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# Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

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Chair: Julie Dzerowicz





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• (1630)

[English]

**The Chair (Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone.

I call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 28 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format.

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

For those who are on Zoom—and we do have one person joining us virtually today—kindly remember to click on the microphone icon to activate your microphone. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking. As well, and this is also for the benefit of our virtual guest, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French.

Of course, for those in the room you can use your earpiece and select the desired channel.

I will let everyone know when you have one minute left.

As always, kindly wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

I will remind everyone not to speak over each other, please, as it will be hard for our interpreters to interpret. It makes their job difficult.

Of course, please ensure that all your comments are addressed through the chair.

Members, raise your hand if you wish to speak. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can. Thanks to all of you for your co-operation.

Before I go into introducing our guests, I want to say this.

[Translation]

Welcome, Mr. Champoux.

[English]

I also have a warm welcome for Randy Hoback.

Thank you for joining us, Mr. Hoback. It's a pleasure to have you with us. I have not seen you for a while, and it's nice to have you here.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on September 16, 2025, the committee is resuming its study of Canada's immigration system.

Mr. Hoback, I'm going to ask you to keep your voice down, please.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses for today's meeting.

We have with us Professor Tony Fang, a full professor—I'm glad you're not a half professor, but a full professor—and the Stephen Jarislawsky chair in economic and cultural transformation, and from Drummond économique, Julie Biron, director, industrial development and talent strategy, and Philippe Proulx, lawyer, immigration law.

From Matthew House, we have Ms. Anne Woolger, founding director. We are very pleased to have her joining us by video conference.

Five minutes will be given to each group for opening remarks, after which we will proceed with rounds of questions.

Professor Fang, if I could start off with you for your five minutes, your time starts now.

• (1635)

**Tony Fang (Full Professor, Stephen Jarislawsky Chair in Economic and Cultural Transformation, As an Individual):**

Thank you, Madam Chair and honourable members, for the opportunity to present before the committee.

My name is Tony Fang, professor of economics and the Stephen Jarislawsky chair at Memorial University. I also have adjunct appointments with the University of Toronto and Toronto Metropolitan University. Over 20 years, my research has focused on immigration, employer harm behaviours and the systematic barriers facing newcomers.

My core message today is very clear and simple: One size does not fit all in immigration policy and programs. To illustrate, let me discuss five key points in which immigration is not currently working to the best of its ability. I will also provide five key recommendations to address those inefficiencies.

Number one is that regional floors are essential. I come from Newfoundland and Labrador. Using University of Toronto's macroeconomic model, called FOCUS, we simulated an increase of 10,000 immigrants per year to Atlantic Canada, matched with proportional national growth. By year 10, real GDP would rise by 4.2%, employment by 4.4% and GDP by 0.6%, with no increase in unemployment. Therefore, the positive impact is stronger for Atlantic Canada than the national average.

Newfoundland and Labrador is the oldest province in terms of average age, at about 48, with the national average being 41. It has the lowest immigration rate, at 2.8%, versus the national average of 23%; it also has a lower retention rate of 45%.

I urge the committee to recommend regional floors and minimum annual economic integration allocations for Atlantic Canada and to make the Atlantic immigration program more permanent, predictable and scalable.

Number two is that the over-education crisis is systematic, not accidental. New research from TMU corroborates my earlier study published in Canadian Public Policy in 2008 and shows an 11% immigrant unemployment rate, which is double that for Canadian-born people, at 5.6%. Only 44% of recent immigrants are working jobs matching their qualifications, versus 64% for Canadian-born people. The over-education rate is 26.7%, doubling that of Canadian-born people, which is 10.9%.

Our point of view is that this is not a skills problem. It's systematic discrimination and labour market inefficiency, including employer preferences for Canadian experience, which is illegal right now in Ontario, and devaluation of foreign credentials. This represents a severe underutilization of the immigrant human capital and a significant drag on Canada's productivity and economy.

Number three is that racialized newcomers face severe discrimination. Our IRCC-funded study in 2024 found that 45.7% of racialized newcomers face discrimination in employment, housing or daily life, compared to only 17.9% of non-racialized newcomers. Settlement workers also reported landlords refusing to rent to racialized families and employers hesitating to hire due to accent and foreign names.

We need mandatory anti-racism training for settlement staff, expanded service eligibility for international students and temporary foreign workers, and the provision of support with navigators for foreign credential recognition.

Number four is that employee engagement works but barriers remain. In our 2022 survey of more than 800 Atlantic Canadian employers, 81% of those who had hired immigrants agreed that the modern cultural workforce enhances creativity, innovation and productivity, and 90% would hire immigrants again. However, the number of employers—

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Tony Fang:** Okay, thank you.

The point is that we need a national employer engagement strategy.

Number five is to modify and not purely pursue a wage maximization model. This is only one factor. We also need other kinds

of programs—for example, low-wage pathways for the care and agriculture sectors—and we need to update models every two or three years.

To re-emphasize, I have five key recommendations: regional floors in immigration levels planning for Atlantic Canada, credential recognition reform for pan-Canadian credential assessment and skill recognition, anti-racism and EDI policies and programs in the settlement service sector, a national employer engagement strategy and modified wage-based selection.

Madam Chair, Canada's long-term competitiveness and prosperity rely on immigration programs that are equitable and allow immigrants to contribute in Canada, a nation of immigrants. A regionalized, employer-engaged, anti-racist and evidence-based immigration system will deliver order, fairness and effectiveness for every part of Canada, including Newfoundland and Labrador, especially for racialized newcomers.

