



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

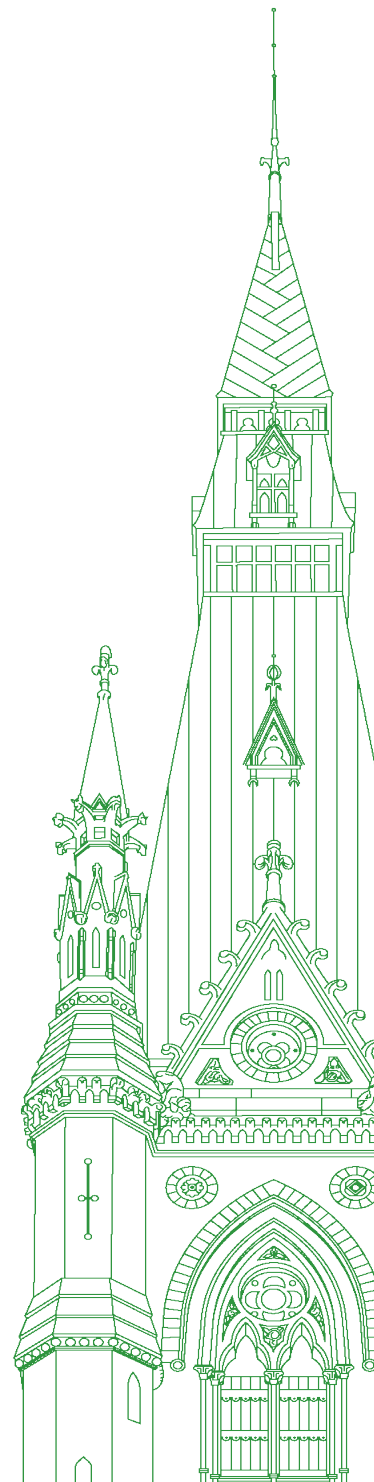
House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 152 No. 129

Thursday, June 4, 2026

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 4, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[Translation]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay before the House, pursuant to subsection 40(1) of the Privacy Act and subsection 25(1) of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, the Privacy Commissioner's report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

* * *

COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay before the House, pursuant to section 11 of the Lobbying Act, the report of the Commissioner of Lobbying for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 18 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC) moved that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, presented on April 30, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I stand today in unity with veterans from all across Canada who have been tirelessly fighting to right a historical wrong. For too long, veterans have faced these kinds of issues where, first of all, they deal with a cold and heartless bureaucracy. Second, they struggle to even have recognition of their service from government. The Persian Gulf War veterans and the Afghan war veterans are looking for recognition that they fought a war and cannot seem to find that from the current government. They attended what seemed to be a hastily put together groundbreaking for an Afghan war monument that was mired in scandal, and they felt like they were an afterthought at the ceremony. These are the kinds of things that we are seeing, and this is another example of exactly that.

What we are talking about today is giving Canadians some inspiration and some hope. In Canada, there are a lot of problems that our country faces right now, and especially young Canadians. They look at their future and they do not see a lot of hope. They know when they look at their future that hope does not come from the government. It is not going to be the government that gets us out of this mess, at least not the current government. However, Canadians have the intuition, the skills and the heart to rebuild Canada as the same great nation that we inherited from generations past. Inspiration is needed and many people are seeking inspiration right now. We look at our veterans, and they are the type of people whom we need to see and draw that inspiration from.

Veterans are ordinary men and women from all across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, who signed on the line and deployed into some of the most hostile and remote places all around the world. Everywhere a Canadian steps around this world, they carry with them the best values of our people: a love of freedom, a love of democracy and a love of justice. Nowhere did the example of the maple leaf shine brighter than it did in the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan. A land torn by centuries of conflict predating our nation was introduced to a multitude of Canadian actions.

Routine Proceedings

The people of Afghanistan were met with Canadian generosity with millions of dollars in aid. The people of Afghanistan were met with Canadian ingenuity as schools, institutions and infrastructure were built by Canadians. In the deserts and mountains of Afghanistan, the Taliban forces met Canadian ferocity. Canadian soldiers from decorated battalions across our country brought the fight to the enemy and dismantled it in every engagement that they had. Finally, the people of Afghanistan were also met with Canadian mercy. Wounded members of the Taliban were often treated and saved by Canadian medical crews and spared the cruelty that is often visited upon captives in times of war. In the Afghan villages where children lived in fear, the maple leaf on the shoulders of our men and women stood defiantly against evil.

These ordinary men and women joined the forces and became extraordinary. They showed us as a nation that even when faced with discomfort, hostility and, yes, evil, Canadians can rise as heroes and fight back. The youth in Canada today desperately need heroes. They need Canadians to look up to with pride. They need role models to emulate. These heroes do not wear suits and sit here in Ottawa. They walk quietly as silent heroes among us every single day. Let us raise cases of extraordinary bravery and exceptional character for this generation, to show them that there is still some good in this world and it is still worth fighting for.

Let us raise heroes like Jess Larochelle. Jess Larochelle was a Canadian who joined the Canadian Armed Forces at the height of the war in Afghanistan. Just a young man, he was sent overseas to fight those responsible for terrorizing not only the people of Afghanistan but also people around the world through horrific attacks like those witnessed on September 11, 2001.

It was in Afghanistan where Jess Larochelle made his mark on Canadian history. Facing an unrelenting Taliban attack on his unit, Jess Larochelle manned a lone position and drove back the enemy, fighting exhaustion, fear and severe injuries. It is a fact that during this fight, Jess was nearly struck by a rocket-propelled grenade that detonated on a wall of his tower, severely injuring him. Jess had a detached retina, a fractured neck, a broken back, massive internal bleeding and a severe concussion. Despite all of this, he continued fighting, drove back the Taliban assault and saved many of his comrades.

• (1005)

Unfortunately, Jess's brothers in arms, Blake Williamson and Darcy Tedford, were killed in this attack, and it was only after Jess helped to carry their coffins into a plane headed back to Canada that Jess finally presented himself for some medical attention. Members should think about that, about what he went through and what he dealt with. Jess was only a young man, 24 years old, when he sustained those injuries, and he carried them for the rest of his life.

Unfortunately, Canada lost one of its heroes when Jess passed away in August 2023 due to complications from his injuries. Former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole brought a motion to this House that called for the creation of a military honours review board. Unfortunately, that motion was defeated by the government back then, but now there is a renewed interest, thanks in large part

to the work of Bruce Moncur and others who are involved with an organization called Valour in the Presence of the Enemy.

While Jess was awarded the Star of Military Valour, he was passed over for Canada's highest honour, the Canadian Victoria Cross. Since the inception of this medal, it has never been awarded. There are many Canadians who wish to see this changed, to ensure that our veterans are properly recognized for their deeds of courage. There have now been several provincial legislatures that have voted in support of the creation of a military honours review board, including Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. It is clear that public sentiment on this is that we need to see it happen.

Conservatives have been proud to stand with veterans on this issue since day one. We will not allow this issue to rest until it is seen through. The arguments for this review board do not just end with individual examples and historical anecdotes, but also with real-world examples to compare ourselves to. Many of our allies have issued the equivalent of their Victoria Cross to their soldiers. The United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Italy and New Zealand have all issued their highest awards of valour to members of their militaries for actions taken in Afghanistan, and that is despite the fact that several of these nations committed fewer personnel to the war and saw less fighting than Canadians.

There is also testimony of retired general Rick Hillier, who was chief of the defence staff and chair of the honours committee when the case of Jess Larochelle came through. General Hillier is a great and well-respected man, but by his own admission, a mistake may have been made when deciding the award for Jess Larochelle. Canada was newly at war in Afghanistan at the time, and the committee was reluctant to give the award as a result, because its members did not know what would ensue, so the Victoria Cross was spared for an event that did not come. Additionally, it took several years for all of the details to come out and to talk more about the battle that Jess fought with the Taliban. Over time, these details emerged, but there was no ability to change the award that had already been given.

This example is one that cries for change; it cries for justice. If mistakes were made and new details are brought to light, then mere policy should not stand in the way of honouring a war hero. This past week, the government responded to a petition put forward by the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming, and indicated that it is open to examining the formation of this board. The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, of course, has thrown its support behind this issue, as has the Senate, and we wait for the final and most important step now, which is taking the action that is necessary.

All of this effort over the years cannot be in vain. All of the lives touched by the story of Jess Larochelle are inspired, and inspiration is what Canada needs right now. Let us celebrate and enshrine the stories of our national heroes. Let us raise our children with the tales of bravery and sacrifice. The ball is now in the government's court. It has publicly signalled openness to this cause. We thank it for that, but now we eagerly await the details on how and when this review board will be formed, and when the historic injustice can finally be addressed.

However, I beg the government to not make Canadians wait for long. The great author and evangelist C.S. Lewis once said, "Since it is so likely that (children) will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise you are making their destiny not brighter but darker." Since it is so likely that Canadian children will grow up facing hardships and hearing of evil in the world, let them at least have heard of brave soldiers and their heroic deeds. Let them at least have heard of Jess Larochelle and the fighting Canadians.

I will note at this moment that I will be splitting my time with the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, and I want to just conclude in French. I want to, if I can, speak to Quebec.

● (1010)

[Translation]

I hope that the government will not make Canadians wait too long before it finally takes action. The great author and evangelist C.S. Lewis once said, "Since—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): As the member is splitting his time, we have to go.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not think there is a member of the House who would not recognize the valuable role that members of our CAF have played, and we continue to support them.

What disappointed me the other day was when the critic for the Conservative Party misled Canadians when he was challenged on the issue of the current status of the Brandon Veterans Affairs office. The member, along with his colleague, clearly indicated that it was closed when he should have known that it was not closed.

I wonder if the member would apologize to veterans for trying to give the impression that the office was closed. Would he apologize?

● (1015)

Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, the apology needs to come from that member and his government because, I can tell members right now, what they did there is very hypocritical.

That office is, in fact, closed and has been closed. Not only that, but essentially every office in this country is closed to veterans because what happens now is they must go online and make an appointment. If they just show up at an office, they cannot be received by Veterans Affairs. Many veterans also reported to us that just be-

Routine Proceedings

cause maybe one time they got a little frustrated, because they had waited months and years to get action, they were told they can never speak to another Veterans Affairs employee again.

The only person who owes an apology is that member, and his government, for what the government does to veterans.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

I served on the veterans affairs committee and was very familiar with the situation of Jess Larochelle. It pains me to know that he will not have seen what should have been bestowed upon him, the Victoria Cross.

I know my colleague had some additional words he wanted to say in French. I wonder if he could enlighten the House with those words.

[Translation]

Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague.

The great author and evangelist C.S. Lewis once said, "Since it is so likely that [children] will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise you are making their destiny not brighter but darker."

Since it is so likely that Canadian children will grow up facing hardships and hearing about evil in the world, let them at least have heard about brave soldiers and their heroic deeds. Let them at least have heard about Jess Larochelle and Canadian soldiers.

[English]

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the ACVA committee report that we are discussing this morning calls for the creation of an independent review board. As the member knows, we announced on Friday that we will be doing that.

I will be meeting with the organizers behind Valour in the Presence of the Enemy this afternoon to talk about next steps and move forward. I would ask my colleague if he is willing to work with us to make sure we have the feedback he would like us to have in terms of what the advisory board should look like.

Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, the answer to that is quite simple. First of all, I thank the government and the hon. member for expressing openness to this, and I hope they are going to actually take the action. I really do.

We have been fighting for this for a long time. I would encourage the member to go back and look at the motion that was brought forward by Conservatives in the past, which the government rejected. It was a very detailed motion. It had a lot of detail in terms of what this should look like, and I would encourage her to go back and look at that. I would encourage the government to have a look at that. It provides a very good instruction manual for what this needs to look like.

Routine Proceedings

The key here is that we need to go beyond words. We need to move to action. I am hopeful that that is what we are going to see, but I will continue to push and to hold the government to account until we do see that action. I hope it is not long before we see it. If it does not happen, I will be the first to be jumping all over the government for its words and not actions.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief.

I had the opportunity, I believe it was late last year or early this year, to celebrate Mr. Bruce Moncur with his family.

How important is it that this motion go through today, to ensure that future generations will also support and protect Canada?

Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I will just say that I do not have time to tell Bruce Moncur's story, but his story is one of bravery and courage. He believes that his life was spared so that he could see this through. We are going to help him to do just that, so that future—

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

The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this motion. It is a very important subject, not only to my riding but to me personally, and I would like to share the reason.

Before I kick off my speech, I would like to thank my colleague from Airdrie—Cochrane for his speech and for his passion and leadership as the critic for veterans affairs. I have learned quite a bit from him. I appreciate his dedication to veterans and what he wants to do with this particular board.

I would like to give a bit of background about why I am so passionate about this, and why I am here.

My family, as I have shared numerous times, came from Scotland, but during World War II, they were living in Scotland. My grandfather, who was on the offensive during World War II, was in a café. He was drinking, having a few libations with his fellow British soldiers. All of a sudden, Canadian soldiers came rushing in and started screaming “retreat, retreat, retreat”. There was a German offensive, and they did not have enough firepower to have a counteroffensive, so the British soldiers started throwing on all their gear. While they were doing that, the Canadian soldiers looked at the wall that had all these bottles of booze and started shooting at them, like it was a western.

My Scottish grandfather, who liked his odd tippie, was horrified and started screaming “ceasefire, ceasefire, ceasefire”. Finally, the Canadians stopped. My grandfather went up a Canadian sergeant and asked, “What are you doing?” The Canadian soldier looked at him and said, “If we're not drinking it, they're not drinking it.” My Scottish grandfather fell in love with Canadians. What he witnessed was the bravery of those soldiers overseas, which was so important.

At home, my grandmother and my mother, who was a very small child, witnessed the generosity of the Canadian soldiers. These soldiers came overseas, volunteered, and brought with them things my grandmother could not get, like baked goods, and shared them with

generosity. That was why my family decided to move to Canada. It was because of what they witnessed at home and what they witnessed overseas, the bravery. We cannot forget that. That is the whole point of having an independent military review board, to recognize the bravery and the sacrifice of our Canadian soldiers.

Not only is this important to my family, but it is important to my riding. I know that MLA Blaine McLeod has been here, to Ottawa, advocating for recognition for Jess Larochelle and the bravery he displayed while he was overseas. He was doing what the soldiers in World War II were doing, in Afghanistan.

● (1020)

Our foreign policy and our international recognition are based on the blood and sacrifice of Canadian soldiers overseas. Those in Europe get to see the gravestones every single day when they drive by, because our soldiers went overseas. Fortunately, we have not had that much conflict here in Canada. We had little skirmishes very early on in our history. Our sacrifices made overseas are something Europeans witness every single day. It is hard for Canadians to reconcile that. That is why we have to make that extra effort within the House of Commons to recognize those who have advocated on our behalf and made that sacrifice. They have gone overseas and said, “Yes, I'm going to go,” not just to save the democracy within this country but to preserve democracy around the world.

I am passionate about this subject. I am passionate about our military, and I am passionate about our veterans, who deserve more. We keep failing them. There is a continual failure to support our veterans, those who have said, “Yes, send me. I will go.”

Madam Speaker, you will have to give me a second here because sometimes, in my passion, I have to kind of chill out a bit. I feel like we have done a great disservice to Canadians and to veterans, who just want some basic, simple things like care, and we are failing in our duty to support them.

I witness that every single day, whether they are reservists or full-time veterans. We do not understand sometimes what they have gone through and the sacrifices they have made, but they deserve better. That is the whole point of having this independent review board. It would recognize people who have slipped through the cracks. It is so important for us to pause, have a reset and make sure things do not slip through the cracks for our veterans.

I also want to go back, while I have the opportunity, to the recognition of veterans who served but did not come back. Europeans can drive by gravestones and see the maple leaf on them. They get to witness that every single day. As I have said, we do not have that recognition of the sacrifice here, but we do get to see the professionalism of our serving members when we witness the Snowbirds. That is why I find it disappointing that the Liberal government wants to cancel the Snowbirds after this season. For Canadians who do not get the chance to go overseas or witness the sacrifices by Canadians, it is a way for us to see the professionalism, excellence and unity of our Canadian Armed Forces.

People in Canada now have a connection with their military. They have a connection with the history of our military and the sacrifices that our military has made. It is so important. When we erode these things, we do a disservice not only to our nation but to our ally nations around the world that rely on a strong partner in times of need. We have always been there, but when we cut these things, we are sending a message that we are weakening our position. We are weakening ourselves, and we are not being there for our allies and neighbours.

I am speaking in support of the motion. This independent review board is necessary. It is necessary not only for our nation but for the people in my riding, because they believe in it.

• (1025)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the utmost respect for my colleague opposite. I certainly do agree it is important to get the military review board in place so we can do memorials and honours such as the Afghanistan one that honours Corporal Brent Poland and Private William Cushley, who gave their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice.

I wonder if the member could give some indication of what kind of makeup he would like on the committee, what kind of qualifications.

• (1030)

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I have to say that sometimes we get things wrong, and we witnessed that recently. We witnessed the Liberal government's parading out the Snowbirds and then basically telling the pilots that they are going to be losing their jobs. Then, at the Afghan monument, there was no, or very little, presence of our veterans. We have to reverse the roles. We have to recognize when it is due and treat our military properly.

I think the committee makeup has to be of people who actually recognize and understand the sacrifices made by our vets and have an inside perspective but who are also very neutral, so their own passions are not—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke from the heart and his speech was incredibly genuine. It was an excellent speech.

Routine Proceedings

I have a rather simple question for him. This motion is not just about medals. In fact, it deals more with our ability to properly recognize and honour the men and women who have accepted risks, dangers and injuries to protect peace and democracy.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

[English]

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I have to point out that I have not seen my colleague in the gym for a while, so hopefully I will see him next week.

We as Canadians are very humble in the way we carry ourselves, so it is very hard for us to accept recognition for the sacrifices we have made. However, it is so important now, when we are being challenged globally, that we recognize the sacrifice made by the people who are willing to leave their family and to miss birthdays, weddings and anniversaries to go help someone else. The sacrifice is not just by the person who is going overseas. It is also by the family, and we have to recognize that. What makes our nation such a strong and powerful nation is that we are willing to make those sacrifices, and one cannot put a recognition on that.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague gave an impassioned and compassionate speech, and I understand the sacrifice that the gentleman has made as well.

I was honoured to be with Corporal Bruce Moncur at a celebration of life at the Royal Canadian Legion earlier this year, and this past Saturday, I was honoured to be with Windsor's air force squadron for the cadets. Trying to look forward and trying to be what Corporal Moncur would want, how do we engage, without celebrating those who went before us, young adults to join our service to ensure that Canada is protected?

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I have interacted with veterans within my the member's riding who were facing some challenges, and I know that he is very passionate about people who have served. It is also very important to recognize how we can attract new recruits, and it is by being—

• (1035)

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

[Translation]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the secretary of state.

Pauline Rochefort (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

[English]

I would also like to thank my colleague across the aisle who moved that we have this debate this morning, as I do feel that there are still a few words to be said regarding the matter of an independent military honours review board.

Routine Proceedings

On April 15, the day e-petition 6661 was presented to the House of Commons, I was pleased to welcome to Ottawa veterans of the Afghanistan war along with parliamentarians from the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, my colleague across the aisle, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. Representatives of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs and the Senate of Canada were also present. Together we heard from David Mack, a leader with the organization Valour in the Presence of the Enemy.

David reflected that resolving an important matter often takes a village, as the expression goes. He went on to say that in the case of the Victoria Cross cause, at the heart of the village has been a fire that has burned hot for six years, enduring setbacks and disappointments, surviving the moments when progress seemed to move two steps forward and one step back. That fire has been Bruce Moncur, whose name we have heard mentioned here this morning, a veteran whom many people describe as unrelenting and unyielding in his pursuit of justice.

On April 15, Bruce recounted how he had woken after being thrown by a bomb explosion in Afghanistan. The first thing he did was check his legs, then his arms. Relieved, he cupped his hands to his face, only to see them filled with blood. Bruce had lost part of his skull and brain. Back in Canada, he had to relearn how to walk and speak. Through determination and perseverance, he rebuilt his life and eventually returned to the classroom as a teacher. To this day, he is a great teacher, in Manitoba, I believe.

Bruce is a man who has given everything to the Victoria Cross cause to ensure that acts of extraordinary courage are properly recognized and that the stories of Afghanistan veterans are never forgotten. Bruce recently wrote:

I gave this cause my soul.
Not a piece of it. Not the part that was left over
after everything else was done.
All of it.
The hours no one counted.
The calls made at midnight.
The letters rewritten and rewritten.
The years when no one was listening....

I bled for this country once on a mountainside in Afghanistan
and thought that was the end.
It was not the end.
It was the beginning of something
I [simply at that point] did not yet have words for.

Six years ago I found the words.

I found them in the story of a boy from Restoule
who lay broken in the Afghan dust
and kept fighting.
I found them in the oral histories
of Haudenosaunee warriors
who carried eleven men to safety
across a mile of Belgian mud.
I found them in the grave inscriptions
of Métis snipers
whose comrades wrote in the dirt above them
that it must have been a damn good sniper
that finally got him.
I found them in the eyes of mothers
who outlived their sons [and daughters].
In the silence of families
who kept the letters.
Who kept the medals.

Who kept the faith....

These soldiers carried their countries
across impossible ground.

Today, on behalf of the House, I think it is fair to say that we thank Bruce Moncur for his words and for every hour he devoted to this cause: every post; every letter; every sleepless night, I assume; and every morning when he got up and did it all again. I still remember when he said that he took on this cause:

not because I was asked.
but because someone had to.
Because a boy from Restoule
lay alone in the Afghan dust
with a broken back
and kept fighting.

If he could do that
I could do this.

● (1040)

Those words remind us that perseverance is not measured in comfort but in commitment. They remind us that remembrance is not passive; it requires action. I really like that. They remind us that the stories of courage, sacrifice and service entrusted to us by Canada's veterans must never be forgotten, just like the unknown soldier's eternal flame.

I hope we can all draw inspiration from Bruce's own story and from David's own words as we embark on the important work of establishing the independent review board, which includes setting the assessment criteria, selecting the right members and establishing a decision-making process. Moving forward, strict accountability and transparency will be what measures that the job gets done and gets done properly.

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly want to recognize that this effort was stalled out a bit after the previous Conservative motion was defeated in the House. The member brought forward a petition, which has re-energized this effort, and I thank her for that.

I am sure the member has had some conversations internally. Could she speak a bit to the next steps on this, when we can actually expect to see this move forward and what the next steps would be in terms of making this happen?

Pauline Rochefort: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for all his work and effort on this matter.

The Department of National Defence has already reached out to members of Valour in the Presence of the Enemy, and it is preparing the next steps. It will be a matter of looking at other models. For example, in NATO there are such committees, independent boards, so it will be a matter of looking at how they are formed. There will be a process of examining what the different options before us are and then determining how we move forward. From my own point of view, I think what is critically important is that we ensure that, ultimately, it is a process Canadians will feel confident in, and that they have trust that the right outcomes emerge.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague opposite for sponsoring petition e-6661.

Based on the parliamentary secretary's response, it would appear that this petition has helped bring about change. That is great, but I still find it hard to understand why so many other attempts were needed in the past to get this problem addressed and to ensure that Victoria Crosses could finally be awarded. For example, former NDP MP Niki Ashton presented petition e-3636, and former Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole moved a motion on the matter, also in 2022.

What made the government listen this time? Why did it not listen the last few times?

Pauline Rochefort: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague and his question.

I was very pleased that certain members of the Bloc Québécois and other parties took part in this process.

On April 15, there were representatives from the province of Quebec. I was very pleased to see that people from all over Canada had come to Ottawa. I think that is an answer in itself.

There was involvement from all corners of the country this time, which is essential. Obviously, I was not here during the last Parliament, but I truly appreciate what was accomplished. On behalf of veterans and myself, I would like to add that this collaboration between all parties and the government is wonderful.

[English]

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for championing the issue and bringing the parties together. This is a non-partisan issue. In fact, when I ran in 2015, I ran because I am the mother of two serving members. At that time, I remember giving an interview, and someone asked me why I was running. I said it was because I want to make sure that, should something happen to my kids, they will be taken care of. I reread that statement recently about my commitment and why I ran for office. As I said last Friday, I am committed to working with all members of the House to get the advisory board put forward.

I would like to ask the member if she has heard some additional feedback in terms of what we should be looking at. I know that the member from the opposition mentioned a previous motion that was brought forward with some guidelines and some recommendations. I would like to hear if she also has some additional recommendations she would like to share.

● (1045)

Pauline Rochefort: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if this is a recommendation, but I will give my own personal point of view. In life, I have always believed that we must never put all our eggs in one basket. I always believe that outcomes are best when there is a mix of different viewpoints. That is simply my own point of view that I would put forward, that there is value in a diversity of points of view. At the same time, there needs to be independence. With all of that, I think we will find our way forward to ensure that it is a

process in which Canadians can believe and that veterans will have trust in the outcomes.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise and address what I believe is a very important issue. First, let me start off by acknowledging the incredible work that the current members of our forces do today. They provide a sense of security for our nation, and they are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

I had the opportunity to serve in the Canadian Forces back in the eighties, and one of the most touching moments of my career back then was the Remembrance Day parades. I had the opportunity to march side by side with World War II veterans. After those marches, it often led to going to a local community where individuals would share some of their stories, along with, maybe, a little bit of alcohol. Some of the stories involved the experiences that they actually had during World War II. If people really want to get a sense of the emotions and the trauma and the horrors of war, they should talk to a veteran who has actually served and had to go on combat missions. It will bring one to tears, whether it is the prisoners of war, those who have lost their lives in war or those who have been injured in war.

During my time in the forces, I had many opportunities. That is the reason why I would pay tribute to our current members and recognize those who have served in the past. I look forward to seeing the growth in the number of people who want to join the forces.

I was encouraged that, last year, we actually had a record number of Canadians wanting to become members of the Canadian Armed Forces. I believe it has a lot to do with what the Prime Minister and the government have done to reinforce the importance of the Canadian Forces, whether it is providing pay increases or supporting the military in many different ways, ultimately achieving 2% of Canada's GDP, with a commitment to grow beyond that to 3.5% and ultimately hit 5%, being a full participant in the United Nations.

We take the issue of our forces very seriously. We take the issue of our veterans very seriously. I was very upset, for example, when the previous administration actually cut and closed nine veterans offices. That is why I did take it personally when members opposite, just the other day, tried to give a false impression about the Brandon office. That Brandon veterans office is open. It is open today. Members should know that, and they should not be telling veterans otherwise.

Let me focus some attention on Afghanistan and how Canadians really appreciate and love the manner in which our forces conducted themselves in what was the longest engagement of our Canadian Forces. The men and women of the forces did us proud. They gave in many ways. I believe about 150 lives were lost, and 2,000-plus were injured in different ways. I would like to think that every member of the House recognizes the sacrifice that was made.

Routine Proceedings

That is the reason why the government wants to not only support and see this advisory committee struck but actually implement it in a tangible way. The motion for the concurrence in the report that the member brought forward, quite frankly, is going to receive unanimous support. We could have done that in the form of a simple motion that would reinforce just how important our veterans are, who have sacrificed so much for our great nation.

• (1050)

We need to recognize the importance of the Canadian Victoria Cross, which was established back in 1993. The fact that it has not been awarded challenges a lot of us to think about why that is the case. I think there are people here in Canada who are best equipped to do the research that is necessary and ensure that this most honourable medal is actually awarded where the circumstances allow it to be. I would like to think that the desire of every member of Parliament is to see the Victoria Cross awarded. I believe the Canadian Victoria Cross is something we should all be proud of. I look forward to seeing and hearing about the future recipients of this award. That is why establishing an independent review board is of the utmost importance.

It is great to have a debate. I would have loved to have a debate on this in the form of a take-note debate or even an opposition day, so we could have a full day of debate, with a motion at the very end. That would be very clear and decisive. It would show clear support for our veterans and those who are in our Canadian Forces. Having said that, I can assure members who are here, and those who are following the debate, that whether it is the Prime Minister or any other member of the House of Commons, the veterans have the unanimous support of the House of Commons in recognizing the importance of the Canadian Victoria Cross.

We want to see that independent review board put in place. There has to be a process in order to do that. We need to recognize, as an example, that anyone who sits on that review board will have to gain some form of a top security clearance because they are going to have to review the circumstances. I know first-hand that when dealing with some of the stories that take place in a war zone, where deaths and injuries are involved, there are stories that once heard, cannot be unheard. They will become a permanent memory for individuals. This is not something where we can just click our heels and put the board together tomorrow. We have to make sure that it is done in a proper process. The right people have to be brought in for the independent review board. We are committed to doing that. I would like to think that every member of the House would recognize that.

When I think of the issues that we are facing today in our Canadian Forces, I want our veterans to know very clearly that the Government of Canada, from the Prime Minister to the cabinet to every Liberal member of Parliament, has their backs. We will continue to have their backs. We understand the role that they have played in building our country into what it is today, and we will continue to be there in every way for our veterans. We will continue to support our current members of the Canadian Forces, and we will always acknowledge and recognize those who have served in the past. This is one of the ways we can do so.

I hope and believe that this motion, which I understand was unanimously passed in the standing committee, will also be unanimously passed here, on the floor of the House of Commons. I look forward to ultimately seeing the first recipient, whoever that may be, of the Canadian Victoria Cross.

• (1055)

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Madam Speaker, today is not just about the Victoria Cross and Jess Larochelle, but about veterans of the war in Afghanistan. I think they often do not feel recognized in the same way that maybe their World War I, World War II and even Korean War colleagues are, whether that be by the Legion, the general public, the government or the people of Canada. I think we saw that reflected a little recently in the ceremony, where many of them felt like they were an afterthought with respect to the monument that was supposed to be in their honour.

Then we heard the member's speech today, which saddened me, because I know there are many members over there who care about this. I feel like this member stood up and gave a political speech. He talked about everything but what it is supposed to be about.

What I would ask the member is this: Will he apologize, first of all, for making this political today rather than keeping it about what it should be about? Will he apologize for the debacle that was the Afghanistan war monument groundbreaking and how veterans felt left out? Will he acknowledge that the Afghanistan veterans fought in a war?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do not know what planet the member opposite is from. At the end of the day, I think I was very clear. If we want to talk about partisan politics, we need to look at the manner in which this member in particular has dealt with the issue of veterans inside the chamber. We want to be able to appreciate, love and recognize our veterans. Yes, maybe at times I do need to be a little less political, but I can assure members that I am no more political than the member who posed that question.

I would concede that we all need to take a stronger approach in encouraging the municipalities, the provinces and the federal government to do what they can to recognize the importance of our veterans and the service that has been provided to Canadians, in particular regarding Afghanistan. That means looking at parks in our municipalities, and it means the provincial and territorial governments also establishing monuments. I think we can do a lot if we are prepared to work together. The member should read his own speech before he starts criticizing my speech.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, whenever the opposition parties move concurrence in a report, the member for Winnipeg North tells us that it is an important matter, but that it should have been debated at a different time. However, he still takes 10 or 20 minutes to tell us that it should have been debated at another time. I find it hard to follow the member for Winnipeg North. He tells us that we should debate this at another time in order to save time.

If the member for Winnipeg North did not take the floor, we would already be saving time, would we not?

I put the question to the member for Winnipeg North.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as someone who has served in the Canadian Forces, I have the opportunity, as does the member, to share my experiences on the important issue of our veterans. I have taken advantage of that by speaking for my 10 minutes on that, as have other members prior to me. I made a very clear indication that I believe all members of the House of Commons are supportive of our veterans.

I have also, through the question, made a recommendation as to what we can do to encourage and promote the ongoing recognition of what our veterans have done.

I am passionate on the issue because I have walked and talked with veterans. I understand, at least in part, some of the horrors they have had to go through. I want to see that recognition. Yes, I am passionate on the issue, but I can tell members that it is because of the memories I have of my marches with World War II and other veterans.

• (1100)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague made a very good point when he said it is clear that everybody at committee supported the recommendation to support the veterans in this way, and everybody here in the House today has already said that they are 100% in support. Therefore, I am concerned because there is other legislation we are trying to get passed, like Bill C-16, on femicide and coercive control, which is critical legislation. Instead, we are all in violent agreement on this issue. I wonder if that is a delay tactic on the part of the Conservatives. Does the member have a comment?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I hope to see us sitting until midnight very soon. Hopefully, that will compensate and ensure that we get more debate on bills like Bill C-16.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my wonderful colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

I am pleased to speak today in support of the motion to create an independent Canadian military honours review board. This motion raises a fundamental issue, namely, how to recognize acts of bravery performed by the women and men who have served in the Canadian military. For years, veterans, families, military historians and veterans' organizations have been calling for an independent mechanism to review cases when new evidence shows that an error or omission may have occurred.

We know that this is a very real concern. More than 16,000 people signed a petition calling for the establishment of such a body. We also know that a delegation led by former chief of the defence staff and retired general Rick Hillier came to Parliament Hill to request a review of several dozen cases dating back to the First World War. These requests are not motivated by a desire to rewrite history. They are based on a fairly simple principle: When new evi-

Routine Proceedings

dence emerges, when the historical context is better understood or when previously unavailable testimony surfaces, there must be a credible independent mechanism that can review certain decisions.

The Bloc Québécois believes that this request is more than reasonable. Moreover, the government itself recognizes that there is a problem. In its official response to the petition tabled in the House, it committed to examining the establishment of an independent board to review certain cases related to the mission in Afghanistan. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence recently reiterated this commitment in the House. Therefore, the question is not whether we should act, but rather how and when we should act.

The criticisms of the current system are well known. First, many people object to how inflexible the decisions are and complain that the process takes way too long. In too many cases, recognition is granted too late, sometimes even after the individual in question has passed away. When a member of the armed forces performs an act of exceptional courage, recognition should follow within a reasonable timeframe. This country's heroes deserve to be honoured while they are still living.

Second, many veterans criticize the process's lack of transparency. The criteria, decision-making mechanisms and reasons for refusal are often difficult for the people involved to understand. The lack of transparency gives rise to confusion and, in many cases, a deep sense of injustice. Third, a number of veterans feel that their experiences and those of their comrades are not properly taken into account. Who better than those who have served in the field to assess the true worth of an act of bravery? It is high time these criticisms were heard.

Beyond administrative procedures and the decorations themselves, what is at stake here is honour, duty, and the promise the state makes to those who agree to serve their country. Military decorations are not merely symbols, nor are they merely ceremonial symbols. They represent official recognition of service to society. In military culture, the concepts of honour, merit, sacrifice and duty are paramount. Military honours embody these values.

For many veterans, these honours serve as a reminder that the sacrifices they made have not been forgotten. This recognition is particularly important when service members return home. Many veterans must cope daily with physical injuries, psychological trauma, or significant challenges related to their recovery. In this context, knowing that their service is recognized helps preserve their dignity and the sense that their sacrifice was not in vain.

Routine Proceedings

As the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, I would like to take a moment to highlight the outstanding work carried out by the members of the Royal Canadian Legion in our region. In Alma and across Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, legions play a vital role in supporting veterans and their families. They uphold the duty to remember, organize commemorative ceremonies for occasions such as Remembrance Day, and ensure that the sacrifices made by our military are never forgotten.

For them and for us, acknowledging acts of bravery is about more than merely handing out medals. It is about a nation's gratitude to the men and women who agreed to serve, sometimes while risking their lives. Members of the legion constantly remind us about the importance of fairly and effectively recognizing the courage, dedication and sacrifice of veterans.

● (1105)

For decades, veterans have been raising concerns about access to services, administrative delays, physical injuries, mental health and the support available to them after their military career ends. In addition, certain controversies have had a profound effect on the veteran community, including contested commemorative projects or the way that decisions were made.

I am thinking specifically of my highly esteemed former colleague Luc Desilets, who repeatedly complained about the federal government's persistent incompetence in managing commemorative projects. After the bungled Afghanistan memorial monument, the Highway of Heroes project once again showed a flagrant lack of due diligence and respect toward the people it claims to honour.

The Victoria Cross matter also comes to mind. It is a clear illustration of this issue. We have spoken about it before. The Victoria Cross was created in 1993 as Canada's highest military honour, yet none have yet been awarded since its inception. This raises legitimate questions. Many observers believe that certain acts performed during the Afghanistan mission may have met the criteria for this exceptional honour. The case of Master Corporal Jess Larochelle is often cited as an example in this debate.

It is not our role today to determine which cases should be approved or denied. That role falls to a rigorous and credible evaluation mechanism. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that such a mechanism exists. That is precisely the objective of the mission before us. The creation of a military honours review board would provide a pathway for reconsideration when new evidence warrants a review. It would enhance the transparency of the system, improve veterans' confidence, and help ensure that decisions truly reflect the facts.

Above all, it would send a clear message to those who are serving today that our society will never forget their sacrifices. Again, this motion is not just about medals. It is about our ability to properly honour those who have accepted the risks, dangers and sometimes injuries involved in defending freedom and democracy. When a society asks its military members to show courage, it also has a duty to show gratitude.

For all these reasons, the Bloc Québécois will support this motion and urges all members of Parliament to do the same.

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the member's speech and his comments about the importance of recognizing our heroes.

Can the member talk about why it is important for the government to put words into action?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that fundamental question.

In the file before us today, this is obviously a situation where the government should have acted a long time ago, but it did not. Of course, there are many other files where rhetoric and image are prioritized over results. However, when it comes to recognizing the sacrifice of the men and women who fought to defend peace, democracy and freedom for the country they made a commitment to, the government has no excuse for dragging its heels, yet that is what it has done.

This motion is an opportunity for the government to step up. We are reaching out to the government. We want to work together toward the same goals. We owe it to our veterans, to those who fought for freedom and democracy. It is our duty as a country. We asked them to be brave. We have a duty to recognize this bravery.

● (1110)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, just over a year ago, Canadians elected a new Prime Minister and 70-plus new Liberal members of Parliament. To be very clear for those following the debate, every Liberal member of the House of Commons fully supports this motion and would love to see it pass unanimously.

I wonder if the member opposite could reinforce the Bloc party's position.

[Translation]

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, like the Liberal Party members, the Bloc Québécois and all of its members of Parliament will, of course, support this motion, as I said in my speech, in fact. This is not breaking news. We supported it in committee as well. I believe the committee members voted unanimously in favour of the motion.

Let us take this opportunity to speed things up. Let us do it. Unanimity in Parliament is rare. It does not happen often. This is a perfect example. This is why I think it is important to debate it today. We can show that we are actually capable of agreeing on a particular issue sometimes. Now that we have momentum and all-party collaboration, let us use that to do right by the people we represent as quickly as possible.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech.

