ensure your safety.

Travelling from province to province does present a bit of a danger, I would say, for apprentices, depending on what level they are. Again, in an ideal situation, yes, they could, if we were to have the right protections in place. I'd just say that one has to go hand in hand with the other to look after apprentices if they're going to travel.

When I'm speaking on it, I'm not looking at it just from a union context. If I'm looking at it from a non-union context, those wraparound supports aren't there. I'm just a bit more worried about those scenarios.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Gordon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you to both of you for joining us today to bring your testimonies.

Mr. Binger, first, thank you, really, for your testimony today, for your resilience through your experience, and also for continuing to bring those issues to light, making sure that those are part of the conversation. It's very important.

I work a lot on housing and homelessness. I think that the issues of youth aging out of the foster care system are some that we are definitely starting to focus on a lot more, and we'll be doing that in the coming months. I'd love to reach back to you after this, as well.

Can you talk a little bit about, in your experience, the partnership between the federal programs that are currently in place, like the youth employment and skills strategy, and those local organizations? How do those work together to ensure that youth, especially vulnerable youth, have continuous support as they enter the job market? How do you see that? Is there more that maybe not the federal government but maybe together we can do?

• (1230)

**David Binger:** I'm not aware of any federal supports. Child welfare tends to be provincially mandated. It's usually run by the province.

I don't see too many programs. We've done a lot of equity, diversity and inclusion policies, but people from care tend to be excluded from those.

This also goes into post-secondary education as well, where we're starting to bring out new resources and supports for different minority communities. However, again, people from care seem to be excluded. Even if we look at the post-secondary rates of people from care, we see that some reports estimate that about 0.8% of people from foster care will get a post-secondary degree, and it's about half of that, 0.4%, with regard to people from group homes.

I'll clarify, as well, that it's not just foster care that needs a focus. I think that group and residential care as well are significantly under-represented.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you for that.

Understanding that not all is, as you pointed out, federal jurisdiction, what would be some of the solutions? Understanding that that's a very wide question—there's probably a lot missing—what would be the one thing that you think could help bring additional support?

**David Binger:** I don't think there's just one answer to this. I think there's a plethora of issues that are contributing to the youth employment issue—for example, the lack of a regulatory body. We have dentists regulated for working on teeth, but we don't hold people who are working with vulnerable youth who have been abandoned by their families or are dealing with a lot of trauma or sexual abuse to the same accountability. Even with regard to human trafficking, some reports estimate that [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

**Caroline Desrochers:** I think we lost you.

**David Binger:** I think the lack of a regulatory body, the privatization system [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. I think it contributes to a system where a lot of the focus is on profit [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the outcomes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Binger, we're losing you from time to time. I know your testimony is going to be important to the committee.

**Caroline Desrochers:** I'll ask a question. I'll go to Mr. Gordon, and then maybe we can come back.

**The Chair:** We'll check with the technicians and come back to you, Mr. Binger.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Mr. Gordon, you talked about the issue of supply a little bit. There are areas in which there is a shortage, and there are areas in which there is an oversupply. There's a lack of supply, and there's oversupply.

I think you're very well positioned to tell us a little bit about this. I'm wondering whether you are starting to see an increase in the interest. With everything the government has been putting out with respect to the signal we've been sending and with respect to major infrastructure projects—Build Canada Homes and doubling the rate of construction—do you think that those are the right signals to send?

What else can we do to support organizations such as yours that work with apprentices to ensure that we have the work [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] for what we're needing in order to fulfill those pledges?

**Michael Gordon:** That's a great question.

I think it's to give the good information to the potential candidates. I mentioned in my presentation Skills Canada. That's where they have the competitions across the country. Those who advance beyond there go to WorldSkills.

