



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 017**

Monday, January 26, 2026

---

Chair: Peter Schiefke





## Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Monday, January 26, 2026

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

[*English*]

Welcome to meeting number 17 of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motions adopted by the committee on Thursday, September 18, 2025, and on Thursday, December 11, 2025, the committee is resuming its study of the changing landscape of truck drivers in Canada.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of our witnesses and our members.

First, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your microphone, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to welcome the witnesses.

Appearing as individuals are: Claudia Boucher; Nathalie Poulin, accounting technician; and Mélanie Séguin, entrepreneur.

[*English*]

Thank you for taking the time to appear before us today.

We will now proceed with our opening statements.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Boucher, you have five minutes for your opening remarks. The floor is yours.

**Claudia Boucher (As an Individual):** Good morning.

My name is Claudia Boucher. I'm here as a survivor of an accident involving a heavy truck in September 2025. Given the fact that no one knows my story, I'll share it with you.

I am the mother of three children. I'm in the active part of my life, and I was supposed to go back to work full time the week after my accident. I was still on maternity leave at the time.

I was on a country road between Laurier-Station and Sainte-Croix, which is in the Lotbinière RCM, in the suburbs of Lévis, near Quebec City. I was stopped behind a school bus.

That's a pretty busy road, but it was a nice day. It was 25°C. I was driving and listening to the radio. I stopped for the first time, and a young person got on the bus. I stopped a second time, and a young person crossed the street on the left side and got on the bus. I stopped for the third or fourth time. I didn't see anything coming. My car literally exploded. There was dual impact: I got hit from behind and then I hit the school bus. My car moved all the way across the street and stopped there. I was able to open my door, get out of the car and collapse on the grass. When I turned around, I saw that I had been rammed by a 53-foot Safex truck and that I had rammed the school bus, of course.

At the time, I was in a state of shock. There was glass everywhere. Everything that had just happened wasn't really clear to me. A gentleman came to help me, and the truck driver came to see me, with his phone in his hand. He asked me if I wanted water, and he handed me a bottle of water. The gentleman who came to assist me asked the truck driver why he hadn't seen us. The bus was stopped, its flashing lights were on and the stop signal arms were extended. A young person was crossing in front of the bus at the time. He jumped to avoid getting hit by the bus that moved forward after the collision. His sister was late, so she was still in the house. Otherwise, she would have been in front of the bus. We were on the brink of tragedy in all respects. I was alone in my car. I didn't have my daughter, who had just started day care the week before. My children had taken the bus in the morning to go to school, as well.

When I asked him in English why he didn't see us—he didn't understand the question asked in French by the person who helped me—he said he didn't speak French. Then he left. I told him that he couldn't possibly not have seen us, that he was definitely using his phone or texting. Then he went back to his truck.

Afterwards, emergency services arrived and we were taken care of. The ambulance took us to the hospital. There was an orange code at the hospital in Lévis, which means a massive influx of injured people. There were injuries on the bus, of course. What would have happened had I not been there?

Today, let's assume that it could have been serious. Do we have to wait for half a dozen or a dozen young people to die before action is taken? I don't think so. I came home at night to join my children, who were wondering what had happened and why I hadn't picked them up. It was a big stressor on the family, let's put it that way, and the repercussions are still being felt today.

At first, I was diagnosed with a cervical strain. Then I was diagnosed with a concussion with moderate to severe symptoms, vestibular disorders and labyrinthine contusions. I have back and neck pain. I have redone MRIs. I was diagnosed with herniated disks, and I have post-traumatic stress related to the event. In any case, that's a lot of issues.

I'm not here to complain about surviving; I'm here to explain to you that it could have been worse. About half of the young people on the bus wrote to me. I literally had parents thanking me for being there that day.

I learned that the truck driver had received tickets for not stopping when the bus signals were on, and for following me too closely. The truck wasn't following me; it basically came in at full speed, and the driver wasn't looking in front of him. There was no criminal investigation. A collision reconstructionist came to the scene of the accident. That person has the same powers as a coroner, I'm told, but there was no criminal prosecution. Why? There was a dash cam in the truck, but it was not seized. Why?

• (1110)

I now have to deal with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, which doesn't know much about mild traumatic brain injuries, or mTBIs. I have been off work since the accident, and I am being monitored in a number of ways: physiotherapists, psychoeducators and other specialists are now part of my daily life.

The driver is probably driving another truck. Has Safex been investigated? No, not to my knowledge. Maybe it never will be. The company continues, according to its business model, to hire Driver Inc. truckers, and that's well known. In Quebec, people know that. I have accepted a number of requests for radio interviews on the topic. People no longer feel safe on the roads.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

Ms. Poulin, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Nathalie Poulin (Accounting Technician, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Nathalie Poulin. I am testifying before you following the death of my daughter.

I'm sorry, I wasn't supposed to cry.

**The Chair:** Take your time, Ms. Poulin, there's no hurry. You have all the time you need.

**Nathalie Poulin:** On December 18, 2024, a driver left the Port of Montreal with a container. He made it to highway 73. He ignored

14 road signs. One of them said he couldn't take that exit. The first signs indicated that it was the last exit before Vallée-Jonction. Depending on the weight of the truck and where it came from, it couldn't take that exit. A number of other signs indicated that the maximum tonnage allowed to take that exist was 15 tonnes. Just to give you an idea, the truck and the empty container weigh almost 15 tonnes. It's impossible not to exceed that limit with a load.

In addition, the driver was supposed to check the brakes, but he never did. A number of other signs indicated the grade of the hill, but I imagine he didn't take that into account, either. He didn't know what that meant. The last sign that could have saved my daughter's life indicated that there was an arrester bed on the right, when descending. He didn't even try to get there. He probably didn't even know what those signs meant.

I don't drive a truck and I don't have any training in that area. These signs are not written in French or English, but rather consist of drawings. When I see these signs, I understand them. How can anyone not understand them?

The driver went down the hill too fast. There's a traffic light at the bottom of the hill. He tried to turn, but was not able to. My daughter was coming, and the traffic light was green. That's all she saw. The truck tipped over, and my daughter's car flattened out like a pancake. The accident occurred at 12:30 p.m., and she was pulled out of the car and sent to the morgue at 4:30 p.m.

How did we find out? My daughter had her cellphone. Nowadays, everyone enters the contact information of a person to be contacted in an emergency. When there is an accident or a major impact to the cellphone, the contact gets a text message and emergency services are called. In addition, the cellphone is located and the information is sent to the person to contact in an emergency. When the first responders took Alexandra to the morgue, we could track her, as her cellphone sent us her coordinates.

The first thing we learned was that there had been an impact and that emergency services had been called. We weren't sure what was going on, but we didn't worry too much. We never thought there was an accident. It was her spouse, who was waiting for her at home, who went to the accident site to see what was going on. That's when he found out what had happened. I found out about it much later, by telephone. Police officers now no longer go to announce a death. The 811 people are the ones who are trained for that, apparently, but they didn't have time to travel that day. So it was a lovely 911 lady who told me over the phone that my daughter had died.

In the wake of that, we have a number of questions. Why? Who? How? What happened? How could it happen? Through all of this, we have uncovered heartbreaking truths that we had not thought about. I never thought I would have to fight to make people understand that our families are not safe. How can companies that don't comply with traffic safety laws still have trucks on the road? How can that be tolerated in 2026? It's an aberration. How can someone drive a heavy truck without being trained?

• (1115)

You'll tell me that there is now mandatory training. In 2020, the federal government called for a minimum amount of training. Quebec promised us that training in 2023, but it was introduced in 2025. How many people have licences today without training?

The person who hit and killed my daughter didn't get his licence the week before. That driver had been driving trucks for a few years already, and he still does. Since the investigation is not over, the police do not have the power to take away his driver's licence. When you go home today, look at the trucks next to your car. That same driver may be at the wheel. Imagine what we feel when we are on the road and look at the truck beside us. Maybe he's driving; we don't know. It's an aberration.

We have made requests to the Department of Transport for measures to be taken and for the signage to be changed. That hill is extremely dangerous. A commercial building located at the bottom of the hill has even been moved because a truck had crashed into it when coming down the hill. Again, we have no news on that. A year later, two cameras were installed. That is what's been done so far. We were called and promised things that were supposed to be done in May 2025, but nothing has been done so far.

I don't want to sound like I'm whining. Those who know me know very well that the message I've been hammering home from the beginning is that, in life, you have two choices: stay at home and complain, or try to get involved and move forward, as we're doing today. If I just wanted to complain, I wouldn't come here. There are no words to express the pain of losing a child. The proof is that there are no such words in the dictionary; they don't exist.

Since the accident, we have been trying to make sense of all this. That's why we're here today. The worst part is that, since the accident, no one has been wanting to hear what we have to say—no one. We have made phone calls to both MPs and MNAs. No one wants to touch it, as if it were radioactive. If someone today can explain to me why, I'd love to hear it. Is it because you'll lose votes? Why?

How can people be able to buy a licence in Ontario? Transportation is a federal responsibility. You are the ones who enact the laws and regulations. We had to fight to be here today. Can someone explain to me why? You should have called us and asked us what you could have done to help us. However, we're still forced to kick down doors; we're still forced to fight.

No one will ever call me “mom” again, as she was my only daughter. Today, perpetrators will go home, see their children and continue their lives. What are we doing? We're not living; we're surviving. That's what we've been doing since the accident: surviving. I would like to believe that it didn't happen for nothing and that

the necessary measures can be taken today to protect our families and our children. It is your duty to do so. That's why you were elected.

Today, this is a reminder that the road can kill, that negligence has irreversible consequences. Justice, prevention and collective responsibility are not options; they are duties. We'd love to do it on our own, but we can't. You're the ones with the opportunity to do that.

