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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade in relation to Bill C-13, an act to implement the protocol on the accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with an amendment.

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### PETITIONS

#### SYRIA

**Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the petition I am tabling has received 245 signatures on behalf of the Kurdish Canadian community to draw attention to an urgent humanitarian and international security matter that directly affects the community. In northern Syria, Kurds, Druze, Alawite and other minority civilians are facing sustained attacks and systematic deprivation.

Petitioners respectfully urge the Government of Canada and the governments of the free world to consider the following actions: urgent humanitarian access, protection of civilians, and accountability on international law, ISIS detainees, security, political rights and future governance. They respectfully ask for leadership to ensure that Canada does not remain silent at this critical moment.

#### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present.

I am honoured to rise and present a petition on behalf of constituents of the great riding of Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North who are concerned about the Bloc-Liberal amendment to Bill C-9 that would threaten religious freedoms. The petitioners want the protection of religious freedoms, and the amendment to be withdrawn.

#### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is also from residents of Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North in support of Bill C-218. These Canadians want people who have conditions of mental illness provided with proper treatment and not offered assisted suicide. They ask the House to support Bill C-218, which would do that.

#### FALUN GONG

**Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about the persecution of Falun Gong by the Chinese Communist Party. Falun Gong practitioners have endured human rights abuses, torture, imprisonment and forced organ harvesting.

Petitioners ask that the Government of Canada call upon the Chinese Communist Party to end its persecution and that those officials of the Chinese Communist Party who are responsible for these acts be held accountable.

#### CELIAC DISEASE

**Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of over 28,000 Canadians calling for meaningful tax relief for people living with celiac disease. Celiac disease affects about one in 100 Canadians and requires a strict gluten-free diet that comes with a significant cost. The petitioners are therefore calling for a simple refundable tax credit, \$1,000 per adult and \$600 per child living with celiac disease, to provide accessible relief.

I commend Celiac Canada for its leadership.

As a founding member of the all-parties celiac caucus, I am happy to present this petition.

• (1005)

#### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to table a petition on behalf of constituents in Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

*Business of Supply*

The petitioners believe that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights that must be preserved. They believe that Liberal Bill C-9 would be an infringement on those rights. They therefore call on the House to withdraw Bill C-9 and to prevent government intrusion into matters of faith.

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to present a petition on behalf not only of my constituents but of all Canadians

Petitioners call upon the government to protect Canadian media from undue foreign interference and influence, by initiating a formal review of foreign media ownership, introducing stricter rules to prevent foreign entities from holding and controlling interests in Canadian media, and requiring public reporting disclosure for foreign ownership stakeholders in the Canadian media. The petition has garnered over 17,000 signatures in a short period of time.

I would also like to thank Guard the Leaf for its diligence regarding this petition.

## FALUN GONG

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, constituents within the riding of Waterloo have asked me to present this petition on behalf of Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners share that Falun Gong practitioners follow the principles of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. They recognize the importance of relations between different countries, but they also value the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They would like us to uphold freedom of thought around the world, including for Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take stronger measures to protect the Falun Gong community, which is targeted by foreign repression among other things. The people who have signed the petition are practitioners, and they believe that the Falun Gong should have the ability to practise freely.

## FIREARMS

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the residents of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford regarding the gun confiscation program, which will cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. They feel it unfairly targets law-abiding, responsible and licensed gun owners, while doing nothing to address public safety and rising crime rates.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the cost to compensate firearms owners alone will exceed \$750 million. Even the public safety minister has serious doubts as to the effectiveness of the program, as do police jurisdictions across Canada.

The petitioning residents call upon the Government of Canada to immediately rescind the program and prioritize public safety with real change such as bail reform.

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1010)

[English]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

## OPPOSITION MOTION—SERIOUS CRIMES AND REFUGEE CLAIMS

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC)** moved:

That, given that,

- (i) extortion has risen by 330% in Canada since the Liberals were elected,
- (ii) Liberals voted against Conservative motions to end loopholes for false refugee claimants seeking asylum,
- (iii) Liberals voted against tougher sentencing for extortionists proposed by Conservative Bill C-381, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (extortion),
- (iv) Liberals have failed to repeal bills C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, and C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, and end the revolving door justice system,

the House call on the government to:

- (a) bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims;
- (b) bar non-citizens with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims;
- (c) end the practice of leniency to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes to avoid deportation; and
- (d) repeal bills C-5 and C-75 to ensure repeat extortionists stay in jail.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon West.

The value of Canadian citizenship is predicated on maintaining a high trust society where everyone within our borders upholds the institutions that create our peaceful pluralism, particularly and at a minimum, upholding the rule of law. If someone is not a citizen of Canada and is a guest here, our laws state that if they commit serious crimes, they need to leave. However, in many cases that is not what is happening today. While millions of non-citizens of Canada come to our nation and are here playing by the rules, there is now a legion of cases of those who do not, and that number is rapidly rising.

This incredibly destructive trend is the direct result of a decade of Liberal government policies that have created loopholes and allowed serious criminals to be immediately released on bail, receive lenient sentences and even claim refugee status in order to avoid deportation. In short, thanks to the Liberal government, there are now far fewer deterrents for non-citizens' getting involved in gang activity, trafficking drugs and committing violent crimes.

I know that statement will make people in some quarters clutch their pearls because we cannot say that, but the reality is that if we are going to protect Canada's pluralism, this truth must be spoken and addressed. Every statistic and every lived experience imaginable for law-abiding families in Surrey, Brampton, Edmonton and beyond proves that what I have just said is desperately and disgustingly true.

Violent extortion schemes that have turned peaceful neighbourhoods into zones of fear are but one prime example. Since the Liberals assumed power in 2015, extortion incidents have surged by 330%. In British Columbia alone, extortion incidents have skyrocketed by nearly 500% since 2015. Across Canada, the number of people charged with extortion rose from 680 in 2015 to 1,258 in 2024, an 85% jump, while the rate per 100,000 ballooned from 8.56 to 31.82, a 272% increase.

That is a lot of statistics. It is a lot of numbers, but those numbers represent real people, real human beings who have had their lives and their communities shattered; small business owners who are receiving crude threats demanding protection money, only to have their shops shot up; homes riddled with bullets; and arson that destroys people's livelihoods and sanctity.

We would think that the Liberal government by now, after seeing all these cases and the fear that is exploding in many communities across Canada, would do something about it, right? Wrong. What has a decade of soft-on-crime policies and the rote partisan rejection of constructive Conservative proposals to end the tidal wave of violence has done? It has emboldened gangs, many with transnational ties, to prey on the most vulnerable communities in our country, many of which are made up of newcomers and immigrants.

The following comes from a very recent Global News story, which reported something worse:

Canada's plan to expel those behind B.C.'s extortion epidemic has hit a roadblock after more than a dozen suspects facing deportation claimed refugee status.

The foreign nationals were identified by B.C.'s Extortion Task Force, but once the [CBSA] began investigating them, they claimed to be refugees.

As a result, deportations of the 14 suspects have been put on hold until the Immigration and Refugee Board decides whether they have legitimate [claims] for asylum.

Here we are today. The word used by David Eby, the leader of the British Columbia New Democratic Party, not a Conservative but a New Democratic leader, to describe this egregious abuse of Canada's asylum was "ludicrous", and he is right. He asked Parliament to do something to change the laws. I say to Premier Eby that Conservatives have listened to his call.

• (1015)

We are here today to call on the Liberal government and all members of the House to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims, which seems like a no-brainer;

### *Business of Supply*

bar non-citizens who have active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims, also a no-brainer; end the practice of giving leniency to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes so they can avoid deportation and avoid the spirit of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and repeal Liberal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 to ensure that repeat serious criminals stay in jail and do not get released back onto the streets immediately with impunity and the motivation to serially reoffend.

I would also note that Conservatives have already attempted to get the Liberals to ban non-citizens convicted of serious crime from making asylum claims in an amendment to Bill C-12, which is currently before the other place, but the Liberals in this place rejected the amendment, and that is crazy. I know the Liberals today will likely rise to debate and say everything is fine and that laws already cover these issues, but they do not. Here are the facts.

A massive backlog of asylum claims, nearly 300,000, or about the entire population of Burnaby, which has been amassed under the Liberal government, means that non-citizens can make asylum claims that take years to process. This includes non-citizens who have active legal proceedings for committing serious crimes, and Bill C-12, which is currently in the other place, would only, in theory, prevent non-citizens who have been in Canada for over a year from making asylum claims. It would do nothing to stop a non-citizen from entering Canada, committing a serious crime within a year and then making a refugee claim, especially a non-citizen with ties to transnational gangs, and we know there are major problems with screening right now. This is why Conservatives proposed the amendment that we did, and it is why the Liberals should have accepted that amendment, but they did not. That is, arguably, insane. That is what is fuelling this crisis.

There is also the massive problem of judges routinely giving lenient sentences to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes in order to avoid deportation, which is already set out as a consequence in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. I have a simple one-line bill to amend the Criminal Code that the Liberals could pass today and that would stop this practice, and yet when I brought forward my bill in the House, the Liberals were so tone-deaf that during the debate, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader made the false claim that judges do not grant special lenience in cases of, for example, sexual assault and questioned whether anyone seriously believed a rapist would receive preferential treatment because of potential deportation risks.

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He implied, and Liberals have implied, that these scenarios are far-fetched. The very next day I rose in the House, and I could have given multiple examples but gave one in Barrie, where a non-citizen pleaded guilty of raping a 13-year-old girl and impregnating her twice but was given an adjournment specifically to evaluate how his guilty plea and sentence would affect his immigration status. That is absolutely disgusting. That is an abrogation of our democratic system, upholding the rule of law and our immigration laws. It is disgusting. There has been silence from the Liberals over and over again. Premier Eby is right that it has to change.

Not only have the Liberals made this situation worse, and empowered it, but they are silent today on this and are not doing anything. This is why immigration attitudes have hardened in Canada. It is the why. It is the silent thing that nobody wants to talk about, but it is true. It is destroying our pluralism and making the lives of everybody harder, Canadians and newcomers alike, and it has to stop. That is why we have this motion in front of the House of Commons today. These things have to change. They are real. They are destroying communities.

My colleagues later today will talk about the impacts of the fact that the Liberals have not repealed Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. These are bills that have enabled the catch-and-release justice system, that lowered sentences for serious crimes and provide every incentive possible for people to commit serious crimes in Canada and get away with it. Eliminating these deterrents signalled to criminals that repercussions are minimal, and it contributed to massive spikes across the country in violent crime, firearms offences and sexual assaults.

I thought we would get serious about sexual assault in this place, but no, that bill still stands. There is no deterrent for it, and the Liberals will not move. Every time I hear somebody talk about sexual assault, there is no action. Somewhere today, I bet right now, in Surrey, in Brampton, in Edmonton, in Calgary, somebody is receiving an extortion threat. Somebody has been defrauded of their life savings. Still, somebody is going to receive catch-and-release bail or might be able to make a refugee claim—

• (1020)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Unfortunately, the hon. member is out of time.

Questions and comments, the hon. Secretary of State for Combatting Crime.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what is disgusting has been the obstruction by the opposition.

Back in June, we brought forward Bill C-2, which contains provisions that would not have allowed those asylum claims to be made in Surrey that the member references. That portion, which is now in Bill C-12 before the Senate, would not allow any person who entered Canada over 12 months ago to make an asylum claim. They would be ineligible to even file the claim. All of those individuals, those 12 individuals, had been in Canada for over a year. They would have been ineligible had the Conservatives not obstructed and had passed that bill back in June, and that is disgusting.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, how does a minister of the Crown not even know the bill that is in front of the House of Commons?

There are two things. Number one, it was Conservatives who went to Liberals to separate out the parts. The parts she talked about are in Bill C-12, not Bill C-2. That is wrong number one. Wrong number two is that Bill C-12 would not stop somebody from coming into Canada right now, committing a violent crime and then making an asylum claim.

The other thing is that there are 300,000 people in the refugee claim system right now, which means it takes years for those claims to be processed. In those years, those violent criminals can avoid deportation, claim social benefits and do all sorts of other things that make a mockery of Canada's immigration system and our justice system and harden attitudes toward immigration. That is disgusting. I cannot believe she does not even know the bill—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act already includes provisions for offences. Refugee claimants who have committed offences, whether in Canada or abroad, are deemed inadmissible to Canada. Are my colleague's demands not redundant?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, I welcome the question because it is a good one, and they are not. It is not redundant. In practice, as well as in the law, we need to have an amendment to clarify, to ensure that people who have committed violent crimes cannot claim asylum and to not give lenient sentences.

There are many instances now where the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act needs modernization. The definition of "serious crime" needs to be updated so that judges cannot use loopholes to give people leniency and avoid deportation. The Criminal Code needs to be updated as well, which is why I have a private member's bill in front of the House. The Liberals and the House could pass those things today, expedite them and end these processes.

I am very happy to work with my colleague through these bills, but he is wrong. He is hearing what lawyers and powerful lobby groups that profit off of these systems are saying, and he is not hearing the practical reality of—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member just commented that the secretary of state does not even understand or know some of the contents of bills. It makes me think of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, two bills that made house arrest possible and took away mandatory minimums.

I wonder if the member has some comments on those two bills and how they are affecting this situation.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising those bills. The reality, as I mentioned in my speech, is that there are many bills in front of the House of Commons that Conservatives have proposed that I think the Liberals have just rejected on blind partisanship. The Liberals need to stop listening to far-left special interest groups, powerful lobby groups of lawyers who profit off this system, and start listening to the victims of crime. Premiers like Premier David Eby are saying we need more measures to support these things. There needs to be a reset in thinking that focuses on victims, upholds the sanctity of the law and Canada's—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Mount Royal.

**Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as always, my colleague gave a very interesting speech.

The last part, part (d) of the motion, calls for the repeal of Bill C-75, which would essentially put the criminal law back to the state it was in before Bill C-75. Bill C-75 did a number of important things, one of which was to repeal the bawdy house laws and vagrancy laws that led to the mass jailing of gay men in Toronto and Montreal.

Would the member explain to us why the entire Bill C-75 should be repealed, as opposed to only the part on extortion?

• (1025)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, my question would be why, as a member of the government caucus, the member supported a bill that protected the rights of LGBTQ Canadians, which I fully support, but also made their lives more difficult by catch-and-releasing criminals who terrorize them. The government often makes these false dichotomies, where we have to sacrifice common-sense civil liberties or protections that protect victims in order to protect one group of people. I do not buy that, and the member opposite should not either.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on this motion we put forward in the House.

I have had the privilege of travelling to Rwanda multiple times. It is a beautiful country. When I say I am going to Rwanda or have been to Rwanda, people look at me with shock on their faces, because they have an image of a country that was rocked by genocide 32 years ago, which it was. It was a tragic thing, but the country has been rebuilt. It is a beautiful country, hilly and tropical. The fruit there is amazing, and so are the people. It is now a very safe country that is well developed. There are roads and buildings. They have a beautiful soccer centre and a basketball centre. It is an amazing

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place. They had the cycling UCI Road World Championships there last year, which was the first time ever in an African country.

When I talk to Rwandans about what it is like in Canada, they do not believe me. The conversations are quite interesting. I talk about things like homelessness and how we can see homeless people in any major city, tent cities, people cooking on fires in our cities in Canada. When I tell that to people in Rwanda, they do not believe me. I talk about the drug use we see in our cities, the fentanyl use, people literally dying on our streets and the way our government actually supports that by providing tools and facilitating the use of drugs and in some cases giving hard drugs to people. They cannot believe that. One certainly does not see that on the streets of Kigali in Rwanda.

The obvious consequence of these things is that crime has increased since 2015 in Canada. Violent crime is up 55%, firearms crime is up 130%, extortion has skyrocketed and is up 330% across the country, sexual assaults are up 76%, and homicides are up 29%. This is the result of some of the changes that the Liberal government has made. It is hard to imagine that when one is sitting in a country like Rwanda. We have a perception that it should be a problem in Rwanda, but it is actually a problem here, not there.

Then I tell Rwandans that police are increasingly powerless. Any of us who have talked to police officers will hear every time that they got into policing to catch the bad guy and put him in jail. They are increasingly frustrated that they cannot do that because courts are releasing the bad guy. It is frustrating police officers to the point that they do not even bother to arrest some people for crimes now because it just does not matter.

Why is this happening? It is partly because of Bill C-5, which took away mandatory minimums. It allowed judges the freedom to give lesser sentences, which has happened across the board, and not for little things; it is for serious things such as gun trafficking, robbery with a firearm and drug trafficking. These kinds of offences are now not subject to mandatory minimums, and judges are free to give whatever lenient sentence they may choose.

Bill C-75 was a big expansion of bail. It was the bill that not allowed but actually required judges to consider the least possible thing they could do to a criminal. There is a thing called “the principle of restraint” that was introduced in the bill, for police and courts to ensure that release at the earliest opportunity is favoured over detention. It forces our criminal justice system to release criminals at the earliest possible opportunity. This is how we arrived at the revolving-door bail situation, where people are arrested and end up back out on the streets.

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These are the things that have been done by the government that have caused crime to increase in our country and light sentences to prevail. The consequences of crime are gone. We have completely lost control of crime in our country. When I say these things to a person from Rwanda, they are shocked. This is not the view of Canada that they have, but it is the true Canada that we do have.

On the immigration side, we have to remember that somebody who is not a citizen of Canada showing up at our borders does not have the right to become Canadian. Canadians are the ones who decide who can become Canadian. Canadians are the ones who decide that we should allow certain people to come into our country and in certain quantities. Those are our decisions to make. They are no one else's.

For many years, Canada had a consensus on immigration. If someone is not an indigenous person, then they quite likely have an immigrant in their background somewhere. My grandparents came here 100 years ago, so I am the product of immigration to this country, as are most of us here who are not indigenous people. Canadians were happy and comfortable with that. We had a system that picked the brightest and the best people because that is what benefited Canada the most. If one talks to an economist, they will say that we should be selecting people who have the potential to earn higher-than-average incomes in our country to bring all of us up as a country.

• (1030)

This worked well, but we also left room to help those in need. We all recognize that there are refugees who come to our country, and we need to help those people too. This system worked, and immigrants would be the first to say that.

Then the Liberals completely lost control. They allowed in way too many people, and we have seen the impacts of that on our housing, our jobs and our health care. Trying to buy a house is expensive. Trying to pay rent is expensive. Jobs are hard to find. Our unemployment rate for youth is very high.

It has overwhelmed our system. Sometimes people forget about this, but we have a system in our country that was designed to process tens of thousands of people a year. It has now been dealing with millions of people a year, and it cannot keep up with that volume. Something like security screening, for example, is woefully inadequate and behind. As a result, someone can sneak into our country as a criminal and we probably will not catch it. This is a sad thing to say, but it is the reality. We see it every day.

We also have low-wage people coming into the country, which suppresses wages. It gives employers an opportunity to have a temporary foreign worker they can pay a low amount of money to, so Canadians do not have jobs. This is why we have such high unemployment among the youth in our country. Those same youth are faced with high rents while not having a job. They cannot find a place to live.

At the same time as that, we are letting in criminals, as I said, because we cannot really screen properly. We have, for example, IRGC members from Iran here in Canada, who have been able to come here, launder their money and have a pretty good life, and

they should not be able to do that. We have scam artists who are taking advantage of the immigration system.

Let us remember that immigrants are not the criminals here. Immigrants are not the problem. There is a very small fraction of people who are the problem, but when we have a system we can take advantage of, bad things happen.

This leads me to the unholy marriage of an out-of-control crime system with an out-of-control immigration system. This is where we find ourselves. We talk a lot about immigration, and some of my constituents do not necessarily have experience with this, so I want to read this because it is shocking. This is an example of an extortion letter. It says:

WARNING...we are...gang members, we want our share from your businesses like protection money. as you seen on news on November...two shooting on houses...were targeted because we asked them [little] money they...denied.... We want...peacefully from you this amount if you...do...business here in abbotsford—

This is in Abbotsford.

—you have no other way...please make sure do not contact...POLICE....

We asking only 2 million...in cash...here or we might get...INDIA we have links all over do not ignore us, it will effect you really bad. we will contact you next month we gave you 1 month to decide....

This an example of an extortion letter that people are getting, and it is not just one. There were 36 incidents like that in Surrey in the month of January alone. There was a situation on January 19 where a business received a message like that, and their place was shot up overnight. People do not necessarily even report these things. Also in Surrey, there were 15 suspects of this type of crime who were arrested by the police, and they immediately claimed asylum.

This a problem in our system. The asylum system is broken. There are 300,000 people in our asylum queue right now waiting for a hearing. That is the size of Saskatoon. The equivalent of the entire city of Saskatoon is currently waiting for nearly four years, which is how long it is going to take to process them. Because our system cannot process them, 100,000 of those people are simply waiting for security clearance.

This why NDP Premier David Eby from British Columbia called the situation “ludicrous”. He said that something had to change, that something has to be different. We proposed these changes. My colleague from Calgary Nose Hill proposed a change like this to Bill C-12 that would have barred asylum claims from people who are convicted of a crime. Premier Eby actually wants to go further by barring people from claiming asylum if they are in a judicial process for a serious crime. We think that is a good idea. We want to partner with the House to make that kind of thing happen.

Let us remember that Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimums for extortion with a handgun. There are also sentencing discounts, which allow judges to reduce sentences. There are multiple examples of this. It happens all the time. We need to fix this by undoing Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 so that there are true consequences. The member for Oxford brought in Bill C-242, which is the jail not bail act.

We need to fix Bill C-12, as I just described, but we also need to implement Bill C-220, which is from the member for Calgary Nose Hill. It would forbid judges from giving sentencing discounts where it impacts deportation. Criminals who are convicted of a crime greater than six months are subject to deportation, so judges are giving them sentences of less than six months so they are not subject to deportation.

• (1035)

We need to fix this. Something is wrong in Canada. We have to get crime and immigration back under control. The motion today would do that. For the benefit of Canadians, all Canadians, especially young ones, we need to do this today.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the good news is that this new government has a tough-on-crime agenda. The Conservatives are good at giving salacious speeches, but they have been obstructing any of our measures that we have put forward to be able to handle these types of issues.

Once again, we brought Bill C-2 back in June of last year, June 2025. Had we passed that bill, the people who had claimed asylum in that Surrey case would not have been able to do so. I have good news, because that bill was split and is now at the Senate. Retroactively, when passed, those cases will be ineligible. They will get cancelled. That is the good news. That is the work we can do together when the Conservatives stop obstructing.

**Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, the bad news is that a significant minister of our country is very confused about her own legislation. It is Bill C-12 that is doing this. We were actually very co-operative with the government on the bill. We wanted to see it passed. We supplied many good suggestions and many good amendments, some of which were adopted. Most were not, as I described in my speech.

This is what we have been doing to help the House, to get good legislation passed, so that we can protect Canadians from things like this. That is what we want to do, and that is what we will continue to do.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act already stipulates that, if a refugee claimant has committed an offence, whether in Canada or abroad, they may be deemed inadmissible to Canada.

However, if everyone with a criminal record abroad is systematically banned from entering the country, what would happen to prisoners of conscience, like Raif Badawi?

### *Business of Supply*

[*English*]

**Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, there are a lot of very specific cases that can be cited, and that is why we have the system that we have. We have to make sure, though, that we are also able to deal with those people who do commit serious crimes in our country. It needs to be very clear that the system cannot be abused. That is what is happening today. People are taking a system that had a very legitimate purpose and are abusing it.

The government has done nothing to fix that. It did not even recognize that it was a problem until very recently. It has allowed the queue to grow to 300,000 people, four years' worth of work, before it finally decided to do something. That is why we need to fix this. We need to make sure that this cannot be done again.

**Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Conservatives had two objectives when introducing amendments to Bill C-12. One was to truly fix Canada's broken asylum system, and the second was to strengthen Canada's border security.

Can the member please tell us here in this place why the Liberals were so opposed to our very reasonable amendments?

**Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, that is the million-dollar question.

There is partisanship in this place. It is alive and well today. When we propose something that is good and constructive, it gets rejected. That is the mode of operating of the Liberal government. We want to see this country work. We want to see legislation that affects people in a positive way passed. We want to be helpful. We want to do what we can. That is why we are proposing amendments that we think are good amendments that everybody can agree with.

The problem is that the other side, the Liberal side, tends to say that, just because it came from us, it is a bad idea and therefore they are not going to support it. That happened multiple times on Bill C-12. I mentioned the example of barring criminals from claiming asylum, which is a great example of that. That is why we need to—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Brampton South.

**Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was listening to the member's speech when he was talking about extortion. He says that we need to fix this. This government has a big legislative agenda with six bills to fix this. If the member is serious about extortion, why is he stopping Bill C-14, which would create reverse-onus bail for violent extortion, require consecutive sentences and strengthen the bail system?

Why is there obstruction? Will that member join us to pass the bill?

*Business of Supply*

● (1040)

**Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, I am actually very excited to hear about all the co-operation from the Liberal side to allow things that we want to do to come through the House. We are excited to propose good amendments. We are excited to work with the government on legislation that works for Canadians.

We will be helpful. We are doing our best to get good legislation. We are not going to pass bad legislation. The Liberals are not going to trick us into passing something bad, but we are very much ready to help good legislation get through the House for Canadians' benefit.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to lend my voice to the debate. I wish to assure Canadians today that our government is committed to protecting their safety and security and ensuring that all communities remain safe and free from violence. Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, includes measures that would expand Canada's law enforcement tool kit to combat transnational organized crime. It is the culprit.

Under this legislation, we would expand the CBSA's authority to access warehouses and export staging zones to identify and disrupt the movement of stolen vehicles and illicit commodities before they leave our shores. This provision would be game-changing. CBSA would be able to go into these warehouses to stop the export of items, whether they are drugs or autos, that are being exported out of our country and threatening the safety of Canadians. This is a good bill.

We would cut off the flow of fentanyl into our communities by accelerating the scheduling pathway under this bill for precursor chemicals. We would also crack down on money laundering by increasing the monetary penalties for anti-money laundering violations, ensuring that non-compliance is no longer just the cost of doing business.

Another critical section of Bill C-12 would establish clear legal authorities for IRCC to share information with provincial law enforcement partners. This means that investigators would be able to confirm the identity and immigration status of individuals in real time, eliminating delays, which previously hindered criminal investigations. This provision would directly correct a lot of the things that I think the Conservatives wish to correct as well. However, we have already done those things in our legislation, which is why I ask that they stop obstructing and allow this legislation to progress.

While Bill C-12 carries forward urgent priorities, Bill C-2, the strong borders act, would continue to advance critical tools to further secure borders. This would include measures to further facilitate law enforcement's access to basic subscriber information. In cases of extortion, this is critical.

Without the measures in Bill C-2, which were proposed and tabled in the House back in June, this is very difficult. We are basically tying the hands of our law enforcement officers if we do not give them these lawful access measures. This would not only help in extortion cases but also help in child pedophile cases, and I do not know why the Conservatives are against that. It would also enable Canada Post to perform warranted searches of mail to stop the

circulation of fentanyl and other contraband, which is an issue that is of grave concern in Canada.

Finally, we are addressing the revolving door of justice through Bill C-14. This legislation contains changes designed to keep repeat violent offenders off our streets. The proposed legislation would expand reverse-onus rules for violent and repeat offenders, limit bail releases and mandate stricter public safety considerations. It would also impose tougher sentencing provisions for crimes such as motor vehicle theft, break and enter and extortion.

With respect to the crime of extortion in particular, Bill C-14 is a game-changer. Not only would it impose tougher sentences for this crime, but it would also mandate consecutive sentences for extortion when it is committed alongside arson or with a firearm. Our government introduced these bills to crack down on crime, protect Canadians and increase public safety.

The Government of Canada is aware of the growing concerns related to the growing crime of extortion and is deeply concerned about Canadians who are victims, as am I. We agree that the recent increase in the numbers and severity of extortion attempts are alarming. That is why we are committed to protecting the safety of Canadians and Canadian interests from all criminal threats, including extortion-related acts of violence. Whether this is through physical threats, coercion or blackmail, extortionists seek to profit at the expense of others' livelihoods, safety and well-being. It is a crime that involves using threats, accusations or violence to coerce someone into surrendering something against their will.

● (1045)

Extortion is not just a financial crime; it is a direct assault on the peace of mind of our citizens. We have seen a surge in extortion incidents targeting families and small businesses, particularly in the South Asian community, of which I am a part. This is an issue that is deeply concerning to me, not only as the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, but also on a personal level. As the member of Parliament for Brampton North—Caledon, I have personally witnessed the impacts of extortion on people's lives. They can be very scary and devastating.

*Business of Supply*

In addition to our proposed suite of legislative changes, our government is moving to target extortion on a number of other fronts. The RCMP's national coordination and support team, which our federal government put in place, recognizing the seriousness of this issue, was started back in February 2024, when the crime was starting to surge. This support team supports investigations into extortion and intimidation tied to organized crime, working closely with police across Canada and international partners as well. The NCST serves to expand the reach and impact of police agencies by facilitating information and intelligence sharing between law enforcement agencies, and by providing tools, techniques, best practices and other resources to advance investigations led by the police of jurisdiction.

Across Canada, law enforcement agencies have applied significant resources to this issue. The Peel Regional Police established the extortion investigative task force. The Calgary Police Service stood up a South Asian extortion working group. In B.C., the province and municipal police forces have mobilized to stand up the B.C. extortion task force.

In B.C., the extortion task force, led by the RCMP, brings together the CBSA, the CFSEU-BC, the Delta Police Department, the Metro Vancouver Transit Police, the Abbotsford Police Department and the Surrey Police Service. By combining expertise and intelligence, these agencies are expanding capacity, strengthening coordination and driving a unified response to dismantle organized crime networks and protect communities. To bolster enforcement, the B.C. RCMP has added resources to the task force, while the CBSA has opened investigations into foreign nationals who may be inadmissible, and it has already removed individuals from Canada.

RCMP surge resources continue to be deployed strategically, using an intelligence-led approach to support local police agencies. This evidence-led increase in police resources has ensured that additional tactical resources have more presence in identified areas.

As of January 17, 2026, the task force has taken conduct of 32 files from jurisdictions across the Lower Mainland. Investigators are analyzing physical, digital and forensic evidence to establish linkages and advance investigations toward enforcement into identified cluster groups. The task force has obtained almost 100 judicial authorizations and executed multiple search warrants across the Lower Mainland, in the southeast district, and in Alberta. Investigators have made arrests, conducted searches incidental to those arrests and obtained statements to lawfully secure perishable evidence. To date, task force efforts have resulted in seven individuals being criminally charged. Municipal policing partners have also secured charges in some of their respective investigations, both independently and through joint evidence gathering with the task force.

As of January 20, 2026, in support of this task force, the CBSA Pacific region is investigating 111 foreign nationals who may be inadmissible for immigration and refugee protection-related offences. So far, nine of these individuals have been removed from Canada.

I want to pause right here. This task force I am mentioning is in relation only to B.C. There have been many other arrests in Edmonton, Calgary and the Peel Region. Through the national coordination team and the intelligence provided, I am absolutely certain that we are going to continue to see success.

• (1050)

What is key, and this addresses the opposition motion today head-on, is that we have incorporated the CBSA directly into these task forces. The CBSA's job has been to work with police and process the removal of these individuals, sometimes even before charges are laid, when they are removable. If people are out of status in Canada and are connected to criminality, and the police are able to identify them, we are working efficiently and quickly to remove them from the country so that they do not take up resources and police time, and we are able to dismantle criminal transnational networks. We are putting in every effort and we are thinking outside of the box so that we can tackle these issues in a non-traditional sense.

Beyond that, there are many provisions currently in Bill C-12, like those I have named, which will also help in these cases. They will apply retroactively, once passed through the Senate, and they will no longer allow people who have been in the country for over 12 months to even file a claim for asylum. Those with criminal intentions, who often come between our official ports of entry, through illegal means, will not be allowed to file a claim of asylum after 14 days.

On top of that, I also wish to acknowledge that in this country, if someone has been found criminally liable and convicted on charges, that sheer fact makes them removable. They would be removed. If someone who is a PR or on some other temporary status serves a sentence in Canada today of six months or more, which one would for serious criminality, they are removed from Canada.

The Conservatives are raising sensational issues based on headlines in which the Crowns are also responsible. I would urge that in many cases where Crown attorneys dismiss charges or fail to adequately pursue the charges the police lay, they do it so that these people can then be removed by the CBSA. The system is there to make sure that we can quickly identify these people and remove them so that Canadians are safe.

Making a refugee claim does not exempt lawbreakers from the consequences of their actions. The CBSA continues to aggressively pursue the removal of extortionists attempting to evade justice by abusing Canadians' concern for genuine refugees in need of protection.

I do not want to single out only immigrants in this conversation, which I feel the Conservatives' motion does. They are trying to target immigrants and put them in a bad light, but the system is already there to identify when somebody has been criminally convicted in our country, and we have a process in place to remove them.

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I just mentioned that we are also creating other informal processes to remove those who are already removable. In response to B.C.'s January 2026 request for additional federal support to address the acute extortion situation in Surrey, which was recently heard about in the news, our government is providing 20 additional RCMP officers and a helicopter to strengthen local operational capacity.

All of these efforts build on the federal leadership already demonstrated in November 2025, when the Government of Canada convened a trilateral summit in Surrey, B.C. It brought together federal, provincial and municipal leaders, along with law enforcement officials, to coordinate national action on extortion and organized crime. The summit focused on law enforcement, supporting victims and prevention. At its conclusion, federal, provincial and municipal leaders committed to enhancing and strengthening law enforcement capacity, expanding community safety planning and increasing supports for victims and prevention initiatives.

● (1055)

To strengthen Canadian law enforcement's capacity to disrupt organized crime groups that control the illegal drug market in B.C., the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial partners, is creating a regional integrated drug enforcement team, backed by a federal investment of \$4 million over four years provided through Public Safety. It will bring together law and border enforcement resources from multiple agencies and jurisdictions to fight organized drug crime and combat extortion. To maximize collaboration, participants will co-locate in a centralized hub.

In January, we convened a summit on extortion in Peel, during which we announced another, similar \$100 million to help the Peel Regional Police combat extortion, provide support and services to victims and build on the efforts already under way through its police force. This investment is further backed by a federal investment of \$4 million to establish a similar drug enforcement team with the Government of Ontario.

Let me be clear: These are not the only resources that are being put into this matter. Provincial governments are responsible for policing their provinces, and they have also put in resources to tackle this issue.

The drug enforcement teams, or RIDETs, are a key part of Canada's \$1.3-billion border plan. This is a historic investment. No other government has put this amount into its border plan. This, alongside proposed border security legislation, will support the provinces, territories and municipalities in combatting the illegal fentanyl trade and protecting communities from those who try to evade our border security measures.

As part of our border plan, we are hiring 1,000 new CBSA officers and 1,000 new RCMP personnel to further strengthen our ability to combat threats from organized crime. Extortion is one of those crimes that is organized and transnational in its nature. Investing in and expanding these resources means that we are cracking down on crimes like extortion, money laundering, online fraud and gun smuggling, which have caused havoc in our urban centres.

In addition to our focus on bolstering the capacity of law enforcement, we are making investments in prevention efforts and as-

sistance for victims. To support victims of extortion, the Government of Canada and the B.C. government committed \$1 million. The Government of Canada is also providing the Government of B.C. with \$500,000 over two years through Justice Canada's victims fund for four additional outreach workers to assist the B.C. extortion task force and local police. These investments address the need for additional victims services and community outreach in Lower Mainland communities, particularly Abbotsford and Surrey. This funding will also support the development and translation of public resources, including web pages and safety planning tools, to improve cultural relevance and accessibility.