This happens in every province and territory upwards from Skills Canada. It's a good place to showcase and a good place to make announcements where people are listening. I'm talking about the people who are listening being not just the competitors. They're quite busy competing at the time. They know they're being recognized. I'm talking about how we have busloads of potential apprentices come through these facilities. It is continuously outgrowing.... There are only a few provinces that can host this event, it's that large. Having that context and having the attendees, with guidance counsellors and whatnot, inside there....

I think we need the right messaging to get out there. I always go back to the same thing. We need to give appropriate expectations. These are skilled trades. That means we need math and sciences, and that these align at the academic level with successful outcomes.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Gordon. We're way over time.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Ms. Desrochers.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We couldn't hear Mr. Binger earlier. I was wondering whether the connection issue had been resolved. I had wanted to ask him some questions. I'm told yes. Great.

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before the committee today.

As I was saying, I have some questions for you, Mr. Binger.

The point has been made several times that the committee meets with young people, but perhaps not often enough. After all, this issue directly affects them.

We've talked about many extrinsic factors. These factors are outside the control of young people and may cause them to face barriers when looking for work. This is one reason for unemployment. That said, it would be worth learning about other factors that you believe contribute to youth unemployment. You referred to a number of reasons, including socio-economic factors. If you could elaborate on these factors, it would enhance our study. Yes, the economic situation is a factor. However, many other areas require attention to ensure that young people don't end up unemployed when they're able to work.

[*English*]

**David Binger:** Again, I think it's a multi-faceted approach. I think the lack of a regulatory body creates different standards of qualifications for staff. Even for people who are working in the group home system, without regulatory bodies, we aren't having standardized support.

I think the system itself isn't designed to produce better outcomes. Even the mandate of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, in my interpretation, is based more on protection rather than on mental health. I think one of the major—

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** Sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Binger. I would just like some clarification. You're talking specifically about child welfare services in Ontario, right?

[*English*]

**David Binger:** Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** As a young person, you also interact with other young people and you have your personal experience. You're talking about social conditions outside your control that may make things more challenging.

Aside from this, have you made any other observations? I think that you also spoke about training and greater difficulty in accessing certain training programs. Would you like to discuss any other issues? We're talking about the challenges encountered. However, what could be done to make it easier for young people to find work?

[*English*]

**David Binger:** I think national data would be better. We keep very minimal data going from different provinces to be able to see that one province is doing well and another province isn't. I think keeping proper data on education and graduation rates or employment and income outcomes would be extremely beneficial, and requiring provinces to submit this data to StatsCan or the federal government each year. It would give us a better idea of how we can tackle this.

I think a big issue as well is with the education and post-secondary supports. People from care rush into post-secondary education as a way to escape the life of care and step up the economic ladder, when a lot of the time we aren't ready. Then when we go in, sometimes there will be tuition waivers, for example, but lots of data supports that solely providing these waivers isn't adequate enough.

There's been some research coming out of the Atlantic provinces, specifically by Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan. She found that creating wraparound supports through mental health, housing, financial stability, and providing all of those supports to people through post-secondary education was also a significant factor. What I've found is the only thing that really closes the wage gap from people from care compared to non-people from care is getting at the very least a college degree. There's a report called "Half the time I felt like nobody loved me": The Costs of 'Aging Out' of State Guardianship in Ontario". It estimates that people from care are making about \$326,000 less than people not from care because they're primarily only going into minimum-wage or low-stability jobs, if they are even going into the employment market.

There are lots of nuances. There are homes for non-verbal autistic adults who most likely won't enter the job field. It's a very nuanced situation.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** Do I have any time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds left.

**Marilène Gill:** Okay.

Mr. Binger, you spoke about equal opportunities. Governments should ensure that everyone can benefit from equal opportunities at some point. I wouldn't call this some form of upgrade. I don't have the specific term for it.

Do you also believe that we need to reform employment insurance in order to give some young people the necessary resources to change their path after a job loss, when their income from working while studying doesn't cover all their needs?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Give a short answer, please.

**David Binger:** I think it would most certainly help, yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, and thank you, Madam Gill.

Mr. Genuis.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Chair.