That's all, Mr. Chair.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin.

Ms. Séguin, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Mélanie Séguin (Entrepreneur, As an Individual):** Good morning, everyone.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Mélanie Séguin.

I am here today, on January 26, 2026, to request changes to certain laws that, in my opinion, are somewhat archaic in some respects, given the evolution of our society. My requests are as follows: make changes regarding the renewal of work permits, the legislative framework and the temporary retention of passports in the event of fatal accidents. The reasons for my requests are as follows.

On July 19, 2022, my stepdaughter Nancy, my grandson Loïc and Nancy's companion Benoit set off from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu for Sainte-Martine, a trip of barely an hour. There was construction on Highway 30 eastbound. The entrance to Highway 10 was closed, and traffic had been diverted. A little detour was necessary. Around 10:30 p.m., on Highway 30 eastbound, a pileup occurred at kilometre 69.5. It involved eight vehicles, including a 53-foot truck, and killed on impact—at least, I hope—Loïc Chevalier, 11, and Nancy Lefrançois, 42, mother of four boys. In addition, a dozen people were injured, if memory serves. Three of them were seriously injured, including Mathis Chevalier and Benoit Lavoie. The name of the third person is still unknown to me at this time.

At around 3 a.m., news of their deaths broke. The news kept on coming: there were two seriously injured, Mathis and Benoit, who were being treated for various injuries.

On October 5, 2022, the Sûreté du Québec in Boucherville organized a meeting to inform us that the accident was criminal. According to the evidence, it involved the use of a cellphone while driving. The police also informed us that the respondent, Mr. Singh, had left the country less than 24 hours after the accident. There is no legislation authorizing the seizure of a passport at this time. On July 13, 2023, the following charges were laid against Baljeet Singh: two counts of dangerous driving causing death and three counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm.

I still have questions. Why wasn't Mr. Singh's passport seized for the duration of the investigation? How, after killing two people and injuring several others, can a temporary foreign worker have the privilege of leaving our country? I continue my quest to ensure that our story is never repeated for any Canadian family. It took more than three years for this man to be brought back to Canada, with the help of the U.S. Marshals Service and the Boucherville Sûreté du Québec. Today, Mr. Singh is facing Canadian justice. How much more did it cost our society because this man fled? How is it possible that his work permit was renewed, even though criminal charges had already been laid against him in Ontario in January 2021? How is it that he himself was considered a victim while being the main accused in this case? He had committed 43 violations of the highway safety code between Ontario and Quebec that day, before killing those people.

On June 13, 2024, I tabled petition e-4915 with the help and invaluable co-operation of Claude DeBellefeuille, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon. Why have there been no changes to the legislation? No changes have been made as a result of my petition.

Even though a number of mistakes were made in our case, I have all the evidence to support what I am saying today. Behind each and every one of you, public servants and elected officials, there is a family. If it were your sister, your daughter or your mother, what would you do?

Two briefs can be made available to you, if necessary. Can I hope that my requests will be taken into consideration today?

Thank you for your time.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Séguin.

Mr. Groleau, you now have the floor for six minutes.

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Good morning, Mr. Chair and dear colleagues.

Today's meeting is quite difficult. First, I would like to acknowledge your presence, Ms. Séguin, Ms. Boucher and Ms. Poulin. You're incredibly brave. I know it's difficult for you. I have children, too. I don't know how you feel, and I find you deeply courageous. I want to tell you that you have my support and that we are here to help you. Again, thank you for being here.

My first question is for you, Ms. Poulin.

You're from Beauce, and we met recently. What are your intentions in appearing before the committee? What is the main message you would like to send to the government?

**Nathalie Poulin:** Concrete action must be taken and adjustments made. Road safety cannot be treated as an administrative detail. As soon as you see that there are flaws and that things aren't working, you can't turn a blind eye. You're our only help. It's no joke, but that's the reality. If we want to keep our families safe on the road, we have no choice but to rely on you. Transportation is a federal matter.

Then, you have to do a proper analysis of the situation in each province. You handed over the management of these laws to the provinces. Do you really think it's working? I can tell you it isn't. They're not equipped to do that. Today, you have to recognize that negligence has irreversible consequences and tackle this issue. It should have been done before the tragedies occurred. We'll deal with it, but things must change. We have no choice.

Today, I'm speaking on behalf of my daughter, but my daughter won't come back; it won't change anything. There are plenty of other parents who have empty chairs at home. There are children who could have had an empty chair instead of their mother. No one should leave home in the morning wondering whether they'll make it back because some people aren't properly trained and are driving trucks and trailers that aren't maintained. It makes no sense. It's your responsibility to change that.

• (1130)

**Jason Groleau:** Are there tools or mechanisms that could be put in place to avoid that?

**Nathalie Poulin:** There are many.

When such an accident occurs, our main concern is whether that person is still driving and whether they can leave the country. Please understand me: I'm not just talking about foreign workers who have temporary permits or visas. A Roger who lives in Chicoutimi or a Jason who lives in Saint-Georges could, following an accident, decide to empty their bank account and leave for another country. The law is the same for everyone. Just because someone comes from somewhere else doesn't make it any easier. They may already have another place to live, but that doesn't change the fact that anyone can get on a plane and leave. That shouldn't be possible, and it's a federal matter.

Drivers licences are a provincial matter, but in the case of an accident causing death, the first thing that should be done is to suspend the licence for the duration of the investigation. These people cannot be allowed to drive. The driver involved in my daughter's accident could have had another accident two days or three weeks later. We don't know how long he was suspended, but we do know that he is still driving today.

Furthermore, if an Ontario driver is stopped by a road inspector in Quebec, or vice versa, there is no way to verify whether the company in question is complying with the rules or has committed any violations. It's nonsense. There needs to be a national registry. The same goes for insurance. There are road inspectors on the road, but they can't do anything in half of the cases. They can take action if it's someone from their province, but otherwise, unless a truck has a major problem, nothing will happen. That's not right.

It's the same thing with mechanical inspections. We see lots of trucks with worn-out tires. Yet they have definitely been inspected by road inspectors and weighed on scales. If I were stopped on the road with tires in such a condition, the police would take my car away. They would tell me that I couldn't drive away with my car and that they would have to tow it away. So how can these drivers be allowed to continue driving? They are driving death machines. These trucks are carrying incredible loads. The provinces are not capable of managing this. In Ontario, you can buy licences. I'm not making this up, we've all seen it in the news. It's not right. It's no better in Quebec either.

• (1135)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin and Mr. Groleau.

[*English*]

Mr. Greaves, the floor is yours. You have six minutes, sir.

**Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Good morning, ladies. Thank you very much for being here today.

[*English*]

Thank you for sharing your stories and experiences with the committee: these terrible and, in some cases, very recent experiences you've had. It must be very difficult. We appreciate your being here with us today.

I'd like to ask each of you if you could speak on the days and weeks after the accidents you each experienced. You would have had to interact with many different organizations. You would have interacted with local police—I believe you mentioned the Sûreté du Québec—and potentially with other levels of government or other investigators.

Could you tell the committee what could be changed to improve the experience you had in dealing with those different officials and organizations after the accidents occurred? From your perspective, what changes would have made that immediate period after the accidents better?

We can start with Madam Séguin.

[*Translation*]

**Mélanie Séguin:** What should have been done to improve the situation immediately after the accident was to seize the driver's passport, because the defendant left the country within 24 hours of the accident. If the police had checked with the Ontario Provincial Police, they would have known that criminal charges for threats and harassment had already been laid against this man and that a breach of conditions was already on his record. The passport should have been seized immediately, but this was not done because it would have required waking up a chief justice and undertaking a lot of legal procedures. In addition, the police told us that there was no reason to believe that this man would leave the country.

Personally, I don't work for the police, but it seems to me that if someone already has a breach of conditions on their record and has temporary foreign worker status—excuse my language—they already don't give a damn about the country's laws. I was told that

this man had the right to take a holiday and that suspending his passport could cause him harm. Who suffered harm for three years, until this individual was repatriated to Canadian soil? It was us, the family, and no one else.

You have a duty to protect families and spare them from such trauma. It really takes nerves of steel to navigate the administrative maze to get here today. If we don't stand up and cry wolf, no one will come to see us, as Ms. Poulin said. No one came knocking on our door to apologize and ask if there was anything they could do to help us, not even the company involved, called the Harman Group, or HGC. I saw that it had problems with the CNESST, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail. It was an HGC driver who killed two members of our family and seriously injured another.

Can you do anything to improve the situation immediately after an accident? Yes, you can seize the driver's passport and driver's licence for the duration of the investigation. That is what should be done immediately.

**Will Greaves:** Thank you, Ms. Séguin.

What do you think, Ms. Boucher?

**Claudia Boucher:** I agree with Ms. Séguin on the seizure of passports and driver's licences.

In my case, what I regret is that there was no follow-up. I met with the investigator three weeks after my accident. I was still in shock and very emotional. He told me he had done everything he could to have the case heard in criminal court. The truck driver's driving licence had a valid address in Ontario and a valid address in New Brunswick. He worked for Safex, which is based in Vaudreuil-Dorion. Isn't that strange? No one questioned whether it was a real licence. We know that some were sold. There were articles in *Le Journal de Montréal* about a man who forged licences. There were literally some for sale in the Brampton area.

This individual behaved very irresponsibly. Wasn't he criminally negligent? Shouldn't he have been given a ticket for distracted driving? They didn't even try to prove it by taking the dashcam. They said there weren't enough witnesses. Someone would have had to say they saw the driver using his mobile phone while driving. I know I wasn't being followed. I didn't have a dashcam in my car, but there was one in the truck.