Today, we are debating a motion that would establish an independent Canadian military honours review board. One of its key mandates would be to potentially award the famous Victoria Cross, which has never been awarded.

This initiative is being taken now as a result of the motion we are debating, which stems from a report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. However, similar initiatives have been undertaken in the House of Commons in the past through petition e-3636, which gathered 14,000 signatures; through a motion adopted by unanimous consent in the House; through delegations; and through petition e-6661.

It feels as though this keeps coming up and the government keeps ignoring the calls. This time, it feels as though the government going to say yes, but it still has yet to be implemented.

People go into battle for a country, make sacrifices, lose their health and keep fighting. How does this situation make the government look?

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that excellent question.

That is unfortunate because there has been a clear opportunity on the table for a very long time. As my colleague just said, this is not the first time such a proposal has been put forward. Legions and other veterans' organizations have been calling for such a mechanism for a very long time. It is not right that the Victoria Cross has never been awarded to anyone here since its inception.

Unfortunately, I cannot understand what the government is doing, but it always instills doubt in people's minds when they do not see the government taking quick action on things that should be no-brainers.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, today, we are debating the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, which is quite short. It is just one paragraph long. I have seen some pretty long committee reports in my time, but in this case, the report is very clear and effective. It says what needs to be said. Basically, the report states the following:

That the committee report to the House its recommendation for the creation of an independent Canadian Military Honours Review Board with the specific mandate to review decisions made under the Directorate of Honours and Recognition and its precursor bodies when new evidence demonstrates that the reconsideration of a military honour is warranted to ensure that no error or omission was made.

Upon reading that, it seems obvious. It is worth noting that the committee did in fact adopt the motion unanimously. Basically, the idea is to acknowledge that, in the past, certain distinctions, medals and honours may have been denied to individuals who have done great things for their country. Unfortunately, after some time has passed, the government is realizing that perhaps it should have awarded those honours, because it did not have all the information needed to make the right decision at the time. I find that interesting and I think it is good.

Today, we are doing more than simply presenting a committee report, because we are now debating it in the House of Commons. It is important that our voices be heard. As we know, when a committee presents a resolution, report or recommendation, it often re-

Routine Proceedings

flects the voices of the committee members. Those voices carry considerable weight, because they represent people of different political stripes sitting around the same table, who have discussed an issue and learned more about it. Once they have considered a matter and studied it carefully, they recommend that Parliament examine it further.

I understand from my Conservative colleague's proposal that the idea is to go even further by ensuring that this is not only the will of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, but also the will of the House of Commons as a whole. I assume that, given that the committee adopted the report unanimously, the same should be the case today. It sends a much stronger message when it is adopted by the House of Commons than when it is adopted by a committee, even though a committee adopting something already means a great deal. I therefore congratulate my colleagues who decided to bring this debate to the House today.

It should be noted that there is a broader context to this debate. We talk about distinctions, but there is one whose significance underlies today's debate: the Victoria Cross.

The Victoria Cross was established in 1993 to recognize acts of valour, self-sacrifice or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy. Although it was established in 1993—when I was just a kid, since that was more than 30 years ago—it has unfortunately never been given out. It has never been awarded. I realize that this is an exceptional honour. I believe it is the highest honour that can be awarded, so they are not handed out like candy. However, that does not change the fact that, at some point, we need to ask the question. It is inconceivable that no one committed any exceptional acts over the course of 30 years. That would be very surprising, especially considering all the conflicts that Canada and members of the armed forces have contributed to during that time.

In the specific case of the conflict in Afghanistan, in which Canada participated by sending troops, no Victoria Crosses were awarded. However, other nations—or rather, other countries, since there is the Quebec nation and the Canadian nation, and a distinction must be made—that participated in the conflict in Afghanistan decided to award Victoria Crosses. In particular, Great Britain awarded three Victoria Crosses in connection with the conflict in Afghanistan. Australia awarded four Victoria Crosses also in connection with the conflict in Afghanistan. New Zealand awarded one. The United States obviously did not award any Victoria Crosses, because they do not exist there. However, they have Medals of Honor, which are roughly the American equivalent. They awarded 18 Medals of Honor. In Canada, however, no medals were awarded.

Routine Proceedings

● (1115)

That is pretty sad considering that people went over there to fight the Taliban and put their lives and their health on the line. In fact, a former Bloc Québécois MP, Michel Boudrias, the member for Terrebonne, went to Afghanistan. We know things were not easy for everyone over there. Many people have spoken out on Parliament Hill to demand change, to get Canada to change how it does things and decide to honour the veterans who fought in Afghanistan. There have been proposals, including some in connection with the Victoria Cross.

For example, Canada's former chief of the defence staff, retired general Rick Hillier, led a delegation on Parliament Hill last month calling on the federal government to review cases involving Afghanistan as well as more than 40 cases dating back to the First World War involving veterans who may have been eligible for the Victoria Cross. I would note that the Victoria Cross has occasionally been awarded to other individuals in the past even though it did not exist prior to 1993. It was actually awarded by Great Britain, but Canada is no longer a colony even though it has the same king. We could talk about the monarchy at length today, but that is not the point of this debate.

Nevertheless, perhaps it is time for Canada to choose to use the tools and resources available to reasonably and appropriately honour those who fought for the country.

This is not the first time we have talked about this. I just spoke about the action that Rick Hillier has been taking and about how he led a delegation, but there is also petition e-3636, which was sponsored and tabled in the House by former MP Niki Ashton. I can use her name since she is no longer a member of the House of Commons, but I had the opportunity to serve with her in the past.

That petition was tabled in 2022, and no fewer than 14,000 people supported this effort to award the Victoria Cross for the first time. Unfortunately, the Liberal government at the time refused to do so. Again in 2022, MP Erin O'Toole took action in this regard. He is also no longer a member of the House, but we know that he served as the leader of the official opposition and, if I am not mistaken, minister of veterans affairs. He sought the unanimous consent of the House to implement what we are discussing here, namely a review board to award the Victoria Cross to deserving individuals. Once again, his motion did not receive the unanimous consent of the House in 2002 and it was rejected.

It is now 2026, four years later. Most recently, petition e-6661 was presented by a member from the other side of the House. I cannot name her since she is still in office, but I can say that she is a member representing the Liberal Party. After two Liberal rejections, it is quite a change to see a Liberal member say that we need to exert some pressure and try to get her government to take a position. The member probably does not agree with the decisions her party has made in the past. On April 15, 2026, she presented a petition with 16,500 signatures. That is a lot of people. The previous petition had collected 14,000 signatures. Even more people signed this petition.

In addition to the petition presented by the member opposite, a motion was moved by a Conservative member at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs on April 20. His motion was adopted

unanimously there. It was forwarded to the House, and the report was tabled on April 30, 2026, less than a month ago. All of this shows that many steps are being taken to recognize the sacrifice of those who have given so much.

There are cases such as that of Jess Larochelle, who did so much for his country and who sadly passed away in 2023 before he could receive this medal. It brings to mind the Canadian government's difficulties in recognizing those who fought in Afghanistan, or the memorial, which listed names of people who had not actually died. Then there is the whole story of how that contract was awarded.

● (1120)

It is always disappointing to see that the action taken does not seem to match the sacrifices made by members of the armed forces. This time, I believe we have a good opportunity to rectify the situation and make the right decision.

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for highlighting the importance of recognizing our veterans and heroes.

Can the member explain the potential consequences of the government failing to show veterans the respect they deserve, and how this lack of recognition might hinder recruitment into the armed forces?

● (1125)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question from my colleague. As for the impact on recruitment, I must say that about 20 years ago, I myself considered joining the armed forces, since I was a former member of the air cadets. I ultimately decided not to go through with it, in part because I wanted to serve Quebec and felt that doing so as a member of the Canadian military created a somewhat unique situation. That does not mean that no one in Quebec wants to serve in the Canadian military, but I found it hard to reconcile that situation.

There are probably things the Canadian military could do to make recruitment easier in Quebec. For example, allowing people to serve only in Quebec could be an option.

When it comes to military honours, I think this is a good illustration of what my colleague is currently presenting, the motion we are debating today. If we are unable to commend people on their acts of bravery and give them a pat on the back, especially since these individuals often come home with post-traumatic stress disorder and injuries they will carry for the rest of their lives, often in ways that are invisible in daily life, it is certainly not motivating. On the contrary, these individuals should be singled out for their patriotism.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could my colleague share a little story about the value of veterans in his riding?

*Government Orders***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PROTECTING VICTIMS ACT

BILL C-16—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), not more than one further day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at report stage and at the end of the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

Members will recall that the preference for questions during the 30 minutes is provided to the opposition, but not to the exclusion of some members from the government side.

[English]

Members should keep their interventions to approximately one minute, and they may speak more than once.

I now invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this debate.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, there was a point in time when the Liberals were in opposition. Those were the glory days, when they were in opposition—

An hon. member: And the third party.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, they were the third party, to boot.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, my colleague on the other side of the House has caught me off guard a little. However, I can say that when the November 11 memorial ceremony is held every year in my riding, the family of one armed forces member who fought in Afghanistan attends. We lost one former resident of Boucherville, who died while serving. It troubles me because that individual was still in the prime of life, still relatively young, and he never got to see his children grow up or have the good fortune to enjoy a long life like others will. That saddens me. At the same time, I feel that it is important to remember the sacrifice he made every day so that we could enjoy our lives.

I think that ceremonies like the one on November 11 are important and need to be valued even more. That is why it is important on these occasions, which offer us a rare glimpse of military personnel wearing their medals, to congratulate and thank them for their service. We have to do more for them.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent speech and for his answers to our colleagues' questions. I want to put the ball back in his court, as he asked me a very similar question earlier. Why are we once again being forced to move concurrence in a committee report in the House in order to give it further impetus with a unanimous vote when the government could have taken action much earlier? After all, arguments have been presented to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, petitions have been tabled, not to mention all the witnesses who came to tell their stories.

I think it is good that we are doing this today. It is great. However, why are we being forced to proceed this way when it seems so obvious to me that this is something that should have been done a long time ago?

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, the good news is that the parliamentary secretary already responded to petition e-6661, stating that the government was willing to move forward.

I believe that the motion we are debating today will simply help speed up implementation. Sometimes, promises do not materialize. This time, I believe that if the entire House of Commons makes a commitment, it would enable us to move faster.

• (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

Sherry Romanado: Madam Speaker, we ask that it be carried unanimously.

(Motion agreed to)

Government Orders

They would routinely oppose time allocation motions. They did it every single time. How hypocritical are they now?

I have a question for the justice minister. Effectively, this runs completely contrary to the messaging of the Prime Minister. Literally within minutes of the Prime Minister securing a majority government following the by-elections and the floor crossings by the cowards who left the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister—

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is a well-established rule, which the member should know, that we cannot speak of any hon. member in this House in a disparaging way such as that. I would ask you to ask him to withdraw that comment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I invite the hon. member to withdraw that.

• (1135)

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I withdraw that and replace it with “for their own selfish reasons”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations may continue.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, literally within minutes, this is what the Prime Minister had to say. He pledged to work collaboratively with the House, stating that the government is “open to ideas from anyone”, yet at the justice committee, the Liberals actually shut down debate during Bill C-16. They did not allow additional days for additional witnesses to be heard.

We now have the justice minister shutting down the will of Parliament to voice its concerns over Bill C-16. The question is simple: Why is the justice minister going against the will and direction of his leader?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, respectfully, I find that I have enjoyed a productive working relationship with members of the opposition, including, specifically, the hon. member as the critic of this portfolio. We have accepted a number of amendments from different parties, including from the Conservative Party.

This has come to embody the work we did in government before and after the moment it became a majority. I would note, in particular, the collaboration my office and I have undertaken with the public safety critic, a Conservative member of Parliament, specifically with respect to his work to advance Bailey's Law, Bill C-225. We built relationships with the family to ensure that important protections, including some that are similar to those in Bill C-16, were baked into law to honour the memory of their beloved and departed relative.

We have the opportunity to take good ideas from different members of the House of Commons from different parties. In the present instance, the reason we wish to move quickly is that there are protections that could be afforded to people very soon, or they could delivered months from now.

This comes at a time when, in my home province, in just these past few days, we are seeing news stories about the rampant increase of AI deepfakes depicting people, without their consent, in intimate scenarios against their will. We have an opportunity to nip in the bud growing social problems that are disproportionately hav-

ing a negative impact on women in the country and are promoting cultures of violence and discrimination, and I think we can do our part to help advance protections as quickly as possible.

I would invite collaboration from all members of the House. Hopefully, the points in debate will be on substantive concerns, rather than a mirage of false claims that we are not being collaborative.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, despite the fine words from the other side of the House after the Liberals secured their much-vaunted majority, the government is moving forward with one time allocation motion after another. At the end of the day, despite the promises to work together, we are seeing more and more committees being muzzled.

I heard someone mention it is happening at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I could say the same thing about the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, which is still shut down. For over a month now, it has been impossible to get any public information about what is going on at this committee.

As Minister of Justice, does my colleague not think it is important for there to be transparency in the decisions that are made in the House so that people have an opportunity to speak out on important issues?

Right now, given everything this government is trying to do and despite their talk of collaboration, I get the feeling that, for them, collaboration is a one-way street. We have to do what the government says, and that is the end of it.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I disagree with my colleague when he says that the government is not collaborating. He also talked about transparency. I want to clarify one thing: There will be six meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights devoted to consideration of this bill. We have an opportunity to improve protection for families and communities.

I will give him an example of collaboration: Some of the ideas in this bill come from critics for the Bloc Québécois and other parties as well. For example, the idea of creating a new offence for recruiting young people to commit criminal offences comes from a Bloc Québécois critic. I think that is a good idea. Indeed, the purpose of the bill is to prevent youth exploitation.

I think we can continue this collaboration, but protection does not stop there.

• (1140)

[English]

We have to advance these protections expeditiously if we can afford protections over the next number of months for victims of crime, particularly sexual crime. We have to ask ourselves whether we want to be part of the solution today or we want to kick the can a few months down the road.

I clearly stand on the side of taking action today.

Government Orders

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is yet another example of the Liberal government stifling debate. We are here to debate the bill in good faith, and unfortunately, we are in for another time allocation motion, which does not allow members to fully debate their mind. I believe that is not the way to go.

I would like to ask the Attorney General a specific question. He knows that at committee, I brought a motion forward to bring a further amendment to Bill C-16 to invoke the notwithstanding clause in response to the Senneville decision, in which the Supreme Court struck down the mandatory minimum sentences for the possession of and access to child pornography. I subsequently read in the newspaper that the Attorney General had, in fact, considered invoking the notwithstanding clause.

I ask the Attorney General this question. If he refused to invoke the notwithstanding clause in response to the minimum sentences for the possession of and access to child pornography being struck down, is there a possibility that he would ever do it with respect to any legislation? Would he ever specifically invoke the notwithstanding clause, or is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, first, I take issue with the characterization of not providing adequate opportunity for debate. I warned the member and his colleagues on the justice committee that their shenanigans and filibustering for months on a separate bill, which tied up work, would delay our work on bail reform, sentencing reform and protections for victims of gender-based violence. Here we are, months down the road. They spent hours upon hours debating whether they prefer puppies or kittens, rather than how we can protect victims of crime. We are now facing a potential delay over the summer, due specifically to the wasted time at the justice committee, including the member's repeated interventions that were designed to chew up the clock, rather than advance protections for Canadians. I disagree with him on his threshold question.

On the substance, we examined a range of different options for how to address the fallout of the Senneville decision to restore mandatory minimums in cases involving child pornography, as well as mandatory minimums that were previously struck down or were constitutionally vulnerable. One of the reasons his proposal would result in weaker protections for victims is the temporary nature of the notwithstanding clause. There is a five-year term, which would expire when we have the same constitutional challenges that would—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. minister.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies is rising on a point of order.

Mel Arnold: Madam Chair, the minister opposite is arguing that debating the bill itself—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is debate. The minister has a lot of leeway to answer questions.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, finally, in order to drive home the point that we believe we found a better path forward, we did not rely just on guidance from the Supreme Court of Canada. We took guidance from members of Parliament from different parties, including the public safety critic within the Conservative Party of Canada and the justice critic within the Bloc Québécois, who demanded that and implored their colleagues from all parties move forward with what they discussed as a safety valve to provide some residual discretion where there are grossly disproportionate consequences.

That is the path we followed.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a woman dies by femicide in Canada every other day. We see coercive control on the rise and the deepfakes the minister alluded to.

Can he speak to why it is so urgent to move this legislation forward quickly to save lives?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, let us think about what my colleague just said. There is a woman killed every 48 hours in this country. There could not be a more pressing desire to act, and to act now. We have the opportunity, by criminalizing coercive control, not only to punish wrongdoing after it has taken place, but to intervene in relationships before they become violent and before that violence becomes fatal.

I mentioned during a previous answer that I saw, after debating the specific point last week in scrums and in the Senate, that we need to take action against the proliferation of AI deepfakes. I arrived back in my home province to see that someone is facing 79 charges, with an uncertain outcome through the trial, of using AI to generate deepfakes in horrific and heinous sexual acts without the consent of the person whose likeness is in these images.

We have an opportunity to be part of the solution today. I would urge all parliamentarians to take it.

• (1145)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister of Justice will know that I have never seen a debate closure motion that I liked. I think time allocation is overused.

I support Bill C-16, although I regret that my amendments to extend coercive control to protect seniors from elder abuse were not accepted in this round. Perhaps I can use this opportunity to ask him, since the bill now contains a periodic review, if the justice department would not see fit to bring in a bill against elder abuse, specifically dealing with the coercive control of seniors by those who are close to them or make the pretense of being close to them.

Government Orders

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, first, on the closure issue, I have made the case that there was ample study. There was filibustering at the committee. We have an opportunity to take action today, and I believe we should.

On the substance of her question, it is an area where I am genuinely interested in identifying the best policy path forward. However, I did not think it appropriate to copy and paste protections that were developed very specifically for the purpose of combatting intimate partner and gender-based violence when it came to coercive control. It may not be that the exact same test can be replicated to deal with the very serious issue of elder abuse.

I do think the five-year review period included in the bill would provide that opportunity. However, should parliamentarians desire to take action sooner, I do believe a parliamentary committee study would shed light on the best way to address that very serious issue, because elder abuse certainly is a problem in this country. I just do not know that the identical solution for gender-based violence could be applied equally to those circumstances without doing the policy work.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, and it is particularly important to me to rise today on this point.

Number one, Bailey's law is languishing in the Senate. It should be passed by the Senate tomorrow or today, and I hope the hon. minister will help with that.

Number two, I have been quoted on this bill, Bill C-16, more times than I can count. The funny thing is that it is on the issue of the safety valve, and I do not think I have given a single speech on the issue of a safety valve on this bill.

The Liberals, for years, mocked Conservatives when we talked about constitutionality and said that we were out to lunch, so between 2022 and 2024, I spoke about these issues. I did not assert and support government legislation when it came to Bill C-16 and give my imprimatur of approval. I want that to be very, very clear.

In my comment here, I want to say very clearly that I believe my words have been misconstrued. If my words are going to be stated, the whole context of it should be stated, particularly when I was stating it with respect to sex offences against children, which the government refused to legislate for years and years.

The last thing is that I would remind the hon. minister that it is not called "child pornography"; it is called "child sexual abuse and exploitation material".

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, first of all, my hon. colleague has done admirable work advancing Bailey's law. I support it fully. I urge senators to adopt it expeditiously to deliver some of the protections. The member has been working with family members who have been working with me and my team. We owe it to those who continue to advocate on Bailey's behalf to get that bill implemented to become law in Canada to protect victims of intimate partner violence. I want to thank him specifically for his collaboration in honour of the loss of Bailey's life and to prove that it was not in vain.

In addition, my colleague raised his concerns about his words being misconstrued. Thankfully, there is a record of the words spoken in this place. I would note that he tried to distinguish his argument on the basis that his comments previously were about child sexual exploitation and abuse material. That, in fact, was very specifically at issue in the Senneville decision, which motivated the use of the safety valve in this particular case.

I have been curious if he was going to participate in the debate on this issue of the safety valve. I would be happy to dig out the video evidence of his position on the matter, or the Hansard record, whichever manner would demonstrate that, in fact, he previously made the case very strongly, imploring even his colleagues within his own party to adopt a safety valve approach so we can restore, very specifically, mandatory minimum penalties. I would be happy to provide that record to the member or to the House, as it would satisfy those listening to the debate.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is shameful that the government has decided it is going to use a hammer to restrict our ability to continue debating this important bill.

The minister has stated that he wishes there were more, such as a parliamentary study on the idea of elder abuse and coercive control. All he would have to do is read through some of the testimony we have been hearing at FEWO for the last couple months, and there is ample. We have had witness after witness make it very clear that this needs to be put in. We have had tons of stakeholders bring this forward as a massive issue, yet the Liberals say that it is not important and that they are not dealing with that right now. Also, they are limiting any ability to have any further debate on this issue because they want to go home for vacation.

We are here to work, and we expect that, so why is the minister so keen to get out of here, get to somewhere else and go on his vacation rather than stay here and work for Canadians?

● (1150)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, the measures included in this bill have the potential to save the lives of victims who are facing violence. To be accused of wanting to go on vacation when I am willing to sit through the entirety of the summer to get this done, if necessary, is absolutely ludicrous.

I see people in my own community and in my own province facing 79 charges of using AI to create deepfakes of intimate images depicting people in heinous sexual acts without their consent. Shame on me for wanting to take action.

There have been six meetings at the justice committee. After months of the Conservatives' filibustering and denying the progress of this bill, we have an opportunity to deliver protections for people who are facing violence. To be accused of wanting to go on vacation is absolutely ridiculous. Yes, we are here to work. I would suggest all members of Parliament, regardless of party, are here to work, but let us stop the charade of pretending there has not been an ample debate on this issue. Let us move forward with the protections that victims so richly deserve.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it really amusing to listen to Conservatives talk about games being played in the House when they are literally the party that hid people behind the curtain during a very important vote months ago.

Would the minister not agree with me that, time after time, we see the Conservatives refusing to let legislation through, so we have to eventually use a tool like this to advance it? If they were more selective and did their filibustering tactics every once in a while, it might hold a bit more credibility. The problem is that they do it at every single opportunity, so with every single bill, it seems like this is the only way to keep it advancing forward. We will get to the point where the public does not even realize what is going on anymore because the Conservatives do it every single time.

Would the minister not agree that the Conservatives' approach and strategy would probably be a bit more productive if they were a bit more selective in choosing when to use the tool of filibustering to prevent and delay legislation from moving forward?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, my colleague makes an excellent point.

I wish I could say that this is a surprise. Realistically, when we had members of the justice committee filibuster for months a study on a previous piece of legislation that had been adopted by the House, we warned them. We told them that their antics were going to delay the implementation of protections that would be embedded in Canada's criminal law, and that it would delay for victims the beneficial impact of the laws that we are putting forward in the House. Did the Conservatives listen? No, they did no. They continued to filibuster for hours upon hours, talking out the clock and preventing the work of the justice committee from advancing.

We are now exactly where we said we would be because of that delay. We have been forced to move forward, despite the fact that there has been a robust study, by the way. This is the question that is central to this debate: Do we think it is acceptable to wait a few months to implement the protections that victims are demanding we put in place, that judges are calling for from the bench and that law enforcement are demanding, or do we want to implement them today? The Liberal Party of Canada wants to implement them today. It is a shame the Conservatives want to kick it down the road to the fall.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we all want to prevent discrimination and violence in this country, but fast-tracking and shutting down debate is not going to help improve this legislation. We have a lot of important questions. We do not want to wait until there are complaints, tribunals or criminal sanc-

tions after the fact. We want to talk about what we are going to do to prevent it.

We have not heard from the minister or the government on how they are going to invest in anti-bullying in schools; in mental health supports for vulnerable youth; in housing and homelessness, which is something that we have heard is clearly important on this; in community-based violence protection; in support for victims of hate incidents and discrimination; and in training in federally regulated workplaces, which is under the purview of the federal government and the minister, before complaints happen.

We have a lot of questions that have not been addressed by the government. Can the minister explain when the funding is going to come in on prevention, instead of it happening after the fact?

• (1155)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a thoughtful intervention, which is very important if our goal is to not only penalize bad actors after they have committed a crime but also prevent violence in the first place.

Each time I have introduced a bill to reform Canada's criminal law in the House and spoke about it publicly, I begin by laying out the public safety strategy that the Government of Canada is moving forward with.

The first pillar is to strengthen Canada's criminal laws, but we recognize that, largely, this has an impact after a crime has taken place. We also want to give tools to law enforcement and community organizations on the front line to support victims and to investigate and prosecute crime, but the most important pillar of our strategy is those upstream investments. They may be outside the scope of this bill, but they are moving forward in parallel.

This includes investments through Build Canada Homes to build assisted, supportive and affordable housing for people at risk in Canada. This includes working with the Minister of Health and provincial governments to advance services and treatments for mental health and addictions. It also includes long-term investments, particularly in at-risk youth, including through the youth employment and skills strategy, as well as investments in infrastructure that builds safer and stronger communities.

If we want to end violent crime in the long term, we need to take a holistic view of how we build safe communities and healthy people. Part of that equation also demands reforms to the criminal law. The protections contained in this bill, though penalizing crime after the fact, can in fact have some preventative nature. I mentioned coercive control and intervening before violence becomes deadly.

Government Orders

However, we should not delay the important work in this bill until the work around affordable housing, mental health and addictions and the at-risk youth prevention programs is done, because that work is going to continue in perpetuity for many many years. We have an opportunity to take action today to strengthen Canada's criminal laws to offer protections. I think we should avail ourselves of the opportunity.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I do not at all appreciate the government's decision to invoke closure on this debate. Nobody wins when the government limits debate on a bill, especially one that deals directly with justice. When it comes to the basic principles of this bill, we all agree that we need to ensure greater protection and get tougher on crime.

As always, the devil is in the details. That is particularly true when it comes to justice and crime. We are all in favour of tougher laws. We all agree that we need to better protect victims and that we need to crack down on criminals, especially in cases involving sex crimes or other related offences.

Does the minister agree that, unfortunately, democracy as a whole loses when the government shuts down debate on such a sensitive subject?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I do not agree. The facts in this situation are very different from what my colleague is describing. For example, a few months ago, the Conservative Party prolonged the debate at the Standing Committee on Justice.

[English]

The Conservatives were talking about a preference between puppies and kittens, wasting time for the sake of wasting time, and carrying on meaningless debates outside the scope of the criminal laws that we are seeking to implement. There was an opportunity to advance these protections in a timely way with full debate.

I would point out to the member the fact that we are seeing people from across Canada calling for these actions, and there was a debate at the justice committee. We have had an opportunity to debate this bill in the House. The Senate will have an opportunity to debate it.

In all honesty, we have judges from the bench crying for some of the protections that this bill would afford to Canadians. We see femicides taking place at an ungodly rate in this country, and we have an opportunity to help prevent those with stiffer penalties, and importantly, upstream investments as well.

I do not see this process as being a function of democracy breaking. I view the inappropriate behaviour to stop the work of the justice committee previously demands that democracy be allowed to work and that the House adopt the important reforms included in the bill.

• (1200)

Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, I rose in the House in support of Bill C-16, and today I rise again for the same reason.

In Peel Region, every year, the police receive approximately 16,000 calls of family and intimate partner violence. That is 16,000 calls for help and 16,000 moments of fear.

Can the minister speak to the importance of passing this legislation and how it will continue to protect the most vulnerable in our communities?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Brampton Centre for her advocacy on this issue.

She is right to point out the magnitude of this issue. It is 16,000 people from her part of the country, so 16,000 lives changed forever. We have an opportunity to have the legal system intervene more forcefully and with a greater effect. In addition to some of the new infractions and more serious penalties that we put in place, we are also making significant changes to how courts deal with some of these changes.

Let us think about the fact that nearly 10,000 cases have been thrown out of courts for delay, including many sexual assault cases. When the complainant is forced to live in the same community as a perpetrator who is walking free in their community, not because they have defeated the charges but because time ran out, that does not feel like justice.

We have an opportunity to correct things. This bill provides that opportunity. Let us vote for it today.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, to listen to this minister complain about and blame Conservatives for the situation of our justice system in Canada today is laughable.

When Bill C-75 was passed, Conservatives opposed that bill because we knew the damage and the consequences that bill would wreak on our justice system. Jody Wilson-Raybould, the minister at the time, said that passing that bill would speed up all of the delays in the court system, delays that seem to still exist. Arif Virani, during the debate, defended the government's use of time allocation and argued the opposition was blocking. Randy Boissonnault did the same thing and argued that Conservatives were holding things up. We were simply trying to warn Canadians about the damage these guys were doing.

Fast-forward to Bill C-5. David Lametti, as this bill's sponsor, said that Bill C-5 needed to move forward quickly and efficiently, and again blamed Conservatives for stopping the government from removing mandatory minimum penalties. Now, fast-forward to the current public safety minister and Mark Holland arguing the same thing.

All of this is evidenced in the Hansard and the Debates of those parliaments. For this minister to stand here today and actually blame Conservatives for telling them that they were wrong and we were right all along is ridiculous.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I have never seen a clearer example of a straw man argument. He is making allegations about my position in this argument that I did not suggest. My criticism of the Conservatives in this debate was about their behaviour at the justice committee, not for decisions taken under previous governments during different parliaments.

It is ironic that the Conservatives are arguing that there has not been enough time to debate this bill, but the questions they have on this debate are not even talking about this bill. The member is talking about bills that were adopted a number of years ago in previous parliaments, which, by the way, he is objecting to despite the fact that it made it harder for people to get bail when charged with intimate partner violence complaints or made house arrest ineligible for people charged with advocating genocide or attempted murder or torture in this country.

My own view is that we have an opportunity to offer protections to victims. It seems the Conservative Party has made a decision for political reasons that they wish to delay the implementation of these protections. I find that disappointing in the extreme. I hope that they will put their money where their mouth is and actually place their vote behind this bill to accelerate its expeditious adoption into Canada's laws to offer protections for communities.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to poke holes in the justice minister's argument over the length of debate on Bill C-16.

We only debated this for two days at second reading, and then we let it go on division so we could get it to the justice committee for study. We asked for eight meetings to actually do a proper study on this bill and to bring in the proper witnesses. The Liberals shut it down to only four meetings. We have only had one day to debate the bill at report stage, and they are already moving closure.

My question is for the minister who wraps himself in this paper tiger, saying that we do not respect the process and that there has been plenty of debate. We know that on the Liberal side, the only person who ever gets up and talks is the member from Winnipeg North who has said the most words ever, but has said the very least.

Why does this minister hate democracy, and why is he undermining parliamentary processes?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I hope, regardless of political affiliation, we can refrain from accusing one another of hating democracy. I think each person, regardless of their community, the language they speak, the community they represent or the party to which they belong, is a defender of democracy. I hope they would align themselves with the protections of the institutions that uphold that democracy, including the rule of law.

We have the opportunity to move forward with protections. It is clear that Conservatives have moved on from making substantive arguments and debates. They clearly just want to label the government with accusations that I do not think are grounded in reality, instead of actually advancing the protections in the bill. We will do this with them or without them. It would be my preference to have them with us.

Government Orders

• (1205)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

[English]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives ask for a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Call in the members.

• (1250)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 134)

YEAS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Battiste	Beech
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan	Bittle
Blois	Brière
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	Chenette
Chi	Church
Clark	Connors
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dandurand
Danko	d'Entremont
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Earle	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fancy
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Gasparro
Gerretsen	Gladu
Gould	Grant
Greaves	Guay
Guilbeault	Gull-Masty
Hajdu	Hanley
Harrison	Hepfner
Hirtle	Hodgson

Government Orders

Hogan	Housefather	DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Hussen	Iacono	DeRidder	Deschênes
Idlout	Jaczek	Diotte	Doherty
Jeneroux	Joly	Dowdall	Duncan
Joseph	Kayabaga	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Kelloway	Klassen	Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gallant	Garon
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Gaudreau	Gazan
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Lattanzio	Généreux	Genuis
Lauzon	Lavack	Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)
Lavoie	LeBlanc	Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Leitão	Lightbound	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Godin	Goodridge
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Gourde	Groleau
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Gunn	Hallan
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Maloney	Hardy	Ho
Martin	McGuinty	Hoback	Holman
McKelvie	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Jackson	Jansen
McKnight	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	Jivani	Johns
Ménard	Mendès	Kelly	Khanna
Michel	Miedema	Kibble	Kirkland
Miller	Mingarelli	Kmiec	Konanz
Morrissey	Myles	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Naqvi	Nathan	Kronis	Kuruc
Nguyen	Noormohamed	Kusie	Kwan
Ntumba	Olipphant	Lake	Lantsman
Olszewski	O'Rourke	Larouche	Lawrence
Osborne	Petitpas Taylor	Lawton	Lefebvre
Powlowski	Provost	Lemire	Leslie
Ramsay	Rana	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Robertson	Rocheffort	Lloyd	Lobb
Romanado	Royer	Mahal	Majumdar
Sahota	Sarai	Malette (Kapuskaing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Sari	Sawatzky	Martel	May
Schiefke	Sgro	Mazier	McCauley
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton South)	McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Sodhi	Solomon	McPherson	Melillo
Sousa	St-Pierre	Menegakis	Moore
Sudds	Tesser Derksen	Morin	Motz
Thompson	Turnbull	Muys	Nater
Valdez	van Koeverden	Normandin	Patzer
Vandenbeld	Villeneuve	Paul-Hus	Perron
Watchorn	Weiler	Plamondon	Poillievre
Wilkinson	Yip	Redekopp	Reid
Zahid	Zerucelli	Reynolds	Richards
Zuberi— 169		Roberts	Rood
		Rowe	Ruff
		Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
		Schmale	Seeback
		Shiple	Simard
		Small	Steinley
		Ste-Marie	Stevenson
		Strahl	Strauss
		Stubbs	Thomas
		Tochor	Tolmie
		Uppal	Van Popta
		Vien	Viersen
		Vis	Wagantall
		Warkentin	Waugh
		Williamson	Zimmer— 164

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
	Bexte
Berthold	Blanchet
Bezan	Block
Blanchette-Joncas	Bonk
Bonin	Boulerice
Borrelli	Brassard
Bragdon	Brunelle-Duceppe
Brock	Caputo
Calkins	Champoux
Chambers	Cobena
Chong	Cooper
Cody	Dancho
Dalton	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davidson	Dawson
Davies (Niagara South)	

PAIRED

Members

Guglielmin	Khalid
Koutrakis	Rempel Garner
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Thériault— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVILEGE

PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF A BILL AND ITS ELEMENTS TO A THIRD PARTY—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on May 25, 2026, by the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères regarding the alleged premature disclosure of C-31, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025.

In raising his question of privilege, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères asserted that information about Bill C-31 had been disclosed to Air Canada before the bill was introduced in the House. He argued that the series of events starting with Air Canada's announcement of a new arbitration mechanism, followed by the government's economic statement and then the introduction of the bill, indicated that a third party had gained preferential access to information that enabled it to anticipate and implement a mechanism aligned with legislative intentions that had yet to be shared with parliamentarians. In the member's view, these events could not be a coincidence and constituted a breach of the privileges of the House and its members.

[English]

In response, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said that members' privileges were not breached in any way. He explained that the government can consult stakeholders and the public as part of the policy development process before a bill is finalized. In addition, he said, the announcements by Air Canada and the government were made before the period during which the contents of a bill must remain confidential, namely the period between the time a bill is placed on notice and its introduction.

In this instance, the announcements were made well before this time period. The parliamentary secretary also pointed out that on May 4, the government had tabled a notice of ways and means motion that included all the measures that were later contained in Bill C-31, consistent with the principle that the House have first access to legislative measures. He concluded that the practices and precedents of the House had been respected.

[Translation]

The Chair would like to begin by reiterating the importance of the convention that the House must be the first to know the details of new legislative measures. Under this convention, it is prohibited to make the contents of a bill public from the time it is added to the Notice Paper until its introduction in the House, with an exception provided for cases where the full text of a bill is included in a ways and means motion. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons did not deny that the government may have consulted with industry stakeholders.

[English]

These consultations are routine and are not in themselves a matter of privilege. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, states the following in section 3.14: “the right to be the first to know the contents of a bill must coexist with the need of the government and members to hold consultations with the public and stakeholders on issues and policies in the preparation of legislation

Privilege

and prior to announcing the intention to introduce a bill on a specific issue.”

Indeed, Speakers of the House have often remarked that the House has to accommodate the government's need to conduct in-depth consultations with the public and affected groups before introducing legislation.

[Translation]

In light of the submissions heard, the Chair concludes that the House's right to be the first informed of legislative measures was not infringed by the government's consultations. Likewise, there is no basis for the Chair to hold that the government knowingly shared specific details of Bill C-31 with Air Canada before the bill was brought to the House.

The Chair therefore cannot conclude that members were impeded in carrying out their parliamentary functions or that a contempt was committed. Consequently, the Chair cannot find that there is a *prima facie* question of privilege.

I thank all members for their attention.

[English]

MINISTER STATEMENT DURING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised on June 2 by the member for Vancouver East, respecting the response from the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship during committee of the whole deliberations on Thursday, May 28.

The member alleges that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship deliberately misled members in response to her question concerning the process of study permit applications for Palestinian students.

I submit three arguments for consideration. First, the minister provided the most accurate information she had at the time and, therefore, did not in any way attempt to mislead the committee of the whole. Second, there is a long-standing practice in this House to take members at their word. Finally, the process in which the member for Vancouver East has raised the question of privilege does not follow the conventions of this place.

On the substantive question at hand, the minister did not mislead the committee in her response. During the committee of the whole deliberations, the member for Vancouver East asked a question concerning whether the minister would take the same approach as other countries in approving study visas. In her response, which is on the parliamentary record, the minister noted the application process that exists and stated that she directed officials to deal with these matters on an accelerated basis.

Privilege

The member for Vancouver East has brought into question what is not captured in Hansard and not clearly audible in the video recording of the proceedings. She has alleged that the minister stated that the application decision would be completed in the next 10 days. While the inaudible answer does not form part of Hansard, upon review of the audio, the minister can be heard stating that the interviews would be completed in the next 10 days. This is an important distinction from what the member has alleged and demonstrates that the minister did not mislead the committee.

