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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, December 4, 2025

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I ask:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or previous order, for today's sitting, Senators' Statements be extended by a maximum of six minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

L'ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

COMMEMORATION OF TRAGEDY

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise at a time when our collective conscience is being put to the test, as we approach the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Every year at this time, we are reminded of a wound that has never fully healed. On December 6, we will remember the 14 young women from the École Polytechnique de Montréal whose lives were taken from them simply because they were women.

Thirty-six years later, their families, their communities and our country as a whole are still keenly aware of their absence.

They had hopes, dreams and lives to build. Their memory calls out to us with this question: What we have done to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again?

[*English*]

This painful anniversary is part of a larger movement. Beginning November 25, Canadians and people around the world participate in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, culminating on Human Rights Day on December 10. It is time to call out attitudes of indifference, speak up in support of women and girls and refuse to let fear dictate their lives.

The reality is brutal and urgent. Every 48 hours, a woman or girl is killed in an act of gender-based violence in Canada. This is more than a statistic. Each loss of life is amplified by grieving family members, friends and loved ones who are left to fill a senseless void. We also hold deep compassion for the survivors of violence and their immeasurable courage. We offer them a sincere promise based on truth, justice and a firm engagement to build a world in which everyone is safe.

[*Translation*]

This week, a table adorned with white roses and white ribbons was set up in the Senate entrance to honour those who lost their lives and those whose lives have been shattered by violence. This initiative, which was carried out in collaboration with Women and Gender Equality Canada, gives a face to our commitment and provides food for thought.

Honourable senators, I would invite you to wear a white ribbon as a sign of our sincere desire to constantly work together so that, one day, no woman or girl will live in fear.

Because some truths are best expressed through poetry, I would like to share the words of the late Elaine Audet, who gave voice not only to pain, but also to resilience and hope:

December's blood mingles with ink.
Fourteen names are penned.
Stand against hatred, never forget.
Always live free.

Together, let us honour those who died, support the survivors and put an end to violence.

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to add my voice in remembrance of Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

For those of us who grew up in Montreal, it is impossible to forget the shock that reverberated through our city when we found out that these 14 young women had been murdered at École Polytechnique de Montréal just because they were women. They were daughters, sisters, friends, classmates, colleagues, but also engineers, researchers, builders and innovators.

They represented unwritten pages of the history and future of Canada. We truly understand the scope of what was lost that day when we think of the projects they could have led, the discoveries they could have made, the inspiration they could have offered to a whole generation. What a tragedy. All this potential, all this light that never came to be, destroyed by violence and misogyny.

[English]

Honourable colleagues, this tragedy does not rest quietly in our history. Its resonance endures because it struck at the very heart of what it means to live freely in Canada: the belief that every person, regardless of their gender or background, should be free to learn, grow and contribute without fear and without limitations.

Each December, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women reminds us that such freedoms are not self-sustaining. They depend on our collective vigilance and our readiness to confront threats, not only to individuals but to the principles that hold this country together.

These 14 women remain our enduring charge, and they compel us to protect our freedoms with renewed purpose, to strengthen the culture of respect that defines our great country, Canada, and to ensure that places of learning remain sanctuaries of opportunity for all our people. May their memory be eternal.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Hon. Suze Youance: Honourable senators, it is with a heavy heart that I rise on behalf of the Independent Senators Group to mark the thirty-sixth anniversary of the femicide at École Polytechnique de Montréal.

On December 6, 1989, I was an engineering student. Haiti's national television station was replaying Radio-Canada's coverage of the École Polytechnique massacre on a continuous loop.

It is an extremely upsetting memory, not only for Quebec and our country, but also for people far beyond our borders.

On December 6, 1989, 14 female engineering students were murdered simply because they were women. Another 13 people were injured.

This misogynistic violence left deep scars on many families and on our collective memory and sparked awareness about violence against women. This event also inspired many to take action for change and to never give up in the fight against violence against women.

Despite this tragedy, female students like me continued our studies for those who were unable to do so.

• (1340)

Today, I remember the decision I made in 1989 to continue studying engineering. It is our role, my role, to talk about this, to remember and to share what we have learned.

Since 2014, the Order of the White Rose scholarship has been a powerful symbol of action in memory of this femicide. These scholarships are awarded to Canadian female engineering students. On December 1, for the first time, 14 women received the prestigious \$50,000 scholarship.

This will be the second consecutive year that a fifteenth beam of light will be lit on Saturday night on Mount Royal in memory of all the women who have been victims of femicide over the years. This special light represents the theme of this year's commemoration.

As Senator Oudar pointed out yesterday, we must always remain vigilant.

Honourable senators, let's wear a white ribbon in solidarity with all women and girls to bring an end to violence.

Thank you.

[English]

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6, 2025. It is a day to honour the 14 precious lives lost in the tragic École Polytechnique massacre and those lost in acts of gender-based violence across our country.

On this solemn day, we remember the young women whose futures were stolen and whose families and communities were forever changed by this senseless act of hatred. The ripple effects of their loss continue to be felt to this day. The shock and grief of that tragedy deeply affected Canada as a whole, leaving a lasting wound in our national conscience and reminding us of the devastating consequences of violence.

As a woman and a mother, I stand here today, honouring their memory and recognizing the strength, resilience and invaluable contributions that women bring to our families, workplaces and communities.

As we reflect on this profound loss and the enduring impacts of gender-based violence, we also reaffirm our collective responsibility to take meaningful action. That means educating ourselves and others, supporting survivors with compassion and resources, challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours wherever we encounter them and working tirelessly to build a society where women and girls can live free from violence, discrimination and fear.

Honourable senators, as we honour these women of the December 6 tragedy, let us also vow to protect, uplift and advocate for women and girls, ensuring their rights, voices and safety are never taken for granted.

Together, we can create a safer and more just Canada for all.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

SILENT TRIBUTE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would ask that you all rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the tragedy at the École Polytechnique in Montreal and in honour of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6.

(*Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.*)

INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Honourable senators, the statement that I'm about to make will be my last as leader of the Independent Senators Group, or ISG. It's been a consummate privilege to represent and serve this group as leader for the past eight years.

[*English*]

Next week, the Independent Senators Group, or ISG, will proceed with an election, for which we have strong and competent candidates. Whichever way this election goes, I am confident our group will be in good hands and ready to continue serving Canadians in this institution with integrity and purpose. They can count on my absolute collaboration in the future as a proud member.

[*Translation*]

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the ISG members, but especially my fantastic and dedicated colleagues on the facilitation team, as well as the highly capable team at the ISG Secretariat. I want to thank Senator Clement, Senator Arnot and Senator Petitclerc for their invaluable contributions, their collegiality and their support. I also want to thank my former colleagues, including Senator Dean for his trust, Senator Duncan for her dedication, and former Senators Omidvar and Gold for their contributions to this group's leadership.

[*English*]

A special thank you to our former facilitator Senator Woo, whom I had the pleasure of working alongside for four years and who deserves a lot of credit for paving the way.

I also want to recognize the roster of leadership for 2025, Senator Moreau, Senator Housakos, Senator Tannas and Senator Francis. It was truly a pleasure to work so closely and collegially with all of you. We shared the common objective of fulfilling this institution's role in the best interest of Canadians.

Since I started this leadership journey in 2017, I have been honoured to contribute to the renewal of a Senate that is more aligned with its constitutional role. The foundations are strong, and the tools are now firmly in place in the legislation and the rules.

I leave this role with gratitude, confidence and deep respect for this institution and all its members.

Throughout my time in leadership, I have tried to promote a culture of disciplined preparation, evidence-based legislative work and respect for the Senate's constitutional role. If I leave any legacy, I hope it is the strengthening of that culture — one grounded in expertise, collegiality and a deep sense of responsibility toward Canadians and the institution we serve.

I thank you all for indulging me, and I look forward to continuing working with all of you, maybe now with just a little bit more time and freedom.

[*Translation*]

I wish you all the best during this holiday season.

[*English*]

Enjoy the holiday break, safe travels and see you in the new year. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Chief Tabatha Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Francis.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

BILL RILEY

Hon. Tony Ince: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to a hockey legend, trailblazer, role model and truly inspirational Canadian. Bill Riley was the third Black man to play in the NHL and the first to play a regular shift, which gave hope to other Black players like Tony McKegney and Ray Neufeld. Bill was a tough player who stood up for his teammates. He played 139 games with the Washington Capitals and the Winnipeg Jets. Born in humble beginnings in Amherst, Nova Scotia, Bill never forgot his roots. He values hard work and has dedicated his life to giving young people opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise had.

• (1350)

His advice is simple but powerful: "Follow your dreams and eliminate the word 'can't' from your vocabulary." Bill spent most of his career in Moncton, where he helped the American Hockey League New Brunswick Hawks get to the Calder Cup in 1982, among many other things he has done for hockey in the community.

A few weeks ago I drove to Moncton to see Bill inducted into the city's Sports Wall of Fame. As I sat in the audience, I heard many stories that captured the character of this great man. I will share one today.

Bill owned a hockey school in Riverview, New Brunswick. While other schools were charging \$200 or \$300 for tuition, Bill charged just \$40. For Bill, it wasn't about making money; it was about making sure that more kids were given a chance.

However, there were times when even this small fee was out of reach. Frankie was one of those times. As Bill tells it, Frankie was a little guy from a single-parent home. He and his mom came to Bill and asked if Frankie could attend the hockey school even though they couldn't afford it. Bill waived the fee and told Frankie he was in. All he had to do was show up and play hard. The next year, the same thing happened. Frankie's mom didn't have the money. This time, Bill told her:

Miss, you can come back every year. All you have to do is pick up Frankie's jersey. He is in for life.

That's who Bill is: a legend to many and an unstoppable force for good in the sport that brings Canadians together. May we all live up to Bill's example of determination, empathy and belief that everyone can follow their dreams if they are given a chance.

Thank you. *Meegwetch. Mahalo. Shukran.*

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Ernie Daniels, President and Chief Executive Officer, and members of the First Nations Finance Authority. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator White.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

FIRST NATIONS FINANCE AUTHORITY

Hon. Judy A. White: Honourable senators, this week marks the annual Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa. This important occasion presents an opportunity to meet with representatives of First Nations governments and to spotlight Indigenous Peoples, organizations and politics in this country.

In recognition of this, I am privileged to rise today to highlight the important work of the First Nations Finance Authority, or FNFA. The FNFA is a non-profit organization, owned and governed entirely by First Nations governments with a vision ". . . to build safe, healthy, and prosperous communities" — by First Nations, for First Nations.

Since 2005, the FNFA has provided investment options, capital planning advice and access to long-term loans that support First Nations governments across the country. FNFA financing has made possible critical infrastructure, social and economic development, land purchases, independent power projects, community housing and so much more. These investments have helped drive economic growth in Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast.

In my province of Newfoundland and Labrador, FNFA loans have generated \$96.6 million in economic output and created approximately 396 jobs for Mi'kmaq and Innu communities as of September of this year.

The FNFA has successfully raised over \$4 billion in financing for projects, resulting in more than \$8.5 billion in economic impact for Canada's economy and has created over 39,000 jobs. This was done through financing economic development projects that support long-term community prosperity.

One of the driving forces behind this success is Mr. Ernie Daniels, President and CEO of the FNFA. Mr. Daniels grew up in the Northwest Territories and is a member of the Salt River First Nation.

Under his leadership, the FNFA enabled seven Mi'kmaq communities to acquire a 50% equity stake in Clearwater Seafoods, the largest seafood company in North America. This was truly a transformational Indigenous economic achievement.

