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# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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Chair: Jean-Yves Duclos





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• (1200)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.)):**  
Hello, everyone. Thank you for being here today.

I officially call this meeting to order.

Welcome to the sixth meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on September 25, the committee is meeting for its study on the mandate and priorities of the Minister of Public Safety.

Welcome, Minister.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members of Parliament had the option of attending in person or remotely by using the Zoom application.

I would now like to welcome our important guests, of which there are many: the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety; Ms. Erin O'Gorman, president, Canada Border Services Agency; Mr. Daniel Rogers, chief, communications security establishment; Ms. Anne Kelly, commissioner, Correctional Service of Canada; Ms. Tricia Geddes, deputy minister, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; Ms. Joanne Blanchard, chairperson, Parole Board of Canada; and Mr. Michael Duheme, commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Welcome to all of you.

We will start with you, Minister. You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety):**  
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, committee members.

[*English*]

I want to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the unceded traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people.

Let me just acknowledge and thank the officials who are here today, who have been acknowledged by you, Mr. Chair. I also want to acknowledge Talal Dakalbab, senior assistant deputy minister at Public Safety. I want to thank all the members here for this invitation.

As the Minister of Public Safety, I am focused on ensuring the safety and security of our country and all Canadians. I've been clear

that enhancing our border security and tackling cross-border crime are among my top priorities. Yesterday, I introduced important legislation, Bill C-12, that will help tackle these two challenges.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

This is the latest step we have taken to strengthen and secure our border while facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and trade. This measure is essential to our economy.

[*English*]

Backed by an investment of \$1.3 billion, Canada's border plan delivers concrete actions to further strengthen border security, disrupt the illicit fentanyl trade, improve operational coordination, expand information sharing and minimize unnecessary border volumes.

We have enhanced security at the ports of entry and between them and increased surveillance via drones, towers, helicopters and other resources to allow 24-7 surveillance. Under our border plan, there has been a 99% reduction in illegal southbound movement from Canada to the U.S. since June 2024. This demonstrates real success in deterring illegal cross-border movement. Further, the CBSA has increased its removals of inadmissible people from Canada.

In 2024, CBSA also intercepted 2,277 stolen vehicles in rail yards and ports. Between January and the end of May this year, CBSA intercepted an additional 666 stolen vehicles. These are just some of the positive results from our national action plan on combatting auto theft. In 2025, auto thefts continue to decline nationally, with a 19% decrease reported in the first half of this year.

This progress comes through collaboration with our federal, provincial, territorial, indigenous and law enforcement partners, as well as police of jurisdiction. For example, the appointment of a fentanyl czar and the creation of a joint operational intelligence cell have resulted in better coordination on disrupting the fentanyl trade.

In September, I met with my Five Eyes counterparts in the United Kingdom to discuss pressing border and national security issues, and next month I will be welcoming our G7 partners to an interior ministers meeting in Ottawa to continue the conversation on these important themes. With the increasing sophistication and borderless nature of transnational organized crime, cybercrime, migrant smuggling and illegal synthetic drugs, the G7 meeting will provide Canada with an opportunity to showcase our efforts and signal the importance of multilateral co-operation.

[*Translation*]

Every person, regardless of their background, deserves to feel safe in Canada. However, we have all seen a troubling rise in hatred across the country.

[*English*]

This past summer, along with the senior deputy commissioner of the RCMP, Bryan Larkin, I met with community representatives from across Canada. They told me that they are concerned for their safety and that they expect tangible action from all levels of government and law enforcement. I want to highlight one success story: the Canada community security program. Since 2007, the Government of Canada has invested over \$40 million in more than 950 projects to help communities at risk of hate-motivated crimes further enhance the security of their gathering spaces, such as synagogues and mosques.

You cannot be serious about crime unless you're serious about guns. The assault-style firearms compensation program is another important piece of our government's comprehensive approach to combatting gun violence. It is working. So far, the business buy-back program has removed over 12,000 firearms from our communities, with over \$22 million in compensation. We're now implementing the program for individuals, beginning with a pilot project in Cape Breton that will later be expanded nationwide. This will help us get even more guns off our streets and protect Canadians.

**The Chair:** Minister, maybe you can come to a conclusion.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I will.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to the conversation today, and I want to thank you and your colleagues for this invitation.

**The Chair:** Thank you for having accepted this invitation.

We will now turn to questions and comments from the members of Parliament, starting with MP Caputo.

**Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for attending, Minister, with all of your colleagues.

Minister, 600 foreign nationals were set to be deported, and 70% of them committed violent crimes, including sexual assaults. Where are they?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** As you're aware, the Canada Border Services Agency is tasked with the removals of those who are deemed to be inadmissible—

• (1210)

**Frank Caputo:** Minister, I'm sorry, but we don't need a preamble. We just need an answer.

Where are the 600 people who were set to be deported?

Maybe I'll ask it this way: Do you know where they are, yes or no?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, if I may respond to this question in whole, as you're aware, the CBSA is tasked with the removals of those who are inadmissible to Canada. In this particular case, we have been ensuring that removals have been taking place at an unprecedented rate—

**Frank Caputo:** I asked about the 600 people, Minister. I didn't ask about removals at an unprecedented rate.

Do you know where they are, yes or no?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Well, there is a set of—

**Frank Caputo:** I'll take that as a "no", Minister. Let's move on.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Let's be clear, Mr. Caputo. There are a number of individuals who are in the process of being removed. For the 600 you talked about, there is a breakdown, and I'd like to invite Ms. O'Gorman to respond to this.

**Frank Caputo:** You are the minister. You are the expert. The Globe and Mail reported that 600 people are missing. You're the minister. You're expected to know this. The buck stops with you. We have six minutes. You don't know. Let's move on.

You promised 1,000 new border officers for the CBSA. How many have been hired?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Right now, as you're aware, we are in the process of ensuring that the 1,000 new CBSA officers will be trained appropriately—

**Frank Caputo:** Again, Minister, you're answering questions I'm not asking. I asked how many were hired. It's a simple number.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Caputo, I'm not here for your TikTok videos. I'm here—

**Frank Caputo:** And, Minister, I'm here—

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** —to answer questions.

**The Chair:** Minister, these conversations are important, but they need to be understandable, including through interpretation. I have some tolerance for bilateral interactions, which is fine. That can, in some cases, speed up and increase the efficiency of the conversation, but if it leads to people not being able to understand the flow of the conversation, I have to intervene.

**Frank Caputo:** I'll commence.

First of all, TikTok is banned in Canada. Second, I don't have an account. I'm here for Canadians. I'm here for answers. You can obfuscate. I will continue to press forward.

The RCMP didn't know how many of the 1,000 officers that were promised were hired. I'd like just a number. How many?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I'll invite the RCMP commissioner to answer this question.

**Frank Caputo:** No, I want to hear it from you, Minister. I want to hear it from you.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I'm not responsible for the hiring of the officers.

**Frank Caputo:** I beg your pardon? You are the minister—

**The Chair:** I am sorry. This is not useful, because it is obviously impossible for anyone listening to the interpretation to understand the flow of the conversation. Again, we want to have a dance, a speedy content-full conversation, but it has to be understandable. Please, let's make sure that this is happening.

**Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I'll be very clear. I am asking the minister these questions. The buck stops with him. I am not asking him to defer to anybody. If he doesn't know the answer, he should just say it. Just the other day, on the recording, he said, "don't ask me to explain the logic to you". He was perfectly capable of saying it then. He is capable of saying it now.

Minister, do you know the number of how many of the 1,000 promised RCMP officers were hired, yes or no?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, the RCMP are preparing to hire 1,000, including ensuring that training facilities at depot are equipped, because this will be solely for federal policing. The work at depot to ensure that the right modules and the right level of training are in place is currently being prepared. As soon as they are able to recruit, they will be hired and they will be on our streets.

**Frank Caputo:** That is a zero, I take it, then, because you wouldn't give us a number.

Minister, you said in leaked audio that the gun buyback wouldn't work. Do you stand by that?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** That is not what I said, Mr. Caputo.

**Frank Caputo:** You could have fooled me, Minister. You actually said, "don't ask me to explain the logic to you". You talked about how it's only been "three weeks on the job", and you said, "I'm not an expert on this, right? I'm not an expert." The tone of what you said was that this wouldn't work and that it was being done for politics.

Do you stand by that, yes or no?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** That is not correct.

**Frank Caputo:** Do you believe that the buyback will work?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The buyback is being implemented right now. There is a pilot right now in Cape Breton.

**Frank Caputo:** That is not what I asked.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, I think the fair way to do this is that I get adequate time to respond to questions posed.

If I may, the buyback program is currently being implemented. There is a pilot right now in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. By all accounts, the registration appears to be going well. We are ironing out any logistical issues that may arise. The program will be expanded across Canada—

• (1215)

**Frank Caputo:** That registration program, let's talk about that—

**Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I am sorry to disrupt, but I really want to hear the answer. Whether the answer is one you like or not, I want to learn, and I have the same right as any other members here and the people who are watching. I would appreciate it if you could leave the time.

Plus, I want to add, Mr. Chair, that TikTok is not banned in Canada. It's available on the App Store.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That is—

**Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I'm asking questions here. This is my time. This is Canadians' time.

**The Chair:** Your time—

**Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I will not be interrupted.

**The Chair:** Your time has stopped, Mr. Caputo, so what I am going to say is not going to reduce your time available.

I think the point is that we want the conversations to be, again, a dance, to be as forthcoming and as useful as they can be, but they cannot overlap. If I hear two people speak at the same time, it must be impossible for interpreters to do their job.

**Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, I will reclaim my time, Canadians' time, when the minister is going on and on. I understand the Liberals want to protect the Liberal minister. I am not here for that. I am here for answers. Let's keep going here.

You spoke about Cape Breton Island. There is a chief who is the brother-in-law to a Liberal MP on Cape Breton Island. Did you speak with that chief in respect of this buyback? Just give a yes or a no, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, as you know, the Mass Casualty Commission report—

**Frank Caputo:** That's not what I asked, Minister.

I asked whether you spoke with the chief.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, I would like the opportunity to respond.

The Mass Casualty Commission report indicated that governments need to do everything in their power to ensure that assault-style—

**Frank Caputo:** I asked whether you spoke—

**The Chair:** Mr. Caputo, I'm sorry—

**Frank Caputo:** Mr. Chair, he doesn't get to talk out the clock. He has to answer.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry—

**Frank Caputo:** I asked whether he spoke with the chief, Chair. That's it. He doesn't get to talk about turkey basters or whatever we're going to talk about here. He has to speak about the questions he's given, and I won't stand for this, as somebody representing Canadians, to let him talk out the clock.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chair—

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Ehsassi.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** I would like to remind Mr. Caputo that around this table we all represent Canadians, and it's important for us to actually have an opportunity to hear from the minister. This session is not just for theatrics. All of us here want to listen to the minister to have a better appreciation of what is being done.

I'd appreciate it if Mr. Caputo would kindly provide the minister the necessary time to provide comprehensive responses.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You have another 10 seconds, Mr. Caputo.

**Frank Caputo:** Did you speak with that chief, yes or no?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Chair, the Mass Casualty Commission report in Nova Scotia indicated that governments need to do everything in their power to get assault-style firearms off the streets—

**Frank Caputo:** You spoke with a Liberal insider and didn't tell us.

**The Chair:** That's it. Thank you so much. There will be other rounds.

Let me turn to MP Ehsassi for six minutes.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, given that you were interrupted repeatedly, Minister, is there anything else you would like to add to what you previously stated?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi, for that question.

Let me start by talking about the 600 individuals in question who are the subject of removals. The CBSA removed more people last year than it did many years ago, as a whole. Over 20,000 people are

in the inventory to be removed this year. Over 18,000 were removed last year. So far this year, we have removed more than 500 people with serious inadmissibility or criminality. The CBSA prioritizes those who have served sentences for the most violent offences. Of the 600 people who were cited, the CBSA has since closed 41 of those specific warrants.

Furthermore, 61 of those 600 continue to serve sentences for convictions that are the subject of the removal. Of those, 48% have been charged with minor, non-violent offences. That is 48% of the 600, so about half of them have been charged with minor, non-violent offences. These include mischief and failing to comply with conditions. These people do not pose a danger to Canadians.

To be clear, the CBSA is looking for them. It has warrants for them, and we will continue to enforce them.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Thank you very much, Minister.

Judging by the legislation that is coming before the House, you are certainly keeping very busy. Thank you for that, and thank you to your officials.

You noted in your opening remarks that we have experienced a 99% reduction in goods—I believe it was fentanyl—going from our border to the States. That's a very significant number. It's one I had not heard previously.

I was wondering if you could kindly elaborate on that.

● (1220)

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I believe I was speaking about the irregular movement of people south of the border.

Let me take a moment, though, to talk about fentanyl. As you're aware, the assertions previously made by the President of the United States related to fentanyl are not consistent with the impacts we've seen.

First and foremost, we know that fentanyl impacts all Canadians. Every single community in Canada is impacted by it. I've personally been impacted by it through someone I knew for many years who has passed away. The scourge of fentanyl is impacting North America as a whole, so the assertions made by the President about fentanyl going to the United States via Canada are categorically incorrect. Notwithstanding that, we've made some incredible and, I would say, once-in-a-lifetime investments in border security, including \$1.3 billion toward Black Hawk helicopters, drones and towers that will ensure that measures curtail the flow of fentanyl from both directions so that it is contained.

Bill C-12, which we introduced yesterday, will give additional tools to law enforcement to attack fentanyl from all directions, including from overseas, as well as the precursors. As well, the 1,000 new RCMP officers and CBSA officers will ensure that our 10,000-plus personnel at the border is strengthened even further.

I want to note that a couple of days ago, the President said about fentanyl, “No, it's not over, I think it's never going to be over frankly, but Canada's worked hard and they've done a much better job than in the past.” It's a reflection, I think, of where the sentiment is. It may not be accurate, because we do not believe that fentanyl has been going from Canada.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** That's great progress.

If I can, I'll also ask you about car theft. I understand that the numbers are down approximately 30% over the course of the last year. I come from a riding where this has been quite a challenge. I have heard from experts that as we see greater co-operation between various provincial jurisdictions and the federal government, these numbers will improve.