Through the crime prevention action fund, we recently announced \$1.5 million for the Yo Bro Yo Girl Youth Initiative in Surrey to divert vulnerable youth away from gangs. The crime prevention action fund is a key component of the Government of Canada's initiative to take action against gun and gang violence. It was renewed in 2023 and provides \$390.6 million over five years to provinces and territories. The government also launched the building safer communities fund in 2022, which provides \$250 million directly to municipalities and indigenous communities to bolster gang prevention.

The reason I am listing all of these things is that they are all interconnected. It is important to understand that. No one fund or plan will solve the problem completely, but as I have been saying, we have a tough-on-crime agenda, we are adding resources, we have drafted legislation and we have tabled it in the House. All we have asked for is support from the Conservative Party of Canada to pass these measures so that we can catch and convict criminals in this country and, when necessary, also remove criminals from this country.

All I would say to the Conservatives is allow the vote, pass the bill and catch the criminals.

● (1100)

**Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in 2023, a foreign national attempted to buy sex from an underage girl. However, when he got to the location, it was an undercover officer, who arrested him. When it came time to sentence the individual, he was given a lesser sentence so as not to affect his immigration status.

Do you believe that an individual who commits a serious offence such as this should one day become a Canadian citizen?

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**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I would remind the hon. member that I do not believe anything. I am just a carrier of messages.

The hon. secretary of state.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, the answer is absolutely not. Anyone who commits a serious crime in Canada and does not have citizenship is removed if they serve a sentence of six months. Also, during the citizenship process, criminality is a factor, and criminal background checks are asked for, which is another check and balance we have in our system.

The system is in place. However, I would ask that Crown prosecutors pursue these matters and make sure these criminals are convicted and held accountable. There is no federal legislation that says sentencing should be reduced for anybody.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, you may not believe anything, but I believe in you.

I think there is a major blind spot in the Conservatives' motion when it comes to political prisoners. There are authoritarian regimes in the world that fabricate charges and convict innocent people simply because they oppose a repressive regime. With the Conservative motion before us today, I feel that these people would not even be given a hearing to explain why an authoritarian regime has accused them of very serious crimes.

Is this not a flaw in the motion that would make it impossible for anyone to support?

[*English*]

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, yes, it is important that all of these cases are taken case by case. The Conservatives are trying to tarnish the image of immigrants as a whole, which I am against. Today, even if somebody—

**Frank Caputo:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the Standing Orders state that members are not to say anything that would bring the House into disorder—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Order. Can we listen to the honourable member?

**Frank Caputo:** Madam Speaker, to say that Conservatives are trying to tarnish all immigrants, as the child of immigrants and somebody who sits with immigrants, that is reprehensible. The member should withdraw the comment.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** This is entering into debate, and this is a debate that is very emotional.

The hon. secretary of state has the floor.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, I am just trying to point out the fact that when we have broad motions like this, which are salacious in nature and trying to rage bait Canadians, it is irresponsible and creates a conversation in our country that is not factual in nature and overlooks a lot of very important concerns. Even today, if a protected person in this country commits a crime, Public Safety Canada and the minister have the ability to issue a danger opinion and remove that person from this country.

• (1105)

**Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, extortion has been a key issue in British Columbia. I have been on this file almost every day, talking to the secretary of state, the Minister of Public Safety or even the Prime Minister.

The Conservatives are playing games when it comes to dealing with extortion. I would ask the hon. secretary of state what the Conservatives can do immediately to deal with this situation instead of making it a political football?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, one thing we could do is maybe, on unanimous consent, pass Bill C-2, which contains measures of lawful access that police across this country have been asking for in order to crack down on extortion cases.

It is really essential, as technology evolves, that police also have the tools to deal with modern crimes and extortion, which is done through computers and telephones. They need to be able to connect these numbers and IP addresses. Without that, we are tying the hands of police behind their backs.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would ask if there would be unanimous consent of the House to allow Bill C-2 to pass.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member knows there will not be unanimous consent.

Is there unanimous consent to pass the bill?

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the hon. parliamentary secretary, and she is an honourable member.

I am opposed to Bill C-2, and I understand that she put it forward again in the House today as though there has been some delay on the part of opposition members. I want to ask her if she can explain the quite unusual procedure where Bill C-2, the so-called strong borders act, was put forth in June after more than 300 groups from civil society formed a coalition to stop it, groups from migrant workers' rights organizations to civil liberties unions, the United Church of Canada and so on. Then the government brought in a vastly similar bill, Bill C-12, and now we are asked about Bill C-2, which has not even gone through second reading.

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The government controls when bills are put forward for votes. Opposition members do not do so, and I will not vote for Bill C-2 as it currently stands. I am wondering how they can bring forward Bill C-2 since vast portions of it, verbatim, have already been passed in Bill C-12, and it would violate our rules to bring forward the same motions twice in one session.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, we need to work collaboratively in the House. The government tabled this bill back in June. It is a part of the government's responsibility to draft legislation and to table it in the House, but moving that bill forward through the House requires opposition parties to work with us and to put forward amendments to that bill. Once again, I would say Bill C-2 has been blocked due to opposition parties not supporting that bill. Conservatives and other parties are included.

Therefore, the compromise that we came to was that we took some aspects of that bill, put them in Bill C-12 and are moving those forward. This is because we do not want other things not to pass and progress through the House, but there are important measures, like lawful access, still left in Bill C-2. The Minister of Public Safety and I are working with civil society organizations to try to come to a compromise so that we can also get those measures passed, because police desperately need them.

**Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member has been part of Liberal governments for 10 years that are responsible for the crime, chaos and corruption on our streets. I was just reading an article from this week saying that 53% of Canadians fear for their safety because of crime, 56% avoid a certain area in their communities and 71% have lost faith and have no confidence in the justice system, which the secretary of state is responsible for.

After 10 years of being with the Liberal soft-on-crime agenda and in that government, how can we trust the secretary now, saying that she is going to do something different?

• (1110)

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, there is no need for the member to trust me. The proof is in the legislation. The words are in black and white. They are printed in the legislation. They are being debated in the House, and if good law is there, the opposition's job is not to just obstruct everything that comes before them. If these measures are going to help combat this issue and combat crime, then we would expect the opposition and the Conservatives to support those measures so that we can crack down on criminals and so that we can protect Canadians from the fentanyl drug trade. There are so many issues that the world is facing right now, and we need to evolve our laws to be able to tackle those issues.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's opinion. In her view, do paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of the motion not run the risk of being challenged in court? That could drag on for years and years, since, in my opinion, there are many people who would want to challenge these three paragraphs.

[*English*]

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Madam Speaker, that is one consideration, as the member just mentioned. That is why I am saying that the motion brought forward by the Conservatives is irresponsible, because

it would lead to lengthy cases in courtrooms, which we want to prevent. We cannot take away everyone's charter rights in this country. We have to deal with things factually and in a sensible way, backed by evidence and by the experts who helped us craft the bills we put forward in the House. Absolutely, we want to avoid lengthy court cases that would delay these matters further.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with someone who is a role model to us all, the member for Rivière-du-Nord, who will be speaking right after me.

I will get straight to the point, as I think I did with the questions that I asked. I would like to start by saying that the motion moved by the member for Battle River—Crowfoot does not sit well with the Bloc Québécois. The reason is quite simple. We believe there is no contradiction between protecting public safety and respecting fundamental rights. This motion fails to do either.

As we see it, the motion proposes more of an ideological response rooted in fear and generalizations than an effective solution. It would weaken the rule of law rather than strengthening it, without even addressing the true causes of extortion. Extortion is a serious crime. We agree on that. Victims deserve protection, justice and support. Because this is such a serious issue, it deserves more than political slogans and solutions that ultimately weaken the rule of law.

One example of oversimplification and political slogans is the motion's reference to “loopholes for false refugee claimants”. The right to asylum is not a loophole. It is a fundamental right that has been recognized by international and Canadian law for decades. Canada is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva convention. This means that we have an obligation, as a signatory, to review asylum claims on a case-by-case basis and to not automatically turn people away, unless we have safe third country agreements, for example.

On that point, I want to be clear that mechanisms already exist to deny asylum to anyone who poses a risk to public safety. Anyone convicted of serious crimes can be deemed inadmissible and deported. The system is not perfect. I agree with my Conservative colleagues on that point, but the system is neither blind nor unreasoning.

What the Conservative motion proposes, on the other hand, is to deny individuals access to refugee protection, which not only goes against the presumption of innocence but also against the charter and our international obligations. It violates those three things in one fell swoop. It is also safe to assume, as I mentioned earlier, that the proposals contained in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this motion would expose Canada to major court challenges.

In our view, this motion gives the illusion of wanting to take action, but in reality, it distracts from the real solutions for combatting extortion. These solutions include funding for police forces, combatting money laundering, international co-operation, protecting victims and witnesses, and robust criminal prosecutions. Blaming refugees and refugee claimants does not dismantle any criminal networks. It does not protect any victims. It does not make any communities safer.

The Bloc Québécois is also against the idea of restricting judges' discretion, as seems to be the intention of the leader of the Conservative Party. Indeed, for judges to be able to impose a sentence that is individualized and proportional to the seriousness of the offence, they must be able to weigh all the evidence. Ironically, this means that the approach put forward today by the Conservatives would not make Canada safer; it would make it more legally vulnerable.

As I mentioned in my first question earlier, the main issue with this motion is its major blind spot, which is deeply concerning. It relates to political prisoners, people who defend human rights, freedom of expression and democracy, who are falsely accused by authoritarian regimes of committing criminal acts. The Conservative motion makes no mention of these nuances that are nonetheless crucial. The fate of political prisoners is a reality that this motion cruelly ignores.

Around the world, there are women and men who are imprisoned, not for violent crimes, but for exposing corruption, defending human rights, advocating for democracy or simply expressing an opinion. These defenders of human rights and democracy are sometimes accused of fabricated crimes and prosecuted in weaponized judicial systems or convicted following unjust and inhumane trials.

I feel deeply today for the family of political prisoner Jimmy Lai, whose 20-year prison sentence was announced just a few days ago. In the eyes of the Hong Kong authorities, Mr. Lai is a criminal. In reality, he is a family man and a defender of human rights, freedom of the press and democracy. Mr. Lai is an activist, a pacifist, and yet he is behind bars. His crime is having defended democracy.

What does this motion propose? It proposes indiscriminately barring people with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims without any analysis of their case or any context.

• (1115)

If the Canadian Parliament had adopted such an approach in the past, how many political prisoners would have never found refuge here? Soviet dissidents, opponents of the Iranian regime, Chinese journalists, pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong, and human rights defenders in Latin America could have all been rejected on the basis of accusations made by authoritarian regimes. If adopted, the Conservative motion would prevent someone like Raif Badawi from joining his family in Canada.

To date, Canada has presented itself to the international community as a defender of human rights. It has certainly not done everything right in recent years, but blindly including individuals who have been accused of or prosecuted for so-called serious crimes in a general ban on asylum would betray the very spirit of international protection. As parliamentarians, we cannot delegate our conscience

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to authoritarian regimes. Canada cannot simply say that we will ban someone because they have been accused by a foreign state. Doing so would amount to delegating our international refugee protection system to regimes that criminalize dissent. Perhaps the Conservatives should clarify their motion and explain their intention. I am sure that they are acting in good faith, but this is not the right way to proceed.

Again, the motion, as written, does not resonate with us at all at the Bloc Québécois. I said it from the outset. To us, this approach lacks nuance and distracts from real solutions at the expense of political goals. It is ineffective and counterproductive, and will not improve public safety in any meaningful way. Worse still, it could potentially weaken the asylum system, expose the system to costly legal challenges and distract from real solutions to combat extortion and organized crime.

In fact, this motion does not appear to strengthen public safety or the rule of law. It is based on fear, generalizations and political oversimplification rather than effective and responsible solutions. It weakens our values, our legal obligations and our international credibility.

Extortion can and must be fought head-on, but we can do so without sacrificing justice, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the fundamental principles that define democracies.

For all these reasons and many others, and for the sake of moral credibility, which, in my opinion, should always guide our actions in the House, I oppose this motion, as do my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois.

• (1120)

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the government has been clear that anyone who commits a crime must face the consequences under the law, regardless of their immigration status.

Why do the Conservatives refuse to acknowledge this reality and why do they continue to conflate issues that undermine social cohesion by tarring all asylum seekers with the same brush? Can my colleague confirm that the Conservatives are deliberately blurring the lines between refugees and offenders?

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, I think I made that pretty clear in my speech.

I also do not want to be too hard on my Conservative friends, because I am sure they are acting in good faith. Unfortunately, sometimes people have ideas that turn out to be not so great.

I think that this motion deserves a lot more work, a lot more rigour to achieve the objective that the Conservatives have set for themselves. Unfortunately, as I said, there are many blind spots in this motion, including the issue of political prisoners, which, as I explained, has been totally left out of this motion. It is really too bad.

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If the Conservatives want to work on this, if their goal is to convict criminals and above all not to allow criminals to remain in Canada when they have no right to be here, some Bloc Québécois members will want to work with them.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I understand the Bloc is going to be voting against the motion. I see that as a positive thing. I really do believe there is a lot of hypocrisy in the Conservative motion today. If we take a look at it, the biggest barrier in terms of actually dealing with these issues today is the Conservative Party of Canada.

We have seen, whether it is Bill C-2, Bill C-14, Bill C-9 or Bill C-16, that all of those bills are there from a Prime Minister who was elected—

**Kelly Block:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Pursuant to Standing Order 43(2)(a), I hereby divide all Conservative caucus slots in two.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I was in the middle of making a statement and the member stood up on a point of order. I would suggest that maybe I should be given the chance—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** That is debate, and we have to proceed with the question that the hon. member was asking the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, we will remember that when we go through on others. They are being silly.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the greatest barrier to Canadians receiving the type of reform we need on crime is the Conservative Party of Canada and the ongoing filibustering that they do, day in and day out, to prevent crime legislation from passing the House of Commons. The motion that we are debating today is trying to put the Conservative Party in a light of wanting to see change, when they are the biggest barrier to realizing change.

Would the member not agree that individual bills, like those on combatting crime and Bill C-14 on bail reform, are legislation that Canadians want to see passed?

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, since my colleague did not ask me any questions about my speech, I am not going to answer the question he just asked me.

I spoke at length about political prisoners. My colleague is trying to play party politics by attacking the Conservatives and talking about hypocrisy, yet the Liberals are reaching new heights of hypocrisy when it comes to human rights.

I spoke about Jimmy Lai. The Prime Minister took a trip and shook hands with the Chinese president, but there was not a single word about Jimmy Lai; nothing, *nyet, nada*. If the Liberals want to talk about hypocrisy, I can talk about hypocrisy all day long.

• (1125)

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for his speech that revolved around social justice and responsibility.

In his speech, he spoke about the Canadian federal government's backtracking in recent years in terms of protecting human rights. In his response to the parliamentary secretary, he provided the example of Jimmy Lai. Can my colleague provide us with other examples of this backtracking?

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, a significant, concrete and factual step backward is the decrease in funding to Canada's international development envelope, which is being cut by \$2.5 billion over three years.

That money is often used to fund human rights organizations in countries under authoritarian regimes. That is a fact.

The Prime Minister's current vision is to link international development and international trade, while ignoring anything related to international human rights. By cutting these budgets, he is cutting funding to people who are fighting for democracy.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I applaud our Conservative colleagues' efforts to combat extortion. That is a good thing; we all agree on that. However, we in the Bloc Québécois believe that the measures proposed make no sense. Certain distinctions must be made—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I am sorry but I must interrupt the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[*English*]

I want to inform the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill that there is still 15 minutes before his speech.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord may continue his speech.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I was saying that it is entirely valid and honourable to want to combat extortion. It has caused many problems in our society and, unfortunately, I suspect that we have not seen the end of it. However, we need to be clear-headed and make certain distinctions in order to be effective in our fight against extortion.

The fight against crime is currently the subject of much debate at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We studied Bill C-14 in a panic. We rushed it through in three meetings, which I thought was a shame because it gave us little time to seriously consider the different provisions. We did manage, I think, to come up with something that will be useful and I commend my Conservative colleagues and my Liberal colleagues on their collaboration on this bill.

Tomorrow, the committee will likely finish its clause-by-clause review of Bill C-9. That is another good thing, fighting hatred. Immediately afterwards, we will begin studying Bill C-16. All of these bills will be useful in fighting crime, and I thank my colleagues from all parties for their work.

In this motion, however, the Conservatives are raising the issue of extortion and seem to be attributing it to refugee claimants or immigrants. This is where I disagree. That is going a bit too far. I am not saying that refugees or newcomers are angels or that none of them have ever done anything wrong. That would be a bit naive. There are people of good faith and bad faith among both newcomers and people who have lived in Quebec and Canada for generations. We have to keep things in perspective.

Among other things, a reference was made to the case law and the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Pham*. However, that decision did not say that the consequences of a court decision on a newcomer's status or application for status should not be considered. It said that the entire situation, all the consequences, must be taken into consideration, and that is how it should be. We cannot, as MPs, mandate how decisions should be taken in the future and what criteria to apply.

What our Conservative colleagues are proposing seems sort of like when someone gets AI to do their work. They can go on a computer, enter some conditions, criteria and reasons, and get AI to spit out the decision that will apply to so-and-so's case. That is one way to do things. I think it is unfortunate, but perhaps that is the way things are going. Personally, I much prefer human justice.

I would rather have a judge, or a few judges, getting to hear all the evidence in each case and make decisions that are humane, that meet the legal criteria and follow the rules we have set for ourselves as a society, but that also show a modicum of human mercy when it comes to tailoring humane decisions to each case. That is more or less what the Supreme Court said in the *Pham* decision in 2013. It said that, to determine if a sentence is fair, the court must consider all the consequences it would have on the individual, in terms of their employment, their immigration status, their family and so on.

Today's motion says that, going forward, no consideration will be given to all the circumstances of people who apply for refugee status and who have a criminal record or have been charged or convicted in their country of origin. With all due respect, I would say that is a bit lazy. I believe that the court needs to hear the entire case and take all the circumstances into account.

Earlier on, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean very aptly mentioned the case of Raif Badawi, who was recognized here in Parliament not so long ago. I do not recall the exact wording of that particular motion, but it recognized that he had a certain degree of credibility and was eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship. Raif Badawi was charged and convicted in his country of origin and was sentenced to lashes. He was sentenced to all kinds of punishments that he never would have received here in Canada.

• (1130)

Does this mean that, in the case of someone like Raif Badawi, too bad, so sad, the government does not care and would never let them in? Alternatively, is the government willing to consider each case on its merits and make informed decisions? I believe that is how the system works now, and I prefer this humanized system with all its strengths and weaknesses.

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As a society, we decided that we would rather let a criminal go free than put an innocent person in prison. Yes, it would be easy to fill our prisons with suspects and say that is the way to reduce crime. That probably would reduce crime, but it would be a major step backward in terms of quality of life and respecting everyone's rights and freedoms. Let us steer clear of that trap, be sensible, trust our courts and avoid being too prescriptive.

In a similar vein, this reminds me of the mandatory minimum sentence issue. We have been talking about Bill C-5. Our colleagues feel that Parliament should not have passed Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. I remember voting in favour of Bill C-5, but that bill had two components. First, it repealed mandatory minimum sentences. Second, it established diversion measures for simple drug possession.

The Bloc Québécois believes in rehabilitation. We believe that a young man or woman caught with a small amount of drugs in their pocket should face consequences. However, mandatory minimum sentences are a bit too much. I think such cases should be left to the courts to decide. Often, a diverted sentence better serves the interests of justice, the victim and society than sending someone to prison for the time prescribed by law. Diversion opens the door to measures other than a trial and conviction, which is a good thing. We supported that.

We had asked the minister to divide Bill C-5 in two, with diversion in one bill and the repeal of mandatory minimum sentences in another, since they are two separate matters. The minister at the time refused to split up Bill C-5. We had to work on the bill as a whole, and we ultimately passed it. I think the bill's benefits outnumbered and outweighed its drawbacks.

We had a problem with the mandatory minimums. We wanted to make some changes to those provisions, but unfortunately, we were unable to do so. I remember making some suggestions in committee, but they were rejected by both the Conservatives and the Liberals. That said, that is how democracy works, and that is what happened. Members will recall that we had no choice but to do away with many of the mandatory minimums because the Supreme Court found them to be unconstitutional. We had to sort of clean up the Criminal Code. The courts will never apply anything that is unconstitutional. That is what the Supreme Court said, so these sentences had to be removed from the Criminal Code.

I proposed a change at the time. I proposed adopting mandatory minimums for certain crimes, such as those committed with a firearm, but allowing judges to make exceptions to them in extenuating circumstances. That would have required judges to explain in their decisions what made the case in question unique and why the mandatory minimum should not be applied. However, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives agreed with my proposal, so unfortunately, we ended up with Bill C-5 as it now stands.

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The new bills, and more specifically Bill C-16, include a provision similar to the one I proposed. I look forward to its consideration by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I hope we can improve the situation.

Once again, the Conservatives' proposal is rather unfortunate. Fighting organized crime, extortion and fraud is laudable. It is a good thing. However, the proposed approach, which is to lump everyone together and refuse to take into account each newcomer's circumstances, is not acceptable in the fair and democratic society we have created for ourselves.

• (1135)

[*English*]

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from the Bloc's speech, and I appreciate the fact that he talked about the human aspect of it and his concern about things being human.

I can assure him that that is exactly why this opposition day motion was presented. It was because of the human factor. A lot of my concern today is about legitimate refugee claimants who are possibly at risk or whose claims are delayed. Their housing and health care also suffer because we have criminals making false refugee claims.

I sit on the public safety committee with one of my Bloc colleagues, and she and I talk a lot about the human reasons for needing to crack down on this. I know she supported some of the Conservatives' recommendations on Bill C-12 for the same reason the Liberals voted against it.

I wonder if my colleague would comment on some of that.

[*Translation*]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, I think anyone who says that the motion takes the human factor into account clearly did not read it.

With all due respect to my colleague, I understand her point of view, but the motion calls for the government to bar people “convicted of serious crimes” and people “with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims” and to “end the practice of leniency” and “repeal bills C-5 and C-75”. That is a step backwards. We have moved forward since 2015.

I know that, before 2015, we had a Conservative government whose bills were probably more in line with our Conservative colleagues' values, but we have done some work over the last decade. We should not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Some good work has been done, and refusing to consider refugee claims from people who have been charged or convicted of crimes means taking away the courts' power to consider the human factor in specific cases.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member made reference to Bill C-16 and that he is looking forward to it ultimately going to committee. I too want to see it go to committee, but if we look at what we have witnessed in the past, and I reference Bill C-9, which deals with hate

crimes, the Bloc have come up with an amendment, and as a direct result we have seen a great deal of filibustering on that piece of legislation coming from the Conservative Party.

Does the member believe the Conservatives would, in fact, if we get to it at some point, allow it to go to committee and continue to do a bit of filibustering on it, given that the members of the Bloc have some ideas they would like to share in terms of amendments? There just seems to be a lot of filibustering.

[*Translation*]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, with all due respect for my colleague, I would say that perhaps he should ask our Conservative colleagues that question.

He is right about the fact that there has been some filibustering on Bill C-9. I find that unfortunate, as I always do. Such tactics can be really harmful and prevent democracy from taking its course. I understand that we want to debate and make submissions and that we may spend one, two or three meetings hearing from witnesses and presenting arguments against a bill. That is fine. However, I find it unfortunate when members engage in filibustering, because it does not get us anywhere.

I hope that we will not have to deal with such tactics when it comes to Bill C-16. Until I have proof to the contrary, I will trust in the good faith of our Conservative and Liberal colleagues, and I invite everyone to work hard on these bills.

• (1140)

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague on his excellent speech, which was very eloquent, as usual.

There was a bill on citizenship by descent. In committee, we adopted an amendment that would have required such citizenship applications to be subject to the same criteria as all citizenship applications, including a criminal record check. The Liberals and the NDP voted down that part of the bill.

What does my colleague think about that?

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin:** Madam Speaker, my colleague's remarks are always relevant. I know that newcomers to his riding encounter significant problems.

Unfortunately, that is not my area of expertise, but criminal records should definitely be taken into account. An individual whose application for citizenship is being examined has a certain number of characteristics, and one of those is whether they have a criminal record. This should be taken into account, but it should not be the only criterion.

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the safety of our communities is of utmost importance. For 10 years, we have seen the soft-on-crime Liberal government prioritize the interests of criminals over the safety of law-abiding Canadians.

Just a few months ago in my riding, Amir Shafei, an innocent man, a quiet man, walked outside in front of his house and was accosted by a repeat violent offender who was out on bail. Amir would be alive today if this heinous killer had been in jail.

Since the Liberals took power in 2015, extortion has skyrocketed by a staggering 330%. This, along with many other types of crime, is the direct, predictable result of the government's soft-on-crime agenda. Its record on crime, defined by Bill C-75 and Bill C-5, has replaced a culture of accountability with a catch-and-release revolving door. Criminal organizations have seen the signals coming from the government, and they have concluded that the risk of consequence justifies their actions.

Families in Surrey, Brampton and right across the GTA, including in my riding, are waking up to threats, firebombings and bullets through their windows. Small business owners, many of whom came to Canada to build a better life for their families, are being told to pay protection money or face the consequences. This is the Canada the Liberals have created, one where thugs feel emboldened and citizens feel abandoned.

When we gut our judicial system and then tell the judges to use the principle of restraint for repeat violent offenders, we are not just being lenient; we are fanning the flames of the crime wave that follows. This failure is compounded by a loophole within our judicial and immigration systems. We are witnessing a pattern whereby judges are granting reduced sentences specifically to ensure that a non-citizen's immigration status remains unaffected.

Under current law, a sentence of six months or more triggers a serious criminality designation, making a non-citizen inadmissible and eligible for deportation. Instead of applying the law, we see sentences of five months and 29 days handed out to bypass this threshold. Even NDP Premier David Eby has called for these laws to be changed, describing these loopholes as "corrosive" to public confidence.

Here are some real criminal cases in which judges have considered immigration status in sentencing: A man, Aswin V Sajeevan, spied on a woman in a bathroom, where he made video recordings; another man raped a 13-year-old girl; Rajbir Singh sexually assaulted a young woman in Calgary.

My question to the Liberals is this: Is it really the position of the government that we should give rapists, peepers and those who sexually assault women in Canada a second chance to stay here? If it is not, they should vote with the Conservatives to end the practice of leniency to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes to avoid deportation.

It makes sense: When a judge considers a criminal's immigration status as a mitigating factor in sentencing, they are essentially saying that a non-citizen deserves lighter punishment for the same crime than if it had been committed by a Canadian citizen. This is the definition of a two-tier justice system.

We cannot have a safe society if the right to stay in Canada is placed over the right to be safe for those already here.

Conservatives have repeatedly raised concerns about how our immigration system is being gamed. We have seen cases where in-

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dividuals accused of violent crimes use our asylum system as a shield to protect themselves. NDP Premier David Eby called this out as "ludicrous". I do not agree much with David Eby, but I agree with him on this. It is crazy that individuals who come to our country and proceed to terrorize our citizens would be allowed to stay here.

Canada is a country built on immigrants, my own family included, who came here to work hard, play by the rules and contribute to the peace and prosperity of this great nation. When we allow violent extortionists to claim refugee status to avoid being sent back to their home countries, we are making a mockery of the genuine refugees who are fleeing actual persecution. It is a slap in the face to every law-abiding immigrant who waited years, followed every rule and respected all of our laws.

• (1145)

Conservatives proposed an amendment that would have updated the immigration protection act to bar asylum claims from being made by those who have been convicted of serious crimes in Canada. The Liberals rejected it. In fact, they rejected removing the ability of migrants with failed asylum claims to claim any federal social benefits beyond emergency health care. The Liberals rejected disallowing asylum claims to be made by nationals of, or by those arriving in Canada having transited through, a G7 or an EU country. They rejected modernizing screening requirements. They rejected requiring educational institutions who accept foreign students to share the cost of any bogus asylum claims made by the foreign students they welcomed to Canada.

The Liberals rejected requiring that claims made by migrants who return to their home country while their claim is pending be abandoned. They rejected rejecting claims made after a claimant is found to have lied to an officer. They rejected placing the onus on a claimant to prove they made their claim in a timely manner, not the government. They rejected requiring asylum claimants arriving in Canada to immediately provide, on the record, their full grounds for seeking protection, preventing the later use of unscrupulous lawyers to game the system.

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They rejected modernizing the appeals and judicial review processes associated with the asylum system. In fact, they also rejected creating a new transparent and clear reporting requirement for the government to disclose the amount of federal benefits received by asylum claimants. They rejected modernizing the content of the annual report to Parliament. They also rejected modernizing the IRB appointment process to better consider the provinces and include more merit-based candidates, particularly those with law enforcement experience.

Our opposition motion today would make our streets safer. It would restore order and increase fairness in our judicial system. By barring non-citizens with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims, we would send a clear message that our asylum system is not a get-out-of-jail-free card for organized crime and for those who want to unscrupulously use it. This closes the loophole through which a criminal can delay their deportation by filing a claim the moment they are caught. They are here, they get caught and, all of a sudden, they are claiming asylum.

By barring non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims, we are actually protecting Canadians. That is our job. The primary responsibility of any government, of any Parliament, is to protect citizens, our citizens.

We must end the practice of leniency, in order to avoid deportation, for non-citizens convicted of serious crimes. A crime is a crime. It does not matter who commits it. We cannot look at one group of people differently than another group of people when they are, in fact, executing the exact same crime. That is not what a judicial system is. Our judicial system is one based on democracy. It should be one based on fairness. The government has allowed the opposite to happen.

The punishment should fit the offence, not the immigration status of the offender. It does not make sense to Canadians, it does not make sense to anybody, that the immigration status of somebody should be considered when making a determination as to whether they should be sentenced as fairly and as equally as everybody else committing the same crime. Ending this practice ensures that our judges focus on justice and public safety.

These measures make sense because they protect the integrity of the immigration system that so many of us value. I invite my Liberal colleagues to stand with Conservatives and send a clear message. Canada is a land of opportunity for those who follow the law, but there is no place here for those who seek to destroy our peace. In closing, let us put the safety of Canadians first, restore the rule of law and end this era of Liberal leniency once and for all.

• (1150)

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that would be a great speech if it were not for the fact that Bill C-12, which was already passed by the House, deals with just about everything that is in the opposition motion.

I heard the member stand up and talk about everything that the Liberals are not doing right. What about the fact that the Conservatives have held up Bill C-2, on lawful access, and prevented components of that bill from going forward? What about Bill C-9, a bill on hate speech, Bill C-14, on bail reform, or Bill C-16, which rein-

states mandatory minimums? The Conservatives have routinely held up these bills. They obstruct Parliament from being able to pass very important pieces of legislation, and then they come in here and try to profess that they have the solutions in opposition motions like this, which serve as nothing more than to act as dog-whistle politics on immigrants.

I think it is absolutely shameful that the member and Conservatives would operate in this manner. If he does not know, he should educate himself. Everything they are looking for in the motion has already been passed by the House in this Parliament.

**Costas Menegakis:** Madam Speaker, it is a little rich for the member opposite to be speaking about who should be shameful. After 10 years of allowing criminals, with the Liberals' catch-and-release policies, to be on our streets and attacking our communities, they have the audacity to stand up and talk about who should be shameful.

I will add this for the hon. member's education. He would know and, if not, he ought to know that all of the bills he mentioned go to committee and we make recommendations. I listed a very extensive list of amendments that we made specifically to Bill C-12. Every single one of them was rejected by the Liberals. That is who is obstructing Parliament from working. The obstruction here is happening by the Liberal Party and the Liberal government. They do not want Parliament to work. They put a piece of legislation together that is flawed, and they expect it to pass without respecting the will of other parliamentarians.

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it does not seem the Liberals want Parliament to work. They keep saying things like Conservatives are obstructing. It seems to me they are obstructing many of their own bills from going forward. We have been helping them or trying to help them speed up good government legislation that helps Canadians.

I wonder if the member would comment on that and the fact that we would like to move things through quickly. We call on the government to collaborate and to work with us and stop obstructing its own agenda by playing politics.

**Costas Menegakis:** Madam Speaker, we are all parliamentarians. We are all elected to represent our communities and to represent Canadians. We are here to make Parliament work. We want to work with all parties, including the Liberal government, the Liberal Party, to make things better, to make legislation better. It is sad that when we try to do that, they put their hands up.

They have used the word “obstruction” in the House this week probably about 150 times, if not more. They get very emboldened when the polls change and they start talking about elections. I hear the government whip over there chirping that we need an election. That is not what it is about. We are all sitting in borrowed chairs here. These chairs do not belong to us. They belong to the people who gave us the right to sit in them. We should listen to them, work for them and work together to make Parliament work.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as we have already said, the Bloc Québécois is going to vote against this motion, mainly because we think that refugee claimants or permanent residents with an actual criminal record are already barred under existing legislation. Enforcing the law is all it takes.

However, I have a question for my colleague. The processing times for refugee claims are already very long. This could be a risk factor, allowing people with criminal records to fall through the cracks. Will the Conservatives commit to reducing processing times for refugee claims?

[*English*]

**Costas Menegakis:** Madam Speaker, the member makes a valid point. There are definitely long lineups of people waiting. The lists just keep growing and growing. It is fact. A CBSA official who was a witness at the citizenship and immigration committee told us in his testimony that there are over 30,000 asylum seekers in Canada right now who should not be here and who they cannot find to deport from the country.

**Amanpreet Gill (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about a very serious issue that is spreading fear in our communities and that the government has failed to stop. That issue is extortion.

For 10 years now under the Liberal government, crime has gone up. Violent crime is up. Gun crimes are up. Extortion has exploded across Canada. Since the Liberals took power, extortion is up 330% nationwide. In British Columbia, it is up over 480%. In Vancouver alone, extortion cases have risen by more than 330%. These are not just numbers; they are real people, families and small business owners who live in fear every single day.

Extortion is not a victimless crime. It is not just a phone call or a threat. It is a crime that terrorizes families, shatters lives and forces people to choose between their safety and their savings. Across Canada, small businesses owners are getting threats. They are told to pay money or face violence. They are told their stores will be burned. They are told their homes will be shot at. They are told their children will be harmed. This is happening in Brampton, Surrey, Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg. It is happening throughout Canada. In Surrey alone, there have already been over 100 reported cases this year, and police tell us that many more go unreported.

People are too scared to come forward. When people are afraid to call the police, when families are afraid to open their doors and when business owners are afraid to go to work, it is a crisis, yet the government continues to do nothing. Instead of taking action, the Liberals have chosen a soft-on-crime approach and catch-and-re-

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lease laws. They have chosen to side with criminals over communities.

Their bills, including Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, weakened the justice system. They removed mandatory jail time for serious crimes, made it easier for violent offenders to get bail and forced judges to release repeat offenders back onto our streets. The result was more crime, more violence and more fear. Extortionists know that the system is weak, risk is low and punishment is light, so they keep offending again and again.

The government talks a lot about being tough, but talk does not stop extortion. Action does. Conservatives have brought forward real solutions, clear common-sense solutions. We have proposed restoring mandatory jail time for extortion to three years for a conviction, four years if a gun is involved and five years if it is linked with organized crime. We believe arson should count as an aggravating factor. Burning down a business is not a small crime; it is an act of terror. These measures send a simple message that if someone extorts Canadians, they will go to jail for a long time.