Mr. Daniels, your decades of service to First Nations organizations have strengthened communities nationwide and set a new international standard for Indigenous-led economic development — work unmatched anywhere else in the world.

I would like to extend my congratulations to you, the FNFA and, especially, my friend and fellow Newfoundlander and Labradorian René Jeddore, for your vision, leadership and transformative contributions that are improving the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples in this country.

Wela'lin. Thank you.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Kailee Deacon, daughter of Senator M. Deacon, as well as Cameron Chell, Chief Executive Officer of Business Instincts Group.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

THE LATE ROLANDE FAUCHER

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to a prominent member of Ontario's francophone community, Rolande Faucher, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 84.

Rolande Faucher was born in Ottawa in 1941. She distinguished herself early in her career through her unwavering commitment to the advancement and vitality of Ontario's francophone community. After spending some time in Kapuskasing in northern Ontario, she settled in Orléans and continued her work in the community.

Rolande Faucher left an indelible mark on the Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans, or MIFO. As president, she professionalized the organization, led its first strategic planning process and contributed to the construction of the MIFO building, which instantly became a landmark for francophone culture in Orléans when it opened in 1985.

From 1988 to 1990, she served as president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. A visionary and a woman of action, she helped strengthen the organization's political and community influence during a crucial period for language rights in the province.

In 1993, she served as chair of the Council for Franco-Ontarian Education. She also served as an adviser to the Minister of Education on issues related to the entire educational continuum. In addition, she was one of the first people to argue in favour of "by and for" at the post-secondary level, pushing for the creation of an autonomous French-language university in Ontario.

Her many contributions are a testament to her commitment and generosity to her community over the years. She worked with Ontario's Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs, the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages, the University of Ottawa's Centre de recherche sur les francophonies canadiennes, or CRCCF, and La Nouvelle Scène. She also made a significant contribution as a Montfort Hospital board member during the high-profile legal challenge.

She wrote many important reports on accessing health care services in French, as well as a biography entitled *Jean-Robert Gauthier : « Convaincre... sans révolution et sans haine »*, for which she received the Champlain Prize in 2009. Over the course of her career, she received many other accolades, including the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario, or AJEFO, Order of Merit, the Albert Régimbald award and the CRCCF award. She was also appointed a knight of the Ordre de la Pléiade. In 2014, she became an honorary member of the Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario.

By building, shaping and shoring up the institutions that Ontario's francophone community relies on today, Rolande Faucher ensured that her work would endure so that coming generations could build a future based on a solid foundation. The organizations she shaped, the cultural spaces she expanded and the networks she built are also lasting reminders of her time with us.

Thanks to her, generations of Franco-Ontarians will be able to keep our language alive in every area of public life and nurture a strong and vibrant community that is confident in its future.

[Senator Moncion]

Rest in peace, dear Rolande.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1400)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, which deals with amendments to the *Senate Administrative Rules*.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 531.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Moncion, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[English]

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE NEED TO MODERNIZE AND CLARIFY THE CRIMINAL CODE OF CANADA AND THE CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

Hon. David M. Arnot: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine and report on the need to modernize and clarify the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, including an assessment of current structural deficiencies in the legislation and options for moving toward a comprehensive review;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2028, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO
STUDY THE CURRENT STATE OF COURT DELAYS IN
THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Hon. David M. Arnot: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine and report on the current state of court delays in Canada's criminal justice system following its final report tabled in June 2017, entitled *Delaying Justice is Denying Justice: An Urgent Need to Address Lengthy Court Delays in Canada*, including an examination of what progress has been made in implementing the recommendations made in that report;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject during the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament be referred to the committee;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit its reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2028, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

HUMAN RIGHTS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO
STUDY THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Hon. Paulette Senior: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine and report on the impact of artificial intelligence on human rights and economic security in Canada, especially in relation to vulnerable groups and the international human right to work;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit its reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO
STUDY ANY MATTERS RELATED TO THE DUTY TO
CONSULT AND ACCOMMODATE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Hon. Michèle Audette: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with rule 12-7(15), be authorized to examine and report on any matters related to the duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous Peoples, which flows from the honour of the Crown derived from section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, focusing on:

- (a) the needs of Indigenous Nations, specifically First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples who seek to make the duty to consult more responsive to their community needs;
- (b) the identification of promising practices and ways to develop positive working relationships; and
- (c) the exploration of standards to improve federal policies and practices;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 15, 2027, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

• (1410)

[English]

VITAL ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the vital role that physical activity and sport play in enhancing our well-being, strengthening our communities and shaping the fabric of the Canadian experience.

QUESTION PERIOD

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FINANCE

STEEL INDUSTRY

COST OF FOOD

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Government leader, Feed Ontario's 2025 *Hunger Report* shows that one in three food bank users in Ontario are children under the age of 18 and that one in three children are food-insecure despite existing federal programs such as the Canada Child Benefit. Children also still represent 29% of all people relying on food banks.

Given these numbers, how does your government justify its current approach to child poverty? What specific measurable changes will your government make to ensure that fewer children need food banks next year?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is relentlessly focused on bringing down costs and creating new opportunities for Canadians. Food inflation is tied to global supply chains, climate-driven shocks and currency pressure.

Budget 2025 invests directly in Canadian food resilience, more processing capacity here at home, stronger supply chains and supports for producers facing volatile input costs.

The government is making the National School Food Program permanent because the most direct aid to ease pressure on families is to lower the costs they face every single week. Up to 400,000 kids getting healthy, reliable meals means parents have real, measurable relief. Budget 2025 answered that question.

Senator Atallahjan: Senator Moreau, more than 1 million Ontarians relied on food banks last year, registering a record high of 8.7 million visits. A growing share of food bank users are employed — a clear sign that having a job is increasingly insufficient to avoid food insecurity.

What systemic failures does your government recognize in the federal social safety net, and why have these weaknesses been allowed to widen to the point where employment no longer shields Canadians from hunger?

Senator Moreau: This is an important question. Again, Budget 2025 builds on actions Canada's new government has already taken to make life more affordable while protecting the vital programs that millions of Canadians rely on, from child care to dental care, to Pharmacare. Unfortunately, the Conservatives in the other place voted against the budget.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, earlier this week, Algoma Steel announced it is laying off 1,000 workers, a third of its workforce. That's 1,000 families losing their livelihoods at a time when grocery and gas prices keep climbing. In Ontario alone, food banks saw a record 8.7 million visits last year, 24,000 visits every single day.

Yet, when the opposition pressed for accountability on Monday, the response of the Minister of Industry, Mélanie Joly, was simply, "... stop whining."

Senator Moreau, when will your government put Canadians first, provide relief to families struggling to feed themselves and secure jobs, not only in steel but across the economy?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, I don't want to minimize the difficulty of losing one's job and the economic hardship many Canadians are facing. The government is well aware of that. That's the reason why the government has taken strong action within Budget 2025.

Unfortunately, you stand here saying the same thing. We care about Canadians and Canadians who are losing their jobs. The problem is that whenever the government puts forward measures that would relieve those situations, your colleagues in the House of Commons vote against those measures.

It's quite unusual for you to stand asking for measures to be taken, while, in the other place, you vote against measures that would help Canadians.

Senator Martin: Leader, the fact is you say you care, but, despite that, the Prime Minister is completing a loop around the world every 44 days for photo ops. Canadians see no deals, no protections and no security for these workers and their families.

When will the Prime Minister end his sightseeing tour and start taking real action to protect Canadian steel jobs?

Senator Moreau: Well, when the Prime Minister is travelling throughout the world, it is to diversify markets for the Canadian economy, to create jobs here, to make agreements with all the countries in the world, to open new markets and doors for Canadian industry to create jobs here at home; that's why he's travelling around the world. Your leader should do the same.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CANADA'S EMISSIONS TARGETS

Hon. Mary Coyle: Senator Moreau, last month, Prime Minister Carney answered Green Party leader May by saying, “I can confirm to the House that we will respect our Paris commitments for climate change”

In a recent exchange with MP Patrick Bonin, Minister Dabrusin said the government remains committed to its 2030 emissions reduction targets. Those are 40-45% below 2005 levels.

MP Steven Guilbeault warns that with the rollbacks we've seen over the past few months, it's impossible to see how we will achieve our 2030 targets.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that Canada will miss its 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target by 49 to 102 megatonnes.

Senator Moreau, what assurance can you give us that Canada will meet its 2030 emissions reduction targets? When will we see the new plan to achieve that?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): For the last part of your question, I have been informed that the government will soon release its climate competitiveness strategy.

Canada's focus remains committed to reaching the Paris targets and net-zero emissions by 2050 through ambitious climate action while building the economy of the future. The federal government can only meet its climate targets by moving forward together. Achieving net-zero emissions and staying competitive require every province driving innovation and climate action.

The government knows that good climate policy is good economic policy. Canada is driving toward delivering long-term investment that will restructure our economy, prepare our industry for the global shift to net zero and support jobs right here in Canada.

The government is investing in green homes, clean electricity and technology that will keep Canada competitive and sustainable for decades to come, hopefully to meet the 2030 target.

Senator Coyle: Thank you, Senator Moreau. We look forward to seeing the new plan.

While I was at COP 30 recently, I was reassured by former minister Guilbeault that the government is committed to accelerating implementation of biodiversity commitments and mobilizing investment to protect nature for people, the planet and generations to come. There was an indication from him that a plan on nature will be coming by early December. Senator Moreau, when will this plan be made public, and what can we expect to see in it?

Senator Moreau: As you know, I'm not able to speculate as to when this plan will be released. Having said that, you did raise the question previously regarding the inclusion of nature in Budget 2025.

I neglected to mention that the Northwest Critical Conservation Corridor was mentioned in that budget, which has been referred to the Major Projects Office, or MPO, for consideration and includes a potential new conservation area the size of Greece. I thought that you would like to know that.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

RUSSIAN SANCTIONS

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Senator Moreau, in October 2025, the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights published a report in which they identified that a number of Canadian companies had dual-use products found in Russian weapons that had attacked Ukrainians, so that's our companies.

Is the Government of Canada aware that sanctioned Canadian products seem to be shipped through Hong Kong, a known global sanctions evasion hub, and what steps, if any, has the government taken to address this issue?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I have every confidence that the government is aware of this report. However, I will certainly bring this to the minister's attention regardless.

To your specific question, senator, I'm not aware of any intention to designate Hong Kong as a high-risk jurisdiction. As you noted, this has been done for Russia, Iran and North Korea. I am unsure if Hong Kong would fall under this list.

• (1420)

Having said that, I would like to assure you that Canada will continue to work closely with allies to support Ukraine. Just yesterday, the government announced a package of critical military capabilities under NATO's Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List in partnership with other NATO allies.

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much.

For the record, I want to point out that my friends in the Parliament of Ukraine are very appreciative of that.

Canada lags behind our allies in designating companies and individuals in sanction evasion hubs through which useful military components are put through to Russia. This is, in part, due to our lengthy and complicated internal process around that kind of designation. Could Canada not develop a policy to automatically adopt sanctions on Russia already imposed by the EU and other allies?

Senator Moreau: My understanding is that, currently, sanctions can be enacted under three pieces of legislation: the Special Economic Measures Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act and the United Nations Act. These acts prescribe the necessary legal requirements for imposing sanctions.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

ACCESS TO BENEFITS

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Senator Moreau, yesterday, the Veterans Ombud released a report on Veterans Affairs Canada's internal review process of benefits claims to determine whether they meet basic standards of fairness. The ombud's investigation found that, too often, veterans receive unclear responses when their benefits claims are denied, making the denials more difficult to contest. The report is critical of what it calls Veterans Affairs Canada's ". . . systemic unfairness . . ." in how it handles claims and communicates decisions to veterans.