Could you comment on that as well, to assure people in cities such as Toronto that car theft will hopefully go down drastically?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Look, as you'll recall, we had a summit last year on combatting car thefts. I cited a number of examples of CBSA intercepting items that are leaving Canada, including vehicles—some 2,000 vehicles last year, and over 600 in the first quarter or so of this year. It does indicate a downward trend. Overall, in Canada, the drop in car thefts is about 19%. In specific regions, including Toronto, it's much higher.

We are seeing that the level of co-operation we have with local police jurisdictions—including Chief Demkiw, who's our mutual chief for the City of Toronto—and their leadership is actually working, and we will continue to do more. Bill C-12 is another example of where that can be very helpful.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but that's all the time we have for that particular round.

Let me turn to Madame DeBellefeuille.

[*Translation*]

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

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Minister, I have a reputation for being quite friendly, but I'm also impatient. I'm going to ask you a few questions, and I would really appreciate concise answers, if you can give them to me. I'll speak slowly to help the interpreter.

As you know, our border is still quite porous; there aren't enough RCMP officers. According to several reports, we also don't have enough CBSA officers at the border itself, so we're looking for solutions. You said people would be hired, but everyone knows the hiring process takes a long time and that it will be a long wait before new officers are ready to work.

I wonder why you're reluctant to allow CBSA officers to patrol between official ports of entry. It's easy for you to do, you just have to change the regulations. This week, during his testimony, the Customs and Immigration Union's national president said that officers cannot intervene if they see a migrant crossing, they have to call the RCMP. However, it can sometimes take four to six hours for the RCMP to respond in rural areas. We know full well that illegal immigrants do not cross the border in Toronto; they cross in rural areas, under the cover of forests.

Why are you reluctant to allow CBSA officers to patrol the borders and intercept migrants while waiting for the RCMP to arrive?

• (1225)

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you for your question, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

It's an important question.

[*English*]

Let me just say at the outset that the functions of the RCMP and the CBSA are distinct. They have different sets of responsibilities—

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Minister, I'm going to interrupt you to ask you to clarify your answer.

We know that the RCMP has one mandate and CBSA has another. We know that the two groups collaborate. However, you have the ability, through regulations, to authorize CBSA officers to patrol the borders to better collaborate with the RCMP. You have the power to change that.

Why are you reluctant to do so?

[*English*]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Let me just say that the functions of both institutions are very different. The RCMP has a very particular function for federal policing. CBSA is at the border—

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Excuse me, but I already know what you're trying to explain to me. If we want to improve and optimize procedures, things need to change, and I'm telling you that it's possible. There would be better co-operation if CBSA officers had the authority to detain people while waiting for the RCMP to arrive. When there are limited human resources, procedures need to be optimized. You have the authority to do so through regulations. It's easy.

What I understand is that you're opposed to the idea of granting CBSA officers new powers.

You said that CBSA would hire 1,000 more officers over three years, which is about 330 more than you are currently training.

I'm going to ask you a very simple question.

Will the 1,000 officers CBSA is hiring undergo the 18 weeks of training similar to that offered in Rigaud? This includes weapons training, allowing officers to intervene directly at the borders.

Can you tell me today that, within three years, all 1,000 officers will have received this training?

I would ask you to answer me honestly and sincerely.

[English]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The simple answer is yes, but I will ask Ms. O’Gorman to elaborate.

[Translation]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Excuse me, Ms. O’Gorman, but we’ll have a chance to chat at another meeting.

Minister, I just want to say that it’s mathematically impossible for you to hire 330 more officers per year in addition to the 572 officers you train in Rigaud because you lack the infrastructure and instructors.

I’ll tell you what I think, Minister. CBSA will give you your officers, but they won’t have the required 18 weeks of training. They won’t be able to work at the border itself. It’s impossible. Unless you tell me today that you’re going to open another training centre in Chilliwack that will allow you to provide the full 18 weeks of training.

Am I understanding correctly, Minister?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I can categorically tell you that when we hire the 1,000 new CBSA officers, they will be trained. They will be trained with the 18-week requirements, if not more. They absolutely will be ready to do the job on day one.

With respect to—

• (1230)

[Translation]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** That’s good. You’ve answered my question.

**The Chair:** Mrs. DeBellefeuille, if we speak at the same time as the minister, the interpreters can’t do their job, whether they’re working from French to English or from English to French.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** You’re right, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I would encourage everyone to ensure that we understand each other not only in one language, but also in the other.

You have 40 seconds left, Mrs. DeBellefeuille.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Minister, I am pleased that you have confirmed that all officers hired will receive 18 weeks of training, including weapons training, and that they will be able to intervene directly at the borders.

That said, can you explain to me how you’re going to train them, seeing as the infrastructure does not exist?

Will the Chilliwack project go ahead?

Did you receive the \$20 million requested to open another training centre?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I would say that neither you nor I are experts with respect to training. That’s why we have the president here. I would like to invite her to elaborate on the plan that she has, including which facilities to use.

I think if you want to hear a more wholesome answer—

[Translation]

**The Chair:** You’ll have to wait until the next round of questions to finish your answer because we must now give the floor to Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Lloyd, you have five minutes.

[English]

**Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC):** Thank you.

Minister, I appreciate you talking about the rise in hate in Canada and the meetings that you said you’ve had with synagogues and mosque communities.

Are you aware that 123 churches have been burned, vandalized or desecrated in the last four years in Canada?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Lloyd, yes, I am aware that a number of places of worship, including churches, have been vandalized.

**Dane Lloyd:** Have you met with any of those congregations, Minister?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I have not met with those specific congregations, but I have met with many members of different church and faith groups.

**Dane Lloyd:** You haven’t met with any of the members of the congregations in Canada from the churches that have been subject to hate crimes over the last four years in this country.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I have not.

**Dane Lloyd:** Is it because hate crimes against Christians aren’t a priority for this government, Minister?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** That’s absolutely incorrect.

**Dane Lloyd:** You said you’ve met with synagogues and mosques, which I do appreciate—those communities need your support, Minister—but Christian communities also need your support.

Why have you not met with any of those communities, Minister?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I can tell you that I meet with faith leaders. I meet with Christian leaders across Canada all the time. I’ve met with—

**Dane Lloyd:** Thank you. I’m going to move on to the next question.

There have been allegations made that an Antifa member threw smoke bombs into a church service in Montreal this past summer. The allegations are that they are a government employee who works on a military base outside of Montreal.

Are you aware of these allegations, and are they being investigated?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Allegations such as those are investigated by the police of jurisdiction. In this case, it would be the City of Montreal police.

**Dane Lloyd:** Considering that this a potential terrorism case, does this concern you? Are you at all concerned about, potentially, a government employee being a member of an organization like Antifa and committing a crime like throwing smoke bombs in a church service?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I'm concerned about every instance of hate at any place, including churches. Certainly, if the allegation involves government employees, that makes me more concerned.

**Dane Lloyd:** Thank you.

Minister, prominent members of your caucus have called for the banning of the SKS. These are hunting rifles that are used by indigenous people and many others.