Instead, Liberal policies allowed for a recent sentencing decision that undermined public confidence in the justice system. In a troubling case of extortion in Calgary, the offenders received an 18-month conditional sentence of which six months was to be served under house arrest. It was a very light outcome, given the gravity of the crime. The Canadian victim was pressured to repay more than \$200,000 tied to third party illegal gambling and was shown images of chopped-up body parts in an attempt to intimidate them. This is what the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies allow.

• (1200)

The Liberals had a chance to protect Canadians, but what did they do? They went against us again and again. They killed Conservative bill after Conservative bill. They blocked the protection against extortion act. They made excuses, delayed and did nothing. They even opposed stronger self-defence laws, like the “castle law”, as our leader mentioned weeks ago. They opposed fixing bail. Last week the Liberals opposed deporting non-citizens convicted of serious crimes like extortion. At every step, they have chosen criminals over communities.

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The Liberals say they support police, but the facts are the other way around. The Minister of Public Safety has not hired a single new RCMP officer. He even said it is not his job. Police forces across the country are stretched thin. They are overworked, they are under-resourced and the government has left them to deal with a crime wave of its own making.

The government has also failed at the borders. Under Liberal policies, 18,000 known criminals were allowed into Canada with no proper background checks and no serious screenings, reckless decisions that put Canadians at risk. Now we see the results: organized crime networks growing stronger, extortion rings spreading fear, and gangs operating with confidence.

After building pressure from the Conservatives, the government recently labelled the Bishnoi gang as a terrorist entity. That was the right step, but it is only one step. We have to see what is behind it. Our own agencies, like CSIS and the RCMP, are saying that it is foreign interference. Why are the Liberals ignoring this? Labelling a gang means nothing if criminals are still being released on bail. It means nothing if sentences are weak. It means nothing if police lack resources. Canadians do not want words; they want safety, and they want action.

When the Prime Minister visited the Lower Mainland, he had a chance to listen, a chance to meet victims, a chance to meet business owners and a chance to meet police officers. Instead he took a walk on a pier. He did not show up. He did not listen. He did not lead. That is not leadership; that is abandonment.

Communities are crying for help. Parents are worried about their children. Families are scared to speak up. Business owners are wondering if tomorrow will be the day their store is attacked. This is not the Canada we know. This is not the Canada we want.

Conservatives believe in safe streets. We believe in strong laws. We believe in real consequences for serious crimes. Our plan is clear: Stop extortion with real jail time, end catch-and-release bail, keep violent offenders behind bars, support police with real resources, and protect families, workers and small business owners. We are ready to work with anyone who wants to fix this crisis. We will not stay silent while Canadians live in fear.

After 10 years of failures, Canadians have had enough: enough excuses, enough delays and enough crime. It is time to stop the extortion crisis. It is time to change the law. It is time to put communities first.

• (1205)

**Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the hon. member mentioned foreign interference. In fact I am very familiar with the issue because I brought in a motion in the previous Parliament to deal with foreign interference. In fact our government brought in Bill C-70 to deal with those situations as well.

I would like the hon. member to tell the House what kind of foreign interference he is hearing about on the ground, and what his leader is doing to curb that situation.

**Amanpreet Gill:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same: We need a foreign registry. The Liberals have been talking about this for a

very long time. I think it was passed in 2024. We need all foreign agencies to register here; that is the only way we can tackle them. I know trade deals are important, but Canadian lives also matter. That is what I would let the Liberals know. Just get some action done.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that the motion is devoid of nuance. For example, the Conservatives are saying that they want to bar refugee claimants with criminal records, something that is already provided for in the law. Without further nuance, this means that refugee claimants who are political prisoners or prisoners of conscience would automatically be barred.

Would my colleague not agree that this motion should have included a role for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada?

[*English*]

**Amanpreet Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are not blocking the asylum system; we are just saying that we have to keep the criminals away. In the extortions in B.C., all the criminals who were caught by police claimed asylum, and that is what we have to change. We know that once criminals apply for asylum, they will have a few years and will keep doing crimes, making our streets unsafe. We want safe streets for Canadians, and that is what our approach is.

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I hear from police officers and victims is that the victims are afraid to come forward to testify because the person who has committed the crime against them will be released on bail, if not within minutes then maybe within hours of having been detained by the police.

Does the member agree that there should be tougher punishment for criminals for extortion?

**Amanpreet Gill:** Mr. Speaker, I have come across so many police officers. They are doing their job, but in this judicial system, while the police are still filing their complaints, the criminals are getting out on bail. This is where we have to work to change the laws. The member for Oxford brought forward Bill C-242 on jail not bail for criminals, and that is where we have to work together to tackle these criminals.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, would the member not agree that the motion is just an illusion of acting, that it is actually just window dressing?

We have already addressed the issue in Bill C-12. These criminals would not be allowed to apply for asylum, and even for those who have, their cases would be cancelled.

*Business of Supply*

**Amanpreet Gill:** Mr. Speaker, last week there was an amendment in committee that the Liberal Party opposed. It took them almost 10 years to come up with something, which is so weak.

We fully disagree with the member opposite. We have to come up with stronger laws that will protect Canadians.

● (1210)

**Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Surrey Centre.

Let me begin clearly: Extortion is a serious crime. It terrorizes families, threatens small business owners and undermines confidence in public safety. In Surrey and across British Columbia, I have met with constituents who are living in fear. They deserve real solutions, not political theatre.

The Conservative motion claims to be about fighting extortion, but it relies on misinformation and proposals that would weaken, not strengthen, our justice system.

In British Columbia, the federal government has provided significant resources to combat extortion. We have committed \$4 million to strengthen the B.C. extortion task force through the regional integrated drug enforcement team. In addition, the federal government and the Province of B.C. have jointly provided \$1 million to support victims of extortion. The federal RCMP will deploy up to an additional 20 RCMP officers, along with helicopter resources, to support on-the-ground enforcement efforts in Surrey. Further funding is being delivered through the federal gun and gang violence action fund to disrupt gun and gang violence linked to extortion networks.

We have also taken decisive action by listing the Bishnoi gang as a terrorist organization. The RCMP and the CBSA are actively supporting investigations, laying charges and, where appropriate, also pursuing removal orders against foreign nationals who are inadmissible due to criminality or to non-compliance with Canadian law.

Once passed, Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act, would modernize immigration enforcement and crack down on transnational organized crime, including extortion networks, making it harder for violent offenders to exploit procedural delays.

Now let us address the Conservative proposals directly. They are claiming that non-citizens convicted of serious crimes can make refugee claims to avoid consequences. That is simply false. Claiming asylum does not and will not prevent criminals from being punished to the fullest extent of the law. Criminal matters take precedence over immigration matters. When CBSA believes a claimant is inadmissible on the grounds of serious criminality, their claim is put on hold while their criminal case proceeds. If they are found inadmissible, their asylum claim is terminated, their lawful status ends, and they face removal.

Foreign nationals already subject to a removal order cannot make a refugee claim. In cases of serious inadmissibility, those individuals are permanently barred from re-entering Canada.

CBSA is aggressively pursuing the removal of criminals attempting to misuse the asylum system. Where credibility issues arise,

CBSA prioritizes those files, presents evidence to the Immigration and Refugee Board and seeks dismissal or admissibility hearings leading to deportation.

Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, a claim is already ineligible if the person is inadmissible for serious criminality or has been convicted in or outside Canada of an offence punishable by at least 10 years. Adopting the Conservative proposal would not close a loophole; it would create new administrative layers and invite litigation.

● (1215)

Paragraph (b) of the motion would bar asylum claims for those with active criminal proceedings. That, too, has already been addressed. CBSA officers may suspend eligibility reviews when a claimant is charged with a serious offence. Once the criminal case is resolved, the officer resumes the assessment and may deem the person ineligible. Canada's system already prevents asylum claims from advancing when serious charges are pending.

In paragraph (c), the Conservatives call for an end to so-called leniency to avoid deportation. What they are really proposing is to prohibit judges from considering immigration consequences at sentencing. Judges may consider immigration consequences to ensure that a sentence remains fit and proportionate, but never to reduce a sentence below what is appropriate. There is no evidence that the courts are improperly lowering sentences to avoid deportation. Any rare adjustments are reviewable on appeal and often reflect the joint positions of the Crown and defence. Eliminating judicial discretion would weaken, not strengthen, the justice system.

The Conservatives are also demanding the repeal of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Canadians elected this government with a mandate to strengthen public safety and modernize the justice system, and we are delivering. We have tabled more than six major public safety and criminal justice bills designed to crack down on violent and repeat offenders. Conservatives have delayed them, while premiers, police chiefs and municipalities have called for their urgent passage.

*Business of Supply*

Bill C-75 did not weaken bail. It strengthened protections for victims of intimate partner violence by defining “intimate partner” to include former partners, creating a reverse onus for repeat offenders and requiring courts to consider prior convictions. Bill C-14 would go even further by clarifying that restraint does not mean automatic release, yet the Conservatives have blocked it. I have seen that in the House. The other day, speaker after speaker from the Conservatives did nothing but block Bill C-14, which would strengthen the bail act.

Bill C-5 did not allow house arrest for serious extortion. Conditional sentences are unavailable when sentences exceed two years or offenders pose a public safety threat. Mandatory jail time remains for extortion involving firearms or criminal organizations, which are exactly the cases that Canadians are most concerned about.

Our current legislation agenda targets extortion directly and effectively. Bill C-14 would create a new reverse onus for violent extortion, require consecutive sentences for related crimes like arson, prohibit weapons at bail and strengthen geographic restrictions. Together with Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-9 and Bill C-12, these reforms would strengthen border enforcement, cybersecurity, hate crime laws and immigration integrity. These are evidence-based measures supported by law enforcement and municipalities across Canada.

Extortion is not a street-level crime; it is driven by organized networks and money laundering. That is why the response must be comprehensive. Fighting extortion requires evidence-based policy and firm endorsement, not false promises, and it requires a justice system that is tough on crime while still upholding the rule of law.

The Conservative approach is to blame immigration and repeal laws. Our approach is to dismantle criminal networks, strengthen enforcement, protect victims and uphold the rule of law. Victims of extortion want results, not slogans. This motion would divide communities, undermine due process and distract from real solutions.

• (1220)

For those reasons, I will oppose this motion and support the serious, targeted reforms needed to keep Canadians safe.

**Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to build a narrative of obstructionism by saying we are obstructing their efforts to combat the problems that they themselves have created over the last 11 years. The irony here is that they are actually opposing a bill that would fix some of the problems they have created, which they claim they want to fix.

My question for the member is why.

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that Bill C-2, which would give lawful access to police forces, Bill C-12, which deals with asylum seekers, and Bill C-14, which deals with bail reforms, are the bills that police chiefs, premiers and the public want. There is only one party, the Conservative Party, that is blocking those bills and not letting them pass.

The Conservatives are the ones who are putting Canadians at risk every day. That is what I am hearing on the ground, and I am here to fix that problem.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not long ago, the House voted on a bill dealing with applications for citizenship by descent.

In committee, an amendment was moved to require that applicants for this kind of citizenship undergo the same citizenship screening as any other applicant, particularly the criminal record check.

Why did the Liberals, along with the NDP, vote against this amendment, ensuring it would be defeated?

[*English*]

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, any person who claims to be a citizen, either by descent or by naturalization, has to go through criminal and security checks. That is what I personally believe and what this Parliament believes, and that legislation is in place.

**Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for all of his hard work, especially on this topic and the challenges we are seeing with extortion and other crimes.

We all know that as criminal organizations evolve, they look at new ways to do things. Can the member for Surrey Newton let me know what he is hearing on the ground about the kinds of changes being made, and how important people think these changes are that we are bringing forward?

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, recently, members might have noticed that some of the criminals who are trying to commit crimes are seeking asylum. When we see Bill C-12, which has already gone through the House, pass through the Senate and get royal assent, they will not be eligible to claim asylum, effective June 2025.

What I am hearing on the ground is that the people who are caught should not be free. They should be kept behind bars. If the Conservatives and the opposition parties support Bill C-14, once it passes, those criminals will stay behind bars and not be out and free.

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member criticizes the Conservatives on this side of the House while we are proposing solutions. Since the election, there has been a lot of talk, but no action. The Liberals know what needs to be done to keep criminals and terrorists off our streets.

Will the member be voting for the Conservative motion, which prioritizes the safety of Canadians over political expedience?

*Business of Supply*

**Sukh Dhaliwal:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, if we look at this motion, it is nothing but politics. It has no solutions. The only solution is the immediate action we need on the ground to catch those criminals.

I want to tell the hon. member that I brought up that the CFSEU-BC should be deployed in British Columbia. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety, the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime and the B.C. Liberal caucus supported me in that. The only person who did not support that is the Leader of the Opposition. The member should go and tell his leader to support me on that issue.

• (1225)

**Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about a matter that is of deep and pressing concern to my constituents in Surrey Centre, as well as to those living in the Lower Mainland region in my home province.

The government's first priority is to protect Canadians and their communities. We are deeply concerned about the reports of people in B.C., in Ontario and across Canada who have been targeted by extortion, threats and violence. These types of crimes are insidious. They sow fear in our communities and prevent hard-working Canadians from running their businesses and sleeping soundly at night.

This is why we are working with a wide range of stakeholders and law enforcement to ensure that we address these issues head-on. Our government has tabled over six major public safety and criminal justice bills, legislation that is specifically designed to crack down on violent and repeat offenders, strengthen sentencing and modernize Canada's Criminal Code. This is why I find it surprising that the Conservatives have chosen this as their motion for today. Rather than fast-tracking the legislation that premiers, law enforcement, municipalities, police chiefs and police associations across the country have all called on Parliament to pass urgently, the Conservatives constantly delay and obstruct the committee and the House.

Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 will bolster Canada's law enforcement tool kit with critical assets, like lawful access, to combat transnational organized crime. For those who might not know what lawful access is, it is the ability to catch digital phone systems like WhatsApp and Signal and track them down to the subscriber.

In fact, there is nothing in the Conservative motion today that has not already been addressed or tabled in the House, or that is not categorically false.

Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, would bring in stricter bail laws to address violent and repeat offending and organized crime, and tougher sentencing laws for serious and violent crimes, including extortion. Combined, Bill C-2, Bill C-12 and Bill C-14 would crack down on intimidation and violence by using tools like lawful access, and reduce risks to victims and witnesses.

In addition to this legislation, we have held summits on extortion in collaboration with the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Ontario. These summits were a strong, collaborative effort, bringing together federal and provincial governments, local law enforcement and the RCMP to advance a joint response to extortion cases.

In fact, one of the few parties that have not been willing to collaborate is that of the sponsor of today's motion. Instead, they prefer to mislead Canadians by mis-characterizing our justice system. For instance, this motion calls to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims. First of all, Canadians cannot make refugee claims, so it sounds pretty odd.

Serious criminality is already grounds for inadmissibility for claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Asylum claims do not and will not prevent criminals from being punished to the fullest extent of the law. The minute the CBSA suspects someone of serious criminality, like extortion or firearms offences, it suspends their refugee claim. Everyone other than the Conservatives knows a person cannot claim asylum if they are being investigated for serious criminality.

While Conservatives continue to rely on slogans and ideological proposals, our government is delivering thoughtful, targeted reforms to strengthen public safety and protect Canadians. We have announced millions in funding through Canada's border plan for the creation of regional integrated drug enforcement teams, which will bring together law and border enforcement resources from multiple agencies and jurisdictions to fight organized drug crime and combat extortion. We have announced additional funding to help bolster the work of local law enforcement to combat extortion, support and provide services to victims and build on efforts already under way through local police task forces in Peel Region and in British Columbia.

The CBSA is committed to supporting the task force through the removal of inadmissible foreign nationals involved in extortion and other serious criminal offences.

Further, because we know that preventing crime in the long term means targeting its roots, we have allocated \$390 million over five years to support provinces and territories with prevention programs and law enforcement activities through the initiative to take action against gun and gang violence. Our government is also providing \$250 million through the building safer communities fund directly to municipalities and indigenous communities to bolster gang prevention programming and counter the social conditions that lead to criminality.

*Business of Supply*

• (1230)

These actions build on the national coordination and support team, which was established by the RCMP in February 2024 as a nationwide alliance supporting police and helping to coordinate and advance extortion investigations across Canada. Through the national coordination and support team, the RCMP is working with police departments across Canada and internationally to address extortion and violent incidences.

In response to the call for more federal resources to address the extortion situation in Surrey, the RCMP is providing 20 additional federal officers and helicopter resources to strengthen local operational capacity. As I have made clear, we are collaborating across all levels of jurisdiction to combat extortion and help those who have been affected. We are also investing in an additional 1,000 new RCMP and 1,000 new CBSA personnel. This funding comes from budget 2025, which commits over \$1.8 billion over four years to strengthen federal law enforcement.

To ensure that members in our communities feel safe, we have introduced legislation; made significant federal investments in enhancing federal law enforcement capacity, directly supporting provincial and locally led efforts; and continued to meet with affected communities. We are using all our tools to crack down on crime and protect our communities.

I would like to take this time to recognize the tireless work that our officers in the RCMP and CBSA do each and every day. If someone receives threats, we urge them not to comply with demands and to report the incident to their local police of jurisdiction. All of us have a right to live and work free of threats and intimidation. We will continue to work together with all levels of government and law enforcement to ensure that all Canadians have safe communities in which to live, work and raise their families.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking the secretary for coming to Winnipeg and addressing a number of concerns, concerns he is addressing here today, by meeting with different stakeholders. I was really impressed with the manner in which he alleviated a great deal of concern.

I think a lot of that concern comes out of misinformation that comes from the Conservative Party as it tries to give a false impression that the government is not doing anything. The reality is that the Conservative Party of Canada has been filibustering crime legislation that would have helped with issues such as extortion.

Can the member provide his thoughts on the crime package that we currently have? If the Conservatives would stop the filibustering, we would be able to do more.

**Hon. Randeep Sarai:** Mr. Speaker, I was able to go to Winnipeg to speak to people who have been victims of extortion or who are getting threats.

Let me be clear that, if Bill C-2 had passed, if we had legislation on lawful access, we would not have police and prosecution departments working four to six months to get production orders to find out the source of a threatening call. If we were prioritizing that rather than making slogans and having opposition day motions like

we are today, we would have a tool the police could immediately use to find out, when someone gets a threatening extortion call, who is making that call. Then the next level of action could be taken to wiretap, surveil or do other things.

When we have legislation that was created so far in the past that it predates cellphones, we need to modernize it to this date and time so we can capture those who are extorting our vulnerable citizens.

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I always find it ironic when we hear the Liberals talking about crime, crime rates and things like that. They have had 10 years in government, and if we look at any of the trend lines, they show that, once the Liberals got into power, crime started increasing. When Conservatives were in power, crime was decreasing.

Will the hon. member at least acknowledge that the Liberals have been the cause of the rise of crime in Canada?

**Hon. Randeep Sarai:** Mr. Speaker, the funny thing is that, in modernizing our legal system, most of the legislation we have had to deal with is because of the violations of the previous government. The Supreme Court gave ruling after ruling saying that all the legislation the Conservatives passed was invalid, was not just and does not comply with our charter. Over the last 10 years, we have been fixing all the Conservatives' errors.

Crime is actually on the decline in Canada. I think major serious crime is on the decline. The Liberal government will continue to work hard to address the root causes and make Canada a safer, more compliant place, where our citizens can live freely, free of crime and free of threats of extortion.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in several European countries, the standard is to process asylum claims within three or four months. Here, it takes four or five years, sometimes longer. In my colleague's opinion, what are the consequences of such long wait times? It is also a humanitarian issue.

Should we not try to reduce these wait times?

[*English*]

**Hon. Randeep Sarai:** Mr. Speaker, I think the delays, in the criminal aspect, have zero weight, because immediately upon the suspicion that someone is involved in criminal activity, the asylum proceedings suspend. The CBSA will not pursue those. The CBSA goes through the claimant's criminal actions, so it does not affect it.

When it comes to anybody who has been living over a year in Canada, under the new bill, if it passes the Senate, comes back here and we expeditiously pass it, they would be ineligible for asylum. That would reduce the timelines in general, but when it comes to anybody involved in serious criminality, the asylum process would not be a hindrance to their criminal trial. It gets suspended. Once their sentencing is done, they would be deported as needed.

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentions a very important point. We need to pass Bill C-2 to catch the criminals so that they can face penalties. The Conservatives seem to misrepresent, because in this country we have a maximum penalty of 25 years and minimum sentences for firearms and organized crime.

**Hon. Randeep Sarai:** Mr. Speaker, we need to pass Bill C-2 immediately so that we can give the tools to our law enforcement to catch the extortionists, who are violating our homes and our communities. I urge, on a non-partisan basis, all parties to please enforce this and pass this bill.

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Canada is facing a crisis that begins at our borders and ends up in our communities. Criminals have been emboldened by weak Liberal policies, and non-citizen criminals have been able to exploit our asylum system. Some of these criminals are now exploiting the refugee system, and those with false claims are remaining in Canada.

At the same time, extortion has exploded 330% since the Liberals were elected. Families and small businesses in places such as Brampton, my hometown of Edmonton, Surrey, Vancouver and Calgary are living in fear. Many of them are actually contemplating leaving this country.

Violent crime is at the highest level we have ever seen in Canada. In British Columbia alone, extortion is up nearly 500%. This is happening right across the country and in plain sight. In fact, these criminals are filming themselves shooting at houses, creating videos and posting them. When non-citizen criminals are caught committing serious crimes, including extortion, many of them file false asylum claims, which delay deportation and provide more lenient sentencing. In fact, under the Liberal government's catch-and-release bail laws, many are put right back on the streets, where they are free to reoffend.

Despite many Conservative proposals on both issues of broken immigration and soaring crime, the government continues to make things worse by letting unvetted criminals into our country, and then allowing them to stay as they exploit asylum loopholes. The government is also refusing to enforce tough penalties for serious crimes. No wonder crime is out of control and victims are the ones paying the price.

Just last week, the Premier of British Columbia expressed deep frustration with Canada's immigration laws as they pertain to non-citizens committing serious crimes and subsequently making asylum claims. He asked for our laws to be changed and called the abuse of our system "ludicrous". Ten years of weak Liberal laws have allowed serious dangerous criminals, many of whom should never have been in Canada in the first place, to gain a foothold and terrorize our communities.

What is happening today with foreign gangs and criminals across this country is a symptom of two deep structural failures caused by the Liberal government. First, foreign criminals have learned that Canada's asylum system is porous and easily manipulated and sec-

ond, weak Liberal laws have made our system unable to keep criminals in jail or deport non-citizen offenders. These two failures are driving up crime almost everywhere across the country.

On top of this, the Liberals stopped performing criminal record checks on immigrants, allowing people with criminal pasts to come here and continue their criminal careers. Before the summer, I asked the government what it was doing to protect Canadians. The answer was that it is going to hire 1,000 new RCMP officers. In the fall, we asked how many of them had been hired. Those RCMP officers have not yet been hired.

Weak legislation on crime, which does not even keep the worst criminals in jail, as well as Canada's asylum system, which has become a shield for foreign gangs and criminals, continue to spread crime and disorder throughout our streets without an end in sight.

Conservatives have put forward real solutions. On extortion, I introduced my private member's bill, Bill C-381, the protection against extortion act, that would have restored mandatory jail time. The Liberal government voted against it.

On asylum abuse, we warned the government years ago that criminals were exploiting gaps in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and in November, the Conservatives proposed an amendment to Bill C-12 to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes in Canada from making refugee claims. This was a common-sense proposal that would have prevented the abuse of our asylum system and stopped non-citizens from using refugee claims as a tactic to delay deportation after committing serious crimes. The Liberals rejected it at committee.

The Premier of British Columbia has said that Canada's immigration laws must change, and he is right. Conservatives agree with him that non-citizens convicted of serious crimes should not be allowed to file asylum claims. We also agree that Canada must bar non-citizens with active judicial proceedings for serious crimes from making refugee claims. This would stop those who believe they can commit serious crimes and avoid deportation by abusing Canada's asylum system.

● (1240)

Furthermore, the practice of judges granting leniency at sentencing to help non-citizens avoid deportation must end. Too many individuals convicted of serious crimes have benefited from this practice at the expense of victims and public safety.

*Business of Supply*

Conservatives attempted to make these changes by amending Bill C-14, but Liberal members voted it down. That is why the member for Calgary Nose Hill introduced Bill C-220, which is a simple one-line change to the Criminal Code to end this practice once and for all. The bill will be up for a vote in a few weeks, and we hope the Liberal government will support the Conservatives with this bill.

The Liberal government has failed repeatedly. Its members voted against Conservative motions to end loopholes for false refugee claims. They voted against tougher sentencing for extortion in my bill, Bill C-381. They have refused to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which created Canada's revolving-door justice system. They have now rejected our common-sense amendment to Bill C-12 to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes in Canada from making refugee claims.

Conservatives are calling on the government to stop blocking justice and to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims. We also must bar non-citizens with active judicial proceedings for serious crimes from making refugee claims and end the practice of sentencing leniency designed to help non-citizens avoid deportation.

There are overdue, crucial changes to Canada's immigration system and asylum laws that would finally close loopholes and prevent serious offenders from using Canada's immigration system to their advantage.

Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities. They deserve a government willing to stand up for victims, not criminals, and they deserve a federal government that will finally fix the asylum and immigration failures at the core of this crisis. Conservatives have the common-sense solutions. We are ready to work with the Liberals to expedite legislation that will deliver these long overdue changes and restore safety to Canadian neighbourhoods.

• (1245)

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to correct a falsehood, that we stopped criminal background checks. That is completely false. We did not stop any type of background criminal checks from being done.

Second, would the member agree that this motion is completely moot because of Bill C-12? Anyone who has been convicted of a serious crime and who has been in this country for over a year would be ineligible to apply for asylum with Bill C-12. They would not be able to make the claim.

It is the Conservatives who have stalled that bill. That was a provision in Bill C-2, which we tabled in the House back in June, and they did not allow it to progress through the House. Also, anyone who comes in irregularly through our ports of entry would, after only 14 days, not be able to apply for asylum.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, Liberals like to, first of all, believe that crime is down, which is false. The other thing is that after 10 years of bringing forward soft-on-crime Liberal policies that created this mess, that made it easier to get bail and reduced sentencing for serious violent criminals, they are trying to blame us now for stalling legislation. The fact of the matter is that 19 times

we tried to debate those bills to be able to vote on them in the House of Commons and they blocked it. We are ready to work with the government to protect Canadians. Will the government work with us?

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my hon. colleague that it is Liberal failures that have brought us this increase in crime rates across this country. The extortion that the member talked about right off the top is a thing I never heard about when I was growing up. I wonder if my hon. colleague has another story he can share about the extortion happening in Edmonton.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, there are so many stories from across the country, and I have met so many of these victims, from Brampton, Surrey, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and right across the country. I have heard from business owners, many of whom say they came to this country to build a better life for themselves and their families but now are actually thinking about leaving this country because they do not feel safe. I have talked to kids who say they have not been able to go to school because their family is under threat; their family is hiding. Obviously it has a very, very serious effect on children as well. I have talked to families who are now living in their basement. They do not live upstairs because the upstairs might get shot at, so for weeks and months now, they have been living in their basement because their lives are under threat. Many of these families are in hotels. This has completely uprooted Canadian families, and unfortunately, the Liberals have yet to take real action on this.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota:** Mr. Speaker, we have brought forward a tough-on-crime agenda, including six different bills. The Conservatives have been stalling all of those bills. They would like Canadians to believe that because someone has applied for asylum, they are going to get it, which is completely false. None of those criminals will be allowed to stay in Canada.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. We have brought forward legislation to stop this extortion threat. A couple of years ago, I brought forward a private member's bill that would have brought in mandatory minimum sentences for extortion. The Liberals voted against it. My colleague from Oxford brought in the jail not bail act, which we tried to fast-forward, but the Liberals blocked it. We tried to move forward and debate their legislation to strengthen the bail laws, which does not go as far as we would like, but we were still willing to work with them. They blocked it 19 times.

*Business of Supply*

We are willing to work to help Canadians to be safer, but unfortunately, the Liberals have yet to do so.

**James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Edmonton for his great advocacy and work on this file for so many years and for standing up against extortion and all other crime.

Can he point out even one situation where the Liberals have taken action? They like to make all sorts of claims, but is any one of those claims true?

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, what we see from the Liberals over and over again is more photo ops and more press conferences. They have had summits, meetings and discussions across the country. What we do not see is what they have actually done.

There has been no action. They said before the summer that they would hire 1,000 new RCMP officers. After the summer, we asked them in the fall how many of those have been hired. None had been hired.

They are not taking action. It is more talk from the Liberals. Canadians need action to protect them.

• (1250)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I sat in the basement of a Surrey home and met with the Sahsi family, I could see a combination of fear and anger in the sons who had lost their father, a law-abiding Canadian, a successful businessman, a pillar of the community, Darshan Sahsi, who was gunned down presumably by extortionists. Not long after that, I was at Radio Swift in Surrey, and as I looked up in the studio, staring me in the eye was a bullet hole put there by extortionists who had demanded that the owner pay money to avoid violence.

The other day, I spoke to a Lower Mainland, British Columbia, mother who was paid a visit by police officers warning her that a house on the street was the subject of extortion threats and so there may be stray bullets flying around the neighbourhood, such that some might consider moving their families into the basement, which is to say, not living on the main floor of the home, to avoid the prospect of a stray bullet flying through the window and killing a family member. Many others are saying they are leaving Canada altogether for fear of extortion, going as far away as possible to hide from the extortionists the Liberals have let into the country.

Why now, after 10 years of Liberals, do we in Canada suddenly have an extortion problem that never existed before? Liberal laws have turned extortionists loose on our streets, and Liberal immigration has allowed them into the country in the first place. When they get here and they finally get caught, they can declare refugee status and, under the Liberal laws, avoid leaving the country altogether.

The CBSA reported in December that 15 foreign nationals charged with extortion suddenly discovered they were refugees and claimed status so that they could stay in Canada. Now, because the Liberal government allows these phony claims to occur, Canadians will need to spend millions of dollars housing, feeding and paying the legal bills of these criminals. By the way, there will be an endless string of appeals, so that even when their claims are eventually rejected, God willing, it will still be seven years' more cost and more danger for Canadians. Liberals force taxpayers to pay for a

higher standard of living for foreign criminals living wrongly in Canada than they allow for the hard-working, law-abiding seniors who built this country.

We have seen cases, case after case actually, where judges relying on Liberal laws are reducing sentences for foreign nationals who commit crimes in Canada to avoid "immigration consequences". In one case, a foreign national attempted to buy sex with a child and received a lighter sentence so deportation could be avoided. In another, a foreign national driving the wrong way on a street crashed into and killed an entire family. He got just months in jail because the court wanted to protect his immigration status. In Calgary, a non-citizen convicted of sexual assault got leniency so that he could stay in Canada.

Canadians deserve to live in safe communities. They deserve freedom from random violence. They deserve to ride transit without fear of being attacked by strangers. They deserve to know that their kids can play safely in the streets, including into the evening hours. They deserve to run businesses without getting threatened or shot at or having their storefront burned down. They deserve justice and immigration systems that put law-abiding Canadians first, not foreign national criminals.

There is a direct cause and effect here. Liberal catch-and-release laws and Liberal open borders immigration have led to this 330% increase in extortion. We can say that in the inverse: that extortion was about 90% lower when the Conservatives were in power. As we see Liberal members trying to blame others for their 10-year-long record, we can see that it is under their watch and their laws that we have witnessed the more than quadrupling of this horrendous sector of crime.

• (1255)

There has been a 55% increase, under the Liberal government, in violent crime overall. Businesses are being shaken down. Bullets are shot through storefront windows. Firebombs are thrown in residential neighbourhoods. Extortionists are now so brazen that they post videos of shooting up residential communities on their social media because they know there will be no consequences for their crimes under the Liberal government. This is the daily reality for too many Canadians in Surrey, Brampton, Vancouver, Calgary and the GTA.

*Business of Supply*

I was at a Calgary business that builds homes a few months back. I did a photo line, where I met with all the people who wanted to say hello. Out of about 150 conversations, there must have been 30 or so people who had either been threatened or knew someone who had been threatened. About 20% of the people I spoke to said they had been or that a close loved one had been threatened with extortion.

This crisis was not predetermined but it was predictable. We predicted that this would happen when the Liberals passed laws unleashing this crime.

I look across the aisle at the Liberal government here today. The same ministers who are now in the Liberal cabinet voted for the laws that caused this. They voted for the Liberal bill, Bill C-75, which created Liberal bail. Liberal bail is a system that requires judges to release criminals at the earliest opportunity under the least onerous conditions, something the Prime Minister continues to support.

The Liberal government, including the members sitting here with us, voted for Bill C-5, which actually reduced jail time for extortion with a gun. The Liberal government brought in laws that actually lowered sentences for violent and sexual offenders, allowing them to serve their sentences in the comfort of their living rooms. We have worked to reverse these Liberal laws by putting forward common-sense proposals that would keep our Canadian people safe. We have tried, but the Liberals will not stop obstructing in order to protect their soft-on-crime agenda.

Conservatives have tried. We put forward amendments to the Criminal Code. For example, there was Bill C-381. I think that was the member for Edmonton Gateway's bill. It would create mandatory prison sentences of 10 years for extortionists. Liberals blocked it. Liberals obstructed. We tried to repeal Bill C-75, catch-and-release bail, but Liberals obstructed and blocked us. We tried to repeal Bill C-5, the house arrest law. Liberals obstructed and Liberals blocked. They opposed the Conservative bill, Bill C-220, which would have prevented judges from giving lighter sentences to people based on the fact that they are here as immigrants.

We are calling on the government to stop obstructing and stop preventing us from fixing the system that it broke. That means acting now. Today, we have before the House of Commons a motion that would ensure that anyone convicted of a crime would not be eligible to seek refugee status in Canada. It would require that they be removed immediately from our country and that their status as an asylum seeker would immediately be revoked.

This is a reasonable motion that would bring peace and tranquility to our communities. It would allow small business people to once again operate fearlessly, focusing all of their attention on hiring workers and providing affordable goods to their customers. It would allow the law-abiding immigrants who came here to contribute to do so in open and free communities without fear of danger. It would allow places like Surrey, Brampton, northeast Calgary, Vancouver and the GTA to be peaceful and tranquil once again, as they were before the Liberal government.

We ask them to work with us, to put aside partisan obstructionism, to accept that they were wrong to liberalize our laws and our

borders, and to instead stand on the side of law-abiding, hard-working Canadians and restore the promise of safe streets and a country filled with opportunity and security.

● (1300)

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we care deeply about this issue. That is why we put forward six bills to help address it. If the Leader of the Opposition cared so much, he would put forward a genuine suggestion, not one in a motion that is made moot by Bill C-12, the stronger immigration and borders act, which is already in the Senate. It makes all of their suggestions moot. What he should do is address the issue of Bill C-2, which is lawful access. Police have been asking for this provision across this country.

Let me put it in simple terms that the Leader of the Opposition would understand: Would he allow the vote and pass the bill, so that, therefore, we could catch the criminals?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, they have not brought that bill back for a vote, so they might actually want to decide what they are doing. Bill C-2 is about allowing the government to read personal emails and mail without a warrant. That is what the bill does. The problem is not that law-abiding Canadians need to be spied upon; it is that foreign criminals need to be kicked out of this country.