A long-standing practice of this place is to take members at their word, as noted by the Speaker in his ruling of April 29, 2015: “as your Speaker, I must take all members at their word. To do otherwise, to take it upon myself to assess the truthfulness or accuracy of Members' statements is not a role which has been conferred on me, nor that the House has indicated that it would somehow wish the Chair to assume, with all of its implications.”

The member for Vancouver East has brought forward these allegations based on conversations with stakeholders, which, she states, “suggests that officials are not proceeding in accordance with” a certain time frame for applications.

Page 58 of the fourth edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* notes, “The Speaker has also stated that statements made outside the House or documents published elsewhere must not be used to cast doubt on members' statements in the House.”

The matter at hand is a dispute as to the facts. This is based on both a mischaracterization of the minister's response and the member's meetings with external stakeholders.

On June 19, 2025, the Speaker ruled, on a matter that constituted dispute as to the facts, that “If every disagreement is to be raised as a question of privilege, the House would spend its time doing little else. There are many opportunities in our debates for members to challenge each other on the facts of a particular case, and that is the correct way of dealing with such disagreements.”

I would add that the format of the committee of the whole does not always allow for exhaustive responses. As the time for answers in committee of the whole is to be proportional to the time to ask the question, members can appreciate that the circumstances of each matter raised cannot be adequately addressed in the time provided.

Members have several ways to obtain detailed information on a particular matter before bringing forward an allegation of a member misleading the House. I submit that the way the question of privilege was raised did not conform with the practices of this House.

The Speaker ruled on a similar matter on June 19, 2025, which outlined the process for dealing with questions of privilege in committee of the whole. This process is not being followed in the matter raised by the member for Vancouver East.

Let us review the facts at hand.

• (1255)

On May 28, the House resolved into committee of the whole to hear the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship on the 2026-27 main estimates for her department. The member for Van-

couver East asked a series of questions to the minister regarding her portfolio. At no point during the deliberation did the member raise concerns that she had been misled or that her privilege had been breached.

The Speaker has ruled on a similar situation that occurred on June 10, 2025, during consideration of the main estimates in a committee of the whole. The following day, the member for Mirabel alleged that the Minister of Finance misled the House in response to the member's question on the consumer carbon rebate scheme.

On this matter, on June 19, 2025, the Speaker ruled:

When the House resolves itself into a committee of the whole, it is, for all intents and purposes, functioning as a committee to consider a matter the House has referred to it. In this regard, the practice for raising questions of privilege emanating from a committee of the whole is the same as that of a standing, special or legislative committee...The Chair recognizes that there may sometimes be challenges with the committee of the whole format, in particular during the consideration of estimates. They, however, do not exempt members of their obligation to raise their concerns there first.

Section 3.99 of the fourth edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* sets out the requirements for raising a question of privilege in the committee of the whole. This process entails:

The Speaker will entertain a question of privilege in regard to a matter that occurred in a committee of the whole only if the matter has been dealt with first in the committee of the whole and reported accordingly to the House.

Moreover, section 19.18 of the fourth edition states:

Although questions of privilege in a committee of the whole are infrequent, the practice is identical to that for any standing, legislative or special committee. If a member rises on a question of privilege which is relevant to the proceedings in a committee of the whole, the Chair will hear the question of privilege....

If the matter raised by the member touches on privilege and relates to events in the committee of the whole, the Chair will entertain a motion that the events be reported to the House....

The Speaker will hear a question of privilege in regard to a matter that occurred in a committee of the whole only if the matter has been dealt with first in the committee of the whole and reported accordingly to the House.

I submit that the process was not followed in this case. I submit that the inaudible comments made by the minister were mischaracterized and that the minister did not in any way mislead the committee in her response to the question from the member for Vancouver East. Therefore, there are no facts to satisfy the requirement that the minister misled the House and did so deliberately.

The facts suggest that the minister stated accurately and truthfully that she directed her officials to accelerate the student visa process, which has been corroborated by her remarks in committee and in recent media coverage. Moreover, the well-established practice of the House is to take members at their word when considering the matter of what was on the parliamentary record and what one can hear in the audio recording of the proceedings of May 28.

Finally, the member for Vancouver East did not satisfy the requirements of the process for raising a question of privilege in a committee of the whole. In conclusion, I submit that there are no facts before the House to support a finding of a prima facie question of privilege in the matter raised by the member for Vancouver East.

• (1300)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

* * *

PROTECTING VICTIMS ACT

The House resumed from June 3 consideration of Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address Bill C-16, the protecting victims act. This bill represents an important step in reinforcing Canada's commitment to protecting victims and supporting survivors of crime.

When I was a law student, I worked in a community legal clinic in Toronto. Interacting and advising women who were living with domestic coercion and violence was a sobering experience for me. I was privileged to work with lawyers in the violence against women and children sectors where I learned much more about the cycle of abuse, a malignant dynamic that was afflicting so many families. Later, when I worked as a family law lawyer, I encountered many women trying to navigate the legal system while simultaneously attempting to break free from the financial, emotional and social coercion that their intimate partners exercised over them. It had taken many years for some of them to even recognize they were victims of such control and manipulation. Isolation from their families, friends and social supports; restrictions to accessing their own money; and erosion of their self-worth and value through psychological manipulation were regular symptoms I encountered. Of course, there were limits to the help I could provide as a new lawyer, and I was grateful for the community groups and social supports that I was able to refer my clients to for that help.

My early career as a family law litigator also taught me of the pervasive obstacles these women faced and continue to face in accessing justice through the legal system. My experiences with these women and their families inform the words I bring to this House today and ratify my support for our government's action to protect them.

Bill C-16 advances four core goals in protecting victims: strengthening the criminal law's response to gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence and femicide; strengthening protections for children against sexual exploitation, particularly in online spaces; improving the treatment of victims; and addressing delays that undermine confidence in the justice system.

I will focus today on how the bill would enhance the criminal justice system's response to gender-based violence and improve

Government Orders

protections for children from sexual exploitation. Every two days in Canada, a woman is killed by her intimate partner. This extreme form of violence is both devastating and disturbingly prevalent. These realities demand a strengthened and explicit response in our criminal law. We can strengthen the Criminal Code through Bill C-16 to ensure that murders occurring in certain aggravating circumstances are treated as first-degree murder, the most serious offence in the Criminal Code. These include murders of intimate partners that occur in the context of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, murders that occur in the context of sexual violence or exploitation, and murders motivated by hate, including based on gender.

The bill would also treat manslaughter occurring in these same circumstances more seriously by requiring sentencing judges to consider imposing the penalty applicable to second-degree murder: 25 years of imprisonment. Importantly, Bill C-16 would explicitly refer to these killings as femicide. Words matter, and naming these crimes matters. In doing so, we recognize and acknowledge that women and girls are disproportionately the victims of these forms of homicide, and it reflects victims' lived realities.

While femicide represents the most extreme form of gender-based violence, such violence often takes many other forms, including mental abuse. Abusers may exert control by isolating intimate partners from family and friends, monitoring communications, controlling finances or making threats involving children. This pattern of coercive or controlling conduct often precedes intimate partner femicide.

Through the protecting victims act, a new offence would criminalize engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward an intimate partner. The new offence is modelled on Scotland's approach, which is widely regarded as the gold standard because it does not require proof that the victim feared for their safety. Clearly defining "coercive control" in the Criminal Code is intended to help law enforcement identify the true aggressor in intimate partner violence cases and reduce the risk of dual charging by requiring a contextual assessment of power imbalances and patterns of exploitation of vulnerabilities. This approach recognizes that coercive controllers often target vulnerabilities, while violence used by victims is often defensive. The new offence would be supported by training to support the offence being applied by law enforcement in a manner consistent with its core objective of protecting victims.

To complement these reforms, the protecting victims act would modernize the criminal harassment offence by removing the need to prove the victim's subjective fear, instead requiring proof that a reasonable person in the victim's circumstances would perceive a threat to their physical or psychological safety, reducing the need for survivors to relive their trauma in court.

Government Orders

The protecting victims act would also respond to an emerging form of digital-based gender violence: sexual deepfakes. While child sexual abuse material is already criminalized regardless of whether images are real or fictional, the existing offence for non-consensual distribution of intimate images does not clearly capture AI-generated images that are indistinguishable from real ones.

• (1305)

Bill C-16 would address this gap by ensuring that sexual deepfake depictions of identifiable persons that appear real and are distributed without consent are treated the same as real intimate images, affirming that consent is required regardless of how the image is created.

The bill would also criminalize threatening to distribute intimate images, including deepfakes, to address sextortion and intimidation and would increase the maximum penalty for the offence from five to 10 years' imprisonment.

The proposed legislation contains a range of measures to better protect children from sexual exploitation, including online. For example, significant concerns have been expressed about child sexual offence mandatory minimum penalties, MMPs. While Parliament has been signalling that sexual crimes against children should be treated as far more grave by increasing MMPs, courts have struck many of these MMPs down as violations of section 12 of the charter, which characterizes them as cruel and unusual punishment.

Our government is responding to this through the proposed protecting victims act. We propose to reinforce these MMPs for predators who create, possess or distribute child sexual abuse and exploitation material by allowing judicial discretion, in rare cases, where applying an MMP would be grossly disproportionate in the facts of the case before the court. The protecting victims act would ensure those who prey on our kids face prison time for the most heinous crimes imaginable, by reviving 13 MMPs for child sexual offences that were previously struck down by courts.

This approach is designed to protect and preserve mandatory minimum penalties while ensuring they continue to apply to the serious crimes they are intended for, thereby addressing the court's constitutional concerns under section 12 of the charter, cruel and unusual punishment. It is an approach that members of the opposition have supported very well.

The protecting victims act also proposes reforms that would modernize offences that target sexual exploitation, sextortion and child luring and child sexual abuse and exploitation material. These reforms include creating a new offence that would prohibit threatening to distribute child sexual abuse and exploitation material; expanding the child-luring offence so it would explicitly apply to those who communicate with children to sextort them; criminalizing the distribution of bestiality depictions, including deepfake ones, which is conduct that is known to be used to manipulate children for sexual purposes; expanding certain child sexual offences to protect children from those who may invite them to expose their own sexual organs for a sexual purpose, including where no physical touching occurs; and ensuring Canadians who sexually assault children abroad could be prosecuted at home.

The proposed reforms also seek to strengthen requirements for Internet service providers under the mandatory reporting act, which imposes duties on Internet service providers, including one to notify police when their services are used to commit a child sexual abuse and exploitation material offence. Service providers would have to preserve data for a longer period of time and transmit critical information to law enforcement. The act would also more clearly cover a broader range of online platforms and would extend the limitation period for the prosecution of offence under that act.

Finally, to address those who recruit and involve youth in the commission of criminal offences, Bill C-16 proposes to create a new offence that would prohibit recruiting, counselling, encouraging or inviting a young person to be party to a criminal offence.

These reforms are necessary. They move Canada forward toward a justice system that recognizes modern forms of abuse, protects survivors before it is too late and refuses to allow predators to hide in technology, bureaucracy or legal loopholes.

I mentioned earlier that every two days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. That day came for Darian Hailey Henderson-Bellman, a 25-year-old woman who lived in my riding. She was killed by her intimate partner, a man who had numerous interactions with law enforcement and should never have been released into society after he was previously charged with domestic violence.

The system failed Darian and her family, but her murder is not in vain. Through the valiant and dedicated work of her parents, Flo and Paul Henderson, Darian's story has been shared and discussed, including in this very House.

Darian's story and those like hers play a key role in the fabric of this legislation. We owe it to women living under the shadow of coercive control, we owe it to the children who are confronted with threats on their phones and we owe it to victims who wait for years for justice only to be turned away.

Laws shape culture, and culture shapes safety. When we call femicide by its name, we expose misogyny for what it is. When we prosecute sextortion, we protect dignity. When we protect children, we protect our country's future. When we expand victims' rights, we honour their courage.

I implore everyone in the House to support these reforms because safety is not optional, dignity is not negotiable and justice should not be a privilege; it must be a guarantee.

• (1310)

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I listened with great attention to my colleague's speech, as the person who wrote the bill along and ushered the bill through to change the name of "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse and exploitation material." As somebody who prosecuted Internet luring and offences against children, I took a great deal of interest.

One of the things the member spoke about was homicide of intimates, which was also addressed in Bill C-225, also known as Bailey's law. Bailey's law is at the Senate right now, and it was studied and amended substantially in the House at the request of the government.

I wonder if that member would be prepared to provide an endorsement to state that Bailey's law should be passed forthwith. Bailey McCourt, for whom the bill is named, was tragically killed in a similar situation to the Henderson murder the member spoke about. Her death happened on July 4 last year. Would the member support this bill coming into effect by July 4 this year?

• (1315)

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for his advocacy and work on that bill.

As someone who has worked in the violence against women sector in the legal context, I know we saw gaps in laws and legislation that could be addressed through this House, and we are glad to see those types of bills moving through now.

I am happy to continue to advocate, and certainly it is our job as elected officials in this chamber to advocate on behalf of those who do not have voices to bring their stories forward. I commend the member for his work on that bill, and I will certainly continue to work with him to elevate those voices in this chamber.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have a chance to take the floor to ask a question of my colleague from Milton East—Halton Hills South.

I am distressed. I certainly agree with all the sentiments. We need to make sure that we are acting to protect people from the crimes that we have talked about, including intimate partner violence. However, we are falling back on rhetoric in the absence of evidence when we start echoing the notion that mandatory minimum sentences are somehow great at preventing crime, because there is no evidence for that at all. Empirical studies from all around the world, particularly from the U.S., where they were used a lot in Texas, prove conclusively that they do not deter crime. What deters crime is the risk of being caught, not longer sentences.

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, it is a great question about mandatory minimum sentences. We had great discussions about that in this House. I do agree that the research on justice does tend to show that mandatory minimum sentences do not necessarily deter crime. However, they do provide more trust and more confidence in the justice system. What our government is trying to do

Government Orders

here is find that middle ground where we can ensure that folks have confidence in justice, and I believe there is some element of deterrence there as well, but at the same time we are making sure that we are compliant with the charter. As we know, there have been a lot of charter challenges with respect to mandatory minimum penalties, and this is a balance that we have to negotiate here in this House.

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many women who experience intimate partner violence face obstacles in accessing justice. Can my colleague explain how Bill C-16 would improve access to justice for women who experience intimate partner violence?

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question from my colleague. During my work in the legal field with women who were experiencing intimate partner violence, many of them experienced hesitation and trepidation in coming forward because they were not confident that the justice system could be easily navigated or address their needs.

This bill speaks directly to that concern by ensuring that courts can have earlier responses, respond faster and deliver stronger results for victims. We are also including testimonial aids for victims, so that they do not have to relitigate and relive their traumas in court. We also want to ensure that they have a speedy result. At the same time, we have to make sure that more complex sexual assault and sexual abuse cases have the time they need in the courts without encountering unnecessarily long delays and being thrown out, as we saw in the Jordan decision.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, remember how good life used to be a decade ago, before the Liberal government? We had the wealthiest middle class. Now the middle class is poor, and Canada is the only G7 country in a recession. However, the best thing we had was how safe our country used to be. My city, the beautiful city of Toronto, anywhere, anytime, day or night, any neighbourhood, was safe.

After a decade of Liberals, violent crime is out of control. Residents are no longer safe. Parents are afraid for their kids to take the transit. There are robberies on the street, home invasions and extortion. It seems like every day I wake up and a person has been shot in my North York riding. Last week, there was a murder at Sheppard and Magellan, in the beautiful community of Downsview. Three men shot a man to death outside his house.

Government Orders

What is happening? What is happening is Liberal bail and sentencing laws. Every police officer will say that. We need to close the revolving door in the courts. First, we got the Liberal failure of Bill C-14. That was for bail. Now we are here on Bill C-16, to deal with sentencing. Again, we have a Liberal failure. Instead of increasing mandatory minimum sentences, the Liberals do the opposite. They create what they refer to as a “safety valve”, which would allow judges to disregard mandatory minimum sentences.

Under the Criminal Code, mandatory minimum penalties apply to a range of serious offences. These mandatory minimums are designed to set a sentencing floor, a minimum term of imprisonment that Parliament deemed necessary for denunciation, deterrence and public safety for specific categories of crime.

In recent years, courts have been striking down mandatory minimum penalties under section 12 of the charter as cruel and unusual punishment. That, of course, includes the Supreme Court. The Liberals frame the safety valve as a response to this jurisprudence of striking down mandatory sentences. They point to recent decisions like *Senneville*, where the Supreme Court struck down a mandatory minimum penalty for possession and distribution of child pornography. I will come back to this decision.

What would they do with a safety valve? The valve would allow courts to impose sentences below the mandatory minimum if a judge thinks that applying the mandatory minimum would amount to a cruel and unusual punishment. The Liberals ironically say they would strengthen mandatory minimum sentences, but instead they do the opposite. They make them non-mandatory. Effectively, the valve would allow a judge to disregard mandatory minimum penalties, so a minimum penalty is no longer a mandatory minimum penalty.

Jail time would still be required, but a judge would be free to sentence the convicted person to one day in prison. If they feel that this House, Parliament, has prescribed a sentence that is too extreme, they can just disregard what we say. This is crazy. It would result in lighter sentences for serious repeat offenders. The Liberals are doing the exact opposite of what is required. In effect, what previously required a constitutional argument would be an automatic argument every time at sentencing, that something is cruel and unusual.

The safety valve is a major concession to judicial activism. It would undermine the role of this Parliament. We are the ones who set sentencing policy. Worse, the principle of deterrence is lost. I listened to some comments a short time ago from folks saying that there are empirical studies that state mandatory minimum sentences do not work. They do work, because someone cannot commit a crime if they are in prison. Many of these violent offenders who offend repeatedly, again and again, should be left in jail, away from the community that they seek to terrorize again. Therefore, we need to do the opposite.

This is especially in response to the Supreme Court striking down the mandatory minimum sentence on distribution and access to child pornography. At the justice committee, I moved a motion to invoke the notwithstanding clause to protect mandatory minimum sentences on possession and distribution of child pornography, but the Liberals voted it down. Again, they failed to protect

children. This is not just about kids who have already been abused and exploited in these pictures and videos. It is about kids in the future who, God forbid, could be raped because the courts have failed to punish these perverts and deter future perverts.

• (1320)

We had to go hard here so that we could kill this awful industry, but the Liberals refused. Why? They say, “All we heard from the Attorney General was that it is a sunset clause, and in five years we would have to do this again.” Well, fine, let us do it again.

What was the point of the notwithstanding clause? It was to prevent absurdity. Attorney General Jean Chrétien used the clause to seal the deal on the charter, and he specifically used an example for absurdity that the Supreme Court could potentially come up with. It was a hypothetical that Chrétien used: that the Supreme Court would find possession of child pornography protected by freedom of expression. I think everyone in this room, even the Liberals, would agree that such a finding would be absurd.

Now, that is not the scenario we had in *Senneville*, but pretty close. *Senneville* pleaded guilty to possession and access to over 300 images of children, mostly girls between the ages of three and six, being sexually exploited. The co-appellant, Mathieu Naud, pleaded guilty to possessing over 500 images and almost 300 videos, most of which were of children ages five to 10, in many cases being subjected to rape and sodomy. This is disgusting. Striking down a mandatory one-year sentence for each of those two counts is precisely the type of absurdity that Attorney General Jean Chrétien had in mind. This is precisely why section 33 was explicitly inserted in the charter.

We said to the Liberals at the justice committee, instead of narrowing down and diluting the mandatory minimum sentences, let us preserve the mandatory minimum sentences for the worst of the worst, and this is one of them, but the Liberals refused the amendment.

I am proud of the Leader of the Opposition and my Conservative colleagues. We will invoke section 33 to protect children from these monsters and to prevent this absurdity that the Supreme Court arrived at. The Attorney General is refusing to invoke the clause, refusing to do his job, refusing to protect children and safeguard the law. Instead, the Liberals weaken sentencing laws with a safety valve. It is a shame, and it is regrettable.

I spoke to a police officer in my riding. I do not want to name them, and I do not even want to name the division. He said to me, not too long ago, “Roman, you know how upsetting it is when we arrest a guy again and again. We had a situation where an officer got injured during the arrest of a guy he arrested again and again, and a couple of days later the same offender was out on bail again.”

We tried to deal with bail, but the Liberals refused to remove the ladder principle, and still the courts are required to release at the earliest opportunity under the least restrictive terms. We dealt with sentencing and with activist courts that refuse to impose the mandatory minimums that the House prescribed. Instead of preserving mandatory minimums, what did the Liberals do? They did what Liberals do: They weakened mandatory minimum sentences. They now tell judges to go ahead and disregard the mandatory minimum if they think the mandatory minimum is disproportional.

I do not understand what it is we are doing here with Bill C-16. We need to do the opposite. We need to protect Canadians. We need to take a bite out of crime and not let criminals loose, as this bill would do.

• (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we often hear from the far right, and when we talk about the far right on Bill C-16, they are part of the problem. They really and truly are. Think about this. Not only would Bill C-16 reinstate some of those mandatory minimums that the member says he is concerned about, but let us talk about lawful access. The Conservative Party of Canada has made the determination that lawful access is bad. They do not want to support it. They are fighting it tooth and nail, yet lawful access will help in dealing with issues such as child exploitation and child pornography.

Listen to what the member opposite said, and their actions speak louder than words. Does this member support lawful access or not?

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, the member should stop yelling and start protecting children instead.

The member believes that preserving mandatory minimum sentences is far right. The Liberal Party has gone so completely insane to the left that anybody who disagrees with it on anything is deemed to be of the far right.

I am proud of the fact that the Conservative Party wants to preserve mandatory minimum sentences, and we will do so when we form Conservative government.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is also on the justice committee, and I was hoping he could elaborate on the problems that emerged during our committee study, because we actually put forward a lot of amendments. It was shocking how many amendments the Liberal government put forward to its own bill, which I think reinforces the point that even the Liberals saw the flaws in this.

We were prepared to work across party lines to protect victims, but can my colleague answer what happened when we tried to put forward concrete amendments that would keep offenders behind bars, where they belong?

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, repeatedly, the chair of the justice committee called our amendments to reintroduce and strengthen mandatory minimum sentences out of order. This is despite the fact that this is precisely what the bill seeks to do, which is supposedly to strengthen mandatory minimum sentences.

Government Orders

Why the chair of the justice committee called them out of order and out of scope, I do not know, but ironically, something interesting happened during that process. In one specific instance, which had to do with the use of a firearm during extortion, the chair of the justice committee initially called the proposed amendment in order, contrary to the fact that every other amendment was out of order. I do not believe that the ruling was correct. We were overruled again and again.

• (1330)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to lawful access. The Conservatives cannot have it both ways. They cannot say that they are going to fight and get tough on crime, but then, when we have police agencies and law enforcement agencies from across the country saying they want lawful access, be so determined to prevent the House of Commons, the Prime Minister and the government from passing lawful access. I ask the member to tell us the reason why.

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party is the party of law and order, and the key to the rule of law is that the government is also under the law. This means that, when the government comes along and says it wants a sweep, it wants the private sector to hold all metadata, all of it, without a warrant, without any suspicion of a crime being committed, that would be a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As the party of law and order, we will defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is the reason.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to sit alongside my colleague on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We do not always see eye to eye, but I believe he does a thorough job and I congratulate him on that.

I understand that he disagrees on a number of points relating to Bill C-16, but can we agree that Canadian society is better off with Bill C-16 than without it?

[*English*]

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, what is patently clear is that, by winding down, nullifying and watering down mandatory minimum sentences, Canadians are going to be considerably worse off.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I was just saying, I would not be prepared to say that Bill C-16 is a cure-all and that everything will be fine from now on, but I would say that things will certainly be better than they used to be.

I am quite pleased with the work that was done on Bill C-16 before it was referred to committee and when the committee was studying it. This bill improves quite a number of things. First, it provides a legislative response to controlling and coercive behaviour. I believe we have been working on this problem for three Parliaments now. Our efforts have finally resulted in a bill. Since we still have three and a half years to go before the next election, I hope that we will be able to pass it and move on to something else.

Government Orders

With this bill, we will finally be able to properly punish murders classified as femicide, meaning murders that occur alongside controlling and coercive behaviour, violence, human trafficking, hatred or other factors. We are addressing the issue of femicide.

The bill also tackles the issue of harassment. Until now, and even today, victims that report harassment must prove that they subjectively feared for their safety. This often forced women or victims of harassment to testify and recount everything they had endured, the effect it had on them, which obviously hindered their recovery. Now, the standard is that the behaviour must be such that it could reasonably lead the victim to believe their safety is in danger. That is good news.

I am not going to address every issue, because there are so many.

As for the recruitment of individuals under the age of 18, this is something the Bloc Québécois has called for. I have personally spoken with our Minister of Justice on numerous occasions to address this issue. Criminals affiliated with organized gangs recruit young people knowing that, since they are under 18, it does not matter if they get caught, as they will not have a criminal record. These criminals therefore ask these young people to commit theft or other crimes on their behalf. It is a scourge. These are our young people; we try to keep them on the straight and narrow, to bring them back when they stray. It is truly appalling that there are people who recruit them to commit crimes. Personally, I recommended going so far as to provide that an adult who recruits a young person be sentenced to twice the penalty they would have received had they committed the crime themselves. The bill does not go quite that far, but it does provide for penalties for the recruitment of minors under 18. I applaud the minister's initiative.

On the issue of reasonable time frames, the Supreme Court Jordan decision caused a number of issues. At the same time, we all agree—in any case, I do—that a trial should be held within a reasonable time frame. If it takes two or three years, I think that is reasonable. If five or 10 years pass and an individual has still not had a trial, that harms that individual, who has been living with the sword of Damocles hanging over their head that whole time. It harms the victims too. All that time, they do not know whether their attacker will get the conviction they want and that the attacker deserves. It harms everyone. It harms society. The costs are astronomical. Holding lengthy trials is not possible. I therefore agree with the Supreme Court regarding what “a reasonable time” means under the charter. In the future, the time frame will be set at 24 months at the Court of Quebec and 30 months at the Superior Court of Quebec. That seems perfectly reasonable to me, and I am satisfied with that.

Unfortunately, things being what they are, there is no money. The federal government is not transferring funds to the provinces for health care. Hospitals are overflowing. People are waiting in emergency rooms. The federal government is not transferring funds to the provinces for education. Schools lack specialized services. The same goes for the courts. Not enough judges, court clerks and necessary staff can be hired. Not enough courtrooms can be booked. As a result, trials are often not held within the time limits prescribed by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Bill C-16 amends or improves the way time limits are calculated. I do not know if it will work. I remain skeptical but optimistic. If

nothing else, I am pleased that our Minister of Justice has decided to address this issue, and I welcome this initiative.

● (1335)

My colleague mentioned a certain aspect of Bill C-16 a moment ago that is also a recurring issue. I have been an MP since 2015, and I do not remember a single time or year where we did not discuss the issue of mandatory minimum sentences. The Liberals do not want them for anything, whereas the Conservatives want them for everything. Throwing everybody in jail certainly would reduce crime on our streets, but that might not be the kind of society we want to live in. We need to find a middle ground. With all due respect for the opinion of my colleague who spoke just before me, I think that what Bill C-16 proposes fits somewhere in that middle ground.

This was a proposal that originated with the Bloc Québécois. I suggested it to the two people who served as justice minister before the current minister. Each time, they said it sounded reasonable and that something could be done, but nothing ever came of it. Now our idea has shown up in Bill C-16. The government says it is trying to compromise. The mandatory minimum sentences that our Conservative colleagues believe in so strongly will be reinstated. That will send a clear signal that Parliament takes these crimes very seriously, and it will also send that message to the courts, but judges will be allowed to deviate from the mandatory minimums under genuinely exceptional circumstances.

People may wonder why, since it can sometimes lead to absurd situations. I recall one case, although I have unfortunately forgotten the details. It was a Quebec case involving a young 18-year-old man who had been accused, for all sorts of reasons, of committing sexual interference with a minor because his girlfriend was 16 or 17 years old, I think. They had been intimate for a few years. Both families were aware of it and accepted the situation. It was all right, but sexual interference with a minor carried a mandatory minimum sentence. The judge said in his decision that he regretted the situation and that, in his opinion, it made no sense. Those were not his exact words. I cannot remember what he said exactly. Please excuse my word substitution. The judge said that it was unfortunate, but that the offence carried a minimum sentence so he had no choice. He therefore sentenced the young man to prison. I have no details about what happened next, and I do not mean to overdramatize the issue by citing a rare example.

However, in those exceptional cases, can we trust our judges? They are not perfect, but based on my experience as a lawyer before I became a member of Parliament, and from what I have read since, they do a pretty good job. I have good friends who are judges, both at the Superior Court and at the Court of Quebec, as well as at the provincial courts of the other provinces. They are honest and well-meaning and, like just about everyone here in this chamber, they want the best for society. They work in the fairest, most effective way for everyone.

Personally, I am fine with mandatory minimum sentences, but I want to make sure that the judges who preside over our courts can use their common sense in exceptional cases and that they are given the option to deviate from those minimums if they consider the case to be exceptional or if the sentence would be cruel and unusual. Those judges will obviously have to justify their decisions. In their rulings, they will have to explain the exceptional circumstances justifying their decision to deviate from the mandatory minimum sentence imposed by Parliament. That reassures me, and I think it should reassure the general public, too.

I realize that this does not reflect the wishes expressed by our Conservative colleagues. I respect their position, but I would urge them to be a little more flexible in the criteria we use to assess bills. They will see that this may be the most appropriate solution between having no mandatory minimum sentences and having mandatory minimum sentences that are too restrictive in certain circumstances.

● (1340)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe Bill C-16 has the right balance. When the Supreme Court of Canada rules that a piece of legislation is outside of the Constitution or the charter, it overrules the law and mandatory minimums in place.

Bill C-16 re-establishes a number of the minimum sentences that have been overruled in the past by having that particular clause in it. That clause allows the judiciary the independence of being able to then provide the explanation. I appreciate the way the member brought it forward.

The Conservative solution to the issue is to use the notwithstanding clause, on an ongoing basis, an unlimited number of times. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on using the notwithstanding clause.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat myself unnecessarily, but my colleague is right to raise this issue. I do not think it would be appropriate to return to mandatory minimum sentences that leave no room for discretion.

For one, this would run counter to the ruling the Supreme Court has already handed down on this matter. I have no objection to going back to the Supreme Court several times if necessary, but constantly doing the same thing over and over again in hopes of obtaining a different result seems a bit odd to me.

Moreover, I believe that our society is better off with mandatory minimum sentences that allow for exceptions. I disagree with a rigid framework that does not allow for exceptions, as that can lead to injustices.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be working with my colleague on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

During committee proceedings, he spoke with several witnesses about the issue of criminals recruiting young people. In Canada, we

Government Orders

are seeing an increasing number of cases of youth crime, including serious offences such as murder.

I would like to ask him why, in his view, the government has not taken this problem seriously.

● (1345)

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me as well to work with my colleague.

First of all, I want to say how much I appreciate his efforts to speak French. His French is becoming exceptional. I tip my hat to him. I actually think his French is better than my English.

To answer the question more specifically, as I said earlier, I think the recruitment of minors is a scourge. I cannot stress this enough. It is cowardly for an adult to ask a minor to commit a crime on their behalf. I have no sympathy for such an adult, and I have no qualms about doubling or even tripling the sentence they would receive.

That said, I understand that we are in Parliament. There are 343 of us here, and everyone's opinion must be taken into account. The Minister of Justice has found a middle ground between what I would have wanted and what others might have wanted. I will leave it at that. We will give it a try and hope for the best.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Bloc is supporting the principles of the legislation. I see that as a very strong positive.

There is a series of legislative initiatives that the Prime Minister and the government have put into place to make the communities across our country safer. That is very important to the government, as we have a very extensive suite of bills

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the holistic approach of dealing with crimes in our community and working with provincial jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies to achieve the ultimate goal, which is to make our communities safer.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, here is what I think of his government.

I admit that the current Minister of Justice is someone I have a cordial relationship with. I consider him to be effective, and I have a certain amount of confidence in him. However, I do not want anyone to ask me to approve everything the current government has done. It has done a lot more objectionable things than good things, in my opinion, and I say that with all due respect for our colleagues who make up this government.

I would be remiss if I did not mention certain aspects of the justice system. It is all well and good to pass laws that we think are effective, but the fact remains that they have to be administered, and that falls under provincial jurisdiction. There is no money in the provinces. That is something the government could perhaps do: speed up transfers to the provinces, stop meddling in matters that are none of its business, and ensure that the provinces are able to effectively enforce the laws passed here.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the chamber on behalf of the great people of Brampton West.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, an act to amend certain acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters. As my constituents' member of Parliament, I have a responsibility to listen, to bring their concerns to the House and to fight for safer communities.

When I speak with residents in Brampton West, one issue comes up again and again: extortion. Not once in a while but every single week, business owners come to my office, families send emails, and community leaders call. They are afraid and feel threatened.

Extortion is up 330% across Canada, and it has become a national crisis. Criminals are targeting hard-working families and small businesses. Homes and businesses are being shot at, and threatening videos are being sent, demanding money. Families are living in fear. Some people have even left Canada because they no longer feel safe. Think about that. People came here to build a better life, but instead they are being terrorized by criminals.

Recently, Peel Regional Police arrested 17 individuals connected to a major extortion network targeting South Asian businesses throughout Peel Region. I commend the officers involved. Their work was outstanding. The investigation revealed a coordinated campaign of intimidation, violence, threats, arson attempts and shootings. There were more than two dozen shootings, hundreds of rounds were fired, and businesses were attacked simply because owners refused to pay criminals.

However, those arrests are only one step. The problem and threat remain. Gangs are now sending letters to police, boasting that they have thousands of extortionists ready to commit crimes. That should alarm every member of the House. Criminal organizations are becoming bolder, more organized and more violent, and Canadians are paying the price.

This is exactly why Conservatives proposed amendments to strengthen the bill. We wanted stronger consequences, greater protection for victims and to send a message that extortion will not be tolerated in Canada. One amendment would have extended mandatory minimum penalties for extortion committed with a firearm. Another would have ensured that extortion-related mandatory minimums could not be weakened through the Liberal safety valve provisions.

The Liberals have voted down all these community safety amendments. They were reasonable amendments that reflected the reality that extortion today often involves guns. Criminals fire bullets into homes and businesses, record it, then send the videos to victims and post the videos online. They use fear as a weapon, yet Liberal members rejected our proposals.

When Conservatives tried to strengthen penalties against violent extortionists, Liberals said no. When Conservatives tried to stand with victims, Liberals voted no. That is disappointing because Parliament created mandatory minimum penalties for a reason: to clearly denounce the most serious crimes, establish consequences,

protect society and provide certainty in sentencing. Canadians understand that principle. When someone commits murder or kidnaps another person, there are consequences. When someone commits sexual assault, there must be consequences.

Let us discuss another major concern with Bill C-16. Conservatives proposed amendments to protect mandatory minimum penalties for some of the most horrific sexual offences in the Criminal Code. One amendment would have preserved mandatory minimum penalties for sexual assault involving a weapon, and particularly in cases involving firearms and involving children. These are not minor offences, and they are not mistakes. They are among the most serious crimes imaginable. When someone sexually assaults a child while using a weapon, society has a duty to respond firmly. The rights of victims matter, and the safety of children matters, yet the Liberals rejected that amendment.

• (1350)

Conservatives also proposed protecting mandatory minimum penalties for aggravated sexual assault. These are the worst cases. Cases involving severe violence and devastating harms permanently change the lives of victims. Canadians expect Parliament to speak clearly when it comes to these crimes. They expect us to stand with victims and denounce offenders. Instead, the government voted against those amendments. That sends the wrong message, especially in a bill that claims to strengthen protection for victims. If we truly support victims, we must ensure meaningful consequences for the worst offenders. Words alone are not enough. Victims deserve action.

Another important amendment came from my Conservative colleagues at committee, an amendment dealing with reasonable hypotheticals. The principle was simple: The court should focus on facts, not on speculation or hypothetical possibilities. The justice system must rely on facts, evidence and reality. Justice must be based on what actually happened, not on the circumstances that may never occur, yet Bill C-16 would continue to allow courts to consider reasonably foreseeable circumstances. That language is vague. It is subjective and invites inconsistency. Two offenders could commit the same crime under the same circumstances but receive different outcomes because of speculation that undermines confidence, fairness and public trust.

Canadians expect equal justice. They expect sentencing decisions based on evidence, not imagination. Conservatives proposed an amendment that would have restored clarity. It would have ensured that courts focus on the actual circumstances of the offender, the actual facts before them, nothing more and nothing less. Again, the Liberals rejected the amendment. That is unfortunate. People must believe that similar crimes receive similar consequences. That principle should not be controversial; it should be common sense.

I want to be fair, so let me say that Bill C-16 is not entirely without merit. There are provisions that Conservatives support. Making the justice system more responsive to victims is positive. Reducing unnecessary delays is positive. Addressing coercive and controlling behaviour is positive. Addressing harmful deepfake images is positive. Those measures have value, but good measures alone do not make a complete bill.

A justice bill must also prioritize accountability, protect victims, deter crime and ensure that serious offenders face consequences. That is where Bill C-16 falls short. The government had opportunities to improve it by strengthening protections against extortion and sexual violence, by improving consistency in sentencing, and by restoring public confidence. Those opportunities were presented at committee. Conservatives brought forward constructive, practical and reasonable amendments, yet the Liberal government used its majority to reject them. That is disappointing.

Canadians are increasingly concerned about crime. They see violence rising and repeat offenders returning to the streets. They want Parliament to act. They want laws that put public safety first and support victims. They want laws that ensure that jail means jail for the worst offenders. Conservatives will continue fighting for those principles. We will continue fighting organized crime and extortion, and we will work to restore confidence in Canada's justice system.

Canadians deserve safe communities. They deserve a justice system that puts victims first. Conservatives stand with victims and law-abiding Canadians. Conservatives stand with the families who simply want to live in peace. Conservatives will continue fighting to ensure that Canada's justice system puts victims first, protects our communities and keeps dangerous criminals exactly where they belong: behind bars.

• (1355)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about a record. Just over a year ago, Canadians went to the polls and elected a new Prime Minister and 70-plus new Liberal members of Parliament. A substantial aspect of the agenda is to make our communities safe. We have brought forward a substantive suite of legislative bills to support our provinces in making our communities safer. The member made reference to extortion three or four times—

The Speaker: The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka is rising on a point of order.

Scott Aitchison: Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not elect a prime minister.