Will the government commit to acting on the ombud's recommendations in the report, particularly the call to improve the quality of decision letter so that veterans whose claims have been denied can get specific and substantive explanations of the decision?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question.

I'm aware of the report, and I will raise those recommendations with the minister.

The budget is there to help veterans on very important investments regarding long-term care, savings from VAC and disability pensions, but what you're raising today is very serious. I understand that you care as much as I do about the well-being of veterans. Thank you for raising that question. I will conduct the necessary follow-up with the minister.

Senator Patterson: Thank you.

I can say with confidence that veterans are suffering a trust deficit with Veterans Affairs Canada. One of the recommendations in the review was that the minister be authorized to initiate reviews under the Veterans Health Care Regulations. Senator Moreau, we know that responses to recommendations are slow. When will Veterans Affairs Canada provide a response to these recommendations so that veterans can at least start to regain confidence in this vital organization?

Senator Moreau: Senator, thank you very much for the question.

I will raise that very important issue with the minister. I will get back to you as soon as I have an answer.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS CONTROL

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Moreau, on the evening of Saturday, December 6, the skies over Montreal will light up to commemorate the 14 victims of the Polytechnique femicide. As this solemn moment approaches, PolyRemembers is criticizing the fact that there is still no full ban on assault weapons, including the SKS, a Russian semi-automatic military weapon better suited to battlefields than hunting grounds. Why wasn't this weapon included in the buyback program that's now getting under way after years of delay, considering that 11 women in Canada have been murdered with a firearm by their partner in the last two years?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Miville-Dechêne.

I think the best person to answer that question directly is one of the Polytechnique survivors, Nathalie Provost. The SKS issue is very complex, so I will quote her:

This issue must be resolved before the end of the buyback program because it's an omission in the program. The minister announced that he would address this, and there are solutions. It's important to remember that the SKS model is unique. It's still used for hunting by First Nations people, who have a historic right to hunt and to use this firearm. To truly ban these weapons and get them off our streets, there has to be a program that covers the SKS, but that issue is still under review at this point.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I hope a solution will be found.

That's not all, though. The federal government just postponed the coming into force of its Firearms Marking Regulations for the twelfth time. It was supposed to happen in 2006, but now it won't happen until 2027.

This marking would make it possible to identify the origin of firearms manufactured in and, more importantly, imported into Canada, which would be useful at crime scenes or in cases of theft.

Senator Moreau: Once again, it gives me confidence to know that Ms. Provost is our secretary of state. I believe that there will be a follow-up, not only on the issue of the SKS model, but also on the issue of the publication of the regulations.

According to my information, although the regulations were published in the *Canada Gazette*, their entry into force has been postponed to give the many companies involved more time to prepare and complete the consultation process.

Once again, I believe that the matter is being followed with great interest in the other place.

[English]

FINANCE

FISCAL ANCHORS

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, the last Liberal decade has achieved record deficits, record debt, a collapse in foreign investment — and, for that matter, domestic investment — a cost-of-living crisis and, of course, a Canadian loonie that is flying at the lowest levels we have seen in many years.

Further, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that the Carney Liberal government has discarded any fiscal anchor entirely, without warning, debate or any respect for Parliament's role in holding the government to account. That's not me saying that; that's the PBO.

Why does the Parliamentary Budget Officer say that your government has no fiscal anchor? Why does he say you have no accountability to or transparency with Parliament?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is transparently answering questions every day during Question Period, and I think your colleagues in the other place are trying to ask questions about the budget and for accountability from the government. As far as I know, the government is properly answering all of those questions.

Concerning the fiscal anchor, there are two things: We want to reduce expenses, and we want to increase investments so that we will monitor the ratio between the debt and the GDP.

Senator Housakos: We can give you a report card on answering questions, Senator Moreau.

The PBO suggested that any changes to longstanding fiscal anchors should be required to be approved by the House of Commons. The fact that your government has done so with zero parliamentary discussion is a condemnation of the Prime Minister's respect for Parliament. We know he and the Liberal Party have very little respect for this institution, but don't they have some respect for the other place? That is, at least, the place where you can't have taxation without representation.

Senator Moreau: Senator Housakos, I totally disagree with your premises. I will repeat — because it's fun to have the occasion to say this — inflation is down, GDP is up, unemployment is down and wages are up. The Leader of the Opposition's popularity is down and the Prime Minister's is up. I think it's going well in Canada.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

ARTHUR MEIGHEN BUILDING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, in midtown Toronto stands the Arthur Meighen Building, named in 1957 after a former Progressive Conservative prime minister. Yet after a major renovation

wrapped up in 2024, thanks to prime ministerial historian J.D.M. Stewart, Canadians noticed something conspicuously absent: Arthur Meighen's name no longer appears on the front of the building. Your government removed his name from the exterior and now claims his commemoration survives on an interior plaque tucked away somewhere in the building.

Leader, the previous Liberal government had a habit of erasing our history. Can you tell Canadians whether this new Liberal government intends to continue that trend? Why is it erasing the public commemoration of a former prime minister of Canada?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): That's a good question. I don't think there's any intention on the part of the government to erase our history — quite the contrary. As a matter of fact, we had the King visit the Senate during the opening of our session.

• (1430)

I think it underlined very well that Canada is historically well grounded and that the government is respecting its history.

As far as the building and the plaque are concerned, I have no information concerning this specific case. I will make an inquiry and see whether the plaque should be put back outside at the front of the building. As of right now, I don't know where the plaque is. I believe it is inside the building if I understand your question correctly. I will get back to you with more information as soon as I know where the plaque is located.

Senator Martin: I appreciate you looking into this, Senator Moreau, because Canadians shouldn't need a scavenger hunt to find where their history has been hidden.

May I confirm that the government will commit to restoring Arthur Meighen's name to the front of the building and commit to preserving — not hiding — Canada's heritage in our public institutions?

Senator Moreau: I am committed to understanding where the plaque is that you are referring to. I will get back to you as soon as I know exactly what we're talking about.

FINANCE

PRIVACY RIGHTS

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative. While some Canadians are counting down the days to Hanukkah and others are counting down the days to Christmas, we in the Senate are counting down the days to the arrival of Bill C-4.

One of the things that Bill C-4 does is exempt federal political parties from the privacy provisions, specifically, of British Columbia law. One of the things the B.C. law did was provide citizens with a right of access, a right to know what information an organization has collected on them. Bill C-4 eliminates any idea of a right of access. Can you tell us why the government chose that strategy?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Well, as you know, Bill C-4 is still in the other place. It will come to the Senate, and we will have ample opportunity to study the bill and answer those questions.

As Bill C-4 is now under discussion, we should wait until it comes to the Senate in its final form before we study and discuss the matter.

Senator Simons: Thank you very much. As a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, I look forward to being able to discuss this part of Bill C-4 in our committee.

I can't help but notice, though, that this is a pattern with this government, which has, so far, introduced Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-12 as well as Bill C-4, each of which has been criticized for undermining Canadians' rights to privacy. At a time when our privacy rights are already under assault from so many private sector actors, will the government step up and protect the privacy rights of all Canadians?

Senator Moreau: It is certainly the intention of the Government of Canada to protect the private lives of citizens. As I mentioned earlier, we will have Bill C-4 here, and I have all confidence in the members of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee to ask good questions, the right questions, and to bring us all the information and indications we need concerning Bill C-4.

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, my question is for Senator Moreau.

This question is asked in recognition of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

In December 2023, Parliament adopted Bill C-21 with a clear safeguard: Anyone subject to a protection order in the context of domestic violence would be ineligible to hold a firearm's licence while that order is in effect. Recall that 96% of Canadians in a national survey conducted in 2023 support this.

Two years later, women's organizations, including the National Association of Women and the Law, report that this provision has still not been brought into force and that the proposed regulations would further weaken it by limiting it mainly to civil protection orders and by applying key licence bans only to future convictions.

Senator, can you explain why the government hasn't implemented this safeguard to date? When will the government commit to a firm timeline for bringing these provisions of Bill C-21 into force?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. It is an important question. Bill C-21 is part of the Government of Canada's comprehensive plan to strengthen

gun control in Canada and keep Canadians safe from gun violence. I understand that most measures for implementing former Bill C-21 are now in effect.

To your specific question, I have been informed that implementation of the measure requiring revocation and refusal of firearm licences for those subject to a protection order is ongoing. Although I do not have an exact date for you, this work has been included as part of the Forward Regulatory Plan: 2024-2026. I would be happy to have my office share that plan with you as soon as we receive it.

Senator Dasko: Thank you. Over this two-year period, at least 11 women and girls have been killed by intimate partner gun violence in Canada. Guns and domestic violence are a lethal combination. Why is the government proposing to narrow the scope of the legislation, which, I believe, is contrary to Parliament's intent? Thank you.

Senator Moreau: To your question, senator, I'm not aware of any intention to limit the scope of the legislation that was passed. I will certainly raise this issue with the minister and pass on any information I receive. However, I have no information whatsoever that the government intends to narrow the scope of the legislation.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

MAJOR PROJECTS OFFICE

Hon. Jim Quinn: Senator Moreau, in considering the Building Canada Act, does the designation "projects of national interest" apply only to the specific project or does it also apply to infrastructure which supports getting resources from the project to market? For example, does increasing supply chain connectivity for a mine via service or rail corridors to ports constitute such a project?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): My understanding is that the Major Projects Office conducts a review of the major project that has been done and determines whether it is creating more jobs and positive effects on the economy. Those are the major criteria looked at in order to classify a project as a national major project. That's my understanding.

Senator Quinn: In consideration of the Building Canada Act, how does the Major Projects Office advance executable projects in the national interest through streamlined federal review processes of national interest, if "national interest" is not defined?

Senator Moreau: "National interest" is a very broad concept. I don't think it would be a good idea to have a specific description because projects that are under evaluation could then be excluded because of an overly narrow definition of the term "national interest." I think it is a good thing to see it as a broader concept.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, we should all be alarmed to learn of yet another failure of our justice and immigration system. A 47-year-old non-citizen who pleaded guilty to heinous sexual offences against a minor was granted a pause in proceedings so that he could consider whether his guilty plea might have an impact on his immigration status.

This, leader, is a man who repeatedly abused a minor, even while on bail for abusing the same minor. How can this government defend a system where the immigration status of a violent offender appears to carry more weight than the safety and dignity of Canadian victims?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I don't have any information on the specific case you are raising, Senator Housakos. I will be raising the question with the department, but the government is committed to having a very strong immigration process that will reassure Canadians that they can feel safe within the immigration procedures.

Now, for the specific case to which you are referring, if you want to give me more information, I will get back to you and provide you with an answer.

Senator Housakos: I will be happy to do so because I have never seen a case as disgusting as this before in my life. This case is not happening in isolation. Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, officials testified this week that more than 700 foreign criminals are at large in Canada — I'm not making this up — some of over 33,000 individuals under removal orders who have simply disappeared in this country.

• (1440)

Leader, this is not enforcement; it is a surrender of our obligations and duties. It is basically the government absconding from its most basic duty to Canadians.

Senator Moreau: Obviously, I disagree with your conclusion, senator. CBSA is an independent agency aligned with the idea that the government wants Canadians to feel safe in the country.

If you have information concerning that specific case, I will not comment on it until I have it, and I will then get back to you with a specific answer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted June 4, 2025, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable

Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, will take place on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 4 p.m.

INDIAN ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Audette, seconded by the Honourable Senator Francis, for the third reading of Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements), as amended.

Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements), for what I sincerely hope will be the last time.