Subsequently, it was the media who contacted me to sound the alarm and get the Minister of Transport and the federal government to take action. I thought the Minister of Transport would be here today. I would have liked to hear what he has to say about this. I would have liked the investigator assigned to my case, who was really committed to the cause, to be able to tell me, three weeks after my accident, that the driver's licence had been suspended, that he would no longer be able to drive and that Safex would be investigated. That was not the case. So what was left for me to do? It was to fight the system, with the media on my side, and to share it on social media.

My children asked me why I was going to Parliament. It was Mr. Barsalou-Duval who invited me, because Parliament did not want to hear us. We came anyway. We held a press conference, but I had already covered most of the issues, because my case had already received a lot of media attention. We had a narrow escape from death in every respect during the accident. It's crazy how badly this accident could have ended. However, there have been others, notably in New Brunswick recently.

For its part, the United States has taken matters into its own hands. Tennessee has passed a law that will come into effect on July 1, 2026, and will impose heavy fines on drivers who break the rules, as well as fines of up to \$1 million on companies that hire drivers on the cheap. This may be a draconian measure, but it may be what we need here.

We know that companies hire these drivers. There are even companies whose business model is based on this. It's not just about lining their pockets. There is such a huge loophole that we know this practice is taking place. There are large companies, such as TransForce and Speedy, that give a percentage of their contracts to drivers who are underpaid and pocket the difference. We have been victims of people who use this scheme, and that is what we are denouncing. In my mind, the driver who was behind the wheel on the day of my accident was an illegal worker.

● (1140)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

I will give Ms. Poulin the opportunity to respond to Mr. Greaves' question.

**Nathalie Poulin:** There are three things to do when an accident like the ones we've experienced occurs. In my case, I can't tell you that it was a substandard driver. I have no idea at this point. The only thing I can tell you is that there is a glaring lack of training and vehicle maintenance.

The first thing to do would be to seize the driver's licence and passport. Next, a squad should go to the company concerned, stop all the trucks and trailers, and carry out a minimum of checks. That would be the best way to ensure everyone's safety.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin and Mr. Greaves.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank Ms. Séguin, Ms. Boucher and Ms. Poulin for being here today. It is very moving to hear their testimonies.

Of course, we had seen the reports in the media, but hearing you and seeing you in person is something that really touches us. I imagine that for you, it is even more emotional. I must tell you that I have been monitoring the issue of low-cost drivers for quite some time. What is happening is very serious. I just want to tell you that you have my full support to go as far as necessary to resolve this issue. I hope that the committee will produce a report that will get things moving. I am glad to have heard your voices today. I have a few questions for you.

My first question is more of a comment. I have done some research on the three companies that were involved in your respective accidents.

In the case of the Harman Group, which is linked to the accident described by Ms. Séguin, it is a member company of the Canadian Trucking Association, which is the lobby group promoting the Driver Inc. model. This company was also involved in another accident recently, a train derailment on January 12 in Saint-Alexandre-de-Kamouraska, where the drivers had parked on the railway tracks. We also know that there have been recent shootings at this company's facilities.

In the case of Safex Transport, which was involved in the accident that affected Ms. Boucher, I consulted the Quebec business registry, which shows that it is a company with 26 to 49 employees. The company's website states that it has 150 trucks and 200 trailers. The U.S. Department of Transportation's website, SAFER—Safety and Fitness Electronic Records—which is the American system that tracks trucks and drivers, states that this company has 216 trucks and 225 drivers. How can we explain the discrepancy between the figure of 30 to 50 employees and the number of more than 200 drivers, other than by the Driver Inc. ploy?

In the case of Groupe Verville, we know that it was cited more than 20 times for various safety violations between July 2021 and February 2024.

It also happens that these three companies have been reported to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, or CNESST.

In these circumstances, because there are people who question whether the Driver Inc. model has an impact on road accidents, I would like to know if you think it is a coincidence that these three companies have these things in common and that there have been the deaths and accidents that we have seen.

I would like to start with Ms. Séguin.

● (1145)

**Mélanie Séguin:** Do I think it's a coincidence? No, there are no coincidences. I don't believe in coincidences. In our case, too, the gentleman had a work address in Brampton. His driver's licence was from Nova Scotia, if I remember correctly. His home base was in Nova Scotia, and he worked in Brampton, Ontario. Very strangely, everywhere the gentleman went after leaving the country and until his return to American soil in April 2023, the Harman Group was part of his journey. Am I very surprised, or is it a coincidence? No.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Ms. Boucher, what is your response?

**Claudia Boucher:** That's a lot of trucks for 24 to 36 employees, if I remember the figures given on the website correctly.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** It's 26 to 49 employees.

**Claudia Boucher:** I see a lot of them, in any case. I can say that I see them from quite a distance, because the logo is easy to recognize. At one point, I left the offices of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, and there was a Safex truck right in front of me at the traffic lights. Everyone I know sends me photos of them. We started looking into it, and it started to stink.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Ms. Poulin, would you like to add anything?

**Nathalie Poulin:** After the accident, we searched for answers, so we spent a lot of time browsing various websites, especially that of the Commission des transports du Québec. We found some very interesting information about Groupe Verville Intermodal.

Once, it appeared before the Commission des transports du Québec, which downgraded its safety rating to "conditional" when it should have been "unsatisfactory", and the commission should have grounded the trucks.

The group appeared before the transport commission and lied about the names of the employees who worked for it.

We can see that the employees are not trained to carry out safety checks, so there is a serious problem from the outset.

The majority of offences relate to stolen vehicles. However, there are no police reports, and we are unable to provide information to the commission.

Their mechanic is a foreign worker who does not have a permit to work in Quebec.

The group appeared before the commission with all these lies, but its rating was left at "conditional".

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin and Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

Mr. Groleau, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Jason Groleau:** I would like to come back to you, Ms. Poulin, to finish the discussion we started earlier.

Earlier, you proposed some fairly concrete solutions, such as the creation of a national driver's licence registry and a squad for mechanical inspections.

Could you give us more details on that?

**Nathalie Poulin:** Creating a registry would certainly help. That said, when there is a fatal accident, why not go to the company involved, shut down all the trucks and carry out checks? Fifty people could work in this squad, and it would take three and a half days to do everything. First, they would check to see if everyone has a valid licence, because many people drive trucks even though they are banned from driving. Next, they would check to see if drivers have completed training.

At the same time, why not have drivers take a short road test, for example, to see if they are able to reverse the truck? My husband is a farmer, and we have friends who receive deliveries. Out of five drivers, only one is able to reverse the truck. The others all stop in the street, park, and the first driver gets out to reverse all the trucks, because the other drivers are unable to do so. That's the reality.

When the squad arrives to check whether the employees are able to do their safety rounds and whether the trucks are in good condition, it could also do mechanical inspections and a short driving test. If the drivers are unable to reverse a truck, they are not able to drive it, in my opinion. That's the bottom line.

• (1150)

**Jason Groleau:** You spoke to all the authorities and to all levels of government, from municipal to provincial to federal. Who do you think is responsible for the accident in which your daughter died?

**Nathalie Poulin:** I wrote the answer down somewhere, because I found it quite good and significant.

I'll talk about responsibility. I would like the chance to finish my thoughts, Mr. Chair.

It's a collective failure, and this includes me. The same goes for the accidents that affected Ms. Séguin and Ms. Boucher. Society failed to protect them. When I say "society", I mean everyone. People who use Driver Inc. drivers know that a 40% price difference must come from somewhere. When we buy something on Amazon and the price difference is significant, we know that the item won't last as long. Can we keep in mind that, when we purchase transportation and the price is significantly different from the price of another supplier, truck maintenance and training may fall short, since this is the only area, in addition to insurance, where companies can cut costs?

People see absurd situations on the road. For example, they see drivers watching movies on Netflix. They film it and put it on Facebook. Thank you, but can they also call the police? Maybe a phone call will stop the offending driver from causing an accident and killing someone 40 kilometres down the road.

We also need to consider the matter of who handles the tests to issue driver's licences. We've had many calls from people working at the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, or SAAQ, who say that it makes no sense to issue all these licences. Why don't they speak up? They're calling me to say that they're giving licences to incompetent people and that they have no choice but to do so. I understand that these people need their paycheques, but why hasn't anyone raised their hand before?

The Commission des transports du Québec should be stricter. Highway controllers are sometimes a bit too lenient, or they lack the necessary tools to arrest offenders. Why aren't drivers who carry a logbook that doesn't match their driver's licence placed under arrest? The federal government has asked for this in its recommendations. Do we realize that these drivers may have been on the road for 90 consecutive hours, but that the controllers can't verify this? These drivers aren't arrested. The controllers don't have the right to arrest them. This gets people killed.

As of today, if the government fails to take action, I consider that all its members will have blood on their hands when the next tragedy occurs. Everyone will be responsible for this accident. We now know what's going on and we're shedding light on these matters. If you do nothing and change nothing, you'll be responsible for the next deaths.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin.

Before I give the floor to Ms. Nguyen, do I have the unanimous consent of the committee to ask Ms. Poulin a question? I have only one question for her.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Ms. Poulin, you said that you spoke with the people who issue driver's licences. You said that one person or several people told you that they had no choice but to issue licences.

Can you elaborate on this? I wonder how this is possible. If a person doesn't deserve a driver's licence, why do these people need to issue one? Can you explain this to our committee? We aren't on the ground, so we don't know how this works.

**Nathalie Poulin:** I'll talk about Quebec, because that's where I'm from.

First, I gather that the people from the SAAQ told me that, when people show up at the SAAQ with a driver's licence from their country, the employees aren't able to check whether it's actually a driver's licence. From what the employees told us, they often don't understand. It says "driver's licence", or it's written in another language that nobody understands. Apparently, the employees don't ask too many questions.