Can you confirm to this committee—yes or no—whether your government is planning on banning the SKS?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** No. What I can say is that the expert panel is tasked with coming up with recommendations—

**Dane Lloyd:** To clarify, are you saying “no, we can't confirm” or “no, we are not banning the SKS”?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** No, we are not.

**Dane Lloyd:** Okay.

Minister, only one-third of the \$750 million you're planning on spending on this gun confiscation is for compensating firearms owners. This number is estimated to be well short of the amount that's needed. If you continue on and compensate all these firearms owners, it's going to be well over \$1 billion. How can you justify that expense when we've been told by the Customs and Immigration Union that we have only 300 CBSA officers who are at the border removing potentially violent criminals from Canada? How can you justify that expense?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I think that number is incorrect with respect to CBSA. I can ask Ms. O'Gorman, if you wish, to clarify that.

**Dane Lloyd:** I'll move on to the next question. Thank you, Minister.

Ms. O'Gorman, if you could provide that in writing to this committee at a later time, I'd really appreciate that. Thank you.

Trappers, foresters, biologists and other wilderness workers require protection from dangerous animals, such as cougars and bears. Minister, do you believe these individuals should be able to carry handguns for their personal protection?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** They should be able to carry the right type of equipment to do their job that is in line with Canadian law.

**Dane Lloyd:** These professionals have to carry a lot of equipment into the wilderness. They can't just carry a rifle; it can be very heavy with all of their other equipment. A sidearm is necessary for their safety. Do you support their right to have one?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I support their right to be equipped with the right types of tools they need to do their jobs effectively and safely in line with Canadian law.

• (1235)

**Dane Lloyd:** Does that include a handgun when necessary?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I will repeat what I said, Mr. Lloyd.

**Dane Lloyd:** Are you aware of what an authorization to carry is, Minister?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Yes, I am.

**Dane Lloyd:** Are you aware of what it takes to get an authorization to carry in Canada?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Yes, I am.

**Dane Lloyd:** What is required to get an authorization to carry?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** What will be required is a course that will ensure they're properly trained in carrying the said type of firearm—

**Dane Lloyd:** Yes, it's a proof of proficiency test. I'm pleased that you understand that, Minister.

Minister, since your government brought in the handgun freeze, it's now become impossible for anyone to transfer or purchase a handgun. How do you expect people to pass a proficiency test if they can never get access to a handgun?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Well, listen, as you're aware, this legislation was brought in as part of Bill C-21 and previously through a number of orders in council. To date, we believe that the program is working well, but there—

**Dane Lloyd:** These members cannot get their proficiency tests because of Bill C-21. You're asking these people to go on their traplines, to go into the forest without the proper equipment they need. Do you commit to fixing this, Minister? You're putting these people's lives at risk. They can't access handguns because your government, in a reckless ideological decision, completely banned the transfer of handguns so that people cannot get their authorization to carry or do their proficiency test. What are you going to do to fix this, Minister?

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, time is up. There might be an opportunity to engage the minister further on the topic.

I will turn to MP Acan, who has five minutes.

**Sima Acan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister. Thank you for being with us today.

During the summer, I had multiple opportunities to consult with local law enforcement, the heroes of the Halton Regional Police Service. As an aside, they are looking forward to welcoming you in my riding of Oakville West soon. I consulted with them on legislation being tabled by our government, specifically Bill C-2.

Minister, can you elaborate on the support this bill has received from law enforcement agencies across Canada and how it strengthens their ability to combat organized crime and secure our borders?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you, MP Acan, for that very important question.

Let me just acknowledge that I believe there are members of Halton Regional Police Service here today. I had a chance to meet some of them a couple of weeks ago at the police memorial in Ottawa, and I look forward to seeing them very shortly. The Halton Regional Police Service plays a very important role in ensuring the safety and security of Canadians.

I have heard from police chiefs, as well as associations representing police unions and police chiefs, including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, on the need to have enhanced tools to combat crime. The major tool for them is what's called lawful access. Lawful access is a regime that enables law enforcement to access specific types of information for cause and with different levels of judicial scrutiny to be able to combat crime, particularly around the use of the Internet, cellphones and other electronic devices. Canada is the only Five Eyes country that does not have a lawful access regime, and Bill C-2 tries to address that—imperfectly, I would admit.

I have had some conversations, since the introduction of Bill C-12 yesterday, with a number of police chiefs, as well as union heads, who are deeply disappointed that Bill C-12 does not have those measures in place. My undertaking and my commitment to them, as I said yesterday at the press conference, is that we will work with law enforcement and with all parties to ensure that a lawful access regime in line with charter principles is passed by this House. That's a commitment I still make today.

**Sima Acan:** Thank you very much, Minister.

You pretty much answered my next question, but I'll ask for a little more detail. Frontline officers are often the first to respond to crime and community safety concerns. Could you please speak about how insights and experiences that have been collected through consultations, including the ones that our respective offices have been working together on, are being incorporated into decision-making processes, particularly in the development of legislation—Bill C-2 and, as you mentioned now, Bill C-12—for broader public safety strategies? Also, can you elaborate on the current situation with Bill C-2 and Bill C-12?

• (1245)

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Bill C-12 was introduced. It has every element that's in Bill C-2, save and except for lawful access, issues around postal delivery and searches, and money laundering of \$10,000. Except for those three elements, Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 are very similar legislation with identical provisions.

We were informed by a lot of stakeholder engagement, including from law enforcement, in developing Bill C-2 and, subsequently,

Bill C-12. We also spoke to a number of civil liberties groups, academics, experts in their fields and the legal community, and we feel that Bill C-12 better represents a consensus within Parliament right now, with the expectation that we can move that along at a faster pace than Bill C-2.

Having said that, the three elements that are left out of Bill C-12 will continue to be in Bill C-2. We are hopeful that, with the right types of amendments and proposals, we'll be able to advance that at a later date.

**Sima Acan:** Thank you very much, Minister.

In my community of Oakville West—

**The Chair:** Madame Acan, I'm sorry, but I have to interrupt you again.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, you have two and a half minutes.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, will you ban the purchase and sale of SKS semi-automatic rifles?

[*English*]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The determination about the SKS is with an expert committee, an expert panel—that is, with law enforcement—and it is up to law enforcement to make their recommendation. At this point, there is no recommendation about this.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Excuse me, Minister, but my question was pretty simple.

Will you ban the purchase and sale of SKS semi-automatic rifles? People are calling for it, including a member of your party who is also a secretary of state.

I just want an answer to this question, and I think it's you who should answer it, not the RCMP commissioner.

[*English*]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** It will be informed by recommendations from the expert panel.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Thank you very much.

I would now like to talk about the battle against foreign interference.

Bill C-70 was adopted a year ago. However, the office of the national counter-foreign interference coordinator has still not been established. No commissioner has been appointed, and there is still no foreign agent registry.

How can you explain this bureaucratic or administrative delay?

As you know, just because a law has been passed does not mean that foreign interference has stopped. When will a commissioner be appointed, when will the office be established and when will there be a registry?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you for the question. It's a very important question. Let me say yes to all three of those questions that you posed. Yes, there will be a commissioner. Yes, there will be resources. The office will be up and running—

[Translation]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Minister, the law requires you to. I'm asking when it will happen.

[English]

When?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Well, your first question was “if”, so I will get to “when”.