Thank you.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Fang.

[*Translation*]

Who will speak on behalf of Drummond économique?

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

**Julie Biron (Director, Industrial Development and Talent Strategy, Drummond économique):** Good morning, committee members.

Thank you for meeting with us today and for giving us the opportunity to speak to you.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Julie Biron. I'm the director of talent strategy at Drummond économique. I'm joined by my colleague, Philippe Proulx, an immigration lawyer.

Before I get to the crux of our remarks, let me briefly explain our role.

Drummond économique is a parapublic organization that promotes economic development in the census metropolitan area—commonly known as the CMA—of Drummondville, a city located between Montreal and Quebec City.

For over 15 years, we've been actively supporting local businesses in their international recruitment efforts. We believe that economic immigration plays a key role in our community and our businesses.

Over the years, we've developed a unique model that gives businesses access to international recruitment initiatives. We provide legal support when it comes to their foreign workers. We also take care of the intake and integration of their workers. We've supported hundreds of businesses and helped recruit over 5,000 workers. Over 1,000 immigrant families now live in our region.

We're here today first to talk about the restrictions imposed on all CMAs in Canada, regardless of their size. We really want to reassure you that we understand the Government of Canada's desire to lower the proportion of temporary immigrants in the country. However, the uniform application of restrictions unduly penalizes small CMAs. The economic and demographic reality of these CMAs is radically different from the reality of major urban centres.

As a result, an employer located in Drummondville, a CMA with just over 100,000 residents and home to small towns and small rural municipalities, is subject to the same rules as a company located in downtown Toronto.

The first example that I would like to address concerns the recently announced temporary measures for the temporary foreign worker program. These measures came into effect on April 1, 2026. One of these measures seeks to give employers in rural areas the opportunity to retain the services of foreign workers who already hold a job. In concrete terms, this measure allows rural employers to maintain the current proportion of temporary foreign workers who hold low-wage positions, even if this proportion exceeds the allowable limit. Yet this measure applies only to employers located outside a CMA. This means that businesses located in rural towns with 1,000 to 5,000 residents can't benefit from the measure, simply because they fall within the administrative boundaries of the Drummondville CMA. This approach makes no sense and serves neither Service Canada's objectives nor the real needs of regional businesses.

We're currently receiving many reports from businesses whose operations are at risk owing to a lack of skilled workers. Our first recommendation is clear. The restrictions should apply only to CMAs that are major urban centres.

The second major issue that we wanted to discuss today concerns the freeze on labour market impact assessment, or LMIA, applications for low-wage positions in CMAs with unemployment rates above 6%.

Our goal today is to draw your attention to the reliability of the data used by Statistics Canada to establish unemployment rates, particularly for the Drummondville CMA. Since the recognition of Drummondville as a CMA, we've noticed a wide variation in the unemployment rate calculated by Statistics Canada. It's often completely at odds with our observations on the ground.

In April 2025, we were surprised to see that the unemployment rate in the CMA was 8%, according to Statistics Canada. This figure was even more surprising given that the unemployment rate for

the entire region was around 4.2%, according to Statistics Canada. Even Statistics Canada questioned this data.

Under these circumstances, we sought the advice of Frédéric Laurin, a researcher from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. He analyzed the data and gave us a report saying that the data wasn't accurate. The Institut de la statistique du Québec did the same.

Given the serious doubts regarding the accuracy of the unemployment rate reported for the Drummondville CMA, employers within its territory should be exempt from the refusal to process LMIA applications. We're asking Service Canada to suspend the freeze on LMIA applications for low-wage positions in the Drummondville CMA until Statistics Canada can confirm the validity of the data used to determine the unemployment rate. At the very least, manufacturing companies should be excluded from the restrictions.

• (1645)

The issue isn't just theoretical. Since 2024, businesses in our region have been reporting shift closures, loss of expertise, project delays and financial losses. The situation is already precarious right now. It will become critical without swift corrective action.

Thank you.

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

[English]

We'll now move online to Ms. Woolger from Matthew House.

Your five minutes start now.

**Anne Woolger (Founding Director, Matthew House, Toronto):** Hello. Thank you.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Anne Woolger, and I'm the founder of Matthew House Toronto, a group of homes that welcome, shelter and assist newly arrived refugee claimants. We have also served as a catalyst for the opening of more than half a dozen other refugee claimant shelters across Canada, some by the same name, including Matthew House Ottawa.

I've personally been working with refugee claimants since 1988—a long time—and have helped with the hands-on settlement of more than 4,000 refugee claimants. I've served on various local and national refugee advocacy committees, including the Canadian Council for Refugees.

In my nearly 40 years in the sector, I have witnessed a lot. My long service has given me a deep, first-hand understanding of the issues and, more importantly, the people involved in the shelter and support of refugee claimants.

I recognize that, for some, the conversation around investing in refugee claimants is fraught with negativity, particularly in light of today's housing challenges. Let me be clear: Refugee claimants are not the problem creating our housing shortage; a lack of vision is the problem.

Today, I want to share a good news story and assert that the arrival of refugee claimants in Canada is a profound asset to our nation, offering immense opportunities. Our challenge is simply recognizing their arrival as an opportunity, not as a threat or burden, and turning it to our national advantage.