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Statements by Members

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if you give me time, I will explain it to my colleague across the way. It is funny, I guess. Ha ha.

The serious issue is dealing with the member when he says “extortion” three or four times in his speech. On the one hand, the Conservatives talk tough on extortion, but they oppose lawful access. Lawful access would deal with the extortion issue.

Why does the Conservative Party oppose lawful access?

Amarjeet Gill: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite understands that crime is a problem in our communities, in our neighbourhoods and on our streets. Brampton families are living through a real extortion crisis, and that is why I mentioned them. I am really concerned about the safety and security of Brampton residents. Businesses are being threatened, houses are being shot at, and organized criminal networks are growing.

Conservatives proposed amendments to strengthen penalties for extortion involving firearms and to prevent those penalties from being weakened. The Liberals rejected those amendments. I would be happy to see—

• (1400)

The Speaker: Unfortunately, I must stop the member there. The member will have about three minutes for questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to share that our government is investing \$35 million to help YWCA Hamilton build 84 new transitional housing units in my riding of Hamilton Centre. These homes will support women and families during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

The project includes 60 units for single women and 24 units for women-led households. It will also provide on-site supports, shared spaces and community amenities to help residents rebuild their lives with dignity and stability. For women and mothers fleeing violence and abuse, safe housing is more than just a roof over their heads. It is safety, it is support, and it is a fresh start.

Our government is laser focused on building more affordable housing. I am proud of our government's support for this project and grateful to the YWCA Hamilton team, led by Medora Uppal, for the incredible work they do every day for our community.

*Statements by Members***RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION**

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, persecution based on religious belief is a significant and growing problem around the world. Women and girls from religious minority communities are increasingly at risk of a kind of double persecution known as gender-specific religious persecution, where they are targeted for both their faith and their gender. Gender-specific religious persecution can include abduction, sexual assault, forced marriage and forced conversion, along with other abuses.

Maria Shahbaz, a 13-year-old Pakistani Christian girl, was abducted, forcibly converted and subjected to so-called forced marriage. The Pakistani court ruled that the marriage was legal.

Amany, an 18-year-old Coptic Christian woman living in upper Egypt, was kidnapped on her way to school as part of a coordinated effort to have her forcibly converted and married outside her community.

The often hidden plight of women and girls who face this double persecution must not be ignored. Canada's government should push legal and practical reforms in partner countries to address this issue and ensure that our public service has the knowledge and capacity to address gender-specific religious persecution. There is a need and an opportunity for our government and our Parliament to champion a response to this issue.

* * *

SUMMER IN PETERBOROUGH

Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as spring turns to summer, communities across the Peterborough riding come alive. From beloved events like Peterborough Musicfest, the Peterborough Folk Festival, the Lakefield Jazz, Art and Craft Festival and the Ennismore Shamrock Festival to Canada Day celebrations, there are countless opportunities to come together and celebrate what makes our region a very special place to live.

First Fridays, sidewalk sales and farmers' markets in Peterborough, Lakefield, Havelock and Norwood offer local vendors, fresh food and familiar, friendly faces that make each visit memorable and provide great ways to support local businesses and connect with neighbours.

Summer also brings many meaningful milestones, from graduations and celebrations to moments of reflection and remembrance. It is a season to gather and to enjoy the vibrant communities we call home. I am looking forward to another wonderful summer across the Peterborough riding and wish everyone a safe, happy and memorable summer.

* * *

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of the Edmonton Police Service and other law enforcement agencies involved in a two-year-long national drug trafficking investigation. Police seized approximately 80 kilograms of cocaine with a street value of more than \$8 million, along with dangerous narcotics, am-

munition and cash. This is a serious reminder of the organized crime networks bringing drugs, violence and fear into our communities. I want to thank the officers who put themselves at risk to keep our streets safe.

Police cannot do this alone. They need a justice system that backs them up. After 11 years of Liberal soft-on-crime policies and Liberal bills like Bill C-5, our streets are more dangerous.

To the police officers in Edmonton and across Canada, know that Conservatives support them. We will keep fighting for safer communities.

* * *

[Translation]

NACIM HADDAD

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Dr. Nacim Haddad, whom I welcomed today at my Hill office. Dr. Haddad is an artist, physicist and a keeper of memories. He is at the crossroads of nuclear physics, art and communication, devoting his work to promoting the musical art of Aïta.

Aïta is a traditional musical art form from the Kingdom of Morocco. It carries a collective soul that has been passed down from generation to generation. Through his Ayta World Tour, Dr. Haddad infuses the art of Aïta with a contemporary spirit that is worthy of its great history. Dr. Haddad brings together past and present, tradition and creativity.

I would also like to commend Richesses culturelles Montréalaises for its invaluable support of this cultural initiative and for its commitment to supporting initiatives like these that bring various Canadian cultures closer together.

I hope that Dr. Nacim Haddad receives a level of recognition that matches his talent.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

PONOKA STAMPEDE

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, folks can grab their hats, dust off them boots and polish up them buckles. The arena lights will be blazing, the chutes loaded and the thunder of hooves shaking the ground. The 90th Ponoka Stampede is just around the corner, and it is fixing to be one for the books.

At the get-go, the Ponoka Stampede was a two-day event organized by local cowboy and veteran George MacKeddie. With an admission price of 25¢, spectators could see saddle bucking, bareback riding, chariot racing, pony races, Roman races and more. Soon after, chuck racing and premium bucking broncs were added to the stampede, which put Ponoka on the map as an internationally acclaimed show and one of the top rodeos in the world.

Each year, over 800 volunteers put in over 3,000 hours during the week-long celebration, with support from over 30 local community organizations. From 3,000 spectators in the mid-1930s to over 100,000 spectators today, the Ponoka Stampede sets the standard for celebrating our great western heritage. Folks can come on out and join us in Ponoka between June 25 and July 1 for a grand old time. Yee-haw.

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, when the Secretary of State for Labour came to my riding, he met apprentices who would benefit from our government's \$6-billion plan to incentivize 100,000 apprentices to get their Red Seal. Three of those whom we met were welders who had just won first, second and third prizes in the local welding competition and were on their way to compete for the Ontario championship. Ryan Beattie from my riding won the gold and is now on his way to compete at the national championship.

I want to congratulate—

The Speaker: I am sorry. I am going to have to interrupt the member. I appreciate the sentiment that we need to be quieter in the House, because the last couple of days were pretty noisy, but I think there is something else behind this.

I will ask the hon. member to start from the top, and hopefully, I will not have to ask her again to start from the top.

* * *

SKILLS COMPETITION

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Secretary of State for Labour came to my riding, he met apprentices who would benefit from our government's \$6-billion plan to incentivize 100,000 apprentices to get their Red Seal. Three of those whom we met were welders who had just won first, second and third prizes in the local welding competition and were on their way to compete for the Ontario championship. Ryan Beattie from my riding won the gold and is now on his way to compete at the national championship.

I want to congratulate Ryan and all the other competitors. A career in the trades is a well-paying job with the satisfaction of helping to build Canada strong for all. Ryan's future and that of his fellow apprentices is bright. I thank him for great representation, and I thank the organizers for supporting the trades.

* * *

MELVIN ANSTEY

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we remember a man who was much more than Uncle Melv. He was a husband, father, grandfather, uncle and steady presence in the lives of those who loved him.

Statements by Members

Uncle Melv's story began with unimaginable tragedy. At just three years old, he and his sister were the only two survivors of nine. Their entire family died in a devastating fire at our family property, yet through his life, he showed deep resilience and strength.

My husband spent much of his childhood fishing alongside Uncle Melv and his grandmother, creating memories that would last a lifetime. He shared that same love and generosity with our four children, gifting them treasured rods, reels and countless moments that they will never forget.

Uncle Melv loved to weld, and one of his creations, a piece he called *Boredom*, stands proudly in our yard, made from old items welded together. It is a lasting reminder of his creativity and how he could make something meaningful out of what others might overlook.

Our hearts are with Aunt Wavey, his three children and all of his grandchildren. We love Uncle Melv, we miss him, and we will carry his memory with us always.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

JOURNÉE DE LA GASPÉSIE

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is Gaspé Day, a day to celebrate the region that I love. The landscapes there are breathtaking, but let us talk instead about the people back home and, above all, about the bond that unites us.

Loneliness is taking a toll on society, but the Gaspé is an exception. Back home, when I see an ambulance go by, my heart sinks as I wonder who has run into some misfortune. Back home, I only ever honk my horn to get my friends' attention when I pass by their house and they are puttering around their yard. Back home, the cashier at the grocery store comments on what people buy and sometimes shares recipes. Back home, my son plays hockey with the son of my childhood friend, whose father coached us 30 years ago. Back home, we love to tease each other, laughing as we look back on our own clumsy mistakes. It is as if the Gaspé Peninsula, with its sea, mountains and rivers, seeps into our souls and makes us better people, not perfect, but cheerful and warm-hearted.

Since June 4 is Gaspé Day, I encourage everyone to let a little bit of Gaspé into their hearts.

*Statements by Members**[English]***KITCHENER RANGERS**

Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Kitchener Rangers on capturing junior hockey's top national honour this year, the Memorial Cup, after an amazing season that also saw them win the OHL championship. The Rangers demonstrated remarkable determination and composure throughout their run, excelling in both the OHL playoffs and the Memorial Cup tournament. They have met every challenge with confidence and resolve, proving what their fans already knew, which is that they are true champions.

I send my congratulations to the players for their dedication and performance and to the coaches and staff for their ongoing leadership and guidance. I also send my thanks to the billet families and to the fans, whose steadfast belief and passion have been the foundation of this team's success. Their support has carried the Rangers every step of the way.

Once again I congratulate the Kitchener Rangers. They have brought pride, inspiration and lasting memories to our community. This achievement stands as a proud moment for Kitchener and for all who believe in them.

Go, Rangers, go!

* * *

SUMMER IN SUDBURY EAST—MANITOULIN—NICKEL BELT

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, summer is on the way, and in Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, that means agricultural fairs and vibrant community celebrations, such as Valley East Days, the Verner Ram Rodeo and the Massey Fair.

[Translation]

This weekend, I am very proud to participate in the Rayside-Balfour heritage days hosted by Café Heritage, an organization led by Gary Michalak and Éric Lachance. With the help of many volunteers, they are doing an excellent job of promoting our history and culture.

This year, we are paying tribute to the pioneer families who founded our community. There are nearly fifty of them, including the Bélangers, the Blais, the Carrières, the Castonguays, the Grattons, the Leroux, the Pilon, the Poulins, the Séguins, the Trotters, the Vaillancourts, the Watiers and many others.

I invite people to come out in large numbers to celebrate and join us for our parade, which will take place this Saturday at 11 a.m. in Chelmsford.

* * *

*[English]***JOHNNY PAULS**

Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the remarkable life of Mr. Johnny Pauls, who passed away at the age of 102.

Johnny Pauls was among the last surviving veterans of the Second World War from our province. He served as a member of the merchant marines. His contributions helped secure the freedoms we continue to cherish today.

Born in Rencontre East, he later moved his home to beautiful Spaniard's Bay. Johnny Pauls spent his life on the water, and in his retirement enjoyed gardening, hunting and fishing. He dedicated more than 75 years to the Royal Canadian Legion as a founding member of branch 9 in Spaniard's Bay.

Today I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends and all those whose lives he has touched. May we honour his memory by striving every day to live up to his standard of service to the country and his community.

I thank Mr. Pauls for his service. May he rest in peace.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the last year of the Harper government, Canada's national debt was \$616 billion. Today, under the Liberals, it is an astonishing \$1.4 trillion, and Canada is the only G20 country in recession.

In 2015, Canada had a balanced budget and the richest middle class in the world. Today, we spend more on federal debt interest than we do on the Canada health transfer, and we are now forced to subsidize groceries for a full third of the population.

While Liberals debate terminology to describe the economic crisis, today's consequences are the result of a decade of deliberate Liberal choices, such as the choice to take on mountains of debt early on; the choice to use the cover of a global pandemic to undertake a massive, permanent expansion in inflationary spending; and the choice to kill private sector oil and gas projects that would have provided immense economic and security benefits to Canadians today.

JFK once famously said, "Things do not happen. Things are made to happen." It is time someone in the Liberal government took some responsibility for the economic disaster it has made to happen here in Canada.

* * *

● (1415)

*[Translation]***10TH ANNIVERSARY OF JAZZ TEASDALE RESIDENCE**

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last May, I had the honour of marking the 10th anniversary of Jazz Teasdale. The residence organized a celebration under the leadership of Geneviève Wellens, executive director, and Malinda Campo, recreation coordinator, which took place in a festive atmosphere, enlivened and energized by jazz music.

This event was an opportunity to see just how much Jazz Teasdale contributes to providing a humane, warm and respectful living environment for all those who built Quebec and helped build Canada—a legacy for which I am deeply grateful.

Thanks to the attentive and deeply compassionate care they receive, residents can continue to enrich their daily lives and enjoy genuine quality of life.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team that has made the Jazz Teasdale residence a wonderful place to live.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into a recession. Just like he manufactured a Liberal majority government, he has now manufactured a full-blown Liberal recession. Instead of building the second-fastest growing economy he promised, he has actually shrunk it. All of this is from the same Prime Minister who described himself as the best person equipped to manage an economic crisis. In any other industry, that alone would call for a performance review.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer just reported that there is only a 1% chance the government will meet and maintain its fiscal anchor of shrinking the deficit.

Canada now has the highest household debt, the worst housing costs and the second-highest unemployment rate in the G7.

Excuses simply do not cut it for children with empty stomachs, moms with empty grocery carts and parents with hollow bank accounts. The Liberals need to admit their policies have failed, reverse course and position Canada for the win. It is time to get Canada back on track.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an exceptional Haligonian, someone who has had a long and storied career supporting some of our most vulnerable residents.

Since 1985, Linda Wilson has dedicated her career to organizations that have significant community impact. From early career roles to senior leadership positions, and with over 40 years of service, her impact is lasting. She had five years at Adsum House, eight years with Phoenix Youth Programs, 16 years at HomeBridge Youth Society and now over 11 years as the CEO of Shelter Nova Scotia, where she is overseeing the charitable, not-for-profit organization that supports 1,500 Haligonians navigating times of crisis and transition through residential, trustee and outreach programs annually.

This summer, Linda will officially step into her next chapter, which is retirement. I wish her all the best and some much-deserved rest. On behalf of all Haligonians, I ask the members of the House to celebrate this remarkable woman.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj to repeat his statement from the top. There was an audiovisual problem the first time he spoke.

Alexis Deschênes: Mr. Speaker, today is Gaspé Day, a day to celebrate the region that I love. The landscapes there are breathtaking, but let us talk instead about the people back home and, above all, about the bond that unites us.

Loneliness is taking a toll on society, but the Gaspé is an exception. Back home, when I see an ambulance go by, my heart sinks as I wonder who has run into some misfortune. Back home, I only ever honk my horn to get my friends' attention when I pass by their house and they are puttering around their yard. Back home, the cashier at the grocery store comments on what people buy and sometimes shares recipes. Back home, my son plays hockey with the son of my childhood friend, whose father coached us 30 years ago. Back home, we love to tease each other, laughing as we look back on our own clumsy mistakes. It is as if the Gaspé Peninsula, with its sea, mountains and rivers, seeps into our souls and makes us better people, not perfect, but cheerful and warm-hearted.

Since June 4 is Gaspé Day, I encourage everyone to let a little bit of Gaspé into their hearts.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Russia, Mexico, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the EU, the U.S. and the U.K.

As Big Bird would say, “One of these things is not like the others. One of these things just doesn't belong.” Can the Prime Minister tell us which one of these G20 economies is not like the other? I will give him a hint: Only one is in a recession. Which one is it?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the world has gone through some incredible headwinds. Canada has been no exception and perhaps has been singled out as we are a neighbour of the country that has launched an unprovoked and unjustified trade war. That is why we are putting in place measures that will grow our economy.

However, I do want to ask this member which of the countries that he listed would he rather live in. I know there is 173 of us who would rather live in and face the economic prospects of this country, Canada.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Long live Canada.

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is an easy answer: a Canada led by a strong Conservative government.

Under the Liberal government, poor economic management leads to more bad news, the only G20 country in a recession. Today, the parliamentary budget watchdog said that the Prime Minister has a 1% chance of keeping his promise of a declining debt-to-GDP ratio. Growth is downcast for 2026 and 2027.

Is this a recession or is this all just technical?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Germany, Italy, Mexico, France—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: I cannot hear. There is too much noise. It is a bit like yesterday and the day before. I know the summer break is coming up, but I would ask that members settle down.

The hon. Minister of Finance may start over.

[English]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is going to be a real pleasure to start again.

Let us take the list: Germany, Italy, Mexico, France, Japan, United Kingdom and Canada. Canada is going to have the second-fastest growth in the G7. This is the Canada we are building. This is the Canada that this team is building. This is the Canada that the Prime Minister is building. This is the Canada that Canadians want, and we are going to build it with them.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in a recession, yet for a week now, the Prime Minister has outright refused to address the seriousness of the situation, ignoring the fact that Canadians are worried about their jobs, their savings and whether they can afford to make ends meet.

The Prime Minister has spent more time avoiding the word “recession” than he has explaining the plan to end one. Will the Prime Minister stop dodging the question and tell Canadians if we are in a recession or just a technical recession?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is China, Japan, Australia and India. Our Prime Minister has just signed billions of dollars of trade deals with those countries, creating thousands of jobs in this country.

Canadians elected a leader with world-class business and economic credentials. They have no time and will take no advice from a leader who has never worked one day outside of the House.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the first step to fixing a problem is admitting that there is one. Liberals think the word “recession” is like the word “Beetle-

juice”. If they do not say it, then it does not exist, but ignoring reality does not change reality. The Liberal government has spent months telling Canadians it has the fastest-growing economy in the G7. The reality is that we are the only country in the G20 in a recession.

Will the government finally answer if Canada is in a recession, or is it just a technical one?

• (1425)

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are listening for is something rational, something thoughtful, something coherent, something comprehensive, maybe even a plan. How about a plan that is a fiscal plan? How about an economic plan? What about an industrial plan? What about a defence and security plan? How about supports and social services for Canadians?

All we hear is about driving this country down. It is absolutely ridiculous.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this new Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in a recession. The economy has shrunk in three out of four quarters. Productivity is falling. Investors are fleeing the country. Government borrowing is \$7 billion above target. Today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the Liberal government has only a 1% chance of meeting its budgetary commitments.

My question is very simple. Does the Prime Minister acknowledge, yes or no, that his management of the country's economy is a failure?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly my colleague was not with us on Friday when we were in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, not far from his riding, to support the employees of Rio Tinto and the entire aluminum sector, who are the victims of a ruthless tariff war.

Surely my colleague is aware that we, together with the Premier of Quebec, made an incredible announcement for the aluminum sector: the expansion of the AP60 plant. Furthermore, we have invested an additional \$100 million in the new Elysis technology, which will ensure that Quebec's aluminum is the greenest in the world.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what real people are facing, as described in a message from Matis, a young Quebecker who wrote to me this week:

I just wanted to tell you that many of my generation are starting to lose faith in the idea that we will ever become homeowners.

Housing prices, rents, and the cost of living are rising so fast that I feel like I am chasing something unattainable.

We are not out to get rich. We just want to be able to live with dignity after working hard. We want to build a future without constant financial stress.

We are in a full-blown recession. The Liberals' economic plan is not working. When are they going to give young people a little hope? When will they stop governing for the bankers and start governing for the people?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have so much empathy for Canadians like Matis. These are the people for whom we stand up every day, the people for whom we fight, the people for whom we implement programs that work.

I do not have their names, but my colleague's riding has 13,500 families who receive \$80 million thanks to the Canada child benefit. My colleague voted against that. What does he tell them? His riding has 23,500 citizens who benefit from the Canada dental plan. I do not know their names, but he voted against those 23,500 constituents.

My colleague should change his mind and support measures that truly help his people, our people.

* * *

CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is neglecting culture yet again.

After scrapping the digital services tax last summer without getting anything in return, yesterday he scrapped the proposed increase in levies on tech giants for Quebec cultural production. His first instinct in dealing with Donald Trump was to hand out billions of dollars in gifts to the tech giants and pass the bill on to taxpayers. It took less than 24 hours of negotiations in Washington for the Prime Minister to agree to that sacrifice.

Why is he so eager to capitulate when it comes to the future of Quebec culture?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at least the Conservatives are honest enough to say they do not care about culture. Now Bloc Québécois members are standing up in the House, one after another, to vote against culture, that is, against the \$750 million in the latest budget for Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board of Canada, Radio-Canada, and so on. The height of hypocrisy is that they are voting against \$600 million for the cultural industry. It is a massive amount, it is immediate, and it is going to be effective for our content producers.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister's \$600 million is paid for by citizens. The minister is replacing billions of dollars in contributions from platforms like Netflix with \$600 million from taxpayers' pockets. Regardless of whether citizens are subscribers or not, they are still going to pay.

However, other countries around the world are demanding significant payments from streaming platforms and they have not seen a significant increase in bills. Quebec had the courage to stand up to the web giants.

When will the federal government show the same courage?

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a good thing that the leader of the Bloc Québécois is no longer the president of ADISQ, because yesterday, ADISQ said that this was immediate relief until a permanent solution is found.

Of course, thanks to Bill C-11, we certainly expect people and web giants to pay their fair share.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, ADISQ later came back to say that this was not a permanent solution.

The entire cultural sector is calling for a long-term solution that involves contributions from digital platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. In the meantime, Ottawa is still exempting them and turning to taxpayers to make up the \$600-million shortfall.

We have been talking about this for 25 years. The future of culture depends on the web giants paying their fair share. This decision is clearly yet another capitulation to the digital billionaires at the expense of Quebec culture.

What will it take for the Minister of Culture to defend culture?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is a master at lecturing others, but it has no lessons to teach. When we were negotiating the budget and sought their support, the Bloc Québécois made no requests about culture. When it came time to vote on the budget, which included \$750 million for culture, the Bloc Québécois voted against it.

Now that we are announcing \$600 million—a decision welcomed by ADISQ and the cultural sector to support our artists, our cultural sector and our cultural sovereignty—the Bloc Québécois is once again opposing it.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only leader in the entire G20 to force their country into a recession is the Liberal Prime Minister. He forced the same 2.2 million Canadians to pay for his lavish 200,000 dollars' worth of meals on just three flights. In fact, he spent more on salmon on those three flights than what an average family will spend on groceries for the entire year. He is forcing Canadians to sacrifice so that he can stuff his face with crème brûlée.

Will he stand up on his two feet and tell us, is this a technical recession or a full-blown Liberal one?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy, because we had a nice exchange this morning at the finance committee on this very issue.

Oral Questions

Every time the Prime Minister travels somewhere, he comes back and tells his ministers about the investments and the economic opportunities that are coming back to this country. It keeps us very busy, thanks very much.

For my part, I hope he travels more, because we will be building more infrastructure, we will be building more ports, we will be building more railways, we will be building more bridges, we will be building this country strong and we will be building it well.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time the Prime Minister leaves, he stuffs his face with 200,000 dollars' worth of lavish meals on the taxpayer dime. We see a lot of fake signings of MOUs, a lot of fake handshakes, a lot of nothing and zero dollars in trade deals. That is why Canada has been thrown into a full-blown Liberal recession.

The Liberal government has done nothing for the average Canadian. That is why 2.2 million Canadians are facing food insecurity in this country and why 120,000 lost their jobs in the first three months of this year.

Will he tell us, what is the plan to get out of this full-blown Liberal recession?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure Canadians who are watching today are fed up with the Conservatives' talking down the Canadian economy.

Canada is a great country. We have the most educated workforce. We build planes. We build cars. We build ships. We have the critical minerals that the world needs. We have an abundance of energy. We are the only G7 country with free trade with all the other G7 nations.

We are going to build Canada strong. We are going to build it together. We are going to have the second-fastest-growing economy in the G7. That is Canada.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only things they build are debt, deficit and a Liberal Prime Minister who has made Canada the only G20 country in a recession.

While Canadians are told to make sacrifices, do members know who is not making sacrifices? It is the Prime Minister, as well as his well-connected Liberal insiders. Recently released documents show \$200,000 spent on food for just three flights, including \$18,000 for salmon for just one flight alone. That is more than the average family will spend in groceries in 2026.

As seniors line up at food banks and families pay the price, will the Prime Minister finally tell us whether we are actually in a technical recession or a recession?

• (1435)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have some news here. We looked up leader expenditures for 2024, and I will be very interested to look at 2025, because we all know what happened there. We had a summer sojourn at Stornoway that was a little iffy. However, in 2024, Mr. Leader of the Opposition spent \$8.8 million in the Leader of the Opposition's office, and he does not have to make one single decision. The Liberal leader

spent \$4.1 million. That is double. That is bad. They have some answering to do.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next week, we will do the Prime Minister's Office—

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Barry South—Innisfil can start from the beginning, please.

John Brassard: We will do the whole PCO next week for them, Mr. Speaker, and you will get a kick out of that.

Canada's the only G20 country that is in a recession. While it may be a laughing matter to them, Canadians are missing mortgage payments, bankruptcies are up and nearly 60% have little or no money left over at the end of the month. The Liberal Prime Minister spent money in Rome: \$4,213 on crème brûlée, \$3,800 on chocolate and \$593 on luxury Normandy buttercups, whatever that is. Canadians deserve an honest answer.

Are we in a recession or a technical recession? Tell us the truth.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is \$8.8 million. The Leader of the Opposition has been in the House for 22 years. He has never had a job outside of the House, yet he spent \$8.8 million. On this side of the House, we are serious about the economy. We are serious about building an economy for all Canadians. Abroad, we are signing trade deals. At home, we are cutting taxes. We are investing in infrastructure. We are investing in housing, in aerospace, in defence and more. We are going to build Canada strong. They can continue with the rhetoric.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into a recession. Canadians are struggling with food affordability. One in four is now food insecure, yet the Prime Minister racks up \$200,000 in airplane catering in three trips. He spent \$17,000 on salmon alone, which is more than most families spend on food in an entire year.

If the Prime Minister cannot control his own reckless spending, how can Canadians trust him to get us out of this recession, or is it technically not his problem?

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this moment, our government is making important investments in communities throughout Ontario, and these investments are going to create jobs for all Canadians. We know it is time to invest in Ontario. This is why we are investing in the Black Creek sanitary trunk sewer, the Kitchener central transit hub, the downtown connection hub in the city of Barrie, the Scarborough subway, the Hamilton LRT and the Darlington nuclear power plant. All of these are in Ontario, where the member is from. We care about Ontario, and it is time to invest.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$94,000 was spent on a single flight. Only a member of the Liberal insider class cannot see a problem with that. It is more than five families spend in an entire year on groceries. Canada is the only G20 country in a recession, and Canadians are struggling. If one is in the Prime Minister's entourage, well, one can expect \$200,000 in catering. Federal executives get tens of millions of dollars in bonuses despite missing performance targets.

If the Prime Minister thinks sacrifice is necessary, why are he and everyone in his inner circle exempt from it, especially in a recession?

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are focused on doing the hard work of building our country and building our economy. Two weeks ago, our government announced \$350 million in housing and infrastructure investments in the Yukon to deliver stronger communities in the north. Three weeks ago, we announced \$61 million in funding for high-speed Internet projects in northern Manitoba. Four weeks ago, we celebrated station construction being under way at all eight stations along the Surrey Langley SkyTrain extension. We are doing the hard work from coast to coast to coast to build Canada. All they want to do is tear it down.

• (1440)

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in a recession. Canadians are being told to tighten their belts while the Prime Minister cannot stop spending. On a single trip, taxpayers were billed more than \$17,000 for salmon, which is more than many Canadian families spend on food for an entire year. Meanwhile, the environment minister said it was reasonable to spend half a million dollars on luxury accommodations in Brazil on a junket.

With all the extravagant spending, will the Prime Minister stop dodging and tell Canadians the truth? Are we in a recession or merely a technical recession?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party leader needs to explain the \$8.8 million of unaccounted for, unexplained expenses.

The Conservatives know that we are in the middle of a trade war, but we have a plan. We are building. Let me give some examples. There is Canada's first European LNG agreement, with more than \$30 billion in investment secured. The Nouveau Monde Graphite mine project will provide thousands of jobs in the skilled trades. The Darlington nuclear project in Ontario will provide thousands of jobs in the skilled trades.

Oral Questions

We are building this country. We are fighting for Canadians. I hope the Conservatives join us.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were wondering why the Liberals did not have the courage to criticize the Prime Minister's climate record. The Toronto Star explains it. According to Liberal elected officials, the Prime Minister is literally yelling at his MPs when they tell him things he does not want to hear. They are not allowed to question him. They are not allowed to write to him either.

Are the Liberal members throwing in the towel on climate change because they are afraid of the Prime Minister?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised by my kind colleague's question. I will share my humble experience as Secretary of State for Nature. I was not yelled at. I did not have to make a big scene. We worked, consulted and talked. I have plenty of colleagues here who worked with me, since this is all very new to me.

We are able to work together, debate and move forward, and we are doing this to protect nature and develop our country within a united Canada.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as wildfire season approaches, today, 300 mayors are calling the Prime Minister out on his climate record and his shift toward the oil sector. Representatives of half the population are telling the Prime Minister that if he wants to build the country, as he claims, he first has to make sure not to burn it down.

We already know that the Prime Minister wants nothing to do with environmental groups and Parliament. We now know that he yells at his own members.

Will he at least listen to these mayors or will he yell at them too?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working well together as a team. We are working hard to fight climate change and we are already seeing results. The sale of electric vehicles has more than doubled thanks to the EV rebate. We are now making investments in public transit in Quebec. We are making investments in Quebec aluminum to make it greener and create jobs. We are investing in Alto for faster and greener transportation.

They are against all that. We are doing the work and we are doing it together.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lothbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in the midst of a recession. While families are counting every penny at the grocery store, the Liberal Prime Minister is traveling in the lap of luxury on the taxpayer's dime. We are talking about \$4,213 for crème brûlée, \$3,800 for chocolate mousse and \$593 for Normandy buttercups. While Canadians are stretching their budgets, the Liberal Prime Minister is splurging on luxuries.

I am going to ask him a very simple question. Is the recession that he himself created a technical recession or a full-blown Liberal recession?

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my colleague failed to mention is that, tomorrow, 12 million Canadians, including thousands of people in his riding, will receive the first Canada groceries and essentials benefit payment.

This is the kind of concrete action our government is taking to help make life affordable. This is the kind of program the Conservatives disparage here, day in and day out. They should not be lecturing us. Who are they to lecture us? They are not concerned about the cost of living at all.

• (1445)

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lothbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that we are not concerned about the cost of living. At least we are able to recognize the reality facing Canada, the reality facing Canadian families, the reality facing mothers who are struggling to pay their grocery bills at the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the Liberals cannot even spell the word “recession”. They cannot even bring themselves to utter the word, yet Canada is the only G20 country that is currently in a recession. It does not seem to be hurting them, but it is hurting Canadian families and everyone. For the Liberals' cronies, it means bonuses. It means \$11 million for the Royal Canadian Mint.

The Prime Minister plunged this country into a recession. Is it a Liberal recession or a technical recession?

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the people on that side try to manufacture a crisis, we are making the necessary investments to strengthen our communities.

More than \$2.5 billion was announced this week for post-secondary campuses, community centres and infrastructure across Quebec. More than \$1 billion over three years is being allocated with the Government of Quebec to modernize and expand our hospitals and emergency rooms, including those in rural communities. More than \$6 billion is going toward public transit across the province.

These are the concrete results we are delivering for Quebecers and Canadians.

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a recession is a concept created by economists. They are the ones who set the criteria. Canada is the only G7 country or, pardon me,

the only G20 country that is in a recession. I am not making this up; it is a fact.

Instead of finding solutions, the Liberals are casting around for a diversion. When the government cannot acknowledge that there is a problem, it cannot find solutions.

Will the Prime Minister be honest and tell Canadians that Canada is in a recession?

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want us to build a stronger, more independent and more resilient economy in partnership with the provinces, territories and indigenous peoples.

The Conservatives are ignoring everything going on around the world and in geopolitics. They are disparaging Canada.

We will continue to build Canada strong.

Projects like Nouveau Monde Graphite, the port of Contrecoeur, the Alto train and many others are proof of that. However, the Conservatives have voted against every measure aiming to build Canada strong.

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to create a diversion. The Liberals are experts at that.

We are in a recession. Only the Liberals fail to see that. They make excuses. The President of the United States is being blamed for a lot of things.

The so-called saviour of the Canadian economy, our Prime Minister, should be coming up with solutions, because his plan is not working.

Will this Prime Minister accept the situation and admit that our country is in a recession?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 150 airplanes at Airbus is not a diversion. A contract with Bombardier for GlobalEye is not a diversion. Nouveau Monde Graphite, the largest graphite mine in the G7, is not a diversion. The high-speed train between Quebec City and Toronto is not a diversion.

The \$2.75 billion invested in the Quebec City tramway will have an impact. The \$10 billion we just announced for the greater Quebec City area is certainly not a diversion.

That is action. These are results. It is very real.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in a recession. This comes as no surprise.

We have experienced three out of four quarters of negative growth. We are seeing a record decline in productivity. The public finance watchdog confirms that there is a 99% probability that the government will fall short of its fiscal anchor.

Despite repeated warnings from the banks, this government continues to run up the debt. It will borrow \$72 billion this year.

Will the Prime Minister finally stop denying the obvious and admit to Canadians that our economy is indeed in a recession?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will pick up where my colleague from Quebec City left off, because he was too modest. He did not mention the Davie shipyard or its inclusion in the national shipbuilding strategy. He did not mention the Port of Québec as the first port of arrival. He did not mention developments such as the high-speed rail project in the national capital.

Quebec and the City of Quebec are benefiting enormously from this growth. They are benefiting enormously from our strategy to build a very strong Canada, to create opportunities and to create jobs for the people of Quebec.

* * *

● (1450)
[English]

HEALTH

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians live with vision and eye health problems. During the last Parliament, I was pleased that my private member's bill, the National Strategy for Eye Care Act, passed both the House and the Senate unanimously. Thanks to this bill, we are putting a real focus on preventing and treating eye disease and ensuring better outcomes for all Canadians.

Can the Minister of Health please tell the House how our government is leading a coordinated response to vision loss care?

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Humber River—Black Creek for her leadership on this issue. Thanks to her bill, we have tabled Canada's first ever national eye care strategy. We have brought together all levels of government, indigenous partners, health professionals and people with lived experience to create a strategy that reflects the needs of all Canadians. The member was critical to making this happen, and I hope this strategy helps improve access to eye care for the millions of Canadians who need it.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the only G20 country that is in a recession. Shirley is a senior from my riding who lives alone in Summerland. She tells me that she does not drink, smoke or gamble. Her only luxury is a swim pass to the local public pool. Every time I speak to her, her tone is increasingly dire. Shirley and her friends do not see anything getting better, and they believe that the Liberals have forgotten seniors. Another recycled rebate is not going to fix it.

Can the minister tell Shirley whether the reason she cannot pay her grocery bills is that we are in a recession, or is it just that it is a technical recession?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing the story of Shirley in his riding. I have

Oral Questions

news for Shirley. There are steps we are taking to support her. Shirley could be one of the individuals who might benefit from the middle-class tax cut, which is helping 22 million Canadians. She might also be somebody who is going to benefit from the expanded criteria for and accessibility to the disability tax credit. She might also be one of the individuals who is benefiting from the reduction of the fuel tax by 10¢ a litre.

These are all things that can impact seniors but can also impact all British Columbians.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country in any kind of recession.

Maria from my community worked her whole life but lost her home because she and her husband could not make ends meet. She needs help because CRA made a mistake on her file, but she needed to know we could help her before making the drive to my office, because the cost of fuel is so high that she cannot afford to waste the trip. I hear from more and more Marias every week.

Will the Prime Minister please tell Maria whether her hardship is because Canada is in a recession, or is it just a technicality he will continue to ignore?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Island for bringing up that there are some headwinds facing our economy right now. That is why I think it is really important for us to talk about the forestry sector, which I know is really prevalent on Vancouver Island. This week, we announced that we are providing an additional \$400 million through regional development agencies, and some of that money is going to be going to British Columbia to support its businesses. We are also investing \$130 million in 56 projects to transform the industry, and more than 50% of that is going to British Columbia.

This is how we are supporting British Columbia—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into a recession. There has been a lot of media attention on creative definitions to describe the Liberals' track record. One of my friends from out in the field, Mike, asked me to share his story with the House. He is a hard-working family man who, after working overtime, still did not have enough money to make ends meet.

Can the Prime Minister please tell Mike the difference between a recession and a technical recession? Mike's grocery bill cannot tell the difference.

Oral Questions

• (1455)

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, did the member vote for the measures that would support this person in his riding? Did he vote to support Red Seal training? Did he vote to support the reduction of taxes at the pump or the creation of a national school food program? These are the measures our government is taking to support Canadians, and Manitobans in his riding, but he continues to vote against them.

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into a recession. I spoke with Rosa from Vaughan, a single senior who cannot afford a place of her own and rents a room in her 86-year-old cousin's home due to the affordability crisis under the Liberal government. After a lifetime of hard work, Rosa is on the housing waiting list, but it will be a decade before a unit is available.

Will the Liberals explain to Rosa the difference between a recession and a technical recession?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say what we will not do for seniors. We will not propose, as our central seniors policy, cutting pensions, for which the Leader of the Opposition fought for 20-plus years.

Housing is a very legitimate issue to talk about. We need more housing. That is why the government is seized with exactly that objective, working with provincial and municipal governments toward that end.

If we look at the headwinds facing the Canadian economy and the trade war that has been put upon us, we see that of course there are challenges. The hardships created will absolutely be there for Canadians day in and day out. Conservatives can propose ideas that will not work and will not be serious. We are a serious government. We are going to stand up for Canadians.

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 nation in recession. Every country faces tariffs and rising energy prices, but these Liberals keep making the same mistakes. Their deficit spending and net-zero regulations kill jobs and make everything more expensive. For Carol in my riding, it means she can no longer afford to drive to and from work each day. For Jackie, it means working full-time as a senior citizen.

I want the Prime Minister to tell Jackie and Carol whether they are struggling every day because Canada is in a recession or because it is just a technical recession and no big deal.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent Saint John—Kennebecasis. That member, my neighbour, represents Saint John—St. Croix. I have lot of respect for him. In fact, recently I was in Grand Manan, in his riding, and announced millions of dollars for small craft harbours in his riding. I am sure he is supportive of that.