On Tuesday, this chamber faced an important question: Did it trust the work of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples enough to accept its report, with amendments — which was, I remind you, supported by committee members 10 to 1?

In anticipation of that significant vote, my office and I reached out to Grand Chiefs, Chiefs, councillors and youth, organizational and grassroots leaders who were in Ottawa for the Assembly of First Nations, or AFN, Special Chiefs Assembly. While we were aware of between 30 to 40 who were interested, what came next was a wave of close to 100 who came to bear witness.

I later heard from so many that they were overcome with pride to see one of their own stand in this august chamber and speak out on their behalf. I was stopped all day yesterday by Chiefs and AFN attendees whom I had never met who expressed similar sentiments.

While I acknowledge that it broke protocol, I found it to be a beautiful moment, for First Nations have gone far — from not being able to vote to being represented in Parliament in both chambers. We have gone from having parliamentarians passing laws to erase us to having parliamentarians standing up to defend our inherent rights.

For a chamber whose very existence is constantly challenged, our debate at the report stage proved to those in the room and listening at home that the Senate is a vital part of our democracy. It has been gratifying to hear over and over again variations of:

I never really knew what the Senate did. I was really impressed and so proud of you guys for standing up for us.

I wanted to ensure that all senators heard these words in hopes that you feel some pride in our work and in being part of such a significant and historic debate.

I also want to dwell a little bit on that phrase “significant and historic debate.” While I feel gratitude for the support that I have been receiving from rights holders across the country, I am also

cognizant of the great responsibility that their trust and faith place upon me. I am wary of the fact that every time I speak in committee, every time I rise in this chamber and with every initiative I undertake, I must ensure that I am upholding the values and teachings of my ancestors and pushing for changes that will benefit the next seven generations of L'nu people across this country.

Several times throughout this process I have experienced moments that I feel were almost surreal. Never in my wildest dreams would I ever have thought that I would be sitting in a Senate committee, reading out an amendment to erase subsection 6(2) of the Indian Act. I remember thinking: Am I really doing this?

I never believed that I would be able to count warrior women such as Sharon McIvor, Pam Palmater, Mary Eberts, Shelagh Day, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Dawn Lavell-Harvard, Chief Marilyn Slett, Cora McGuire-Cyrette, Zoë Craig-Sparrow and Rachel Singleton-Polster as friends of mine whom I would have the distinct honour of working with. Just yesterday, I sat on a panel at the AFN with Sharon McIvor, and she received a standing ovation the minute she was called up to the podium. That's how significant her contributions to the fight for equality and inclusion have been.

And now senators are called to write their part in this decades-long history of struggling against the discrimination embedded within the Indian Act.

To me, the amendments removing the second-generation cut-off, ending the 1985 cut-off and restoring the one-parent rule, have never been a choice for me to make. I have always viewed them as part of my responsibility to listen to my elders and to community.

The second-generation cut-off was unilaterally imposed by Canada in 1985 through Bill C-31 as a means to eliminate what was known as "the Indian problem." It was an assurance that we would be eventually assimilated into Canadian society, as the lawmakers of the day knew that we could not survive if we were relegated to only marrying among ourselves to preserve status.

Through the wording of this imposition, Canada has also created an absurd reality, where siblings with the same parents could find themselves with different levels of status — and thus different rights regarding status transmission — meaning a grandparent could now have a mix of grandchildren who are both status and non-status: a mix of grandchildren who could access programs, health care and educational supports that fulfill the government's statutory, treaty and fiduciary responsibility to First Nations, and grandchildren who could not access these supports.

The return to a one-parent rule would mean that women who are victims of incest or rape, or whose partners refuse to sign the paperwork to acknowledge their children as a way of abusing or holding power over the mother, will not have to go to their Chiefs, teary-eyed, begging for them to sign off as the father so that their children can have status.

These are not theoretical situations we are considering. These are the true-life, lived experiences of First Nations across this country. I have heard countless stories from every corner of this country. The choices we make in this chamber will ripple through time and create positive change far into the future.

• (1450)

Some will say that these amendments will bring back a flood of so-called pretendians, and people with a distant relative a hundred years in the past will suddenly be added. That is not true. The second-generation cut-off was introduced in 1985. That means that the oldest 6(2) status Indian is 40 years old. We are talking about the legal recognition of their children and, in some cases, grandchildren. We are talking about children with direct living relations.

Even Statistics Canada has projected that the impact of these amendments would be approximately 300,000 people over the next 40 years. That's about 7,000 people per year across 634 bands.

Other opponents to these amendments will talk about the funding implications. The fact is community funding is determined on a per capita basis. The longer these children are excluded from status recognition, the longer communities will have to divert own-source revenues meant to help decrease their reliance on government transfers in order to support community members.

Still others will decry the dilution of bloodlines. There have been a few minorities who speak out about the need for some sort of cut-off. That is not a First Nations teaching I have been raised with. If that is a strong belief within other nations, then certainly they are able to define their own custom code under section 10 of the Indian Act. Many have done so.

Similarly, it should be noted that status does not affect a nation's ability to determine citizenship. Band membership eligibility can be customized under section 10; citizenship can be determined through a formal self-government agreement. Status is the legal relationship between an Indian under the Indian Act and the Crown. It is not easy to disentangle ourselves from this relationship. It will be decades and, likely, generations before First Nations can be truly free of the Indian Act. That is how deeply entrenched this colonial, patriarchal and racist policy is in the lives of First Nations people.

I was delighted to hear from Senator Moreau during the clause-by-clause consideration of this bill and throughout the report stage about the commitment of this government to true, meaningful consultation. It is my sincere hope that this commitment is equally applied across all of this government's future undertakings, as I did not see consultations conducted prior to the cutting of Jordan's Principle funding, nor did I see them when the government announced their openness to a pipeline that would need to see a partial exemption to the tanker ban off the B.C. coast, a move widely denounced by B.C. First Nations.

Senators, we have heard from all but 28 of the 75 nations, communities and organizations that are participating in the collaborative process in committee. They were clear that they were forced into yet another process by Canada, when what they really wanted was to stop talking about this issue and to do something now.

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, representing 6 of the 75 collaborative process participants, stated:

I'm here to confront the issue that threatens the survival of our nations, Canada's continued use of section 6(2) of the Indian Act as a policy of legislated genocide.

I know we are here to talk about Bill S-2 and how this seeks to correct some of these injustices and speak to enfranchisement, but it does not address the deeper harm that's embedded in the law. Right now, what we see is that Canada continues to decide who our people are. To me, that is a problem. I know that many of our First Nations see that as a problem as well.

Chief Marilyn Slett, Elected Chief of the Heiltsuk Tribal Council and Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, representing 21 of 75 collaborative process participants, stated:

With respect to the second-generation cut-off, our position has been unwavering: The second-generation cut-off must be removed from the Indian Act, and we must return to the pre-1985 one-parent rule. It must be applied equally to men and women to prevent legislated extinction. Elimination of the second-generation cut-off is supported by advocates, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or CEDAW, and is explicitly called for by First Nations via resolutions.

Grand Chief Norman Sylliboy of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council, at a press conference on Bill S-2, said:

We have wanted Canada to immediately stop the discrimination against Mi'kmaq in the *Indian Act*. Canada keeps stalling the end of their discrimination against Mi'kmaq.

Under the *Constitution* of Canada and UNDRIP, the Santé Mawio'mi has the right to determine who is Mi'kmaq.

In enacting the UNDRIP Act 2021, Canada has promised to make the *Indian Act* consistent with UNDRIP.

The Santé Mawio'mi fully support Senator Prosper's amendments to implement our constitutional and inherent human rights.

Senators, over and over again, our committee heard that the time to act is now.

I want to share with senators a few points regarding timing from the government's website describing the collaborative process.

First, the timeline leading up to the collaborative process shows that over seven years and three different ministers, we have been talking about ending the second-generation cut-off. We know that Minister Gull-Masty didn't restart the collaborative process until September 2025. This is on top of all the work that has been done over the past 40 years.

The website goes on to outline that the consultation activities and events will include time for an assessment of the legal viability and impact of a proposed solution by a panel of experts. On that panel is Dr. Pam Palmater, and she informed me that the panel has not yet been struck.

We also know that Minister Gull-Masty, on October 28, 2025, during ministerial Question Period, refused to commit to a timeline for these consultations ending. She stated:

I am not going to give a timeline, and the reason for this is very specific. I will not rush the communities that I work with to ensure that I'm finding a solution that meets the timeline of an outside institution. We have to be sure that we respect our partners in consultation. We have to give them the space they need to do that work. I know and sense that there is true urgency from the Senate to try to address this. I share that urgency.

• (1500)

Colleagues, I and fellow supporters of these amendments have never called into question the sincerity of Minister Gull-Masty's stated desire to end the second-generation cut-off, but I am forced to look at certain realities.

The first is that this is a minority government. We surely all remember the tension on Parliament Hill when there was uncertainty around whether or not the budget would pass its confidence vote in the other place. By the thinnest of margins, we avoided a winter election. What happens to the children affected by the cut-off if the government fails before consultations are concluded? What happens to the children if the government cannot pass stand-alone legislation in time? In that way, these amendments, with the one-year coming-into-force delay, act as a fail-safe in these uncertain and unpredictable times.

When Bill S-2's predecessor, Bill C-38, died on the Order Paper in the last Parliament, we could not have foreseen that the then deputy prime minister and finance minister would step down from her position in such a way that it would create a chain of events leading to the then prime minister stepping down, a leadership race for the Liberal Party, the dissolution of Parliament and a spring election. We cannot take anything in a minority government as a given.

Another scenario is one in which the minister is able to table stand-alone legislation and bring forward a bill that would lead First Nations down a path to true citizenship and self-determination. I have spoken with the parliamentary Law Clerk's office, and I am assured that coordinating amendments could be drafted to address these amendments if they are passed into law.

I would also point out that transitioning to citizenship takes time. We know from the experience of Jeannette Corbiere Lavell that work on the Anishinabek Nation citizenship code began in 2008. After being consulted with community, it was passed and adopted by the nation in 2011. However, it has been only recently that the nation has had the capacity and funding required to operationalize their citizenship code. That's 17 years.

Senators, what will happen to the children who are non-status in those 17 years? That's an entire generation left waiting — an entire generation that cannot apply for programs and services set aside for status Indians alone. In this instance, these amendments act as a stopgap measure to ensure we are leaving no First Nations child behind.

In the minister's letter shared by Senator Moreau, the minister talks about finding consensus, but there has never been a requirement for complete consensus on any bill affecting First Nations before. Senator Moreau also underscored the minister's desire to see these solutions come from community. I would argue that we heard and saw support for these amendments from community.

As a reminder, the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, or BCAFN, representing 204 First Nations in B.C., has passed a resolution in support of these amendments. All 13 Chiefs in Nova Scotia support it. All 15 First Nations in New Brunswick support these amendments. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc., or MKO, and the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. support these amendments. The Anishinabek Nation, representing 39 First Nations, and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, representing 49 First Nations in Ontario, have issued statements of support.

I met with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, or FSIN, and they support these amendments, as do nations from Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8.

Grand Chief Alatini of the Council of Yukon First Nations, which represents 9 of the 14 Yukon First Nations, called section 6(2) "legislated extinction on a delay."

National Chief George Mackenzie of the Dene Nation, which represents 30 communities, told us:

But if you are a descendant of a status person that you have from the past, the parents, the grandparents, that has to be honoured. Who is to say that you are no longer an Indian? You are born an Indian; you will die as an Indian. It's important that all this is understood.

For those keeping count, that's over 360 First Nations out of 634 that have expressly supported these amendments. Senators, this is the solution community wants.