The member then went on to say that she has already passed a bill, which is now in the Senate, that would do everything that is in this motion. If that were the case, then they would have no problem voting for the motion. Of course, that is not the case. They have passed no such law. In fact, they are blocking and obstructing action to protect Canadians.

Let me read the motion, as I would like them to tell us which part they disagree with. Is it barring non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims, barring non-citizens with judicial proceedings, ending the practice of leniency for non-citizens convicted of serious crimes, or repealing Liberal bail and house arrest?

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the motion calls on the government to “bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims”. However, it seems to overlook the existence of political refugees, people falsely accused of committing criminal acts by corrupt authoritarian regimes. If adopted as is, the motion would prevent someone like Raif Badawi from joining his family in Canada.

*Business of Supply*

That is why the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada exists: to determine whether or not the charges these people face are valid. Barring anyone who is facing charges from entering the country makes no sense, considering some could be political refugees.

Is the hon. leader of the Conservative Party prepared to amend his motion to that effect?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I would be willing to consider an amendment.

The member says that there should be a process to allow foreign criminals to appeal to remain in Canada. I do not agree. Once someone has been convicted of a serious crime, they should be removed from Canada. They should not be entitled to years and years of expensive legal appeals that are paid for by our taxpayers and that allow foreign criminals to have a better quality of life and a higher income than Canadian seniors who have contributed to our country for many years.

We want to bring back the principle that Canadians matter. We will protect our own people, not foreign criminals.

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, if a non-citizen enters Canada, there is nothing to stop them from committing a serious violent crime and then going on to make a bogus asylum claim. This is why Conservatives put forward an amendment to Bill C-12 to close this loophole.

Could the Leader of the Opposition speculate as to why the Liberals are trying to pass off the one-year, get-out-of-jail-free card, bogus refugee policy that is in Bill C-12 right now as a good thing, as opposed to actually fixing the problem?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. I heard the Liberal members across the way say that a convicted criminal would not be able to get their refugee status recognized. Even if that were true, and it is not, the problem right now is that they get to spend seven or eight years in appeals before they actually leave, during which time we have to pay their bills.

I have asked the Liberal members to tell us what in this motion they are against: barring non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims, barring non-citizens with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims, ending the practice of leniency to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes to avoid deportation, or repealing Liberal bail and Liberal house arrest.

Which of those individual measures are they opposed to? Let them say it out loud so Canadians can understand their real agenda.

● (1305)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise. I found it a bit much when I heard the Leader of the Opposition saying “blocking and obstructing” and attributing those two words to the government. Talk about hypocrisy.

At the end of the day, we need to reflect on why we are where we are today. The new Prime Minister was elected less than a year ago. Going through the last campaign, it was well defined that we needed and wanted to do something in regard to crime. It is an election platform issue. The Prime Minister and the government, meaning every Liberal member of Parliament, made a commitment to deal with the issue of crime. As a holistic approach, we have a serious package of legislation before us today.

When the leader of the Conservative Party tries to give false information and mislead Canadians, whether it is inside or outside this chamber, he does a disservice to all Canadians. It might be good for the Conservative Party of Canada, but it is not good for Canadians. Canadians, even Conservative-minded Canadians living in Conservative MPs' ridings, know that what the Conservatives are saying is wrong and want to see the crime package of bills passed here in the House of Commons.

It is absolutely ridiculous to try to imply that the Conservative Party is not filibustering our legislation, because that is the reality. They talk about it. They complain about it. They spread misinformation through social media, yet when it comes time to actually act in the best interests of Canadians, they filibuster.

I could talk about Bill C-2. Bill C-2 deals with lawful access amongst other things. The Conservative approach to that was that they did not want it to go anywhere. They were so stubborn in filibustering Bill C-2 that the government had to come up with a new piece of legislation, Bill C-12. Bill C-12 was a huge effort by a couple of ministers, in particular the Minister of Immigration, to deal with the types of issues that the Conservatives are talking about in their motion, yet Bill C-12, the new bill, has not passed, just take a look at the time it took for the Conservative Party to get it out at third reading.

Bill C-2, on the other hand, on lawful access, is going nowhere. The Conservative Party refuses to enable our law enforcement agencies to have lawful access. Every one of the other Five Eyes countries has it, just not Canada. The Conservative Party refuses to allow it to proceed. They talk about extortion, but if they believe in fighting extortion, then they should pass Bill C-2.

Rhonda Kirkland: Tell the truth, Kevin.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is the truth.

By the way, I will be splitting my time with the member for Daventry.

*Business of Supply*

However, it goes far beyond that. Let us look at Bill C-9, on combatting racism and hate. Once again, the Conservative Party is preventing that legislation from passing. Conservatives will not even let it out of the committee. It is filibuster after filibuster. They complain a lot to Canadians, but in reality, when it comes to actions, their only action is to filibuster to prevent legislation from passing and to try to frustrate the government. Bill C-9 is still in committee, with no indication that it is going to pass.

Bill C-14 is such an important piece of legislation that I have asked the House to sit until midnight. I have asked, for weeks, for unanimous consent for us to continue on, to try to get the Conservatives to acknowledge the importance of bail reform legislation.

● (1310)

That is what Bill C-14 is: important bail reform legislation that every provincial and territorial premier has indicated they want passed. Law enforcement agencies and Canadians as a whole are demanding bail reform legislation. The only reason we do not have bail reform laws today in Canada is the Conservative Party of Canada, and the leader tries to imply that we are being obstructionist. What a joke that is. The Conservative Party has consistently been filibustering important legislation.

We can talk about Bill C-16. It was not that long ago that we introduced it for second reading. I listen to what the Conservatives have already indicated. They do not like the bill. Bill C-16 would reinstate mandatory minimum sentences in law. With respect to the issue of femicide, the bill is something that I think would put Canada on the front line in terms of dealing with that very important issue.

Where are the Conservatives on it? They say we have given ourselves only a couple of days of debate, and they want more debate. Nothing prevents them from allowing legislation to at least get to the committee stage. We can have extensive debates and all sorts of presentations, and hear from Canadians. We can still have debate when a bill comes back for third reading. The Conservatives use this as an excuse; it is not real or legitimate in terms of their filibustering.

The Conservatives say they want democracy inside the chamber. I love and support democracy; that is the reason I have asked on many occasions to allow us to sit longer hours so more members would be able to speak to issues. That is why I have argued that some of the silliness, such as some of the concurrence reports that the Conservatives have brought, has been to prevent the government from passing a legislative agenda dealing with crime.

The Conservative Party is not consistent. The only thing it is consistent on is self-serving. Conservatives prefer to serve the interests of the Conservative Party of Canada than to serve the interests of Canadians. They make a pile of money through fundraising, generating millions of dollars by trying to preach through emails and so forth that the government is not doing anything. The ultimate irony is that the Conservative Party would actually prevent legislation from passing, then say the government controls the legislative agenda and that it cannot pass anything.

Given a dozen grade 12 students from any public school in Canada, I can filibuster indefinitely too. It does not take much to

filibuster legislation, and the Conservative Party has actually demonstrated that. I have witnessed a destructive force from the Conservative Party in dealing with legislation. The Conservatives talk about other commitments and ask why the government has not brought them forward.

The budget implementation bill is legislation that the Conservatives continue to filibuster. There is no indication whatsoever. If the leader of the Conservative Party were true to his words, the Conservative Party would come forward and say, "Here is the legislation we will pass. Let us get it to committee. Let us get things to third reading. Let us deliver for Canadians."

That is what we should be striving to do. That is why there is a great deal of frustration coming from the government benches. Because of a minority government, we need to have more co-operation coming from opposition, and that is just not happening. We are not getting the co-operation required in order to pass the legislation that Canadians deserve. That was legislation that was made in the form of an election platform.

Even though it is platform issues that we are talking about, commitments that were made to Canadians, the Conservative Party of Canada continues to filibuster. That is the reason I ultimately believe that the Conservative Party needs to start listening to what Canadians are saying and responding in kind here on the floor of the House of Commons. They can do a whole lot better on delivering to Canadians by listening to Canadians and actually giving more co-operation in passing the legislation.

● (1315)

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, so many pieces of the member from Winnipeg North's speech did not make a lot of sense. A couple of things were regarding Bill C-14. The Liberals were the ones who decided to defer Bill C-14. The member mentioned the BIA. Portions of that are going to be looked at in the public safety committee. The minute that motion came forward, we all voted in favour of looking at it right away to move it in front of other things, so what the member said is simply not the fact.

We also talked about Bill C-16. We support a lot of Bill C-16, but we do not support that it would take away the mandatory part of minimum sentences.

The last note I have is that the member talked about filibustering. The member for Ajax, a near-neighbour of mine, is a parliamentary secretary. She has stood up in the House and spoken 32 times so far this session. The member who just spoke has filibustered; he has stood up 1,250 times.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I do not quite understand that last bit.

*Business of Supply*

At the end of the day, the Conservatives can say whatever they want in regard to the bail reform legislation. If they look at one of my 1,000-plus comments, they would find that I have consistently said on behalf of the Government of Canada that the bail reform legislation was absolutely critical.

I challenged the Conservatives in November and December to give Canadians a Christmas gift and allow Bill C-14 to go through the system. I even stood up in the chamber and asked for leave to get Bill C-14 passed, even to accommodate that by allowing us to sit until midnight for two weeks. The only people who said no to it were the Conservative members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am increasingly concerned about the parliamentary secretary's growing anger. I have had the honour of serving with him for just over a decade. Instead of talking about the motion, he is saying that the government is unable to move its legislative agenda forward as it would like. He is talking as though the government has a majority, when, as we know, this is a minority government.

The government is so close to having a majority, that before some Liberal members resigned, it was one vote away from a majority. This means that the Liberals could come to an agreement with the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP or even the Green Party member to move their work forward. There are measures that can be used to block stalling tactics if one has a majority of votes in the House.

Why is the government behaving as though it has a majority when it has a minority government and up to four opportunities to come to an agreement with parties and move its work forward?

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, it is not that we are acting as if we had a majority. I suspect there is a great deal of frustration because there is substantial legislation before us that is election-driven. There is a newly elected Prime Minister, elected less than a year ago, who made commitments to Canadians in the last federal election. Every Liberal member of Parliament wants the legislation we advocated for in the last election, but we are finding that the opposition parties continue to want to filibuster that legislation, which does cause frustration.

That is one of the disadvantages of a minority government. What is necessary is for opposition members to come forward and say that if we cannot get the support of the Conservative Party, they will work with us—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Winnipeg North will know that I am pretty fair-minded. If the Conservatives are filibustering, I would love to join him in denouncing that, but I do not see any sign of the Conservatives' filibustering, particularly on Bill C-2, which came forward for first reading on June 5. The Liberals then put it up for debate on June 18, September 16 and September 17, and we have not seen it since, largely because huge portions of it were put into Bill C-12. I do not see any signs of the Conservatives' stopping Bill C-12, since

it went through on December 11 by unanimous consent. I asked to be registered as in opposition.

In fairness, could my hon. colleague point out any episode that I could not find online, in the committee hearings or in the House of filibustering by the Conservatives on Bill C-2?

• (1320)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely could, and if the member wants to sit down with me, I will go into great detail with her on it.

Remember that the reason we stopped calling Bill C-2 was that the Conservative Party refused to pass it. That was why we had to come up with Bill C-12; it was a compromise. It was the only thing the Conservatives would pass that was from Bill C-2, which denied Canadians' having a law that had lawful access, which deals with extortion, and—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Davenport.

**Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be as passionate an intervenor as my dear colleague from Winnipeg North, but nonetheless I have a few very important things to say about the opposition day motion today.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate today. As the chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and as someone who has heard testimony from legal experts, law enforcement and settlement organizations over recent months, I rise to speak to the motion with a perspective grounded in both evidence and our government's principled approach to public safety.

As members may know, I am the daughter of immigrant parents who fled their respective countries due to poverty, war and discrimination. They came to Canada to find a safe place to raise their children, so I very much understand on a personal level what our immigration system means to families, but I also understand that public safety must always be paramount.

Let me be absolutely clear from the outset: Claiming asylum cannot and will not prevent criminals from being punished to the fullest extent of the law. The Conservatives would have Canadians believe that our asylum system provides a safe haven for criminals. This is simply not true. Our Immigration and Refugee Protection Act already establishes that a claim is ineligible to be referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board if the claimant has been determined to be inadmissible on grounds of serious criminality or by reason of a conviction in Canada for an offence punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least 10 years.

*Business of Supply*

When CBSA believes a claimant is inadmissible on the grounds of serious criminality, their claim is put on hold while their case goes through the criminal justice system. If they are found guilty, their asylum claim is terminated. Their authorized period of stay in Canada ends, and they will face removal. In cases of serious inadmissibility, removed foreign nationals are permanently barred from re-entering Canada. Criminal matters take precedence over immigration matters. Making a refugee claim does not exempt lawbreakers from the consequences of their actions.

I want to address the calls in the motion to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. The Conservatives claim Bill C-5 allowed house arrest for serious crimes like extortion. This is simply incorrect. Conditional sentence orders are never available where the sentence is two years or more, which is typically the case in serious extortion offences. They are also unavailable where an offender poses a threat to public safety. Furthermore, we maintained mandatory jail time for extortion involving restricted or illegal firearms or extortion connected to criminal organizations, precisely the types of extortion cases Canadians are most concerned about today. The Conservatives should do their homework before repeating slogans.

On Bill C-75, the Conservatives' central criticism is that it codified the principle of restraint and bail, but what they refuse to acknowledge is that Bill C-75 actually strengthened protections for victims of intimate partner violence. It formally defined "intimate partner" in the Criminal Code to include ex-partners. It created a reverse onus for repeat intimate partner violence offenders, making it harder for them to obtain bail, and it now requires judges to consider prior intimate partner violence convictions and imposes stronger penalties for repeat offenders.

The president of the Criminal Lawyers' Association of Canada has stated clearly that the claim that Bill C-75 weakened public safety is a false narrative. Canadians deserve a debate grounded in facts. If the Conservatives want to repeal a law that made it harder for repeat intimate partner violence offenders to get bail, then they should say so directly.

Just last week at the immigration committee I chair, we heard from Professor Audrey Macklin, chair of human rights law at the University of Toronto. She confirmed that under Canadian law as it currently exists, individuals convicted of serious crimes are ineligible to seek refugee protection. When asked about individuals who claim asylum after being charged with crimes, she was clear that if they are convicted of that offence, they will be ineligible because the eligibility requirements make them ineligible.

• (1325)

She also noted that those who receive custodial sentences tend to be removed, because they are in custody. Also, CBSA has historically prioritized people serving criminal sentences because they are, frankly, easy to find.

We further heard from representatives of the Refugee Centre, who told us that, in the first nine months of 2025, the acceptance rates for refugee claims reached 78%, of which less than 1% were fraudulent claims. This tells us that the initial decision-making is generally sound and that our system is working. Yes, it is overloaded, but it is working.

Everyone deserves to be and feel safe in their communities, and that is why Canada's government is taking real action to keep Canadians safe, not through slogans and divisive rhetoric but through comprehensive, evidence-based reforms. We have introduced several major bills: Bill C-2, the strong borders act; Bill C-12, the immigration system and borders act; and Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, which has introduced over 80 targeted criminal code reforms, many directly addressing extortion.

Bill C-14 would create a new reverse onus for individuals charged with violent extortion, making bail significantly harder to obtain. It would require sentences for extortion to be served consecutively to sentences for related offences like arson. It would prohibit weapons at bail for those accused of extortion and organized crime offences. It would strengthen bail conditions for organized crime-related extortion, including geographic restrictions.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has endorsed Bill C-14, stating that it reflects their own recommendations. Police leaders called for broader reverse onus provisions and tougher penalties for organized crime, and Bill C-14 answers all of those calls. We have also made the largest single investment in Canadian border security, \$1.3 billion. We are hiring 1,000 new CBSA officers and 1,000 new RCMP personnel. On top of all that, we have created a financial crimes agency to combat money laundering and organized crime.

What deeply concerns me about the motion before us is its intent. The Conservatives are not genuinely seeking to strengthen public safety; they are seeking to create division within Canadian society by suggesting that the federal Liberal government is making it easy for criminals to stay in Canada. This is absolutely false.

*Business of Supply*

The member for Calgary Nose Hill proposed an amendment to Bill C-12 that she claims would have prevented non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making asylum claims. However, in reality, our law already does this. Her amendment would have created more operational and administrative procedures and likely resulted in significant litigation, not greater safety.

While Conservatives rely on slogans and ideological proposals, many of which are imported from outside of Canada, our government is delivering thoughtful, targeted reforms that strengthen public safety, protect victims and ensure that our justice system responds to the realities Canadians face today. While Conservatives are holding important public safety bills hostage in committee, we are working across party lines to ensure that we are delivering for Canadians.

Instead of looking backwards with motions designed to divide Canadians, our government is looking ahead. The criminal justice reform agenda being implemented by the government is principled, responsible and will meaningfully address the public safety challenges that communities across Canada are facing today. The reforms contained in Bill C-2, Bill C-9, Bill C-12, Bill C-14 and Bill C-16 have been informed by significant engagement with stakeholders right across this country. The federal government is doing its part. We need the provinces to do their part and the cities to do their part.

In conclusion, I encourage all members to work collaboratively to improve our criminal justice system. Canadians expect no less. They expect us to be serious about public safety, not to play political games with their security.

The government opposes the motion before us because it is based on misinformation, would undermine Canada's sentencing principles, remove long-standing judicial discretion and offer no real solutions to the challenges we face. Instead, I urge all parties to support the passage of Bill C-12 and Bill C-14, legislation that is right before us. In doing so, we will make all Canadians safer.

• (1330)

**Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2023, a foreign national attempted to buy sex from an underage girl. However, when he got to the location, it was an undercover officer, who arrested him. When it came time to sentence this individual, he was given a lesser sentence so as not to affect his immigration status.

Does the member opposite not think that an individual who commits such serious offences should be denied Canadian citizenship?

**Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, we have a series of bills that are before the House that are going to make Canadians safer. I would ask the hon. member on the other side to consider passing those bills collectively. All of those bills would address all of the major issues that have been raised in the House and would ensure that Canadians are safer.

**Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her remarks today. She is part of a group within the Liberal caucus that is focused on the questions of immigration, refugee status and the work the government has to do to both create a better system

and make sure that Canada continues to have a pathway to compassionate admittance into the country.

Obviously, today we are talking about an opposition day motion. However, I would invite the member to share anything else that she believes is important vis-à-vis the government's next steps in relation to immigration writ large. I think she would have a lot to share with the House beyond the opposition day motion and I invite her to share that.

**Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, if we asked Canadians today, the vast majority of them would say they are concerned about public safety.

I am very proud of our government. In a very short period of time, we have introduced a whole series of measures and legislation taken directly from key stakeholders, victims groups, police associations, municipalities and provincial leaders to address the major safety issues that concern Canadians today. We have Bill C-9, Bill C-12, Bill C-16 and Bill C-14. All of this legislation collectively needs to pass through the House of Commons and be made into law so that it can protect Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning, I was surprised to see the official opposition's motion, because I think this is the first time in many years that we have had a Conservative opposition day about something other than oil or stopping the fight against climate change.

I would like to know whether my colleague opposite wants to congratulate the Conservatives for choosing to address another subject for once.

[*English*]

**Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, when we came back and the House went into session after the holiday season, my Conservative colleagues made a number of statements saying that they wanted to be more collaborative, more positive and wanted to work with us. I would say, in that spirit, that I hope it is true that they want to work with us. We have important business at hand. There is important legislation before us. We are willing to work with the Conservatives and all opposition members on all sides of the House to make sure that we are incorporating any legitimate changes that we need to make. Let us get moving on this legislation. Canadians deserve no less.

• (1335)

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask my friend opposite how she could be so proud of her government's abysmal track record for the last 10 years when she herself voted in favour of Bill C-75, in favour of Bill C-5 and in favour of Bill C-48, which created the problems we are facing right now with extortion. It is fine to say they are taking it seriously now, but where was she 10 years ago?

*Business of Supply*

**Julie Dzerowicz:** Mr. Speaker, I think I was very articulate in my speech about why I was very supportive of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

Canadians are now looking to us to see what the issues are and what actions we need to take now. They are asking the House to work together. They are asking us to work collaboratively. They are asking us to pass the pieces of legislation that are in front of the House right now in order to make Canadians safer.

**Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents in northeast Calgary. I want to speak today on an issue that hits very close to home and has deeply impacted members of the South Asian community across Canada. Families and small businesses are living in fear as extortion has become rampant across the country. Communities in Surrey, Brampton and northeast Calgary have become all too familiar with these threats and intimidation.

In many cases, extortion begins with a phone call from an unknown or international phone number. The perpetrator makes a demand for thousands of dollars and, in some cases, millions of dollars. They threaten to harm an individual's home, business or family. They drop details about the individual's place of residence or the names of their children and their school. They warn that going to the police will only make matters worse.

In recent months, numerous families and small business owners have come to my constituency office after receiving extortion calls. They were shaken, afraid and unsure where to turn. Some told me that they did not know whether to report the threats. The safety of my constituents is my top priority in the House, and I will continue speaking on this issue until something gets done.

In another case just last month, a father in northeast Calgary received a phone call over WhatsApp from an international number. The man on the line asked for thousands of dollars and claimed to know about his seven-year-old son and where he went to school. Like many others, this call was meant to terrify him into compliance and silence.

Crime and extortion statistics in Canada have become so bad over the last 10 years that it is truly hard to fathom how things got so out of hand. Since the Liberals took power in 2015, violent crime has risen 54%, gun crime has risen 130% and extortion has risen by 330%. In my neighbouring province of British Columbia, extortion has risen by 480% since 2015. These are truly unfathomable numbers.

Canada's extortion crisis is not an isolated issue and it did not happen overnight. It is the result of years of weakness in our criminal justice system and in the bail and sentencing laws. Liberal bills such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 treated perpetrators like victims and prioritized criminals' rights over public safety. These policies of lenient sentencing and reduced consequences have emboldened criminals and signalled to international crime networks, including the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, that Canada is an easy target for extortion-related crime.

These Liberal policies have directly contributed to the rise in crime Canadians are now facing across the country. In my hometown of Calgary, police are currently investigating 21 extortion cas-

es, including recent shootings in Redstone and Taradale. I want to thank the Calgary Police Service, the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team and all of our first responders for their bravery and work ethic in dealing with these matters. Their work sends a clear message to scammers, thugs, criminals and terrorists that our communities will not take threats and will not be silenced.

In Surrey, British Columbia, there have been over 30 reported extortion attempts already this year. Compared to last year's total of 133, Surrey is on pace to have 500 extortion attempts by the end of this year.

Like many families across Canada, a Brampton household began the new year with hope and optimism. Within days, that hope was shattered when they received an extortion demand for half a million dollars and later had multiple shots fired at their home. Incidents like this leave families shaken and communities wondering whether their own homes could be next. This pattern is being seen in communities across Canada. It is why city councils in Brampton and Surrey have asked the Liberal government to step up its response to extortion.

● (1340)

I agree with the mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown, who has said that the Liberals must recognize extortion as a national public safety issue and take immediate action to address it. Mayor of Surrey, Brenda Locke, has been equally vocal, stating that "our laws are simply too weak" and that "strong federal leadership" is needed to protect communities and restore public confidence. I could not agree more.

This is why, over a year ago, the Conservative member for Edmonton Gateway introduced Bill C-381, the protection against extortion act, which set out a clear plan to address this crisis. The Liberals voted it down, choosing to side with criminals instead of communities. Conservatives have also introduced Bill C-242—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Dave Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am trying to listen to my colleague, but I am having great difficulty being able to hear him because of the noise in the chamber.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I thank the hon. member. There is a bit of noise in the chamber. I will ask members, if they are having side conversations, to keep them to a dull roar.

The hon. member can resume his speech.

*Business of Supply*

**Dalwinder Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have also introduced Bill C-242, the jail not bail act, brought forward by the Conservative member for Oxford. This bill would reform Canada's bail system by making public safety the primary consideration, expanding reverse onus for serious violent offences and tightening rules for repeat offenders. Conservatives will not accept a Canada where families and businesses feel unsafe in their own communities.

For 10 years, Liberal soft-on-crime policies and bail reforms have weakened sentencing, reduced consequences for violent offences and made it easier for repeat violent offenders to terrorize our streets. We will fight to pass our anti-extortion legislation, restore serious penalties for violent and gun-related crimes and repeal the Liberal laws that put criminals above public safety.

Canadians should never be forced to live in fear, to change their daily routines or to feel unsafe within the walls of their own homes. This is why we are calling on the government to adopt our Conservative plan to end extortion and protect Canadian families and businesses.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must say, I am disappointed when Conservative members stand up to talk about the issue of extortion when the Conservative Party of Canada is preventing legislation that would deal with extortion, at least in part. I am referring to not only Bill C-2, but also Bill C-14. Those two bills are about bail reform legislation and allowing Canada to have lawful access.

How can the member honestly stand up to talk about the importance of the issue, when, as a Conservative caucus, those members continue to filibuster the legislation, denying Canadians the opportunity for the government to deal specifically with the issues he is raising? How can he do that?

**Dalwinder Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been calling for bail reform for years now, and we have proposed numerous bills to keep repeat violent offenders behind bars. If the Liberals were really serious about keeping Canadians safe, they would support the Conservative jail not bail act.

Today, I am here to speak about extortion. It is hurting my communities. Families and small businesses are being affected. If they are ready to fix this problem, we are ready to work with them to stop it.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that Statistics Canada has observed a significant increase in extortion crimes in Canada.

I would like my colleague to explain the connection between that and asylum seekers.

[*English*]

**Dalwinder Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives recognize Canada's international humanitarian obligations and the need to protect people fleeing persecution, but those obligations require strong screening, proper enforcement and a clear focus on public safety. The safety of Canadians must always come first.

**Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the Liberal member's question. It is just very ironic, given that Bill C-5 removed mandatory prison time for people who have done extortion, who have committed this horrible crime and changed the life of an innocent individual, to hear the Liberals be up on their high horse about this, when they themselves, that member in particular, the member for Winnipeg North, voted in favour of removing mandatory prison time for people convicted of extortion.

I know the member and the Conservative caucus have done significant work to raise awareness about the Liberal soft-on-crime laws that have led to this extortion explosion in Canada. Could the member comment on our good work on that, and on what we would do if we were in government?

**Dalwinder Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Liberal bills, such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, are at the root of the issues we are trying to tackle here today. Conservatives have led the debate on the key issues of the cost of living and the carbon tax, which forced the Liberals to take action. I hope the Liberals take note of the concerns of my constituents that I have shared here today.

I absolutely think more needs to be done to tackle organized crime in Canada. I was glad to see that the Liberals have finally agreed to label the Bishnoi gang as a terrorist entity, but I am still concerned about the alarming rate of extortion happening in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague whether he thinks that political refugees who have been convicted in their country should be excluded from the motion.

[*English*]

**Dalwinder Gill:** Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a growing problem with the transnational criminal network, which uses fear, intimidation and violence to extort Canadian families and businesses. Conservatives take that threat seriously and believe that the response must be serious as well. We want to give our law enforcement the tools they need to disrupt organized crime and protect Canadians.

**Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today because Canadians are asking simple but deeply troubling questions. They ask why our justice system seems to work harder for criminals than for victims, and why law-abiding Canadians feel increasingly vulnerable while repeat offenders appear increasingly confident.

*Business of Supply*

Nowhere is that question more urgent than in the alarming rise of extortion across this country, including in my own region of Niagara. Let us begin with the facts, because facts do actually matter. Since the Liberals took office, extortion has risen by 330% in Canada. This is not a statistical anomaly or a coincidence; it is a systemic failure, one that is being felt in real ways by real people, including small business owners, families and newcomers across Niagara in my communities of Welland, Fort Erie, Thorold and Port Colborne, and throughout the region.

Extortion is not a victimless crime. It is the restaurant owner near our tourism and commercial corridors who receives threats and knows that a single incident could ruin their livelihood and indeed their lives. It is the family living in fear due to gangs that hide in the dark, shooting at houses in once-safe neighbourhoods.

Canadians are scared. Retaliation is certain if they speak out. There are newcomers who came to Canada seeking safety, opportunity and a better life, only to be targeted by organized criminal networks that exploit their fear and silence.

Niagara is a gateway region. We are home to an international border, four border crossings, major transportation routes and a vibrant but fragile tourism and industrial economy. We depend on trade and the safe movement of goods across our borders. Those strengths should be protected, but instead, criminals are exploiting them. They are doing so because they know the risks are low.

Time and time again, when Conservatives have brought forward common-sense solutions to confront this crisis, the Liberals have voted no. They voted against closing loopholes that allow false refugee claimants, including those tied to serious criminal activity, to exploit Canada's asylum system. They voted against Bill C-381, which would have imposed tougher sentences on extortionists. They continue to refuse to repeal Bills C-5 and Bill C-75, legislation that has fuelled a revolving-door justice system, where repeat offenders are released again and again, including in regions like Niagara, and police officers are forced to rearrest the same individuals, repeatedly.

Laws are not compassionate if they abandon victims. They are not humane if they embolden criminals. They are not effective if they leave communities like Niagara less safe than they were before.

The motion before the House is clear, targeted and reasonable. First, it calls on the government to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims. Canada's refugee system exists to protect people fleeing persecution, not to shield criminals from accountability. In Niagara and elsewhere, where many of the newcomers follow the rules and contribute positively to their communities, this distinction matters deeply. When criminals abuse the refugee system, it undermines trust and unfairly stigmatizes law-abiding immigrants who are doing everything right.

Second, the motion calls on the government to bar non-citizens with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims. This loophole is being exploited, and regions and communities like Niagara feel the impact. Individuals facing serious charges use refugee claims to delay proceedings and

complicate removals. They remain in Canada longer than they should. This is not fairness; this is dysfunction.

Third, the motion calls on the government to end the practice of leniency that allows non-citizens convicted of serious crimes to avoid deportation. Canadians believe in due process. People in Niagara believe in fairness, but they also believe in consequences. If someone who is not a citizen commits a serious crime, serves their sentence, and then uses legal technicalities to remain in Canada indefinitely, the system has failed the victims, the community and the public trust. Deportation in these cases is not extreme; it is responsible.

● (1350)

Finally, the motion calls on the government to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, legislation that has weakened sentencing, expanded bail and contributed directly to the rise in repeat violent and organized crime, including extortion. Police officers in Niagara have been clear. They are arresting the same offenders over and over again. Crown prosecutors are frustrated, victims are ignored, and small business owners feel abandoned, yet the government continues to defend policies that prioritize ideology over public safety.

Extortion thrives where consequences are uncertain and enforcement is inconsistent. Criminal organizations are rational actors. They assess risk. When sentences are lighter, bail is automatic and deportation is delayed, crime becomes a business model. It is like an episode of *The Sopranos*. The people who pay the price are law-abiding Canadians, including families and small business owners across Niagara, who simply want to feel safe in their own communities. Let me be clear. This motion is designed to protect Canadians and those who dream about becoming Canadian.

Niagara was built by immigrants. Niagara thrives because of newcomers, over generations. This motion protects them. It is pro-victim, pro-law and pro-common sense. Canada can be compassionate without being naive. We can welcome newcomers while still being firm with those who abuse our generosity. I ask members of the House, what message do we send to the Niagara business owner who has been extorted when an offender is released within hours? What message do we send when criminals exploit refugee processes faster than the government can close loopholes? What message do we send to Niagara police officers when their work is undone by laws that favour release over responsibility?

Leadership is about choices. The Liberals have chosen leniency over accountability. They have chosen delay over action. They have chosen ideology over evidence. Today, the House can choose differently. We can stand with victims instead of criminals. We can protect the integrity of our immigration system. We can restore confidence in our justice system. We can send a clear message that extortion, organized crime and repeat offending will not be tolerated in Niagara or anywhere else in Canada.

In 2023, a foreign national attempted to purchase sex from who he believed was an underage girl. When he arrived at the location, he was met not by a child but by an undercover police officer. He was arrested, and yet when it came time for sentencing, the court imposed a lighter sentence, not because the crime was minor but because the harsher penalty might have affected his immigration status. Canadians need to ask themselves how that makes any sense. We have seen where this kind of failure leads.

In Welland, Daniel Senecal committed one of the most horrific crimes imaginable: the sexual assault of a three-year-old child. It is a crime that shatters families and leaves lifelong scars. These are not technical violations. These are serious violent offences. I ask the House plainly, do members believe that individuals who commit crimes like these, crimes against children, should ever be rewarded with the privilege of Canadian citizenship, or do we finally draw a clear line and say that protecting the most vulnerable must come before protecting the status of criminals?

I urge all members of the House to support this motion, not for partisan reasons but for the safety of the communities we represent and the trust Canadians place in us to get this right.

• (1355)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I think of the whole crime package that the Conservatives continue to filibuster, I think of Bill C-2 on lawful access; I think of Bill C-9 on combatting hate; I think of Bill C-14 on bail reform; and I think of Bill C-16 on mandatory minimums being reinstated, along with leading on femicide.

These are all important pieces of legislation that Canadians are expecting the Conservatives to pass, not to mention bills like the budget implementation bill. These are the types of legislation that even Canadians in Conservative ridings want passed, but the Conservatives continue to filibuster.

When will the Conservative Party stop thinking about the interests of the Conservative Party and start thinking about the interests of Canadians, and allow legislation to pass?

**Fred Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I have a strange sense of déjà vu, because the last time I stood up in the House, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader asked me the same question. He is effectively saying he wants us to just roll over and pass all this legislation without adequate debate. I have a right to stand up in the House and represent the interests of my constituents, and those interests include crime, crime prevention and penalties for offenders. I take exception to this repeated question. He does this over and over, ad nauseam. He has asked the same question every day. I have a right to stand here. I will continue to do so.

### Statements by Members

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### REAL ACTS OF CARING

**Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of national Kindness Week and the 20th anniversary of Real Acts of Caring, founded by educator Harriette Chang. What began in 2005 as a simple idea led by young students has grown into a lasting movement rooted in Canadian values and a belief that kindness, practised with intention, can strengthen entire communities.

Today, Real Acts of Caring has expanded beyond School District No. 43 and across B.C., Canada and the world. Each year, students and families take part through genuine acts of caring, supporting food banks, helping neighbours, sharing books and showing up for others without expecting anything in return.

I invite everyone to take part in national Kindness Week and keep the spirit of caring alive.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE DES BOIS-FRANCS ET DE L'ÉRABLE

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the vital role that the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie des Bois-Francs et de L'Érable, the CCIBFE, has played in our region's economic development for over 120 years.

As an active member of the chamber of commerce for two decades, I have first-hand experience with its energy, leadership and role in bringing the business community together. Through its networking activities, training, advocacy and concrete support for businesses, the CCIBFE is truly a regional economic driver. Its commitment to innovation, collaboration and the vitality of the business community directly contributes to the prosperity of our communities.

I am grateful to the board of directors, the team and all the members for the remarkable work they have done to serve our entrepreneurs. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence on the Hill today of the chamber of commerce's president, Valérie Mercier, its executive director, Anne-Marie Bédard, and board members and governors, who are true ambassadors.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**MINOR LEAGUE HOCKEY**

**Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I was in Fort Frances attending a municipal event. When I arrived at the Super 8 hotel, the very sheepish attendant apologized profusely, telling me there was a hockey tournament on and that it might be a little bit noisy.

