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Thursday, November 27, 2025

Chair: Robert Morrissey



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

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everyone.

[Translation]

I call this meeting to order.

[English]

Welcome to meeting number 18 of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Pursuant to the motion adopted on October 23, 2025, the committee is meeting on the impacts of the temporary foreign worker program on the labour market.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Today, everybody is appearing in the room, including the witnesses.

Before we begin, I would remind all of you to choose the official language you wish to participate in for today's meeting by selecting it on the device in front of you. Make sure you're on the channel that gives you the proper interpretation.

If there is an issue with the translation, please get my attention. We'll suspend while it is being corrected.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, I wanted to raise something with respect to the process on the witnesses for today.

I'm really looking forward to hearing from these folks. Every party has the ability to submit different witnesses. We did submit 39 witnesses as the Conservative Party, and none of them is here today. Again, I'm very interested in hearing from the witnesses we have at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way, but there were 13 witnesses submitted by Liberals and 39 by Conservatives; and it just so happens that none of the Conservative ones was booked today.

Therefore, I'd like to move that during its study of the temporary foreign worker program, the committee direct the chair, to be fair to all parties in his selection of witnesses, to consult with the vice-chairs before finalizing witness panels and to have five to six witness groups appear at each meeting.

I will submit that motion by email to the clerk in both official languages.

It should be arriving, Mr. Clerk, in your inbox now.

I'd like to now say a few words on that motion.

It's established practice that committees, in the process of examining important issues, should seek to ensure that all perspectives are heard in the course of its study on important issues. I'm certainly interested in hearing all perspectives. I'm interested in hearing the perspectives of witnesses invited by other parties. Sometimes witnesses invited by other parties end up agreeing with positions we've taken and vice versa.

However, in order to ensure there is a substantial, diverse and balanced conversation on the motions that come forward, the protocol is supposed to be that every party submits witnesses, and that the chair allocates those witnesses not based on his or her personal priorities, but on roughly the proportions of the parties. I know there are some variations here. There are some cases where a party may not submit enough witnesses to cover for its allocation. There may be cases where there are issues of availability if there's a smaller number of witnesses.

It's just hard to believe that there were issues of availability here. I'm just thinking back to the process. The deadline for submitting witnesses was, I believe, November 14, so it has been, I think, about two weeks since we submitted our witnesses.

If your office received names of 39 different witnesses on this study, all of whom should have been fairly easily reachable, and within two weeks you couldn't find even one of those 39 witnesses to include here, it raises some significant issues around the process.

I know, as well, that the Bloc submitted witnesses, and none of the witnesses submitted by the Bloc is here, either. We want to work collaboratively. We want to make sure this is a good study in which all perspectives are heard, but we don't want a situation in which the testimony is unbalanced.

Looking at the witness list, I think you can see pretty clearly that we Conservatives did our homework. We submitted witnesses, with fewer resources. The government has access to vast resources available to it to identify suggested witnesses. We have much fewer, relatively speaking, in terms of resources, and we submitted 39 witnesses compared to the government's 13—and we have two witness groups from the government.

This is not how I think we should proceed. I think we need to have committee hearings that are respectful of those standards.

With that, Chair, I'd like to move that we adjourn the meeting.

• (1535)

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: There's been a motion to adjourn the meeting. It's dilatory and it must go to a vote.

This is a recorded vote. If you vote in favour, the meeting will be adjourned.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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