Historically, refugee claimants have been the most misunderstood and scapegoated group, but the claimants I have served bring a wealth of employment, skills, education and entrepreneurial drive—gifts we should be eager to leverage. Their success stories are numerous, and I could spend an entire 24 hours telling stories of unaccompanied refugee youth who are now nurses and engineers—even nuclear engineers. They are not the exception; they are potential waiting to be unlocked.

While we as a nation are obligated as a signatory to the Geneva Convention to allow anyone seeking protection to remain here for a fair hearing, from my personal experience, unfortunately, the proactive provision of shelter for these vulnerable people has often been treated as a political hot potato, with federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions continually arguing over who pays. This jurisdictional friction is the single most persistent failure in our system.

This gap has successfully been filled by privately funded entities, such as Matthew House and many other small community-based shelters across Canada. Currently, there is a network of more than 35 homes and shelters across the country filling this gap with excellence while the jurisdictions argue about responsibility. These non-profit community-based organizations have developed decades of expertise and established systems that are far more cost-effective and have much better outcomes.

In recent years, we have been pleased to see that the federal government has stepped up to the plate and provided some direct support for shelter for the increased number of claimants arriving on our doorstep, through initiatives such as the interim housing assistance program, or IHAP. While this support is appreciated, these are often short-term programs. These models are very costly and are not long-term solutions. For any initiative like the IHAP to be truly successful, there needs to be a long-term commitment to a national vision. Last year, the Canadian Council for Refugees launched a campaign entitled “Asylum with Dignity”, which outlines many of the points I'm expressing here today.

The solution for successful refugee reception lies in leveraging the expertise of existing shelter networks and working together with all relevant jurisdictions. If all jurisdictions—federal, provincial and municipal—and civil society commit to working together on a clear shared strategy, we can create a world-class system that is not only cost-efficient but also a model....

● (1650)

The potential for great things is there. The only thing we lack is a collective vision and the commitment to implement it. Let us give

these newest Canadians the stable foundation they need to thrive and, in doing so, enrich the whole country.

Thank you.

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

[*Translation*]

Thank you all for your remarks.

We'll now start the first round of questions.

[*English*]

We will begin with Mr. Menegakis for six minutes.

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I give a big thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us today and for their testimonies.

I'd like to start with you, Professor Fang, if I may.

A recent labour report shows a significant decline in the hours worked by Canadian youth. To what extent do you think federal policy changes—and, more specifically, the decision to increase the work-hour limit for international students—correlate with a decrease in youth employment opportunities?

**Tony Fang:** It's a good question.

Our most recent study, using both census data and labour force survey data, shows that the reduction—due, of course, to the historical 2014 reform of the temporary foreign worker program—had some effects, with higher wages for similarly low-wage workers in Canada. Yes, there is some kind of substitution going on. This is not the case for temporary foreign workers, because they were working in sectors in which Canadian youth are usually not working—for example, fisheries, construction, agriculture and so on and so forth.

The study shows that, yes, to some extent, the reduction in international student hours has had some impact. It's a moderate effect, I would say. It's not highly significant for the employment and wages of someone who is otherwise low-wage, including Canadian youth, who have suffered quite significant unemployment in recent years. This is not only because of the immigration program, of course—we have to be clear on that—but also because of the Trump tariffs, for example, and economic cycle effects, among other things.

**Costas Menegakis:** Thank you, Mr. Fang. I have limited time, and I have more questions I'd like to ask.

Would you agree that the number of international students in Canada affects the wages of young workers?

**Tony Fang:** Although our study focused not only on international students but also on other low-wage workers in Canada, we found some substitution effects among Canadian low-wage workers, including Canadian youth. I have to make that clear.

**Costas Menegakis:** Would you agree that the number of international students in Canada affects Canadian youth unemployment?

**Tony Fang:** I think so, to a moderate extent, yes.

**Costas Menegakis:** Thank you.

I'd like to ask a question of you, Ms. Woolger.

You flagged a lack of affordable housing for new immigrants and asylum claimants in your testimony today. It is not uncommon for them to arrive at a homeless shelter and stay for longer than normal periods of time due to an inadequate amount of affordable housing, resulting in the numbers piling up. In fact, today, the asylum claim backlog has some 300,000 people, and housing costs have gone skyward, particularly in the greater metropolitan areas across the country.

How many weeks are asylum claimants having to stay in homeless shelters now?

• (1655)

**Anne Woolger:** I want to clarify that, of the number you named—300,000—the vast majority are not living in any form of shelter. The vast majority find places to live, often with friends, family or other people upon arrival. It's a much smaller percentage who ultimately need shelter.

I'm sorry. Now I've forgotten your question.

**Costas Menegakis:** My question was, how many weeks, on average, are asylum claimants having to stay in homeless shelters?

**Anne Woolger:** I would say that it is probably three to six months.

**Costas Menegakis:** Would you say—

**Anne Woolger:** Sometimes it can be three months, easily. It all depends on the type of shelter and the type of support in place.

**Costas Menegakis:** I understand.

Would you say housing affordability has significantly worsened since 2018 for asylum claimants?

**Anne Woolger:** Yes, it certainly has. It has for everyone, I believe.

**Costas Menegakis:** Okay.

**Anne Woolger:** I don't think we should point our fingers at them. This has been a problem for everyone.

**Costas Menegakis:** I'm not pointing fingers. It's just that we're doing a study, and we're trying to get some facts. That's why these questions are coming.