On this side, we are serious about building a strong economy for all Canadians. At home, we are cutting taxes. Abroad, we are sign-

ing trade deals worth billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. We are serious about the economy. They continue with the rhetoric.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into recession. This so-called financial wizard created a K-shaped economy where the wealthy, the bankers and the bondholders climb higher, while working Canadians fall further behind. The Liberals can say, "What recession?" because they are not impacted by skyrocketing unemployment, grocery bills and mortgages.

Why is this Prime Minister telling Canadians that they are just technically unemployed, technically hungry or technically homeless?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hopefully have good news for the constituents of that member's riding. Tomorrow, over 27,000 members of that member's constituency are going to receive the groceries and essentials benefit. That is tax-free. That is automatic. That is \$530 in the pockets of a family with two children or \$267 for someone who is single. That is real help to make life more affordable for Canadians in that member's own riding.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is so high that living is being put on hold. This is the real Liberal recession, where people cannot afford to enjoy life, make memories or chase dreams. They are spending their whole time just barely getting by. Those are the consequences of 11 years of Liberals and their failed economic policy.

Instead of telling people who are struggling that everything is fine, will the Prime Minister stand up and admit his real Liberal recession is hurting Canadians?

• (1500)

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us think about the consequences of Conservative policy on those very Canadians that member is talking about. They would be families without child care. They would be families without dental care. They would be families without a national school food program. They would be families that would not benefit from a cut to middle-class taxes.

These are the policies that our government is putting forward because we are actually on the side of Canadians.

Oral Questions

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under this Liberal Prime Minister, Canada is the only G20 country to fall into a recession. While Canadians can delay buying a home or a car, which also hurts our economy, they cannot stop buying food. Families are stretching every dollar at the grocery store, restaurant demand is weakening and our agri-food sectors are facing exploding input costs. Experts have warned that Canada's food economy cannot outrun a shrinking national economy.

Why are the Liberals content to watch Canada's competitiveness and productivity erode? Is this a technical recession or technically a failure of policy?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for my hon. colleague. We talk to each other quite often about processing in his area, mostly in and around Leamington, and there are going to be vast investments in Leamington. He knows that. There is Ideal Can, which is moving to Leamington, one of the only canning companies in the country using aluminum and steel from Canada.

We are going to continue to invest in the processing sector and in agriculture. There are all kinds of companies. I am talking about Massilly North America's \$85-million new food packaging processor and Agropur's plans to invest nearly \$1 billion in plants in eastern Canada. We are going to continue to invest in Ontario.

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our “missing middle” processors have been missing. Finally, we are seeing some action, but Canada's productivity crisis did not start this year. Weak investment did not start this year. Declining competitiveness did not start this year. These are the consequences of a decade of bad Liberal policy choices.

As Sylvain Charlebois recently stated: “The greatest threat to Canada's food economy isn't a recession. It's the illusion that someone else is responsible for our economic decline.”

Does the Liberal Prime Minister plan to reverse these declines or just have a new definition of a recession?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that gives me the opportunity to talk a little bit about foreign direct investment.

Again, these executives are confident in Canada. Imperial Oil is investing \$700 million in Strathcona; Kraft Heinz is investing \$250 million in Montreal; Bayer is investing \$45 million in canola research in Winnipeg; Froneri, an ice cream giant, is expanding Canadian operations; Mars Canada is investing \$180 million across Ontario; and Coca-Cola is investing \$141 million in a Brampton facility. They have confidence in this country and our workers.

Why is it that the Conservatives do not?

[Translation]

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives love to badmouth the Canadian economy, industries, and workers. They completely ignore the historic challenges we are currently facing and the tangible results of our plan.

Instead of these petty partisan slogans and doomsday rhetoric, could the Minister of Finance set the record straight on the state of the Canadian economy?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. It is refreshing for Canadians to hear a good question like that. I want to thank my colleague, who does extraordinary work.

As my colleague from Trois-Rivières said, the people watching us know that we are making generational investments to support the Canadian economy in infrastructure, in housing, in productivity, in innovation and in defence. However, tomorrow is June 5. That is when 12 million Canadians will receive the Canada groceries and essentials benefit.

We will always be there for Quebeckers. We will always be there for Canadians. We will stand up for our industry and we will stand up for the entire country.

* * *

• (1505)

[English]

JUSTICE

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are sick and tired of watching violent criminals get chance after chance while victims pay the price. A non-citizen committed multiple violent crimes in 2019. Seven years later, he is still in Canada. He carried out two robberies at gunpoint and pistol-whipped another victim, yet somehow, these Liberals keep protecting him from deportation. We Conservatives fought to end sentencing discounts for serious criminals. They voted against it.

Why is avoiding deportation more important than protecting Canadians from violent criminals?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to take seriously charges of not taking crime seriously with harms falling to victims from a member who, just a few hours ago, was opposing efforts to speed up the adoption of the protecting victims act. We have launched one of the most ambitious agendas when it comes to criminal law reform, when it comes to bail reform, when it comes to strengthening sentencing, and when it comes to protecting victims and combatting hate.

Oral Questions

With respect to the issue that the member mentioned, he knows there is no rule that requires sentences to be adjusted for immigration status. We support the decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada and trust the judiciary to implement the law with fit sentences, independent of politics.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to watch violent offenders get lighter sentences, avoid deportation and stay in this country year after year. In Kitchener, a non-citizen strangled his wife in front of their child. He was found guilty. The victim and her child are now living in a shelter. He remains in Canada.

Under these Liberals, violent offenders get sentencing discounts, delayed deportation and endless second, third and fourth chances, while victims get nothing but excuses.

When will these Liberals stop bending over backwards to help violent criminals avoid deportation and start standing up for victims for a change?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear, with respect to the individual circumstances that the member referred to, that all members of Parliament must condemn heinous and violent crimes, particularly when it comes to repeat offenders. Now we have to ask ourselves what we want to do about that.

On this side of the House, we want to move forward with the most ambitious set of reforms when it comes to the criminal law in this country that Canada has seen in generations. That includes more serious conditions on bail. That includes stiffer sentences for violent repeat offenders and those tied to organized crime. That includes allowing the courts to make decisions about fit sentences.

When someone commits a serious and violent crime, they should face serious penalties, including deportation—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two of the five men accused of murdering a teenager in a terrifying Stoney Creek shooting linked to the GTA tow truck wars are refugee claimants. A source from the CBSA told the Toronto Sun that although they want to remove these individuals from Canada, they keep facing countless roadblocks.

The minister does not do anything to make sure that government departments will deport non-citizens who commit serious crimes like murder. The residents of Stoney Creek and all Canadians want to know and demand to know why.

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, time and again throughout the parliamentary session, the Conservatives have stood in the way of genuine, real and historic criminal justice reform. They will continue to do so, I suppose, but they should listen to their constituents, who want to see real reform.

They should review the comments of police chiefs across the country, who have spoken in favour of exactly what the government is doing on these issues. With respect to the issue of non-resi-

dents or non-citizens, he knows very well, or should, that in 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada made clear that courts, and justices in particular, can take note of the immigration status of an individual but that does not impact upon sentencing.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across British Columbia, workers and communities know how important the forestry sector is to our economy. As Canada's forest ministers met this week in Langford on southern Vancouver Island—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member has a question, and he deserves to be listened to.

The hon. member can start from the top.

Will Greaves: Mr. Speaker, across British Columbia, workers and communities know how important the forestry sector is to our economy. As Canada's forest ministers met this week in Langford on beautiful Vancouver Island to discuss the future of forestry, workers face unjustified U.S. softwood lumber tariffs and conditions that will require us to make our forestry sector more competitive.

Can the Minister of Industry update the House on how our government is working with provinces and territories to strengthen the sector and support forestry workers from coast to coast to coast?

• (1510)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Victoria for his important work. Indeed, a lot is happening in the forestry sector, which is a complete victim of the illegal and unjustifiable tariffs from the American administration.

That is why the Minister of Natural Resources and I have been working on a plan to really support the sector. While the Minister of Natural Resources is in B.C. with his counterparts from the provinces and territories, we are working on liquidity support, more than \$1 billion for the forestry sector. We will be there for the workers in the sector.

THE ECONOMY

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the Liberals actually compared the salaries and offices and the economy-class flights of the Leader of the Opposition to the Prime Minister's \$835 on orange juice on one trip or the \$3,800 he spent on chocolate mousse on a flight. That is on top of the \$250 million he spends on his personal office. That is 30 times more than the Leader of the Opposition.

While families are forced to tighten their belts because he is the only leader in the G20 that plunged us into a recession, should he not tighten his own?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we now have the answer to the question of what will get the Conservatives to change their script after 38 of the same question, which is to dare touch their dear leader, who squatted at Stornoway for an entire summer while Canadian taxpayers shelled out \$2 million to get his sorry you-know-what back into the House of Commons.

I cannot answer for all of this stuff from the Leader of the Opposition. Maybe they can.

The Speaker: I do not know what. I do not.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

* * *

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's AI strategy is leaving Canadians dangerously exposed. While this technology can produce benefits, it urgently needs effective regulation and strong guardrails. We know AI is driving mass surveillance, facilitating fraud and threatening jobs. It uses huge amounts of water and energy, and children are being targeted. These are real threats, yet the Liberals sprinted through a shallow consultation and are mouthing the lines of tech billionaires.

Why is the government rushing a reckless AI strategy without ensuring real protections for Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. Secretary of State for Sport.

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, AI for all is this government's plan to make AI work for all Canadians. It is about what AI can do in Canadians' lives for better health care, stronger businesses, safer communities and better public services. Our strategy has three foundations: first, trust, so that privacy, children and democracy are protected; second, opportunity, so that every Canadian can use, build with and benefit from AI; third, sovereign control, so that Canada makes its own choices on AI. This is a plan for Canadian AI leadership, and we are taking care of Canadians.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder how the slogan “AI for all” lands in Tumbler Ridge—

The Speaker: We are going to pause for a moment and have the hon. member start over.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, children's lives could have been saved if we had better protection.

Points of Order

I am wondering, despite the benefits of AI, why does this strategy land with more promotion than protection? When will the Prime Minister and the government consider the advice of Pope Leo XIV that AI needs to be “disarmed”?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that trust is at the core of every aspect of our AI strategy. This government is taking a multipronged approach. Bill C-16 would combat those sexualized deepfakes that are concerning for so many Canadians, as they should be. Bill C-25 would protect our democratic institutions. Our strategy commits to bringing forward legislation on safe social media and updating consumer privacy law to protect Canadians' data. We are launching a Canada trusted AI certification program, and we are protecting Canadians as our first priority in this strategy.

* * *

● (1515)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I started to put my question forward when I heard my riding addressed. I have been informed by colleagues that I stood up and began to address the question without having the microphone on.

I know the hon. parliamentary secretary has answered, but may I repeat the first part of my question?

The Speaker: The hon. member may repeat the first part of her question.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the first part of my question was this: I wonder how the slogan “artificial intelligence for all” lands in Tumbler Ridge, where seven families are now in court seeking redress for the loss of their children, who were not adequately protected. When will we see protection?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts are with the families and loved ones of the victims in Tumbler Ridge.

We will do absolutely everything we can, including working with AI companies and advancing our protective legislation, to ensure that these types of tragedies never happen again in Canada. We are advancing this legislation, with trust at its core, to protect Canadians.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Around 2:30 p.m., the member for Drummond used unparliamentary language, and several of us heard him. We call on him to withdraw his comments and apologize to the House.

The Speaker: I did not hear the comments in question, but I see the member for Drummond rising.

The member for Drummond.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am the main focus and target of my colleague's point of order, but, like you, I did not hear myself say anything unparliamentary.

Perhaps my colleague would be willing to clarify what she was referring to. Then we could see if an apology is in order.

The Speaker: If it was unparliamentary, she will not be asked to repeat it, but we will check. The hon. member specified a particular time, so we will see if anything can be heard on the audio.

* * *

*[English]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have all been waiting since last Thursday for today's Thursday question, the time of the week when Canadian telecom providers have to scramble to add excess capacity as hundreds of thousands of Canadians tune in, anxiously anticipating what the government will bring forward in the chamber for the rest of this week and into next week.

With the news that Canada is the only country in a recession under this Liberal Prime Minister's economic plan, will the government finally see the error of its ways and finally start to repeal the bad Liberal legislation that caused the problem in the first place?

Can we expect, next week, to see legislation repealing the industrial carbon tax, which only applies to Canadian manufacturers and Canadian businesses? Will we see the Liberals bring in legislation to repeal the fuel standard tax, which adds at least 17¢ a litre to the price of fuel here in Canada, while American shippers and transporters do not have to pay that? Indeed, will they bring in a repeal of the west coast shipping ban, which prevents Canadian energy exports to Asian markets but does not apply to international traffic off the coast of British Columbia? Will they bring in a single piece of legislation to repeal the bad Liberal laws that are plunging Canada, the only G20 country, into a recession?

Can we expect any of that relief next week?

● (1520)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on building a stronger Canadian economy while ensuring that Canadian businesses remain competitive. We recognize the challenges that are faced across the country by manufacturers, and we have been taking action to support our businesses and manufacturing companies across the country. Unlike the opposition, we believe that growing an economy and reducing emissions can and must go hand in hand. We will continue to work with in-

dustries, provinces and workers to ensure that Canada remains competitive, while advancing our economy and our environmental objectives as well.

On that note, this afternoon we will continue to debate Bill C-16, the protecting victims act. Tomorrow and then Tuesday of next week, we will call Bill C-20, the build Canada homes act, at report stage and third reading.

[Translation]

I also wish to inform the House that Monday will be the final allotted day in this financial cycle. On Wednesday, we will begin studying the Senate amendments to Bill C-14, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act regarding bail and sentencing. On Thursday, we will begin second reading debate of Bill C-26, which seeks to improve housing supply.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***PROTECTING VICTIMS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank the members of the justice committee and the witnesses who contributed to the study of this bill.

[Translation]

Their work highlighted the urgent need to strengthen protections for victims and survivors.

[English]

It is an honour to rise in Parliament to support Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, and above all to stand in support of the victims and survivors of gender-based violence across Canada. I thank the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for putting this bill forward.

At the core of this bill are women and girls whose voices were not heard when they asked for help, women who spoke up and were dismissed, women who were afraid to speak up at all and women who were denied the support that they need. Intimate partner violence is not only physical. It includes control, emotional and sexual abuse, stalking and financial harm, often forming patterns that grow into more dangerous behaviours over time.

When violence goes unseen, it goes unaddressed, and when it goes unaddressed, a woman suffers in silence. A critical challenge is that intimate partner violence is substantially under-reported, with estimates suggesting that around 80% of incidents are not reported to the police. In 2024, in Canada, 81 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner, equivalent to approximately one every four to five days. Each of these deaths represents a life cut short, a family devastated and a failure to intervene when warning signs were already present. These were not random. They were the tragic end of patterns of coercive control, intimidation and abuse, patterns that were known, experienced or reported long before the final act occurred.

These harms are experienced at much higher rates by indigenous women, Black and racialized women, women with disabilities, 2SLGBQI+ people, newcomers and women in rural and remote communities. Too often, they are not heard and they do not receive justice, as systemic barriers often cause delays, limit supports and discourage participation in a system that was not built with their realities in mind.

Bill C-16 exists because victims, survivors, families and advocates have spent years telling us the same painful truth: that the system has too often recognized danger only after it is too late. Their courage in coming forward has made it clear that intimate partner violence is not just about isolated incidents. It is about ongoing harm, escalating risk and lives hanging in the balance. This bill is not only about accountability after violence has occurred. It is about recognizing danger earlier, strengthening those protections and preventing further harm before another life is lost.

• (1525)

[Translation]

Bill C-16 breaks down the barriers preventing survivors from being heard, strengthens protections, improves access to legal support and enables survivors to safely share their experiences.

[English]

These measures align directly with pillar three of the national action plan to end gender-based violence, which is “responsive justice system”. This pillar recognizes that gender-based violence is a violation of human rights and, in many cases, a violation of criminal law. It calls for a justice system that understands trauma, acts early, holds offenders accountable and puts survivors' needs first.

The national action plan is a 10-year framework developed with provincial and territorial governments, as well as victims and survivors. We have dedicated \$539.3 million over five years to help provinces and territories implement the national action plan to end gender-based violence and address their most pressing needs. In addition to this, our budget invests a total of \$660.5 million to ad-

vance gender equality, including \$223 million to strengthen our response to gender-based violence.

Overall, our approach to gender-based violence must be comprehensive. Bill C-16 would strengthen this work by making sure that federal criminal law puts survivors' needs at the centre of justice. On top of this, the protecting victims act recognizes a truth that survivors know all too well: Violence does not begin with a single act. Coercive control can take many forms: isolation, intimidation, financial abuse, threats to pets, property damage or threats of self-harm that are used to manipulate and instill fear.

Bill C-16 acknowledges and would criminalize coercive control, where economic and financial abuse is often weaponized.

[Translation]

However, we know that criminalization alone is not enough. Prevention is equally vital.

[English]

Economic abuse is often used deliberately to control others by cutting off access to money, creating debt, threatening financial ruin or making it impossible for someone to leave safely. It is a powerful tool of coercive control that keeps women trapped and unsafe. That is why this work needs to be connected. By establishing a voluntary code of conduct for the prevention of economic abuse, we would work closely with financial institutions and gender-based violence organizations to help with recognition and respond to that economic abuse. Together, these changes would reflect a broader understanding of abuse and the many ways it can be used to exert power and control.

Coercive control is evolving. We have seen it. In a world where technology can be used to harm, Bill C-16 would respond to that abuse that is deeply personal and deeply violating. The non-consensual sharing of intimate images, including sexual deepfakes and nearly nude images, strips people of that control over their own identity. It follows them into their community, their workplace and their family. It is used to intimidate, to silence and to humiliate them.

Bill C-16 also recognizes a harder reality: The most extreme violence against women is rarely sudden or isolated. Bill C-16 would ensure that murders that are driven by hate, coercive control, or sexual violence or exploitation are treated as first-degree murder in Canada. This matters, because femicide is often the end of a long and visible pattern of control, not an unpredictable tragedy but a failure to intervene in time.

Government Orders

Prevention means listening earlier. It means recognizing coercive control when we see it, recognizing the financial abuse, isolation and escalating threats for what they are. Our laws and institutions must be strong enough to respond before gender-based violence in its most devastating form impacts these victims.

Ending gender-based violence is not only a moral responsibility. It is also about whether people can live, work or contribute without fear. No one can thrive in this country, build a business or raise a family if they are not safe.

• (1530)

[Translation]

The bill is part of a coordinated effort to prevent escalating violence and support survivors.

[English]

Bill C-16 is not abstract. It is about real people and real lives. It is about closing gaps that have left too many people without protection, and about making sure our justice system reflects the harm we know exists. It has been one part of a broader effort to end gender-based violence.

As the bill moves forward, I ask all members to continue supporting Bill C-16, not simply as a policy choice but as a responsibility we owe to the women and girls whose lives were taken, to those whose stories were ignored and to those who were never given the chance to be heard. This legislation exists because of them, because they were brave enough to speak up and because others spoke up for them when they could not. Their lives and experiences forced us to confront what failed, what was missing and what must change.

Together we can move forward in a country where we can live safely and with dignity, where lives are not lost before systems respond, and where hope is built through action.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's words against gender-based violence. We all support a decrease in that, but I do want to outline something for her. As per the Criminal Code, aggravated sexual assault is defined as follows: It occurs if the person assaulted is wounded, maimed, disfigured, beaten or in danger of losing his or her life while being sexually assaulted.

The provision with aggravated sexual assault at gunpoint has a mandatory minimum of four years, which is not nearly enough, in my opinion. Why does the member support clause 63 in Bill C-16, which would allow judges the discretion to provide lesser sentences than the mandatory minimum of four years for aggravated sexual assault with a firearm?

Hon. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the unique challenges that women and other victims face in this country, and this bill is truly important. Bill C-16 would protect those victims.

I have already touched on a few things in my speech today, but really the key is addressing and criminalizing coercive control and all the precursors to an ultimate end for women, in terms of severe issues that are caused for them. The bill would also ensure that, from a penalization and justice perspective, we make femicide first-

degree murder in this country. That would be a huge step forward, and in combination with criminalizing coercive control and all the other measures I outlined today, we would help address gender-based violence in this country.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her ongoing commitment to gender equality in the House.

Consistent with the intent of the bill, the Bloc Québécois supported it and also proposed amendments in committee, in a spirit of collaborative development. However, the Liberals, who now have a majority, rejected one that I think is crucial.

I would like to hear the minister's thoughts on this matter. It was recognized that stalking is part of a pattern of coercive behaviour that must be assessed as a whole.

This amendment would have somewhat shifted the burden of proof, which essentially rests with the victim. We have therefore missed an opportunity to make it easier for a woman to file a complaint and defend herself.

What does the minister think?

Hon. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, gender-based violence has no place in our country.

As I said in my speech, by recognizing femicide as a serious offence, tightening bail conditions for repeat offenders and investing over half a million dollars to support survivors and their families, we are strengthening protections for victims of domestic violence.

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tired of hearing the exaggeration throughout the debate on this bill. The bill would be tougher on crime overall, because without a safety valve, mandatory minimum penalties would often get struck down. What we would do through the bill is keep minimum penalties in place. We could actually make sure that people serve a sentence when they commit a heinous crime.

Really, the Conservatives are fake tough on crime, because what they have achieved is the cancellation of all these minimum sentences through charter challenges. What we would do in this bill is make them mandatory, and therefore make them tougher.

• (1535)

Hon. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. secretary of state for sharing her perspectives, and I completely agree. The Conservatives opposite have an opportunity right now. If they really want to end gender-based violence, and if they really want to help victims and survivors, they can help move Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, forward.

I just want to share, as I already said in my speech earlier, that it is not just about legislation. We are also, through Women and Gender Equality, investing significantly to make sure to end gender-based violence. In 2024 and 2025, more than 1 million people across Canada were able to access services like counselling, housing, legal information, crisis supports and community-based programs, because of the national action plan that I have already referenced. On top of this, we have delivered 27,400 prevention resources, and we are going to do everything we can to end gender-based violence.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians hear the government talk about Bill C-16, they probably think it is a bill about protecting victims. They hear about protecting women from abuse. They hear about protecting children from exploitation. They hear about stopping the spread of deepfake pornography. They hear about tougher measures against coercive control in abusive relationships. Most Canadians would hear that list and say, “Who could possibly be against that?” The answer is, nobody could.

Conservatives support those objectives because we believe victims deserve protection, children deserve protection and families deserve protection. That is the fundamental job of government: protection of its citizens. The problem is that Bill C-16 is a bit like buying a house because the front porch looks beautiful, only to discover later that the foundation is compromised. The government points Canadians toward the parts of the bill everyone likes, while hoping they do not notice the parts that would change everything. Buried inside this legislation is a poison pill that would allow judges to bypass virtually every mandatory minimum sentence in the Criminal Code.

First, we need to understand how we got here. Consecutive Conservative governments had established mandatory minimum sentences for some of the most serious crimes in our Criminal Code. We did that because Canadians expect serious offences to carry serious consequences. Child sexual exploitation, weapons trafficking, armed extortion, drive-by shootings and human trafficking were not treated as ordinary crimes, because the harm they cause is extraordinary.

However, for 10 years, the Liberal government has systematically weakened the principle that serious crimes must carry serious consequences. Liberal Bill C-75 weakened bail laws and pushed the justice system toward release at the earliest opportunity. Liberal Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimum penalties for a range of serious offences, including crimes involving firearms and dangerous drugs.

Time and again, police officers, prosecutors, victims advocates, premiers and community leaders warned that the government was moving in the wrong direction. Time and again, those warnings were dismissed. Today, Canadians are seeing the consequences. Violent crime has increased dramatically. Human trafficking has increased dramatically. Sexual assault has increased dramatically. Organized criminal networks have become stronger and more sophisticated.

Canadians are witnessing the inevitable result of a philosophy that views punishment, rather than crime itself, as the problem, that

Government Orders

views the rights of the criminal as more important than the rights of the victim. That is why Bill C-16's “get out of jail free” card is a poison pill that Canadian communities will once again be forced to swallow. The Liberals will say that Conservatives are standing in the way of getting strong laws passed, but I can assure Canadians that Conservatives are standing in the breach, fighting to keep criminals from getting off with a slap on the wrist for serious crimes.

Understanding Bill C-16 requires a deeper understanding of the path that led us here. For years, courts have increasingly relied on what are called “reasonable hypotheticals” when reviewing mandatory minimum sentences. Rather than focusing solely on the criminal who is actually on trial, the court judges have increasingly considered hypothetical scenarios involving people who do not exist and who never committed the actual crimes in question.

That trend culminated in the Supreme Court's *Senneville* decision. The facts of that case were horrific. One offender possessed 475 files, including 317 images of children, most between the ages of three and six, and many depicting acts of sexual abuse I cannot bring myself to say out loud here in the House. Another offender possessed more than 800 images and videos involving children as young as five years old being subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse. That is hundreds of images documenting the abuse of vulnerable children.

Most Canadians would think that the court would consider those offenders and apply the appropriate mandatory minimum sentence. Instead, the court chose this moment to question mandatory minimums altogether. Judges based their decisions on a hypothetical story of a teenager sending a hypothetical intimate photo to a hypothetical boyfriend or girlfriend, and that hypothetical photo was later shared with a hypothetical someone. The court claimed concern that the same mandatory minimum law could apply, even though the case before them was very real and very serious. Because of that hypothetical case, the court struck down Parliament's mandatory minimum sentence.

● (1540)

The government then had a choice. It could have changed the law to deal with that specific concern while keeping strong penalties in place for serious child sexual exploitation offences. Instead, the Liberals used that court decision as the reason for creating the new get-out-of-jail-free card in Bill C-16. That is why Canadians should look carefully at what the bill would actually do rather than what the Liberals say it would do.

Government Orders

The government wants Canadians to believe that Bill C-16 is a major public safety initiative. It points to provisions dealing with deepfake pornography. It points to provisions dealing with coercive control. It points to provisions dealing with intimate partner violence. All those measures are designed to attract support. However, while Canadians are focused on those headlines, the Liberal government has inserted this poison pill. It calls it a safety valve, a phrase carefully chosen because it sounds limited, reasonable and harmless. The government insists this power will be used only in exceptional cases, yet when Conservatives proposed reasonable safeguards to ensure that outcome, every safeguard was rejected. Canadians should ask themselves a simple question: If the government truly intended that this be used only rarely, why did it refuse every attempt to define what “rarely” actually means? The answer is obvious. The government is presenting Canadians with one bill while pursuing a very different objective beneath the surface.

That objective became even clearer during committee study. Conservatives approached the legislation constructively, because we recognize that there are very good measures that are worth preserving. Our goal is not to destroy the bill; our goal is to strengthen it and ensure that victims remain at the centre of the legislation. We proposed safeguards that would have limited access to the safety valve to offenders with no prior record. We proposed ensuring that sentences would not be reduced below half of Parliament's mandatory minimum. We proposed excluding extortion offences. We proposed excluding aggravated sexual assault. We proposed excluding serious child sexual offences. We proposed excluding some of the most serious crimes that Parliament has already determined deserve firm sentencing consequences. Every one of those amendments was rejected.

Conservatives also proposed stronger notification requirements so that victims of intimate partner violence and coercive control would be informed about release decisions affecting offenders. Those amendments were rejected as well. The significance of those votes cannot be ignored. The government did not accidentally create an overly broad get-out-of-jail-free card but deliberately defended it. It did not overlook the concerns raised by Conservatives. It considered those concerns and voted against them. The result is legislation that speaks passionately about victims while systematically rejecting measures that would strengthen their protection.

Conservatives support stronger protections for women and children, stronger measures against deepfake exploitation and stronger recognition of the devastating harm caused by coercive control. Those objectives are important and need support. Unfortunately, the poison pill at the heart of Bill C-16 undermines all of those goals, because it continues with the same failed philosophy that has contributed to the crime and chaos Canadians are experiencing today.

At a time when communities are demanding greater accountability, the government is creating new opportunities for offenders to avoid consequences. At a time when victims are asking to be heard, the government is focusing its attention on a get-out-of-jail-free card for criminals. At a time when public confidence in the justice system is already fragile, the government is asking members of Parliament to weaken one of the few tools designed to ensure serious crime receives serious punishment.

Canadians deserve better than legislation that says one thing and does another. They deserve a justice system that places victims first, supports police officers, protects communities and recognizes that public safety is a fundamental responsibility of government. If the Liberals truly believed in the good parts of the bill, protecting women and children against deepfake exploitation, why did they insist on attaching a poison pill that creates yet another get-out-of-jail-free card for serious offenders?

● (1545)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact that the member uses the words “poison pill” over and over again makes me wonder whether the Conservatives plan on voting against the bill. They prolonged the amount of time the bill took to get studied. There were some good improvements made. I think the members of the committee eventually worked well together.

Victims are looking for relief. They want mandatory minimum penalties, of course, and we have restored 12 mandatory minimum penalties in this bill.

The bill protects victims. It respects the Charter. It helps keep mandatory minimum penalties on the books rather than having them struck down by courts, with victims out of luck. We are there to protect victims. We are protecting children with the bill. I hope the Conservatives can find it within themselves to support this, because I am starting to really wonder who they are here for.

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives support the parts of the bill that protect women and children, address coercive control and deal with deepfake exploitation. In fact, many of those ideas came from the Conservatives in the first place. The problem is clause 63. The government wrapped good measures around a poison pill that would let judges go below mandatory minimum sentences for serious crimes. Victims deserve protection, but they also deserve consequences for the people who hurt them. That is why Conservatives tried to fix the bill.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is something to be said about the time when there was a minority government. We were able to strike a sort of balance between a more progressive vision of the justice system, championed by the Bloc Québécois, and a more traditional vision focused on law and order, with harsher penalties, advocated by the Conservatives. Unfortunately, the Liberal majority means that the government will be able to impose various measures, notably an amendment that unduly broadens the scope of the provisions on bail conditions and other procedural safeguards. Taken together, these elements create conditions in which the criterion of violence, usually used to justify harsher sentences, is removed.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this. Does this create an additional risk for women and victims?

[English]

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been very clear from the beginning. We support stronger protections for women, children and victims. We support action on coercive control. We support action on deepfake exploitation. We support stronger tools to protect children online.

What we do not support is using those victims as a political cover for a clause that attacks mandatory minimum sentences. The government did not have to attach clause 63 to those protections. It chose to do that, and it chose to reject every Conservative attempt to fix it.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Bow River always appreciate when I have an opportunity to speak in the House or ask questions.

More than a decade of having Liberal-appointed, soft-on-crime judges who follow the tone and tenor set by the government has really eroded the confidence of people on the disposition or the delivery of justice. I wonder if the member can speak to how bills passed need to be explicit in terms of mandatory minimum and consecutive sentences and how, otherwise, judges will erode the system and public confidence in the judicial system.

• (1550)

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, I hope I have been able to tackle some of that in my speech, but the arguments we have heard from the Liberal side do not explain why they rejected every reasonable safeguard Conservatives proposed in order to define things. If their release valve or get-out-of-jail-free card is truly only for rare and exceptional cases, why do they not say that in the bill? Why not limit it to first-time offenders? Why not prevent sentences from dropping below half the mandatory minimum? Why not exclude a child sexual offence, aggravated sexual assault or extortion? The answer is simple. The Liberals wanted this power to be broad, and Canadians should be very concerned about it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Conservative Party is being completely self-serving and does not recognize that the changes in Bill C-16 would make sure that it is constitutionally compliant. Mandatory minimums would be restored.

Why is the Conservative Party attempting to deceive Canadians by trying to spread misinformation on important crime-fighting legislation?

Tamara Jansen: Mr. Speaker, if mandatory minimums can be ignored, then they are not mandatory anymore. The government says there would be jail time, but that misses the point. Parliament sets mandatory minimums because some crimes are so serious that there must be a clear floor.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in strong support of Bill C-16, the protecting victims act. I do so as a woman and as someone who has spent years listening to women, survivors and frontline advocates de-

scribe the gap between their lived realities and the protections our laws have provided.

Government Orders

When I was 13 years old, I was given a rape whistle. It was a quiet but unmistakable signal that my presence in the world came with a risk and that my safety was ultimately my own responsibility to manage. Nearly 30 years later, much has changed: We have a deeper understanding of gender-based violence, of power, control and harm; we speak more openly about experiences that were once pushed into silence. However, for far too many women and girls, violence remains a daily part of their reality.

Before I speak about statutes and sections of the Criminal Code, I want to speak about a young person whose experience illustrates exactly why the bill matters. She was 16 years old. She thought she was in a relationship, but what she did not yet have language for was that she was being controlled. Her boyfriend decided who she could speak to, where she could go, what she should wear and how quickly she was expected to respond to messages. When she resisted, he did not always hurt her directly. Instead, he was violent toward others in her life so that he could intimidate and isolate her. While there was no physical evidence she could point to, what she understood very well was the constant and escalating fear. No single incident clearly met the threshold for legal intervention, and there was not a system that could yet name what was happening to her, let alone stop it from happening. Her story is not rare; it is painfully familiar.

Intimate partner violence and gender-based violence are not new problems in Canada. The government and the minister understand this reality, and the provisions in Bill C-16 address what has been legislatively absent in our response to gender-based violence and intimate partner violence.

In 2024 alone, 187 women were killed in this country, with one woman killed every two days. Behind each statistic is a life ended too soon, a family broken needlessly and a community changed forever. As the bill makes clear, violence does not begin with a punch or a final act of femicide; it begins much earlier, with fear, control, threats, isolation, humiliation and the slow erosion of a person's autonomy. For far too long, the legal system has struggled to name that reality, let alone respond to it. Survivors have told us time and time again that the law intervenes too late. By the time physical violence appears, the warning signs have long been there. The system asks them to wait for bruises, for broken bones, for tragedy. Only then, but perhaps not even then, are they offered justice.

Government Orders

Bill C-16 exists because waiting is no longer acceptable. The legislation recognizes that intimate partner violence and gender-based violence are systemic problems that require systemic responses from the federal government. It recognizes that technology and the digital world have changed how harm occurs, and it recognizes that justice delayed or denied retraumatizes survivors and erodes public trust in our judicial system.

Criminal justice is, of course, a shared responsibility. Provinces must adequately resource courts, victim services, Crown prosecutors and the police, and the federal government has a clear responsibility to modernize and enact criminal law, which is precisely what Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, seeks to do.

Since the bill was introduced, it has been carefully studied at committee, where members have heard from survivors, advocates, legal experts and law enforcement. Bill C-16 would be one of the most significant updates to Canada's criminal justice system in a generation. While broad in scope, its purpose is clear: to intervene earlier, respond more effectively and protect those at greatest risk.

First, the bill would create a new Criminal Code offence for coercive and controlling conduct in intimate relationships. This is a critical shift. Coercive control reflects how abuse actually operates through monitoring, isolation, financial control, threats and intimidation. This would enable police and courts to intervene before violence escalates to lethal outcomes. This would save women's lives.

Second, Bill C-16 would strengthen how the law treats the most serious forms of violence against women. Murder committed in the context of coercive control, sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking or hate would be treated as first-degree murder. When a killing in those same circumstances results in a manslaughter conviction, courts would be required to consider life imprisonment with parole ineligibility, comparable to second-degree murder. Sentencing must reflect the gravity of violence rooted in power and control.

Third, the bill would modernize our response to criminal harassment and stalking. Survivors would no longer be required to prove subjective fear. Courts would instead assess whether the conduct could reasonably be expected to cause someone to believe their safety is threatened. This trauma-informed shift would recognize that harassment is cumulative and that early intervention saves lives.

• (1555)

Fourth, Bill C-16 would update sexual exploitation offences to reflect the digital world we all live in. We know technology is not neutral infrastructure. It is increasingly used as a tool to manipulate, monitor and harm women and gender-diverse people. While the non-consensual distribution of intimate images is already illegal, this bill would clarify the law and explicitly include sexual deepfakes, which would be closing a gap that offenders are already exploiting.

Committee amendments would strengthen these provisions further. The bill would now explicitly capture a broader range of AI-generated images, ensuring the law keeps pace with rapidly evolving technologies and the realities of online harm. A digital violation is still a violation, and the law must say so clearly.

Fifth, the bill would strengthen protections for children, both off-line and online. It would expand child-luring offences, criminalize child sextortion, address grooming tactics involving explicit material, restore and reinforce mandatory minimum penalties for serious child sexual offences with a constitutional safety valve and require online platforms to preserve evidence longer so offenders cannot escape accountability.

Finally, Bill C-16 has been informed through a victim-centred and trauma-informed lens. It would strengthen the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, improve access to information and testimonial aids, clarify the right to present impact statements and modernize procedures so serious cases are less likely to collapse due to delay.

Together, these reforms would bring the Criminal Code into alignment with lived experience, modern technology and the urgent need for prevention. This bill is grounded in evidence and what many advocates have called for, for years. Women's organizations across the country have welcomed the criminalization of coercive control as a long overdue step. Frontline organizations working with survivors have described this bill as historic, recognizing that patterns of control are deeply harmful and that survivors deserve stronger legal protections. Child protection advocates have warned that online sexual violence against children has reached unprecedented levels. They have welcomed the provisions in this bill that would strengthen online child protection.

As this debate has unfolded, some misinformation has followed. Let me address a few of these myths directly. Criminalizing coercive control is not untested. It reflects years of research, survivor testimony and expert input. It represents the hard work that went into Bill C-332, sponsored by former NDP MP Laurel Collins, which received cross-party support at committee.

This government would not only be criminalizing the distribution of intimate images; that offence already exists. Bill C-16 would clarify that it includes sexual deepfakes, which would be closing a gap that offenders are already exploiting.

As well, Bill C-16 would protect children online. It would expand child-luring and sextortion offences. As a mother of two young kids, I know how important this change would be. These are not symbolic measures. They are targeted, enforceable and urgently needed.

Bill C-16 is a vital pillar of our response to gender-based violence, but it is not the entire solution. Legislation alone cannot change culture. It cannot house a woman fleeing violence. It cannot staff a crisis line at three in the morning. It cannot replace the trust built by frontline workers who walk alongside survivors every day. That crucial work is done by the incredible frontline organizations across this country.

This bill must be understood alongside continued federal investment in women's shelters, transitional housing, legal aid, trauma counselling and prevention programs. This work must be in concert with the national action plan to end gender-based violence with provincial and territorial partners, indigenous nations and local organizations. Ending gender-based violence requires culture change in how we understand power, entitlement, masculinity and control.