Colleagues, I, for one, do not intend to develop carpal tunnel from wielding a rubber stamp.

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, Director of First Peoples House of Learning for Trent University and a former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, explained that:

. . . in 1985, when the 6(2) category was created, the government created a legal situation that is causing irreparable harm to our young people. We know that having a sense of belonging is vital for mental health. Yet, every day we see First Nations youth who are in crisis, who feel like they don't belong in their First Nation, that they don't have a right to be there, that they are not real Indians, that they are lesser than other community members because they have 6(2) status.

We cannot let our children continue to suffer, isolated by their lack of status.

Many years ago, while in law school, I learned about the concept of irreparable harm as it relates to those who seek injunctive relief. In basic form, it is a harm that cannot be compensated with money, a harm that cannot be quantified or cured.

Over the past two days, I spoke at many gatherings at the Special Chiefs Assembly. Many people spoke to me about Bill S-2 and how their lives were impacted by the registration provisions within the Indian Act. Some spoke of the irreparable harm associated with separation and isolation.

Last night, I had the unexpected pleasure to once again speak to Sharon McIvor, a true matriarch in every sense of the word. She shared that at times people would approach her, and, after a brief introduction, they would say, "I am one of yours."

These stories are about family connection, identity and belonging. They are about one's right to fall in love, have children and leave a legacy for future generations. This is not just a legal right but a basic human right.

• (1510)

Colleagues, if I can indulge you for just a moment, I ask that you take a pause, relax, close your eyes and imagine a time in the not-too-distant future when, during the course of your day, a complete stranger walks up to you. They introduce themselves and say, "I am one of yours."

Honourable senators, I urge you to vote in favour of this bill and send it to the other place where it is my hope that our elected counterparts will listen to the will of the majority of their First Nations constituents and accept this bill as amended. *Wela'liog*. Thank you.

Hon. David M. Arnot: Honourable senators, I rise because the Senate stands at a crossroads — not because of what we did yesterday but, instead, because of what I believe we will be called upon to do tomorrow.

Yesterday, we also stood at a crossroads, and we answered the first of three questions that, while not on the scrolls, have framed this debate and will continue to frame this debate. The questions are the following:

First, should procedural rules trump the need to respond to structural injustice?

Second, should we remain silent in the face of ongoing colonial legal mechanisms that deny Indigenous Peoples their rights simply because they are legally entrenched?

Third, should we — as a chamber entrusted with protecting minority rights — decline to act, even symbolically, when the law itself is unjust?

Should procedural rules trump the need to respond to structural injustice? The Senate responded with a resounding “no.” To vote for the amended Bill S-2, we will affirm our highest role: to bear witness to injustice and expose its continuing impacts. By adopting the report on Bill S-2, this chamber affirmed that the principles of justice, equity and truth must prevail, even when the rules say, “Not yet.”

While we have answered the first question, our work is far from done. I hope this amended bill will go to the other place. It is their right as elected members of Parliament to accept or reject it. All signs point to rejection. We must prepare ourselves and prepare First Nations people for that probable outcome. This means that the hopes we have raised may soon be dashed.

Yet, honourable senators, let us not retreat from what we have done. In fact, let us build upon it. What occurred in this chamber over the past several days is what the Senate was created to do. We bore witness to injustice. We spoke with courage. We placed the interests of future generations above the convenience of the present. We were the Senate at its best.

Much of what we did yesterday is directly related to the new independence in the Senate. The majority of the current Senate is non-partisan. I do not believe we would have done what we did yesterday if we had been in a partisan chamber. It is that very independence that allowed us to act on moral clarity, procedural integrity and structural injustice. Senators stood and named truth after truth.

Senator Prosper and Senator White spoke from deeply considered positions. Though they raised different considerations, both pointed in the same direction: the urgent need to resolve the exclusion and harms caused by the second-generation cut-off.

Senator Audette asserted:

... for every decision given concerning the Indian Act and status, emancipation or discrimination between men and women under sections 6(1) and 6(2), whether subtle or

overt, we, the Parliament, have said, “We can do more.” The point we are trying to make is that we have that responsibility.

Senator McCallum said:

We must show Canadians that we stand for justice and equality for all. Supporting this report and Bill S-2, as amended, would send a strong message to First Nations and First Nations women and children, conveying that they are deserving of equality and that they have a place in their own country and a place in “Building Canada Strong.”

Senator Housakos asserted:

At the end of the day, the government in the other place will do what they want. They have that right. They’ve been elected. But we have the right to raise flags, to highlight things for the government and the other place and to express to them some elements that they might have missed in terms of voices and corners of this country so we can help them come to a better solution.

Honourable senators, the Indian Act is often described as a beast — an instrument of legislative colonialism that defies dismantling. However, yesterday the Senate reached for one of its teeth and pulled. In doing so, we faced the second and third questions of our crossroads.

Should we remain silent in the face of ongoing colonial mechanisms that deny Indigenous rights simply because they are legally entrenched? Should we — as a chamber entrusted with protecting minority rights — decline to act, even symbolically, when the law itself is unjust? Our answer must continue to be a resounding “no.”

Colleagues, we’ve answered the first question with clarity. Let us now acknowledge the reality of where we stand. It was signalled quite clearly that the amendment this chamber adopted was considered to be out of order by the government. It is highly probable that the other place will reject the amendment. That outcome, if it comes, will not undo the truths that we have spoken. But it will mean that the witnesses before the Indigenous Peoples Committee, whose testimony moved so many of us, will not receive relief through this bill — not yet.

The good news is that our work as a chamber is not over. In fact, it is just beginning. The Senate made a moral, legal and parliamentary claim that the second-generation cut-off is a colonial wound and that the law can be amended to reflect justice.

If the other place disagrees, it does not end our responsibility; it only heightens our responsibility. We now have a duty to consider what else the Senate can do through its committees, inquiries, studies and procedural authority to ensure that the hopes raised are not permanently dashed.

To adapt the old saying, “If a door closes in the other place, let us open another one here.”

Honourable senators, we must show First Nations that an appointed Senate can use its full constitutional powers to hold the government to account. Voting in this chamber is our most visible tool, but it is not our only one. We can launch a committee study, as permitted by our Rules, our Constitution and our powers as senators. We can work with committees, and we can, I believe, work between committees or even across partisan boundaries to investigate the long-term effects of the second-generation cut-off. We can hold the government to account for 40 years of fiduciary failure.

Let me say this clearly: For four decades, succeeding Governments of Canada have failed to act in the best interest of Indigenous Peoples. They have acted in the best interest of the federal treasury. The second-generation cut-off is not just a policy. In my view, it is a continuing breach of the honour of the Crown. It is a breach of fiduciary duty. It is a breach of treaty rights. It is a breach of Indigenous rights. It is a breach of human rights. That is unassailable.

• (1520)

Canada's treatment of Indigenous Peoples is our national shame. It is a stain on our international reputation. It is fundamentally antithetical to the democratic values that Canadians hold so dearly. The second-generation cut-off rule is a mechanism that carries forward that shame by embedding discrimination directly into law.

The Supreme Court of Canada has held that the honour of the Crown arises whenever the Crown interacts with Indigenous Peoples. That honour requires good faith, fair dealing, consultation and protection of Indigenous rights and treaty rights. That is not an option.

Senators have stood in this chamber to call that out. We must now act on that knowledge.

The Senate Standing Committee on Indigenous Peoples heard compelling, accurate, factual and credible truths. The amendment, in my view, was a matter of logic, touched certainly by empathy and heartbreaking lived experience.

Canadians do not want a Senate driven by partisanship or emotion. They want principled, fair decisions rooted in the rule of law. That law requires procedural fairness, moral integrity and equity.

The law is not only about process, it is about substance. When law causes harm, we as parliamentarians have both the authority and the duty to fix it.

The federal government is committed to reconciliation. In fact, the government announced yesterday its intention to cure the Indigenous child welfare issues once and for all. That is a powerful commitment, and it shows that where there is political will, there can be legislative and policy innovation.

I am confident in the statements that the Government of Canada has made that they are committed to fixing the 6(2) cut-off as soon as possible. But we must ensure that that confidence is matched by accountability. The Senate has a critical role to play in holding the government to its word.

As I said earlier, I believe the Senate is at a crossroads.

Today, we must look beyond the vote. We must recognize that our challenge now is to prevent the Senate's action from being a moment of rhetorical clarity followed by legislative retreat.

We cannot simply say, "We did our job," and move on. That would be a betrayal of the work that has been done and the people we claim to serve.

We must answer the call to act. I believe that we, as senators, will need to answer that call to act again on this issue of the second-generation cut-off.

In acting, we must use every tool we have: committees, studies, parliamentary questions, independent reports, Indigenous witnesses and institutional courage.

Let me take the liberty of thinking outside the box. Let me suggest that this may require a unique joint effort between the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, perhaps the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights and perhaps the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Perhaps an inter-committee mandate will be required.

Yesterday we spoke our truths. Today we must live them.

We must show First Nations people that the Senate of Canada is not just a chamber of rhetoric but a chamber of resolve.

Let this be our legacy — not as a chamber that watched and waited, but as one that rose and responded.

The second-generation cut-off is not over. It will come back. It will be soon. When it does, let us not be caught unprepared.

Let us stand ready — together and on the side of justice.

I support the passage of this bill. Thank you. *Kinanâskomitinawow.*

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Batters?

Hon. Denise Batters: Would Senator Arnot take a question?

Senator Arnot: Yes.

Senator Batters: Thank you very much for noting the high quality of the debate that we've seen over the last while on this bill. I agree that it has been excellent. I was so happy to see that because I feel like that's what the Senate should always be.

This was a very special moment, but we have had other times, for example, the marijuana legalization debate and the assisted suicide debate the first time, when the Conservatives as opposition were much larger, and in fact, were probably the majority. We have had those times, and I'm glad this was another one of those times.

When you were speaking about the different tools that the Senate can use if, indeed, the government does reject this amendment if we pass it and send it to the House of Commons,

here's another tool that I ask you to consider: The Senate can insist on their amendment to the House of Commons. What do you think about that tool?

Senator Arnot: I have no comment on that, but, Senator Batters, you always have great ideas. I think we should all consider that.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators and colleagues, I am here today to speak at the third reading of Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements), as amended.

Before I start, I want to tell the chamber that, with the help of Jackie and Jeffrey from the Conservative caucus, I met with the Ethics Officer and was found not to have a conflict. One of the questions he asked me was, "Do you have a private interest here?" I said:

No. These are rights that the First Nations always had, and the racist and discriminatory Indian Act took it away from them. What we're doing here is giving it back to them.

He said, "Okay."

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator McCallum: Before I speak to the matter at hand, I want to acknowledge our ancestors who are here with us today. I honour their dedication, perseverance and tenacity to set the path for us. That is the path that you are on and that we are all on. They did it so that we wouldn't be in the same place they were. Now we are the seventh generation, and we are also living ancestors. We now have an obligation to do the same to the generations who are walking towards us saying, "What are you doing to make this a better world for me?"

I want to thank the writer of one of our written submissions. Thanks to Amylie, who is watching. Also, thanks to her parents for giving me consent to read this letter she sent.

My name is Amylie Sioui. I am 11 years old and in Grade 4. My mom, Sabryna Sioui, is Wendat. I wish I didn't have to write this letter. I should be having fun with my friends. I actually really don't want to write it because every time I think about what words I want to use, I can feel myself getting angry, and I get a weird feeling in my stomach. I asked my mom why my stomach felt that way. She told me, "Amylie, that's what happens when we're anxious. It's called anxiety."