With respect to the commissioner, I was expecting to have names available to the official parties—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, I will have to stop this conversation and turn to MP Kirkland for five minutes.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I will be respectful, but I will ask, Minister, that you be as succinct as possible, because I have a lot that I have to get through and a lot that I want Canadians to hear from you about.

I just want to pick up on the last question, because there seems to be a bit of a contradiction. You mentioned to my colleague that you would not ban the SKS. However, it's still under review whether you would ban the purchase and sale of the SKS. Can you please clarify?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Sure. At this point, there is no plan to ban the SKS. However, there is an expert panel, as you're aware, as part of Bill C-21. If they do recommend movement on it, then we will make—

**Rhonda Kirkland:** So this isn't a permanent promise. This is just a “for now” promise, that we're not banning the SKS for now.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The commitment I've made is that.... There are 2,500 prohibited firearms, as part of the three sets of orders in council, that are the subject of the buyback program. Those will continue to be implemented—

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Okay. I'm going to move on. I just wanted to clarify that, and now I'm going to move on because I want to touch on a few things that have already been said.

Six hundred foreign nationals have committed violent crimes in Canada, and they're missing. You could not say where they are. Do you know where one of them is?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Yes. I can tell you there are 61 of them who are currently serving time.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I'm talking about the 600. We don't know where they are. They're lost. Of the 600 who are lost—we don't know where they are—do we have a clue on one, two, three or 10? What's the number, out of those 600? Do we know where they are now?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Madame Kirkland, 61 of them are in detention, serving time right now; 41 of them, their warrants have been closed; 48% of the 600 have not committed a violent offence, so their offences were mischief, failing to comply and so on.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** We're still looking for them. Okay.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** We're still trying to locate them, yes.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Safety is of utmost priority. You are the public safety minister. It is your job to keep the public safe. Would that be correct?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I've indicated from the outset that it is my responsibility, yes.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Yes, that's correct. Perfect.

You've mentioned several times that Canadians are lining up to sell their guns back to the government in the gun confiscation plan. Police associations, experts and even you have admitted that this program won't work.

You said in your testimony that 12,000 firearms have been removed from the streets, and we're talking about guns that kill people. Of those 12,000—you said they are law-abiding citizens because they've given them back—how many criminals have come forward to sell their guns back? Just give us a number.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Let me just clarify that. The 12,000 that have been returned are part of the business buyback program, so these are business owners, which is part of phase one of the program.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Okay, thank you. That answer the question.

Are there any criminals who have lined up to hand you their guns back?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** We don't typically do criminal background checks on the returns.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I see. Do you really believe that any criminal will hand over an illegally obtained gun that was used in a crime or that is being planned to be used to hurt people?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The compensation—

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Do you believe it? It's just a simple yes or no.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:**—program is meant to ensure that over 180,000 prohibited firearms, which include AR-15s, are removed from our streets—

**Rhonda Kirkland:** I'm sorry, but I have to interrupt, sir.

Sir, you're not answering the question.

**The Chair:** MP Kirkland, I have to interrupt, too.

Up to now, it was going quite smoothly. The interpretation was possible, but now I'm finding that we are entering a world in which it might become impossible for some to understand the flow of the conversation, so please, let's revert to a smooth, reasonable and useful flow of conversation.

Your time has stopped, and you have one more minute.

**Rhonda Kirkland:** For my last minute and 11 seconds, I would like to move on to public safety.

Right now, people don't feel safe. More than 51% of Canadians, as reported in a National Post article, do not feel safe in their communities anymore. The Durham Regional Police Service and the Niagara Regional Police Service are now asking us to have a 9 p.m. routine, to shut down our lives and to lock our doors.

Is this really the Canada you envisioned when you became the public safety minister?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** The issues around public safety are critically important to Canadians. It impacts all of our families—

**Rhonda Kirkland:** Are they important to you?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** If you will, please let me answer the question, Ms. Kirkland. You posed a question, so please give me the courtesy to answer it properly.

The issues of public safety are critically important. Every single one of us in this room, every single one of us who ran for office and was elected here, has a responsibility toward ensuring the safety and security of all Canadians. That's what we're doing here. We may have different perspectives on how to approach this, but I can assure you that, as a minister, from day one, I have been working to ensure the safety and security of Canadians, whether it's at the border, or whether it's making sure that—

• (1250)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Minister, but we'll have to stop here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dandurand, you have the floor.

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here, Minister.

[*English*]

I think it's really unfortunate that some Conservative members prefer filming content for social media instead of listening to the

very comprehensive answers you are giving, including on those 600 people. Thank you for your very comprehensive answer.

I'm going to give you another chance, Minister—as well as Madame O'Gorman—to talk about expanding the powers of the CBSA in training. I'm curious to hear the answer about those topics.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you.

Maybe I'll invite President O'Gorman to speak, and then I'll follow up.

**Erin O'Gorman (President, Canada Border Services Agency):** Thank you.

CBSA will carry out whatever mandate is given to them.

On the notion of CBSA officers seeing people sneak into the country and not being able to get them, I'm not sure that's happening on a regular basis. It was raised here that it's happening in rural areas. Those aren't necessarily near ports of entry. Certainly, the constraints of apprehending somebody who is close by are not quite as rigid as is maybe being communicated.

Our border officers at our ports of entry are quite busy. If the mandate were to expand, we need them to also continue. It would be a resourcing issue that we would have to deal with, as well as training. Our officers are extremely well trained. They're armed. They understand the law. However, patrolling between the ports of entry and applying different laws would require more training of some kind.

I'll just say, finally, that the responsiveness of the RCMP—police of jurisdiction in particular, and specifically the RCMP—is extremely high. It was mentioned that it takes hours to respond if somebody is seen crossing between ports of entry. That hasn't been my experience. Those are not the briefings that my colleague and I get as we talk regularly about flows of people north and south, regularly and irregularly. Every day it's less so, but over the past several years, we have had RCMP officers and other police of jurisdiction bring people they have apprehended to CBSA ports of entry, and we process them from there. To the extent that we see that happening regularly, I would say that the system is working.

**Marianne Dandurand:** Thank you very much. It's very clear.

You're talking about rural areas. I live in a rural area. I live close to the border as well, as Stanstead is in my riding. I'd be curious to hear a bit more about how we can help with immigration.

You were talking about forests. What do we have in place to prevent illegal immigrants from coming through forests and things like that? What are we doing about that?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Maybe I'll ask the commissioner of the RCMP to offer some commentary on that.

**Michael Duheme (Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Thank you, Minister.

As stated in the opening remarks, there was \$1.3 billion given for border enforcement, of which the RCMP received \$666 million, which we're heavily investing into aerial surveillance and other technology that we can deploy across the border. We really want to focus our whole approach on technology and have these rapid response teams that can respond.

To your specific question, when we're talking about public safety, it's a whole community approach. If people in the community see something, they should be reporting it to the police of jurisdiction so they can respond. I think it's unrealistic to think that you can have a physical body on every hundred feet of the border to intercept everything, so we're relying a lot on technology. We're encouraging people, if they see something, to report it to the local police.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** As part of the border plan, I was able to join the commissioner and go to the border via Black Hawk helicopter. Between President O'Gorman and the commissioner, we went to a number of border crossings across Ontario, B.C. and Quebec. I can assure you that, at the border crossings themselves but also outside of there, the enforcement is quite strong. It's very integrated and very much working in collaboration with U.S. border patrol and their agencies as well. I'm quite impressed and thankful to the women and men who are on the front lines making sure that Canada is secure and safe.