Then, even if these people don't understand English or French, the SAAQ employees help them pass their theory test by practically giving them the answers.

Lastly, the SAAQ employees told me that, when they go out on the road for the practical test, they give a great deal of leeway. These people come from other countries, so the employees absolutely want them to have their licences and to contribute to Quebec society.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Poulin. That's quite helpful.

**Nathalie Poulin:** You're welcome.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Nguyen, the floor is yours.

You have five minutes for your line of questioning, please.

[*Translation*]

**Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for joining us. You're very brave to share your stories with us. We really need to hear directly from you, so thank you for joining us today.

[*English*]

You'd like us to play a stronger leadership role. Transport Canada sets the guidelines, and we set the rules around training, etc. What more would you like us to do? How do we step up?

How do we encourage the provinces to work on that enforcement piece? It's not our place; it's Quebec and Ontario that do the enforcement pieces and the licences, but what does it look like for us to be able to ask the provinces to work better with us?

[*Translation*]

**Claudia Boucher:** Of the 10 requests made by Mr. Barsalou-Duval, only the tax issue was addressed. Yet, in my opinion, anything to do with passports and the privilege of travelling should take priority. That said, I particularly like requests 1, 2, 5 and 6.

When I did a radio interview, I hoped that the government would address at least one other request. Was I optimistic to think that at least one of these requests would likely be addressed? Today, I dare to hope that realistically four requests can be addressed. I would choose requests 1, 2, 4 and 6.

**The Chair:** Ms. Poulin, would you like to respond?

**Nathalie Poulin:** I don't know about the best solution. However, the government introduced mandatory training that the provinces had to enforce. Why doesn't it take this approach for the rest of the work? Right from the start, drivers must have a minimum amount of training. The government need only do the same for the rest. It should think about everything, including fines.

How much is the fine for drivers who fail to test their brakes and who run the risk of rolling downhill and killing someone? It's \$500. That's the cost of not testing their brakes. It's extremely dangerous. Even if drivers do the test, the brakes can freeze up. If they don't know how to drive, the drivers use the brakes going downhill and they don't release them, so the brakes freeze up and stop working.

The federal government must completely overhaul all aspects of transportation, including safety, training, fines and licences. Many associations are pointing out the issues involved. Many people want to work and to get involved in this project. The government should accept them all. They'll come and help. I'll come. That's what I've been saying all along. Tomorrow morning, I want to tell myself, first, that this accident didn't happen in vain and, second, that something will come out of all this and that the roads will be safer. We just want to help the government, but nobody wants to hear from us. That's the reality.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** The floor is yours, Ms. Séguin.

**Mélanie Séguin:** Mr. Chair, I think it would be better to have one Canada-wide law rather than different laws for each jurisdiction, with Quebec doing whatever it wants with its own laws.

Let me give you an example. In Quebec, a boy was caught driving at 188 kilometres per hour. He was fined \$1,800, according to a report on *TVA Nouvelles*. When I was driving through Ontario, I read on a billboard that the fine for that speeding offence was \$10,000.

Why shouldn't road safety be federally regulated so that all provinces follow the same laws and everything is clear, straightforward and specific? Whether in Quebec, Manitoba or elsewhere in Canada, everyone would follow the same laws. The use of cell-phones while driving would be banned for all possible vehicles, because—according to what I've read—it's the main source of distracted driving that leads to fatalities on the roads.

If we had a nationwide highway safety act, there would be no confusion. There would be no reason to say that the law is different if you're in Ontario.

I'm sorry, but the person who caused the death of two of my family members committed 43 offences. His logbook was not filled out and his required sleep hours were not obeyed when he left Brampton, Ontario.

I'm told that, in Quebec, everyone is responsible for this accident. The deaths would have had to take place in Ontario for us to have any recourse. Does that make sense to you? That is what Marc Bellemare, the former Quebec justice minister, told me himself.

There should be a Canada-wide law that treats everyone the same way.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Séguin.

Thank you very much, Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Boucher spoke about this earlier, but I'll expand on the subject.

In October, I believe, we submitted 10 requests regarding the trucking industry to the federal government, which was supposed to follow up. Unfortunately, the government only acted on one of them.

Given the time that has passed since then, and given the testimony we heard at committee, we could add further requests.

Have you had a chance to look at those requests? Are there some that you would like to emphasize?

Ms. Poulin, would you like to start?

**Nathalie Poulin:** I looked at them closely. The one that struck me the most was the one where people talked about logbooks that are not associated with driver's licences. How can you take a truck off the road when you can't check whether the driver is still fit to drive?

The federal government introduced the requirement to keep a logbook. However, if a driver doesn't enter their name in that logbook and another driver drives the truck, there's nothing anyone can do. It makes no sense.

The simplest and quickest thing to do, which could save lives, would be to arrest the offending drivers, take away their right to drive and seize their truck, regardless of where they are in Canada.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you.

Ms. Séguin, do you have anything to add?

• (1205)

**Mélanie Séguin:** I won't comment on that at this time.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Okay, no problem.

I still have 30 seconds.

Ms. Boucher, had you been able to speak to the Minister of Transport today, what message would you have liked to give him to bring about change?

**Claudia Boucher:** I certainly think all the points you raised in your 10 requests are relevant.

As for harmonizing the rules from coast to coast to allow follow-up when people change provinces, I mentioned at the press conference that that would make sense.

The issue of mechanical checks came up when we talked about the cases of Allyson Dumont and Alexandre Tremblay. When a defect, minor or major, is detected at a roadside checkpoint, whether during weighing or inspection, it should be followed up from one province to the next. The jurisdictions are too divided. There should be a more consistent approach.

On the list of 10 requests, I also thought an item on investigating companies at fault was relevant. I would have liked to bring points 1, 2, 5 and 6 to the attention of the Minister of Transport.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Boucher and Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

We'll now go back to Mr. Groleau.

You have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Jason Groleau:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, I thank the witnesses for being here. Their testimony was delivered with aplomb, if I may say so.

You're very brave.

I'll direct my questions to either Ms. Boucher or Ms. Séguin.

After today's meeting, what do you expect from the government and elected officials?

**Mélanie Séguin:** I expect you to show your humanity. You have a family too. What would you do if this happened to you? Would an extraordinary law be passed overnight if this happened to Mr. Trudeau's children? I'm sure it would. Are you going to continue to give these people licences to come and kill us? I hope not. I hope that today is the last day you allow them to come and kill us on our roads and give them that power. I hope so.

Ms. Poulin, do you have further comments?

**Nathalie Poulin:** My God, it's time to get to work; it must be done. It's fairly simple. Today, you have the power to save lives. That's all I can tell you. You have that power. Even if I shouted and spoke through all the media, I wouldn't be able to do that. We can help you, but we can't do it alone. You have that power. You tell us that these are our families, our children. They are also your families, your children, because it could happen to anyone. If a bus carrying 45 children had gone down that hill on that day, would it have been treated the same way? I don't know, but you have the power to do it.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Groleau.

We'll conclude with Mr. Kelloway.

[*English*]

You have two and a half minutes.

**Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to say thank you so much. It's often said that leadership is the act of serving others and not yourself. You're doing that today by telling us your profound story of loss, and I appreciate it. I know that every MP and all the staff here appreciate it.

The three of you today talked about your experiences, and some of that goes to federal and provincial shared responsibility. I'm wondering if you would like to see the committee include in our report elements of the things you talked about that are provincial that need to be tightened up and to share that with the transport departments that are provincial across Canada. Is that what I'm hearing? It's not just the federal government, although we're key here, but also sharing this report, this recommendation, with the provincial governments in Canada.

Do I get a thumbs-up for that or a thumbs-down?

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We'll start with Ms. Séguin.

**Mélanie Séguin:** I couldn't agree more.

**The Chair:** What do you think, Ms. Boucher?

**Claudia Boucher:** I agree.

[*English*]

**Mike Kelloway:** Okay. Thank you so much.

Also, with limited time, I hear of such things as enforcement, investigations and training, or the lack thereof. Let's be frank; from some of the stories we've heard today and from previous testimony, the level of training, or the lack thereof, is jaw-dropping.

Do you see a role for the federal government to be more involved in those elements that are provincial or to have some type of deeper shared responsibility? Do you see that as something we should look at in terms of a recommendation?

[*Translation*]

**Nathalie Poulin:** When it comes to training, it essentially starts at the federal level. The provincial governments implemented it, but it was too little, too late. It was set up in December 2025, and

for now, it's not enough. Are licences still being issued? I don't know, but for now, the training is inadequate. There's not enough of it, and it's complicated.

What worries me are all those who were licensed earlier, without training. The implementation of training begins, at least, at the federal level. Wouldn't it be possible to ask provinces, for example, to provide ongoing training and require that people who can't prove they've taken a course in the last 10 years retake a short refresher course? That way, provinces could ensure that people are qualified. It might be a good idea. For now, we have no way of knowing.

**The Chair:** Once again, I sincerely thank all three witnesses for sharing their personal experiences with us. It will help us tremendously in drafting the report that we are working hard on. It will be sent to the federal Minister of Transport as well as to our counterparts in each province and territory.

Thank you, ladies.

[*English*]

Colleagues, that concludes the first half of today's testimony.

I'm going to suspend for two minutes to allow for the clerk to invite the next round of witnesses.

The meeting is suspended.

• (1210)

(Pause)

• (1220)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

Colleagues, I'd like to welcome the witnesses for the second half of today's panel.

From the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group, we have Amanda Corbett, director; Carmela Palkowski, director; and Franca Pisani, director.

Welcome to all three of you.

From Justice for Truck Drivers, we have Navneet Aujla, service director, Labour Community Services of Peel, who is joining us by video conference.