I'll have questions for both witnesses, but related to a common theme: early start in career planning.

Something I've talked a lot about is that in an increasingly challenging economy, with various factors rooted in government policy leading to challenges for young people, early career planning is more essential than ever. It helps young people acquire skills earlier and get into the job market earlier.

Mr. Gordon, one of the things Conservatives have proposed as part of our last platform is direct federal support for vocational programs, particularly related to the trades, starting in high schools. Some people have said that actually even earlier is important.

What's your take on some of the current realities around that? What can we do more of to encourage earlier awareness of the trades and opportunities for people to try these things out in their teen years?

**Michael Gordon:** If this were the route that would happen, it could be valuable. I would stress safety at the forefront of all things to protect these youth, especially if you're looking at earlier ages than high school. In elementary school I participated—they used to have it back then—and I think it would be great to bring it back. However, there were dangers associated with it, certainly.

I would suggest this. The government could easily form a committee of professionals who have resources that could guide this process, give input to what those programs should be and what they should not be. This is so we're not empowering people to become victims of the underground economy, working for unscrupulous employers who would put them to work with minor skills and not a full trade qualification and competency within their purview.

That would be my recommendation.

**Garnett Genuis:** I think it's an interesting point that this earlier education can promote trades awareness, safety and learning about work in these areas but also acquaint people with some of the risks, such as the presence of unscrupulous practices that may exist in different places and how to be on guard against them.

**Michael Gordon:** Yes.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you for that.

Mr. Binger, thank you for your testimony today.

I wonder if you could share a bit about some of the particular issues and challenges and the things we can do around early career planning for young people who are in care. What can be done to help expose young people in those situations to mentors and career opportunities that maybe they aren't being exposed to right now?

• (1245)

**David Binger:** That goes back to privatization and the regulatory body requirement. A lot of our staff have very low experience. They are fresh out of social work programs. These are the people working with kids with complex, multiple diagnoses a lot of the time. We need better training for the staff, or at least standardized training to help orient these kids toward them. We could also take privatization out so we don't have people who are solely running these homes for a profit incentive rather than for the outcomes of youth.

I know that I'm kind of just dancing on the topic of youth employment, but a lot of these issues stem from numerous other systemic issues that have led to care being the last place where a kid

should grow up. There are constantly negative outcomes. I think we need to be able to increase their well-being and their outcomes while they're in care and before they even focus on getting into employment.

Another one of the major issues with it is, I believe, section 23. It will be classes in elementary school for youth with behavioural issues. A lot of kids from care go in there, and they're doing school work, but they won't get a high school diploma out of it.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you.

In the last seconds I have, Mr. Gordon, can you comment on the best place for young people who are doing early career planning to get information about what trades are in demand and what kinds of careers they could be pursuing? How would you advise a young person in terms of accessing that information?

**Michael Gordon:** That's a great question.

CBTU, Canada's Building Trades Unions, commissioned SkillPlan jointly funded with the federal government under UTIP to build a forum where they have guidance for introduction to all the trades that building trades represent and pathways, direct streamlines and some guidance. It even has live mentorship that you can tap into to get information directly from people participating as professionals in these trades.

**The Chair:** Thank you Mr. Genuis and Mr. Gordon.

Go ahead, Madam Koutrakis.

[*Translation*]

**Annie Koutrakis:** Mr. Joseph will speak next.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Joseph, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Gordon and Mr. Binger for joining us.

My first question is for Mr. Gordon.

We've heard about how young people face barriers to getting into trades. These barriers include automation, new technology, jobs replaced by machines and the years of experience expected from young people fresh out of school. Yet we know that no one can gain experience without working.

Can you share some specific examples where working with the federal government has helped provide young people with quality and paid apprenticeships and promoted fair access to skilled trades?

Actually, I think that I'll use my time to ask Mr. Binger my question right away.

Mr. Binger, how could a better collaboration involving the federal government and community organizations reinforce the connection between mental health and youth employment programs?