**Anne Woolger:** Sure.

**Costas Menegakis:** Please, it's not intended to have any purpose other than that.

Have you noticed a dramatic increase in the number of asylum claimants seeking your services?

**Anne Woolger:** No, I wouldn't say there's a dramatic increase.

**Costas Menegakis:** Since the government announced that it has allegedly stopped housing asylum claimants in hotels, have you noticed or heard of an uptick in asylum claimants coming to homeless shelters?

**Anne Woolger:** I haven't heard of a significant number, no.

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Costas Menegakis:** Thank you.

You mentioned the IHAP program. Recently we heard testimony at this committee about the government investing in municipalities by giving them money to purchase, for example, hotels to house asylum claimants and refugees.

Are you aware of those?

**Anne Woolger:** Yes, I am aware.

**Costas Menegakis:** In which municipalities are they?

**Anne Woolger:** I don't know if they've purchased buildings; maybe they have in some cases. I believe there is one in Peel, just outside of Toronto.

**Costas Menegakis:** There's one in Ottawa, the nation's capital, very close to where we're sitting right now. There was some \$40 million in investment given to the city to purchase...to house people, among other things.

**Anne Woolger:** I don't know if that actually took place. I think that was proposed.

**Costas Menegakis:** No, it did. There was testimony by the department itself, Ms. Woolger. They told us they actually did that, so it did happen.

**Anne Woolger:** Okay. I'm sorry. I wasn't aware.

**Costas Menegakis:** If they aren't in hotels and aren't in homeless shelters, it's your testimony that they are...where?

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Menegakis. That is the time. You'll have to get a response in the next round.

Next we have six minutes for Mr. Fragiskatos.

**Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today.

Professor Fang, let me begin with you. It's a very general question, but I think it's fundamental to the discussion and to this study. It's about the place of labour shortages and about the immigration system offering a potential answer to shortages that exist. I say "potential answer" because I don't think it is "the" answer; it's one of many.

What is your view, sir? You've offered some recommendations, but I want to have you share your general view on how we can address labour shortages through the immigration system.

**Tony Fang:** That's a very good question.

I'm trained as an economist. We believe in evidence-based practice and policy-making.

We did a national—and also an Atlantic Canada—survey of employers about labour skills shortages.

We reported during COVID times, for example, that 40% of the employers had hiring difficulties. The labour market has eased a little in recent years, but 30% of employers still reported this, especially SMEs—small and medium-sized employers. It was also reported that 80% to 90% of them are willing to hire immigrants and international students to fill labour skills shortages. That's pretty clear. The causal linkage is there. We also know there's been a skills mismatch, which is unfortunate.

At the high end—the highly skilled and the skilled trades—we couldn't find enough Canadian-born workers to fill these positions. Also, in the low-wage occupations—fishery, agricultural and all of those things—we don't have enough local workers willing to take those jobs. There's a pretty clear dichotomy in which immigrants and temporary foreign international students can fill a gap.

This is what we have studied, both during the COVID times of 2020 to 2022 and more recently. We just completed a national survey this year, and it is not as high. It was 40%, and now it's 30% that report hiring and labour skills shortages. The employer hiring attitude still remains very positive, at about 70% to 80%.

• (1700)

**Peter Fragiskatos:** You teach at Memorial University, I believe. Is that correct?

**Tony Fang:** Yes.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** You're very familiar, obviously, with the fish-processing sector in Atlantic Canada writ large. It's fundamental to the economy. That point is obvious.

What might be less obvious to the rest of the country is that shortages exist in the sector, as my colleagues from Atlantic Canada frequently remind me. There is no challenge with demand. The demand is quite plentiful, whether from the domestic market or for markets overseas, but they can't find workers.

Where do we source the workers? You talked about the temporary foreign worker program. Is this a potential answer to fill some of those gaps?

**Tony Fang:** We did interviews with both employers and newcomers across the provinces in Atlantic Canada. The simple fact of the matter is that without temporary foreign workers, those fish plants won't survive. They can't find enough locally.

I ask my students all the time, and nobody in my class would be willing to do a job in the fishery industry, even with many of them coming from fishing companies, villages and so on.

There's no other way around it. In these specific sectors—we're talking about fishery, agriculture, construction and health care—im-

migration certainly plays a key role. I wouldn't say it's the only solution, but it has a key role in solving labour skills shortages in those sectors.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you, Professor.

[*Translation*]

Welcome, Ms. Biron.

I actually have the same questions for you. Specifically, I would like to know your opinion on the issues regarding temporary foreign workers.

**Julie Biron:** Economic immigration in our region has made a real difference to businesses. It's important.

Our region is heavily involved in manufacturing. If we want our businesses to become competitive, we need to fill trade positions. The school system isn't enough to meet these needs. Some trades and businesses are moving towards automation. However, electrical mechanics are needed to operate the robots and machines, for example. The pool isn't large enough.

What do we do? Where do we get these people? The solution has largely been economic immigration and the temporary foreign worker program.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** So is a policy that talks about cancelling this program a responsible move?

**Julie Biron:** Perhaps Mr. Proulx wants to answer that question.

**Philippe Proulx (Lawyer, Immigration Law, Drummond économique):** Are you talking about the cancellation of the temporary foreign worker program?

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Yes.

**Philippe Proulx:** At this stage, we don't consider this a responsible move.

Of course, we know that the long-term solution lies in upgrading the training available for trades facing labour shortages, as well as in robotization and automation. The businesses in our region are investing heavily in this area. However, these are long-term solutions.