Welcome to you.

From Joy Smith Foundation, we have Janet Campbell, president and chief executive officer.

Welcome to you as well.

We'll now go to the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group for opening remarks.

The floor is yours for five minutes, please.

**Carmela Palkowski (Director, Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group):** Thank you very much for having us here today.

The Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group was formed in September 2024 after the death of a young woman in our community, Adrianna Milena McCauley. Her mother, Pia, is here with us today in the gallery. On September 10, 2024, the 23-year-old was killed after a transport truck driver ran a red light a whole 10 seconds after the light turned red. She had just completed her first university degree and had travelled safely countless times, only to lose her life 30 seconds away from home.

Our community has reached its limits. We are now a not-for-profit organization with residents coming together across Ontario advocating for change.

**Franca Pisani (Director, Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group):** “If you get into an accident, make sure you kill them. Injured will cost you more.” A truck driver once told me he overheard companies saying this to their drivers. I will never forget that. It reflects a system where profit is placed above human life.

While my colleagues will address the broader road safety crisis, I want to focus on CRA accountability in the trucking industry. In 2006 CRA introduced a T5018 reporting system in construction to address the underground economy, recognizing that T4As were not sufficient. Today the same lack of compliance exists in trucking and transportation.

A similar reporting model should be considered. Shippers or brokers should be required to report gross payments to carriers and owner-operators for anyone moving goods or people. This would support CRA cross-auditing, close long-standing compliance gaps and improve transparency. This recommendation is made in the interest of public safety, fairness and compliance, not on behalf of any private or commercial interest.

- (1225)

**Amanda Corbett (Director, Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group):** Living in Caledon, which borders Brampton and Vaughan, is living at ground zero for truck industry chaos. We are experiencing a public safety crisis. This is not an exaggeration. A typical daily commute involves cars surrounded by trucks in every lane, and car drivers taking risks to get around the extreme congestion. It involves trucks with improperly trained drivers pulling U-turns on highways, driving at speed on the road shoulder in the opposite direction of traffic, pulling into oncoming traffic from narrow roads and driveways, and bullying car drivers. Recently there's been a drastic increase in extortion crimes, with bullets flying into homes and businesses. It's not “if” but “when” something horrible will happen.

We are surrounded by illegal truck yards where trucks, trailers and intermodal containers are stored on improperly zoned land. Residents are impacted with endless noise, traffic congestion, environmental concerns and potential for organized crime, just to mention a few. This isn't happening in just Caledon or Ontario. It's happening across Canada.

To effectively address these public safety concerns, simply lifting the T4A moratorium is not enough. All levels of government need to be accountable for working consistently and collaboratively to make meaningful changes within their purview. Canada needs a national commercial driver safety registry accessible to enforcement officers to ensure meaningful accountability instead of relying on

fragmented provincial systems, as some drivers routinely move between provinces or carriers.

In regard to the criminal justice system, Adrianna's death exposed a serious gap in how Canada treats fatal negligence involving commercial drivers, currently handled under provincial offences, often with minimal sentences. There needs to be federal recognition that, for example, a fully loaded transport truck running a red light is not comparable to inattentive driving or a momentary judgment error. When a commercial driver causes a death, it should trigger mandatory Criminal Code consideration and not default to provincial offences. Sentencing guidance must account for the elevated professional duty of commercial drivers and the associated risk of severity in harm.

We fully support good truck drivers and companies—even owner-operators or independent drivers—who follow the law and take their responsibilities seriously. They are all an essential part of our economy. Without them, our lives would look very different.

I'll pass it to Carmela.

**Carmela Palkowski:** Every level of government needs to come together to implement change, no matter what political party. This is a public safety crisis. Weapons are on our roads being driven by unqualified drivers who are putting their lives and our lives at risk. What's next, unqualified pilots in the air?

This is a crisis across this country, and this must be addressed now.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your opening remarks.

Next, we'll turn the floor over to Ms. Aujla.

Ms. Aujla, you have five minutes for your opening remarks. The floor is yours.

**Navneet Aujla (Service Director, Labour Community Services of Peel, Justice for Truck Drivers):** Hi, everyone. My name is Navi Aujla, and I am the service director at Labour Community Services of Peel, or LCSP, a non-profit organization that provides free employment law services.

LCSP works closely with Justice for Truck Drivers, a grassroots advocacy group made up of frontline drivers, a large majority of whom have personally experienced wage theft and labour violations. Justice for Truck Drivers holds monthly meetings with its members, and we collect data on working conditions through meetings with drivers, surveys and casework.

Today, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you about the changing landscape for truck drivers in Canada. That landscape is dire. I want to be clear from the outset that our drivers oppose Driver Inc., but as one driver told us, “Driver Inc. is just one branch on a rotten tree. The real rot is weak enforcement and outdated laws that allow wage theft without consequence and put drivers and the public's lives at risk.”

The data supports this. In 2000, 70% of confirmed Canada Labour Code violations occurred in road transport. Even though trucking accounts for only 17% of federally regulated workers, that number rose to 85% by 2022. In just the past two years, LCSP has received calls from over 300 federally regulated truck drivers reporting labour violations. Despite filing complaints with the federal labour program, we find that drivers are still unable to access their rights while employers continue to break the law with little consequence.

At present, 83 drivers whom we represent have Canada Labour Code decisions confirming they are collectively owed \$696,000 in unpaid wages, yet they have been unable to enforce those rulings or recover their stolen earnings. The employers have faced no consequences.

Driver Inc. did not create the exploitation of drivers. The deregulation of the trucking industry in the nineties produced a highly competitive sector dominated by shippers and brokers that rely on low-cost tendering. Transport companies respond to shrinking margins by cutting labour costs and shifting business risks onto drivers and owner-operators.

Misclassification has long been embedded in the industry by large and small companies, new and established alike. Driver Inc. is just one manifestation of this broader problem. As Driver Inc. companies face increased scrutiny, many simply adopt alternative misclassification models, such as using temp agencies with little capital that can open and close quickly to shift a liability for misclassification; hiring drivers as so-called “lease operators,” forcing them to lease company trucks while still exerting full employer control; and contracting owner-operators who are classified as independent contractors even though the company dictates schedules, routes and conditions of work.

This is why addressing misclassification solely through tax mechanisms is not enough. When enforcement focuses on tax compliance instead of labour standards, it ignores the power imbalance in trucking. Employers continue to exploit loopholes while drivers face large tax bills and penalties, yet that same process does not recover their unpaid wages or benefits that should have been paid by the employer in the first place. Employers break the law, but workers absorb the financial harm. The result for drivers is punishment without protection.

It's not just because of misclassification, but wage theft is also built into everyday pay practices in trucking. Unpaid labour is routine in this industry. Many drivers are paid by the mile, but mileage is calculated using shortest-route apps that do not reflect actual miles driven due to traffic, construction or detours. The majority of non-driving work also goes unpaid. Drivers routinely report not being paid for required duties such as loading and unloading, inspections, maintenance and border wait times.

Illegal deductions are also widespread. Employers often avoid using company insurance for vehicle or cargo damage and instead withhold drivers' wages, sometimes holding back entire pay-cheques. Not only are drivers facing declining wages, but these are all forms of wage theft that we get calls about every day.

There are deep systemic failures in the road transport sector that must be addressed. As Stephen Laskowski, CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance, told this committee on October 7, “Do not trust us...we do not have the proper oversight, enforcement and penalties.”

We agree. What is needed is a broad, system-wide review of the trucking industry. Drivers are demanding an end to all misclassification practices, not just Driver Inc.; enforcement through labour standards, not tax mechanisms that punish drivers instead of powerful companies; decent wages; payment for all hours worked and all miles driven; an end to illegal deductions and wage theft; and real enforcement with meaningful penalties that deter violations and hold employers accountable. Anything less will allow exploitation to continue, and drivers will keep paying the price.

Thank you.

● (1230)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Aujla.

Next we'll go to Ms. Campbell.

Ms. Campbell, the floor is yours. You have five minutes for your opening remarks, please.

**Janet Campbell (President and Chief Executive Officer, Joy Smith Foundation):** Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

Our organization was founded by Joy Smith, a former member of Parliament herself. During her time in Parliament, she successfully introduced two private members' bills that amended the Criminal Code of Canada to strengthen Canada's response to human trafficking. That legislative work helped lay the foundation for how human trafficking is defined and prosecuted in our country today.

For more than 30 years, Joy Smith and our foundation have supported survivors, trained frontline professionals and worked with governments at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. We work closely with law enforcement, service providers and international partners to help ensure that Canada's response reflects both lived experience and established legal standards. To date we have supported more than 7,000 survivors of sex trafficking and forced labour.

Consistent throughout our work, human trafficking is often misunderstood while it hides in plain sight. Under the UN Palermo protocol, which Canada has ratified, human trafficking consists of three elements—an act; a means, such as coercion or abuse of vulnerability; and a purpose of exploitation. The International Labour Organization further operationalizes this through 11 indicators of forced labour, which are widely used by governments and courts around the world to assess risk. When we apply that framework, we see that labour trafficking often emerges not from a single illegal act but from systems that concentrate power on one side of the employment relationship and that remove meaningful choice from a worker. Our foundation is seeing a steady increase in forced labour cases and indicators coming to our office, particularly in sectors where immigration dependency and misclassification intersect.