• (1255)

[Translation]

**Marianne Dandurand:** Thank you very much.

I would like to go back to the issue of firearms.

We of course need to reduce gun violence, and many measures are being taken to this end.

Many hunters in my riding are concerned. They are afraid of losing access to their weapons for hunting.

Can you tell us how many hunting weapons remain and to what extent hunters continue to have access to weapons for hunting?

**The Chair:** That's a very good question.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to hear the answer. Perhaps we can be provided with the answer in writing later.

Apologies.

I now give the floor to Mr. Caputo. You have five minutes.

[English]

**Frank Caputo:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to ask the minister short questions. These don't require elaboration. If you don't know, please just tell us. Please don't ask the officials.

Since the Liberal government took power, how much is violent crime up, sir?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I can assure the member that crime overall is generally on the downward trend across Canada.

**Frank Caputo:** I'll help you. It's 55%.

Again, just give a number. How much are homicides up since the Liberal government took power?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** In the city of Toronto, it's down 51% from this time last year.

**Frank Caputo:** That's not what I asked, sir. I asked how much homicides are up. It's 29% since your government took power.

What about sexual assaults? How much are they up since your government took power? Just give a number, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Caputo, this is not a test. Let me just suggest that overall, the general trend of crime has been going down. Having said that, I think there's a lot of work that we need to do. There are areas of concern. As a government, we're bringing forward legislation to strengthen—

**Frank Caputo:** With respect, Minister, I asked for numbers. You are the minister. With all due respect, we can ask these questions on behalf of Canadians, and do it in good faith.

How much is extortion up since your government took power? Just give a number, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Again, let me just say that overall, some types of crime are on the uptake—

**Frank Caputo:** It's 330%, Minister.

How much is auto theft up since your government took power? Just give a number, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** It's down 19% nationwide. It's down 25% in Ontario and 22% in Quebec.

**Frank Caputo:** It's up 25.33% since your government took power.

What about hate crimes? MP Lloyd talked to you about that. How much are they up since your government took power? Just give a number, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Hate crime, particularly since October 7, 2023, has been up significantly. It is—

**Frank Caputo:** It's 258% in the last 10 years. You still haven't met with some of the congregations.

How about gun crime, not in the last year but in the last 10 years? How much is it up, Minister? Just give a number, please.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Well, let me suggest, Mr. Caputo, that if you are serious about ensuring the safety and security of Canadians and addressing issues of gun crime—

**Frank Caputo:** That's not what I asked, sir.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** —we need to have a holistic approach.

**Frank Caputo:** Minister—

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** One moment, Mr. Caputo.

I'll say it in French this time. There's still a bit of disorder. We need to avoid talking over each other or else the interpreters won't be able to do their job.

[*English*]

**Frank Caputo:** With all due respect, Minister, I prosecuted gun crimes on a number of occasions. Please, I understand the impacts of gun crimes. I've looked victims in the eye—victims who I think will want to know that the minister knows that gun crime has soared 130% since Liberals took office.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Caputo, if I—

**Frank Caputo:** No, I'm asking the questions here, Minister. This is my time on behalf of Canadians to ask questions, sir.

How about in Toronto? How much is total violent crime up since 2015?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Caputo, in my previous role, I unfortunately had to bury a number of young people who lost their lives to gun violence. There isn't a person in this room who will say that gun violence of any form is acceptable. What we need to do here, in this Parliament and in this committee and across party lines, is to have a mature conversation about the impacts of guns—

• (1300)

**Frank Caputo:** I am happy to do that, Minister.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** —without politicizing it and without—

**Frank Caputo:** Minister, we have very limited time.

I have one more question for you. Is Toronto safe?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Caputo, I represent Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park. It is a very safe community. Around the city of Toronto, it is safe. Incidents that have happened may appear to make it unsafe, but I can tell you, from the Toronto Police Service, that homicides are down 51% from last year. Shooting and firearms discharge are down 40% from this time last year. Auto theft is down about 22%.

**Frank Caputo:** I'm sorry. Mr. Au does need some time.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, MP Au.

**Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC):** Minister, as the public safety minister, are you aware of the diversion of so-called safe supply drugs to the black market in B.C.?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, there are issues that are happening in B.C., and a lot of it falls under the jurisdiction of the province.

**Chak Au:** Do you know the magnitude of the problem? Do you know how much money flows into the hands of criminals?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, the issues around illegal drugs and fentanyl—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, but time is up.

I will now turn to MP Ehsassi.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I want to revisit the question I previously asked you.

I am aware that car theft is down 19%, but I would hope those numbers improve. I say this as someone who represents a riding where it has been very widespread. Of course, I'm talking about car theft.

As things proceed, do you see those numbers, hopefully, improving? I'd like to share some good news with my constituents. Anything you could share with us would be very much appreciated.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi.

Let me point out a couple of things.

With respect to the city of Toronto and many of the GTA municipalities—I've had a chance to work with many of them—the police of jurisdiction are doing a commendable job in addressing a lot of the local issues, including car theft.

Over the years, funding for policing has not kept up with the demands of policing and the evolving nature of what police have to do today, which includes dealing with issues around mental health, drugs and addiction. Frankly, for the last two decades or so, we have not been investing in policing. For example, as the City of Toronto invests more, we're seeing results coming through.

There is a national strategy on combatting car theft, for example. We know the work we're doing at the border is helping. Bill C-12 will assist as we look at increasing inspections of vehicles that may be outbound. We have our \$1.3-billion investment at the border and the bill Minister Fraser will be bringing forward on bail reform, which will address the issue of repeat violent offenders. It is not just one of these things. It's the culmination of all of this that will seriously hamper the ability of those who are benefiting and profiting off these types of crimes to be enticed by it.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Thank you.

You say that we've seen an underinvestment over the course of the past 20 years. Is this underinvestment by municipalities or by the provinces?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** It's very much at the local level. Granted, I think the commissioner would say we should have been investing more even on the federal side. The commitment we've made is to add 1,000 new RCMP personnel to federal policing, as well as 1,000 new CBSA officers.

I think there's a growing realization, especially among municipalities, that in order to ensure the safety and security of citizens, we need to invest. The city of Toronto is a perfect example. I was reading that over 500 new officers have been hired. I think this bodes well for the security concerns of many of its citizens.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Thank you.

I'll be sharing the remainder of my time with MP Acan.

**Sima Acan:** Thank you, Mr. Ehsassi.

Minister, in my community of Oakville West, organized crime, including auto theft and home invasion, is a concern for many constituents. I have had numerous conversations at doors about these incidents. Although there's a decline in the numbers, I always say that crime is not a partisan issue and that even a little bit of crime is still crime.

Minister, could you please speak to the success of the national crime prevention strategy in addressing these types of organized and violent crimes?