In the short term, we need strong economic immigration to bridge the gap.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you for that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fragiskatos.

Thank you, Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Champoux now has the floor for six minutes.

**Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. Fragiskatos, for bringing up the manufacturing sector and its significance for the Drummondville region and the CMA, as we must now get used to calling it.

You spoke about the economic fabric of our region. This economic fabric can also be found in other regions, in other forms, in Quebec.

Do you think that the measures implemented by the federal government, as well as by the other levels of government—although I'm talking specifically about the federal government measures—are well suited to the reality of regions such as ours?

**Julie Biron:** A CMA isn't a major city. I think that this is really where the confusion lies. A CMA such as Drummondville, which has 100,000 residents, also includes 15 or 16 small municipalities with populations ranging from 1,000 to 5,000. Unfortunately, the businesses located in these municipalities don't have access to the same benefits as a neighbouring municipality located outside a CMA. We're asking you to look at this aspect.

We understand that major urban centres face challenges related to immigration. However, all the businesses in all regions of the country that need these employees—since they play a key role in their industries—must have the opportunity to retain them and to access the other measures available to all municipalities.

• (1705)

**Martin Champoux:** At Drummond économique, you work closely with local businesses. As we said earlier, mainly manufacturing companies turn to you and to the temporary foreign worker program as a result of labour shortages in specific sectors.

Moreover, exemptions have been granted to various sectors. The health care and agri-food sectors come to mind. However, it seems that regional characteristics haven't been taken into account. In the case of Drummond, we're talking about the manufacturing sector. We have urgent needs compounded by a lack of training. As a result, we often end up in situations where businesses are forced to close divisions or turn down contracts or are unable to grow as they would like, as any entrepreneur would want to.

I would like to hear your opinion on the lack of consideration for details and regional characteristics, such as our current situation resulting from the rules implemented with no regard for our most affected sectors back home in Drummondville.

Mr. Proulx, I'll let you respond.

**Philippe Proulx:** Again, we understand the government's objectives. We understand the desire to reduce temporary immigration. All we ask is for a nuanced and strategic approach that takes into account the regional realities of Canada's different regions.

For example, in a region such as Drummondville, or for Quebec in general, the manufacturing sector is a strategic factor. We believe that this sector should remain exempt from the recent restrictions announced since fall 2024. In particular, we believe that this sector should benefit from a ratio higher than 10% of temporary foreign workers in low-wage positions. This sector should also remain exempt from suspensions of LMIA applications on the basis of unemployment rates, for instance.

**Martin Champoux:** It's indeed 10%.

There are new rules based on market fluctuations. The unemployment rate is one factor, of course.

Have you seen any difference in recent months in the way that applications are processed? I'm talking about the latest measures implemented, which seem to tighten up certain criteria. We understand the objective, as you said. Do you feel that these measures have created new hurdles in the overall process? Do you feel that the government agencies are there to help you renew permits when you can do so?

**Philippe Proulx:** At Drummond économique, we process a large volume of files. This helps us to identify certain trends, for example at Service Canada. In recent months, we've noticed a previously unheard of level of red tape taking hold. Service Canada officers are asking more and more additional questions. For example, companies with good compliance records under the program may be asked over one hundred additional questions.

**Martin Champoux:** These aren't cases that pose a problem or raise suspicions.

**Philippe Proulx:** Not at all.

**Martin Champoux:** What type of questions are they asking? On the surface, are these questions relevant, unnecessary or completely outlandish?

**Philippe Proulx:** It's a combination of all these things. We understand that the officers have a job to do. We also understand that they want to ensure compliance with the program. In some cases, this poses a problem. For example, we're asked to describe a welder's day in detail or what their week will look like. These are time-consuming questions in an already cumbersome process.

**Martin Champoux:** I don't want to put you on the spot. However, when you receive one hundred additional questions and you're given two working days to answer them, do you get the impression that this amounts to a set-up and a deliberate attempt to discourage businesses from pursuing the process?

• (1710)

**Philippe Proulx:** We could come to this conclusion.

**Martin Champoux:** You don't necessarily have to respond. It can also be a statement on my part that doesn't require you to get involved.

**Julie Biron:** These demands are unreasonable. We're here today to speak on behalf of our businesses. The businesses are telling us this. They need help. They need support from their government. They're currently facing so many economic challenges as a result of tariffs and other issues. Does their own government need to impose additional burdens on them concerning their workers who are already on site and getting the job done?

**Martin Champoux:** Thank you.

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

Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

This brings us to the end of the first round of questions.

We'll now begin the second round of questions. Each speaker will have five minutes.

[*English*]

We will start with Mr. Fred Davies. You have five minutes.

**Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Professor Fang, your work has generally been focused on the Maritimes. Is this a fair assessment?

**Tony Fang:** I do both.

**Fred Davies:** In your experience in the Maritimes region.... Over the last number of years, with the number of students who have been coming in, there have been pressures on our health care system and housing. Have you witnessed any of those socio-economic issues related to students who are coming in to the east coast?

**Tony Fang:** The increase in the percentage is dramatic, but the total number as a percentage of the population is still relatively small. Those kinds of issues, such as housing and health care, are not recent. They've been a problem for a long period of time.

To some extent, the demand from international students has increased, but there are also issues about eligibility, among other things. Some provinces may not give international students equal access to the health care system.