This is where the trucking industry enters this discussion for us today. In 2024 we launched an awareness campaign, called Trafficking Report, in response to the patterns we were seeing in the trucking industry in particular. As this committee has heard, Driver Inc. undermines labour standards, distorts competition and erodes road safety. Those impacts are very real. This is impacting real lives, as we heard today in the heartbreaking stories from the courageous witnesses earlier. What our work at the foundation adds to this conversation is an explanation of how, in certain conditions, those same structures can meet internationally recognized thresholds for forced labour. That risk increases significantly when misclassification is combined with immigration dependency. When a worker's income, housing, legal status and pathway to permanent residency are all tied to a single employer, the balance of power shifts. When that worker is also indebted through recruitment or training fees, is isolated from community supports, and is unable to change employers without serious consequences, reporting abuse becomes unsafe. In international terms, this is what abuse of vulnerability looks like.

Based on our work, the patterns we see in the trucking sector include debt bondage through recruitment costs, deception about wages and working conditions, withholding of documents, threats

related to immigration status, physical violence, systemic wage theft, unpaid overtime, excessive hours, isolation and unsafe conditions. When multiple indicators of coercion are present, this creates an environment where forced labour thrives regardless of whether the industry itself is legal or regulated. This helps explain why enforcement alone has struggled. Workers often cannot report safely, remedies are slow or unenforced, and companies can dissolve and re-emerge while workers are left without wages or status.

I want to be clear that this is not about casting suspicion on the entire trucking industry. It's about aligning Canada's trucking, labour and immigration systems with the international standards and Criminal Code provisions that Canada already has committed to uphold. Canada does have some strong laws. Of course more work can be done, but what matters now is ensuring that our systems do not unintentionally enable the human trafficking that those laws were designed to prevent.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I welcome your questions.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Campbell.

We'll now turn it over directly to our first questioner, MP Seeback.

Mr. Seeback, the floor is yours. You have six minutes, sir.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming today to talk about this issue.

I really want to thank the CCRSA. You're from my riding, and you do such great work and advocacy in trying to bring this issue.... It's impressive that you've been able to bring it to the local and provincial levels, and, now, here to the national level. Your passionate hard work is going to be very beneficial as we try to figure out the solution to all of these things.

Having listened to what I've heard today, and having had conversations with you, it seems to me that this is not just a one-level-of-government challenge. There are multiple things that have to happen at multiple levels of government. It would be great if the federal government took leadership on that, but could you describe what you think would be the way forward at all levels of government? Do you have an idea of what that would look like?

**Amanda Corbett:** This has to be an ongoing conversation, with all levels of government participating—residents as well.

In our particular case, we live in Ontario and we've tried to have many conversations with the Ontario government. Unfortunately, not a lot of listening is happening, or, if they are listening, they're not taking a lot of action.

There really needs to be an understanding that this is across Canada. This is a problem for all provinces. I do think, quite frankly, that there's a lot happening in Ontario that's also causing problems in other provinces. There really needs to be an ongoing conversation and willingness for each level of government to do what's within their purview to actually make real change so that residents living in their communities can see an improvement.

• (1240)

**Kyle Seeback:** If I were to look at your statement and what I've heard today, it sounds like the tax part of it is one element, certainly with the Driver Inc. aspect of this. You'd say that's a big part of the problem.

**Amanda Corbett:** Yes, most definitely.

**Kyle Seeback:** You'd be very supportive of finding some new way, through the tax code, audit and compliance, to deal with cracking down on the companies that are operating under the Driver Inc. model.

**Amanda Corbett:** I'll let Franca jump in on that.

**Franca Pisani:** Undoing the T4As is just not enough. They're easy to manipulate, and, if somebody has a few family members, split up among everybody.

The thing is, if you do a T5018, which is something similar, which is happening in the construction industry and had cleaned up the underground economy.... Basically, if you have the shipper itself give a T5018 to the brokers or the carriers, and then they, the broker/carrier, issue the T4A to the driver, you have something to audit with. If the carrier/broker sends a T5018 that says, "You've made so much money, but this is all you've dished out in T4As", there's a problem. It's just a cross-audit, and that really helped the construction industry.

**Kyle Seeback:** When you also talked about the licensing requirement, my understanding was that a significant part of the problem has also been people obtaining licences without actually taking the course, some fraudulent schools.... I would take it that these are part of this problem that need to be cracked down on as well.

**Carmela Palkowski:** Absolutely. The other problem is that they've actually caught a number of fraudulent schools, but what happened to those individuals who obtained licences from those schools?

**Kyle Seeback:** I guess you would support that those licences be revoked, and they would have to retest at an—

**Carmela Palkowski:** Absolutely.

**Kyle Seeback:** If we follow this down to the municipal level, there's also a problem, because a lot of the drivers who are operating under Driver Inc., who obtained these licences from these fake driving schools, are probably operating out of an illegal truck yard.

**Amanda Corbett:** It's very likely that's happening, yes.

**Kyle Seeback:** What do you think the solution to that is?

**Amanda Corbett:** Well, there are a lot of solutions. However, I think that the main one is for the Province of Ontario and, perhaps, other provinces that are dealing with this to actually act on some of the recommendations that have been made, both through us and through our municipal governments as well. They need the ability to block the driveways of these particular properties; to drastically increase the fines that are given because, right now, it's really just a cost of doing business—a few hundred dollars is completely irrelevant when you're making tens to hundreds of thousands a day—and also the ability to put those fines on the title of the property so that they can't just sell to a family member or change the name of the company and wash their hands of the situation.

**Kyle Seeback:** If the federal minister of transportation were here, I take it that you would urge him to make this a huge priority for the safety of all Canadians, to take some leadership on this and bring provinces online.

**Amanda Corbett:** Yes. I would say that, given the lack of response that we're having from the Ontario government and the fact that this problem is happening all across Canada, if there was some federal action that could happen that forces the provinces to either actually do something or take some sort of a policy stance, that would be helpful.

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

Mr. Greaves, the floor is yours. You have six minutes, sir.

**Will Greaves:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us this morning as we continue this important discussion.

My question is for Ms. Aujla.

As you noted during your remarks, safety standards are set at the federal level, but we know that, as with most rules, the standards that are set are really only as good as the enforcement on the ground. In this case, the enforcement is largely undertaken by provincial and municipal partners. I'm wondering if you could speak to what you've heard from drivers operating in Peel Region—or from others with whom you've interacted—in terms of how often they are seeing or interacting with law enforcement or provincial officials or inspectors who are conducting roadside inspections or, rather, audits that might help mitigate some of these unsafe conditions.

• (1245)

**Navneet Aujla:** The majority of drivers that are calling us or are a part of Justice for Truck Drivers are federally regulated truck drivers. There's actually a lot that the federal government could be doing in order to make sure that safety and labour standards are followed. A lot of it starts from the fact that when drivers are raising issues and filing complaints with regard to the Canada Labour Code, there is very little effective enforcement. It's grossly underfunded at the federal level. What it signals to companies is that they can actually engage in labour violations without consequences and without any meaningful fines. It tells the drivers that they have nowhere to turn to. A lot of the issues that we're seeing are because companies are being allowed to cut corners by not following labour laws properly and because drivers don't have a place that they can turn to in order to actually enforce their rights.

It is a safety issue when we talk about drivers' rights and making sure that they can access their protections through the Canada Labour Code. That's why we're saying that enforcement from that level is actually going to solve a lot of these issues. It's not just misclassification. It's not just something that should be examined through the CRA lens. It's something where the Canada Labour Code needs to be effectively enforced so that drivers can get their rights enforced.

**Will Greaves:** Thank you for that response. I appreciate that. That's certainly a fair point.

What you're describing is a situation in which a driver has proactively made a complaint or filed some kind of complaint with the federal government, which is certainly relevant.

In terms of their experiences of actually driving and being on the job, can you speak a little bit about the other kinds of interactions they may be having? For example, how frequently do roadside audits occur or being pulled over by police, as well as inspections and that kind of activity? Is that something you're hearing about from your drivers as well?

**Navneet Aujla:** Yes, they do commonly get inspected. They do get pulled over on scales. Again, they face a lot of pressure from employers to drive vehicles that are not properly maintained or to drive hours over what is allowed. They have nowhere to turn to in order to even let somebody know that the company is pushing them this way. Basically, the whole responsibility falls on them to refuse that. Then the employer simply says that they're not going to give them any more work. Again, it comes down to their being able to enforce their rights and protections in order to be able to say no to unsafe work or to driving a vehicle that's not maintained without fear of losing their job or fear of financial retaliation.

**Will Greaves:** Okay. Thank you for that.

That actually segues into my next question, which is for Ms. Campbell.

Thank you for being with us today, Ms. Campbell.

We know that newcomers and international workers are often targeted by bad actors and by companies with some dubious practices for recruitment. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on that. What are some the promises or commitments that are made to lure individuals into working in unsafe conditions in the trucking sector?

**Janet Campbell:** They are often lured to Canada under the pretense of being able to build a better life for themselves. What happens in these situations is all of these administrative factors that we've been hearing about: the labour violations, tax misclassifications, immigration and compliance. All of these things basically don't reveal themselves in their full picture to any one of those entities. Law enforcement often doesn't have visibility to that, to be able to look at these pictures from a Criminal Code assessment standpoint.

These workers come to Canada. They are promised that they will be supported to follow proper immigration pathways and that they'll have great jobs, but when they arrive in our country, all the things that we've been hearing about today happen. Then they become so fearful of reporting that ultimately these cases end up falling into the gaps between these various jurisdictions and administrative processes, but the signs are there.

• (1250)

**Will Greaves:** Thank you for that.

In light of exactly what you just spoke to, are there particular measures or best practices that have been implemented in other jurisdictions that we might learn from to help mitigate the flow of workers into an unsafe industry on the basis of these false promises?

**Janet Campbell:** There are a number of steps that we can take. For instance, the Drivers Inc. model, the misclassification, really adds to the layers of vulnerability for somebody who comes to our country through some sort of temporary worker permit. We need to look at those kinds of things and remove the ability for that layer to occur.