I'm asking you this question because my constituency, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, has many community organizations. A better collaboration involving the government and community organizations could make a real difference in the lives of many young people in my constituency.

[English]

**David Binger:** I think at least within group homes, require group homes to have a clinical director as the person deciding the best outcomes for youth. That's in group homes. I don't know as much about foster care. They're a little bit out of my area of expertise. I think implementing clinical directors in managerial positions within the group homes themselves, to help the staff through factual and evidence-based mental health supports, would be probably the best approach for better mental health outcomes for at least group homes.

• (1250)

**The Chair:** Mr. Gordon.

**Michael Gordon:** Were you looking for me to answer as well?

[Translation]

**Natilien Joseph:** Yes, please.

[English]

**Michael Gordon:** Thank you for your question.

You mentioned a lot of things that have to do with technology and displacing people from employment opportunities—especially young folks, but any folks—who are looking to begin an apprenticeship and move forward. The key here is that we keep our promises. I'll start with that.

Technology isn't something that has decimated jobs for us. We've actually embraced technology. It's created more opportunities. You know, there are so many use cases where we've just become more efficient in terms of work. Maybe there are fewer folks on each job site, but there are more job sites. That's because there's more investment. Things cost less to pursue in terms of public and private sector investments when you can do it with efficiencies and coordination through 3-D and 4-D scanning and renderings and utilizing things like that.

There's also being able to provide supports that weren't always available in the context we have now. You can have augmented and virtual reality and things like that to assist but not to replace person-to-person mentorship. I'll just say that it's actually providing [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. There's a disparity. You have the risk that the person who is not getting into a good-paying job and career is being told that they are a “helper”. There's no such thing as a helper when we're talking about the building trades. We're talking about an apprenticeship. If you're a helper, that means you're not getting any of your hours counted or tracked. You're under the radar.

An apprenticeship is a requirement in the trades that we represent [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Having people not registered and not tracking their hours, you're doing them a disservice. That's the problem that needs to be policed, and maybe better policed, with

enforcement when employers don't follow those practices. At the end of the day, it's a race to the bottom for different employers. If you're competing contractor to contractor, one person is using a bunch of helpers and one is actually guiding and mentoring people to become highly proficient in the trade they represent.

[Translation]

**Natilien Joseph:** I have another question for you, Mr. Gordon.

Do I have 30 seconds or one minute left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You actually have five seconds left, Mr. Joseph, so you might as well say that your time is up.

**Natilien Joseph:** Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The witnesses have already touched on a number of topics. I would simply like them to give their main recommendations to the committee.

[English]

**David Binger:** There should be a federal oversight board or some type of regulatory board that would oversee all provinces on at least how they're standardizing care. Obviously, there will be nuances between provinces, but I don't think geographical location should dictate the supports available for youth. Youth in care in Ontario should be able to get the same amount of supports, although a little bit different, obviously, depending on cultural and provincial location. I think having some type of standardized approach to care from the federal government would help regulate—

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** Could you focus your answer more on youth unemployment, please?

[English]

**David Binger:** This kind of relates to it. A lot of the people from care are having a lot of different issues. If we're not going to be able to focus on those, then we won't be able to get them into the job market.

• (1255)

**Michael Gordon:** Would you like a reply from me as well?

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** Yes. Absolutely.

[English]

**Michael Gordon:** Thank you.

I would suggest a few things as top of the mark. One would be UTIP. I'm glad to hear the announcement of reinforcing UTIP with \$75 million of injected funding to maintain it for what it's meant to be.

Public colleges already receive funding through various chains. There's never been funding at this scale of a similar nature for unions, which have really formed the true structure for trades training in Canada. Maintain it for what it is. Keep us at the forefront of UTIP, the union training and innovation program. Reinstate apprenticeship grants. We need this. It's been held across the board. All trades are asking for this. Track pre-apprentices who participate in pre-entry programs that are funded federally or provincially in the same way we track apprentices, so we can actually analyze outcomes and reward funding accordingly to those programs, or remove funding accordingly in the future.