That day, I learned what anxiety was. But even if I didn't know the word before, it wasn't a new feeling for me. In fact, I've felt this feeling a lot in the past few years. I always said I was stressed, but it is much deeper than that. You see, I am 11 years old and I'm tired. Tired of feeling anxious. So I decided to tell you part of my story as a Wendat child without status. The story of a child who wants to belong to something that is so close yet so far at the same time. My

story. The one where I feel rejected by my own community and by those who make the rules that prevent me from being who I am.

• (1530)

Every day, I get up in my home in Wendake. I live there with my mother. Not in Quebec City but in Wendake. Wendake is the only place I've ever known. It's my home. Then I leave our house and go to Wahta' elementary school, which means maple in the Wendat language. I haven't mentioned it yet, but I'm learning Wendat at school. I love it because I think it sounds really nice and also I'm good at it.

When we have language classes, I feel like I'm taking a trip back in time because my ancestors spoke that language. I say "my ancestors" because that's what my mom taught me. She's Wendat and everyone in my family who came before her was also Wendat. Well, at least one person in every generation, anyway. It goes back so far, my mom couldn't even tell me how far.

But when I grow up, even if I have a child of my own and if they have a child themselves, I will never be someone's Wendat ancestor. Even though I know that I am Wendat deep down, I also know that my community doesn't recognize me and that the government has a law that also doesn't recognize me.

I shouldn't have to care or know anything about that, especially since I'm just 11 years old, but I did some research with my mom. I had too many questions, too much anger and frustration every time I was told I couldn't participate in an activity. Normally, at 11 years old, I should be able to get up in the morning, and the only thing I should have to think about would be going to school in my community and looking forward to participating in the great activities that are organized throughout the year.

I shouldn't have to find words I don't usually use to try to describe my sadness in a letter to adults working in another city.

In the last two years, I've experienced lots of sadness and tears. There was the time when I couldn't attend Camp Tourilli. It's a summer camp where you stay in the forest for several days and do lots of activities related to Wendat culture. But I couldn't go because I don't have a band number. Most of my class went because they are status Wendat. There was also a competition to write a text about our ancestors for the community museum. We had to pick an ancestor to write about and say what they represented to us, and the best ones would be displayed at the museum. We could even win a gift certificate if our work was selected.

I put a lot of effort into mine. I chose Marguerite Vincent Lawinonkie, one of the greatest Wendat women who ever lived. When I found out I had been selected, I was so happy. The problem was that there were too many texts. So, to narrow it down, the teachers decided to remove the texts by all the non-status children. Not because they weren't as good, just because I wasn't a Wendat with a card. I cried so much when I got home.

That time, I even told my mom that I didn't want to go back to school. When I went back to class, we talked about what happened again, because my friends asked why my text was taken away. My teacher told the whole class that it was because I wasn't Wendat. All the kids in my class laughed, and even though it was only for a few seconds, to me it felt like it would never end. I reacted in the only way I knew how in these situations: silence! Nobody would really understand anyway.

There was a third thing that happened, too. With hockey. I get to play hockey at school, and I love it. Every year, Wendake organizes a minor hockey tournament for young people in my age bracket and a few others. Lots of my friends participate. I wanted to sign up, thinking that since we live in Wendake, it should be all right. So my mom called the Wendake recreation department. She was told that, unfortunately, I couldn't participate because, once again, I didn't have a band number. I had to watch with several other young people like me while our friends had fun playing hockey against teams from other communities. Without us! Because we aren't Wendat to our community. I'm here, but I don't belong anywhere.

Someone who helped me with my letter said, "You're invisible." It is funny because I immediately understood what she meant. I am invisible to my community. No matter what I do, it's never going to be enough. I'm always going to be the one who wants to be Wendat without ever really being Wendat.

Why don't I get to have the same opportunities as my friends? I feel like something inside me was stolen and that I'll never be able to find it. I do everything I can to be accepted. I even took smoke dance lessons. But what's the point? They probably won't even let me dance at the Pow Wow if I wanted to.

I'm just 11 years old, so I don't know very much about status and laws. But I know one thing: If I had status, I wouldn't feel like this today. Why can't my mom give it to me? What is the difference between my mom and my friends' moms? The rules need to change and I want my mom to be able to pass on her status to me. Please stop the second-generation cut-off. I'm tired of feeling bad, tired of being afraid of being rejected. One day, I'd like to be someone's Wendat ancestor.

Tiawenhk inenh —

We are looking at an act that attempts to kill the child in the Indian, which is happening today and it happened to me in residential school in 1957. We are still there. And thank you, Amylie. You are here.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator McCallum: My people knew where they belonged, and you compare her to me now.

It's on the land, or *aski*. *Aski* is where our cultures, communities and *etinewak* people rooted themselves and gave themselves definition. Instead of rooting themselves in one

particular place, as we do in cities and towns, they travelled *aski* to follow the food, accommodating their lifestyle to the environment, the seasons and where they lived their everyday lives.

Each geographical space we settled in became imbued with meaning. All environment was seen as a living space and the ideal location for living. We left it virtually untouched until the northern store started to stock items that were not degradable. Those places of nature were not something that we humans made, and these places were influenced by non-human actors. Our relatives — the birds, animals, insects, fish and ecosystem — occupied *aski* and played a huge role in the continual shaping and evolution of our culture. In effect, the land was occupied, but the newcomers didn't see it that way. They saw it as empty, and they wanted the land.

Aski is meaningful to me. She gives me life. We cannot bind her nor make borders to own her. As cultural groups and a collective, First Nations define themselves, their governance and their code of ethics from the places they lived out on the land since time immemorial. We carry this notion of home in our collective blood memory, free to live out on the land, educating ourselves as we, the children, watched our parents live out the traditions and life skills so we could become independent, but also interdependent, to take our place and honour our purpose in this earth world. Growth involved not only the physical and mental but also the intellectual and spiritual. This is how I came to know and understand myself. I was able to exercise the creativity and the curiosity I had. There was no place like home out on the land.

• (1540)

I believed I was special then; that I was capable and quick to observe; that I could mimic what my parents could and did do; that I was capable of thinking, imagining, laughing, running; that I understood that I mattered and, therefore, I did. I trusted myself in my growth. There was something in me, something that was from the Creator and that was not male or female, not old or young, a kind of worth that was inherent and unshakeable.

I was at home with my people's history, stories of trapping, my ancestors living out their lives in their own time, in their own way in the vast *aski*.

I stand in support of Bill S-2 as amended, and I ask that you all stand behind First Nations, in particular, First Nations women and children, and vote in favour of passing Bill S-2 as amended.

We the Senate have all been given a precious gift. We have been gifted the stories, teachings, expertise, experiences, vulnerabilities and trust of the many First Nations witnesses who appeared before us, trust that we hear their voices, that we understand their suffering and that we are committed to and will take immediate action to uphold their fundamental human rights.

Their trust is not to be taken lightly. We are here as senators to represent those voices that have been excluded for far too long. Not everyone is so fortunate to receive a gift like this, and we are forever changed by it as people and as human beings.

Canadians owe a debt of gratitude to the First Nations women and their descendants who have given decades of their lives to uphold the very Charter rights that Canadians hold so dear.

The First Nations' battle for equality ensures our right to equality for all Canadians is protected.

Thank you to Mary Two-Axe Earley. Mary was a Mohawk woman from Kahnawà:ke who gave more than two decades of her life fighting sex discrimination in the Indian Act. She persisted despite staunch resistance from her own First Nation, First Nations Chiefs and the federal government. She once famously said that a dog had more rights to be buried on the reserve than she did.

Her passion and commitment to protecting the equality rights of First Nations women were unwavering and helped unite First Nations women across Canada. Not only did she spearhead a new advocacy organization, Equal Rights for Indian Women, in the late 1960s, but she was also actively involved in the Canadian women's rights movement. She gave powerful testimony at the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. The Commission's recommendations in 1970 included a call for Canada to act: "Legislation should be enacted to repeal the sections of the [Indian] Act which discriminate on the basis of sex." This was in 1970, before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Thank you to Jeanette Corbiere Lavell and Yvonne Bedard. Jeanette is an Anishinabek woman from Wiikwemikoong, and Yvonne Bedard was an Onondaga woman from Six Nations. Their court challenges against Canada for persistent sex discrimination in the Indian Act went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. Their battle involved the Canadian Bill of Rights, and while they lost the case, they won the hearts of First Nations women all over Canada who joined together and advocated for equality.

Jeanette faced threats of violence and vocal opposition from First Nations Chiefs but continued her advocacy and went on to become president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Thank you to former senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas. Sandra is from Tobique First Nation and challenged the ongoing sex discrimination at the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which decided in her favour. The UN found that the Indian Act prevented Sandra from enjoying her culture with community. Because of this case and her advocacy, the Indian Act was amended in 1985 to address some of the sex discrimination. She, too, faced organized opposition from First Nations leaders and the government, but she never stopped advocating.

When she joined the Senate, she joined the Indigenous Peoples Committee and successfully helped push for critical amendments to Bill S-3.

Thank you to Sharon McIvor. Sharon is a woman from the Lower Nicola Indian Band in B.C. She successfully challenged sex discrimination in the Indian Act post-1985 and won her case. As a result, Canada amended the act in 2010. She instantly became the grandmother to thousands of new status Indians.

Because Canada refused to address all the sex discrimination in 2010, she took her case to the UN Human Rights Committee, which decided in her favour. The Human Rights Committee called on Canada to register all those in the same position as Sharon and her descendants, remedy any remaining discrimination within First Nations communities resulting from discrimination in the Indian Act, take steps to prevent discrimination in the future and make full reparations to her. Canada has yet to act on this decision.

Thank you to Stéphane Descheneaux and Susan and Tammy Yantha. Stéphane, Susan and Tammy are Abenaki of Odanak First Nation who challenged the sex discrimination in the Indian Act that resulted in differential treatment of cousins and siblings born out of wedlock based on whether they descended from matrilineal or patrilineal lines. They won their case, which resulted in the Bill S-3 amendments in 2017. Madam Justice Masse from the Quebec Superior Court called on Canada to fulfill its legislative obligation to make further amendments to address other forms of discrimination to ensure the Indian Act complies with the Charter.

Thank you to Lynn Gehl. Lynn Gehl is an Anishinaabe woman from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation who also challenged sex discrimination in Canada's "unstated paternity" policy, which presumes the father of a child born to an unwed First Nations mother is a non-Indian. She won her case at the Ontario Court of Appeal, and because this decision came out during the consideration of Bill S-3, Canada has to include amendments to make the unstated paternity fairer for First Nations women, as it only impacts First Nations women.

Thank you to Jeremy Matson. Jeremy is from the Squamish Nation and successfully challenged the ongoing sex discrimination in Indian registration at the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or CEDAW.

CEDAW called on Canada to make reparations to Jeremy and his children; recognize them as status Indians without conditions; recognize their right to transmit that status to their descendants; amend the Indian Act to fully eliminate sex discrimination and eliminate cut-off dates, such as the 1985 cut-off; and ensure descendants of First Nations women are equal to those of First Nations men.

• (1550)

Thank you to Sharon, Terra and Nicole Nicholas and all the other plaintiffs.

Sharon is from the Haida Nation, and she, together with the other plaintiffs, challenged the race-based discrimination in the Indian Act's historic enfranchisement provisions, which denied Indian status and the ability to transmit Indian status to one's descendants. In this case, Canada conceded that the inability to be registered and to transmit status to your children and grandchildren amounted to race discrimination and violated the Charter. Canada also admitted that this has caused significant harm to their sense of identity and belonging in their First Nations and economic damage due to the denial of federal programs.