Bill C-16 reflects years of advocacy, hard conversations and courage in particular from survivors who spoke when it was extremely difficult to speak up. It would recognize harm earlier so systems can intervene faster. It would treat victims with dignity while modernizing our justice system to meet the realities Canadians are living with today.

These changes might have made a difference for the 13-year-old handed a whistle instead of protection and for the 16-year-old unable to name coercion. They would make a difference for the women who have lived in silence and for all children who deserve safety.

I urge all members of the House to support Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, and to continue the work beyond the chamber that our country deserves and demands.

• (1600)

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is clearly something important in this bill.

However, in committee, the Liberals decided to vote against a Bloc Québécois amendment that would have applied mandatory conditions to any offence against an intimate partner, including purely financial disputes, such as fraud. These included a no-contact order, a ban on cross-examination, house arrest and a ban on possessing firearms.

Evidence that a female victim could legally rely on to strengthen her defence is being rejected by the Liberals. Why is that?

[English]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I have just become a member of the status of women committee. I am really thrilled that we are working at a systems level to start to address some of these challenges that we are seeing in the laws and to hearing from some of the folks who are doing the work on the front lines to identify some of these challenges.

I cannot speak to the question that the member brought up specifically, but I want to say that this work needs to be happening with a much more systematic approach.

Government Orders

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague.

This is a first-of-a-kind legislation on the whole issue of coercive actions, femicide being advanced to first-degree murder and the reinstatement of a number of mandatory minimums. These are all important things that will make our communities healthier.

Could the member expand on why it was important that the government bring in not only this legislation, but a series of pieces of legislation to make the communities we represent safer for all?

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I was recently in Strasbourg as part of a parliamentary delegation, and one of the issues that we were exploring was around gender violence and the need to take more explicit actions. I am very proud to be part of a government that has recognized femicide as part of the wave of violence that women experience in our communities.

What we are achieving here with this legislation, alongside a whole host of other interventions and changes to our criminal system, is a balanced approach. There are really important measures that also think about prevention and culture change. This work is happening across several pillars, and it is work that I am very proud to be speaking to.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-16 would create the so-called safety valve that would allow judges to essentially ignore a mandatory minimum sentence.

Is the member concerned that, by virtue of this Liberal safety valve, at a time when we are experiencing record crime, judges will ignore the mandatory minimum sentences more often and let repeat violent offenders out on the street when they should be in jail?

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, one of the testimonies we heard earlier this week at the status of women committee was about the concept of restorative justice and finding other approaches to respond to these challenges.

We live in a patriarchal society in which there is a whole host of really challenging views around the place for women, women's safety and women's role in our society. We are thinking about other ways to respond here because of the wave of this kind of violence.

I want to make sure we recognize that sometimes the justice system is not the right place for the responses we need and it is not the healing that some survivors have asked for.

• (1605)

Doly Begum (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was very eloquent in speaking about the ways that gender-based violence is addressed and how important it is. This legislation is a significant step forward in understanding the different types of violence and the need for very comprehensive responses to it.

Government Orders

You talked about first responders and those who are on the front lines. I would ask if you could elaborate a little and talk about how important it is for us to understand the uniqueness and how victims should be—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to cut the member off to give a chance to the member for Spadina—Harbourfront to respond.

I know the member is new, but she cannot use the word “you” because it is directly addressing the Speaker. I will not be responding, but I invite the member of Spadina—Harbourfront to respond in 20 seconds or less.

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, centering the experiences and voices of survivors is critical to getting this right. It is how we move forward and ensure that there is real justice for women who have suffered.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to engage in this very important debate we are having about the Liberals' bill, Bill C-16, which comes in light of quite significant violent crime statistics in the country over the last 10 years. For example, sexual assaults have increased by 76% and violent crimes by 55%. That comes after 10 years of the Stephen Harper government, when there was a 26% decline in violent crime, but over the last 10 years of Liberal government, there has been a 55% increase in reported violent crime. Sexual violations against children in that decade as well are up by well over 100%. Human trafficking is up by over 84%, so the bill is arriving at a very dire time in violent crime against women, against children and against the most vulnerable in Canada.

As such, I am very honoured to engage in this debate, and frankly, there are a number of measures in the bill that we personally support, notably things that the Conservatives on this side of the House have brought forward over recent years and have championed in recent years. While we welcome those things being adopted in this bill, we have other concerns, which I will get into shortly.

For example, there is Bill C-225 from the Conservative member of Parliament for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, our public safety shadow minister. That bill is currently in the Senate and would make the murder of an intimate partner automatically first-degree murder. In fact, that would build on a bill from the Senate from about four years ago, which I helped champion, from former Conservative senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, who is a nationally renowned champion for fighting against violence against women. It is great to see that is part of this bill. I appreciate that.

Bill C-216 from the Conservative member for Calgary Nose Hill aimed to ban deepfakes of intimate partners to keep Canadians safe, especially women, from non-consensual intimate images being created and shared. Bill C-16 also includes provisions from that same bill to bring in mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse material, so that has been taken up as well.

There are a number of measures that we have championed and that we welcome seeing in the bill. Also, it would update mandatory reporting requirements concerning child exploitation material, but also the bill would criminalize coercive or controlling conduct within intimate partner relationships, which we support. I used to serve on the status of women committee, and we have long been

hearing that this is an area that needs very early intervention, so I welcome that in this piece of legislation.

However, there is a very divisive piece that we need to discuss. It is clause 63 in Bill C-16, which the Liberals have included. It makes it very difficult for us to support the bill. Despite all the good work that we have done that is reflected in it, there is a very clear red line in clause 63. It is what the justice minister has called a safety valve for mandatory minimum penalties. This really emphasizes the trend in this country of judicial activism and concessions by the Liberal government to that, and would undermine Parliament's role in setting sentencing policy.

Ultimately, it would allow courts to impose sentences below mandatory minimums set by the House. It would provide discretion to a judge to determine that a sentence should be less than a mandatory minimum penalty under circumstances the judge deems cruel and unusual punishment. This sounds like quite a significant hurdle, but recent court cases make me question if we should be allowing judges the discretion to determine what exactly that is.

In fact, the Liberal government has linked this provision in the bill to a recent Supreme Court decision that I think really rocked the nation. For me, when it came out, it made me feel sick to my stomach. It was the Quebec (Attorney General) v. Senneville decision in the fall. For those who may not be familiar with that ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a one-year mandatory minimum sentence for the offences of possessing and accessing child pornography is unconstitutional. Our Supreme Court of Canada, the supreme judicial body in this country, ruled that a one-year mandatory prison sentence may be unconstitutional in certain hypothetical extreme scenarios for possessing and accessing child pornography. In the case in particular, the two offenders had 475 and 805 files, respectively, depicting child pornography, mostly of girls between the ages of three and six years old undergoing horrific, unimaginable sexual abuse.

During this case, the Supreme Court said that, maybe not in that scenario, but in another potential scenario of a 17-year-old sending an 18-year-old an intimate image, if maybe that 18-year-old shared it and that was ever charged by police, prosecuted by the Crown and then brought all the way up to the courts, an MMP could be cruel and unusual punishment in that hypothetical scenario.

This is why there is no longer a one-year mandatory minimum, based on this decision. Now they are bringing this forward, saying that this helps that situation. It gives the judges what is basically an out. I guess this is what they are allowing. We would have used the notwithstanding clause on that judicial ruling and been very proud of that.

• (1610)

There are a number of other rulings as well in recent years that have us really just questioning the morality we are seeing in this country and, again, the judicial activism. For example, two years ago, in *R. v. Bertrand Marchand*, the Supreme Court ruled that a one-year mandatory minimum for child luring was cruel and unusual punishment. In *R. v. Hills*, it struck down the four-year mandatory minimum for reckless discharge of a firearm. These are very dangerous crimes, very horrific crimes in many cases, where the mandatory minimum is being struck down by the Supreme Court. Most egregiously, in *R. v. Bissonnette*, involving the man who opened fire and killed six people in a mosque, the court decided it was unconstitutional to impose consecutive life sentences on murderers like that. I disagree strongly with all of those rulings.

Now Bill C-16, with clause 63, is providing more opportunity for judges to decide, despite Parliament having ruled that certain offences are so egregious that they require mandatory minimum prison time, like child pornography, for example. I look at this, and it is difficult to wrap my head around it when I think about some of the worst examples we have seen. We cannot go a week in this country without seeing some ridiculous ruling by a judge who ruled that someone could be let out on bail despite 50 violent crimes, some including sexual assault, breaking and entering, violent assault. They say, “Oh, yes, you can go out on bail,” over and over and over. There are light sentences for sexual abuse. We see this all the time.

Instead of doubling down and asserting our rights of Parliament, the government would allow a “safety valve”, as per the Minister of Justice, for judicial discretion with mandatory minimums. We cannot support that. I will just describe one example: aggravated sexual assault. This is how the Criminal Code defines aggravated sexual assault. It occurs if the person who is being sexually assaulted is wounded, maimed, disfigured, beaten or in danger of losing his or her life. That action at gunpoint has a current mandatory minimum of four years, which, quite frankly, I think is not nearly enough, but that is what it is. At least it is there. Why is it that the Liberals voted against our amendment at committee to ensure that provision is not part of this safety valve? They allow it for treason and murder but not aggravated sexual assault with a firearm?

What about sexual abuse against children? We also put forward amendments to ensure that those offences were excused, that those were not included, that those would be in the same category as the treason and the murder, so that this would not apply. That was also voted down. We worked collaboratively in that committee to provide opportunities so that these mandatory minimums would remain, and they voted them down. I would like to hear Liberal members describe to us in what scenario they morally believe a judge should be permitted the authority to allow less than four years for an aggravated sexual assault at gunpoint. If they cannot think of a scenario, why did they not support our amendment?

Government Orders

It is so frustrating because there is stuff in this bill that we worked hard to push forward. I have been here for almost seven years. I cannot tell the House how much we have been banging on these tables demanding more justice for women, for children, for victims of sexual abuse, tougher sentencing, jail not bail for repeat violent offenders. Now the Liberals are getting up on their high horse, pretending they have the higher ground, and they are allowing this provision to give more discretion to judges to allow lesser sentences for aggravated sexual assault at gunpoint. I cannot get on board for that, and it is very upsetting.

As members can tell, I get quite animated, because there is stuff in this bill we would like to support. We gave them every opportunity to take this out of the bill to ensure that these protections, this justice for victims, remain in our Criminal Code, and they voted them down. It is very disappointing but, unfortunately, not surprising.

* * *

• (1615)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that next Monday shall be an allotted day.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

PROTECTING VICTIMS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with every speech I hear, I am starting to feel more and more worried that the Conservatives may vote against one of the most ambitious changes in criminal reform when it comes to protecting victims in this country.

This bill would create incredible changes. It would account for new technology. It would implement 12 mandatory minimum penalties. The Conservatives are fixated on making sure that it is all or nothing, so that victims do not get heard in court, so that perpetrators get away with their crime. We do not want them to get away. What we want is for them to have to serve mandatory minimum penalties. This is why the lesson from the Senneville case is not that Parliament should abandon this but that Parliament—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to cut the member off to give the member for Kildonan—St. Paul a chance to respond.

Government Orders

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit rich to hear any of that coming from Liberal members. What we are fixated on is rights for women against their abusers.

For example, there was my bill from a few years ago that was from the Senate, from Senator Boisvenu. In that bill, there was the opportunity for a peace bond for two years. A peace bond is something that a woman who has been abused can get as protection against her abuser. It takes a lot of courage and a lot of time to go before the courts, through the process, to get it; in essence, it is a type of restraining order. In that bill, a woman would have had two years when she could relax for a moment with that protection. Liberal members diluted that to one year.

I will take no lectures, no ivory tower from these Liberal members about protecting women and what is best for them.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated the speech by my colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul. Her passion for this issue was evident in her remarks. I know she has worked tirelessly and with great dedication on these issues over the years.

I see in Bill C-16 many improvements in terms of compassion and fairness for victims. There are also many improvements regarding the recognition of deepfakes. I therefore see very positive developments. My colleague is right to say that the collaboration that took place in committee left something to be desired. The committee rejected amendments and refused to discuss amendments from the opposition parties that were entirely constructive.

Even if we can agree that we could be stricter on certain points—that we could place greater emphasis on minimum sentences, for example—does my colleague not think that there is still some improvement in Bill C-16, that it is better than nothing, and that we can work on the rest later? Would that not be something worth considering?

Raquel Dancho: I thank my colleague for the question, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

I appreciate it.

Again, I outlined in my speech a number of things we like in this bill, a number of things we have put forward and advocated for. That is why it is so frustrating that there is a provision in here that allows the opportunity for more judicial activism for lesser sentencing. It is very difficult for us because, again, there is a lot of our work represented in there, but how can we in good conscience support something that is going to provide more opportunity for judicial discretion to lower sentencing for violent repeat offenders? It is very difficult.

I have outlined our position on this. I appreciate the member's work, as well, on this. Again, what is most frustrating, I think, is that we gave them every opportunity to get on board for this. We brought forward concrete, clear amendments to ensure that the most egregious offences, for example, aggravated sexual assault at gunpoint, are removed from that safety valve, and the Liberals voted

them down. They are not interested in working on this together. They want to play politics.

● (1620)

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in terms of improving the bill, I wonder how the member feels about a proposal that the Conservatives, in fact, it was me, brought to the justice committee in response to the Senneville decision, in which the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the mandatory minimum sentences for accessing and possessing child pornography. Instead of going with the safety valve to potentially undermine mandatory minimum sentences, the Conservatives proposed the invocation of the notwithstanding clause to preserve the mandatory minimum sentences for accessing and possessing child pornography.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's work on the justice committee.

Kerry Sun is a doctoral student at the University of Oxford and a member of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. I will just outline his words in the National Post on the purpose of the notwithstanding clause. He wrote that it “is a mechanism to prevent overreaching judicial interpretations of rights from undermining the common good.”

Chief Justice Wagner said that the decision could erode public confidence. This would have been the opportunity to use it. We feel it should have been used.

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today at third reading to speak in support of Bill C-16 and the Government of Canada's continued response to criminal justice system delays.

Before I start, I would like to express gratitude to all members of the committee who have worked hard and diligently on this legislation.

To start, I would like to highlight three measures proposed in Bill C-16 to address delays. First, Bill C-16 would introduce greater flexibility to courts in ordering alternative remedies to address unreasonable delays. Currently, once a court determines that there has been unreasonable delay, in breach of section 11(b) of the charter, a stay of proceedings is the only available remedy recognized by the common law.

While Bill C-16 would not preclude ordering a stay of proceedings, it would, however, direct the courts to consider it a remedy of last resort after considering whether other remedies are appropriate and just under the circumstances. Courts would need to take into account specific factors like the impact a stay of proceedings is likely to have on the victim and the interests that society has in a final decision. Requiring that a stay of proceedings be considered as a remedy of last resort would also ensure greater consistency with how charter remedies are considered in other contexts.

Alternative remedies would not be codified. Instead, it would be open to the courts to determine what would be most appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the case. Each remedy could be tailored to rectify the harm suffered by the accused while preserving the public interest in having criminal cases decided on their merits. For example, a court could make an order to expedite proceedings or the trial itself, sever charges for cases involving multiple co-accused or change the venue of the trial. Courts could also consider making an order to change the mode of trial, for example, by ordering a jury trial to proceed by judge alone where applicable and with the consent of the accused.

Second, Bill C-16 would provide courts with additional guidance on assessing case complexity. The Jordan framework recognizes that some cases are inherently more complex and may justifiably take longer to complete, for example, cases with significant disclosure or particularly complex types of evidence. Bill C-16 would preserve the existing approach, determining whether a case is complex under the Jordan framework, but would require courts to consider specific additional factors when the case involves applications or motions.

This proposal responds directly to the reality that in recent years, increased reliance on applications and motions has become a significant source of delay in some jurisdictions, for example, in cases involving sexual offences and organized crime. These proceedings can be important in ensuring the accused's right to a fair trial, but they also require time and resources that are often beyond the control of the judge.

Importantly, all existing common law factors that the courts currently consider in determining whether a case is complex would continue to apply. The intent is not to replace those factors but rather to ensure that courts are recognizing the procedural complexities of modern criminal litigation and accounting for the cascading effect that applications and motions can have on delays.

While Bill C-16 seeks to address delays in the justice system to protect victims and would ensure that justice is being served for the most egregious crimes and offences, our new government is also addressing crime by investing in upstream solutions and preventative measures.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, investing in sport results in lower crime. This may seem implausible or unconvincing to some, but I want to emphasize what a significant and serious upstream investment sport represents in an effort to create safer communities while promoting positive social development and building resilience, particularly among at-risk youth. Sport provides a safe environment for families and youth to learn life skills, develop social capital and engage in activities that reduce

the risk of crime and violence. By fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for youth to participate in sports, societies can create safer and more stable environments.

Our government's recent generational investment of \$755 million in sport will support sport development for youth and also offer families more opportunities to learn and grow their skills and to meet new friends and mentors. According to experts, sociologists, psychologists, crime prevention researchers and law enforcement across Canada, sport will also help build a stronger, safer Canada for all.

To conclude, Bill C-16 takes a careful and balanced approach to addressing criminal justice system delays. It responds to the real and lasting harm caused by stays of proceedings, particularly for victims. It would also provide courts with carefully tailored tools to ensure that justice is not only swift but fair and meaningful.

Bill C-16 reflects this government's commitment to a criminal justice system that protects constitutional rights while maintaining public confidence and delivering justice on the merits. I urge all members of the House to support this important legislation.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Earlier, the parliamentary secretary said that Monday would be an allotted day. In the French interpretation provided by the interpreters, however, Tuesday was mentioned instead.

My question is for clarification.

Could the parliamentary secretary please tell us again what the allotted day will be next week? Will it be Monday or Tuesday?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, it will be Monday.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond is rising again. Is he rising on the same point of order?

Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to apologize to the secretary of state, who I referred to as a parliamentary secretary. I apologize and I thank her for the answer.

[English]

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering, at a time when Canadians are experiencing record violence from criminal enterprises, whether it makes sense to narrow or water down mandatory minimum sentences by creating the safety valve.

Government Orders

Does the member have any concern that we are going to have many more situations in which courts do not follow the mandatory minimum sentences?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I understand the member's concerns. I am a strong believer that our job in this House is not to play judge and jury; our job is to create the framework legal system to protect people and to protect victims. That is what the bill seeks to do: protect victims, expedite the justice system, and ensure that justice is served and victims are protected.

I also strongly believe that we need to invest more in upstream solutions, because simply suggesting that everything is in place for a safe society and we could not do anything to prevent crime is also not a responsible approach. We are taking a balanced approach, investing in upstream solutions while also ensuring that the legal system has everything it needs in order to ensure that justice is served.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are many positive aspects to Bill C-16, as was mentioned earlier.

There are, however, certain shortcomings and some issues that deserved to be explored in greater depth. For example, a number of amendments were proposed. Earlier, we heard the Conservatives place great emphasis on an issue close to their hearts: mandatory minimum sentences. The Bloc Québécois also had proposals to make. I am a bit concerned about the government's approach these days. They are rushing things and cutting debates short. They are requesting time allocation, which are closure motions, strictly speaking.

I wonder if the secretary of state could share his thoughts on this. Are there not important issues—such as this bill, which is extremely important to society as a whole—that warrant taking the time to show a little respect for the views of the opposition parties?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the members of the committee for their work on Bill C-16. It is extraordinarily important and serious. We urgently need to find solutions to improve Canada's justice system.

• (1630)

[English]

We could debate this all summer and into the fall. However, people are urgently awaiting for the legislation to be passed. This is a long-standing issue in the court systems, and as provincial governments are seeking to expedite their processes, and invest in courts and courtrooms, we have an obligation to act as well. That expeditious approach, acting urgently, is one that I encourage all members to undertake.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the aspects of the bill that I also find very interesting, and that victims groups have been advocating for, was the court delays issue and the fact that so many cases are getting dismissed from our provincial courts right now because of the delays.

This also provides an exception when cases are complex so that these cases do not get dismissed and so that victims get their day in court and get justice. This bill is about protecting victims' rights.

What is the member's opinion on that?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, for her question and for all of her work on this legislation and many other pieces of legislation. It is worthwhile to mention that fully two-thirds of the legislation tabled by this government over the last year has been to address crime and to focus on fixing our justice system.

I would just highlight that the court delays are largely a provincial jurisdiction. The court in Halton region is very close to my constituency office, so oftentimes we hear from constituents who are concerned about those delays. It is an aging court. Unfortunately, it is one that does not have the capacity to deal with the growing population in Halton region and throughout Peel.

I would also just highlight that we have seen in the news lately that Premier Doug Ford is very concerned about how 156 criminals were released from prison without an explanation. It is very easy to blame one level of government or another, but we are working together to solve these problems.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Health; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Employment; the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, Finance.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-16, an act to amend certain acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters, is what I am going to be discussing tonight, including child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures that are part of the bill. It is a broad justice omnibus bill that combines victim protection and criminal law modernization measures, but it also has a fundamental restructuring of mandatory minimum sentences.

Also, there are some good parts to this. Banning deepfakes of intimate partners will keep Canadians, especially women, safe from having non-consensual intimate images created and shared. I am thankful the government has adopted the proposal from the member of Parliament for Calgary Nose Hill in her bill, Bill C-216, to do exactly that.

The bill also criminalizes coercive or controlling conduct within intimate relationships. This is something that I have been very concerned about. I believe the behaviours that are the precursors to serious injury and death of women in those relationships often happen when women are most vulnerable. The government has basically failed to mention that when women are especially vulnerable is when they are pregnant and expecting a child.

Provisions from the same bill to bring in mandatory reporting for child sexual abuse materials have also been taken up, helping our kids feel safe from the most despicable crimes, and I hope it will keep them safer from those crimes.

I applaud the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, whose calls have been heard to make the murder of an intimate partner automatically first-degree murder.

Sadly, the Liberals opposed the member of Parliament for Edmonton Gateway's bill to introduce a three-year mandatory minimum sentence for all forms of extortion. However, at the very least, Bill C-16 introduces an aggravating factor for sextortion. It is a step in the right direction, but it is not anywhere near enough.

There are some good things in Bill C-16, but of course, as we are hearing today, there are some very serious concerns with it specifically. Despite the positive additions, it continues with the Liberals' soft-on-crime agenda. It would empower judges to ignore literally every mandatory prison sentence in the Criminal Code other than for murder and treason.

The Liberals want to empower judges to ignore mandatory sentences for such things as aggravated sexual assault with a gun, human trafficking, multiple violent firearm offences, extortion with a firearm, weapons trafficking and drive-by shootings with a restricted or prohibited firearm. These are some of the things that the government is prepared to declare are not violent crimes worthy of further mandatory sentences.

By creating a general safety valve, Bill C-16 introduces a sweeping sentencing change, allowing courts to impose sentences below mandatory minimum capabilities when applying the minimum would amount to cruel and unusual punishment for the offender. I have nowhere to put this. If mandatory is not mandatory, then we have an issue with our judicial system's being given the opportunity to play around with this. This provision would apply to nearly all mandatory minimum sentences in the Criminal Code and other federal statutes, effectively converting mandatory minimums from binding sentence floors into discretionary benchmarks.

While custodial sentences would still be required, Parliament's ability to set firm baseline consequences for serious violent crimes would be significantly weakened, encouraging lighter sentences for violent and repeat offenders, as well as the long-term erosion of mandatory minimum sentencing as a policy tool. This would result in more, not less, violent criminal activity on our streets. Victims, advocacy groups and the federal ombudsperson for victims of crime are in disbelief.

In 2021, instead of fulfilling the responsibility to review the Victims Bill of Rights, as was outlined, the Liberals began a study through the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. According to the ombud for victims of crime, the committee eventually produced a December 2022 report titled, "Improving Support for Victims of Crime". Critics, including the ombud, argued that the review was not as comprehensive as the legislation warranted. Although 13 recommendations were made, many of the most significant remain outstanding to this day. The federal ombud continues to argue that victims rights remain largely symbolic rights that are not enforced.

Government Orders

Let us comment on the fact that this is what is happening to the victims, but look at what is happening with respect to the sentencing of those who perform violent crimes against those victims. In 2024, it was stated that many of the recommendations could significantly improve victims' experiences if they were implemented.

● (1635)

Many of the more significant recommendations remain outstanding, such as the automated notification of rights. One of the biggest complaints is that victims are still generally required to seek out information themselves. Victims are still not automatically informed of their rights and services, or of offender status, parole processes and restitution options, yet the accused are informed of theirs. What is wrong with this scenario?

Also outstanding is stronger enforcement of victims' rights. The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights gives victims the right to information and whatnot. However, there is still no broad mechanism allowing them to go to court and obtain a remedy when those rights are violated.

National minimal service standards are also outstanding. The committee and ombudsperson called for more consistent national standards, but the government has not provided those national standards, leaving victims to try to navigate services that vary significantly between provinces and territories. Why has the Liberal government treated the Victims Bill of Rights as largely symbolic and failed to strengthen victims' rights in a meaningful way? Why instead are victims seeing the insertion of this poison pill in the form of a safety valve in Bill C-16, which is dangerously weakening Liberal criminal justice policies and giving more leniency to criminals, in sentencing reforms? That is what is happening here.

Government Orders

This poison pill is antithetical to preventing violent crimes. It would be giving more leniency. There should be one track in Bill C-16 for victim protection, coercive control, deepfake offences and trial efficiency measures. It is typical of the federal government members to bring forward such a bill. Quite honestly, they know that much of it was put forward by our members, yet they put something in there that is antithetical to the goodness that could be done on behalf of victims while lessening the amount of violent crime that continues to grow in this country. That is because of the laws it has allowed, such as bail and not jail and lowering the sentencing requirements for those committing very serious violent crimes.

Each component should be studied on its merits. Let us study the bill separately from the desire that the Liberals have to basically remove mandatory minimums from our judicial system. We would be able to support the victim protection and procedural component of Bill C-16, but the mandatory minimum sentencing safety valve is definitely something that should not be part of the bill.

Why does it even matter? Parliament sets mandatory minimum sentences for these heinous crimes for a reason. If the Liberals allow judges to ignore them, there would be nothing mandatory about it. The vast number of mandatory minimum sentences have already been deemed constitutional, and now the Liberals would be putting them in jeopardy when they have already passed that test of constitutionality. They would be allowing judicial activism. As a matter of fact, they are encouraging it toward lesser sentencing. On top of that, they are using hypotheticals rather than the real situation in front of them to make decisions that would actually be causing more harm to victims and creating more violent crime in our country.

The court's responsibility is to interpret and use the laws created by parliamentarians that are in the best interests of those who face the terrible conditions of violent crime. We have heard about many of those today. We continue to see the erosion of Canadians' safety when criminals' rights are put ahead of victims' rights. This is part of the problem with this approach to the charter. We have already indicated that a vast number of mandatory minimum sentences have been deemed constitutional, yet the government would be giving the judicial system, an activist judicial system, a window to go out and make huge changes to that.

The passage of this provision would be a total abolition of our duty as elected representatives to keep Canadians and their communities safe. The Liberals should split this poison pill out of the bill so that parliamentarians can work together to pass Bill C-16.

• (1640)

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have met many victims across this country and families who have lost loved ones to femicide, and they are very eager to see this bill go forward. There has been a lot of co-operation at the committee level, as well as amendments that have been accepted. Some were outside of the scope, however.

I really wanted to know whether the Conservatives will be supporting this bill, which would be a large change and protect women's rights and the rights of children.

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I was really pleased to see some of the items in this bill with regard to protecting women when they are being attacked, and I am a little surprised, because when the government had opportunities to support private members' bills, two of them mine, that would have given protections to women and recognized when they were being attacked simply because they are pregnant or, in a case where the attacker, a third party, knows they are pregnant, there was no recognition at all of that circumstance. I call that a poor failure on the part of the government.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to my research, two trials were halted in my own riding in 2023 because of incessant defence motions. Clearly, the Jordan decision ended up being applied.

Is that a problem with our justice system? Is there a lack of resources?

Ultimately, will this bill help address that, or are we basically still leaving victims to fend for themselves when justice is not taking its course because of a lack of resources?

[*English*]

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, no victim should face a situation where they do not get justice from our courts. It is very frustrating to see the limitations, in a lot of ways, of our court system.

At the same time, I am really frustrated with the fact that the federal government continues to pass the buck to our provinces. As one member was saying, we have had growth in populations and immigration has gone far beyond our capacity as a country to handle schooling, housing, jobs and education. I would also say, it has gone beyond our capacity for dealing with individuals who come to our country who perhaps add to the challenge of those court systems getting through all of their cases.

• (1645)

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the poison pill. First of all, mandatory sentences, obviously, as my other colleague pointed out much earlier, do in fact stop crime because it is very hard to commit a crime when in jail.

As far as the poison pill goes, when I raised my kids and told them to clean their rooms, I did not say at the end of it, "Unless you don't feel like it." This, I believe, is what is happening with this bill: If we do not feel like it, we do not have to obey the law. I would like my colleague to expand on that, if she would.

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that observation. That is part of the problem we have. The government has introduced, over this last five to 10 years, bills that basically give more and more leniency than the expectations of citizens and people in our country to obey the laws of our land, treat other people with respect and not create scenarios where violence is allowed. It is not only allowed but also seems to be encouraged.

“Poison pill” is something we use in the House to describe the Liberal government's legislation over and over again. As a matter of fact, my constituents are starting to use this term, because they see the good in a bill, but then they recognize when something has been interjected that is contrary to the value of a bill and is going to harm citizens rather than protect them.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, we hear news stories about how widespread and devastating intimate partner and sexual violence is in Canada. Frequently in the House, members stand to talk about a tragedy that has occurred in their community. According to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 147 women and girls were killed in Canada in 2025 in cases classified as femicide. That is one woman every two days.

At December 6 vigils in my community, we read the names of the women killed in Ontario and we hear their stories. These are not isolated incidents or private matters; they are part of a systemic crisis with costs in our homes, in our schools, in our communities, in our court systems, in this place and across Canada.

About one in three police-reported violent incidents involves intimate partner violence, and we know that is the tip of the iceberg, because the last thing somebody wants to do in the worst moment of their life is pick up the phone, call the police and have the cars outside with maybe kids in the house. In Ontario, nearly 100 municipalities have declared intimate partner violence an epidemic. I am proud to say Guelph is one of them.

A recent report shows that sexual violence costs nearly \$15 billion every year in Canada. Members can think about the lost wages of the victims and the costs of the lawyers, the counselling, the investigation, the courts, all of it, not to mention the deep social costs, which can last for generations through individual, family and community trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Could there be a more adverse childhood experience than sexual abuse and exploitation?

Police have reported that child sexual abuse and exploitation material offending is now more than 12 times higher than it was in 2008. From prevention to prosecution and community support, we need to address this epidemic in many ways. Bill C-16 is part of the legislative solution. It is one part, but it is urgent and important progress.

The protecting victims act would be one of the most significant updates to Canada's criminal justice system in generations. While broad in scope, the bill can be clearly understood through four core pillars: tackling gender-based and intimate partner violence, protecting children from predators, strengthening victims' rights and addressing court delays. Together, these reforms would modernize the Criminal Code to respond to contemporary threats, intervene earlier to prevent escalating violence and ensure that the justice sys-

tem works faster and more fairly for victims and survivors. What I hear from some women is that the justice system is in service to the law and not in service to victims.

The bill would take decisive action to prevent violence before it becomes lethal and reflect the gravity of modern forms of abuse. It would address femicide, coercive and controlling conduct, criminal harassment and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, including AI-generated sexual deepfakes. We know there has been a story in the news in the last couple of days of women who have been subjected to this type of abuse.

These reforms would recognize patterns of control and exploitation that often precede physical violence and would ensure they are treated seriously under the law. This means creating a new offence prohibiting coercive control, which is a pattern of coercive and controlling conduct toward an intimate partner. If people missed it, I would refer them to the remarks provided by the member for Spadina—Harbourfront, who described it very well. We need to get to a place where there is no more “awful but lawful” when it comes to controlling someone's behaviour. Let it be known that coercive control will become a crime.

Bill C-16 recognizes femicide as automatic first-degree murder, and provides the following circumstances for what would be murder in the first degree, known as femicide when committed against a female person:

- (i) the murder is committed against an intimate partner in the context of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct,
- (ii) the murder is committed in the context of sexual violence,
- (iii) the murder is committed in the context of human trafficking, or
- (iv) the murder is motivated by hate;

All of these would require the courts to consider life imprisonment for manslaughter committed in those circumstances.

● (1650)

Bill C-16 would address criminal harassment by removing the requirement to prove that the victim subjectively feared for their safety and replacing it with a requirement to prove that the harassing conduct could reasonably be expected to cause the victim to believe that someone's safety is threatened, removing the need for victim testimony. We have all seen news stories where a woman is not believed until it is tragically much too late.

Government Orders

Bill C-16 would ensure that the offence captures harassing conduct committed through modern technology as well. The scope of that is mind-blowing, from abusers who are sending messages through bank transaction memo sections to those who are monitoring people's whereabouts. With respect to the new scourge of our time, sexual deepfakes, Bill C-16 would address those by amending the offence of "non-consensual distribution of an intimate image" to include those deepfakes.

The bill would also protect children from predators. Child victims face unique vulnerabilities. Predators increasingly rely on digital tools to lure, manipulate and extort children. This includes threats to distribute images, deepfake technology and the use of explicit bestiality depictions to groom children. Let us think about that for just a minute. Current laws do not fully capture these behaviours and courts have struck down several mandatory minimum penalties for child sexual offences, creating uncertainty around sentencing and weakening deterrence. This bill would strengthen Canada's response to child sexual exploitation both online and offline. It would update offences to reflect how predators groom, manipulate and exploit children today while reinforcing accountability and prevention.

Mandatory minimum penalties would be strengthened for predators who possess or access child sexual abuse and exploitation material, including restoring more than 12 mandatory minimum penalties for a range of child sexual offences that were previously struck down by courts. We would bring them back in a way that is constitutional.

We would criminalize the threat to distribute child sexual abuse material and the distribution of bestiality depictions used to groom children. That is child sextortion, which are two words that really should never, ever be said side by side. We would expand child luring and sextortion offences, and we would also create a new offence for recruiting a person under 18 to participate in criminal activity. This is particularly important in sex trafficking. We would strengthen the reporting of child sexual abuse and exploitation material by bolstering mandatory reporting and data preservation obligations for online service providers.

Victims' rights also require modernization. The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights provides important protections, but many victims report difficulty accessing information, navigating procedures or having their interests reflected in decisions that affect them. Calls for clearer rights and expanded access to information have been consistent across provincial and federal reports. The bill would reinforce a victim-centred and trauma-informed justice system by enhancing the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and improving victims' participation, protection and access to information across criminal, military and correctional systems.

We would do that by affirming victims' right to be treated with respect, courtesy, compassion and fairness, which I cannot believe we have to legislate. This means that, in other contexts, we need to ensure ongoing training for the whole spectrum of people who are in victim services, from the very first point of contact to the judges who see them in court. We need to provide victims with information proactively without requiring a formal request. We would expand access to testimonial aids for victims of offences committed by an intimate partner. The bill would clarify victims' rights to

present impact statements at sentencing, parole and correction stages as well as enhance disclosure of information to victims under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

Bill C-16 would finally address court delays and strengthen system integrity. The Ottawa Citizen has reported that, in 2023 to 2024, 55% of adult criminal cases were stayed or dismissed in Ontario. Courts are struggling with serious delays. The Supreme Court's decision in *R. v. Jordan* established strict timelines for bringing cases to trial. While the federal government designs criminal law, the administration of justice is shared with provinces and territories, which are responsible for policing, prosecution services, court resources and provincial judges. Despite strong federal efforts to appoint judges, delays persist in many jurisdictions, including Ontario, due to resourcing pressures. These delays have resulted in cases, including sexual offences, being dismissed entirely. Imagine.

These reforms would build a justice system that responds earlier—

• (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has elapsed.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Drummond.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that my colleague from Guelph discussed the perspective of victims in her speech. I think this bill is so important. It will make fundamental changes to how victims are treated during the very painful process they have to go through to obtain justice in situations that are sometimes troubling. My colleague mentioned this in a number of cases.

There are a lot of very positive points in Bill C-16. I believe she talked about respect, courtesy, compassion and fairness. She also talked about court delays. She says that Bill C-16 will address the issue of court delays. I am not aware of any cases where a trial was halted, because of the *Jordan* decision, for example, and where the delay in justice, the stay of proceedings, served the interests of victims. The perpetrators are always the ones who come out ahead.

What does the government intend to do to fix this problem quickly?

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, as I said at the start of my remarks, I believe this requires a collective effort.

The federal government, just like the provinces, can pass legislation and then ensure it has the necessary resources for trials. That said, as everyone knows, some people continually abuse the court system, and we must absolutely stand together to oppose this.

[English]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member cares deeply about this issue, especially when it comes to protecting children from predators. The member is right that we should not have to talk about child sextortion, but many children in this country have committed suicide because they were victims of sextortion.

The bill would broaden the number of offences under this type of crime. I think this is a really important step to take, because this is where the ball is going, unfortunately. These are the types of crimes that are being reported. It saddens me to hear that the Conservatives would not support protecting children the way that this is being proposed in the bill.

• (1700)

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely share the position of the Secretary of State for Combating Crime that this is urgently needed legislation. It would immediately restore 12 mandatory minimum penalties in a way that is constitutional. It would protect children. It would protect victims of crime.

I hope that all members will support the legislation, just as members on this side of the House have supported a number of private member's bills, because we can all care about intimate partner violence.

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's speech was passionate, and I agree. Coming from where I do, the north coast of British Columbia, I have experienced that most of my life.

The government wants to portray this side of the House as not being supportive of this type of bill or protecting vulnerable people. The Conservative member for York Centre moved an amendment, CPC-13, that was defeated by the Liberal government. It would have protected child pornography possession and access offences from charter challenges under section 7 and section 12 by enacting the notwithstanding clause, while also preventing these offences from benefiting from the bill's mandatory minimum safety valve.

Why did the government not protect victims in this equation?

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I am in no way assuming that the members opposite will not support this bill. I am inviting them to support this bill, just as we have supported a number of private members' bills that also address intimate partner violence.

When it comes to this type of scourge, an epidemic, we need to put down the partisanship and move forward with the progress. The justice committee has met nine times, heard from 54 witnesses and received 60 written briefs on this study alone. It considered over 100 amendments, which have added to strengthening the bill.