Yes, there was an under-13 AA tournament. Sure enough, it was noisy at times, with a bunch of raucous 12-year-olds playing floor hockey in the stairwells, while at the same time, their parents sat on the first floor pretending they were drinking ginger ale out of coffee cups. As I listened to the halls filled with the laughter of kids, and as I saw the parents having a good time with a bunch of people they previously hardly knew, all while it was 30 below outside and the wind was blowing, I realized, and this is with sincerity, what a wonderful thing minor league hockey tournaments are and how much they are a part of our identity and the Canadian culture.

Everyone who puts them on, even the refs, who I sometimes criticize, should keep up the good work. I thank them.

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**FATHERHOOD**

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year, I thought being elected would be the most important accomplishment of my life, but I was wrong. Just six months later, I became a father with the birth of my first daughter, Rose Mantle. This Monday is Family Day across much of Canada, and I am honoured to celebrate Family Day for the first time as a father. In fact, I am hosting a free community skate in Uxbridge all Monday afternoon.

Strong and healthy families are built on strong, committed and masculine fathers. In fact, I am seeing every day that the virtues of fatherhood belong in this place: putting others' futures ahead of one's own, choosing patience rather than exasperation, displaying strength and courage when it matters, and defending what is good and proposing what is right. Our kids need strong fathers and families, our communities need strong fathers and families, and our country needs strong fathers and families. I will be a champion for that.

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[Translation]

**PIERRETTE ROY**

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Pierrette Roy, an artist who made a significant contribution to Quebec's musical heritage, passed away on January 24.

Ms. Roy is known for being the voice behind *Carnaval, Mardi gras, Carnaval*, the iconic theme song for a cherished symbol of our culture, the Quebec Winter Carnival. She also made history as the first artist in Quebec to record a Beatles song in French, which showed how much influence she had on the francophone entertainment scene.

Through her talent, her commitment and her contribution to promoting Quebec and francophone popular culture, Pierrette Roy has

left an lasting mark that will continue to resonate far beyond her generation.

On behalf of the House, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to Pierrette Roy's family, her loved ones and all those who have been moved by her music.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[English]

**IRAN**

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for over four decades, the people of Iran have lived under a regime that promised hope but delivered repression, corruption and violence. Like a lion long restrained but never broken, the children of Cyrus the Great are rising once again. This is not simply because of economic collapse but because a people can be pushed only so far before they demand their freedom.

The regime answered that cry by shutting down the Internet and tearing families apart by mass arrests. Credible reports tell us that tens of thousands of people have been killed. This is how tyranny survives: by silencing the truth and ruling through terror. That is why I proudly support e-petition 7153, initiated by my constituent Reza Sadjadi.

Canada must stand with Iranians who are risking everything for their freedom. Their courage does not ask for our sympathy; it demands our action.

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**CANADIAN COAST GUARD**

**Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important moment for the Canadian Coast Guard. After more than 40 years of dedicated service, Commissioner Mario Pelletier has retired. As the first graduate of the Canadian Coast Guard Academy to lead the organization, he served Canadians with distinction and helped advance the Coast Guard's critical work from coast to coast to coast.

I also want to welcome Marc Mes, who will be serving as acting commissioner as the important work continues. This transition comes at an exciting time for Cape Breton, as Sydney has been named the preferred location for the future maintenance port for Canada's new polar ice vessels, strengthening Arctic operations, maritime security and, indeed, Canadian sovereignty. This is great news for Cape Breton, for Nova Scotia and for Canada. As we know, when one community benefits in Atlantic Canada, all communities in Atlantic Canada benefit.

I want to thank Commissioner Pelletier for his service and, and I wish Acting Commissioner Marc Mes success as the Coast Guard builds on this momentum.

*Statements by Members***SYRIA**

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my North York riding is home to thousands of Canadian Kurds. I and my Conservative colleagues are gravely concerned about recent reports of attacks by Syrian forces against civilians in Aleppo. The attacks target the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh neighbourhoods, which are home to half a million Syrians, mainly Kurds but also Christians, Yazidis and Druze. Innocent civilians, including women and children, are reported to be targeted. These attacks against the Kurds may escalate into mass atrocities.

The Kurdish people and other civilian religious minorities in Syria endured decades of displacement and unspeakable violence. These are clear violations of international law. I condemn any attacks against Kurdish civilians and call on Canada's government to stand up in defence of human rights of Syrian Kurds.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**JIMMY LAI**

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights took a clear, strong and unanimous stand. It condemned the 20-year prison sentence that the Hong Kong authorities imposed on Jimmy Lai, a defender of democracy and freedom of speech, whose only crime was to express his opinions publicly. The motion calls for his immediate release.

In 2023, the House of Commons and the Senate unanimously adopted a similar motion. All of the parties recognized that, by granting Mr. Lai honorary Canadian citizenship, Canada could exert real diplomatic pressure to secure his release.

Today, that call is more urgent than ever. Jimmy Lai's son, Sebastien Lai, put it very aptly when he asked how we could talk about warming relations with China when his father is still in prison. We have a duty to align our actions with our principles.

I call on all parliamentarians to join in this collective effort so that justice is served and political prisoner Jimmy Lai is freed.

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[*English*]**CANADA'S AGRICULTURE DAY**

**Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is Canada's Agriculture Day, a time to recognize the farmers, producers and food processors who sustain our communities and our economy.

In Kitchener—Conestoga, across Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich, agriculture is a part of everyday life and is a year-round commitment. From the first harvest of maple syrup in early spring, through planting and the fall harvest to the daily care of livestock throughout the year, the work never stops. Agriculture is present in our farms and barns, in on farm markets, in processing plants and along the routes that move food from farm to table. I recognize and appreciate the early mornings, long hours and dedication required to steward the land, produce high-quality food and plan for the future.

On Agriculture Day, I want to thank the people whose work helps us put food on our table every day and whose efforts strengthen our economy and food security. They are building Canada strong.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is Canada's 10th Agriculture Day, recognizing farmers and agri-food workers.

While this should be a day of celebration, the government has instead allowed Canada to lead the G7 in food inflation. This is not a failure of Canada's farmers or our agricultural sector; it is the result of short-sighted government policies. Rather than cutting costs where they actually matter, the government is piling them on. The industrial carbon tax, labelling and packaging regulations and the fuel standard tax drive up the cost of groceries.

At the same time, Ottawa is cutting in the wrong places. CFIA's decision to scrap destination inspection services without industry consultation, along with ag research centre closures, undermines reliability, competitiveness and trust in Canada's food quality. This makes Canada a weaker trading partner, leading to higher prices.

If the government is serious about food affordability and security, it must stop making short-sighted decisions from Ottawa and start listening to the people who actually provide our food. Canada's farmers do not need to be managed; they need to be heard.

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**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, cardiovascular disease, CVD, remains one of the greatest health challenges facing Canadians today. Currently, one in 12 adults, 2.6 million people, lives with CVD. Nine in 10 Canadians over age 20 have at least one risk factor. More than 750,000 Canadians live with heart failure, and a million live with atrial fibrillation. Nine out of 10 over age 20 are at risk.

CVD is one of the main causes of hospitalization and loss of productivity, costing the health care system over \$21 billion a year. Early detection in high-risk populations can prevent and delay disease, reduce the cost of treatment, improve quality of life and save millions of lives.

*Statements by Members*

The Canadian Cardiovascular Society and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute have partnered with our Speaker to offer heart risk assessments in West Block today until 4 p.m. I encourage members to go. The life we save may be our own.

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**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 24,000 auto workers in Essex—Windsor are once again being asked to pay for the Liberals' failed patchwork EV policy. These are workers who did everything right. They built the strongest automotive ecosystems in North America, yet the government continues to ship Canadian dollars out of the country, sending a clear message to our workers that they are not good enough.

The 49,000 Chinese EVs that the Liberals allowed to flood our market are projected to account for up to 30% of our EV sales this year without end-of-life safeguards in place. It does not stop there; the Liberals are handing out up to \$2.3 billion in subsidies for EVs made in the United States, and just after the Liberals reannounced their EV policy, Stellantis sold its stake in the NextStar battery plant and shut down plug-in hybrid production in Windsor. This is not a coincidence; this is a failure.

Let us be clear. Who benefits from this EV policy? It is the United States and China. Who pays the people of Essex?

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**GERALDINE BROWNING**

**Hon. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Dr. Geraldine Browning, a prominent and beloved member of our community in Kings—Hants, who passed away on December 31, 2025.

Born and raised in the historic African Nova Scotian community of East Preston, Geraldine began her career in nursing in Montreal before meeting her husband, Orval. Together they raised nine children and lived a military life before moving to and building a house in Gibson Woods. Faith was a cornerstone of Geraldine's life, and Sundays at the Browning household were spent at the United Baptist Church, where she was a prominent member of the congregation.

Despite living a busy life, Geraldine consistently gave back to her community. She led several key organizations supporting the African Nova Scotian community, including the Black Cultural Society, the Black Business Initiative and the Valley African Nova Scotia Development Association, VANSDA. For her public service, Geraldine was awarded the Order of Nova Scotia, an honorary doctorate degree from Acadia University and the Queen's diamond and platinum jubilee medals.

Geraldine made a difference in this world and will be dearly missed. I extend my condolences to Geraldine's family and the broader community on her passing.

• (1415)

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a surge in violent extortion that is shaking communities across the country. Families and small business owners in my own community are living with a level of fear they have never known before.

Extortion has risen by 330% since the Liberals were elected. In British Columbia it has climbed more than 480%. In B.C., 14 accused extortionists have paused removal by claiming refugee status, exposing the blatant abuse of our asylum system.

Canadians deserve to feel safe in their home, on their streets and in their place of work. We owe it to them to strengthen protections and to ensure that violent offenders face meaningful consequences. This is why our Conservative motion demands that the government close loopholes exploited by serious offenders, repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, end repeat offender cycles and ensure that violent criminals cannot use the system to delay or avoid removal from Canada. We also refuse to let the Liberals play politics with the safety and security of Canadians any longer.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE**

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand with voices around the world in denouncing the unjust and politically driven sentencing of Jimmy Lai, the latest chapter in the erosion of Hong Kong's freedom and independence.

This outcome was not inevitable. For years, advocates globally have called for the release of Jimmy Lai, and this pressure from the international community must continue. His sentencing is a clear violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a legally binding treaty lodged with the United Nations. Sentencing a 78-year-old newspaper publisher to 20 years in prison for peaceful expression is not the justified rule of law; it is repression. I urge democratic societies to answer this abuse with coordinated diplomatic measures and accountability.

Jimmy Lai's case makes clear that Hong Kong's courts now operate fully under Beijing's control. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family, and I reaffirm my commitment to seeking his release, alongside that of all people in prison for their beliefs in Hong Kong.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve affordable groceries. Last week, I asked the Prime Minister why Canada has the worst food inflation in the G7. I asked him why grocery prices here are rising faster than in any other G7 country. He said it is because of our weak dollar, but he is the one responsible for the dollar. How has he weakened the dollar? Was it by doubling the deficit, keeping all the anti-development laws in place, or taxing our industries and preventing exports?

What is the reason for the weak dollar and expensive groceries?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our dollar has strengthened since the election of the new Government of Canada. That is my first point.

My second point is that it is thanks to this government's economic plan, a plan that will invest in Canada, that will make Canada an energy superpower, that will find and is finding new partnerships around the world.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am hearing some good slogans, but I am not hearing an answer. Yes, I do appreciate a good slogan, but the fact is that the Prime Minister is the one who said that the dollar is weak. The Prime Minister is the one who cannot explain why, one year into his term, food inflation has doubled and grocery prices are rising faster in Canada than in any other G7 country.

I will ask again. Can the Prime Minister explain why Canadians are being forced to watch as prices rise faster here in Canada than anywhere else in the G7?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is time for another little economics lesson for the Leader of the Opposition. The other party's obstruction in the previous Parliament is what eventually caused the dollar to fall. Now the dollar is going up, wages are going up and growth is happening here in Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, now the Prime Minister is claiming it is the official opposition who lowered the dollar, another excuse from a man whose results do not live up to his rhetoric. The same is true on crime. After 10 years of Liberals, extortion is up 333% because of lax Liberal laws and immigration, and now Liberals are obstructing a solution. Today, we are proposing a motion to ensure that no one accused or convicted of a crime can claim refugee status.

Will the Prime Minister stop obstructing the motion so we can kick extortionists out and bring safety to our system?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Leader of the Opposition brought up obstruction. It is the obstruction by the opposition that is delaying the six bills before

### Oral Questions

the House and Senate that will address extortion, that will tighten bail, that will tighten sentencing against extortion and, very importantly, consistent with every major police force in this country and consistent with mayors of large cities, that will introduce lawful access, which the opposition has consistently stopped in favour of extortion.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is blocking his own bills and failing to move ahead because Liberals do not want to repeal Liberal bail, Liberal house arrest and Liberal immigration. However, we have a motion before the House of Commons today. It would, one, bar non-citizens convicted of a serious offence from claiming refugee status; two, bar the same people who have been charged from claiming refugee status, and three, stop judges from giving sentencing discounts to people because they are from abroad.

Which of these three things does the Prime Minister oppose? If there is none, why obstruct?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this side of the House supports taking control over immigration, which is why asylum seekers are down 50%, which is why temporary foreign workers are down 50% and which is why students and temporary residents are down by over 50%. That is the first point.

Second point, this side of the House supports tightening sentencing, tightening bail, for violent crimes, for extortion and for sextortion. They should join us.

\* \* \*

### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has done none of those things. By the way, all those numbers are up compared to when the previous Conservative government was in office.

On to jobs for Canadians, our auto workers are losing their jobs in Ingersoll, in Oshawa and elsewhere because of American tariffs. The Prime Minister is helping the U.S. take away these jobs by forcing Canadian taxpayers to spend \$2.3 billion on subsidies for American and other foreign-made electric vehicles.

Why not scrap this subsidy for foreign-made vehicles and take taxes off vehicles made here in Canada?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is investing \$3 billion in Canadian automakers. We are investing not in the auto industry of the past but in the auto industry of the future. The auto industry of the future is electric. It is connected. We are building out the entire supply chain. As the House will see in the coming weeks, we are building out the electricity grid, in the spirit of co-operative federalism, with the provinces.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the auto workers are waiting for it. They are waiting for their jobs, but the Prime Minister is subsidizing electric vehicles whose sales are in full collapse and that are made outside of Canada. Imagine being an auto worker looking at high taxes on his severance after he has lost his job and knowing that billions of those dollars will be going to subsidize vehicles made in the very country that tariffed him out of work.

Why does the Prime Minister not find his elbows, do the right thing for a change and actually take the taxes off Canadian-made automobiles, not subsidize foreign ones?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if any extremities are going to be removed, it is the fingers from the ears of the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition could listen to the head of the auto manufacturing association. He can listen to the Conservative Premier of Ontario, the heartland of Canadian auto manufacturing. He can listen to the entire sector, which knows that our investments of \$3 billion in the supply chain and in the grid are going to drive our sector forward to the future.

\* \* \*

• (1425)

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Prime Minister gave a speech in Davos about the hypocrisy of great empires, a speech that most people seemed to agree with. He outlined some very interesting principles.

Today, I want to call on the Prime Minister to be consistent because in that speech he said—without naming names, but in other circumstances, he did name names—that the United States was no longer the reliable economic and military partner we could count on. However, this morning we learned that the Canadian government is going to again award F-35 contracts to the United States, not suspending the contract as it had done.

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, for the record, the statement just made by the opposition member was not in my speech.

Second, with regard to the F-35s, yes, the government is paying a small amount in order to have options. This is useful for our national defence and in order to have options in our negotiations with the Americans.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, wording the question differently could lead to a differently worded answer that I might have a chance to understand.

If the Prime Minister believes that the United States is no longer a reliable partner, is it normal for the government to follow through on a contract that the Prime Minister himself called to be studied and suspended, when the U.S. President goes so far as to say that a bridge paid for by Canada could be blocked because his mood happened to swing that way at the moment?

Is the government being inconsistent, or does it simply not mean what it says?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question gives me an opportunity to share some information with this Parliament.

I had a conversation with the President of the United States this morning. I informed him that Canada built and paid for the Gordie Howe bridge, that we co-own it with the state of Michigan and that the bridge contains steel made by Canadian and American workers.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is not getting any better.

Let us say that Canada is in a good position to tell the U.S. president that we paid for the bridge and to ask him to treat us with respect. However, now we are going to pay for planes even though he is not treating us with respect and he will retain control over the planes by monitoring the flight plans.

At this point, should the government not practise the Canadian nationalism it preaches and suspend the F-35 purchase contract until trade relations return to normal?

**Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the situation is crystal clear. The Government of Canada is reviewing the F-35 contract. The Government of Canada, Canada, has other options. There are other options for protecting Canadians and growing our economy and our industry, especially in Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal deficits and taxes drove up inflation and food bank usage. Canada has the highest food inflation in the entire G7, double that of the U.S. Canadians spend more on Liberal taxes than on all basic essentials combined. Consumer bankruptcies are rising, and bankruptcy proposals are at levels not seen since the 2008 financial crisis.

When will the Liberals scrap the taxes and inflationary deficits that are driving more Canadians into bankruptcy?

*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. The first thing the government did under this Prime Minister was cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. They know it. Canadians know it. We know it. On this side of the House, we are going to build this country, we are going to empower Canadians and we will protect our sovereignty. We believe in Canada.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, believing the Liberals are helping Canadians is as ridiculous as believing the budget will balance itself. The Prime Minister doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit, while consumer debt skyrocketed last year. Liberal deficits and taxes are forcing Canadians to borrow more, and they are racking up their credit cards just to get by. Non-mortgage debt has exploded to \$675 billion. That is why Canadians are the most indebted in the entire G7.

How many more Canadians need to go broke and bankrupt before the Liberals stop driving up the cost of living?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a simple answer: Move on, man, move on. Honestly, change the QP card. I can give some advice: Move on.

I have good news. I know it is only Tuesday, but Canada is forecasted to have the second-fastest growth in the G7. This is under this Prime Minister, under this government, under this team, which is building Canada like never before. We will build at scale. We will build at speed, and we will build a Canada that we can all be proud of.

**Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, these Liberals keep telling Canadians that they have never had it so good. Not only has food inflation doubled since the Prime Minister took office; it is now twice as high in Canada as it is in the United States. It is driving over two million people a month to food banks. I guess they should just “move on” from that.

Now we learn that more and more Canadians have been forced into bankruptcy and bankruptcy proposals. In my province of British Columbia, they are up over 10% in the last year alone. When will the government stop pushing people to the brink and cut the taxes and red tape that are pushing Canadians into bankruptcy?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives want to talk about taxes. We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We cut the GST for first-time homebuyers and the consumer carbon tax. Last week, we launched the groceries and essentials benefit, which will put up to \$1,900 in the pockets of Canadians. We are focused on affordability for Canadians; they are focused on continued obstruction.

**Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal plan is not working. Over two million Canadians a month are using the food bank. The cost of groceries has skyrocketed to over \$340 a week for a family of four. The small minority of Canadians who get that recycled rebate he was talking about will only get \$10 a week, which is not going to keep their creditors at bay.

Now bankruptcies and bankruptcy proposals are at their highest levels since the global financial crisis, so when will the Liberals fi-

nally cut taxes and red tape and stop pushing record numbers of Canadians into bankruptcy?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is from a member and his leader who supported giving the Canada child benefit to millionaires. They voted against the dental program, the day care program and housing, and the list goes on and on.

On this side of the House, we are going to continue to focus and deliver on affordability. That party is focused on obstruction and slogans.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal government, food inflation is double what it was when the Prime Minister took office and double that of the United States. Food bank use has more than doubled, and now bankruptcies are up, the highest they have been since the financial crisis, clocking in at a shocking 10.6% in British Columbia.

Will the government admit that its taxes and deficits are driving Canadians into food banks and into bankruptcy, or will it just claim that everything is fine, proving that it is totally out of touch with reality?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will bite. Let us imagine what affordability would look like under the Conservatives in British Columbia.

They would cut the industrial carbon tax, and nothing would happen, because it does not affect the price of groceries. Then they would follow their plan to get out of the way, a.k.a. do nothing, and there would be no national school food program, no OAS for 65- to 67-year-olds, no groceries and essentials benefit.

From what I have heard, all the Conservatives would offer is thoughts and prayers. Oh, wait. No. They would also obstruct, as they currently are.

• (1435)

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we saw the hubris of the finance minister in his response. We will not move on from the issues that are affecting Canadians.

### Oral Questions

He should take the advice of the Prime Minister and look inside himself. Fresh data from the superintendent of bankruptcy in this country presents a very grim truth, that bankruptcies are rising and consumer proposals are rising.

Canadians can literally no longer afford this profligate Liberal government. When will Liberals cut the taxes, get out of the way, get rid of the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax, and stop obstructing our ideas?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the budget will deliver generational investments for the province of Ontario, and the member, who is from Ontario, voted against these measures in our budget implementation act.

Through the Build Canada Homes program, we are creating thousands of affordable homes, including the Arbo Downsview project. Again, the member opposed 40% affordable homes being developed.

We will use Canadian steel, Canadian lumber and Canadian aluminum. We are protecting Ontario's steel industry. We are also stopping competition from foreign steel and keeping good-paying jobs in this country. That is how we build Canada strong, and we will continue to do that.

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, consumer bankruptcies are up, to the highest level since the financial crisis. That means 141,000 Canadians are losing their homes, their savings and their sense of security. Clearly the Liberals' band-aid programs are not enough to prevent bankruptcies.

Canadians need long-term solutions that bring down the cost of food and housing. When will the Liberal government stop the inflationary deficits, scrap the taxes and remove the bureaucratic roadblocks that are making life so unaffordable?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this member is also from Ontario and voted against our budget, which will make generational investments.

We are making investments in our economy. We are protecting our communities and empowering Canadians, and the members opposite continue to obstruct this progress. We are creating jobs in clean energy through the Darlington nuclear project, which is going to help support 1.2 million homes and create thousands of jobs in this country.

The Conservatives should stop opposing these measures, so they can help support Ontarians and Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PENSIONS

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the government, 85,000 seniors have been having problems getting their old age security benefits because of issues with the Cúram software. Some of them have been waiting for nine months.

Yesterday, we saw why it is taking so long. The government House leader said that the errors would be corrected. He said, and I quote, "If there are cases...[we] would have heard about them."

His own government says there are 85,000 victims, and he is still in denial. Do members see now why nothing ever gets fixed at the federal level?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois seems to have a problem with misquoting people today.

Obviously, we take every case seriously. To reassure Quebeckers, Canadians and everyone who receives old age security, I want to reaffirm that we have modernized the computer system. If there are mistakes, we will correct them, and obviously, we invite our colleagues from all parties to give us the names of the people and the cases we should look at to resolve the situation.

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the government's own estimates, 85,000 pensioners have been affected by the issues with Cúram. That is 85,000 people who have been affected by a software with cost overruns of close to \$5 billion. If this were happening in Quebec, there would have been a public inquiry a long time ago. However, the government House leader thinks that everything is fine and dandy. He is basically patting himself on the back because, if 85,000 pensioners are having issues, that means that all of the others are doing fine.

How out of touch does the government have to be to think that causing problems for 85,000 people is no big deal?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are modernizing a very old system. Doing nothing would have jeopardized the payments of millions of seniors. The backlog cases are complex. They are currently being dealt with, and retroactive payments are guaranteed.

Again, I invite the member opposite to give me the names of the individuals and we will help them.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, extortion is out of control in this country. Small business owners are being threatened, firebombed and shot at. They are living in fear, and many are contemplating leaving this country, yet the Liberal government refuses to take this crisis seriously. Some of these criminals, who should be deported, are now exploiting the refugee system with false claims in order to stay in Canada.

*Oral Questions*

We tried to close these loopholes, but the Liberals continue to obstruct. Will the government support our motion to protect Canadians from dangerous non-citizens by closing this loophole and finally ending these bogus refugee claims?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about this issue and therefore doing everything possible by bringing legislation that will tighten bail and impose stricter sentences. The one bill that is missing is Bill C-2, which we tabled in the House back in June. If the Conservatives were serious about solving the problem, rather than doing this window covering they have brought with this motion, which essentially is moot because Bill C-12 already does everything they are asking for, they would approve lawful access and consent today to moving that bill forward. Will they allow the vote, pass the bill and catch the criminals?

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for 10 years we have heard the Liberals make excuses and blame others while Canadians continue to live in fear as criminals threaten their families, businesses and communities. Serious non-citizen offenders are exploiting loopholes in the refugee system to stay in the country, leaving Canadians vulnerable.

Will the Liberals finally work with us to pass this motion to ban these non-citizen criminals from making false refugee claims and ensure Canadians are protected from dangerous offenders who should be deported?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here we have yet another Conservative who probably needs to remove his fingers from his ears, because we have already solved this problem. Under Bill C-12, essentially all of these criminals would not be allowed to apply for asylum. Even in the cases we heard in B.C., where they have applied for asylum, they would not have been able to had the Conservatives not obstructed and had they passed C-2 when we tabled it. Because they obstructed it, they have been able to make those claims. However, there is good news, because it is in the Senate, and once it is passed, those claims and those cases will be cancelled.

**Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, extortion is out of control in my home province of B.C., where the rate is up 482% since the Liberals took power. The Prime Minister about 10 minutes ago said that the Liberals are tough on extortion. Perhaps somebody should remind him that the Liberals voted to repeal a mandatory jail sentence for extortion with a firearm so people could serve their sentence on house arrest. That is the opposite of being hard on extortion.

Will the Prime Minister support our common-sense solution to ensure that those convicted of serious crimes cannot claim refugee status, yes or no?

**Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it pretty amazing that legislators on the other side do not know the legislation that is already here. Nobody can claim asylum when they are charged. It gets suspended. They go to trial, they get sentenced and they get deported. They cannot claim asylum when they are charged. That was the law even before the legislation before the House, which is going to make it more restrictive and even more onerous for those who commit extortion.

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, picture a city with gangs demanding protection money from small businesses, where shots are fired at home, where families fear going out at night and people are forced to change their cars and their routines. It sounds like I am describing a slum in a third world country, but it is my hometown of Surrey. What is worse is that when these thugs are caught, they are right back on the street after claiming refugee status.

Will the Liberals support our motion that those charged with or convicted of serious crimes cannot exploit the refugee system in order to stay in Canada?

**Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I speak to the police chief in that jurisdiction, when I speak to the mayor in that jurisdiction and when I speak to the premier of that province, they ask, can I get the Conservatives to pass Bill C-2? Can I get lawful access passed? Can I get them to pass the bills in the House? They do not want this obstruction.

I urge the Conservatives to support all this legislation so we can give the police the tools they need to prosecute, enforce the laws of this land and kick these extortionists out.

• (1445)

**Amanpreet Gill (Calgary Skyview, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, extortion is up 330% since the Liberals took office. Small business owners in places like Brampton, Surrey, Vancouver and my home of Calgary are being threatened. Families are being shot at and fire-bombed, and the Liberals have done nothing. Even the Premier of B.C. has said that the Liberals must stop criminals from gaining refugee status.

Will the Liberals support our motion to protect communities by ensuring that convicted criminals cannot use refugee status to stay in Canada, yes or no?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we want to talk about the position of the Premier of British Columbia when it comes to our criminal justice reform agenda, I would advise the hon. member that the premier did not just support the legislation; he asked if he could join us for a press conference to celebrate the achievements of that legislation.

*Oral Questions*

If the member is interested in doing more to combat extortion, he could help accelerate the bail and sentencing reform act, which tightens bail for violent extortion and hardens sentences for offenders. He could support the strong borders act. Patrick Brown, the Mayor of Brampton, asked me to pass a message to the Conservatives that the Peel Regional Police want lawful access in this country so they can bust extortion rings, not just to punish bad actors after a crime is committed but to stop them in the first instance.

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[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, February 7 marked the end of the mandate of Haiti's transitional presidential council and a new step in the country's political transition with the transfer of power to Prime Minister Fils-Aimé.

As Haitians continue to cope with uncertainty over the future of their country amid a worsening security situation, can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us how Canada is going to keep supporting the Haitian people throughout the country's democratic transition and the restoration of security?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this transition is an important step toward stabilizing Haiti, including general elections. Canada is a leader in the world. We have invested \$450 million in stabilizing Haiti, and we are also co-operating with the diaspora. We are committed to fighting for a healthier and safer future for Haiti.

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[English]

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, despite the Liberal government signing on to up to \$52 billion to build an electric vehicle supply chain in Canada, the wheels are falling off most of those deals, and the vast majority of EVs are built elsewhere. Now, the Liberals are expecting liberal Canadians to buy into this \$2.3-billion subsidy program for foreign-made EVs.

Why is the Liberal government expecting working Canadians to subsidize their \$2.3-billion subsidy for foreign-made EVs, including in the U.S.?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in affordability and we believe in electrification. We just do not understand why the Conservatives are so against electrification at a time when, in five years, 40% of all the cars sold worldwide will be EVs. We will not hold back our auto workers. We will invest in the future of the sector. We will make sure that we leapfrog what is going on in the United States, and we will create jobs across the country.

**Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is not addressing the issue, so allow me to be clear: Under the Conservatives, not a single taxpayer dollar would go to subsidizing the American EV market, yet that is precisely what the \$2.3-billion subsidy the Liberals have just introduced will do. There are

not a lot of EVs made in this country. They are made elsewhere, including in the U.S., which is eligible for this \$2.3-billion subsidy.

Will the minister change course, or will working Canadians be expected to fund the American auto market?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that auto workers are building the best cars in the world for the world, but we all know that the auto sector is completely integrated within North America.

Is my colleague saying right now to call for a boycott against American EVs, which are made with Canadian parts by Canadian auto workers? Is that what she is suggesting?

● (1450)

[Translation]

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has announced a \$2.3-billion subsidy for electric vehicles, but that money will come from Canadian taxpayers. Does the government realize that American electric vehicles will in turn also be subsidized?

Need I remind the government that we are currently in a terrible trade war because of Donald Trump and that, so far, Donald Trump's actions have cost 5,000 people their jobs? Why subsidize American cars?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after being in a tariff war for almost a year, it is surprising to finally hear the Conservatives denounce the tariffs imposed on the Canadian automotive sector. In the meantime, we have presented a plan, a plan supported by the entire industry, by the unions, by the Premier of Ontario, where the industry is really established, as well as by environmentalists. We agree that we need to invest in the electrification of transportation and of the auto industry, because we know that, globally, that is where the investments are being made. We follow the capital.

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister forgot one name in her litany of people who would agree with this: President Trump. Obviously, he and the American industry will benefit from this.

*Oral Questions*

If the minister really wants to help workers, help the industry and help Canadian families buy a car, why not take up our proposal to axe the GST on cars made in Canada? That is a concrete measure. That will get results.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are already helping the automotive sector with \$3 billion, and we will continue on that path. We will support the 500,000 people who work in the auto sector in Ontario, but also in the battery industry in Quebec. We agree that we need to invest more in the electrification of transportation because it also supports jobs in our beautiful province.

My colleague also needs to understand that the North American auto sector is completely integrated. When he calls for a boycott of electric vehicles made in the United States, is he saying that workers manufacturing auto parts for this sector will—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Simcoe North.

[*English*]

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the auto sector is half the size today as it was when the Liberals took office. President Trump has launched a sustained and unjustified attack on Canada's auto sector. His stated goal is to take Canadian auto jobs and put them in the U.S. Now the government is going to use taxpayer money to subsidize electric vehicles made outside of Canada. Thousands of these rebate cheques will end up in American pockets.

Does the minister really believe that we should be using taxpayer money to reward President Trump's behaviour?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is shocking that the opposition members do not recognize the measures the government has taken to support the auto sector, to support workers and to make sure that we are investing in national projects. They vote against us every single time.

We have an auto strategy. We have a liquidity management fund. We are reducing tariffs. We are making sure we are building Canada strong. We urge the Conservatives to get on board.

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government, Canadian auto production is down by half. Mass auto layoffs in Oshawa, Brampton and Ingersoll are devastating our communities. We gave the minister a very reasonable solution to help auto workers. Under section 153 of the Income Tax Act, he can bring forward a regulatory change to reduce the mandatory withholding rate on lump sum severances for impacted workers.

The Minister of Finance rejected it. Why?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I come from a riding with and I represent auto workers and the auto sector. They want this government to keep doing what we have been doing, which is to support auto workers, support unions, support auto manufacturing and ensure that we are, together, building Canada strong. This is what we do in times of economic stress. We band together. On this side of the House, we urge them to vote with us, vote for Canada, vote for national projects and build Canada with us.

• (1455)

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance called standing with auto workers “political malpractice”. It is easy to talk about that here in Ottawa, but try saying that to the workers who lost their jobs, to the workers who cannot feed their families, to the workers who cannot pay their mortgages. The government is sending billions of their tax dollars outside of Canada to fund foreign jobs and foreign projects. Canadian workers feel betrayed.

Will the minister just drop the rhetoric, work with us and stand for Canadian workers?

**Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, breaking news for the opposition: we are in a trade war. Maybe instead of talking down the Canadian economy, talking down workers, they should join us and build them up. We are investing \$3 billion in the auto sector. We are backing companies who choose to build here. I was just in Bradford, Ontario, where we invested in Kumi Canada. It employs 280 Canadians and it supports our plan to build in Canada, buy in Canada and believe in Canada. They ought to try it.

**Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals providing billions in rebates for American-made EVs coming into Canada is anything but elbows up. This is at a time when Donald Trump is tariffing every single Canadian auto going into the United States. Furthermore, working-class Canadians are now being forced to subsidize \$50,000 cars they cannot afford so wealthy people can buy them. In an affordability crisis, this makes no sense. In a trade war, this makes even less sense.

When will the Liberals reverse course on this ridiculous policy that gives American-made EVs a subsidy and leaves Canadian workers paying the bill?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, the only party going in reverse is the Conservative Party. We are going to move forward. We are going to drive forward by investing in the Canadian auto sector. We have a plan to invest \$3 billion in this auto sector. We are making sure that we are building the cars of the future. We are not only building the cars of the future; we are building affordable homes. We are making sure that families can put food on the table. This is called building Canada. They are blocking all those. They should get on board, stop blocking, start building Canada and join us.

**Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they are not investing in Canadian auto workers; they are subsidizing Tesla. Canadians are watching our auto sector get hammered by Trump slapping illegal, unjustified tariffs on Canadian-built cars, putting paycheques at risk in Ontario and in Kitchener. While Trump punishes Canadian workers, the government is rewarding the U.S. auto sector. I am wondering whose side they are on.

Can the government please explain why, at a time when Canadians need action, it is choosing to use taxpayer dollars to subsidize American-made vehicles? Why?

**Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have created over 160,000 jobs since September. Wages are rising. Inflation is within target range. We know that certain sectors in the economy are facing impacts from the tariffs, from the trade war, but we have a plan, a plan that invests in workers, which is in our budget. That party has voted against it. Unfortunately, the members keep blocking the budget. If that member wants to make a difference, if she wants to help workers, it is important that they pass the budget. Let us go pass the budget. Let us stay all night and pass the budget.

[Translation]

**Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the new automotive policy announced by our government marks a turning point for this industry. In this global political context, we are focusing on what we can control. This helps to provide more clarity and stability for our industry.

Can the Minister of Industry explain how this policy will build a stronger Canada, protect our economy and support Canada's auto industry?

**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 Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie for his excellent work. He plays a very active role in our auto caucus.

He asked me a question about our auto strategy. It is an excellent strategy focused on two objectives. The first is domestic production. The second is electrification, because we believe that this is where the industry is headed. We do not want to simply be victims of the White House's decisions. We will be there for our auto sector in Ontario and across Quebec.