As a result, Canada had to introduce legislation to address this discrimination, which is Bill S-2 before us. Like with *Descheneaux*, the court pointed out that Canada is not limited to only dealing with this case and could seek extensions to the deadline to make amendments.

Thank you to Pam Palmater. Pam is a Mi'kmaw lawyer from Eel River Bar First Nation in New Brunswick. She is a mother and grandmother who has been working on this specific issue for 40 years, since she was a youth. Pam knew she'd have to battle the federal government in every forum, including in the media, in inquiries and commissions, as part of her research and publications and in parliamentary committees and studies, as well as at the international level, including at the United Nations, courts and tribunals.

In order to prepare for this battle, she has worked with First Nations communities and organizations all over Canada, especially First Nations women's grassroots groups, on Indian status and band membership. She also earned four university degrees, knowing that to compete with Canada, she needed to learn a lot. Her doctorate in law was on this exact topic. Her massive public outreach campaign in the media and on social media has helped educate an entire nation. Her only wish now is that her grandchildren don't have to suffer like her family did.

Thank you to former senator Lillian Dyck. Lillian is a Cree woman from George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan. She has advocated for equality and justice for First Nations women for many years. Not only did she advance women's rights while a sitting senator, but she was also the Chair of the Indigenous Peoples Committee during the consideration of Bill S-3 in 2017 and, together with the other Indigenous Peoples Committee members, forced additional amendments that went beyond the *Descheneaux* case.

Thank you to every First Nation mother, grandmother, auntie, sister and daughter, and thank you to all the male elders, leaders, activists and youth who stood with them to advocate for the equality rights of First Nation women and girls; shine a light on violence against women; advance our domestic and international human rights; call out discrimination in the foster-care system; work to end discrimination in jails and prisons; persist in efforts to combat human trafficking; raise children, care for elderly parents or contribute to their communities; protect our lands, waters, plants and animals; and advance our inherent, Aboriginal, treaty and land rights, as well as our right to be self-governing. Where would our communities be without all your passion, dedication and persistence? You navigate the minefield that is historic and ongoing genocide so that First Nations and Canadians alike can live in a more just society.

I want to make a special mention that I had a lot of help from Dr. Pam Palmater. She helped me with this speech and another speech, and she provided me with a lot of advice.

Despite centuries of colonial oppression, dispossession and discriminatory federal laws, policies and practices, you come before Senate committees like the Indigenous Peoples Committee in hopes that we will truly listen and take steps to protect our rights.

Thank you to all the First Nation witnesses and experts who put so much time and effort into ensuring our committee was fully educated on Canada's legal obligations to end sex- and race-based discrimination in Indian registration and, in particular, the second-generation cut-off that would lead to the end of family lines, divided families and the legislated extinction of First Nations.

Only one First Nation testified against the entirety of Bill S-2 with or without amendments. The rest, which included Indigenous women's organizations, individuals, experts, elders and youth, as well as individual First Nations and First Nations organizations that together represent all the First Nations in Canada, all supported the removal of the second-generation cut-off. It's important for the Senate to understand just how significant that is. The near-unanimous consensus from First Nations and organizations was to end sex discrimination and remove the second-generation cut-off.

I also want to thank the Indigenous Peoples Committee and all the senators in this chamber for passing the report. It really means a lot.

Remember what the Supreme Court of Canada said in the *Andrews* case:

Discrimination is unacceptable in a democratic society because it epitomizes the worst effects of the denial of equality, and discrimination reinforced by law is particularly repugnant. . . . It is against this evil that s. 15 provides a guarantee.

Their words are important. They said, “. . . a guarantee” — not a promise, not a commitment, not a discussion, not a meeting, not a consultation process and not an action plan to be developed over the next few years.

Section 15 equality for First Nations women is a guarantee. Not only is the Charter of Rights the highest law in Canada, but the Supreme Court of Canada has also repeatedly reinforced this interpretation of section 15 equality rights. There are no legal options to enact a law that is not Charter compliant.

We, as a Senate, can't do it. The House of Commons can't do it. Justice Canada knows this, and so does Indigenous Services Canada. Canada cannot use the arguments that Indian registration rules are complex, that it would be more convenient administratively to amend one tiny part of the act at a time or that increasing the number of people entitled to registration could cost more as legal justifications to deny equality rights.

I am not a lawyer, so I have to rely on the constitutional, human rights and Indigenous rights experts who appeared before us, like Mary Eberts and Pam Palmater. They reminded our committee that the law is very clear. I will share some of the jurisprudence that they shared with us.

In *Vriend*, the Supreme Court of Canada held that government incrementalism cannot justify an infringement of Charter rights:

In my opinion, groups that have historically been the target of discrimination cannot be expected to wait patiently for the protection of their human dignity and equal rights while governments move toward reform one step at a time. . . .

It went on to explain that:

If the infringement of the rights and freedoms of these groups is permitted to persist while governments fail to pursue equality diligently, then the guarantees of the *Charter* will be reduced to little more than empty words.

• (1600)

Yet, the federal government is asking First Nations women and children to wait.

In *Schachter*, the Supreme Court of Canada, or SCC, explained that financial considerations alone can't justify a Charter breach:

This Court has held, and rightly so, that budgetary considerations cannot be used to justify a violation under s. 1.

In *Eldridge*, the SCC rejected the government's assertion that speculative costs constitute minimal impairment:

Assuming without deciding . . . that the objective of this decision — controlling health care expenditures — is “pressing and substantial” . . . I find that it does not constitute a minimum impairment of s. 15(1).

They went on to hold that the deference a court must give to the government is not infinite.

The SCC also dismissed the government's argument that a change to the act would be a financial burden on small First Nations, stating in *Corbiere*:

. . . the possible failure, in the future, of the government to provide Aboriginal communities with additional resources necessary to implement a regime that would ensure respect for equality rights cannot justify a violation of constitutional rights in its legislation.

The government's other argument pertaining to the duty to consult has been seriously considered and debated in the Committee on Indigenous Peoples and in this chamber. It is the subject of a great deal of discussion. It bears repeating: It was the federal government — this Liberal government — that chose to battle the Mikisew Cree First Nation in litigation all the way to the SCC. The government fought strenuously against the legal duty to consult when enacting legislation.

The federal government won: The SCC held that the federal government has no legal duty to consult when it enacts legislation. I am not proud that Canada fought a First Nation on this issue, but the SCC has now settled that point.

In my speech on Monday, I referenced all the national inquiries and commissions that raised the issue of ongoing sex- and race-based discrimination that deeply impacts First Nations women. The National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls found Canada guilty of ongoing genocide, a manifest pattern of conduct that demonstrates a clear intention to destroy Indigenous Peoples, including unique forms of gendered genocide.

The minister has conceded many times over that the second-generation cut-off is “very discriminatory” and “one of the most harmful things.” Canada has conceded in the *Nicholas* case that the inability to transmit Indian status to your descendants is discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, and breaches their section 15 equality rights.

Everyone knows that the second-generation cut-off is unconstitutional and must be remedied immediately. Here are some of the tangible and intangible benefits denied to First Nations and, in particular, First Nations women if we do not vote for Bill S-2 as amended:

The “repugnant,” “evil” sex- and race-based discrimination continues; it sends the message to society and First Nations that First Nations women are less valuable, less worthy, not deserving of equality, not important enough to enjoy human rights, less Indigenous and less deserving of remedial action; it perpetuates divisions within families, extended families, communities and Nations; it prolongs disconnection from community; it creates barriers to accessing language, culture, ceremonies and teachings from Elders; it denies a political voice in the communal governance of their home First Nation; it denies the social cohesion of regular interactions and relationships with other community members; it can result in rejection by other community members if they lack status; there is exclusion from political or legal land claim, Treaty or other settlement negotiations; they can be prevented from participating in First Nations elections and referendums; it is a barrier to accessing Treaty rights without harassment; they can be denied access to federal programs and services which are First Nation-specific and those offered on reserve; they would be unable to access First-Nations-specific pandemic supports, which may apply in the future to other endemics, epidemics or pandemics; it impacts their sense of self-worth and identity and belonging; and it harms their physical, mental and emotional health.

Senators, we must pass Bill S-2 as amended. This is the only protection available for First Nations women and children right now. We are the only barrier that can prevent them from waiting four years or more — if ever — for equality and justice. We must, then, be ready to stand firm in our defence of the Charter and the equality rights of First Nations and all Canadians should the House of Commons try to strip out these amendments.

People have talked about rejection, but people have gone to the other side and have talked to groups there. They are being supported. So I don't know where people are getting this story.

The 12-month delay for the coming into force of these amendments is not ideal. It means women will wait longer, but it is a fail-safe to protect their rights should the government try to drag their feet or not act at all.

I will vote in support of Bill S-2 as amended, and I ask that all of you do the same. Imagine what message a unanimous vote to uphold Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms would say to the House of Commons. Thank you. *Kinanaskomitināwaw*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Is there an agreement on the length of the bell?

Some Hon. Senators: Fifteen minutes.

Some Hon. Senators: Now.

The Hon. the Speaker: I just want to mention that if there's no agreement, it will be an hour, so I'm going to ask the question again: Is there an agreement on the length of the bell? Fifteen minutes was indicated. Is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: The bell will ring for 15 minutes. The vote will take place at 4:23 p.m.

Call in the senators.

• (1620)

Motion agreed to and bill, as amended, read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler	Manning
Arnot	Marshall
Ataullahjan	Martin
Audette	McBean
Batters	McCallum
Boudreau	McPhedran
Boyer	Miville-Dechéne
Burey	Mohamed
Busson	Moncion
Cardozo	Moodie
Carignan	Muggli
Clement	Osler
Cormier	Oudar
Coyle	Pate
Dalphond	Patterson
Deacon (<i>Nova Scotia</i>)	Petitclerc
Deacon (<i>Ontario</i>)	Prosper
Dhillon	Quinn
Forest	Ravalia
Francis	Ringuette
Galvez	Ross
Gerba	Saint-Germain
Gignac	Senior
Hay	Simons
Hébert	Smith
Housakos	Surette
Ince	Tannas
Karetak-Lindell	Wells (<i>Alberta</i>)
Kingston	Wells (<i>Newfoundland and Labrador</i>)
Loffreda	Youance
MacAdam	Yussuff—63
MacDonald	

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Nil

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Boehm	McNair
Duncan	Moreau
Harder	Petten
LaBoucane-Benson	Pupatello—8

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1630)

JUSTICE

STATUTES REPEAL ACT—MOTION TO RESOLVE THAT
THE ACT AND THE PROVISIONS OF OTHER ACTS
NOT BE REPEALED—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Pat Duncan, pursuant to notice of December 3, 2025, moved:

That, pursuant to section 3 of the *Statutes Repeal Act*, S.C. 2008, c. 20, the Senate resolve that the Act and the provisions of the other Acts listed below, which have not come into force in the period since their adoption, not be repealed:

1. *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. 33 (2nd Supp):

-Part II;
2. *Contraventions Act*, S.C. 1992, c. 47:

-paragraph 8(1)(d), sections 9, 10 and 12 to 16, subsections 17(1) to (3), sections 18 and 19, subsection 21(1) and sections 22, 23, 25, 26, 28 to 38, 40, 41, 44 to 47, 50 to 53, 56, 57, 60 to 62, 84 (in respect of the following sections of the schedule: 2.1, 2.2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7.1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16) and 85;
3. *Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Implementation Act*, S.C. 1998, c. 32;
4. *Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act*, S.C. 1999, c. 34:

-sections 155, 157, 158 and 160, subsections 161(1) and (4) and section 168;
5. *Yukon Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 7:

-sections 70 to 75 and 77, subsection 117(2), sections 167, 168, 210, 211, 221, 227, 233 and 283;

6. *An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, S.C. 2003, c. 26:

-sections 4 and 5, subsection 13(3), section 21, subsections 26(1) to (3) and sections 30, 32, 34, 36 (with respect to section 81 of the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act*), 42 and 43;
7. *Budget Implementation Act, 2009*, S.C. 2009, c. 2:

-section 394;

-sections 401 to 404;
8. *Payment Card Networks Act*, S.C. 2010, c. 12, s. 1834:

-sections 6 and 7;
9. *Financial System Review Act*, S.C. 2012, c. 5:

-sections 54 and 56 to 59;
10. *Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act*, S.C. 2012, c. 17:

-sections 70 to 77;
11. *Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act*, S.C. 2012, c. 19:

-sections 459, 460, 462 and 463;
12. *Strengthening Military Justice in the Defence of Canada Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 24:

-sections 12, 13 and 46;
13. *Economic Action Plan 2013 Act, No. 1*, S.C. 2013, c. 33:

-subsection 228(2);
14. *Northwest Territories Devolution Act*, S.C. 2014, c. 2:

-section 47;
15. *Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act*, S.C. 2014, c. 29:

-section 28, subsection 29(1), sections 31, 33, 35, 37 to 39, subsection 40(1), sections 41 to 49, subsections 50(2) and (5), sections 52, 53, 55 and 56;
16. *Economic Action Plan 2014 Act, No. 2*, S.C. 2014, c. 39:

-sections 306, 308, subsection 309(1), section 311, subsection 313(2);

-sections 387 to 400;

17. *Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act*, S.C. 2015, c. 23:
-section 32;
18. *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act*, S.C. 2015, c. 27:
-sections 10, 15 and 35;
19. *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, S.C. 2015, c. 29:
-section 2; and
20. *Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area Act*, S.C. 2015, c. 38:
-section 4.

She said: Honourable senators, please cast your mind back to November 1, Game 7 of the World Series. The excitement about baseball's final game of the season was felt throughout this country. From Iqaluit to Old Crow via Tuktoyaktuk, from Campbell River on Vancouver Island to Twillingate in Newfoundland and Digby in Nova Scotia, the Blue Jays were Canada's beloved team, and everyone was on the edge of their seats. It was the same rise-to-your-feet, sheer joy that was felt in Saskatchewan by Roughriders fans this year —

Senator Batters: Hear, hear.

Senator Duncan: — and by Habs, Jets and Oilers fans in their playoff runs. There are probably a few old enough in this chamber to remember 1967 for the Leafs fans.

Honourable senators, I am speaking of sheer joy, excitement and anticipation felt by Canadians about their sports. It is the same anticipation senators feel about the motion on the Statutes Repeal Act.

Seriously, you say? Colleagues, I am serious. This motion is eagerly anticipated every year for a number of reasons.

This motion, brought forward at the end of the calendar year, before we rise for the holiday season, is carefully and joyfully examined by senators. It represents a commitment to recognize and build upon the work of previous colleagues.

For those senators without longevity in our chamber, in 2001, a constituent brought forward to the then Alberta senator Tommy Banks the question of why the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act had never been brought into force. To Senator Banks' amazement, there were several acts of Parliament that had never come into force, and he brought forward Bill S-12, the first of many Statutes Repeal Bills. As newer senators are realizing, it can take several tries to get an S-bill adopted. Bill S-12 became Bill S-11, and so on, until Bill S-207 finally received Royal Assent in 2008. It was not proclaimed until 2010.

The essence of the act requires that at the start of every calendar year, the Minister of Justice tables before us and the other place a report listing every act or provision that was assented to nine years earlier or more on the preceding

December 31 — in effect, 10 years. All acts or sections of acts in the report will then be automatically repealed on December 31 of that year, unless they are either brought into force or repealed before that date. These acts or sections of acts can be kept on the books for another year if a resolution is adopted by either house of Parliament to defer their repeal. That is the motion we have before us today.

We have this motion at the eleventh hour, fairly close to December 31, as throughout the year, there are ongoing engagement and work with officials and affected parties to ensure appropriate proclamation, repeal or deferral of repeal.

Honourable senators, I refer to this as some of the hard work of government. Perhaps a better description is the time-consuming attention to detail that is often overlooked. In the case of statutes' repeal, it is dusting off the cobwebs or — in modern parlance — relocating the dust bunnies that seem to collect on legislation, ensuring the law remains fit for purpose.

Annually greeted with enthusiasm by all senators, this motion especially caught my eye when I first arrived in the Senate. Newer senators will recall the advice they are given upon arrival here: Information flow in the Senate is like drinking from a firehose.

Busy on the Finance Committee when Senator Bellemare brought forward this motion in June 2019, which was an unusual time of year due to the expected dissolution that was soon to follow, I recognized a reference to the legislative provisions of the Devolution Transfer Agreement with Yukon, an agreement that I had helped to negotiate. I asked a question, which was not a common occurrence at that time of year, on one of the last motions under debate. The Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut "constitutions" are regular acts of Parliament and are often referred to in the statutes repeal motion.

Credit must be given to former Nunavut senator Dennis Patterson and the Canadian Senators Group, who were instrumental in ensuring the Senate give truly sober second thought to this motion and the acts that are being deferred. Thanks to their efforts, for the past three years, this motion has been referred to our Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for detailed review.

Honourable senators, the review is truly thorough and detailed. I would like to offer my thanks to all members of the committee for their work this year. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks on behalf of all senators for this work, especially to the officials who came before the committee. There are a significant number of officials who are called upon to provide information, and, having attended the committee meetings, their answers to members' questions were thoughtful, straightforward and greatly appreciated.

Moving now to speak briefly to the more exciting details contained in this year's motion, I ask for your support for this resolution before December 31 to defer the repeal of one act and the provisions of 19 other acts that are listed in the motion.

I am asking the Senate to resolve that this act and these provisions, which have not come into force since they were enacted, not be repealed by operation of the Statutes Repeal Act.

The fifteenth Annual Report on the Statutes Repeal Act was tabled on May 28, 2025, in both houses of Parliament. This was in compliance with section 2 of the act. Following the tabling of the report, the Department of Justice contacted the departments responsible for the act and provisions listed in the report to verify whether their repeal should be deferred.

This year, certain provisions of seven acts will be repealed on December 31 by operation of the Statutes Repeal Act because the responsible ministers have not recommended that their repeal be deferred.

Thirteen ministers have recommended the deferral of repeal of one complete act and provisions of 19 other acts for which they are responsible.

The deferrals can be sought due to a number of reasons. Here are some examples: An external event must occur before the legislation can be brought into force or repealed, such as the coming into force of an international treaty or the enactment of legislation by the provinces and territories; proposed legislation repealing, replacing or bringing into force the not-in-force provisions is currently under way; matters currently being adjudicated must be dealt with; approvals are necessary for bringing the provisions into force or complete regulations; necessary policy work or consultations have to be completed. These are all reasons why these provisions come before us.

The repeal of certain provisions could also cause tension between the federal government and the provinces and territories and affect Canada's international relations.

Honourable senators, before I go further, I want to bring to your attention that there was a background document my office shared with all senators. Since my allocated speaking time is limited, the background document explains the purpose of the Statutes Repeal Act and includes an annex that lists the measures for which deferral of repeal is recommended, including the reasons for the recommended deferrals. I hope this document will give both new and seasoned senators a better understanding of this annual statute repeal process.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is recommending the deferral of repeal of one complete act, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Implementation Act. Officials from the department informed the committee that the coming into force of this act depends on actions of other countries either by signing the agreement or by a ratification process. Canada is not dragging its feet or signalling a change in policy. We are simply waiting on others.

The Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages; the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature; the Minister of Jobs and Families; the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada; the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs; and the Minister of Public Safety are each recommending the deferral of repeal for certain provisions of one act under their responsibility.

• (1640)

Honourable senators will recall that I mentioned Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut were created by acts of Parliament. Paragraph 5 of this motion makes reference to several sections of the Yukon Act. Many of these sections mention the Auditor General of Yukon. The Yukon, however, continues to make use of the Auditor General of Canada. We've not appointed our own auditor general. Utilizing resources and expertise already in place is being part of the Canadian family. These sections are not enforced and have not been enforced since the act received Royal Assent in 2002.

The territories work hard to have the tools necessary to operate as governments, in the case of the Yukon in government-to-government relations with First Nations Peoples.

There are some situations where we don't quite have all the tools in place and borrow from Canada, such as with respect to the Auditor General. It's important to the Yukon to maintain this relationship.

The Ministers of Finance, National Revenue and National Defence, as well as the President of the Treasury Board, have each recommended the deferral of repeal for certain provisions of these three acts under their responsibility.

The Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has recommended deferral of repeal for certain provisions of four acts under his responsibility.

Since the repeal deferrals are valid for one year, any act or provision whose repeal is deferred this year will appear again next year in the annual report, unless the responsible minister is confident the repeal will not cause any unintended negative consequences, it comes into force before then or is repealed by the adoption of another bill to that effect.

As I said, it is important that the resolution be adopted before December 31, 2025; otherwise, the act, and the provisions of other acts listed in the motion, will be automatically repealed by operation of the Statutes Repeals Act. This could lead to inconsistency or gaps in federal legislation, which would need to be corrected through the introduction of a new bill.

Going through the complete legislative process from policy development to legislative drafting in both official languages — and in the case of Nunavut also Inuktitut — to Royal Assent may prove problematic, especially if the needed legislated fix is of an urgent nature.

The committee's report on the measures found in this motion, as well as that of the seven to be repealed this year, ensures we have expectations to have officials justify the need for referral.

Honourable senators, I want to again express my sincere thanks to the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for their good work and for asking pertinent and direct questions to officials — whom I have been told are becoming more accustomed to this process and have therefore improved the quality of answers and justifications provided. I thank them for their report, which includes a very key

recommendation: that a list of information is to be provided by each department, to the extent it is available, in order to further improve this process for the good of Canadians.

The committee's report also includes a very important request to Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees Canada for a progress report within six months on the continuing study of the issues related to the coming into force of section 2 of An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Act, the Civil Marriages Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

In conclusion, I'm asking you to support the motion and vote in favour of a resolution that the act and provisions of other acts listed in the motion not be repealed on December 31, 2025, by application of the Statutes Repeal Act.

Just as we are looking forward to the next season and the playoffs, I'm certain that all my colleagues here today are eager to hear what we find in next year's Statutes Repeal Act and the committee report on it.

I am also conscious, Your Honour, of the time and standing between honourable senators and sustenance. Thank you very much for your time and attention, colleagues. *Sháv nithän.Mähsi'cho. Kwä'nä'schis.*

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO AFFECT SITTING ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025, AND AUTHORIZE COMMITTEES TO MEET DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE WITHDRAWN

On Government Business, Motions, Order No. 34, by the Honourable Patti LaBoucane-Benson:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, December 8, 2025, at 6 p.m.;

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day;

That, notwithstanding rule 9-10(2), if a vote has been or is deferred to that day, it take place at the end of Question Period; and

That committees of the Senate scheduled to meet on that day be authorized to sit even though the Senate may then be sitting and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 5-10(2), I ask that Government Notice of Motion No. 34 be withdrawn.

(Notice of motion withdrawn.)

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of December 3, 2025, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 2 p.m.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

Hon. Jim Quinn: Honourable senators, given that we've had quite a couple of days here, and that it is the holiday season, I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 4:47 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate earlier this day, the Senate adjourned until Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 2 p.m.)

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