You need a lot of cross-agency collaboration and enforcement. There's some great data in the different agencies, whether it's ES-DC, CRA, IRCC or CBSA. It's taking the data and the information that we have and having the training and understanding of those indicators from a forced labour standpoint to then be able to elevate them into pathways where they can be considered for criminal offences.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Campbell and Mr. Greaves.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here. I think their testimony is truly important for our committee's study.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express my frustration that we weren't able to hear your testimony earlier. In my opinion, we should have heard your comments last year. I find it unacceptable that the committee wasted so much time before resuming work on this important study.

My first question is for Ms. Aujla, the service director at Labour Community Services of Peel.

In your opening statement, you mentioned that you oppose the Driver Inc. model, but also that there are other problems in the trucking industry. We heard from witnesses who claimed or would have us believe that each problem experienced by the industry is an individual problem—that is, isolated from the others—and that there is no connection between these various problems.

Here's what I'd like to know: With regard to the companies or drivers who come to us to complain that they are unable to get paid by their employer, is there a link between these companies and the Driver Inc. model?

[English]

**Navneet Aujla:** I would say the link is in the sense that companies are being allowed to use various methods to basically put liability back on workers and not follow the labour rights that they're supposed to give to drivers. Misclassification is one of those pieces, alongside the other rampant labour violations that we're seeing.

It's linked in the sense that companies are being allowed to break the law in a myriad of ways. Misclassification is one of those, but it's certainly not the only one. Because they're being allowed to steal workers' wages and, again, to put liability back on drivers, we really just need better laws and protections to make sure that drivers are able to access their rights, and again, this needs to happen through the Canada Labour Code.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** You mentioned earlier that over 300 drivers contacted your organization with complaints.

First, do you feel that the practice of flouting the law and mistreating drivers is widespread in the industry? Or is it more of an isolated phenomenon?

Second, with regard to drivers operating under the Driver Inc. model, do you think that incorporation is generally done willingly, or is it often imposed by the employer?

[English]

**Navneet Aujla:** The statistics show that it's a widespread issue. We get hundreds of calls from truck drivers, but even statistics from the Canada Labour Code itself, as I mentioned in my presentation, show that in 2022, 80% of confirmed Labour Code violations were from the road transport industry, even though trucking only accounts for 17% of federally regulated truck drivers. It's clearly a systemic issue and it's really widespread in trucking.

As for the second question, I'm sorry; can you repeat it?

• (1255)

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Often, the drivers who seek you out are forced to incorporate, meaning that it's not a voluntary choice on their part. Is that correct?

[English]

**Navneet Aujla:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you for confirming that.

You mentioned your dissatisfaction with the processing times at the Canada Industrial Relations Board. It seems to be difficult to get cases resolved.

How long does it take, for example, from the time a driver comes to you until a case is resolved at the Canadian Industrial Relations Board? Are we talking days, years, weeks, or months?

[English]

**Navneet Aujla:** That is a great question, because one thing that using the CRA to enforce misclassification does not address is the power imbalance between drivers and employers. Drivers often do not have a choice in how they are classified, and there are a lot of reasons that they are pushed into it. It may be a lack of education, but there is a clear power imbalance that the Labour Code recognizes. When you enforce this only through the CRA, it's missing that power imbalance, so there's often no meaningful ability to refuse incorporation or challenge your status. When the enforcement is happening through the CRA, the drivers are not going to be penalized, but it's not going to restore their lost wages, their unpaid overtime or the statutory protection that they've been denied.

To answer your question, oftentimes they do not have a choice.

Your second question was on the length of time it takes when drivers file complaints. It can easily take two to three years. At this point, if a driver files a complaint with the Canada Labour Code today, it's going to take 14 to 16 months just for a labour program officer to be assigned to the case. Then you have another year or two of the investigation taking place before a payment order is issued.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Okay, thank you. Since I don't have much time left, I have to stop you there.

I must say that it is utterly scandalous that it takes two to three years to process a case before people can get paid. It makes no sense when you consider that these people need this money to get by and that they are often poorly paid or underpaid. In any case, I am truly outraged to learn this.

I have two quick final questions for you.

Are the measures in place to deter companies from resorting to such practices sufficient?

Do companies comply with orders when they receive them?

[English]

**Navneet Aujla:** We need more, 100%. Not only does it take a long time, but there are huge rates of non-compliance. Even when payment orders are issued, many employers do not actually end up paying. There are no meaningful consequences or fines. Basically, right now the system encourages employers to break the law because they profit from it. There are no real consequences for breaking the law.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Aujla and Mr. Barsalou-Duval.

[English]

We'll now go to Mr. Seeback.

Colleagues, just to meet our resource deadline of 1:17 p.m., I am going to cut back on everybody's time just a little bit. I appreciate your understanding.

Mr. Seeback, the floor is yours, sir.

**Kyle Seeback:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to go back to the CCRSA for one question.

I know that the issue with respect to the illegal operation of truck yards is not necessarily a federal issue, but you mentioned issues around fines and how the fines weren't sufficient.

My understanding is that the mayor of Caledon and some other mayors have written to the Province of Ontario asking for the ability to levy increased fines for these types of things as a way to deter them and to be able to put those fines on title so that it's difficult for those bad operations to sell the land.

Is there any update on the status of that?

**Carmela Palkowski:** The mayor of Caledon came back from a ROMA meeting last week and confirmed that there are going to be some legislation changes, but we don't know what those legislation changes are going to be. That's what we're waiting on.

We have tried to meet with the province, with our own MPP, Sylvia Jones, who is the deputy premier of Ontario. It's been very challenging to get through to her with our asks. We've had one meeting by force, because somebody else had the meeting and we just joined. We asked her for exactly what we needed and what the mayor of Caledon, Mayor Groves, needed, to deal with these illegal operations. We're still waiting to hear back from her.

We've been waiting to hear back for about four months now. Queen's Park will be back March 23, so we need to wait almost two months to see what they have. Our guess is it's not going to be strong enough to deal with whatever has been asked, so we will still be advocating past when Queen's Park opens.

• (1300)

**Kyle Seeback:** Thanks very much.

Ms. Aujla, you mentioned the Canada Labour Code the two to three years at the CIRB. I've heard similar issues with union matters being adjudicated through the CIRB. It seems to me there's a

resource issue here and an underfunding issue perhaps with the CIRB. I wonder if you wanted to comment on that.

**Navneet Aujla:** Yes, I would agree that enforcement is grossly underfunded. There need to be more labour officers, stronger powers for the labour officers to ensure they can enforce payment orders and collect drivers' unpaid wages, and there stronger consequences and meaningful fines for employers who break the law.

**Kyle Seeback:** Has your organization ever contemplated any changes to the Canada Labour Code that would deal with some of the issues you're talking about? I think you were very clear that it's not just a tax issue; there's 100% a bargaining power imbalance between the drivers and the company owners. I agree.

Do you have potential changes to the Canada Labour Code that would help on this? If you could describe them, that would be great. If you don't have them, could you please submit them to the committee so they could be part of this report?

**Navneet Aujla:** Definitely. We have made submissions in the past. Since 2023, we have made submissions to the Ministry of Labour's staff.

This includes, as I mentioned, making sure there is more funding for enforcement; making sure drivers have more than six months to file a complaint; making sure there are meaningful fines and consequences, including changes to the Canada Labour Code itself, to make sure drivers are actually paid adequately for all the time they work. Right now, there's a huge issue of a lot of labour that goes unpaid as well. We need more measures to ensure drivers are able to speak up and access justice.

**Kyle Seeback:** Thank you.

You submitted these in 2023. Have the changes that you've requested been made or are they in the current budget or any legislation the government has?

**Navneet Aujla:** No.

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

Ms. Nguyen, the floor is yours. You have four minutes, please.

**Chi Nguyen:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for joining us today. It's extraordinary to hear about your efforts to come together and advocate for the community in terms of safety where you're living. For those who are online, thanks for your time today.

I want to ask about other tools in other jurisdictions. One of the things that came to mind is a whistle-blower line or other ways to get information around what's happening in the industry. Would measures like that help people who are being exploited, as these drivers are, come forward in a way that protects their safety?

Ms. Campbell, do you want to start? Then I can go to Ms. Aujla.

**Janet Campbell:** We get these kinds of calls to our office because individuals in the situation we've talked about often feel trapped: they feel like they have no choice, they're being threatened, they're under control, they are being threatened about getting in trouble with the law and all these kinds of things. It sometimes prevents them from wanting to talk with some of the agencies, such as law enforcement, because their perpetrators have instilled such fear and they're under such pressure.

When they have tried to raise their hands with respect to some of the missed wages and other treatment like that, their entire picture on those cases that are forced labour isn't seen in its entirety and these are falling through the gaps.

• (1305)

**Navneet Aujla:** I had some trouble with the interpretation. Could you repeat the question?

**Chi Nguyen:** The question was about whether other tools like a whistle-blower line might be useful in this context or something like that. I know that that's been successful in other sectors.

**Navneet Aujla:** Yes, definitely. That's one of the biggest issues raised by drivers and owner-operators. Companies are able to exert so much pressure on them so that they can save money by asking them to sometimes falsify logbooks, drive excessive hours or drive vehicles that are not maintained. They have nowhere to turn to report this.

The entire responsibility is put on the driver to say no, and then at most they can file a reprisal claim. As we've seen, it's very ineffective when they try to go through the Canada Labour Code enforcement, so they need a place to turn where they can report companies and where the companies can be investigated. They should be able to report anonymously so they're not risking their jobs or having to report every time they try to refuse something that's unsafe.

**Chi Nguyen:** Some of the other measures and recommendations we've heard about are more data sharing between the provinces and a kind of registry of drivers who have been problematic. Are there other kinds of joint initiatives that you think we should be considering as a committee to recommend for implementation?