Finally, regulate and align microcredentials with the trades. If it has an impact on an existing trade in state make it compulsory that there's a prerequisite that you are either a registered apprentice or a journeyperson, or you're displacing people from the trades.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

[*English*]

Ms. Falk has five minutes, and then we'll conclude with Ms. Koutrakis.

Madam Falk, you have five minutes.

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to thank both the witnesses for their testimony today.

Mr. Gordon, we heard earlier testimony in this study that only 30% of women who begin apprenticeship programs complete them compared to 45% of men and that overall completion rates remain low across all the trades. What are some of the main barriers that prevent young people from entering or completing the apprenticeship program? I want to note that you talked about wraparound supports. Do those affect the completion rate, and what are those looking like?

**Michael Gordon:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to that.

For wraparound supports, we have maternal and paternal. The UA is the first construction union in Canada to put forward maternal and paternal benefits for our members, which are paid out of the UA to look after our members when they're going through a pregnancy. We heard stories of women. Speaking specifically of why the completion rates were less in the past, there were women who were hiding their pregnancy because they were afraid of being laid off. What a horrible experience it would be to have to do that when you can, in other walks of life, take maternal leave. These things were essential. Child care is a massive one that we're trying to fight for and see implemented. There are opportunities to fix things. Again, the 30% and 45% markers you're giving do not reflect the UA. We're in the 90% or higher completion rate category for every trade we represent, women or men.

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

I will just make note that I said we got that stuff earlier. In no way am I saying that it is reflective of your organization.

**Michael Gordon:** I understand.

**Rosemarie Falk:** Another question I have for you, Mr. Gordon, is regarding economic factors. We know that our economy is declining. We're hearing that over and over again, especially within this study, which would tell me that if our economy is declining, our productivity is low and there's just less opportunity for jobs. We have economic factors such as high taxes, complex regulations and rising business costs. Would you say that this can affect job creation and hiring in the skilled trades?

**Michael Gordon:** Investment affects job creation, whether it's in the public sector or private sector. The massive influx of projected projects that are to take place in the coming future is really something we're happy to hear about. We just want to see it actually come to fruition and be done. When we have major infrastructure, other projects follow, private investment follows. It's about opportunities.

• (1300)

**Rosemarie Falk:** In my neck of the woods—I come from Saskatchewan where we border Alberta—and we have a lot of energy and agriculture. Those are our driving economic drivers within Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake.

We've seen private investment leave. Even on a national scale, we've seen this. We've seen for energy companies that the regulations and the red tape that have been placed by this Liberal government have actually chased investment down south. That would affect private investment, which ultimately... I mean, public investment is basically tax dollars. The government is taking that, whether it's through taxation and, on a provincial level, royalties, which they then are using to put into social services, whether that's our health care, our education or those wraparound supports that Mr. Binger was talking about and are needed to help people in different situations.

Would you not agree that private investment is better than having the public tax dollars invested in these projects?

**Michael Gordon:** We need to do both. One goes hand in hand with the other in various capacities. In the world we live in, in the piping trades, we navigate according to various sectors, from low-rise residential sector housing and single-family dwellings up to high-rise massive structures, commercial, institutional...all of the above. I can tell you that, right now, private sector funding for high-rise buildings in the Toronto region is having a major decline. Again, that's going to affect jobs as well.

On injecting funding through investment, be it the private or the public sector, if we're talking about the trades that we represent, our members can shift, because their scope of practice covers the various sectors. They can shift accordingly. It's actually good for them, because they get a broader range of the scope of their trade in terms of the experience, if you're an apprentice learning a trade.

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thanks, Mr. Gordon.

I guess my point is that if we keep taxing—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Falk. We're way over the time.