• (1500)

**PENSIONS**

**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said to give her names. I gave her two names this week. Does she want the names, addresses and phone numbers of the 86,000 seniors who are waiting for their pension and GIS?

The Minister of Transport says that the system is being modernized. The projected cost of \$1.6 billion has now reached \$6.6 billion. The money the Liberals are spending is Canadians' hard-earned money. Meanwhile, our seniors are waiting to pay their rent and buy groceries.

Who is taking responsibility for this financial fiasco, and who is going to stand up and apologize?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to sit down with the opposition member, but what he said is not true.

[English]

We are actually under budget for this modernization of a 60-year-old system, migrating more than 7.5 million Canadians to this new system. Of course, as we see challenges with specific applications, where maybe information is incorrect or maybe there are paper applications, the department is working urgently on those cases. If any MP here has a constituent who is not receiving their benefits in time and is in urgent need, please reach out to my office. We would be happy to help. Canadians can also contact Service Canada.

[Translation]

**Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Valentine's Day is fast approaching. Unfortunately, there is very little love for the Liberals right now. Just ask the 86,000 pensioners who are definitely not in love with the new Cúram software, a faulty system that is depriving them of their money every month. We could also ask the public servants who are saying that this is the worst system ever designed.

Worst of all, Quebeckers and Canadians are realizing that the Liberals are once again spending their money irresponsibly. We are talking about a cost overrun of \$5 billion. That is appalling.

Why do the Liberals always spend taxpayers' money recklessly, without accountability and without respect?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the public servants who are working hard to learn a new system very quickly.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

It is very important that we talk about these civil servants with the respect they deserve. In fact, at the beginning, of course it was challenging to learn that system. These workers have worked extremely hard to get better and more proficient at a brand new system. It is replacing a 60-year-old system. I challenge us all to think back to what a computer system that is 60 years old would look like. I am very proud of the civil servants who have worked so hard.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian forestry sector is being hit with unjustified U.S. tariffs of 45%. Liberal inaction continues to threaten the lumber industry and our workers. After 346 jobs were lost at the Domtar plant in Baie Comeau in January, this morning it was announced that 90 forestry workers in La Tuque and Montreal will be losing their jobs.

When will the Prime Minister start working with the Conservatives, get rid of the U.S. tariffs and stand up for forestry workers?

*[English]*

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite that while the Conservatives are obstructing our progress, we have proposed \$2.5 billion in support from the government to go to the forestry sector.

Workers and businesses know that American tariffs are what are causing the problem. Do these folks understand that it is the tariffs we need to be fighting, not each other?

\* \* \*

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to choose electric vehicles, but they also want the confidence that they will be able to charge them where they live, work and travel. This is a critical component of the government's auto strategy.

Can the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources tell the House how today's announcement is helping build the charging infrastructure Canadians need while supporting jobs and investment across the country?

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Hamilton Centre for the great work he is doing in his riding.

That is exactly what today's announcement is about. We are investing more than \$97 million in 155 clean transportation projects across Canada, including \$84 million to install 8,000 EV chargers, helping Canadians choose to drive electric with confidence. This builds on our progress today and supports our auto strategy by strengthening Canada's charging network, attracting private investment and keeping good jobs from coast to coast to coast.

● (1505)

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on November 25, 2021, a lone gunman circled the Vanderhoof RCMP detachment, spraying dozens of rounds into the particle board walls, narrowly missing the RCMP members working inside. They thought they were going to die that day. It is a miracle no one was killed.

The Liberal government promised it would stand with these members. It promised it would partner with the province and the District of Vanderhoof to build a new detachment, but five years later, the memories are still raw. The bullet holes remain, serving as a constant reminder of that horrific day.

The province is on board, and the District of Vanderhoof is on board, but the government is missing in action. Why is that?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me extend my deepest support to the individual RCMP officers who have been impacted.

I will work with Commissioner Duheme to ensure that those who require the support, including new facilities, are addressed. The work of RCMP frontline personnel across Canada is truly inspiring, and I want to thank each and every member for their service to Canada.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently urged the global community to stand up to superpower intimidation and called on middle powers to stand together to resist it.

The United States has imposed an illegal blockade on Cuba for decades, crippling its economy and causing mass suffering to the Cuban people. Now Donald Trump is cutting off fuel, risking a humanitarian disaster.

Will the Prime Minister stay true to his words in Davos, uphold independent Canadian foreign policy and support Cuba in the face of aggressive U.S. imperialism?

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned by the deteriorating conditions in Cuba. Our consular officials are actively engaged. They stand ready to support Canadians in need. We are also working with the Cuban authorities and Canadian tourism stakeholders to ensure a timely and effective response.

*Business of Supply*

We understand that aircraft carriers from Canadian airlines will be picking up Canadians. Our top priority will always be the safety and security of Canadians, and our foreign policy is based on that.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Alberta's Bill 11 is American-style two-tier medicine. It allows doctors to bill privately while also billing the public system, and it allows private insurance for medically necessary care. This breaks the promise of Canadian medicare, creating one system for the wealthy and one where the rest of us are left waiting even longer.

The minister said she would look into it, but it has been two months and we have heard nothing. Will she stop stalling, enforce the Canada Health Act and protect Canada's universal health care system?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague that, yes, we are working with Health Canada's legal services to see what the Alberta legislation does. I am working closely with my counterpart in the province. When I know more, I will come back to say whether that legislation complies with the Canada Health Act.

As I have said several times before in this House, I am the guardian of the Canada Health Act for Canadians.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Charmaine A. Williams, associate minister of women's social and economic opportunity for Ontario.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

● (1510)

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BILL C-2 AND BILL C-12

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

During the course of debate today, numerous times, numerous Liberal members made reference to Bill C-2, which was named the strong borders act when it was introduced in June. The trouble, and I will try to be succinct, is that Bill C-2 cannot be put forward for a vote. It is in violation at this moment. It would only be acceptable for it to sit on a shelf covered in dust until the government removes all the sections that have already been carried in C-12 and are identical to those still in Bill C-2. This would encompass, in Bill C-2, parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. This is because the rule in this place, known traditionally as the same question rule, prohibits any government or any member from bringing forward legislation that is substantially the same.

In this case, we know Bill C-2 came forward in June. I thought, when I saw Bill C-12, that the government would remove Bill C-2 from the Order Paper. I was informed later by the minister responsible that the intention was to reintroduce Bill C-2 with only those sections that related to warrantless access, as the rest of Bill C-2 had been put into Bill C-12.

As such, I would like to direct the Speaker to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, 2025, in which he will find on this particular issue of concern, the same question, that a bill adopted “cannot be revived in the same session.”

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to please consider the matter and direct the government to immediately remove Bill C-2 from the Order Paper until such time as it can reintroduce it with only those sections that have not yet been adopted, the warrantless access sections.

I also draw the Speaker's attention to the fact that the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime called for Bill C-2 to be passed. That violates the same question rule.

Even worse is the part the Speaker will find in Hansard. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons asked for unanimous consent to pass Bill C-2 immediately. Fortunately, I said no. Otherwise, the government would have found itself in error and contravening all our rules. Should the member have happened to achieve unanimous consent, the government would have violated the same question rule.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for that elucidation. I will consider the hon. member's comments and get back to the House.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, my intention when I asked for unanimous consent on Bill C-2 was to get it to committee stage, not to pass it through the House.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## OPPOSITION MOTION—SERIOUS CRIMES AND REFUGEE CLAIMS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for St. Catharines.

*Business of Supply*

Today, I will focus on how our immigration system responds to concerns about non-citizens who are accused or convicted of serious criminal offences, as well as the decision-making process of admitting, investigating and removing a non-citizen.

I want to emphasize how upholding these rules, and the independence of these processes, is critical to our country. Canadians rightly expect that our immigration system will protect everyone in this country and that our laws are applied consistently and respond to their concerns, especially concerns about serious criminal acts. We want the decisions of our justice and immigration systems to be fair, efficient and final, and we expect that these decisions are made thoughtfully, lawfully and in alignment with our democratic values.

Serious criminality has serious consequences in this country. These cases are deeply troubling, and our hearts go out to victims and their families. Our laws are already clear: Individuals who commit serious crimes face consequences. Immigration law is clear that serious criminality has serious implications for admissibility and continued presence in Canada.

Before going further, it is important to clarify roles. Criminal investigations, prosecutions, sentencing and court procedures fall within the authority of police services, prosecutors and the courts. Those matters are addressed by other departments. My remarks today will focus on immigration consequences under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Security and public safety measures begin before arrival. Canada's immigration screening process is intentionally multi-layered. It involves Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; the Canada Border Services Agency; and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. Every applicant is assessed for criminality, terrorism, human rights violations, organized crime, espionage and public health risks, despite a lot of the misinformation we hear coming from the other side. Screening occurs before travel, at the border, and where necessary, after entry into Canada. This layered approach ensures that the system is responsive, adaptable and capable of addressing evolving threats.

To enhance our control over the system, our government has prioritized strengthening document control in recent years. Since January 2025, explicit authorities came into force for our immigration and border officers to cancel temporary resident documents, such as visas and electronic travel authorizations, on a case-by-case basis, when new information comes to light that someone is inadmissible or is no longer eligible to hold their document. They also have the authority in more limited circumstances to cancel study and work permits. This helps Canadians keep Canadians safe and migration orderly.

Additionally, we are seeking new authorities under Bill C-12 that would further strengthen the government's ability to manage immigration documents and applications. Included within these authorities are measures that would authorize the Governor in Council to make an order, when it is in the public interest, to cancel, suspend or change groups of immigration documents, to pause or suspend application processing or to stop the intake of new applications on a large scale. These authorities would ensure that the government is better able to manage immigration documents and applications when required to protect the public interest.

This is just one example of how IRCC is continually strengthening control over our immigration and asylum systems to the benefit of Canadians and communities. Additionally, we work closely with domestic and international partners to identify risks, share information and respond to concerns as they are identified.

The system is proactive as well as reactive. When misrepresentation or criminal history is discovered, individuals may be found inadmissible on the grounds of serious criminality and misrepresentation. Officials can move immediately under the law to issue a removal order.

● (1515)

Under the Refugee and Immigration Protection Act, Parliament has carefully balanced thresholds for inadmissibility and removal based on Canadian law and international obligations, including our obligations not to create stateless people and not to return people to danger.

The act already contains some of the strictest provisions among like-minded and democratic countries. Non-citizens convicted of serious criminality are inadmissible to Canada. Those sentenced to six months or more of imprisonment have no right of appeal to the immigration appeal division.

There is no special treatment for criminals, including violent offenders, under Canada's immigration law. Criminal proceedings take precedence over immigration proceedings. When a non-citizen is convicted of a serious crime, they must serve their sentence, and immigration consequences follow. These consequences are set out in legislation and applied through established legal processes. These serious criminal convictions mean people are subject to a removal order.

The Canada Border Services Agency is empowered to investigate, issue removal orders and carry out deportations. Its work is governed by the laws set by Parliament, following due process. Decisions are subject to review by the courts to place a check against potential errors.

Effective immigration enforcement is not measured by rhetoric but by results, and the results demonstrate that Canada's enforcement system is active and effective. In 2023-24, the Canada Border Services Agency prevented more than 9,000 individuals from boarding flights to Canada and denied entry to 34,000 people at ports of entry. Within Canada, the CBSA removed well over 700 individuals found inadmissible for serious criminality. The results for the first 10 months of 2025 surpassed the results for 12 months in 2024, showing sustained progress.

*Business of Supply*

Canadians want an immigration system that is fast and efficient and that upholds the independence of our judicial and law enforcement systems. That is why our focus has been on a system that carefully screens applicants, responds to new information and applies the laws consistently.

We have introduced measures to make the system stronger and more efficient. For example, Bill C-12 introduces strong information sharing and coordination across departments, things that are essential to public safety. This measure could reduce the amount of time it takes to detect a problematic security issue and take action.

When programs operate in silos, discrepancies and risks can be missed. Bill C-12 would modernize information-sharing authorities within IRCC and with authorized domestic partners to strengthen integrity and improve decision-making. These authorities would allow the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to share identity, status and document information with domestic partners when there is a lawful purpose for doing so, and that includes with our law enforcement.

The new information-sharing authorities would reduce duplication, improve efficiency and enhance program integrity. They would do this while protecting privacy. Any new use or disclosure of personal information from these new authorities would remain subject to existing privacy legislation, policies, guidelines and best practices, including privacy impact assessments. These safeguards would ensure that integrity measures are balanced with a strong protection of personal information.

It is important to be clear about what Bill C-12 would and would not change in relation to criminality and removals. Bill C-12 would not alter existing thresholds for inadmissibility or removal. Canadian law already establishes a threshold for serious criminality for the purpose of inadmissibility, one that, unlike the Conservatives' failed proposals, would not risk targeting the wrong people or providing relative leniency to temporary residents compared to permanent residents.

We will uphold tough measures to address criminals, as well as the due process that demonstrates to us, to all residents of Canada, that we respect democracy and the rule of law.

Criminals adapt fast, and government must do more than keep up. It must get ahead of them. In that spirit, we will continue to improve the sophistication of Canada's criminal response tools to keep Canadians safe.

• (1520)

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member and the entire Liberal government talk really tough on crime, particularly on extortion, when the national average is over 330%, and in B.C. alone, it is over 500%.

If the Liberals were truly genuine in their words about being tough on crime, why did they gut the mandatory minimum penalty in Bill C-5? Why did they not bring back a reverse onus in Bill C-14 or even bring back the mandatory minimum penalty in Bill C-16?

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about how we talk tough, but we are doing more than just talking tough. What we are seeing here is a war of words.

Quite frankly, we have made major additions, not only with bringing back mandatory minimum sentences but also with everything from Bill C-12 to Bill C-2, the borders act. We can talk about strengthening something, but we need the Conservatives to stop blocking what we are doing here in this House and come along to make these changes.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member has been a very strong advocate in regard to the entire crime package that the Prime Minister and government have been trying to get passed, but the Conservatives continue to obstruct and try to prevent it from passing.

The member talked a great deal about extortion. I agree with him that extortion is a very serious issue. Bill C-2, lawful access, and Bill C-14, bail reform, are two pieces of legislation that would go a long way in dealing with some of the extortion we are witnessing in Canada.

Could the member express his thoughts on the Conservative Party's continuing to prevent those important pieces of legislation from passing?

• (1525)

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, I talked about how criminals adapt fast and how we have to stay ahead.

Many of the measures we have introduced, many of which the member just indicated, build upon things that we have done, things like Bill C-70, the foreign interference act. It has many measures that will help us deal with the issues around extortion.

We need to move quickly on all of the measures that have been introduced in this House over the past few months to continue not only to adapt to what the criminals are doing but also to move ahead of them and make these changes quickly. We need the Conservatives to join us.

**Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question again.

The member talked about bringing mandatory minimum penalties back in Bill C-16, but that does not happen at all. In fact, there are no mandatory minimum penalties brought in for specific offences in Bill C-16. What the government did was bring in a safety valve.

*Business of Supply*

Again, if the member is that serious about extortion, why did he vote in favour of removing the mandatory minimum penalty for extortion when he voted in favour of Bill C-5?

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, whether the member likes it or not, Bill C-16 reinstates mandatory minimum sentences.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Parm Bains:** I have already answered the question.

Mr. Speaker, the member needs to read the legislation and join us. Let us make these changes quickly. I know members across the way from British Columbia want this to happen very quickly.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the Conservative Party has not even read the legislation.

Bill C-16 actually does reinstate mandatory minimums, maybe not in every area that he can imagine, but it does reinstate them.

Could my colleague provide his thoughts on how important it is that the Conservatives truly understand what they are filibustering? They are denying Canadians the opportunity to see good legislation pass.

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, I heard from the member across—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am trying to listen to the member for Richmond East—Steveston.

The hon. member can continue for 30 seconds or less.

**Parm Bains:** Mr. Speaker, we have heard from many members across the way who claim that it would allow house arrest for serious crimes, such as extortion. This is simply incorrect.

Conditional sentences or sentence orders are never available when the sentence is two years or more, which is typically the case. We also maintain mandatory jail time for extortion involving restricted or illegal firearms, as well as extortion connected to criminal organizations. It is clear. It is right there.

**Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I hope you can give me a bit of latitude. This is my first opportunity to rise since the passing of Kirsty Duncan, and I want to offer my condolences to her family. Very few people in this place have fought as hard as Kirsty for the most vulnerable in their community and across the country. The Olympics are going on, and the women's team is playing right now. I know she would be glued to that, because there was also no one who fought harder for safety in sport in this country than she did, so my condolences go to her family.

I am here to speak today on the Conservative opposition day motion. It is really telling that, for a party that claims to want to have an impact on law and order and to be tough on crime, the only thing it has brought to the table is a non-binding motion of Parliament. The Conservatives have had opportunities since the start of this Parliament to act on legislation, to act on things that matter and act on a piece of legislation, while mayors, police chiefs and constituents have begged them to stop their obstructionist tactics.

Whether it is Bill C-2—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Manitoba is going to sit there and heckle, and the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is just going to heckle. He has nothing to add. He has been part of this obstruction from the start. He has been here for 10 years, but he has brought nothing to the table in terms of this problem, except yelling, screaming and pounding his desk on a non-binding motion. He has an opportunity. He is still yelling.

He has an opportunity to go to his leader's office. His leader sent a letter to the Prime Minister saying he's ready to co-operate. These are words on paper. Yes, on one of the pieces of legislation, the Conservatives have moved forward. On Bill C-14, we have seen some movement. After months of holding it back, after months of filibuster, we have finally seen some movement on that. My understanding is it finally passed committee after, again, mayors and chiefs of police begged the Conservatives to let these pieces of legislation through.

We still see a lot of work ahead of us. We can look at Bill C-2. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police stated that Bill C-2 is "a timely and necessary step as part of a sustained commitment to modern laws, modern tools, and modern collaboration." This will give law enforcement the tools they need to dismantle and prosecute increasingly sophisticated organized crime networks threatening our communities.

Again, the chiefs of police are calling for action, and what do the members have on the other side? They have a non-binding motion, a non-binding resolution. Where are they in their committees? When are they saying to their leaders, "We need action on this. Our chiefs of police, our police associations are demanding action on this. They are demanding action on lawful access." They will get up and say that terrorism and child exploitation are problems, but they have concerns with the bill. They will not examine it in committee. They will fight it here. They will go back to their constituents and say they supported a non-binding motion. Where are they? They say this is their issue. They talk about it time after time.

I would like to believe the Conservatives have some legitimacy in this space, but where are they? If these bills are so terrible, why are they not getting them to the committee to amend them and make them better in their minds? They are just leaving them here on the floor of the House of Commons. They are not speaking to the Conservative members of their caucus in the Senate to make sure the bills are expedited.

*Business of Supply*

Premier after premier is screaming to get these pieces of legislation passed, whether it is Bill C-2, Bill C-8 or Bill C-9 on combatting hate. The Conservatives are just fundraising off their obstruction of Bill C-12, Bill C-14 and Bill C-16. We even heard the member wanting more mandatory minimums. At the same time, he is obstructing Bill C-16. It is unbelievable, but again, they have a non-binding motion. That is their solution. I am sure that when they meet with chiefs of police and with mayors, they are going to say, "Well, we have this piece of paper." When they are asked why they would not support other legislation that we have been calling for, they will have no answer. They have had no answer here.

● (1530)

The only thing the Conservatives do have, which I am sure they have not mentioned, is that crime is actually down, but who are they going to blame? They have a non-binding motion to blame immigrants and refugees for the problem. At the same time, they are clutching at their pearls.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, how dare the member say that? He should probably read the Conservatives' own motion. I am sure none of them have gotten up to say that crime is down the last couple of years, but they are going to ramp up the fear. We have said from the start—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations is the biggest hypocrite of them all as he stands there yelling at the top of his lungs and not listening. This is nothing new for him; it goes back to the last Parliament, where he sat in committee and obstructed.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, even now he is trying to obstruct my speech and trying to shout me down, but I will keep going if it is all right with the hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, who still keeps going. Perhaps you should have a review of the Standing Orders. It is not his turn to speak.

Again, all the member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations has is a non-binding motion. Perhaps that it is why he is mad at me; he wants to tell his leader to pass consequential legislation, the consequential legislation that is before us. I am sure that he, as the justice critic, meets with police chiefs and police associations, because he talks about it in this place. He is hearing from those associations, "Pass the legislation."

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, at the same time, why does the member come forward with this, because he is yelling at me right now that he has a non-binding motion? I am sure he is going to go to the chief of police in Brantford and say that he has a non-binding motion. Is that going to reduce crime? That is all he has.

It is truly unfortunate that a party that used to fight for law and order is silent.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, it says a lot that all the Conservatives are doing is heckling. Again, they have nothing.

At its core, the non-binding motion before us is about making people afraid. Canadians have an expectation of safe communities, whether that is passing the budget or ensuring that we move forward on our commitment to hire 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA officers.

**An hon. member:** Where, where, where?

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the member asks where, but he will not ensure that the budget gets passed. It is a neat trick so the Conservatives can again show their non-binding motion but then hold up all legislation to make it happen. The member has been here since before I was here. What is shocking through his heckles is that I do not know that he knows how this place works. We need to pass the budget. It is genuinely shocking how there is a lack of understanding of how this place actually works. The only gear the Conservatives have is heckling, shouting and obstruction. Again, a non-binding motion is not going to get this done.

This is about immigration. Premier Eby of British Columbia said there was a wave of extortion in this country. He called it "a terror attack in slow motion". He wants loopholes closed in Bill C-12. He wants the passage of Bill C-12, but again we have obstruction. We do not see action. Can the member go back to the premiers and say the Conservatives tried to put forward a non-binding motion? That is all they have.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are still yelling at me. They are mad because I am pointing a mirror to them. They have an opportunity right now to advance these pieces of legislation, but they are using their opposition day to stall. They could have used it to schedule hearings in committees, to direct these committees to study, or to call on the Senate to expedite studies of these pieces of legislation, but what did they do? They did none of that.

The Conservatives actually had some power to move this agenda along, but again, all they are going to go to their constituents with is a piece of paper that says that they have a non-binding motion. They tried nothing and are all out of ideas. It is the Conservative way on this: to pound their fists and demand action but do nothing when the chips are down. I hope they put their actions into effect and ensure that these pieces of legislation get passed, because they are doing nothing.

*Business of Supply*

• (1535)

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the member's 10-minute diatribe, I heard very few relevant talking points to support the government's position. In fact all I heard repeatedly, was reference to a non-binding motion, that it is our solution, that we do not have any talking points and that we are not creating any opportunities for the government to pass legislation.

Perhaps the member needs a little bit of a history lesson. In the 44th Parliament, the Conservative Party of Canada tabled 22 criminal justice PMBs that the member voted against every time in the House, and nine in the Senate. In the 45th Parliament, there were 14 criminal justice PMBs in the House and five in the Senate. When they were brought to a vote, the member voted against them.

We are talking about obstructionists. Why do the member and his party continue to obstruct their own legislation?

• (1540)

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the hon. member on one thing. He said that I said he did not have any talking points. He is full of them because that is, again, all they have. It is just ludicrous to suggest that the government is stalling its own legislation. Do the Conservatives hear themselves? It blows my mind that they have finally given up. They have nothing. The emperor has no clothes. I do not know that anyone could believe that the government is stalling its own legislation.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the member is yelling because he cannot believe he would say something so ridiculous in this place.

[*Translation*]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' proposal seems like a step back in time. I feel like I am looking at proposals that could have come from the Harper government at the time. However, it is 10 years later and, personally, I want us to keep moving forward. I think we can benefit from some of the good things that were done by the previous government, but there are other things that are good now.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. In his opinion, does the current motion not set us back 10 or 15 years?

[*English*]

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the Conservative talking points ignore Supreme Court jurisprudence, which is interesting, because their justice critic often tells us that he is a lawyer and a former prosecutor. They ignore Supreme Court precedents and ignore the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The hon. member is right; we do need to move forward. There is a pile of pieces of legislation that we can move forward on. Are they perfect? They are probably not. They need to be studied. They need to be amended. We need to move on them because Canadians deserve to feel safe. Again, all the Conservatives have are talking points and the slowing down of things in this place.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives are banking on with the opposition day motion is that Canadians will not understand the

mere filing of an asylum claim and an approval of an asylum claim. Even today, if one files an asylum claim and has criminality, they would not be approved. Bill C-12 is a bill currently in the Senate that would substantially make this motion moot.

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

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, again, it is a non-binding motion that the Conservatives have brought forward. Tomorrow is their caucus day. They can go to the Conservative senators who are sitting in their caucus and say that they need to move quickly on this, but despite the letter from the Leader of the Opposition, their only plan is to obstruct, stall, delay and deny. All of them are yelling, but again they have nothing except a non-binding motion for clips on Facebook. That is all they have, when police chiefs and police associations are begging—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman just keeps yelling, because he knows he has nothing. He has absolutely nothing except a non-binding motion.

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of hot air in the chamber this afternoon. We have not heard the member for St. Catharines lose his mind for quite some time. I am actually quite disturbed by what I heard and how much anger and confusion he seems to have as an individual member. I can see why the Liberals have not let him speak for quite a while. That was just an egregious example of what a member of Parliament should not be doing—

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I kept my comments to the thrust of the Conservatives' non-binding motion, but they are engaging in attacks.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, again, they have nothing except talking points and a non-binding motion. I hope the hon. member—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member knows that is a matter of debate.

I invite the member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford to continue.

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the member for St. Catharines is very disturbed. Maybe he needs a cup of coffee. I am surprised the Liberals let him speak today. Normally, it is only the member for Winnipeg North. I feel bad for him. In respect—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

*Business of Supply*

• (1545)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

One member has been recognized to speak. Other members trying to continue their conversation. They could perhaps wait until the member is done, and then they can rise for questions and comments.

I invite the member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford to continue.

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the member for Richmond East—Steveston, who spoke earlier, I would just like to clarify some comments on Bill C-16 that I heard in the House. Bill C-16 would not change the offence of extortion itself and would not create any new mandatory minimum sentences for extortion. It would add extortion as an explicit aggravating factor. It would not redefine extortion. It would not increase the maximum penalty for extortion. It would not add a new mandatory minimum for extortion, and it would not create any new stand-alone offences for extortion either. I just wanted to clarify those points for the House of Commons before I began.

The reason we are here today with another opposition day motion is that the Liberals told us we needed to have one today. They allotted one of our supply days early on because they would rather push forward their new agenda, to say we are delaying things in the House of Commons, before the Prime Minister likely calls a spring election. That is what is taking place today. The government controls the House calendar. We heard the rhetoric from the member for St. Catharines, with his anger and confusion, but we are only here today because the Liberals did not want to talk about their own bills, full stop.

I rise in support of what we are talking about today. The safety of our communities is the first duty of a free and just society. Unfortunately, the Liberals forgot that for 10 years. The foremost responsibility of any government is to protect law-abiding citizens. Across British Columbia, and across Canada, that responsibility is being tested with increasing urgency. Recent data and public warnings point to a troubling rise in organized extortion and related criminal activity, while the response required to confront this threat has too often been delayed. For too long, policies that weaken consequences for serious crime and blur the integrity of our immigration system have eroded public confidence in safety and justice.

After nearly a decade, Canadians are asking a fundamental question: Why do criminals feel more confident, while communities feel more vulnerable? From small business owners and construction workers to truck drivers and young families, ordinary Canadians are facing intimidation that disrupts their livelihoods and undermines stability. In places like Abbotsford, threatening extortion letters have unsettled entire neighbourhoods and placed growing strain on local police. These are the lived realities of Canadians who seek nothing more than to work, raise their families and live in peace.

Since the Liberals took office nearly 10 years ago, violent crime has increased by 54% and extortion is up 330%. This is not a marginal increase. This is a systemic failure. Again, the member for St. Catharines talked about decreasing crime. Well, guess what. The cities of Surrey and Abbotsford in British Columbia, just in the last year, have had to create many special task forces to deal with the problem at hand here today. The reason is that the Liberal government failed to act, full stop.

Less than a month ago, police investigated an extortion-related shooting that damaged a local business and nearby vehicles. This was part of a series that included 34 reported threats, 21 victims and seven shots-fired calls in just 19 days. Law-abiding Canadians must be able to trust that crime will be met with firm and proportionate consequences. Instead, serious crime is too often met with delay, leniency and the absence of real consequences.

More than a year ago, I sponsored legislation in the House through Bill C-381, the protection against extortion act. This legislation would have delivered real jail time for serious offences, stronger penalties for organized crime involvement and a clear denunciation of extortion as a violent and coercive crime. The government, the Liberals, voted against it.

Today, police in British Columbia report that they are overwhelmed, arresting the same offenders again and again. Communities are left to deal with the fallout. Business owners are left to fend for themselves. Victims are left asking whether the justice system in fact works for them. This is the direct result of Liberal catch-and-release laws, weak sentencing and revolving-door bail policies that are enabling repeat offenders to return to the streets, placing families, workers and businesses at risk.

Our motion today also addresses the government's refusal to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, laws that have weakened consequences for serious and repeat offenders. We mention those laws again because their consequences will even touch on the legislation in this chamber and the impact of what the Liberals say it is going to do.

*Business of Supply*

• (1550)

Bill C-5 removed mandatory prison sentences for serious firearm-related crimes, including extortion involving a weapon. Bill C-75 entrenched a principle of restraint in bail decisions that too often results in repeat violent offenders being released back into the community while awaiting trial. It is not every day that every single premier in the country stands against an action by a standing government. They did on that law. They did it because what the government did was so egregious that every premier, New Democrat, Liberal and Conservative, agreed that the government had failed badly and eroded any sense of justice in this nation.

In British Columbia, police have raised new concerns about transnational crime networks, some involving individuals with no legal right to remain in Canada. Allowing extortionists to hide behind asylum claims undermines public confidence and endangers communities, including immigrant communities, who are often targeted first.

Conservatives believe deeply in protecting genuine refugees, those fleeing persecution and violence, but when violent criminals can claim refugee status to delay deportation, something has to change. That is why last November, Conservatives proposed an amendment to Bill C-12 that would have updated the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to bar asylum claims from being made by those who had been convicted of serious crimes in Canada. The Liberals rejected it, and nothing has changed.

This motion reflects exactly what Conservatives have promised Canadians: to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims, bar non-citizens facing serious criminal proceedings from making refugee claims, end leniency that allows criminals to avoid deportation, and repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 so repeat extortionists stay in jail. These measures are fair, lawful and absolutely necessary. They would protect victims, newcomers and communities alike, and they would restore a sense of justice in our country.

The issue before us is not complicated. It comes down to a simple question: Will Parliament stand with victims or with the loopholes that protect criminals? The choice before the House is clear.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have gone to many of the different areas of this country that are affected by extortion. What we are lacking right now are results. We are lacking the number of arrests in these cases. What the member keeps mentioning and talking about is sentencing. We currently have a maximum of 25 years in prison for extortion, and we have minimum sentences when extortion is committed with a firearm or through organized crime, so that is not the issue. In the cases where there have been trials, sentences have been of seven years or more. The problem is catching the criminals, and in order to catch the criminals, we need lawful access. We need to give our police forces the tools they need.

Would the member agree, and would the member co-operate with the government in passing lawful access through the House?

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, we have already had the debate in this chamber between Bill C-2 and Bill C-12 in good faith. The Liberals' attempt to bring up another issue that was not related to their election platform in the amendments they made in Bill C-9 disrupt-

ed a lot of good work that we could have done collaboratively on behalf of Canadians. Instead, when it was right before Christmas, in December, the Liberals chose not to work with us and to put a wrench in the notion of what freedom of religion means in Canada, when we could have been debating these issues in more detail.

What police also need and what they have been calling for are additional resources and for the Liberals to make sure there are no judicial vacancies.

**Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC):**

Today, Mr. Speaker, just in media monitoring clips, there is a story from CTV News: "A new province-wide survey suggests more than half of British Columbians don't feel safe in their communities, with respondents citing ongoing concerns about crime and violence."

CityNews Vancouver says, "Abbotsford Police calling for justice system changes amid growing extortion".

Those are just stories that are appearing today. I wonder if my hon. colleague could speak to the concerns that his residents are facing and why the government is not taking steps to answer those concerns.

• (1555)

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, when our institutions work as they should, people feel safer, victims know where to turn, investigations can move forward, and communities can stand strong in the face of intimidation and violence. Unfortunately, due to the changes Liberals have made over the last 10 years, that is not the case in Canada right now. We know what we need to do. The motion before us today is a step in the right direction. We want the Liberal government to work collaboratively with us and to stop putting its politics ahead of public safety in Canada. We need better from the government. It is not doing a good enough job to protect Canadians.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note the Conservatives are preventing Bill C-2 from passing. They are also preventing Bill C-14 from passing, both of which have a direct link to preventing extortion. I have a letter that was emailed to Conservative supporters. It says, "Extortion is spreading across Canada. Businesses are being threatened. Communities are being terrorized. And families no longer feel safe in their own neighbourhoods." This is the type of propaganda the Conservative Party is pumping out, including today.

How much money has the Conservative Party made by filibustering legislation that would improve the conditions of Canadians?

*Business of Supply*

**Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, all I have to say in response to the member for Winnipeg North is that it is time for the Liberals to stop playing politics with the lives and security of Canadians. I will offer him the opportunity to clarify his earlier statements on Bill C-16 and how he misled Canadians with his false statements on what is included in that legislation. I will take no lessons from the member.

Again, the Liberals need to work constructively with Conservatives, to vote for bills and laws and support motions that are going to put the safety and security of Canadians first. We have not seen that from the government.

**Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my constituents from Abbotsford—South Langley and Canadians who are living in fear, frustration and a deepening loss of trust for the Liberal government. Many feel abandoned and that their safety and their families are being pushed aside. This Conservative motion before the House will help restore confidence in both our justice system and our immigration system. It ensures that the laws of this country protect innocent people and not those who terrorize our communities. This motion recognizes a simple truth: When laws are weakened, when consequences disappear and when loopholes are left open, organized crime does not hesitate to step in, and it is ordinary Canadians who end up paying that price.

Since the Liberals were elected, extortion in Canada has risen 330%, and it is not any better in British Columbia, where I am from. In British Columbia, extortion has risen 482%. In January alone, the Surrey police tracked 36 separate extortion attacks, 36. That is more than the number of days in the month. Those are just the ones that are being reported to the police.

Extortion is not a victimless crime; it is a threat made in the middle of the night, and sometimes in broad daylight. It is intimidation directed at small business owners. It is arson. It is gunfire. It is families being targeted in their own homes. It is people being forced to choose between their safety and their livelihood.

I can speak personally to the impact of this violence. I know and speak to many victims and their families regularly, more regularly than I would like. These are people in our Lower Mainland communities, who live in fear every single day. Families who have reached out to me in my community choose to sleep in their basement with their children, because they are scared of bullets flying through their bedroom windows at night. People are scared to go to their own place of work, businesses they own, because they do not know if they are going to return home that night to their families.

As a federal representative, I get phone calls and concerns about these shootings more than I would ever think I could. Mr. Satwinder Sharma was shot in broad daylight. His family is still grieving his loss every single day. Mr. Baljinder Garcha's death took Surrey by shock. Until this day, many questions are left unanswered. Mr. Darshan Singh Sahsi, a father, a husband, a son and a dear friend of mine, was someone who was recklessly killed in an extortion attack in front of his own home. Every statistic is a real person, a grieving family and a community left asking why more was not done to stop this reckless violence.