What is important is that any legislation passed in the House be constitutional. Who gets to decide that? It is the courts.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

Government Orders

it is an honour for me to rise this evening on behalf of the citizens of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel to speak to Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, at third reading.

Across the country, we are facing a stark reality. In my home province of Quebec, there have been 10 femicides since January. A woman is killed in Canada every 48 hours. Bad actors are taking advantage of rapidly changing technologies such as AI and deep-fakes to victimize Canadians. That is completely unacceptable.

As legislators, we have a responsibility to act, to make real change when Canadians are asking us to do so. This is the job Canadians sent us to the House to do. With Bill C-16, we would put into place concrete measures that would make a real difference in the lives of Canadians. Behind every one of these numbers is a person, a family and a community left to grieve. We owe those families more than our sympathy. We owe them action, so let me outline a few of the key changes that Bill C-16 would bring.

First, we would create a new Criminal Code offence that captures the coercive and controlling conduct of an intimate partner. One may ask, what is the significance of criminalizing such a behaviour in the face of fatal violence against women? The answer is that coercive control is so often the warning sign of the harm we can see before the harm we cannot undo. By criminalizing coercive control, we would give the criminal justice system an opportunity to intervene before relationships become violent, and before violence becomes deadly. This is a measure with the potential to save lives in this country.

Coalition féministe contre la violence envers les femmes tells us that this type of violence, which so often goes unseen, is one of the main determinants of femicide. Criminalizing it would help us detect high-risk situations sooner and strengthen prevention.

Next, through Bill C-16, we would automatically recognize femicide as first-degree murder. This would ensure that anyone who murders a woman in situations involving control, hate, sexual violence or exploitation faces the harshest penalty: life imprisonment. Even in situations of manslaughter, under the circumstances I have raised, courts would be directed to consider imposing a life sentence, with a period of parole ineligibility of between 10 and 25 years, the same penalty that applies to second-degree murder. Treating these murders as the Criminal Code's most serious forms of homicide speaks directly to the gravity of these offences and to the seriousness with which the government is moving to address them.

Government Orders

I would like to dwell for a moment on the term I am using here, “femicide”, and the importance of naming it as such. With Bill C-16, we would be including the term “femicide” in the Criminal Code for the very first time. By putting a name to this insidious crime, we recognize its gravity and have put forward tangible measures to address it, measures that would lead to better protection of women in particular, as well as of children and other members of society.

Next I would like to address how the bill would protect children from predators, strengthening Canada's response to child sexual exploitation both online and off-line. Most significantly, Bill C-16 would strengthen mandatory minimum penalties for predators who possess or access child sexual abuse and exploitation material, including restoring more than 12 mandatory minimum penalties for a range of child sexual offences that were previously struck down by the courts. It would do so by introducing a safety valve to ensure that these sentences, and other existing mandatory minimum penalties that would have otherwise been at risk, remain constitutionally valid.

We are also seeking to expand the definition of distributing child sexual exploitation and abuse material so that it would now include the threat of distributing such materials. Children rely on the adults around them to keep them safe, to care for them and to protect their well-being. When someone exploits that trust and vulnerability for sexual purposes, it is profoundly wrong. It is conduct that every member of the House and every Canadian should condemn without hesitation.

• (1705)

In a world of ever-changing technology, where explicit images and videos can be shared in an instant and where Canadians are accessing these platforms at a younger age, we must also hold accountable the people on whose platforms this content exists. Bill C-16 would bolster mandatory reporting and data preservation obligations for online service providers so law enforcement can find and charge these offenders faster.

Finally, Bill C-16 would truly provide help to victims and give them a louder voice in the system. Some of them are part of cases that include complex trials in the justice system, and with that complexity comes the element of time. The time periods outlined in the Jordan decision can be restrictive, turning a measure meant to bring justice into one that can take it away. When a stay of proceedings is automatically demanded, victims lose their chance to be heard, and they feel that justice has been denied to them.

With Bill C-16, we would require the courts to consider remedies other than a stay of proceedings should the Jordan period elapse. We would also be clarifying for the courts which more complex cases deserve a longer period of time before they run into such an issue. Every victim should have the chance to be heard, and we would make sure of that.

We would also be putting more information into the hands of victims by providing them with information about available resources proactively, without requiring a formal request. We would be expanding access to testimonial aids for victims of offences committed by an intimate partner and clarifying victims' rights to present impact statements at the sentencing, parole and correction stages.

We would also be enhancing the disclosure of information to victims under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act so victims can have the full scope of the status and location of their offender.

While I have highlighted but a few of the essential measures the protecting victims act would introduce, the issues of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation impact us all. Whether it be a family member, a friend, a colleague or a neighbour, someone in our lives has needed or will need these remedies one day, and it is important that we step up to provide them.

Bill C-16 has been supported by law enforcement, by victim advocates and by Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and I implore all members of the House, of all political stripes, to stand with victims and lend their support to Bill C-16.

• (1710)

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have worked with the parliamentary secretary on this file for a while, and I know that she also understands fairly well the issues we are dealing with, so I would like to pose a serious hypothetical for her. Imagine a situation where someone is convicted of a third offence of driving under the influence, and that person is now mandated for, I believe, either 30 days or 90 days as a minimum term of imprisonment. If that person happens to be the only breadwinner of the family, can the member imagine a scenario where a judge would not look to use the safety valve and allow an accused, who would otherwise have to serve mandatory jail time, to escape jail time?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, my colleague sits with me at the justice committee, and we have done tremendous work on various bills, including Bill C-16, through hearing testimony from experts, going through clause-by-clause and making amendments, so I want to thank him for his collaboration on the committee.

The purpose of this specific bill is to protect victims and children. That is the focus of Bill C-16. The bill would bring in measures so victims can finally get the protections that they need. We would establish a measure, in terms of the mandatory minimum penalties, in Bill C-16, the safety valve, so that when an accused receives a sentence or a penalty, the measure would make sure the sentence will not be struck down.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is a growing scourge in our society, namely the use of the Internet to access violent material or material that sexually exploits children. This is a very serious matter and I would like to ask my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, a question.

What solutions does Bill C-16 propose, particularly in terms of what is required of Internet service providers, to stamp out this scourge and protect our young people once and for all?

[English]

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, in fact, what this does is basically give tools. The objective of Bill C-16 is to protect victims. It gives tools to police enforcement and those who work in the justice realm, so that they will be able to catch predators faster. It imposes on service providers to share the information.

Bill C-16 will be a helpful remedy.

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working hard together, at the justice committee, on this issue. It is historic legislation. Things that have never been addressed before are being covered under this legislation.

Can our hon. colleague tell us what kind of impact it will have on future generations, as opposed to what has happened in the past?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, my colleague also sits on the justice committee and has contributed to the study of Bill C-16 and many other important pieces of legislation.

This bill, Bill C-16, has been waiting to be brought forward for many years. Women's groups have come forward and have told governments and politicians to enact, finally, a piece of legislation that would protect them. It would also protect children who are being abused with sextortion online. We see it, we hear it and we read it in the papers.

This is a relief, not only for today, but for many generations to come.

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every person deserves to live free from violence and fear. No life is worth more than another, and no one should face a greater risk of violence because of their gender, their sex, the neighbourhood they live in, the work they do, the school they attend or whom they love.

Violence against our most vulnerable is some of the most morally reprehensible behaviour in our society. It is not a demonstration of strength or power or control. It is a profound failure of respect for the dignity, autonomy and humanity of another person. It rewrites the rest of their story, because becoming a victim of a violent act changes someone forever. It changes their sense of safety and often the course of their life.

Our responsibility as legislators is to help build a society where those principles are not merely aspirations but realities. These acts may rewrite their stories forever, but we can help to ensure a happier ending.

I am proud to stand up today in support of our government's Bill C-16, the protecting victims act, because it would put the necessary tools in place for law enforcement and the legal system to take action. It would give police, prosecutors and courts the ability to intervene earlier, better protect victims and survivors and help prevent future harm.

Bill C-16 is about victims, not as statistics and not as stories, but as people. It aims to do right by them and to recognize that their lives are fundamentally altered by violence long after the courtroom is empty and public attention fades. It would be responding to the real-world concerns we have heard from victims across Canada.

Government Orders

Too often, our justice system asks these victims to relive the most traumatic moments of their lives while offering them little certainty in return. It asks them to be resilient and patient and silent while we debate the process. It places the burden of safety on those who have already been harmed. As a government, we are saying this is not good enough. We need to make changes, and we need to make them now.

Bill C-16 would strengthen how victim safety is considered throughout the justice process. It would ensure that courts are better equipped to assess risk, recognize patterns of repeat violence and impose conditions that reflect the lived reality of victims. It would improve consistency and accountability in decision-making, particularly in cases involving intimate partner violence. It would also introduce concrete measures to better support victims throughout the legal process, including permitting, in the courtroom during testimony, support persons, or in some cases even support animals, to accompany children, persons with disabilities and people who have experienced sexual violence.

This legislation is grounded in a simple but urgent truth: Violence, particularly intimate partner violence, is rarely random. It is often patterned, escalating and predictable. When we have evidence that harm is likely to occur, failing to act is not neutrality; it is negligence.

As the member of Parliament elected to represent the people of Halifax, I have a responsibility to support this bill, which, among so many important steps, proposes to criminalize coercive and controlling conduct. For far too long, our criminal law has focused almost exclusively on isolated incidents of physical violence while failing to recognize the sustained patterns of psychological, emotional and financial control that so often precede them.

Coercive control includes isolating someone from friends and family, monitoring their movements, controlling access to money, issuing threats, intimidation and humiliation. It is violence that may leave no visible injuries but that causes deep and lasting harm. The evidence is clear. Coercive control is one of the strongest predictors of serious injury and intimate partner homicide. In Canada, women are far more likely than men to experience intimate partner violence, and research consistently shows that the presence of controlling behaviour dramatically increases the risk of lethal outcomes.

Government Orders

By criminalizing coercive control, Bill C-16 would give our justice system the tools to intervene earlier, before violence escalates, before lives are lost and before harm becomes irreversible. These are the steps that matter most, because this bill is not just about changing the way we respond to violence; it is about stopping it from happening entirely. It refuses to accept that violence must become extreme before the law responds.

● (1715)

However, coercive control is only one part of how this bill would modernize our response to the evolving forms of violence. The protecting victims act would also take further preventative measures, including the creation of a new offence that would prohibit even threatening to distribute child sexual abuse and exploitation material, because threats need to be taken seriously, and we need the tools to stop them from becoming a reality. The bill would also target sextortion by criminalizing threats to distribute intimate images and by increasing penalties for people who exploit fear and humiliation for coercion or gain.

Bill C-16 would also modernize our criminal law to reflect the realities of harm in the world we live in today. It would strengthen protections for victims of image-based sexual violence, including the non-consensual creation and distribution of intimate images and sexually explicit deepfakes, recognizing the profound and lasting damage these acts cause. It would improve accountability of people who weaponize technology to humiliate, threaten or control others, particularly women and girls.

The bill would enhance how courts consider risk, patterns of behaviour and victim safety across bail, sentencing and supervision, and it would reinforce a simple principle: that dignity, consent and personal autonomy do not disappear online. It would also modernize Canada's criminal harassment laws, recognizing that stalking and intimidation increasingly occur through technology and that victims should not bear an unreasonable burden to prove their fear before the law can respond. Violence is violence, whether it happens behind closed doors or behind a screen.

In April 2020, Nova Scotia experienced the deadliest mass shooting in Canadian history. For many Canadians, it was a shocking and tragic news story. For my constituents, and for those of my fellow Nova Scotian MPs, it was something far more personal. Communities across our province lived through the fear and uncertainty of those days and continue to carry the grief and loss that followed.

The events of April 18 and 19, 2020, led to the establishment of the Mass Casualty Commission, which undertook a comprehensive examination of the circumstances surrounding the tragedy and the systemic factors that contributed to it. Among its findings, the commission highlighted the critical link between gender-based violence and broader threats to public safety. It found that patterns of intimate partner violence, coercive control and escalating risk were present long before the shootings occurred, yet those warning signs were not sufficiently recognized or addressed.

The commission concluded that violence is often not a series of isolated incidents but rather a pattern that can escalate when left unchecked. It called for earlier intervention, stronger risk assessment tools and a justice system that responds to gender-based violence with the seriousness it deserves, designed to protect victims,

prevent future tragedies like this and to keep communities safe. Bill C-16 would respond to those lessons by strengthening our ability to intervene before harm becomes irreversible.

In my community of Halifax, we see both the devastating impact of violence and the extraordinary strength of the people who survive it. We also see the tireless work of frontline organizations that step in where systems too often fall short. Shelters like Adsum house provide safety and stability for women and children children fleeing violence. Organizations such as the YWCA Halifax, Alice House, Bryony House and the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre support survivors through crisis, recovery and rebuilding their lives. These groups do life-saving work every day, often with limited resources and under immense pressures, and they have been clear with us about what is needed.

Safety cannot begin only after harm has occurred. It must be built into the system itself. Proactive and preventative measures save lives. Bill C-16 is one part of how we do better. It is not the only solution, but it is a necessary one. It reflects evidence, it reflects lived experience, and it reflects a commitment to ensuring that victim safety is not an afterthought but a priority.

We are here not to accept violence as a fact of life but to prevent it where we can, respond to it where we must and ensure that it never goes unanswered, because we know that harm is predictable, and we also know that it is preventable. We owe that responsibility to survivors, to families and to communities across this country that deserve to feel safe in their homes and in their lives, and that is why I support the protecting victims act.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say, I am really enjoying this debate. I have been listening to the comments this evening about the importance of Bill C-16, particularly with regard to victims' rights and the rights of victims of domestic violence.

However, as I mentioned earlier and as I pointed out to the member for Guelph, there are flaws in the justice system. Proceedings are slow and some cases are dropped due to court delays.

One of the major problems is the shortage of judges. We still do not have enough judges. The Liberals may argue that the provinces share some of the blame for the role they played in the backlog of cases in the courts, but the fact remains that, when it comes to the federal courts, it is the Liberal government, the current government, that is responsible for appointing judges.

There is still a backlog. It would help a lot if they appointed a few judges.

Is that one of the options being considered?

• (1725)

[English]

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what my colleague from Guelph said. This really is a joint effort. There are jurisdictional divisions and responsibilities across all levels of government. I think that our Minister of Justice and his team have been working in good faith and really doing deep consultations with provinces and territories on the shared responsibility of administering justice. I am very hopeful that this is going to get us much further.

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to my colleague, thank you for your speech today. You outlined very important things, including—

The Deputy Speaker: I will just interrupt the member. The member is using the word “you”. I did not give a speech. I will just remind the member to speak through the Chair to the member, not to the member directly.

I will let the member continue.

Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, the member has given a speech in which she outlined many important aspects of the bill. I would like to ask her about her thoughts on femicide being automatically first-degree, considering the scourge of femicides that we have seen in past years.

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the changes I am most excited about. I think it would be game-changing for our country and game-changing for the better half of our population. It would be a hugely impactful change, and I support it wholeheartedly.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to work with my colleague on many climate-related issues.

Earlier, I raised some concerns to the justice minister on responding to those who have been victims of discrimination and violence. Certainly, we understand the important work around dealing with complaints and the criminal sanctions piece, but there is still nothing when it comes to funding and when it comes to prevention around discrimination and violence, especially for vulnerable youth. I tabled a bill yesterday calling for parity for mental and physical health so that people get services when they need them.

Does my colleague agree that the government should be supporting legislation to have parity for mental and physical health? This would be so that mental health is an insured benefit and people, especially youth, could get the supports they need when they need them.

Government Orders

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoy working with my colleague on all the great work we do here in the House.

I am quite pleased that our government is supportive of mental health and youth, as well as in terms of crime and public safety. I was very pleased to announce significant funding through the mosque in my riding of Halifax to help prevent gang violence in the Muslim community in Halifax, which is being led by members of the mosque, as an example.

I also know that the Minister of Women and Gender Equality has been talking a lot about the substantial funding that we have to support the organizations that are really on the ground, on the preventative side and the response side, to support victims in this regard.

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to get up on behalf of Skeena—Bulkley Valley to talk about Bill C-16, the protecting victims act.

Before I get into the substance of the bill itself, I want to explain the term “safety valve”, because just about every speaker has spoken to this term. It is a mechanism that allows judges to give lesser sentences, as opposed to a strict mandatory minimum sentence. If we are going to give weaker sentences instead of imposing a strict mandatory minimum sentence for some of these crimes, then what is the point of using the term “mandatory minimum sentence”, especially when we are talking about protecting women and vulnerable victims?

Even when the government members themselves get up and debate, they admit that the bill is long overdue. In fact, when I was an MLA, we were talking about crimes and how there should be punishment. At the time, the NDP government actually blamed Ottawa for not amending or introducing more legislation. I agree. This is a long time coming.

It just so happens that a “southern Alberta man faces criminal charges after police say they found more than half a million child sexual exploitation photos and videos in his possession.... More than 500,000 child sexual exploitation photos and videos were discovered, [making it] one of the largest collections the unit has ever encountered”.

Like every other case that has been in the media in the last year or so, this just makes me sick. A lot of other leaders have said the same thing. It makes them sick. I know some premiers who have made some pretty inflammatory comments about what should be done with these kinds of people.

It is good that the legislation is up. Is it groundbreaking? Does it go to the full extent of protecting victims? We have to give credit to the Conservatives, who have been asking for the legislation for years. Finally, it is being recognized in Bill C-16, not just in terms of debate but also in terms of some of the content that we are talking about that is in Bill C-16.

Government Orders

Making the murder of an intimate partner first-degree actually came from the Conservative MP for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. Expanding the offence prohibiting the non-consensual distribution of sexual deepfakes, digitally manipulated pictures or video using artificial intelligence, came from the Conservative MP for Calgary Nose Hill. Updating mandatory requirements for child exploitation material came from previous Conservative governments. We are pleased to see that the government took its lead from Conservative MPs.

To try to frame it now, politically, that Conservatives do not support this or that, somehow, we do not agree with protecting victims is misleading Canadians. That is not the truth. If anything, Conservatives have been leading the charge to actually punish offenders for years.

It is now here, but one of the best tools of this institution is committee work. I did not realize that until I got to Ottawa, because committees in the B.C. legislature are different.

The Liberal government stacked the committees to, basically, get its own way in terms of votes. Not only is it now a slim margin of votes so that the Liberal government can get everything it wants in a committee, but it actually stacked it even further so that there is no chance of any amendments proposed by any opposition parties. I am talking about the Bloc. I am talking about the Conservatives.

The committee is there for a purpose. It is to collaborate. It is to represent the interests and needs of Canadians, the interests and needs of the constituents we represent.

● (1730)

The Liberal government is framing this as one of the most ambitious pieces of legislation that has come down the pike in a long time. That is not true. It could have been better. In terms of amendments regarding safety valves, there were six put forward by Conservatives that were all voted down by the Liberal committee members. There was one from the member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations that would have narrowed the mandatory minimum safety valves to only apply to offenders with no prior criminal record. There was one from the member for York Centre, another Conservative, that would have required courts to consider only offenders' actual circumstances, not hypothetical scenarios such as what the court is saying, when assessing the constitutionality of mandatory minimums. It was voted down by the Liberals.

There was another one from the member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations that would have excluded serious offences, including child sexual offences and major drug trafficking offences, from accessing the mandatory minimum safety valve. This means that we wanted the full extent of the law applied to these offenders, especially drug traffickers, sex traffickers and those having anything to do with violent crime. We should give them not a lesser penalty but the full mandatory sentence. We should keep the full mandatory sentence in play. If we really want to protect women, vulnerable victims and children, we should keep that mandatory sentence. If anyone wants to challenge it, they can challenge it in the courts. The Liberal government is so afraid of being challenged through the charter. If victims or Canadians cannot depend on us as lawmakers to stand up and fight for them, and they cannot depend on the courts, who are they going to depend on? There is nobody

left. The Liberals should take on the challenge. The Supreme Court can use a challenge, especially when we are talking about a lesser, weaker sentence for some of the worst offenders in our society. It is getting worse.

There were six amendments put together for that safety valve, and each one was voted down. There were two amendments for victims' rights put together by my Conservative colleagues, and they were voted down by the Liberal committee members. One was put together by the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South that would have ensured victims of intimate partner violence and coercive control are notified without delay of release orders or recognizance. It was voted down. There was another one from the same member that would have required the Parole Board chairperson to disclose offender information without delay to the victims of intimate partner violence or coercive control offences. It was voted down.

The bill could have been stronger. We could have sent a strong message to the women and vulnerable victims in Canada, saying that we are going to fight for them. We are going to take on the Supreme Court, and if the Supreme Court rules against us, we will think of another fight. Each and every MP could have taken that pledge together, but we did not. The Liberal government backed down at committee through majority votes on each one of these amendments.

There were six other defeated amendments. The one put together by the member for York Centre would have protected against charter challenges to child pornography, possession and access offences under sections 7 and 12 by enacting the notwithstanding clause while also preventing these offences from benefiting from the bill's mandatory minimum safety valve. It was voted down.

Four pages of amendments were voted down by the Liberal committee members. There were also amendments ruled out of scope, and each one of these amendments was just trying to further strengthen the bill so offenders could not get away. I know there are going to be lawyers arguing this and fighting for lesser sentences or no sentence at all. I know that.

● (1735)

However, as legislators, we are the last stop. We are the last hope. Given that the Liberal government actually took recommendations from Conservatives and implemented them in this bill is commendable. To be truly ambitious, the Liberals should not have voted out the rest of the amendments.

• (1740)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that there is a difference between what the government and the Conservative Party are proposing. At the end of the day, exceptional circumstances would enable the legislation and the reinstatement of a number of mandatory sentences to be supported within the courts. That is a really important fact.

Just over a year ago, this Prime Minister was elected with a mandate to make our communities safer. We have a series of pieces of legislation, not one but a half dozen or so, which would make our communities safer. We are working with provincial and territorial governments, law enforcement and indigenous communities to make sure we have safer communities and that there is a consequence for criminals who commit crimes.

Does the member not believe that using the notwithstanding clause should be a last resort?

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, that was not the point. The point is that we should actually impose a mandatory sentencing for these offenders. That is it. That is the starting point.

We could have made the legislation so much stronger if we had actually taken more of the amendments that were proposed by my colleagues. Instead, we have watered it down.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-16 makes certain amendments to the Firearms Act.

The bill “amends the Firearms Act to clarify that an individual whose firearms licence or registration certificate has been revoked is required to deliver their firearm”. Furthermore, no individual is eligible to hold a licence if it is suspected that they “may have engaged in an act of domestic violence or stalking.”

We know that the Conservatives are generally opposed to the idea of any form of gun control. Does my colleague think this amendment to the bill is reasonable?

[English]

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, it could have been stronger. There were even amendments talking about crimes committed with firearms. The Liberal government, through committee majority, voted them down as well.

All I am saying is the amendments that were rejected could have made this bill so much stronger, including the amendments that dealt with firearms.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to wind the clock back to 2022 when, in this place, the Liberal government of the day passed Bill C-5, which actually removed mandatory minimum penalties for a number of serious gun crimes, including extortion with a firearm and robbery with a firearm. There were no mitigating court cases or rulings from the Supreme Court of Canada that actually mandated that Parliament do that. That was an ideologically imposed piece of legislation that removed them.

Government Orders

Now the Liberals want to bring back mandatory minimums, with what they call a relief valve, which makes them voluntary mandatory minimums. I have also heard voluntary mandatory when it comes to their gun buyback program. Is there anything that is any more oxymoronic from the Liberal government than this?

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, the gun buyback or confiscation plan is actually going after law-abiding citizens who have PALS and get training. For those who have restricted firearms, the bar is even higher. They are not going to get safety valves. They are going to get a mandatory sentencing.

Anything under this is going to get reduced sentences, and that is including firearms offences. The Conservatives have been saying that we have to start tightening the controls and the laws around firearms, especially connected to crimes, but not law-abiding citizens.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, in speaking with our shadow justice minister, something he brought to my attention was that there are many mandatory minimums that are no longer protected, and we tried to give that protection back through our amendments, that have actually already been tested by the Supreme Court and found to be constitutional.

What does that mean, when they can now simply decide to change the rules?

• (1745)

Ellis Ross: It is a political decision. That is what it is.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3.

[English]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[Translation]

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask that there be a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Monday, June 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 6 p.m. at this time, so we could begin Private Members' Business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FAIR REPRESENTATION ACT

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved that Bill C-259, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (fair representation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to stand today to debate this piece of legislation I have brought forward.

I want to start by thanking my colleague, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, for seconding this bill. As a new Democrat, I can say I am so proud of our caucus and the work we have done in this Parliament to support and strengthen workers' rights. I think about the repealing of clause 107. I think about the work we have done to close loopholes in the anti-scab legislation to ensure workers are paid for the work that they do. I am so proud to be a New Democrat and to stand with members like the member for Courtenay—Alberni as the party representing workers in the House.

I am also proud to speak to this legislation, Bill C-259, the fair representation bill, or as I like to call it, the wolf in sheep's clothing bill. Today, Parliament will debate a simple idea that workers deserve real representation. The fact is that real unions represent workers and fake unions do not.

I want to thank the Canadian Labour Congress, the United Steelworkers, the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, LiUNA Local 1611, the Building Trades, the International Union of Operating Engineers, IBEW, UA and other workers who stood with me today to talk about why this legislation is so important.

I also want to thank the many unions and workers across this country who have pushed for this legislation and who have supported me along the way. I think about Scott Crichton, a member of IBEW Local 424 in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona, or Tyler

Bedford from the Operating Engineers who have worked so closely to make sure this legislation comes to fruition.

Unions support this legislation because unions in this country, the vast majority of them, do what unions are supposed to do. They fight for workers, raise wages, improve safety and strengthen communities. This bill is not about them. They are unions that do the work they are supposed to do. This bill is about fake unions. It is about unions that represent companies, not the workers. It is about unions that do not fight for their workers. It is a danger, because those are the unions that drive down wages, make workplaces less safe and undermine workers' rights. That happens within those unions, but it also happens across sectors, because what impacts one worker impacts us all.

I want to be very clear that workers have asked for this legislation. This came from workers. It came from the concerns that have been raised by labour over many years. When we wanted to bring this legislation forward, we worked with workers, labour leaders, members of the building trades and others across the labour movement.

I want to acknowledge the incredible work that Terry Parker and my friends at the Building Trades of Alberta did to help move this legislation forward. We have strong support from organized labour because real unions have nothing to fear from worker accountability. Real unions support this bill because it protects the rights they have fought for generations to win.

Right now, there is a gap in the legislation. Federal law does recognize that employer-dominated unions are a problem. Section 25(1) of the Canada Labour Code says that employer-dominated unions cannot be certified. However, here is where my legislation is so necessary and so important: There is no way for workers to remedy that after certification. There is no worker-driven review process. There is no dedicated mechanism. There are no specific remedies.

There are provinces in this country that have much stronger regulations against company unions, and federal workers deserve that same protection.

What would this bill do? This bill would give workers a practical way to fight back. It would create a process for workers to raise concerns. It would allow workers to seek a review where there are allegations of employer domination or influence. It would require organizations to demonstrate their independence when concerns are raised. It would provide remedies where employer domination is found. It would reinforce a very simple principle that unions must answer to workers, not employers.

Private Members' Business

● (1750)

This matters. It matters because when employer-dominated unions put employers first, we know that wages suffer. We know that working conditions suffer. We know that safety on the job for Canadian workers suffers. We know that bargaining power, a fundamental right of every worker in this country, the ability to bargain effectively, is taken away, and that right suffers. Workers deserve the confidence that the organization speaking for them is actually on their side.

I want to tell the House a story as to why this matters. Today I had some folks from British Columbia join me. They told a story about Sam Fitzpatrick. This story illustrates for me why this issue is not theoretical. This is not just about what happens on paper. It impacts workers in our country.

Sam Fitzpatrick was a 24-year-old who was working in Squamish, B.C. He was killed on the job in 2009. There were serious safety failures that were documented. Previous incidents were documented. His employer had promised it would do better, that it would not endanger the workers' safety. Concerns were raised. Risks remained. There was a WCAT review. In fact, the employer was described as "heedless", "wanton", "extreme", "gross" and "highly irresponsible". This is the employer.

The union representing Sam Fitzpatrick was the CLAC, the Christian Labour Association of Canada. It wrote in and said, "a presidential penalty was not appropriate given the employer's prior demonstrated commitment to safety." The CLAC literally argued that the corporation should be fined less for its incompetence and its failure to protect the life of a worker. It is unbelievable. A worker was killed, the family was seeking accountability, and the union representing that worker argued against the harshest penalty. That is not what a real union does. That is the opposite of what a real union does. Workers expect more from a union. Workers deserve more from a union.

That is not the only example. Today I stood in the foyer with a photo of Sam Fitzpatrick, a 24-year-old worker. My children are that age. That man had parents. He had friends. He had people who loved him.

There are other examples. In 2025, at the Executive Hotel Le Soleil, the B.C. Labour Relations Board found unlawful employer interference in the employees' choice of union. Management steered workers toward the CLAC and away from Unite Here Local 40. The board later voted that the employer's voluntary recognition agreement with the CLAC needed to be voided. It happened again with the EXchange Hotel in 2026, where there were findings of employer interference. There was pressure. There were inducements. There was employer support.

Decisions were issued in 2025 and 2026. This is still happening in this country. This is not history. This is happening right now.

I want to talk a bit about the international context. Union independence is recognized internationally as a core principle. In 2011, the ITUC suspended CLAC and said that workers deserve representation independent from employer influence. This is all happening right now.

Millions of dollars in federal funding flowed to CLAC last year. The same year that the B.C. Labour Relations Board brought a finding against it for not properly representing its members, the federal government was spending millions of dollars and diverting that money there.

● (1755)

In my home province of Alberta, the UCP government just announced a new \$4-million training initiative being delivered in partnership with the CLAC. Workers are raising concerns, yet governments are continuing to write cheques. Workers deserve confidence, before public money is spent and before public money is handed over, that it is going to unions that represent workers.

I will tell members some good news. Just months ago, more than 800 workers at an Edmonton manufacturing facility voted to leave CLAC and join the operating engineers, because they were dissatisfied with the representation they were receiving. It was one of the largest departures from CLAC in Canadian history, and it happened not decades ago, but last year.

When I talk about federally regulated workplaces, I am talking about everyone who is working in those workspaces, which is roughly one million workers. These are workers in transportation, telecommunications, broadcasting, banking, grain handling, long-shoring and federally regulated construction. These workers deserve protection. They deserve to be represented by a union that will represent them and only them. That is what this legislation would do.

In this country, workers are worried. They are worried about affordability. They are worried about wages. They are worried about job security. The economic war we are having with the United States, the tariffs and the economic impacts are causing uncertainty. The moves that the Liberal government is making to strip workers of their rights, such as the use of section 107, a backdoor method to force workers back to work, continue to undermine the rights of workers in this country.

This legislation would give workers their rights back, because workers need stronger protections, not weaker protections. The Liberals and the Conservatives say they support workers. This is their opportunity to prove it.

Private Members' Business

Real unions answer to workers. Employer-dominated unions do not. Fake unions do not. Let us put power back where it belongs. Let us put power back with workers.

● (1800)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will have the opportunity shortly to provide more details, but I do have one question.

I think it is important, as we look over the private member's bill, that we try to provide a clear definition, and I guess this is what I would look to my colleague for. If the member could provide a clear definition of "employer influence" and how she sees that within the legislation, it would be appreciated.

Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, it is very clear. A good union that represents workers' rights is elected democratically by the members, and it answers only to the members. That is the definition of a good, democratic union.

I stood today with Siobhán Vipond, the vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, and she spoke about the democracy within the labour movement. I think it is important for us to recognize that democratically elected leadership that is responsible to the members, and only to the members, is a key component of good union leadership, of good union representation.

That is what this bill would do. It would actually protect the right of workers to trust and know, without any doubt, that who is representing them is only representing their interests.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have had this conversation with the member previously. One of the issues I see with this particular piece of legislation is the threshold that is being set for a review of an entire union, which is 25% of any bargaining unit. The concern I have is that there are many small bargaining units across the country. We could go to a small bargaining unit that has five or 10 people and get one, two or three people to sign saying that they believe the union is employer-dominated, and then the entire union is under investigation.

Does the member agree with me that there are some concerns about that kind of a threshold? We could have a union with tens of thousands of members, but if two or three people in one small bargaining unit sign a document, the entire union is under investigation. That is how I interpret the legislation, and I have real concerns about it.

Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, the 25% threshold is a screening threshold. It is not a decision threshold. I think that is important to clarify. It ensures that a meaningful number of workers support a review before the board is asked to investigate allegations of employer domination. At the same time, it is significantly lower than the threshold required to remove a bargaining agent or trigger a representation vote. The threshold balances accessibility for workers with the stability in labour relations.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her bill.

I will have an opportunity to speak about it later, but I have a question for her. Around the world, we are seeing democracy losing ground in an uncertain economic context. Unions exist. We know that, in times of economic uncertainty, it is essential to stand up for workers independently of management. In a context where democratic rights are being rolled back, that is important.

How important are these two principles and her bill for democracy and for standing up for workers in an uncertain economic context?

● (1805)

[English]

Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, this is an excellent question. These principles of democracy that protect workers' rights are fundamental. She is absolutely correct in that the attacks on worker rights are not just happening by our federal government in Canada. They are happening around the world. Corporations are undermining workers' rights. Governments in Canada and around the world are undermining workers' rights. People are trying to take away the rights of workers to use their right to collective bargaining, to demand safe workspaces, to demand pay for the work that they do.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and to speak to Bill C-259. I have had the opportunity in the past to do this, but I would like to use this time not only to reinforce my personal beliefs and thoughts in regard to unions but also to talk about the manner in which the government of today, and under Justin Trudeau, has been there to have people's back and support unions. I think there are a number of examples of that.

I can still remember MaryAnn Mihychuk, who was our labour minister at one time, bringing in legislation in order to repeal a private member's bill that was brought in by the Conservative Party under Stephen Harper. More recently, there was the anti-scab legislation, which was a significant achievement. I have always argued that the national government can play a leadership role in dealing with workers' rights and advocating for the benefits of unions.

I like to think that the whole idea behind the anti-scab legislation is that it is something that not only regulates federal employees but also demonstrates strong leadership for other jurisdictions. Even though the bulk of the unionized workforce is under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, we can actually set an example, because not every province has anti-scab legislation. In fact, I believe that B.C. and Quebec are the two provinces that have anti-scab legislation.

I know that in my home province of Manitoba, in the late 1980s, I advocated for anti-scab legislation or, failing that, to support final offer selection as an alternative to anti-scab legislation. We could not get support beyond our caucus at the time. I think that within each political entity we will often find that there are some very strong advocates for unions. I represent the north end of Winnipeg. A lot of people reflect on the 1919 general strike in Winnipeg, which was a historic moment not only for the union movement in the city of Winnipeg but also from a national perspective. We will still find people, including me, who will advocate that it had an impact around the world.

I think we all have a responsibility to promote and encourage the union movement here in Canada. Some programs and other things we have today have been spearheaded by unions. I can think of many different social programs, as well as ways in which budgets and laws have been influenced by the union movement here in Canada. I think that when we talk about unions, we need to highlight how we as a society have benefited by them.

However, we also have a job to do. That is something that has been pointed out today, and we will take a look at it. That is why I posed the question I did for the member opposite. I was genuinely wanting to get a better understanding of what is within the legislation.

Protecting workers' rights has always been a priority for me personally, and it will continue to be. I recognize that, at times, what we have witnessed is the domination of a union that does not have the support of the workers. It is the workers who make the decision to have a union and who put it into place, and the union is there to represent the workers. I think, if we take a look at it from a historical point of view, that has been the case, but unfortunately there are examples where that has not been the case. If we can deal with this issue in a tangible way, I suspect we will find an openness of the government to do so.

• (1810)

If we take a look within the Labour Code itself, the issue of protecting the integrity of collective bargaining is there. The issue of protecting the integrity of the worker, through not having employer interference in union membership, is also there. I think these are the types of things we should be reinforcing in their importance.

I like the manner in which the member had put it, that unions are there to answer to the workers. I appreciate that particular comment because I truly believe that is the case. I think that we can collectively continue to demonstrate leadership in the manner in which we approach those issues.

I also believe it is important that we try to depoliticize, where we can. I had the opportunity recently to talk with the union membership of the Winnipeg transit union to hear some of the concerns they have in areas where Ottawa has some influence. I would indicate to James and company at the Winnipeg transit union that I understood what they had to say, and I will be sharing those concerns with the government in an attempt to deal with them.

I appreciate the phenomenal work that our firefighter associations and unions have done across the country. In particular, in my home province of Manitoba, we had Alex Forrest, a champion for

Private Members' Business

our firefighters in how the membership, the workers, can actually benefit from strong advocacy.

I am really encouraged with Canada Post's recent decision to ratify an agreement. I believe the vote was over 85% in favour. That agreement has been a long time coming. It is very gratifying to see that there is, at least, an agreement ratified by the employees, but I understand that the employees still have many concerns. Some of those are concerns that I plan to continue to advocate for, because I genuinely want Canada Post to be there for future generations.

These are the types of issues, whether it is advocating for union membership or supporting good union jobs through programs such as the Red Seal program, where we are promoting a significant amount of allocated money that is going to assist, literally, 80,000 to 100,000 new highly skilled workers. That anti-scab legislation is something that I take great pride in. Hopefully, other provincial jurisdictions will take it up and move on that particular file as well.

I believe in the importance of ensuring that workers have confidence in their union executives. A big part of that is to ensure that it is not being influenced by employers. That is really an important aspect of the role unions have to play. The manipulation of unions is something that I believe, in principle, we have to look out for and protect them from. That is why I am very much interested in how the Canada Labour Code could potentially be improved or if there are other things we can do to protect our unions.

• (1815)

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the NDP member for this particular piece of legislation.

Two years ago, I was asked to be the Conservative shadow minister for labour, and it has been one of the best experiences I have had in my life. I have had the opportunity to travel to almost every province in this country and meet with union locals and union representatives. I have done it especially in the construction and building trade unions, in which there is an entire system that most Canadians do not know about, which are union training centres. Most people do not know the extent to which the people who build this country are trained in union training centres. The unions themselves have put money aside to build these facilities. Yes, in certain provinces, they are now getting provincial money to help with that, and at the federal level there have been programs to do that. In fact, in the last election, the Conservative platform included a massive increase in funding for UTIP, including elements like a bricks and mortar thing to help expand union training centres.