• (1305)

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Overall, and I said this at the outset, the general trend of crime is lower across Canada. Certain types of crime are still trending up. What's important is people not just being safe but also feeling safe. The responsibility of government, including me, is to make sure that sense of safety and security is there, which means we have to bring in measures that strengthen that confidence.

This starts, in part, with the investments I talked about: making sure that at both the CBSA level and the RCMP level there are additional resources, and that there are additional tools for law enforcement across Canada. Changes to the Criminal Code are the sole responsibility of the federal government, and Minister Fraser will be bringing those forward. He already brought forward Bill C-9 to address issues around hate. He will bring forward legislation on bail reform and so on.

What I think we need to do to leverage this is make sure the provinces do their part. Many provinces are, but some are still

falling short. We need to make sure there are adequate judicial resources and adequate training for JPs and judges when it comes to the interpretation of the Criminal Code. We need to make sure there are remand facilities available at the local level so they are able to remand, so that requires a provincial response.

In terms of men and women in uniform, it's much more of a provincial plus a municipal response, so—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Minister.

[*Translation*]

I will now give the floor to Mrs. DeBellefeuille for two and a half minutes.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I am the member for a riding in southern Quebec, which includes the Akwesasne reserve and the municipality of Dundee Township. As a member of Parliament, I have also recently represented the municipalities of Havelock and Hemmingford, the epicentre of where criminal smugglers have been exploiting migrants and bringing them across the border.

This has been and continues to be a very challenging time for us. CBSA has decided to reduce its evening hours at two border crossings in my riding: Trout River and Athelstan.

I wrote to you, Minister, and to the minister at the time about this. The reason CBSA cited for this was that there was not enough traffic. No security parameters were analyzed.

So you agree, Minister, that two remote, rural border crossings, in an area targeted by organized crime, should be left without border officers to monitor the area at night.

Do you really agree with CBSA's decision?

[*English*]

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** On the decision of the agency, as you know, agencies are at arm's length from government. They're independent and they make their own determinations. In this particular case, I understand that the reduction in the hours aligns with the reduction in hours in the United States. It is always collaborative with the border across the—

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Chair, I must interrupt the minister, as I only have two and a half minutes left.

I already know everything you've just told me, Minister. This decision was made by two agencies. Personally, I find it very difficult to accept that you can't do anything because CBSA is an independent agency. That is why we, the members of the Bloc Québécois, are calling for a borders minister; because an agency has assumed your responsibilities and you don't feel responsible for its decisions.

This is a serious issue. Two border crossings are closed at night, with no surveillance. The mayors of Elgin, Dundee and Hinchinbrooke do not understand this decision. Frankly, the American elected officials I consulted in New York state do not understand it either. Cutting surveillance at night is not what securing our borders is all about.

Do you not agree, Minister?

**The Chair:** Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I'm sorry to interrupt, but your time is up.

I give the floor now to Mr. Au.

[*English*]

**Chak Au:** Minister, I want to continue with my question.

Do you know the magnitude of the problem that the safer supply drugs are being resold to the criminals?

• (1310)

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, I recognize the deep impact that drugs, illegal drugs—including what you're suggesting, which is the selling of safe supply—have on communities. It is abhorrent. I've had the chance to meet with many law enforcement officers, including in British Columbia—

**Chak Au:** Minister, I'm sorry to interrupt, but do you know the magnitude? How many pills get into the hands of criminals? How much money flows into the hands of criminals? Do you know that?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, with respect to British Columbia, I do not know that.

**Chak Au:** Okay.

Again, do you know that the police chief of London, Mr. Thai Truong, said that the safer supply programs are “fueling the [illegal] drug trade”. Are you aware of that?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I've had the opportunity to meet with the police services in London. When I visited there, the chief was not in London, so I wasn't able to meet with him, but I met with his deputies, as well as a number of his superintendents. We talked about some of the challenges they face near downtown, including on the issue of safer supply—

**Chak Au:** Minister, with the time, I have to interrupt.

Clearly, you do not have the information. Is it not your obligation to be informed?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, I am well aware of the challenges that are faced by our main streets in many of our municipalities. I have been working with the fentanyl czar. Yesterday, I met with the fentanyl czar and several organizations relating to mental health.

I have visited many of the downtowns that have had the incidents you're talking about, and I deeply understand the challenges we face. It is a culmination of issues that congregated—

**Chak Au:** Again, I'm sorry for the interruption, but an article in the medical journal JAMA reported that the safer supply program was “associated with an increase in opioid overdose hospitalizations”, expanded illegal supply and increased demand for illicit drugs.

Are you aware of this report?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** I did not personally read that report, no.

**Chak Au:** You are not on top of the issue, so how could—

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, you are showing me a piece of paper. You don't cite what the article is, who the author is, who the researcher is or which institution is attached to it, and you're asking me to comment on it. I'm telling you I have not read it—

**Chak Au:** Is this not your obligation?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. MP Au, this is becoming difficult to understand and follow.

You have another two and a half minutes.

**Chak Au:** Is it not your obligation and responsibility to be informed and on top of the issues so that Canadians will not suffer from the illegal supply of drugs on the streets?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, I invite you to go through my itinerary over the last four and a half months. In every major city and every mid-size municipality I've visited, I have visited the downtowns and many of the areas where there are challenges, including drug use, fentanyl use and meth use. I wholly understand the challenges.

Let's not question each other's—

**Chak Au:** Again, we're talking about a bigger problem.

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, I'm going to—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Minister and MP Au, you are overlapping each other. I understand that we want to have a freely flowing conversation, but it's becoming impossible to understand and interpret. I would ask both of you to make sure that we can understand what you're saying.

**Chak Au:** I'm talking particularly about the safer supply program. Because of exemptions given by your government, these drugs are being thrown into the hands of the criminals. More people are dying of overdoses and more young people are getting into drugs, and the money that's flowing into the hands of criminals is making the problems even worse. Canadians do not feel safe in their communities.

How could you not take responsibility?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Mr. Au, you're talking about a program that is run by the provinces. Safer supply is not run or authorized by the federal government. It is at the request of the provinces that these programs run. I will take responsibility for a lot of things, Mr. Au, but I'm not taking responsibility for something the provinces are responsible for.

What I want to talk about, if I may—

**Chak Au:** I'm sorry for interrupting.

I will pass my time to my colleague Mr. Gill.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, there are only 10 seconds left, MP Gill, so I doubt there will be an answer.

**Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC):** I'll ask a very straightforward question: Do you know the leading cause of death of children in B.C.?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** There are a lot of things happening, but I know fentanyl is among the top—

• (1315)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry for interrupting, but that's all the time we have for this second-to-last round.

This leads me to inviting MP Ramsay to close our time with our witnesses.

[*Translation*]

**Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't think the minister was given a chance earlier to respond to the question about training 1,000 additional officers, both for CBSA and the RCMP. I would like to give the minister, Ms. O'Gorman or the RCMP commissioner an opportunity to respond to that question.

Can you tell us more about how these 1,000 additional officers will be hired on both sides?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

[*English*]

Commissioner, could you answer that?

[*Translation*]

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

First, a senior officer has been appointed to oversee the training of these 1,000 officers, which include 750 police officers and 250 public servants with specialized skills.