We need more convincing evidence to show the cause or impact, but my observations, both in Newfoundland and in Atlantic Canada, are that the impact international students have on the housing sector and health care is not significant.

**Fred Davies:** Thank you.

I'm going to switch gears for a second.

How many post-secondary institutions in the region are accepting international students? I want to get through to the issue of the new letter of acceptance, which has been plaguing many of the post-secondary institutions. Have you had issues with some learning institutions that have, perhaps, been bringing in a disproportionate number of students in relation to the effectiveness of the programs?

**Tony Fang:** It's a good question.

I think the issue you raised applies more to such provinces as Ontario, Quebec, B.C. and so on. They have a large number of private colleges and schools, which have accepted a lot of international students in recent years. In Atlantic Canada, we don't have very many private colleges and universities, so most colleges and universities are publicly funded. I don't think this is a big issue for Atlantic Canada in terms of the legitimate international students who pursue post-secondary education.

International students also create a lot of jobs through consumption and investment. Others pay high tuition to the universities. In many ways, we have shown that the positive effects of international

students on the regional economy are much greater. They're 2:1 in terms of the costs we put into the system.

**Fred Davies:** I'm sorry. Can you expand on that 2:1? What do you mean by that?

**Tony Fang:** This is based on the examination...it was not done by me, but by my colleagues. Professor Wade Locke, Scott Lynch and others found out and published a report on the returns from post-secondary education for the regional economy.

There's also a study, if you're interested, by the association for colleges and universities in Atlantic Canada. It published similar research detailing all the socio-economic and cultural benefits of having international students in the region.

• (1715)

**Fred Davies:** Mr. Proulx, from a legal standpoint, you're familiar with the issues at IRCC with the number of non-follow-ups with students who were deemed to be fraudulent applicants.

Would you agree that, as soon as an application is flagged as potentially fraudulent, IRCC has the authority to refuse a student outright?

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, we've run out of time, Mr. Davies. I know you got started, but he'll have to respond in your next round, if that's okay.

Next, we have Mr. Sameer Zuberi for five minutes. Please go ahead, Mr. Zuberi.

**Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to give a shout-out to my youth council. They're joining us today, watching all of us, from all parties, engaging with the witnesses.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank all the witnesses for joining us today.

I'll start with Ms. Woolger.

[*English*]

I really appreciated your contribution.

First of all, I want to ask this: In the first weeks and months when asylum seekers come to Canada, what have you found are the critical supports those asylum seekers need in order to be fully on their feet and contribute to Canadian society in a meaningful way? What have you observed in your career thus far?

**Anne Woolger:** Thus far, I have observed that the first thing they need is safe shelter. By that, I mean a place in which they truly feel safe. Sometimes, there are places in which they don't feel safe. After safe shelter, it's support with all of their initial settlement needs. This includes going through all the processes to make a refugee claim or prepare for their refugee hearing.

Working through all those things, we often give them an orientation about the whole refugee process and the status determination system so that they understand them. There's then an orientation on life in Canada, connecting them with legal aid and local English classes, if English is what they need. They have to do their immigration medicals and such things. When they already know English, many of them are very keen to find employment, so we help them find employment.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I've engaged with a number of different refugees who have migrated to Canada and sought safety here. They are safe here after the very difficult conditions they fled from in other countries, be they conflict or the potential threat of being deported to great oppression.

I've noticed that there are two different stories. I've seen the one you just said, which is that supports are given by the federal government to people who land here, and within one year, they end up landing on their feet, getting jobs and contributing to society. I've also seen another story, in which supports aren't given. People are dazed and confused, unable to land on their feet. Oftentimes, they say, "I don't know how I can integrate here. I might need to go back to a place that is not as safe."

Have you seen those two stories in your work experience?

**Anne Woolger:** Yes. Rarely have I seen them thinking of literally returning, but in fact, this is one of the reasons I founded Matthew House. I saw a huge shortage of decent and appropriate shelters and services geared specifically toward the needs of refugee claimants and asylum seekers. Because of this, the long-term success rate....

Refugee claimants are incredibly resourceful, and they will ultimately thrive, but it's a lot longer before that might happen. Landing in a place that assists is helpful.

**Sameer Zuberi:** I'll share that I've seen these two stories. The latter story is about Gazan refugees. Canada has welcomed a number who have family here and have gone through intense security checks, but they are here. They say it's so hard that they are thinking about going back to Egypt, to very different circumstances from Canada's, despite the fact that we provided them refuge here from the war in Gaza.

• (1720)

[Translation]

I want to use the remaining 45 or 50 seconds to ask Ms. Biron and Mr. Proulx a few questions about the retention of international talent in small communities.

Can you tell us a bit about this?

**Philippe Proulx:** The challenge lies in retaining the immigrants who choose to settle in our region. On that note, one of the main issues stems from the fact that, since IRCC introduced measures in early 2025, it has become increasingly difficult for the spouses accompanying temporary foreign workers to renew their open work permits. As a result, we're losing people who integrated, who speak French, who work in skilled occupations affected by labour shortages and who chose to settle in our region. We're losing them simply because their spouses can't renew their open work permits. It's a major retention problem.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Proulx.

Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

Mr. Deschênes, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Bloc Québécois seeks a balanced approach to temporary immigration. We know that there was no cap in recent years. In 2025, 673,000 temporary residents were admitted. Now, the government wants to lower that number to 370,000 by 2027.