Today, many Canadians are afraid to report crimes because they fear retaliation, and others are left wondering whether anyone in

authority is truly listening to them. From Abbotsford—South Langley to Brampton, Surrey, Vancouver, Calgary, throughout the Lower Mainland and across our nation, people are continuing to live in fear.

This brings us to Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, two pieces of Liberal legislation that sit at the heart of this crisis. Bill C-5 repealed mandatory jail time for serious violent offences, including extortion with a firearm, and the Liberals' catch-and-release-plan under Bill C-75 is failing Canadians. Ultimately, the principle of restraint has been twisted into a policy that protects repeat violent offenders, leaving law-abiding Canadians vulnerable. Together, these bills have created a revolving-door justice system, one where an offender can be arrested, released and often released again to commit the same crime within days, if not hours.

These increases did not happen by accident. They are a direct result of the deliberate Liberal policies that have weakened our sentencing and bail laws. Instead of taking decisive action, the Liberal government has repeatedly voted against common-sense Conservative proposals aimed to address these crises.

The Liberals voted against Bill C-381, proposed by my Conservative colleague from Edmonton Gateway, which would bring tougher sentences for extortionists.

The Conservatives are ready to pass laws and help Canadians protect themselves, their families and their homes, but the Liberals are insisting on targeting responsible gun owners and hunters with their gun-grab scam. It is shameful that they are not going after the real problems, which are extortionists.

● (1600)

The Liberals' failures are not limited to public safety laws; they are also evident in their mismanagement of our immigration system. In the fall of 2025, the Liberals voted against an update to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, proposed by the Conservatives to bar asylum claims from being made by those who have been convicted of serious crimes in Canada. This was a common-sense change that would have prevented the abuse of Canada's asylum system and deterred non-citizens from avoiding deportation after committing serious crimes.

Let me be clear: Canada's refugee system exists to protect those fleeing genuine prosecution. It is not a shield for individuals convicted of serious crimes. Do the Liberals really believe that an individual who has committed serious offences should be rewarded with Canadian citizenship?

When criminals use asylum claims and delay tactics to avoid deportation, it undermines public trust and puts Canadians at risk, and Canadians face the real consequences. In British Columbia, every single one of 14 people who were charged with extortion immediately claimed asylum after being charged. They used Canada's refugee system to delay justice and avoid deportation. This shows how the refugee system, which is meant to protect people fleeing real prosecution, is being exploited by criminals, and Canadians are the ones who end up paying the price. This is why this motion truly matters.

The motion would call on the Liberal government to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims. If someone has committed a serious violent offence, Canada's asylum system should not be available to them. It is as simple as that. The motion would also put an end to the leniency that lets non-citizens convicted of serious crimes escape deportation. Deportation should be a consequence, not a choice. The motion would also bar non-citizens with active judicial proceedings related to serious crimes from making refugee claims. This is important, as it would send a message to non-citizens, who now believe they can commit serious crimes and avoid deportation by abusing Canada's asylum system. Finally, it calls on the government to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 so that repeat extortionists stay in jail and cannot terrorize our communities any longer.

This motion is necessary to end the crisis. Even the NDP Premier of British Columbia called for the law to be changed. While the premier is a New Democrat and I am a Conservative member, there are some political bridges that we actually agree on. It protects genuine refugees, supports our law enforcement and restores confidence once again in our justice system. Most importantly, it puts victims first.

Canadians are asking for action and for leadership. They are asking for a government that takes their safety seriously. The House has a choice: We can continue down a path of leniency, loopholes and rising crime, or we can take a stand for safer streets, stronger laws and real consequences.

Conservatives are choosing safety and to put victims over criminals. I urge all members of the House to support this as well.

• (1605)

**Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand what a challenge the extortion crisis is in my colleague's community, and I understand the passion that he brings to this issue speaking on behalf of his community members today.

My colleagues on this side of the aisle, especially those of us from British Columbia, have spoken extensively about the extortion crisis. We understand what a challenge this is in many communities across the country. That is why we have spoken with the Premier of British Columbia, cabinet ministers from British Columbia, mayors from municipalities affected most directly in the Lower Mainland, law enforcement officials and chiefs of police. The messages we have received from all those different levels of government and all those different stakeholders are very consistent. We have been told that law enforcement needs more tools, more resources, more cross-border and inter-jurisdictional coordination, and for the House to pass Bill C-2 and Bill C-14.

### *Business of Supply*

Will the member agree with just about every other public official on this issue?

**Sukhman Gill:** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague is truly passionate and understands the problem that is happening in B.C. right now, he should understand that our community members, British Columbians and the Conservative Party have been asking for change, not today or yesterday, but for over a year. We have brought forward bills to make sure we can address these root problems. We have been waiting on the government to act for the past decade, but it has not acted. That is the problem.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the worst thing a legislator can do is to use their speeches to increase public cynicism and cause people to lose confidence in institutions, to lose confidence in the role of legislators and politicians. I have been here since 2019, and since the arrival of the new Conservative leader, I have seen more and more of this type of rhetoric.

We were told some time ago that people are asking for medical assistance in dying because they no longer have enough to eat. My colleague just said that Canadians are living in fear. I do not know anyone in my circle who lives in fear every day. That does not mean we agree with extortion, but members need to propose solutions that are feasible and viable. There are already provisions in the law to ensure that asylum seekers who have committed crimes cannot obtain refugee status.

What my colleague is trying to do today is fuel public cynicism and sow discontent. The same is true of the speeches I heard earlier. That is a very dangerous game. One day, there may be a Conservative government in power, and he will have to follow that script.

[*English*]

**Sukhman Gill:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague commented that he does not know anyone who is living in fear day by day. I urge my colleague to come to B.C. to see what we face in our Lower Mainland communities, because this issue is real, and it is alive. There were 36 extortion cases in January, just since the new year. It is insane.

What we are dealing with is an extortion crisis. It needs to be dealt with now, not yesterday. That is why we are urging the government to vote for this motion, agree with us and collaborate. Let us work together.

*Business of Supply*

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if we listened to the Liberals, they would have us believe that crime is down in this country. Nobody believes that. The Liberals have done a complete turnaround. While being the cause of the increase in crime in this country and after having advocated for and protested to defund the police, they are now saying they are the solution to the problem they caused.

I am wondering if the hon. member has any comments about that.

**Sukhman Gill:** Mr. Speaker, in communities like Surrey and Abbotsford right now, we are hearing from police institutions doing press conferences. They are troubled. They hear the community. The community right now is concerned about these issues. We are trying to work with local municipalities, as well as the provinces. We want to make sure we can bring real results to Canadians.

• (1610)

**James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

First, I want to say that I am always incredibly proud to speak in this chamber and to stand here as a representative of the people of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, whom I have the great fortune and honour of representing. I thank them at every opportunity I get.

I am really happy to be standing here today, talking about a very important topic. I emphasize that, because I am distinguishing it from a very important motion. The last time I spoke in the House on crime-related issues, I said something along the lines that I do not think there is anybody in this chamber or any elected official who does not believe that defending our citizens, standing up for our communities and having safe streets is critically important. I followed that by saying that I defy anybody to say that to my face. It was misinterpreted as a challenge to go outside or something ridiculous like that. The next thing I knew, it was on social media. I will reiterate what I said then. I do not think anybody in this chamber will tell me that I do not believe in the values that I just pronounced, and I know they do not either. That is my starting point.

Having said that, I am sort of sad that I missed the debate last Friday on the Standing Orders because, had I been here, I might have suggested something like changing the name of “opposition day” to “obstruction day”. The leader of the official opposition spoke in this chamber earlier today and said to “put aside partisan obstructionism”. The problem with that statement is that he should be giving that speech tomorrow morning at his national caucus meeting, not here in the House of Commons, because his comments should be directed at his own caucus members.

I thoroughly enjoy working with opposition members, particularly on the justice committee. I look across the way and say that with sincerity.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is not yet questions and comments. I invite members to withhold their questions and comments until that time comes.

The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore may continue.

**James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate because I was just talking about how much I like the opposition members, so I will scratch that part from my speech.

**An hon. member:** It is refreshing.

**James Maloney:** It is refreshing; that is right.

Mr. Speaker, it is genuine. I really mean that, and the opposition members know that.

Let us deal with the obstructionism, and I will try to put it in its best frame possible. There are a number of pieces of legislation before the House that Canadians want and desperately need, and that are designed in response to widespread consultations with the legal community, the community at large and other political parties.

The problem is that it is tough getting these bills through committee. I will give two examples of this. I will not call it obstruction necessarily, but I will give one example from the justice committee. About a week and a half ago, a member I will call Conservative member B made a very carefully crafted and thoughtful argument and then put a question to one of the officials who was in the room. His point was that we have good laws in place, but that they just needed to be enforced; therefore, we did not need this new law. It was a valid point, perhaps.

The problem is that at the very next meeting, we were debating a different piece of legislation. One of his colleagues on that committee, whom we will call Conservative member L, made what he thought was a very compelling, well-thought-out argument and said that we had laws on the books that were not being enforced, so we needed new laws.

I literally looked at him and said that they needed to get together and coordinate their submissions a little better. How in the face of that can someone say it is a principled approach to dealing with legislation? It is not. It is political, and this is my concern. I like putting policy before politics, but with those types of arguments, it is hard to say that they do because they just do not.

I will give another example. Last year at the justice committee, we were about to deal with a private member's bill that had come through the House. It was the private member's bill of the member for Peace River—Westlock. Shortly before the bill was scheduled to come to the committee, that member went on a podcast of one of my colleagues and made some comments about his own religious beliefs, which he is entitled to do and I respect him for, even if I do not necessarily agree with him.

*Business of Supply*

The result was that his caucus colleagues put him into the Conservative witness protection program and filibustered the committee for two straight weeks. We sat for extended hours, and they were filibustering saying that the sponsor of a private member's bill did not have to come to speak to his own bill. I do not know a member in the House who does not await the opportunity to come to committee to speak about something they are so passionate about. Lo and behold, the Conservatives blocked him from coming because he was speaking about his own religious views.

We now fast-forward to just before Christmas. One of the opposition members was just talking about the filibuster in December at the justice committee. The same member who was prevented from coming to committee because of his religious views came to committee to filibuster, saying that we needed to be free to express our religious opinions. How can that be called a principled approach to developing policy? It is obstruction, period, and I do not know any other way to put it.

We can work together in committees. Just last week, we passed Bill C-14. It took us until 1:15 in the morning, but we did it, and we did it as a result of collaboration between all the parties around the table. I think everybody is quite proud of that accomplishment, as they should be.

However, we are not seeing that on other pieces of legislation. This motion today, like so many opposition day motions, is intended and designed to create an impression in the public. Sometimes, and I believe many times, and others share this view, opposition parties are far more interested in having an issue than finding a solution. It is better to have the issue alive and out there, because then they can take their “clip, snip and post” political approach. They can get sound bites and go out there and use phrases like “soft on crime” and “catch and release,” all of which is total utter nonsense, because as I said at the beginning, everybody in the House believes that criminals should be in prison, that people should be entitled to a fair trial and that society should be able to exist with a feeling of safety.

• (1615)

However, that type of rhetoric, that type of an approach to politics, does not do that. What it does is create a mindset in society that strikes fear into people. They believe something is not really what it is, and we were talking about this earlier.

I really hope, going forward, that I can work with opposition members in the House and out in the corridors and get all of these bills that we have before the House passed, because Canadians want them and Canadians need them. In order to do that, we have to work together and do what we did with Bill C-14.

Sometimes I think it would be far better, and we would get way better outcomes, if we were to conduct committee meetings and proceedings in this chamber without cameras. This is because the conversations I have privately with opposition members, and the conversations I have with opposition members out in the corridors of this place, often are not an accurate reflection of what we see and hear inside committee rooms, which is really unfortunate.

To conclude, Bill C-75 is subject to great criticism, but every time the Conservatives mention Bill C-75, they conveniently leave

out the part of the bill dealing with intimate partner violence. If we are going to talk about a bill, then talk about it in its entirety and talk about the constructive steps that were taken as a result of that bill.

I am afraid that people get the impression, and I hold this view myself sometimes, that on the bills we are talking about that are before the House right now, everybody supports them, including mayors, premiers and police associations, except for the Conservative opposition. I am asking the Conservatives to please work with us, to work with the government. Let us get these bills through the House.

• (1620)

**Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to build a narrative that the Conservatives are obstructing them at every turn, despite the irony of actually doing this on a bill that we are presenting. I watched the Liberals obstruct it. Every single speech has the word “obstructionism” in it. I think even a new word was created today, “obstructionality”, by one of the speakers.

I am wondering if the member, who talked about how terrible it is to work with the Conservatives, has any views on the actual bill.

**James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, I assume the member is talking about the opposition motion because what we are debating here is a motion, not a bill. Since he was careful to correct people on their use of language, I thought I would return the favour.

I have expressed my views very clearly. I think the motion before the House is a form of obstruction in itself, because if we go through all of these pieces of legislation, Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-12, Bill C-14 and Bill C-16, they are addressing the very issues that Canadians are clamouring for and that the member and his colleagues are clamouring for.

I will repeat: Please help us get the legislation passed like we did with Bill C-14.

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was well-thought-out and meaningful, as always. The member has a depth of knowledge, being the chair of the justice committee, as to the shenanigans that have been going on there for some time.

In every speech Conservative members have made in the House, they have somehow stated that their motion, presented today, would not allow people to claim asylum. They specifically reference a news story from December 11, wherein 12 people claimed asylum out in Surrey, B.C. However, we tabled Bill C-2 in the House in June. Had the Conservatives co-operated and not obstructed that bill, those people would not have been eligible to claim asylum at that time.

*Business of Supply*

How important does the member think it is to collaborate and to make sure that we move forward these important pieces of legislation for public safety?

**James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, I will say again that I enjoy working with colleagues on the justice committee and elsewhere. I mean that, but it is more enjoyable if we actually work constructively to try to get these bills passed. Bill C-2 is a perfect example. With the passage of these laws, the issues that the Conservatives continue to raise time and time again would be addressed. However, as I also said earlier, I sometimes cannot help but think that they are more concerned about having a live issue than a real result.

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is a highly partisan motion, and the response was highly partisan as well. As New Democrats, we recognize, and I think everybody in the House recognizes, that there is a rise in extortion, that there is a rise in organized crime, that everybody has a right to feel safe in this country and that we need to do more. The Conservatives continue to make assertions that mandatory minimums and longer sentencing would actually curb this, but if we look to the States, there is a sevenfold incarceration rate from taking that very approach.

What we want is evidence-based policy. I would like to hear from my colleague about solutions. When we look at solutions, what we hear about is targeted enforcement against organized crime, which is effective public safety, as well as timely courts and prevention, not rhetoric that undermines charter rights and stigmatizes newcomers. I hope my colleague can talk about solutions, because clearly they must step forward and do more. I am sure my colleague agrees that the government needs to do more.

**James Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, my friend is right. We need to have an evidence-based approach that is solution-focused. Rhetoric does not help anybody, except for people on social media, perhaps. I would love to talk to the member at greater length. I do not have a lot of time right now, but Bill C-16, for example, addresses some of the very concerns he just raised. That is evidence-based legislation. This legislation, like Bill C-14, was done after thorough and extensive consultation with the parties who are most affected by the challenges we face, and that is why we are seeing widespread support for all of these bills.

Again, I will emphasize and ask members to please work with us to get these bills passed.

**Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Conservative motion presented today on public safety, extortion and our immigration system. While this is an important conversation, I have been following the language used by the Conservative members very closely. Unfortunately, it is based on flawed assumptions, misinformation and political posturing, rather than a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to justice in Canada.

Let me be clear: Our government is committed to a justice system that protects victims, punishes repeat violent offenders and is rooted in evidence, not political ideology or fearmongering. In the face of partisan attacks, we are going to set the record straight.

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, I will specifically focus on parts (c) and (d) of this motion. First, let us

talk about part (c) of the motion, which seeks to bar judges from considering some collateral consequences at the sentencing stage. For those unfamiliar with our sentencing framework, judges can consider a wide range of collateral consequences when imposing a sentence. These include impacts on employment; travel restrictions; loss of professional licences; mental health; housing; firearm rights; inclusion in the sex offender registry; family responsibilities, such as care for sick relatives; and immigration status.

Here is the question: Why are the Conservatives complaining only about judges' considering immigration status when deciding a sentence? Why are they not raising the same concern when judges consider the loss of a firearm licence, even in cases involving firearm-related offences? If their goal is truly to remove one type of collateral consequence from judicial consideration, then logically they should be advocating to remove all of them. This includes the very ones, like the loss of a firearm licence, that directly affect public safety. However, the Conservatives focus solely on immigration status. This tells Canadians everything they need to know. Rather than addressing collateral consequences that impact public safety directly, the Conservatives are choosing to stigmatize immigrants.

The reality is clear: Judicial discretion considers all relative factors, and selectively targeting immigration status is both misleading and dangerous. This is not the Conservative Party of Brian Mulroney, who worked to ensure that we did not stigmatize immigrants or portray them as criminals. This is not even the Conservative Party of former prime minister Harper. In fact, the practice of judges considering immigration status as collateral damage and consequence actually started under former prime minister Harper's government.

In 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada in *R v. Pham* ruled that judges could consider immigration status only if so doing ensures that the sentence remains proportionate to the crime committed. Former prime minister Harper was fine with that, because it allowed judges the necessary discretion to evaluate all relevant factors. Even the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who were in cabinet at the time, said nothing. I suspect they knew it was not a problem then and know it is still not a problem today. However, they are now exploiting the issue to scare Canadians, score political points, cater to the far right base and portray all immigrants as criminals.

*Business of Supply*

This is shameful, and anyone who supports the motion should be equally ashamed. The Conservatives are once again pushing for a failed approach that undermines judicial independence and ignores binding Supreme Court precedent. Rather than interfering with judicial discretion, let us focus on the facts. The courts are not misapplying sentencing guidelines or reducing sentences inappropriately. If the Crown believes a sentence is too lenient, it has the right to appeal. It is just that simple. I dare the members opposite to point to a single case in which the Crown has appealed a sentence for a non-citizen based on immigration status. They will not find one.

Now let us turn our attention to part (d) of the motion, which calls for the repeal of Bill C-75 and Bill C-5. These bills were critical reforms designed to modernize the criminal justice system, protect victims and address the realities of today's world.

• (1625)

Let us take Bill C-75. This bill strengthened protection for victims of intimate partner violence, which is something every member of the chamber should be concerned with. Under Bill C-75, we defined “intimate partner” in the Criminal Code to include ex-partners for all Criminal Code-related purposes, and we created a reverse onus for repeat offenders of violence between intimate partners, making it harder for them to get bail. Repeat offenders, the ones who are the most likely to reoffend, are being targeted.

However, the Conservatives are so blinded by their obsession with headlines that they refuse to see the facts. They claim that Bill C-75 weakened public safety, but the president of the Criminal Lawyers' Association has made it quite clear that this claim is a false narrative.

Let us talk about Bill C-5. The Conservatives have tried to make it sound like we were somehow soft on crime, but that could not be farther from the truth. They have raised concerns about house arrest for extortionists, but what they fail to say is that conditional sentences are not available for serious crimes like extortion when the sentence is two years or more, or when the offender poses a threat to public safety. Therefore, Bill C-5 did not give criminals a free pass. We actually maintained mandatory jail time for extortion involving illegal firearms or criminal organizations, the kinds of crimes that concern Canadians most.

While the Conservatives play politics, our government has a comprehensive agenda to combat organized crime. Bill C-14, for example, would introduce over 80 targeted Criminal Code reforms aimed at tackling violent offenders and organized crime, including extortion, yet what did the Conservatives do? They blocked the bill at committee. Their members wasted valuable time at the committee. They are on record talking about their love of cats and puppies, instead of focusing on bail reform, sentencing reform, gender-based violence and extortion.

Let us not forget Bill C-16, which tackles the growing menace of sextortion, a horrific form of online exploitation. The Conservatives have done nothing but block it. They are even asking the government to split the bill.

While the Conservatives stand in the way of very important public safety reforms, we are pushing forward with real solutions. We have introduced targeted reforms, including lawful access, which

would, with Bill C-2, give law enforcement the tools it needs to catch the extortionists before they even commit the crime.

With Bill C-14, we would create new reverse onus provisions for people accused of extortion involving violence, making it harder for them to get bail. We would require that a sentence for extortion be served consecutively to a sentence imposed for arson, not concurrently. We would prohibit weapons at the bail stage for people accused of extortion and organized crime. We would even strengthen bail conditions for extortionists in organized crime, such as geographic limitations. What are the Conservatives doing? They are obstructing.

Let us be clear: Our new Liberal government is committed to protecting victims. The Conservatives, on the other hand, have chosen to play politics with the safety of Canadians. They have obstructed every meaningful reform we have tried to pass, and now they are using partisan rhetoric to undermine our justice system. Canadians deserve better; they deserve a justice system that works for everyone, not just for the politicians who want to score political points.

Let us pass Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-9, Bill C-12, Bill C-14 and Bill C-16. Law enforcement and Canadians are waiting for this critical legislation to secure our borders, our streets and our communities.

• (1630)

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, leaving aside the very controversial decision my friend referred to in the Supreme Court of Canada decision in Pham, which still does not provide any sort of framework by which judges are to apply a discount, if any, I want to focus on the Bill C-5 implications for extortion. I believe I heard my colleague indicate that Bill C-5 did not take away a mandatory minimum penalty for extortion. I remind her to review that again because quite clearly the Liberals removed the four-year to five-year mandatory minimum penalty for extortion with a firearm.

My question is very simple. Given that the mandatory minimum was taken away, which sent a very clear message to extortionists that there are not significant consequences for committing the crime, why did the government not use the opportunity in Bill C-14 to bring back a reverse onus or even bring back the mandatory minimum penalty in Bill C-16, given the substantial increase in extortion in this country?

*Business of Supply*

**Patricia Lattanzio:** Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing the same talking points from the Conservatives on Bill C-5, saying we somehow removed mandatory jail time for extortion. Let me set the record straight, because Canadians deserve to hear this clearly and not just hear slogans.

I have a news flash: Bill C-5 did not eliminate mandatory jail time for serious extortion offences. In fact we deliberately maintained mandatory minimum penalties for extortion involving restricted or prohibited firearms, and for extortion connected to criminal organizations. Those are precisely the types of violent, organized crimes and extortion cases that are causing the greatest harm in our communities today.

Since the member opposite seems unfamiliar with the law they are criticizing, I would encourage them—

• (1635)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[*Translation*]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I also really enjoy working with her on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I have, of course, read the Conservatives' motion. As I have said a few times since this morning, I am a bit disheartened by the motion because I do not think it is going anywhere.

Still, I always try to find something positive, and I believe I have. I want to know whether my colleague agrees with me on something. We get the impression from this motion that our Conservative colleagues want to work on justice issues. That tells me that we may finally see an end to the filibustering and get some bills passed. Bill C-14 passed. Tomorrow, we will be working on Bill C-9. Then, if all goes well, we will move on to Bill C-16 next week.

I see it as a good thing when I hear that members want to work and will stop filibustering. Does my colleague agree with me?

**Patricia Lattanzio:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell him that I also enjoy working with him and my Conservative Party colleague on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Our government has introduced several bills to keep Canadians safe. I know that Bill C-14 has passed, and I hope that we will be able to study Bill C-9 at committee tomorrow.

I very much look forward to continuing to work with my colleague on this and other bills that will come before the committee, including Bill C-16.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I share one thing in common, I think. We have a Prime Minister who has been the prime minister for less than a year and has made a very substantial commitment to Canadians to bring forward a crime package. The bills that my colleague referenced deal, in good part, with that package.

Every day we seem to hear the Conservatives filibustering, coming up with all sorts of excuses as to why they do not want to pass the legislation. When we take a look at the holistic approach that the Prime Minister and this government have put forward, would the member not agree that the Conservative Party is, in fact, clearly filibustering and obstructing the passage of legislation? That serves their party, but it does not serve the Canadian people as a whole.

**Patricia Lattanzio:** Mr. Speaker, in fact and in reality, the government has been very ambitious in bringing forward a crime package to ensure the security of Canadians. We have heard time and time again of what is happening on the streets, and so we have been very bold in our approach, bringing forward Bill C-5, Bill C-2, Bill C-8, Bill C-9, Bill C-12, Bill C-14 and soon Bill C-16.

We are very much looking forward to the Conservatives' co-operation.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. 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 Courtenay—Alberni, Fisheries and Oceans; the hon. member for Oxford, The Economy.

[*English*]

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on a motion addressing an issue that is deeply affecting communities across the country, which is extortion.

We are debating extortion today in the House for one simple reason: It is a crisis. In just a decade, extortion has increased by 330% nationwide, and in British Columbia alone, it is up more than 500%. These are not abstract statistics; they represent families, small businesses and entire communities living under the threat of a system that has failed to protect them.

Let me set the scene for one second. Surrey, B.C., is the eleventh-largest city in Canada. Let us call it a mid-sized city. In January alone, 31 days, there were 36 reported cases of extortion. That is more than one act of criminal extortion every single day in a mid-sized Canadian city. This is why it is a crisis.

Let us be clear about what extortion looks like. It is bullets through windows of small businesses, gunfire outside family homes in the middle of the night, bystanders caught in the crosshairs and families living in fear, wondering if they are next.

*Business of Supply*

In Brampton, gunshots were fired outside a family's home while they slept. A video was sent to them along with the act, demanding \$500,000. This is not petty crime, and it is not first-time offenders; it is organized crime, transnational gangs and hardened repeat violent offenders turning quiet neighbourhoods, cul-de-sacs and suburbs into what feels like a war zone for the families that live there. The Mayor of Surrey has called it a national emergency. The Premier of British Columbia, who I will remind members is not a Conservative, has called it ludicrous. It is hard to disagree, because our laws no longer protect the people they are supposed to protect.

Where is the federal government? The answer is nowhere. The Liberals have watched this unfold and pretended the crisis did not exist until they blamed everyone else for the chaos that they themselves created. They oversaw the chaos, responded with slow, cosmetic half measures, and in their own words, obstructed their own legislation in this place, not just in this session of Parliament but for the 10 years leading up to it.

For nearly 10 years, the Liberals have weakened our justice system with bills such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. I just heard my hon. colleague before this mislead the House on what is in Bill C-5. In it are laws that let repeat violent offenders walk free on bail and terrorize communities. However, from the other side of the aisle, all we hear is laughing, flailing arms and trying to defend what is indefensible. They know that when they go back to the communities, they hear about this first-hand. In fact, it is the reason so many of their colleagues from the York region did not return to the House. At almost every door one goes to there, as they can ask their former colleagues, crime is brought up as the number one issue, and it is not just extortion. It is violent home invasion and gun crime in suburbs where gun crime did not exist before.

Still, from the other side, all day long we have heard mistruths, misinformation, flailing arms and claims of obstruction when they are in the way of their own legislation. They have also broken an immigration system that used to be the very envy of the world with weak screening on the way in and no accountability once the system is abused. What is worse, they have actively blocked reforms that Canadians are demanding.

We brought forward motions for catch-and-release on Liberal bail, and the Liberals voted them down. My colleague from Edmonton Gateway, the co-deputy leader of this party, introduced legislation that would introduce mandatory sentences for extortion, and the Liberals killed it. My colleague from Calgary Nose Hill proposed amendments to Bill C-12 to close extortion loopholes, and they rejected that too.

No matter how many times the Liberals stand up in the House and say that those things are not true, the record is clear: They are true. If anybody were to look back on it, they would know that the reason we have had a rise in crime in this country is the Liberals' weak-on-justice crime policy.

• (1640)

All of that comes after years of pleas from victims, from grieving families, from frontline police officers and from Canadians begging for real criminal justice reform. The question is unavoidable: Is this government on the side of law-abiding Canadians, or is it on the side of extortionists? I ask because nobody can explain why the

Liberals keep defending a system that protects criminals and continually fails the public.

In a crisis like this, there are two responsibilities, and the government knows this well. One is to sound the alarm bells, and the second is to act decisively. We have been sounding those alarm bells for years in the House, on doorsteps and in packed rooms at stop-the-crime town halls that have been happening right across the country. Ordinary Canadians come to those crime town halls demanding change that they just have not gotten from the Liberals.

What has been missing is action, and while the Liberals delay and deflect, Conservatives are not going to do that. That is why we are going to use our opposition day motion to raise the alarm bells and to finally put forward reforms that need to be placed on the floor of the House of Commons in this motion and in the lives of everyday Canadians.

This motion today would first repeal the catch-and-release laws, Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, so repeat offenders would stay in jail and transnational gangs would stop before they even get started here. Second, the motion would end the abuse of the refugee and immigration systems, whereby criminal gangs file for bogus refugee claims to stay in Canada longer and keep committing crimes. A veteran frontline police officer put it very plainly, saying that criminals know that they can come to Canada, commit crimes, get bail and claim refugee status. It is not even up for contention, he says. Conservatives believe that the refugee system should protect people fleeing violence, but it should not import it.

Finally, the motion would confront one of the most corrosive failures of all: a two-tier justice system. Today, two people can commit the same crime and receive different sentences, simply because one is a citizen and one is not. In one real case, a 30-year-old groomed a 15-year-old online and intended to sexually exploit her. He received no jail time and no permanent criminal record, because the real sentence might interfere with his path to citizenship. In another case, a man on a visitor's permit sexually assaulted an 18-year-old in Calgary. He received a discharge because the conviction would have "devastating immigration consequences".

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Let us be clear that one does not earn the right to be in Canada by breaking the law. Being here as a visitor, as a permanent resident or as a citizen is a privilege, and everybody in this place knows that. If someone commits a serious crime, they forfeit that privilege, period. There is nobody out there who is going to contend with that, and we are not going to take lessons from the Liberals on fearmongering on immigration, when it is about criminals committing crimes in this country they are visiting. There would be no refugee status, no extension and no special treatment; this motion would end deliberate leniency.

At its core, this debate is about fairness for law-abiding Canadians, who deserve to feel safe; fairness for real refugees, who follow the rules; fairness for immigrants, who work hard and respect the law; and most of all, fairness, for once, for the victims of these crimes. Nobody ever talks about that in this place. It is time to end the extortion crisis. It is time to end this mess that the government has created. We have had the same ministers in the same chairs voting for the same policies over the last 10 years, and the end starts right here, right now, by supporting this motion.

• (1645)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, understanding, appreciating and doing things for the victims of crime is one of the primary motivators, whether it is for the Prime Minister or for every Liberal member of Parliament in the House, to bring forward to the House a whole slate of crime bills. Using the example of extortion alone, extortion would in fact be better dealt with by passing Bill C-2 and Bill C-14. Those are lawful access and bail reform legislation. The Conservative Party is the only reason those two pieces of legislation are not passing.

Why does the Conservative Party have so much hypocrisy and absolutely no shame on this crime file?

• (1650)

**Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, the definition of hypocrisy and shame is standing up in this place after 10 years of passing soft-on-crime legislation, creating the crime crisis that we have in Canada, the crime crisis that puts victims at the centre of it. That is the definition of shame and hypocrisy, along with the Liberals' standing in the way every single time we have brought forward legislation or a solution in the House, contorting themselves into a pretzel, thinking they are going to be the ones who solve the very problems they spent 10 years in the chamber adding to.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Code already includes sentencing provisions for repeat offenders who commit extortion. However, there are new measures in Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act, that would make it harder for offenders to get bail and that would impose harsher sentences for extortion-related offences.

What does the member think is missing from Bill C-14?

[*English*]

**Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-14 is going through committee. In fact, it was 19 times that the committee asked for Bill C-14 to be studied. It has been clear in terms of what we have

brought forward to the House. While Bill C-14, I think, is a step in the right direction for the victims of crime, and for the criminals who should be in jail, it certainly does not go far enough.

We are not going to stand in the way of the bill, but we are going to make sure Canadians know there is one party fighting for criminal justice reform, and one government continuously obstructing it.

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I hope my hon. colleague, as deputy leader, can provide some final clarity to the House, because I have heard nothing but exaggerated statements and mistruths in the Liberal Party's explanation about our party's being obstructionist.

Can the member provide context as to how many times the justice committee tried to prioritize Bill C-14 before Christmas and how many times the justice committee tried to prioritize Bill C-16 after Christmas?

**Melissa Lantsman:** Mr. Speaker, I will make it very simple for everybody watching at home. It was 19 times that the committee asked for the piece of legislation to be studied.

I want to make one thing clear on what Conservatives are doing in this place. We are going to work with the government to bring forward the very pieces of legislation that we have been advocating for, for almost 10 years, in the House. We are not going to stand in the way of that, but we are the official opposition, and we are going to oppose the very dangerous laws that Liberals put forward in the House. Most of all we are going to expose what the government is not telling people, and that it is, frankly, standing on its high horse and exaggerating 10 years of a crisis that it has created. It is now trying to come in with a cape and solve it.

**Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations.

I rise today to speak to this excellent Conservative motion, which we brought forward after countless meetings across the country with small business owners, families and community leaders, where Canadians have expressed deep concern and genuine fear about the rising extortion issue now facing Canada. The House has been warned by police, premiers and victims of the consequences of inaction on extortion. Those warnings were followed by amendments, private members' bills and motions from our party that would have addressed the problem directly. Each time, the government chose not to act.

*Business of Supply*

Somewhere in Canada today, a small business owner is checking their phone, before they unlock their front door, to see whether there is another message, another demand, another threat. This is what Canada looks like in 2026. It begins with fear, and that fear has spread because the Liberal government has allowed criminals to learn, adapt and exploit the system faster than Parliament has been willing to fix it.

Since these Liberals took office, extortion has risen by 330% across Canada. That figure alone would have triggered emergency action. Instead, what we have seen is the Liberals voting down common-sense Conservative proposals, weakening sentencing laws, preserving loopholes in the asylum system and maintaining a revolving-door justice system that only emboldens criminals and abandons victims.

One reason extortion has exploded is that the government deliberately removed consequences. Bill C-5 repealed mandatory jail sentences for serious crimes, including extortion with a firearm. This was not a technical adjustment; it was a policy choice that lowered the cost of committing violent organized crime.

Every law the House passes sends a signal. Sometimes it is a signal that help is coming for victims. Other times, more often, it is a signal to criminals that the system can be bent, delayed or avoided altogether.

In response, my Conservative colleague, the member for Edmonton Gateway, introduced Bill C-381 to restore mandatory jail time for extortion, strengthen penalties when firearms or organized crime are involved and recognize arson as an aggravating feature. That bill offered a direct targeted response to the crisis we are debating today. Again, the government voted it down.

On extortion, the signal from the Liberals has been clear. Organized criminals have learned that Canada's justice and asylum systems are slow, fragmented and forgiving. Extortion in Canada today is organized, violent and increasingly tied to transnational gangs. It is being fuelled by a system that criminals have learned how to exploit.

Nowhere is this more evident than in British Columbia. In Surrey alone, police tracked 36 extortion attacks in one single month. Shots were fired into businesses. Homes were targeted. Even media outlets were attacked.

The NDP Premier of British Columbia called this situation "ludicrous". He called for changes to federal law. In response from the government, we had crickets. When Conservatives proposed the very changes the Premier is now calling for, the Liberals voted it down. That contradiction sits at the heart of today's debate.

One of the most alarming features of the extortion crisis is how Canada's asylum system is being abused to block legal consequences. In December, for example, Surrey police arrested 15 foreign nationals suspected of extortion-related crimes. Surprisingly, all 15 claimed refugee status, not one, not two, but all 15. Those claims, regardless of their eventual outcome, halted removal proceedings and delayed consequences. That message only sends one clear signal that they can commit a serious crime, claim asylum and evade the law. That is not a failure of frontline officers; it is a failure of federal law, and these Liberals know it.