I know how hard our unionized construction workers work in this country, and they deserve the best representation. I agree with that unequivocally.

Private Members' Business

When I look at this member's piece of legislation, I break it down into three categories. The first category is the definition in the Canada Labour Code, which currently says "so dominated". I have always thought that was a bit of an odd term. Someone is either dominated or not. What does "so dominated" mean? Is it okay if someone is a little dominated?

I think the member is right: The Canada Labour Code should be changed. We should remove "so dominated". That modifier, I think, adds a level of domination when no domination should be acceptable. The test should be whether a union is dominated by the employer. I give the member kudos for identifying that and seeking to make that change.

I agree with what everyone has said here so far tonight, both from the NDP and from the Liberals. No union should be dominated by the employer. The whole purpose of a union is to represent the rights of workers, and they do a fantastic job of that, especially in the construction and building trade unions. I agree 100% with that.

Where I have a little less agreement and a little more uncertainty, and I am open to having conversations about this, is with the other two key aspects of the legislation. One part is, and the member has said it tonight, that her definition of dominated is the fact that a local union representative is not elected. That is how CLAC functions. CLAC elects its national representatives, the members get to elect them, and the national representatives choose the local union rep. Its argument is that it does that because national representatives can select people with expertise in labour relations, construction projects, etc. I do not know which of these two things is where the problem lies. I think there is an interesting question that we should be looking further into with respect to that.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board has looked into CLAC, and it determined that it was not employer-dominated in previous iterations. Is that because the test was "so dominated"? Maybe the CIRB said that CLAC is a little dominated, but not "so dominated"; therefore, it is okay. I do not know. I have looked at some of the decisions, and it is very unclear. When the CIRB looked into CLAC, it would have, of course, looked at governance structure. I do not know if the governance structure is part of the problem, but that is something we absolutely could look a little more deeply into.

Where I do have a challenge, and I have told the member this as we have discussed this piece of legislation many times, is in this: The change to the legislation is that if 25% of any bargaining unit decides that it thinks it is employer-dominated, then an investigation into the entire union could happen.

• (1820)

This country is covered in a lattice of union locals, and some unions in this country are gigantic. Unifor has over 200,000 members. A small local could have someone go around and convince them that the employer was not representing them properly and that the union must be employer-dominated. If the bargaining unit is 10 people, and there are bargaining units that are that small, and three people sign that, then the entire union would be indicted. That, to me, would lead to a bit of a challenge, because it seems to me that the threshold is too low.

The other thing that someone would know, if they have spent any time working with the construction and building trade unions, is that they do not always get along with each other as well as we might like to think. There are often jurisdictional disputes. There is what is called a raiding period, where different unions seek to take over individual locals, which is exactly what happened with the operating engineers in Alberta. The operating engineers in Alberta were able to take an entire CLAC local of some 800 people, and move it out of CLAC and into the operating engineers, so the unions do have a bit of a tussle with each other every so often. I can see that at times there could be an inclination to perhaps weaponize this section.

I also know that the Canada Industrial Relations Board does incredible work in this country. Its members have to deal with very difficult situations all the time, but when the head of the Canada Industrial Relations Board was at committee recently, the testimony was very clear. The Canada Industrial Relations Board has far too much work, and it does not have enough funding to deal with the work that it has. If we were to add to that a whole bunch of investigations into a whole bunch of unions, because in any bargaining unit, no matter how small it is, 25% can meet that litmus test to have that union investigated by the CARB, I could see this becoming incredibly challenging for the CARB.

In fact, there are many circumstances where the CARB does not meet deadlines, and its members have to ask for extensions. Those extensions, in the context of all kinds of serious disputes that they deal with, can have real consequences. I have very great concerns about the impact and effect of that particular section.

When I have had conversations with construction and building trades unions about this particular section, many have said to me that they had not thought about this, and that I might be right and there could be a challenge with that particular section. Initially, they are very supportive of the bill. Virtually every person in the construction and building trades unions whom I talked to thinks this is a great bill to deal with a union that they think is not a real union or is an employer-dominated union. However, when I pointed out some of the things inside the bill that I think are concerning, many of those very same people shared those concerns.

I do not know if the member is open to making amendments to this piece of legislation. We have talked a little. I hope she is open to making amendments to this piece of legislation, because I believe that there is a way to get this legislation to a point where it could be supported by the Conservatives. I do not know where the Liberal Party members are on this. The member's speech did not touch too much on the substance of the legislation. It talked about a whole bunch of other things, so I do not know 100% where they are, but from my perspective, I think that the legislation needs a bit of tweaking.

I want to conclude my remarks by saying, because I do not get the opportunity too often to speak about unions and the great things that they do, that my son went from the private sector into a unionized environment in the construction industry, and his life got 10 times better, so no one is more convinced than me of the good work that unions do to represent people.

• (1825)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-259, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code regarding fair representation. I thank my colleague for tabling it.

We are debating a fundamental principle of our democracy: the freedom of workers to organize freely. This right is not a privilege. It is a right that has been recognized by the courts, by international conventions and by our own laws. When employees choose to join a union, they must be able to do so without intimidation, pressure or interference from their employer. Bill C-259 would ensure just that. The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of this bill.

I will start by talking about the importance of unions and why we are talking about them here tonight. I will then talk about the changes set out in Bill C-259. Lastly, I will talk about Quebec's progressiveness in this area.

First, why are unions important? All too often, we forget everything that unions have helped us achieve. Think of paid leave, annual holidays, pension plans, health and safety protections, parental leave, anti-harassment measures and decent wages. None of that appeared out of thin air. Those gains were achieved thanks to generations of workers who organized collectively.

Even today, unions play a vital role. They help reduce inequality. They promote better working conditions. They help to reduce the gender pay gap. They ensure better protection for the most vulnerable workers. According to Statistics Canada, unionized employees, on average, earn more than non-unionized workers in comparable jobs. Unionized workplaces also have fewer workplace accidents and more prevention measures in place. That is not insignificant.

Some might believe that this is not a major issue in federally regulated sectors, but that is not the case. Federally regulated sectors include banking, telecommunications, airlines, railways, ports and interprovincial transport. More than 900,000 workers are covered by the Canada Labour Code. Approximately 34% of those workers are covered by a collective agreement. In certain strategic sectors such as rail transportation or postal services, the unionization rate actually exceeds 70%. Union independence in these sectors is therefore a major issue.

At its core, the bill we are debating this evening is all about company unions. What is a company union? It is a union dominated, controlled or influenced by the employer, a union that no longer truly represents the workers' interests, a union that essentially becomes an extension of the employer. Historically, this practice has been used to prevent the emergence of bona fide labour organizations. The company would create a fake union, negotiate with that fake union, and then claim that the right to organize was being re-

spected. However, in reality, the workers were losing their genuine bargaining power.

Second, what does Bill C-259 accomplish? The Canada Labour Code already prohibits employer interference, but the current provisions are relatively general. The bill clarifies the rules. It clearly defines employer domination and influence as the employer contributing financially to the union, controlling union leaders, interfering in union elections, or making promises or threats intended to influence members. In other words, we are moving from a general principle to concrete criteria.

The bill also provides for the revocation of certification of an employer-dominated union, the possible nullification of a collective agreement entered into under such conditions, strengthened remedies before the Canada Industrial Relations Board, and fines of up to \$100,000. It really sets clear guidelines.

Third, I want to talk about Quebec as a model. Quebec has often been a pioneer in this area. For decades, the Quebec Labour Code has protected union autonomy. Sections 12 and 13 of our labour code explicitly prohibit any form of employer interference in union activities.

• (1830)

Quebec also pioneered several major reforms. For example, it banned replacement workers. For years, Quebec led the way while Ottawa was slow to act and the Bloc Québécois was calling for action. Even now, the federal government often follows suit on protections already recognized in Quebec. The Bloc Québécois sees Bill C-259 as yet another example of that.

Vigilance remains necessary. That is why we need Bill C-259. Some might say that company unions are rare today. That may be, but when it comes to basic freedoms, we must never wait for a problem to become widespread before taking action. As lawmakers, our role is also preventive. We pass laws to prevent abuses. That is exactly what they are for. We pass laws to protect workers before their rights are violated. This bill sends a clear message. Employers must negotiate with legitimate worker representatives. They cannot create or control the organizations meant to represent workers.

The Bloc Québécois fought for this improvement. However, we believe there is still a blind spot. The problem is the lack of data. The Canada Industrial Relations Board does not produce detailed statistics on specific cases of employer interference or on employer-controlled unions. If we want to improve the laws in future, we must be able to assess the reality of the situation and properly document cases. We therefore hope that more data will be collected and made public. This could certainly be a worthwhile goal to aim for in future.

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, at its core, this debate is simple. A union must belong to the workers, not the employer. Workers must be able to freely choose their representatives. They must be able to freely negotiate their working conditions. They must be able to defend their interests without fear of reprisal. The Bloc Québécois has always defended workers' rights. We have done the same with regard to EI and seasonal workers. I keep saying that the Bloc Québécois will return to the fray with a bill for a comprehensive reform of EI to better protect seasonal workers, amongst others, but it is much broader in scope than that. We have also done the same for workers affected by the use of replacement workers, and we continue to monitor that situation.

We will continue to do so because a fairer society means fairer workplaces. A healthy democracy requires free and independent labour organizations. In addition, respect for workers should never be negotiable. That is why the Bloc Québécois will support Bill C-259.

I would like to close with additional statistics on unionization in Quebec. Quebec has one of the highest unionization rates in North America. In 2024, 39.2% of Quebec workers were unionized, compared to about 28% in Canada. More than 1.6 million Quebec workers are covered by a collective agreement. We can see that these numbers and the impact of unions have an effect on wages.

According to Statistics Canada, unionized workers earn on average 10% to 15% more than comparable non-unionized workers. The gap is even wider among women, young people, and workers with less education. With regard to inequality, according to the OECD and several academic studies, declining unionization accounts for between 20% and 30% of the increase in wage inequality observed since the 1980s. Highly unionized sectors generally exhibit smaller income gaps, less wage discrimination, and greater access to pension plans.

When it comes to health and safety, unionized workplaces report more workplace accidents. Workers in these settings are more likely to have access to joint health and safety committees, training, and grievance procedures.

Here are a few more statistics to wrap up: Between 1981 and today, the proportion of unionized workers in the Canadian private sector has fallen by about 40%. Despite this, unions still represent more than four million workers in Canada. That is still a significant number, and that is why we are debating this bill today.

• (1835)

[English]

Alana Hirtle (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank the member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona for bringing Bill C-259 forward and for her advocacy on behalf of workers.

The Government of Canada recognizes the spirit and intent of Bill C-259, because fairness for all Canadian workers is our top priority. Given the economic headwinds we are facing, worker fairness is needed now more than ever.

Canada's economy is at a turning point. The global labour landscape has shifted dramatically, causing economic shockwaves felt

at home and abroad. Tariffs have dealt a significant blow to workers and employers. This has caused real stress for families and communities across Canada. During uncertain economic times like these, Canadians expect the government to have their backs, and we do. We are working closely with employers and unions to shore up Canada's workplaces and ensure they remain fair and productive.

Our marching orders are clear. We must protect Canadian workers while strengthening our country's economic resilience. We cannot build a strong economy without respecting the workers who keep it running every day. That is why we are fully committed to ensuring that workers and their employers have the tools they need to weather this current labour storm.

At the heart of Canada's labour framework is the Canada Labour Code. It is more than a law that governs federally regulated workplaces in Canada. It is a promise to protect and support more than one million workers in 22,000 federally regulated industries. It is a promise we will continue to keep, because fair workplaces and a strong economy go hand in hand.

Our federal labour framework already works well, but we are always on the lookout for ways to build greater trust, strengthen our labour relations approach and make our policies more flexible and proactive. Today, I would like to highlight our ongoing approach to supporting federally regulated workplaces and the collective bargaining process that is protected by law.

The structural integrity of the collective bargaining process is held together by trust and independence. Without those two key ingredients, the process would fail. For agreements to work, workers must trust their union, and employers must trust the system. Any perception of outside influence weakens the system. Workers should also be able to choose their representatives freely and trust that those representatives act in their best interest. They deserve unions that answer to them without being influenced by external pressures. That is why Canada's labour relations system is built on a structured process that balances workers' rights and employers' responsibilities.

I can assure members that the Government of Canada firmly believes in the right to strike. It is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and it is a key element of free, balanced and respectful labour relations. We believe in open and unfettered dialogue between the parties and that workers must have real bargaining power to reach those agreements.

We know that the best agreements are those negotiated at the bargaining table. We also know that collective bargaining is not easy, but it produces the strongest deals that represent the needs of the parties involved and that help stabilize the economy. That is why we have taken concrete measures to strengthen that right while maintaining balance across the system.

I am referring to Bill C-58, a historic act to ban replacement workers in federally regulated workplaces during strikes or lock-outs. It also improved the maintenance of activities process so that parties determine early in the process what work needs to continue to ensure public safety during a work stoppage. It received unanimous support in Parliament and was written into law one year ago this month, on June 20, 2025. Banning the use of replacement workers protects workers' right to strike, removes distractions from collective bargaining and brings greater stability to our economy.

We cannot have a strong economy without stable labour relations. Reforms like Bill C-58 help establish a better balance in negotiations and protect the integrity of the collective bargaining process.

Collective bargaining can lead to tension at the table, but it remains the ideal mechanism for finding lasting, balanced solutions. That is why the federal labour regime relies on established rules and fair, transparent, independent decision-makers to help parties come to solid agreements. I am referring to the Canada Industrial Relations Board and the federal mediation and conciliation service. They both play an invaluable role in Canada's labour relations system.

● (1840)

While news headlines may paint a different picture, the truth is most labour disputes are resolved without a work stoppage. In fact, in the last fiscal year, the vast majority of disputes in federally regulated workplaces were resolved without a work stoppage when the parties worked with the federal mediation and conciliation service. This tells us the system works well, when parties bargain in good faith and when they have access to the right support.

Labour relations affect wages, productivity and economic stability. Success at the bargaining table contributes to a stronger economy, but we also know the opposite is true. When labour disputes collapse, this can have rapid and significant repercussions for millions of Canadians, businesses, exporters and the economy writ large. When an economy slows down significantly, it is often workers who bear the brunt of the impact. The collective bargaining space must remain uncluttered by external distractions, so parties can focus on solutions that can stand the test of time.

It is here that I would like to turn back to the task at hand and talk about Bill C-259. Bill C-259 proposes a handful of specific amendments. It proposes to further define and codify employer influence and to bar certification of employer-dominated unions. It also adds procedural and governance requirements for certification and creates new penalties, such as summary conviction, up to \$100,000.

These preventative and clarifying measures are consistent with the code's foundational values. In fact, part I of the code already prohibits employer interference, and CIRB has previously applied these rules broadly through past decisions. We have also found limited evidence of widespread employer-dominated unions in federally regulated sectors.

We are aware that the absence of widespread problems is not an argument against clear rules. We know that clear rules set clear expectations, often preventing problems before they arise. I am sure

we can all agree that a proactive approach is always the best approach, especially when it comes to labour relations.

Private Members' Business

The Government of Canada will always protect the rights of Canadian workers, including the right to strike. We are always looking for ways to help strengthen labour stability and bolster Canada's competitiveness while supporting workers' rights. One way to ensure workers are supported and policies reflect the distinct challenges of today's workplaces is through consultations. That is why this government held consultations in the spring with unions, employers and indigenous partners to discuss potential ways to improve worker support and the federal labour relations framework.

These talks provided invaluable perspectives on the collective bargaining process in federally regulated industries, for example. We have explored various important topics in these consultations, and we are all ears for new and innovative improvements. Discussions like these are essential to help inform practical and long-lasting ways to support workers and workplaces, and ensure they have the tools they trust and that help them succeed.

I would like to close by once again thanking the member for Edmonton Strathcona for bringing this bill forward and for her advocacy on behalf of workers. I would like to reaffirm the Government of Canada's unwavering commitment to the integrity of collective bargaining and fair worker representation. We will continue working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that our federally regulated institutions can rely on fairness at the bargaining table, now and in the future.

● (1845)

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my job to bring a profound conclusion to the debate before us tonight, and I am happy to add my 30 seconds of wisdom.

Let me begin by stating something quite clearly, Conservatives believe workers have the right to organize. We believe workers have the right to choose their representation freely and democratically. We believe employer domination of unions has no place in Canada. Those principles are not in dispute.

Adjournment Proceedings

The question before us is whether Bill C-259 strengthens workers' rights or whether it creates instability, uncertainty and unintended consequences in federally regulated workplaces. The sponsor argues that workers must be represented by organizations independent from employer influence. On that point, there is broad agreement. However, the reality is that the Canada Labour Code already contains strong protections against employer interference. Today a union cannot be certified if it is so dominated or influenced by an employer that its ability to represent workers is impaired.

I will wrap up with that profound statement of five or six sentences tonight. I appreciate the patience of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have eight and a half minutes to conclude his remarks when we return to the subject.

[Translation]

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

HEALTH

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is simple. Why are the Liberal MPs blocking the health minister from testifying at the health committee on the \$300-million PrescribeIT scandal?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very glad to have the opportunity to respond this evening.

While the member opposite and many of his Conservative colleagues have drawn up elaborate theories about PrescribeIT and Canada Health Infoway, their position does not make any sense. The member opposite has been making absurd claims about a program launched by the previous government, but here are the facts. Our government ended funding for the program because it was not sustainable. Not only that, but the CEO of the organization that launched the program was fired.

On top of that, in the House yesterday during question period, the Minister of Health said that she is reviewing funding for the organization in question, Canada Health Infoway. She is looking at its mandate and said that it is not getting any money unless we are sure that its work aligns with its mandate. It does not get more clear-cut than that, except the Conservatives have decided to spread misinformation about the program, all in the name of social media clicks.

It is hard to take the outrage on this seriously, especially when we see the Conservatives' behaviour at the health committee, where they have been filibustering since May 7. For the last four meetings, they have used every tool at their disposal to stop the health

committee from even voting on a study of the HIV crisis. Every so often they have asked who could possibly be asking for such a study, calling it useless.

I think most Canadians in the House would agree that, particularly in Pride Month of all months, that is an untenable and unfathomable position.

Does the House know who cares about doing this study? It is some of Canada's leading activists and organizations working in the field of HIV and AIDS who are calling for it. Who else cares about this study? It is the tens of thousands of Canadians living with HIV, not to mention their families and loved ones.

When the Conservatives pretend to care about health care in this country, let us look at their actions: spreading false narratives about health care projects and preventing important health care studies from taking place.

Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the Liberals did not answer my question.

My question was simple. Why are the Liberal MPs blocking the health minister from testifying at the health committee on the \$300-million PrescribeIT scandal?

• (1850)

Leslie Church: Madam Speaker, once again, let us focus on the facts.

The minister has been very forthcoming in terms of her presence on this matter and before committee.

The previous government helped launch PrescribeIT. Our government announced it was ending.

We have already seen that Quebec has signed a contract to launch PrescribeIT in that province.

The Conservatives would rather play parliamentary games than focus on issues that matter to Canadians. As we are seeing at the health committee, that means blocking studies on important health topics like HIV.

Our government will always focus on what matters to Canadians. It would be very nice if the Conservatives would do the same.

EMPLOYMENT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, we face serious economic problems now as a country. We are the only G20 nation in a recession. One in four Canadians is living food-insecure. We have seen a doubling of food bank use since 2020, and we are in the midst of a worsening unemployment crisis, particularly affecting Canada's young people. We have been repeatedly calling on the government to implement a plan to respond to this youth unemployment crisis.

Adjournment Proceedings

In the fall, Conservatives put forward our plan with a series of constructive suggestions focused on unleashing the economy, fixing immigration, fixing training and building homes where the jobs are. We have not seen a willingness on the part of the government to implement these constructive proposals. In fact, we have seen the government choose to move in the opposite direction.

We saw, for instance, with changes the Liberals made, the cutting of grants to students who are studying at vocational institutions. The Liberals ended completion grants for students in the trades. They brought them back eventually, following strong advocacy from unions, as well as from Conservatives, but they have now trumpeted them as if they were something new when they were, in fact, the restoration of grants that had previously been cut by this particular government under the Prime Minister. We are seeing some instances in which our advocacy has made a difference, but generally speaking, there is an unwillingness of the government to meet this moment.

I will also draw the attention of members, in the context of this unemployment crisis, to a great report recently done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business highlighting the challenges small businesses are facing when it comes to hiring young people and some of the disconnect that has existed between small businesses and young people. Its proposal, very much aligning with what we have talked about, focuses on creating the conditions in which small businesses can afford to hire young people. It proposed, for instance, payroll tax relief. Payroll tax relief would be a clear and simple way of making it easier for small businesses to hire young people.

Small business owners report that a lot of the programming that exists right now can be difficult and onerous for small businesses to use and take advantage of. The CFIB proposed broad-based changes that would reduce the cost of hiring, taking into consideration the costs of training and making it easier for people to start and grow businesses.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has also highlighted big gaps in terms of entrepreneurship in this country. It is talking about an entrepreneurial drought and saying that far more businesses are closing than are being started. Obviously, this affects the unemployment situation for young people.

As I have led this file over the last year, and as Conservatives have been working on confronting this youth unemployment crisis, we have always sought to be constructive. That is, we have sought to put forward specific, concrete suggestions to the government on how these challenges can be addressed. We have put those forward in the form of the Conservative youth jobs plan.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has put forward its ideas, which are very similar to ours, but really emphasizes payroll tax relief. We have called on the government to adopt these suggestions. What we saw in the last fiscal update is a plan on the part of the government to increase EI premiums, which is again going in the opposite direction from what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business wants.

My question tonight for the parliamentary secretary is this: When will we see a concrete plan to address the youth unemployment cri-

sis that responds to these realities and recommendations by different stakeholders?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Madam Speaker, allow me to focus on the positive measures the government is continuing to pursue as we work to mitigate the impact of these uncertain times. As the Prime Minister has said, as we cope with economic uncertainty, our most powerful recourse, our most powerful tool is to control what is within our power to control, and that is what we are doing. Let me focus on the government's uncompromising commitment to build a stronger, more inclusive economy.

Nothing represents the power of that commitment more than our labour market development agreements and workforce development agreements. These agreements forged between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments are engines of opportunity, resilience and growth. They provide \$2.9 billion annually in training and employment assistance services delivered through provincial and territorial employment assistance offices. This approach empowers Canadians with the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing labour market.

They offer targeted training programs. They offer career services. They offer all manner of employment supports. They are boosting the employment opportunities of Canadian workers, whether they are new graduates, mid-career professionals, or individuals facing barriers to employment.

Through these programs, Canadian workers can adapt and thrive. The results speak for themselves. Each year, more Canadians are able to access skills training that leads directly to a career in a field where workers are needed. Job seekers are not only finding work faster but also securing more stable and higher-quality jobs. However, there are no jobs without employers, and this is why we are ensuring that employers also benefit. They get a more skilled and job-ready workforce and an ability to hire more quickly. Both of these advantages foster a boost in productivity.

This alignment between worker skills and employers is crucial. It has the power to strengthen entire industries. A well-trained workforce drives innovation, attracts investment and enhances Canada's global competitiveness. This is why our government's workforce tariff response, for example, is providing a further \$570 million until 2027-28 under the labour market development agreements. This is funding that will support tariff-impacted employers and workers in the steel and softwood lumber sectors and in other tariff-impacted industries.

Adjournment Proceedings

Global economies have shifted, and tariff tensions are high, but as Canadians, we do not stand idly by. We build, and our skilled trades workers are the ones who will build our future, but we are facing a serious shortage in the trades. This is why we have made a historic five-year, \$6-billion investment to help workers and young people gain the skills, experience and support they need in order to thrive.

This is where team Canada strong comes in. It is the basis of our spring economic update, and it is our plan to train, recruit and hire up to 100,000 new Red Seal trades workers to meet the demand. It is a plan that will help apprentices learn and train, and to access meaningful and well-paid careers. I can assure the House that the Government of Canada will always have the back of our workers and their families.

With respect to the importance of the skilled trades and apprenticeships, I have to note that I would encourage the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to support our new plan for the trades, and I ask him why he voted against it in our spring economic update.

• (1855)

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, there are many things that are very strange about this response.

Let us be clear. In 2006, in the first Conservative budget of Stephen Harper, Conservatives brought in grants for trades workers. We brought in completion grants in 2009. The current government cancelled them under the Prime Minister, and then, with much fanfare, announced they were bringing them back. Of course, we support bringing in these grants. We wish they had not been cancelled before being reinstated. We voted against the government's fiscal plan in general because, in general, it is going in the wrong direction.

The member highlighted labour market development agreements, which are, of course, an important and valuable part of our national architecture. Most of those agreements were signed in the 1990s and early 2000s. The last one was signed with Yukon in 2009. The government also trumpets things like the Canada summer jobs program.

Again, these are programs that date back to the nineties and have existed for a long time. The government has nothing new. The best the Liberals can do is rename past Conservative programs. The Liberals clearly do not have a plan. They need to get a plan, and fast.

Leslie Church: Madam Speaker, Canada's labour market development agreements and workforce development agreements demonstrate what is possible when governments collaborate with a common goal in mind. The economic impact is equally significant. As more Canadians enter and remain in the workforce, consumer spending rises, communities prosper and public revenues grow. This is why workforce development is more than a social policy. It is a cornerstone of economic strength.

These agreements invest in people, respond to real labour market needs and deliver measurable benefits for workers and employers alike. They are not just supporting jobs. They are helping to develop a more prosperous and inclusive future for all Canadians.

I thank my colleague opposite for answering my question and confirming the fact that he voted against the spring economic update and the \$6-billion program we have to reinvigorate skilled trades in Canada and recruit 100,000 new tradespeople and apprentices.

• (1900)

FINANCE

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to return to a question I asked the Prime Minister in April on his reckless spending. I am grateful not solely because the answer I received from the government was inadequate and devoid of hope for Canadians, but because I believe a whole generation's future hangs in the balance.

The poor choices the government has made over the past 10 years have put young people at a severe disadvantage. They are the future engine of our economy. They are the future tax base that will be asked to support an aging population and compete with a rapidly developing world. A responsible government would provide them with the opportunities and conditions to succeed. A responsible government, as it stands, however, we do not have. We have a federal Liberal government that has failed to meet the moment. This is a matter that I believe should command the concern of absolutely every parliamentarian. In short, this is a federal government that has created an economic hole of its own design, is attempting to spend itself out of that hole and, simultaneously, refuses to take the common-sense steps that will create the long-term growth that Canadians desperately need.

These young people, current and future taxpayers, are entering the working world with a bill that none of them anticipated and none of them deserve. Fully aware of the consequences, the Prime Minister chose to add another \$54 billion of spending on the national credit card this year. Added to other out-of-control deficits over the past decade, Canadians will be saddled with \$407 billion in interest alone over the next six years. As I stated in my original question, by 2031, today's 18-year-old first-time voter will be the workforce facing an additional \$462 billion in national debt. With numbers like this, it is not at all surprising that Canada has the highest food inflation, the highest housing costs and the highest household debt in the G7, but this stark reality does not even factor in the youth jobs crisis.

After years of Liberal stagnation and mismanagement, youth unemployment is now hitting 14.3% and overall youth employment is at one of the lowest points in decades. Students are being hit especially hard, with more than 17% of those looking for work and not able to find a job. Last summer, student unemployment reached levels not seen since the great recession. Young Canadians are trying to pay tuition, gain experience and build a future. A cost of living crisis has come and many cannot find work. Even graduates with post-secondary education are increasingly unable to find jobs related to their training.

After years of Liberal policies that have driven away investment, burdened small businesses and failed to match training with labour market needs, young Canadians are paying the price. They deserve opportunity, not unemployment. Through the Conservative youth jobs plan, our side of the floor would unleash the economy by repealing anti-resource laws, cutting taxes to drive reinvestment and eliminating red tape that is shutting youth out of the job market. We would fix immigration by repairing credential recognition and realigning immigration with labour and housing realities. We would move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to training and ensure that the Canada student financial assistance program provides relatively more support to students pursuing in-demand fields. We would also build homes where the jobs are by proposing a 100% capital cost writeoff for companies that build workforce housing.

I am encouraged that the HUMA committee recently released an all-party unanimous report on youth unemployment. The report makes key recommendations to advance much of what Conservatives have proposed. Now is the time for the government to listen to Conservatives and their own MPs by implementing all of these recommendations.

This is a critical moment. Rising unemployment and the cost of living will drive more Canadians to the breaking point, particularly Canada's youth. While the Liberals have no youth jobs plan, Conservatives have done the work and are determined to deliver results and real hope for their future. We will unleash the economy and restore the take-home pay Canadians need to break out of this Liberal debt cycle of their own creation.

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Madam Speaker, fiscal responsibility is about managing public finances in a way that protects Canadians today while securing the country's future, and that is exactly what the government is doing. Despite global uncertainty and ongoing geopolitical instability—

• (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would just ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to move the phone away from the microphone. It disturbs the interpreters.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Leslie Church: Madam Speaker, despite global uncertainty and ongoing geopolitical instability, Canada's fiscal position remains strong. The 2026 spring economic update confirms that our fiscal outlook has improved, not deteriorated. Deficits are declining over the medium term, and the government remains firmly committed to

Adjournment Proceedings

a declining federal deficit-to-GDP ratio. As a whole, Canada also continues to have one of the strongest fiscal positions in the G7, with the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio and the second lowest deficit-to-GDP ratio.

That strong position is not accidental. It is the result of a government that is committed to making responsible, disciplined choices. That means spending less on government operations, cutting waste and ensuring public funds are used where they can deliver the greatest impact. By managing costs carefully, we are creating the fiscal room to invest more in the things that truly matter, such as supporting workers, helping businesses grow and building the nation-building infrastructure our economy depends on.

Fiscal responsibility also means not fuelling inflation. Inflation has remained within the target range for 28 consecutive months, and we want to maintain the right conditions to keep it there. That is why the government is focused on improving supply, especially housing supply, and providing real targeted affordability relief without compromising economic stability. Even under more challenging global conditions, our fiscal position remains stable under our responsible fiscal plan.

Let us talk about fairness, because fiscal responsibility is ultimately about intergenerational fairness. The government knows that young Canadians deserve more opportunities. By keeping debt under control and investing in growth, we are protecting their future. The 2026 spring economic update shows a government that is meeting today's challenges while protecting tomorrow's prosperity.

I have to highlight for my colleague, given her interest in young Canadians and creating opportunities for them, the transformational \$6-billion initiative in the spring economic update to invest in recruiting, training and hiring up to 100,000 new Red Seal trades workers right across the country.

Canada's finances are improving, our fiscal anchors are intact, our debt remains sustainable, and our economy is being strengthened, not undermined by responsible public investment. That is fiscal responsibility. That is what the government is delivering. I hope that my colleague opposite gets on board.

Adjournment Proceedings

Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but we will have \$407 billion in interest alone over the next six years, and by 2031, the youngest voters will be facing the workforce with an additional \$462 billion in national debt. That is not good money management by the government. Nothing has changed under the Prime Minister, and nothing will change until the government's reckless spending is stopped.

For proof, Canada's youth need look no further than the G7 or even the G20, where Canada is the only member in a full-blown recession. Major banks, as well as the Parliamentary Budget Officer, are forecasting sluggish growth this year, and debt-to-GDP ratios are expected to continue to remain high, with virtually no chance of a decline over the next five years. It is no wonder the PBO is also reporting that the Liberals are borrowing an extra \$7 billion over their own budgeted amount. That is an additional \$72 billion piled onto the backs of our youth this year alone, when they are already overburdened and desperate for relief.

Conservatives warned that inflationary spending would weaken economic growth, drive away investment and leave Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Leslie Church: Madam Speaker, the spring economic update shows that the projected deficit is actually \$11.5 billion lower in

2025-26 than forecast in budget 2025. This improvement is possible because of stronger-than-expected economic performance and higher revenues.

We are concentrating on what we can control, such as maintaining fiscal sustainability while making targeted, high-impact investments for Canadians right across the country. This means eliminating the operating deficit over time, ensuring a declining deficit-to-GDP ratio and ensuring that every dollar spent on behalf of Canadians supports growth and resilience and improves the well-being of Canadians.

That is what a fiscally responsible government looks like, and that is how we are building Canada strong for all. By making these adjustments now, we are making it possible to make generational investments that protect and transform Canada's industries, strengthen our economy and empower Canadians.

● (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:10 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, June 4, 2026

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Privacy Commissioner

The Speaker 8723

Commissioner of Lobbying

The Speaker 8723

Government Response to Petitions

Lamoureux 8723

Committees of the House

Veterans Affairs

Richards 8723

Motion for concurrence 8723

Lamoureux 8725

Caputo 8725

Romanado 8725

Lewis (Essex) 8726

Tolmie 8726

Gladu 8727

Brunelle-Duceppe 8727

Lewis (Essex) 8727

Rocheport 8727

Richards 8728

Barsalou-Duval 8729

Romanado 8729

Lamoureux 8729

Richards 8730

Brunelle-Duceppe 8730

Gladu 8731

Brunelle-Duceppe 8731

Richards 8732

Lamoureux 8732

Barsalou-Duval 8732

Barsalou-Duval 8733

Richards 8734

Gladu 8734

Brunelle-Duceppe 8735

(Motion agreed to) 8735

Questions on the Order Paper

Lamoureux 8735

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Protecting Victims Act

Bill C-16—Time Allocation Motion

Fraser 8735

Motion 8735

Brock 8735

Barsalou-Duval 8736

Baber 8737

Gladu 8737

May 8737

Caputo 8738

Goodridge 8738

Gerretsen 8739

Johns 8739

Deltell 8740

Sodhi 8740

Calkins 8740

Bezan 8741

Motion agreed to 8742

Privilege

Premature Disclosure of a Bill and its Elements to a Third Party—Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker 8743

Minister Statement During Committee of the Whole

Lamoureux 8743

Protecting Victims Act

Bill C-16. Report stage 8745

Tesser Derksen 8745

Caputo 8747

May 8747

Villeneuve 8747

Baber 8747

Lamoureux 8749

Lawton 8749

Fortin 8749

Fortin 8749

Lamoureux 8751

Lawton 8751

Gill (Brampton West) 8752

Lamoureux 8753

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Transitional Housing

Rana 8753

Religious Persecution

Genuis 8754

Summer in Peterborough

Harrison 8754

Law Enforcement

Mahal 8754

Nacim Haddad

Sari 8754

Ponoka Stampede

Calkins 8754

Skills Competition

Gladu 8755

Melvin Anstey	
Anstey	8755
Journée de la Gaspésie	
Deschênes	8755
Kitchener Rangers	
Louis	8756
Summer in Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt	
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	8756
Johnny Pauls	
Connors	8756
The Economy	
Lake	8756
10th Anniversary of Jazz Teasdale Residence	
Auguste	8756
The Economy	
Falk (Provencher)	8757
Retirement Congratulations	
Miedema	8757

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mantle	8757
MacKinnon	8757
Mantle	8758
Champagne	8758
Kirkland	8758
Long	8758
Kirkland	8758
McGuinty	8758
Hardy	8758
Joly	8758
Hardy	8758
Lightbound	8759
Canadian Identity and Culture	
Normandin	8759
Miller	8759
Normandin	8759
Miller	8759
Champoux	8759
Lightbound	8759
The Economy	
Hallan	8759
MacKinnon	8759
Hallan	8760
Champagne	8760
Brassard	8760
MacKinnon	8760
Brassard	8760
Long	8760
Cobena	8760
McKelvie	8761

Cobena	8761
McKelvie	8761
Bexte	8761
Zerucelli	8761
Climate Change	
Bonin	8761
Provost	8761
Bonin	8761
Dabrusin	8761
The Economy	
Berthold	8762
Desrochers	8762
Berthold	8762
Desrochers	8762
Godin	8762
Guay	8762
Godin	8762
Lightbound	8762
Vien	8762
MacKinnon	8763
Health	
Sgro	8763
Michel	8763
The Economy	
Albas	8763
McKnight	8763
Kronis	8763
McKnight	8763
Reynolds	8763
Chartrand	8764
Roberts	8764
Fragiskatos	8764
Williamson	8764
Long	8764
Davidson	8764
Church	8764
Davidson	8764
Church	8764
Epp	8765
MacDonald (Malpeque)	8765
Epp	8765
MacDonald (Malpeque)	8765
Dhillon	8765
Champagne	8765
Justice	
Brock	8765
Fraser	8765
Brock	8766
Fraser	8766
Kuruc	8766
Fragiskatos	8766
Forestry Industry	
Greaves	8766
Joly	8766

The Economy	
Lantsman	8767
MacKinnon	8767

Artificial Intelligence	
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	8767
van Koeverden	8767
May	8767
van Koeverden	8767

Points of Order

Oral Questions

May	8767
van Koeverden	8767
O'Rourke	8768
Champoux	8768

Business of the House

Scheer	8768
Kayabaga	8768

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Protecting Victims Act

Bill C-16. Report stage	8768
Valdez	8768
Dancho	8770
Lemire	8770
Sahota	8770
Jansen	8771
Sahota	8772
Lemire	8772
Bexte	8773
Lamoureux	8773
Nguyen	8773
Lemire	8775
Lamoureux	8775
Baber	8775
Begum	8775
Dancho	8776

Business of Supply

Sahota	8777
--------------	------

Government Orders

Protecting Victims Act

Bill C-16. Report stage	8777
Sahota	8777
Dancho	8778
Champoux	8778
Baber	8778
van Koeverden	8778
Baber	8779
Champoux	8780

Sahota	8780
Wagantall	8780
Sahota	8782
Lemire	8782
Anderson	8782
O'Rourke	8783
Champoux	8784
Sahota	8785
Ross	8785
Lattanzio	8785
Baber	8786
Lemire	8786
Dhillon	8787
Miedema	8787
Champoux	8788
Dhillon	8789
Johns	8789
Ross	8789
Lamoureux	8791
Lemire	8791
Calkins	8791
Wagantall	8791
Division on Motion No. 1 deferred	8791
Division on Motion No. 2 deferred	8792

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Fair Representation Act

McPherson	8792
Bill C-259. Second reading	8792
Lamoureux	8794
Seeback	8794
Larouche	8794
Lamoureux	8794
Seeback	8795
Larouche	8797
Hirtle	8798
Davies (Niagara South)	8799

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Health

Mazier	8800
Church	8800

Employment

Genuis	8800
Church	8801

Finance

Wagantall	8802
Church	8803

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>