We advocate for an approach that takes regional realities into account. However, when we listen to you, we realize that Drummond is lumped together with Saguenay, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke, but also with Montreal and Toronto. A posting rule was enforced at the last minute: You must post job openings for eight weeks before you can proceed with a renewal. We're also learning that the unemployment rate used in your region appears to be unreliable.

Ms. Biron, what is the impact on the ground for the businesses you represent?

**Julie Biron:** All the companies are telling us the same thing: They have a skilled worker who has been here for quite some time, is trained, speaks French, is happy, the companies are happy, everything is going well but, unfortunately, due to certain restrictions imposed on them, they have to terminate this worker's employment. This is a major issue.

From an economic standpoint, we're hearing that these companies are considering relocating, cutting shifts and cancelling projects. That's really what's happening, and we'll certainly feel the effects in the coming years.

**Alexis Deschênes:** Are those effects beginning to be felt?

**Julie Biron:** Yes, absolutely. We know of companies that reluctantly have to cut shifts. That leads to a drop in productivity. They're even considering investing in sister plants located elsewhere, even outside the country. We really need to support our manufacturing companies. The manufacturing sector is the heart of the economy. Here in particular, there are twice as many industrial jobs compared to the provincial average. So it's pretty obvious.

**Alexis Deschênes:** Why shouldn't a region like Drummond be lumped in with Montreal or Toronto?

**Philippe Proulx:** Mainly because the demographic and economic realities aren't the same at all. The pressure on housing and public services isn't the same, and neither are the needs. We are facing severe labour shortages because we have difficulty attracting local workers to the regions. People are moving from one region to another to come here. We also have issues related to certain professions that are largely the same elsewhere in the province and in parts of the country. We lack welders, machinists and electrical mechanics.

So, in our view, it makes no sense for us to be subject to the same measures as those applied to CMAs with several million people, since these are completely different contexts.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Proulx.

Thank you, Mr. Deschênes.

[English]

We have only six minutes left. I'm going to give three minutes to the Conservatives and three minutes to the Liberals.

Mr. Ho, you have three minutes.

**Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Professor Fang, I'm going to be really quick.

Your research has found that when access to low-skilled temporary foreign workers was restricted, wages in those occupations that are intensive for temporary foreign workers rose by about 3% to 5%. Does this not suggest that, at least in some sectors, this program has been suppressing wage growth for domestic workers?

• (1725)

**Tony Fang:** As I said earlier, yes. This is based on 2014. We don't have the data yet for the recent changes since last year. There is some moderate positive effect on wages on otherwise low-wage workers in Canada already. Yes, to answer your question based on the evidence.

**Vincent Ho:** There is some wage suppression, then.

We have seen the number of temporary foreign worker permits issued explode over the last few years under the Liberal government. Would it be fair to say that if an employer can rely on a stream of temporary labour, especially in lower-wage sectors, the pressures to raise wages, improve work schedules or invest in training are disincentivized for employers?

**Tony Fang:** Yes. I would say that, really, those kinds of one-size-fits-all policies don't work, as my colleagues also mentioned, and it depends on which sector you're talking about. In agriculture, fisheries and the care economy, they rely on temporary workers quite significantly.

The other thing it depends on is the region. If you look at urban centres, you have all this housing, transportation, health care and all the issues, but in the smaller rural communities you don't have a large population, and I don't think you have similar kinds of issues. Really, we need to address the regional dichotomy in terms of immigration policy and impacts.

**Vincent Ho:** Yes.

We've seen the Liberals lose control of temporary worker streams in recent years. You mentioned earlier that temporary residents have had a "substitution" effect on employing Canadians. Youth unemployment is now 14% to 15%, in this last year since the Prime Minister took office.

At what point does the temporary foreign worker program, which is supposed to address genuine shortages, begin to function instead as a tool for preserving a dependency on a low-wage business model?

**Tony Fang:** Again, we have to be very careful when we talk about different streams of residents. For example, if you look at youth employment, it's not temporary foreign workers who are replacing local youth in jobs, because they're not working in these industries—for example, agriculture and fisheries. You ask them, and no one is working there—

**Vincent Ho:** There are many working at, say, Tim Hortons in major urban centres.

**Tony Fang:** Yes. It really depends on how they were brought into the country in the first place. It's really the intention to fill skilled labour shortages. Again, we need evidence to say.... As you know, people are mobile—

**Vincent Ho:** It's 15% unemployment, and it's even higher in the GTA. Then there are Tim Hortons and other retail sectors that rely on temporary foreign workers—

**Tony Fang:** Do they have data on whether all of them are temporary foreign workers and not international students? We know that there are a lot of international students working in those kinds of—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Fang.

Thank you, Mr. Ho.

Now we have three minutes for Ms. Zahid, please.

**Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I will share my time with Ms. Sodhi.

My first question is for Mr. Fang.

Can you please share your view on the federal government's budget 2025 commitment to convert the status of the 33,000 workers already living and working in the country to a PR status, a permanent status, primarily in rural areas, so that it will help support an economy such as Newfoundland's?

**Tony Fang:** It's a very good question.

My understanding is that the federal government tried to observe the temporary residents already in the country, and I think it's a move in the right direction to do that. It's good for it to be targeted. I mentioned strategic sectors—agriculture, construction, health care, fisheries and so on—and rural and remote areas, because they have recorded the most severe skilled labour shortages and population declines. It fits into the recommendations I gave earlier: A one-size-fits-all policy doesn't work.