This is why the Conservatives proposed amendments to bar non-citizens convicted of serious crimes from making refugee claims and to bar those with active judicial proceedings for serious crimes from doing so as well. These were narrow, targeted and reasonable amendments. Again, the Liberals voted against them. Canadians are right to ask why the government continues to preserve a loophole that allows criminals to weaponize our asylum system against public safety.

• (1655)

Even when non-citizens are convicted of serious crimes, judges are increasingly encouraged by Liberal legislation to impose lighter sentences in order to explicitly avoid immigration consequences. Let me give the House just a few examples. In 2023, a foreign national attempted to purchase sex from an underage girl. He arrived at the location and was arrested by an undercover officer. At sentencing, the court imposed a reduced sentence specifically to avoid affecting his immigration status. That is disgusting.

In Whitby, Ontario, Manpreet Gill caused a deadly wrong-way crash on Highway 401. A family died. He was also guilty of breaching a probation order, yet the court imposed a five-and-a-half-month sentence citing potential immigration consequences. That is a travesty. In Calgary, a 25-year-old non-citizen assaulted an 18-year-old in a nightclub. He was found guilty but, again, he received a lighter sentence to avoid deportation.

What a dangerous signal our courts are telegraphing to the public. These are not isolated incidents. They are the predictable result we warned the government about, numerous times, of the passage of Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which instruct judges to prioritize restraint, minimize incarceration and consider collateral consequences for offenders.

The results are devastating. Victims see offenders walk free. Communities lose faith and trust in the justice system. Criminals learn that Canada is a place where consequences are negotiable and extortionists take note. The government may point to Bill C-14 and claim it fixed the bail problem; however, it did not. They had an opportunity to create a reverse onus provision for extortion as a serious offence in its own right, and they failed to do so. That means individuals charged with extortion, even repeat offenders tied to organized intimidation campaigns, can still be released while awaiting trial unless another qualifying charge happens to apply.

*Business of Supply*

At a time when extortion is one of the fastest-growing violent crimes in the country, the government chose not to treat it with the seriousness it demands. Even subsequent Liberal criminal justice bills failed to correct this mistake. Bill C-16 does not restore mandatory minimum sentences for extortion or reverse the damage done by Bill C-5. While the government speaks about balance and modernization, extortionists continue to face weaker penalties today than they did before 2015, despite the crime being more prevalent, more organized and more violent than ever. This is not coincidence. This is a policy choice by the Liberals.

The motion before us today is clear and reasonable. It calls on the government to bar non-citizens convicted of crimes from making refugee claims, to bar those with active proceedings for serious crimes from doing the same, to end leniency in sentencing designed to avoid deportation and to repeal Liberal laws that create a catch-and-release system. None of this undermines genuine refugees. None of this targets law-abiding newcomers. In fact, it protects them because immigrant communities are often the first victims of extortion. Ask the small business owners in Surrey. Ask the families in Brampton. Ask the shopkeepers who are paying protection money, not because they want to but because they are afraid. They are begging and urging the government to act.

Canada is a compassionate country, but compassion without accountability is negligence. We can welcome newcomers, protect refugees and still enforce the law. Today, the House has a choice. We can continue with excuses, half measures and delayed action, or we can send a clear message: Canada will not be a safe haven for extortionists, violent offenders or those who abuse our asylum system.

I urge all members to support the motion, stand for once with victims and restore confidence in Canada's justice and immigration systems. Canadians are watching. Are Liberals listening?

• (1700)

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know I am not supposed to call anyone a liar in the House, but I am really shocked to hear things like that there is Liberal legislation that somehow tells judges to give lenient sentences based on immigration status. There is no such legislation. There is no such law on the books that requires judges to give lenient sentences based on immigration status. That is absolutely, patently incorrect. I think the Conservatives want Canadians to believe these falsehoods.

In the House today, the Leader of the Opposition said that Bill C-2 is allowing authorities to read people's emails. That is false. What Bill C-2 would do, what lawful access would do, is that it would help the police connect phone numbers to names. That is so important in order to be able to catch these extortionists.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will remind members and the secretary of state that we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. I am referring to the beginning of her statement.

The member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations has the floor.

**Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the secretary of state needs to look herself in the mirror and ask why she has failed Canadians,

why she has failed victims and why she has allowed such criminality to be so pervasive throughout this country.

She had a choice. She could have said no to the passage of Bill C-5, which eliminated mandatory minimum penalties. She voted yes. She had a choice in passing Bill C-75, which opened up the floodgates to catch-and-release. It is really rich for her to claim now that they are taking it seriously when they were the cause of the problem in the first place.

• (1705)

**Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned a few things in his speech. One is the absolute failure of the Liberal government when it comes to the disastrous catch-and-release policy it has. He also mentioned something I would like him to elaborate a bit more on, and that is the failure of the government to address the reverse onus provision for extortion. It had the opportunity. Why on earth would it not do so?

**Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, I am at a complete loss. The Liberals have known for well over a year that violent crime was on the rise, but particularly extortion, at over 330%. On the highest level of any criminal act in this country, they sat silent. If anything, they could have sent a very clear signal to law enforcement, to victims and to those who prey on and victimize individuals using extortionary tactics that they are not going to tolerate it anymore. They failed in Bill C-14, and now they are failing in Bill C-16.

[Translation]

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I also enjoy working with him on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I commend his energy and his passion for the rule of law.

That said, we do not agree with today's motion. That is obvious. I have said so several times already.

My question relates to his passion for justice and the rule of law. Bill C-14 is coming back to the House on Friday, I believe. Will our Conservative colleagues vote in favour, since I heard them say several times that it is a step in the right direction? Can we also hope that they will support Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, which will be studied in committee tomorrow? Afterwards, we will be looking at Bill C-16.

Do I take it, from this surge of passion for the law, that we will be able to make progress and pass Bills C-14, C-9 and C-16 in the coming weeks?

*Business of Supply*

[English]

**Larry Brock:** Mr. Speaker, I share the same sentiment as my colleague from the Bloc. It has always been a pleasure working with him. I certainly enjoy all of his interventions and his contributions to the justice committee.

I think our party made it abundantly clear where we stand on Bill C-14. We wanted to prioritize Bill C-14. We tried desperately at least 19 times before Christmas to prioritize it. Unfortunately, the government chose not to agree with us.

On Bill C-9, there are still some issues that need to be hammered out. There are still some fundamental philosophical differences with respect to the Bloc amendment. We are going to work in earnest to try to overcome those differences. I have reached out to the government, offering some solutions, and I am waiting to hear back from the government.

We desperately want to get to Bill C-16 because that is what stakeholders want us to do. We will work diligently to ensure its passage.

**Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honour to rise in the House. As I like to do every chance I get, I want to thank the voters who voted for me in Niagara West. I never want to take that vote for granted. I want to make sure they understand, every time I stand up, that I appreciate the support I have been given over the last 21 and a half years.

When I look at what has gone on and why we have the opposition motion today, one of the things that concerns me is the fact that I continue to see crime on the rise, and it is evident all around me. I will give the example of what happened during my campaign.

My campaign office last year was in Grimsby, Ontario, just a few doors down from a jewellery store. In daylight hours, I think it was actually around noontime, a truck backed up and smashed into the store in an attempt to rob it. It shows how organized the thieves were that not only did they smash into the store with a pickup truck, but when they got out of the truck, they also had another car waiting, and from that car they drove to another car. We think about this as organized crime because it was not just a couple of random people doing a smash-and-grab; it was actually something organized at a much higher level.

This has been happening in major cities around the country. I have not seen a lot of it in rural parts like Niagara, and certainly not in a town like Grimsby. However, what was so troubling to me was the fact that this was the third time this happened in three months. Think about that for a second. We were campaigning in April, and within three to four months, the same jewellery store was hit for the third time.

Think about that. This is a local jeweller who gives back to the community and does a bunch of stuff. As a matter of fact, there were people in the store who were actually doing repair work from the previous break-in. When we talk about jail not bail, and things like that, this is why we need to look at what is going on.

A number of other incidents happened in my riding, which is very troubling. The store I was talking about is Harmony Jewellers. The robberies were absolutely horrible to see happen. In the middle

of the day, on a busy street, that was happening. People could have been hurt, not only by being attacked as the truck drove into the back of the store, but during the getaway as well.

I look at some of the other things that are happening, and the member for Niagara South has done a great job talking about a repeat violent offender in Welland. He has been talking about the issue non-stop. These are small towns where we are not used to seeing this type or level of violence. It is not first-time violence; the troubling thing is that it is a repeat violent offenders.

When I look at these things, I realize that our communities are not much safer. I look at violent crime statistics since 2015 when we were last in government, and I see that a number of violent crimes are up by over 55%. Firearms crimes are up 130%. Extortion has skyrocketed 330% across Canada. Sexual assaults are up 76%, and homicides are up 29%. Other members have mentioned this today, but I think we need to continually reaffirm these numbers and let people know that they are not safer than they were when the Conservative government was last in power in 2015.

The challenge is that what the Liberals are great at doing is talking in a very fanciful way about things they are going to do. They say, "This is what we are going to do. This is what we hope to accomplish. We are going to have some meetings, and we are going to set up some round tables." However, what they fail to ever do is deliver on results.

● (1710)

At the end of the day, when we look at today's opposition motion, it makes a whole lot of sense that the people who are repeat violent offenders should be getting jail and not bail. The other thing these reports do not address is the fact that most people have given up on the system. They do not even want to report, because they are worried and they are concerned.

A number of my colleagues have been talking about extortion. We have seen it out west in a variety of places, with some places just outside Vancouver. We have not seen that level of activity in my riding, and I am grateful for that, but those kinds of things still happen in Ontario in places like Brampton.

As we continue to look at what has gone on, we need to look at the numbers. We need to look at the facts. We need to understand that what is going on right now is not getting better; it is getting worse. The words that we are getting from these guys are nothing more than that: They are just words.

● (1715)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

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.

**Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

*Private Members' Business*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 11, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m., so we could begin private members' hour.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### ARAB HERITAGE MONTH ACT

The House resumed from December 10, 2025, consideration of the motion that Bill S-227, An Act respecting Arab Heritage Month, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill S-227, a bill that would recognize April as Arab heritage month in Canada. This matters to Arab Canadians, especially in a city like mine, Windsor. Windsor has always been a working city, a city built by people who showed up ready to work, people who believed that, if one put in the effort, they could build something better for their family. Arab Canadians are part of that story.

Families came here from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt and across the Arab world. Some arrived decades ago; others arrived more recently. They came looking for stability, for opportunity, for a future their kids could count on. They did not come expecting an easy road, and they did not get one, but they worked, adapted and built lives here in Canada.

Today, Arabic is the third most spoken language in my home city of Windsor, Ontario, after English and French. That tells us something important. It tells us that Arab Canadians are not on the margins of our city, but woven into everyday life, at work, at school, in business and in our neighbourhoods. We can see that clearly along Wyandotte Street, in what many of us call the Arabic village.

If we walk down that street, we do not just see businesses; we feel community. We smell fresh bread coming out of the bakeries early in the morning. We see families gathered in restaurants late in the evening. We hear Arabic music drifting out of cafes, sometimes traditional, sometimes modern and sometimes mixed with North American sounds.

All of this did not happen by accident or because of a government plan; it happened because people took risks. They opened restaurants serving shawarma, falafel, *manakish*, kebabs and hummus, food that is meant to be shared and that brings people together.

In Arab culture, food is not only about eating, but also about hospitality. It is about generosity. It is about making room for others. We do not rush a meal. We invite people in. We make sure everyone is welcome. That spirit shows up in Windsor. We will see peo-

ple from every background sitting side by side in these restaurants. Students, workers and families are all welcome and all treated the same. That is what real integration looks like.

Beyond food, there is music, cafes and community life, where people gather to talk, debate, laugh and stay connected, places where elders pass down stories and where young people blend cultures naturally. At community events and festivals, we will see traditional dance, live music and celebrations that are open to the whole city. They are not closed off or exclusive. They are shared. That matters, because culture is not preserved by locking it away; it is preserved by living it and by inviting others to experience it.

That is exactly what the Arab Canadians in Windsor and Tecumseh have done. Many came here with strong education and skills. There were engineers, doctors, teachers, tradespeople and entrepreneurs, but when they arrived, it was not easy. Credentials did not always transfer. Language barriers existed. Some had to take jobs below their training just to get started. Some had to start over completely. Still, they pushed forward. They went back to school. They retrained. They worked nights and weekends. They opened small businesses with family support and worked long hours. They did what Windsor families have always done. They made sacrifices so their kids would not have to.

• (1720)

We should also be honest about this: Not everyone came here by choice. Some were fleeing war, conflict or instability. They arrived carrying loss: the loss of homes, the loss of careers and sometimes the loss of loved ones. Still, they believed in Canada. They believed that if they worked hard, this country would give them a fair shot, and Canada did just that.

Today, Arab Canadians are raising families in Windsor and across Canada. They volunteer, coach sports teams, support local charities and run businesses that keep our neighbourhoods alive. Their kids go to school with our kids. They argue about hockey like everyone else. They speak English with a Windsor accent, sometimes mixed with Arabic, at home. They are not separate from the community. They are the community. That is why Bill S-227 matters. The bill is not about division or special treatment; it is about recognition. It is about saying that this community matters, that its contributions matter and that its story belongs in the Canadian story.

*Private Members' Business*

For young Arab Canadians growing up in Canada, that recognition counts. It tells them they do not have to choose between who they are and where they live. They can be proud of their heritage and proud to be Canadian. For everyone else, it is a reminder of what makes this country work: hard work, family, community and responsibility.

I have seen this first-hand as an entrepreneur in the hospitality business. I hired Adel, a talented chef from Egypt with skills in Italian cooking. Through hard work, he built a life here, marrying a Canadian teacher and raising a wonderful family. I also hired Hassan at one of my venues, a large nightclub. He started young, worked hard and quickly became head of security. He built and owns a multi-million dollar company, proof of what dedication and effort can achieve.

Then there is my friend Tony, whose parents opened a pita bread bakery many years ago. They worked tirelessly to provide a life for their family. Tony is now an electrical engineer; he is deeply involved in Windsor, volunteering on boards and with charitable and political organizations. He is a pillar of our community. I cannot leave out the Chaldean community, leaders like Adel, Salman and Dr. George, who dedicate themselves to strengthening their community. Another friend, Khassan Saka, founded an organization that helps Iraqi and other immigrants settle in Windsor.

Every person I have mentioned is a hard worker. Everyone has excelled and everyone has enriched our city through their efforts, generosity and commitment. Many more names could be mentioned as examples of how our society has benefited from these hard-working new Arab Canadians. This bill would not create new bureaucracy, cost taxpayers money or tell anyone how to live. It would simply acknowledge a reality that already exists.

Windsor knows what happens when people are given the freedom to succeed. Arab Canadians have helped build my city and this country, one business, one family, one meal and one neighbourhood at a time. For that reason, I am proud to support Bill S-227, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill S-227, an act respecting Arab heritage month. I know there is suspense in the air again, and I know you are on the edge of your seat, because I can see you. I do not want you to fall, Madam Speaker. I want to tell you right away that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill.

I see my friend from Bourassa reacting. First of all, this should not come as a surprise, because this bill is a repeat of Bill C-232 from the previous Parliament. That bill passed many stages, was worked on in committee and was supported by the Bloc Québécois. It really reiterated our support for recognizing the cultural heritage of Quebecers of Arab origin. As members know, Quebec's integration model is different. Our model is interculturalism. It is always important to remind everyone of that. Obviously, we recognize the outstanding contributions that Quebecers of Arab origin have made to Quebec society.

When we talk about Canadians and Quebecers of Arab origin, it is important to clarify what we are talking about, because this is literally an entire civilization. Quebec has very close ties with the Maghreb, particularly with Tunisia, Algeria, where my wife is from, and Morocco, where my colleague from Bourassa is from. He, too, appears to be on the edge of his seat. I did not know he was so emotional. We have really important cultural ties. We speak with people of North African origin every day in our ridings. They are part of our communities. They are part of us. They contribute to our culinary art, architecture, literature, science and engineering. When we talk about heritage, it is about a lot more than simply where people come from. We are talking about a Arabic-speaking civilization that originated on the Arabian peninsula but that extends into the Middle East and even into places where Persian is spoken. I believe we need to acknowledge the importance of that civilization and learn from it, and I say that very sincerely. I think we need to celebrate this success.

One of the most rewarding experiences I have had as a member of Parliament has been meeting people in my riding who belong to that culture. I see the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles is here. She is involved in this too. I am talking about the Centre communautaire des Basses-Laurentides in Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, a community centre that serves the entire Lower Laurentians region. I remember the day when Hicham El Gournadi, the then chair of the board of directors who later became a friend, came to meet me at my office. He told me that it was not easy to get charitable status. We sat down and started helping each other. Over the course of our meetings, we got to know each other, and eventually I started visiting the centre, spending time there and meeting with the community.

I would like to point out that the Centre communautaire des Basses-Laurentides is a pillar of our community. In Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, these people volunteer for organizations and keep the community alive. They are not all of Arab origin, but because it is a Muslim community centre, they are well represented there. This is another example of interculturalism, of blending communities in a way that enriches our society. This community centre is amazing. It offers activities like weekend Quran classes, which I attended. People can think what they will about secularism and its role—though I think it is a debate that needs to happen in Quebec, not in Ottawa—but for many people, including Christians, Muslims and members of other religions, faith is important, and they view it as an integral part of their culture.

What I also found extraordinary were the math lessons, because we know that, in the Arab world, there is great respect for science and scientific culture. There is much we could learn from this. They also have an absolutely incredible scientific history. An example of this is the Arabic numerals that we use on a daily basis, which are actually of Indian origin, having first been used in Indian payroll calculations—I hear some disagreement—before making their way into science thanks to Arab mathematicians, one of the most important of whom was al-Khwarizmi. I had actually read about him in a wonderful novel, *The Parrot's Theorem*, which is a fictional exploration of the history of mathematics. We can see just how much this civilization has contributed to the world of science.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1730)

When members hear his name, al-Khwarizmi, it will be obvious where the word “algorithm” comes from. It is a word we use every day these days, and it comes from the Latinized version of his name. Today, it has become so much a part of our common scientific culture that we do not even realize it anymore.

Obviously, he was a great astronomer who worked on Ptolemy's writings, but he also invented the word “algebra”. I am an economist. I studied economic theory, and one day, I realized that the word “algebra” comes from the word *al-jabr*. All this is to say that different cultures are all around us in our daily lives, and we do not even always realize it. The same is true in our communities. I am an economist, and I was drawn to the mathematical aspect, but the same goes for architects. This influence goes far beyond individuals.

The Lower Laurentians cultural centre teaches math to young children. I find that extraordinary. I wish I had gone to math classes on Saturdays and Sundays when I was a little boy. I may have been forced to take them, but I think I would have been thankful for that later on in life. I might not have had to go to night school to finish my high school math.

They also offer Arabic classes. We speak French in Quebec. Our fellow Quebecers from the Maghreb region are also members of La Francophonie, but that does not mean that they should forget where they come from or their culture. I know that these people care deeply about family. I know they often call home. They call their home countries often. It is also important to them to speak more than one language, to speak two, three or four languages and to carry on this legacy. I believe they are doing so. I think that, in many ways, we should be inspired by immigrants who come here and who can have conversations in multiple languages. I think that is a great thing.

I keep coming back to the issue of interculturalism and living together as a community. It is a matter of accepting that we share common ground, that we share a lot of things and that it is a give and take. As a host society, we want to take in what those who arrive here have to offer us. It is through this type of sharing back and forth that we find common ground, that our identity slowly evolves and that we are able to talk to each other and debate ideas. Often, these conversations are not easy, but they are civilized, open and intelligent. In some cultures, debate is a national sport, just as it is in kitchens across Quebec on New Year's Day. I can bear witness to that.

For all of these reasons, I think it is a great idea to recognize the contributions of all these people, which we know date back over more than a century. In our history, all of these people have contributed to our society and continue to do so. I think it is worth pointing out all this heritage that can help to enrich us all.

I repeat that the Bloc Québécois is pleased to support this bill.

• (1735)

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for York South—Weston—Etobicoke for his right of reply.

**Hon. Ahmed Hussien (York South—Weston—Etobicoke, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, good evening to you, my colleagues and Canadians who are joining us to witness this important moment of parliamentary collaboration.

I rise this evening with a deep sense of honour to speak to Bill S-227, an act respecting Arab heritage month. It is a moment when Parliament once again has the opportunity to rise above partisanship and move forward in celebration of our shared values of inclusion, recognition and belonging. I know that sometimes there are moments when the House truly comes together, and I believe this is one of those moments.

This is not the first time that this bill has reached this place. In the last Parliament, my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa South, introduced Bill C-232, a forerunner of this very bill. That legislation passed this House unanimously, with the support of every party and every member in this chamber. It was a rare moment of unity that reminded us what Parliament is capable of when we come together in the spirit of national recognition. Before I go any further, I want to thank the member for Ottawa South for all the work that he has done and his leadership in championing this bill in its earlier form in the last Parliament.

Today I am proud to sponsor Bill S-227. I want to sincerely thank Senator Mohammad Al Zaibak for his leadership in reintroducing this legislation in the other place and guiding it all the way through the upper chamber with determination and grace. I also want to recognize the valuable contributions of colleagues from all sides of the House in support of this bill. I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry for sharing his personal background, the tremendous highlighting of the economic contributions of Arab Canadians and their role in shaping Canadian prosperity. The words of the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader on the importance of education and cultural awareness were timely and very important to that first hour of debate. The reflections of the hon. member for Edmonton Manning, my good friend, on the vibrant Arab community from coast to coast, in Alberta but also across the country, have really brought warmth and insight to this important debate.

[Translation]

I thank the member for Jonquière for his perspective on North African and Arab migration to Quebec. I also thank him for highlighting the importance of student mobility, civic inclusion and mutual understanding.

[English]

I thank the hon. member for Windsor for his remarks on cross-border connections between Arab Canadians and Arab Americans and the unique contributions that Arab Canadians have made and continue to make, not just to his community but right across the country. I share that sense of pride and of the importance of recognizing this Canadian community. Each of those members built the foundation for today's debate, and I want to thank them.

[Translation]

Thank you, everyone.

[English]

This bill proposes that every year the month of April be designated as Arab heritage month in Canada. It is a month that will allow Canadians to learn, reflect and celebrate the contributions of Arab Canadians, their history, culture and heritage. It is an opportunity to recognize the diversity within the Arab Canadian community and to highlight the stories of perseverance, innovation, creativity and resilience.

At its core, this bill is about community and what it means to be part of the Canadian family, to be recognized, to be valued, and to be woven into the larger story of who we are together. Arab heritage month is not only about celebration, though there is much to celebrate. It is also about belonging, to be recognized officially by one's country, to have space in the national calendar that says, "Your story matters, and your identity is part of our collective story." That is no small thing.

This bill is about more than recognition. It is about education, representation and healing. It is about confronting stereotypes. It is about replacing fear with familiarity. It is about making space for stories long left untold. It is about telling young Arab Canadians, "Your heritage matters, your identity belongs, and your contributions are valued." As the hon. member for Ottawa South said so eloquently in 2022, "It is high time to move beyond the notion of tolerating anyone. It is now entirely a question of celebrating each other".

● (1740)

In closing, I want to thank the Speaker for giving me the opportunity to talk about this bill. I ask all members of the House to support the bill and send a message to Arab Canadians that this Parliament sees them, hears them and celebrates them.

*Shukran.*

[Translation]

**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]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I request that it be passed on division.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I declare the motion carried on division. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, tonight I am here on behalf of Pacific salmon. The Pacific salmon strategy initiative, the main federal program supporting wild salmon restoration, habitat protection, science and rebuilding on the west coast, sunsets at the end of March. It was not renewed in the budget, and there is still no confirmation of renewal. This puts the single-largest federal investment in wild salmon recovery at risk.

First nations, hatcheries and community restoration groups cannot plan projects or keep workers on the ground without certainty. Habitat restoration is not something we can turn on and off; salmon recovery takes years of steady work. Time is of the essence. If the government is serious about protecting wild salmon and supporting coastal economies, it must renew the Pacific salmon strategy initiative now.

On the west coast, wild salmon are not an abstract policy issue. They are food security, culture, ecosystem health, local livelihoods and local economies. Organizations like the Redd Fish Restoration Society, working with Nuu-chah-nulth nations, have spent decades restoring watersheds, rebuilding salmon habitat and training local workers. This is reconciliation in action.

We also know, from programs like the watershed security fund, that restoration works. Dozens of projects have been supported, hundreds of jobs created and millions leveraged in community investment. Demand far exceeds available funding. Communities are lining up to do the work. If something works, we scale it up. We do not pull the rug out from underneath the people rebuilding wild salmon and protecting watersheds.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

There is also a separate policy discussion under way about the salmon allocation policy. That review is long overdue and tied to court decisions and conservation realities. There has also been a lot of fear stirred up around the salmon allocation policy review. People are being told they will lose their right to fish, that salmon will stop being a public resource or that the Constitution is being rewritten. None of that is true. No one is being shut out of the water. Recreational fishing is not being eliminated. Families will still be able to fish.

Some Conservatives have chosen to stir fear instead of engaging honestly with the law, the science and the reality facing wild salmon. At the same time, the Liberal government has failed to clearly explain what this review is and what it is not, which is allowing misinformation to spread. What is actually happening is long overdue. Courts have ruled that indigenous fishing rights must be meaningfully accommodated. Outdated policy from 1999 has failed to reflect that reality, and at the same time, many wild salmon stocks are still in decline.

Conservation and rebuilding must come first, because without healthy wild salmon, there is no fishery for anyone. What is most troubling is the double standard we are hearing from some Conservatives. They show up at rallies and town halls and tell fishers one story, and then they come back to Ottawa, sit at the fisheries and oceans committee with the minister and her officials for two hours and do not raise these concerns at all. They have not once raised the sunset of the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, the most critical salmon funding we have, nor the concerns they claim to have heard about the salmon allocation policy, either at committee or here in the House of Commons.

As New Democrats, we are clear about where we stand. Our positions are evidence-based and expert-led. We stand for conservation first because without wild salmon, there is no fishery. We stand for rebuilding salmon so there is a future for all fishers, good jobs in coastal communities and strong local economies. We stand for respecting the law on indigenous rights, and we stand for stable, long-term funding so restoration does not collapse every few years.

The government must now move quickly on these decisions related to both the Pacific salmon strategy initiative and the salmon allocation policy review. Organizations, communities and businesses need transparency and certainty. Delays create real costs on the ground. Coastal communities are running out of time, and the government must act now. Time is of the essence.

• (1745)

**Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite listed a lot of the things he stood for. I was honoured to sit with that member when we were on the fisheries committee together many years ago. I know him to be a genuine leader and a friend of reconciliation in the House.

I am really happy to be here on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries. I would like to talk a bit about how Pacific salmon populations are experiencing long-term and historic declines due to the impacts of climate change, pollutants and changes in land and water use. To address these challenges, the government has invested \$686 million since 2021 to implement decisive actions under the

Pacific salmon strategy initiative. We have restored over 18.5 million square metres of Pacific salmon habitat and advanced watershed-scale salmon rebuilding planning with partners, including for west coast Vancouver Island chinook salmon.

During the summer of 2024, Fisheries and Oceans worked with 60 partners in 75 areas across British Columbia to respond to immediate drought-related issues, fund emergency projects and support fish passage to spawning areas with critical restoration projects. We have provided a further \$90 million for 73 projects through phase two of the British Columbia salmon restoration and innovation fund to protect and restore Pacific salmon habitat and other priority wild fish stocks.

Under the salmon enhancement pillar of the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, we are expanding our hatchery infrastructure and upgrading 47 hatcheries to boost at-risk salmon in priority areas. We are developing new hatchery management tools to optimize sustainable harvest and rebuilding outcomes for more than 250 Pacific salmon stocks.

Through the harvest transformation pillar of the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, we have retired 473 commercial Pacific salmon licences, reducing the total number of eligible salmon licence-holders by 35.7%. In terms of indigenous fisheries, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has collaborated with more than 40 first nations and indigenous fisheries organizations on over 60 indigenous harvest transformation partnership projects to transition fisheries to more selective fishery methods and improved monitoring while reducing impacts on vulnerable salmon stocks. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has also piloted six mark-selective fisheries.

We have heard in committees and we have heard across the country that the salmon mean so much more to first nations all across Canada, especially in B.C. It is not just about fishing; it is about their culture, lessons and their stories. Therefore, in June 2024, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, first nations in British Columbia and the Province of British Columbia signed a new trilateral accord to coordinate and align conservation and restoration efforts to improve outcomes for salmon over the long term. We are advancing targeted efforts in the Yukon, including investments in first nations salmon fisheries transition, stewardship and monitoring activities, and integrated rebuilding planning.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

## THE ECONOMY

Pacific salmon holds a deep social and cultural significance for the people of the west coast of Canada. The government remains committed to the long-term health and sustainability of these vital fishery resources. Through Fisheries and Oceans Canada's work under the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, including our continued collaboration with first nations harvesters, stakeholders and the governments of British Columbia and Yukon, meaningful progress is being made to address conservation challenges and support sustainable salmon harvesting over the long term.

● (1750)

**Gord Johns:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague talking about the record amount of funding invested in wild salmon and its success. I have a lot of respect for him, but now is not the time to take our foot off the gas. The answer tonight does not give coastal communities what they need, which is certainty. The Pacific salmon strategy initiative is set to expire in just over a month, and we still do not have a clear commitment on its renewal. That puts restoration work, good jobs and real progress on wild salmon recovery at risk. First nations, hatcheries and community restoration groups cannot plan without stable long-term funding. Habitat restoration is not something we turn on and off. Time is of the essence.

There is also a separate review under way of the salmon allocation policy. People deserve honest communication about what that review is and what it is not. No one is losing their right to fish. Recreation fishing is not being eliminated, but conservation and rebuilding must come first. Without healthy salmon, there is no fishery for anyone. Coastal communities are waiting.

The Liberal government needs to move quickly, provide transparency and commit now to renewing wild salmon restoration funding.

**Jaime Battiste:** Madam Speaker, I hear the urgency in my colleague's voice. I just want him to know that we are urgently discussing this.

We are making sure that our processes with our partners are collaborative, and we are going to ensure that the government continues to move forward with the investment of \$686 million over five years to implement decisive actions under the Pacific salmon strategy initiative to meet these challenges. We recognize the importance of long-term measures for the sustainability of Pacific salmon of the west coast.

We have accomplished many targeted initiatives to date, including restoring more than 18.5 million square metres of salmon habitat, retiring more than 400 commercial licences, upgrading Fisheries and Oceans Canada and community hatchery infrastructure, and supporting sustainable fishing opportunities while reducing their impact on valuable stocks.

We recognize the social, economic and cultural importance of Pacific salmon for Canadians. The government is committed to the long-term health and sustainability of our vital fisheries resources and is confident that the department's progress—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Oxford.

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in the last election, the Prime Minister said Canadians should judge him by the prices at the grocery store. Those were his words, but since then, he has actually failed. The stats are in; the facts are in. We have the highest food inflation in the G7, higher than in the U.S., actually double that of the U.S. There are 2.5 million food bank visits in a single month. A quarter of them are for children. There is a 10% increase in homelessness encampments in Ontario. There is a crisis that is unfolding.

Every time someone goes to the grocery store to buy some nutritious food for their family, they go to the check-out lane, look at the food they are buying and look at the price being rung in. They cannot believe their eyes. Seniors are putting items back on the shelf just because they cannot afford them. Working-class folks who have decent jobs are now relying on food banks for the first time. The demand for food banks is actually at one of its highest levels. One of the food banks in my riding said that people who once used to once donate to the food bank are the ones actually using it now.

Just last week I received one of the toughest, worst emails I think I have ever received in my three years as the member of Parliament for Oxford. I woke up and looked at an email from a senior. She asked how she can apply for MAID. She wanted to end her life. In that email, she talked about the reason why. She said she cannot afford to eat. She does not feel like being a burden to her own family, to her kids. That is a story from my riding. This is happening in Canada. I could give members lots of examples of food insecurity in our communities.

The government, instead of going after the root cause of fixing this crisis, is bringing forward temporary relief. I always say that any relief is good relief. I always believe we should be giving taxpayers their money back, but we have to look at the larger context.

How is it that our food inflation is double that of the U.S.? I know the Liberal government blames the U.S. for everything, but this is a domestic problem. It is a homegrown problem. Our farmers are being punished with rising input costs and taxes on fertilizer. Our shippers are seeing their costs go up. Truckers are feeling the pain. Food processors are dealing with regulatory burdens and more red tape than anywhere else in the world. In Oxford, a senior came up to me and said that it is cheaper to buy produce that is grown in Mexico, 3,400 kilometres away, than it is to buy Oxford-grown produce.

My question is this: Why will the government not scrap these hidden types of—

● (1755)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I know the member, not terribly well, but well enough to say that I respect him very much. I know how hard he has worked to become a member of Parliament, and I know the riding he represents, which is very close to my community of London.

I would simply say a few things. I acknowledge what he is saying, at least on the individual side. For constituents in his riding, in mine and throughout the country, there is anxiety and suffering. We should acknowledge that, and we need to be attentive to that, but at the same time, if we are serious about our work as parliamentarians, we ought to put solutions on the table.

I can go on about the solutions of the government and what we are doing now and what we want to do in the future, but I would be more interested, for the purposes of tonight's adjournment debate, to hear what the hon. member has by way of solutions. I heard many problems identified, but I did not hear solutions. I turn it back to the member to address that.

**Arpan Khanna:** Madam Speaker, we have the best farmers and the best land in the world, yet our farmers are being punished with these extra taxes. We have brought forward motions in this chamber to take off the hidden food taxes, which include the industrial carbon tax. We have talked about removing the food packaging tax and making sure we could bring more competition to our grocery chains. We are bringing solutions. We have also said to the government, "Let us work in collaboration. Let us work together and pass our motions."

As the member rightly pointed out, this is affecting Canadians right across the board, so we have been putting forward solutions. Let us scrap the tariffs on fertilizer that are driving up cost for our farmers. It is an easy fix. It is why we even supported the Liberals' temporary measure to give relief to families. We are at the table, ready to work. We are proposing solutions.

I always say that, if we tax the farmer who grows the food, tax the shipper who ships the food and tax the processor who processes the food, everyone pays—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Madam Speaker, with great respect to my colleague, he knows that there has not been a shred of credible evidence to suggest that the industrial carbon tax is primarily responsible, or remotely responsible, for the increases in prices that people are seeing at the grocery store.

His point, though, on increasing competition in the grocery sector is well taken. I agree that we need greater competition in the grocery sector. I also agree, or not quite agree because he did not say it, but I am sure he agrees, as a thoughtful colleague, that we do need to address climate change in this country, which is the primary driver of drought and flooding issues. We see the effects on supply that has overall. When we have limited supply, and demand remains constant or increases, we have an increase in prices. That is simple economics.

Finally, I would go one step further to say that he, I and parliamentarians throughout this chamber should collaborate on the big issue at hand, which is putting in place a foundation for sustained economic growth in the future. We see that in budget 2025—

● (1800)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** We are done.

\* \* \*

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-226, an act respecting jury duty appreciation week.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:01 p.m.)





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