RCMP training must remain as it is. When a person successfully completes their training, they receive a certificate stating that they are trained in police techniques, and this certificate is valid in any police force in Canada. It is important to uphold standards.

We're taking a different organizational approach. We're completely overhauling the curriculum in Regina to allow more time for online training, saving us three to four weeks and allowing us to welcome more troops to Depot Division, our academy. This will enable us to achieve the objectives set for the first, second and third years.

It should also be noted that many experienced police officers are joining the RCMP. Over the past two years, between 150 and 176 people have benefited from these individuals' experience.

When we increase the number of troops at Depot Division, we can pull our experienced, front-line officers and have them work within the federal police force.

The structure is being put in place, and we are assessing whether opening a second training centre for officers is needed. That said, our standards remain the same.

**Jacques Ramsay:** Do you have anything you would like to add, Minister or Ms. O'Gorman?

**Erin O'Gorman:** CBSA anticipates that 80% of the 1,000 new employees will be armed officers, while 20% will be operational employees, meaning they will be responsible for targeting and training. That's how they will be distributed.

In Rigaud, we have the capacity to train approximately 250 recruits in the first two years and 300 the following year. We currently have a pool of 300 qualified individuals who can go to Rigaud in six weeks. We are expecting 400 students this year. These are our best candidates for training.

I have no concerns about where the officers will come from. We will work with other departments to recruit operational personnel, such as my colleagues here, who work in intelligence and targeting.

[*English*]

We're ready to go. We have qualified people. We have the capacity at the college. In fact, our attrition numbers this year are slightly lower, so our capacity right now is higher than what we calculated for.

[*Translation*]

**Jacques Ramsay:** Thank you for your answer, it's very reassuring.

Over on the other side of the table they're living in a dream world, thinking they can hire 1,000 people overnight. Obviously, it's not that simple. So I'm glad to see you have a plan.

Minister or Mr. Dakalbab, I would like to hear more about how the project in Cape Breton is progressing.

Have there been good results?

I would also invite you to answer the question about the proficiency test.

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

**Talal Dakalbab (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Crime Prevention Branch, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness):** I thank the member for his question.

As we explained, the primary goal of the pilot project is to test the system from start to finish. We're happy to see that people have signed up and that several submissions have been completed.

The next step will be to schedule appointments to collect the firearms, then to make compensation payments and destroy the firearms. The project is progressing well after one week of implementation, which we are very pleased with.

As for everything else, particularly training, everything is progressing well. Once the pilot project is complete, a public report will be published outlining accomplishments, adjustments made and next steps.

I hope that answers your question.

• (1320)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

That concludes our time with the witnesses today. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank them for being with us today. We are very grateful for the work they did to prepare for this meeting and for everything they did during the meeting. I now ask them to leave quickly, as we have some administrative matters to discuss among ourselves.

For the members and staff, please note that we will now handle two administrative matters, which should be fairly quick. The clerk sent us a draft budget for the following studies....

We'll suspend for a few moments.

• (1320)

(Pause)

• (1320)

**The Chair:** Members, we need you. We'll do this as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

Let me go through one item, and then a second one immediately after.

[*Translation*]

The first item concerns the budget for studies for which we are responsible. The clerk sent us a document that requires our approval. There's \$10,000 for the study on border management and \$500 for the study on the minister's mandate and priorities.

Does the committee agree?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** The second item is about Bill C-8, of course. We need to determine how we're going to work over the next few weeks.

[*English*]

Next week, we will not be in Ottawa, so it will be more difficult to coordinate our work. I would like to hear your views on the number of meetings that we will have for that particular bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ramsay, you have the floor.

**Jacques Ramsay:** Mr. Chair, on this matter, we would like to table the following motion:

That, in relation to the study of Bill C-8, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, the committee dedicate three meetings to the hearing of witnesses, including one meeting with the Minister of Public Safety;

that the deadline for the submission of amendments be Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 12:00 ET; and

that the committee begin clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, and dedicate two meetings to that consideration.

I can read it in English if you'd like.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Should the motion be read in English?

**Frank Caputo:** No, I heard the interpretation.

• (1325)

**The Chair:** Okay, good.

Mr. Caputo.

**Frank Caputo:** Is this a motion that we may be voting on today, or is it just being put on notice here?

**The Chair:** It's possible to vote on it. Given the relative urgency of the clerk's work, the preparatory work, we are obviously being asked to address Bill C-8.

If this is the view of the committee, we can vote on this today.

**Frank Caputo:** The reason I ask, Chair, is that I think some of the committee members took your exhortation to exit literally. I was beside you. I have concerns about the motion, which I am not afraid to enumerate. I don't want to speak for Madame DeBellefeuille. She, I'm sure, will have some points to make on this issue.

I have concerns about the timelines, but I also have concerns about the three meetings. You and I have corresponded, Chair, and again, I am not going to speak for you. Madame DeBellefeuille and I have corresponded; I am not going to speak for her.

However, I know that this bill went through the last time. It is nevertheless a highly technical bill, and it is a bill that requires some scrutiny. The reality is that we'd get essentially one meeting with the minister and, I presume, officials, and then two meetings with stakeholders. If we get two meetings with stakeholders, that is literally four hours. If we have two to three stakeholders per session, that is between eight and 12 people we would hear from on the cybersecurity bill, which is not only highly technical but expansive. A number of organizations have written what I would call op-eds, for instance. They have stated that there are deep concerns. I can tell you right now that on this side, on the Conservative side of the aisle, I know a number of people who would like to participate in committee. At the end of the day, for a bill that is quite consequential, I think that two meetings is far too few.

The other issue I have with the motion is that we were supposed to have the minister here for two hours. The minister was here for 75 minutes, so we need to make up that 45 minutes somehow, and that 45 minutes needs to be made up in a manner that doesn't simply coincide with Bill C-8. The will of this committee was that the minister be here for two hours; not only that, but typically, in my experience, when a minister appears, we actually get their officials for the next hour. In this case, the officials were questioned at the same time as the minister. Clearly, we have more questions for the officials. We haven't really had any time when we could just ask the officials questions.

This motion does not contemplate the additional 45 minutes for the minister. I think, obviously, we're fine if the minister comes. I take no issue with the minister's coming; the minister should be coming, but at the end of the day, we need to have the minister here for the extra 45 minutes, and we need the minister here for Bill C-8. We also need to bring in some additional speakers, in my view. I know there are a number of law professors, or instance, who take issue with this. I recently have been receiving mail regarding this—and I get it that we receive mail on just about everything.

Mr. Chair, at the end of the day, we need to have time in order to appropriately address this. I feel as though the issue of the minister's being here for two hours was set aside. I also feel that we have absolutely no plan as to when he's going to come back.

• (1330)

Chair, you have said to me that we have to deal with the minister's schedule. I don't believe the minister has given us alternate dates to make up those 45 minutes. At the end of the day, I'm curious as to when we are going to hear back.

**An hon. member:** Can we suspend?

**Frank Caputo:** We can certainly suspend, as long as I still have the floor.

**The Chair:** We can discuss this further.

We'll suspend for a few seconds.

• (1330)

(Pause)

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We will briefly resume the meeting to adjourn it because it's late.

I believe there is consensus on the need to further develop our future plans.

The meeting is adjourned.





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