**Rosemarie Falk:** —the private sector and they leave, we don't have public funds to put into investment. That's all.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll conclude with Ms. Koutrakis.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Annie Koutrakis:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

All Canadians who are watching us today, including my constituents in Vimy and Laval in the beautiful province of Quebec will see the generational investments that will be covered in the budget later today. I think you will see that this government has listened and has heard and that there's going to be something in the budget for everyone.

Mr. Gordon, given that more than 130,000 youth placements were supported last year through federal programs, what lessons do you think we can draw from those outcomes to continue connecting young people with skilled, well-paid careers?

**Michael Gordon:** I think that we look at the projects that have the most success and try to emulate those. With the new injection of \$75 million into UTIP, there are a few things we can do. Even though we form the greatest amount of infrastructure for trades training, we still need to grow. We need bricks-and-mortar funding. Some of those dollars need to go to expanding our facilities so we can bring in more students faster.

Again, we're accountable if the class has five people or 50 people...well, we don't have classes that big, but five people or 20 people, regardless, the show will go on. Getting to the end of your apprenticeship, you need to attend trades school several times, and if those times are delayed because you can't get into a scheduled class, that's problematic. You can run out of time in your apprenticeship, having served in the field, but not having completed your in-class schooling.

That, and then maybe.... Yes, I would just say further investment in the proven successes, and we assure you that we'll be able to put people on jobs, but looking at the direct entry programs that I mentioned in my presentation would be an excellent example of how we have guaranteed apprenticeship registrations.

**Annie Koutrakis:** Thank you.

Mr. Binger, I also want to thank you for bringing your very important voice to this study. Looking ahead, what additional mechanisms or program improvements do you think would further help youth facing psychological or social barriers to work, building on the foundation of existing federal initiatives?

You spoke about a committee perhaps, but besides a committee, what other things should the federal government be working on? Who do you believe would be stakeholders or partners who could help the federal government achieve that?

• (1305)

**David Binger:** I'd go back to what I mentioned in my opening statement. Creating professional regulation and oversight in care, removing the privatization and profit incentives, and a federal approach to post-secondary supports would be extremely helpful. For a lot of the ones we have now, one school might do it and another might, and a lot of them are specifically doing waivers. The data supports that specifically giving a little financial incentive to go to post-secondary doesn't alleviate any of the issues that start pre-care, during care or post-care. Keeping better national data is one of the most important things. We have very limited national data on child welfare, and that limits any ability to look at one province and say they're doing well over there but not so good there.

I don't know many organizations I can speak of, but Dr. Jacqueline Gahagan from the Atlantic provinces has done a lot of research on increasing at least the post-secondary side. I think she would be fantastic. She spoke with the Senate about a lot of these matters as well.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Annie Koutrakis:** I'll say thank you very much to our witnesses for joining us today and for adding their voices, thoughts and comments.

This is the type of testimony we need to hear as policy-makers to work across all party lines to make sure we are putting in place the proper policies and supports that are needed for our youth to excel.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Koutrakis.

I want to thank you, Mr. Binger, for taking the time to articulate the challenges that you confronted and for making this committee aware of those. When we're doing our reports we must reflect all the demographics in society.

Again, thank you. I know you were a little hesitant when I spoke to you, but I trust it was a good experience and that you got some value from it.

I want to thank the committee members for questioning you in a way that allowed you to get on the record what you felt was very important.

That is not to underestimate you, Mr. Gordon. Thank you for your testimony to this committee as well.

Again, thank you, witnesses, for taking the time today to appear before the committee and give us your perspective on the challenges confronting young people entering the workforce. After all, that's what this study is for.

With that, the witnesses can go.

Committee members, I would like to confirm a change in the calendar for Thursday. It's been suggested to me that we will do drafting instructions in the first hour of Thursday's meeting. I have asked the analysts if we can prepare to make that change.

Is it the wish of the committee to alter the calendar to replace the first hour with the drafting instructions and to make the second hour the last panel on this youth employment project?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

With that, is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** The meeting is adjourned.

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