**Navneet Aujla:** I just want to add as well that what we are hearing from our organization and the folks who we work with is that it's mostly new immigrants who are facing these issues. I just want to make clear that we are seeing this across the board with citizens, permanent residents and folks who do not have precarious status issues. It's not an immigration status issue; it's an issue of enforcement and making sure that all drivers can access that fairly.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll turn it over to Ms. Corbett for one last word.

**Amanda Corbett:** In terms of what other things should be considered in that registry, I think it's important to include things like insurance and a proper way of tracking a company, as sometimes companies change names or go from one province to another. That kind of thing really needs to be considered as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barsalou-Duval, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will begin with a question for the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy Group.

I did some research—I believe you helped us out a bit with that—and I found that a company by the name of Sun Transportation Systems is operating an illegal truck fleet in Caledon. It is the subject of a complaint and legal proceedings with the Town of Caledon. As it turns out, it is also a member of the Canadian Truckers Association, which lobbies on behalf of the Driver Inc. model. We often see photos of association members with members and elected officials of all political stripes from various levels of government, whether municipal, provincial or federal. Many of them are reportedly contributors and even donors to the Liberal Party.

When you see organizations like this infiltrating the political sphere, are you concerned that it will undermine law enforcement down the road?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The floor is yours, Ms. Corbett.

**Amanda Corbett:** Yes, it is a concern. I would say that, within our community, there are a lot of illegal truck yards. Sun Transportation isn't necessarily the only one of concern. We find that there is a lot of lobbying power as these companies give money to political parties and influence political decisions and policies that are made. It's very concerning for us residents, especially given the safety concerns that we have, like the public safety crisis.

[*Translation*]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Thank you.

I'll take this opportunity to ask one last question of the Joy Smith Foundation.

The Canadian Trucking Association told us that the fight against the Driver Inc. model was essentially based on racist ideas. I would like to hear the Joy Smith Foundation's opinion on this. Is that indeed the case, or is it more of a pretext to conceal another model, which could include forced labour and human trafficking?

• (1310)

[English]

**Janet Campbell:** When it comes to forced labour, we certainly do see this across demographics. We see that when you have environments where somebody has control over somebody's immigration status, their hours, their work and all of these things, it does create an imbalance of power. Certainly, we see, very consistently, cases where the use of immigration pathways and misclassification add to people's vulnerability and puts others in a position of control.

These foreign nationals come to our country very innocently with false promises. We've worked with many individuals who we've supported after their exit, where they've been in really horrific circumstances.

They've been threatened and—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Campbell.

Unfortunately, I'm going to have to cut you off there, because I'm on a hard stop with resources for our committee today. I want to make sure that the last two members have a chance to ask questions.

With that, I'll turn it over to you, Mr. Albas, for four minutes, please.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all of our witnesses here today. It's very powerful testimony.

I'll allow Ms. Campbell to complete the last part of her reply. The Women's Trucking Federation of Canada had originally said that there were a number of people, either temporary foreign workers or students with permits.... Maybe she could identify the program where these bad actors seem to be taking advantage of people.

**Janet Campbell:** Bad actors will use the fringes of these legitimate pathways as well as jurisdictions, such as labour, tax, etc. to stay in plain sight without the full picture really being seen.

By and large, the percentage of individuals we have on the forced labour side are individuals who have come to our country under some sort of promise. In some cases, that's through LMIA's. In other cases, it's other pathways. In some cases, it's the promise of a pathway that was never really established for them in the first place. That's primarily what we see.

**Dan Albas:** Thank you, Ms. Campbell. I appreciate the work you do on behalf of the Joy Smith Foundation.

I'd like to quickly ask CCRSA for little bit more information.

Regarding the problem of such congestion that it's aggravating folks, do you know the source of those vehicles? Are they registered in Ontario? Are they simply intraprovincial, or are they trucks from another province, which makes it even more difficult to get them to comply?

**Franca Pisani:** The congestion in our area is that we're basically ground zero for Driver Inc. Kyle Seebach has taken a tour of the area. He knows the area very well.

What boggles our minds is that the minister of transportation lives just kilometres away. He knows what's going on. We haven't been able to get through to him.

A lot of the trucks are registered. Most of the trucks are registered in Ontario. They have Ontario licence plates. Some of the businesses are registered in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. That's the problem. They have those licence plates.

What they're doing in these truck yards is beyond.... We've contacted the minister of the environment, because we know these trucks are pouring motor oil and diesel fuel into the waterways. Unless we have proof, the ministry won't come out.

A few months ago, there was a transport truck dumping quite a bit of motor oil into stormwater ponds. Our municipality had to clean that up. That was only because the driver was caught in the middle of the night; somebody caught him on camera.

What's going on is very dangerous. It's almost impossible to find out who these people are, where they're registered and the names of the shell companies that are there.

• (1315)

**Dan Albas:** A witness in the previous hour talked about a national database to help coordinate enforcement efforts to know who these people are. They may simply close in one location and open up in another. They may get a new safety fitness certificate; the conditions in it would be the responsibility of the federal government.

There was a suggestion in the previous testimony of a national database that could coordinate and identify these actors and that could hold them accountable. Do you believe that would be one of the necessary solutions?

**Franca Pisani:** It is one of the solutions. It needs to be Canada-wide. They have shell companies everywhere, and the database needs to be across Canada, because they go from Ontario to Quebec. They do something in Quebec, and then they change to Saskatchewan and keep on driving.

**Dan Albas:** I want to thank you for the work you do, and I invite any members to see the website. I've seen some video footage of your hometown and some of the incidents that have happened. It's very disturbing, and I'm glad to see that your MP is working hard for you.

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

Finally, for today, we'll turn it over to Mr. Kelloway, who is joining us online.

Mr. Kelloway, the floor is yours. You have four minutes, sir.

**Mike Kelloway:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate it very much.

Thanks to everyone attending today, both online and in person in Ottawa.

I don't want to repeat a lot of the great questions asked today, with all the great, important and constructive answers. I want to try to dive a little deeper into a couple of things. A consistent theme has been accountability and collaboration.

I'm wondering if we can start with the Caledon group there and work our way to Ms. Campbell and Ms. Aujla to get two recommendations on whether it should be federal or provincial. Let's be clear; this is a shared responsibility.

In the time I have left, I want to dive into key recommendations. Give your top two that we need to look at right away. It sounds like, potentially, a national registry is one, as well as greater federal oversight on things that may traditionally be provincial. I don't want to put words in your mouth, so I'm looking to see if I can get a couple of recommendations, first from those in attendance right now in Ottawa, and then we can move to Ms. Campbell and Ms. Aujla.

**Amanda Corbett:** In terms of the registry, definitely, that's one of the things in our opening statement.

We definitely want to see some changes in terms of training. I know that's provincial, but I think there needs to be a lot of federal oversight or some policy mandates for the provinces to actually step up and really follow through, especially within Ontario. We have issues with a lot of the training and licensing being outsourced to third parties; that really shouldn't be allowed.

I also want to mention criminal charges. That really needs to be considered when there is a truck driver who has committed...something, because that's not happening now. It is outrageous that someone dies and a truck driver only gets a 55-day jail sentence. It's absolutely not acceptable.

**Mike Kelloway:** Absolutely. Do your colleagues next to you have anything to add to that before I move on to Ms. Campbell?

**Carmela Palkowski:** Definitely, it's the collaboration. We're all hearing it. Most of it is coming from Ontario. It's causing havoc across this country, so we'd really like to see some more push to the Ontario government, because right now, they're not listening to anybody.

**Mike Kelloway:** A push to the federal government—

**Carmela Palkowski:** The provincial government.

**Mike Kelloway:** —or the Ontario government, yes. I just want to be clear.

What about your colleague next to you? I just want to make sure we capture everything.

**Franca Pisani:** As I said before, the statement that will never leave my mind is what these companies are telling their drivers to do: "It doesn't matter if you kill them because nothing's going to

happen. A month or two in jail is the cost of doing business." Something needs to be done there with the criminal aspect of it.

Of course, with the T5018s, the broker gives a T5018 to the carrier or the shipper, and the carrier or the shipper takes the T4As to the drivers. There's your cross-audit. That's what I would like to see.

**Mike Kelloway:** Thank you very much.

Ms. Campbell.

• (1320)

**Janet Campbell:** I think, within these different administrative processes, there needs to be a clear understanding of what the indicators are so that the staff working with these types of files know that potentially this needs a criminal assessment. From there, if you create those pathways for the referral, I think that also goes a long way towards some of the collaboration that exists, because there's a lot of great data and insight, but it's not always connecting. Even if we take a look at some of the motor carrier enforcement and those types of things where they do these traffic stops, we don't have law enforcement present—OPP or RCMP. That would help.

**Mike Kelloway:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** To all of our witnesses joining us online and in person here today, I want to thank you sincerely for your testimony. It will help us enormously as we put together this report that we will present to Transport Canada, the minister and, of course, our provincial and territorial counterparts.

Colleagues, there has been some discussion behind the scenes. There are two housekeeping items that I need to bring up. The first is prolonging this study, as we thought it was important to do. It comes with a supplementary budget.

Do I have unanimous consent to approve the supplementary budget to add the additional meetings?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Second, on December 11, the committee agreed to study Quebec's and Canada's ports. Based on the text of the motion, it looks like we'll be doing that towards the end of February.

The clerk has asked me to set a deadline for names of witnesses to be put forward.

Does next Wednesday, February 4, sound good to members?

**Dan Albas:** Can we confirm this on Wednesday, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** We can do that.

Okay, colleagues, thank you very much. I wish you a wonderful rest of your day.

This meeting is adjourned.







Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>