The issue is that we need more transparency. It's lacking criteria. I don't think they're very clear at the moment. The number looks reasonable, at 33,000, but if you look at the percentage of the 33,000 in the total amount of immigrants or temporary foreign workers, it's still relatively small.

**Salma Zahid:** I will turn to Ms. Sodhi.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Sodhi.

**Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question is for Mr. Proulx.

I was wondering if you're able to tell us what trends you have personally seen when it comes to immigration and entrepreneurship. Also, what recommendations might you have for the committee to ensure the immigration system supports the work you're doing in fostering entrepreneurship?

[*Translation*]

**Philippe Proulx:** As I mentioned earlier, one of the trends we're seeing is that it's becoming increasingly difficult to obtain LMIA approvals. The administrative process, which is already robust, has become much more complex recently. In particular, processing times are lengthening for no apparent reason. Furthermore, it's hard to get answers.

As I mentioned, even employers with good compliance records—employers with well-documented labour needs—are being questioned. A lot of questions are being asked. In this regard, the agents' work can be so intensive that businesses feel like they're doing something illegal.

There are also Service Canada agents who contact clients directly, even when those clients have chosen to be represented. These agents demand answers as quickly as possible or refuse to accept submissions from business representatives.

There have also been changes introduced without notice, such as the eight-week posting period that was announced recently overnight.

Many administrative issues could be resolved if there were a little more predictability and a comprehensive approach tailored to the needs of businesses.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Proulx.

[*English*]

Thank you, Ms. Sodhi.

[*Translation*]

That concludes our hearing with the first panel of witnesses for today.

[*English*]

I want to thank the witnesses for their time.

[*Translation*]

We'll take a five-minute break so that the witnesses can leave the room. We'll be back with the second group of witnesses.

[*English*]

Thanks so much.

• (1730)

(Pause)

• (1735)

**The Chair:** Welcome back to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and the second panel of today's meeting.

I will make a few comments for the benefit of our new witnesses.

We do have someone joining us online, so I want to mention, as a reminder, that at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation, either English or French. For those in the room, of course, you can use your earpiece and select the desired channel.

I will let everyone know when you have one minute left. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. I remind you that all comments should be made through the chair.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses for the second panel.

We have Stéfanie Morris, who is a lawyer. Welcome.

We have Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou, who is a professor and the Canada excellence research chair in migration and integration at the Toronto Metropolitan University. Welcome.

We have Renze Nauta, who is a program director for work and economics at Cardus. Welcome to you as well.

Each one of you will have five minutes for opening remarks, and then we will begin with our rounds of questions.

We will begin with Ms. Morris for five minutes.

**Stéfanie Morris (Lawyer, As an Individual):** Thank you for the invitation to appear today.

My name is Stéfanie Morris. I'm an immigration and refugee lawyer with Community Legal Services of Ottawa, which is a legal clinic aimed at addressing access to justice issues for low-income residents. I appear today in my individual capacity to discuss major issues faced by refugees waiting to be reunited with their families.

In the fall of 2017, I was part of a research team that conducted interviews with refugees resettled by the Canadian government and by sponsor groups in the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis. One of our key findings was that resettled refugees identified separation from family members, including extended family members, as a primary driver of poor physical and mental health, financial instability and stalled social integration. Conversely, reunification is a powerful tool to foster refugee self-sufficiency.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act states that one of its primary objectives is this:

to support the self-sufficiency and the social and economic well-being of refugees by facilitating reunification with their family members in Canada

Unfortunately, Canada's current immigration system increasingly prioritizes economic immigration, sometimes seemingly at the expense of its family reunification objectives. Key examples of this include that processing times exceed three years for reuniting protected persons with their dependent family members and that programs often used to reunite family members are currently closed, including the groups of five and community sponsorship streams for the private sponsorship of refugees program, and have been since November 2024.

I'll start by addressing family reunification for protected persons in Canada.

When a person obtains status as a protected person in Canada, they are entitled to apply for permanent residence and include their dependent family members in their application. In recent years, protected persons have faced average processing times exceeding two years, simply to be granted permanent residence themselves. Then they wait, sometimes an additional two or more years, for their spouse and/or children to join them in Canada.

The delays in family reunification are not merely about processing capacity. They are a direct consequence of quotas set in Canada's immigration levels plan. In the most recent levels plan, the government announced permanent resident targets of only 20,000 spaces annually for protected persons and their dependents, despite an existing backlog of what I calculate to be more than 250,000 applicants. The government is effectively planning for these families to remain separated for years by setting quotas far below the actual number of applicants.

I echo the call of civil society organizations for protected persons to be removed from the quotas set in the immigration levels plan and to be granted automatic permanent residence as soon as they become protected persons. This would eliminate redundant applications and would fulfill the minister's mandate to prioritize family reunification. The dependents of protected persons should also be removed from these quotas and should be issued temporary resident permits so that they can come to Canada while they await the processing of their PR applications.

I also want to address family reunification for privately sponsored refugees in Canada. Private sponsorship is a time-honoured Canadian tradition in which communities pull together to provide refugees with full financial and emotional support during their first 12 months in Canada. In November 2024, IRCC suddenly announced a pause on community sponsorship, which has been ex-

tended until the end of 2026. Many fear the closure will be further extended.

In addition, the government has repeatedly decreased quotas under the private sponsorship category. Just three years ago, Canada committed to resettling 28,000 privately sponsored refugees in 2026, this year. The newest quota has been reduced to 16,000 for this year, representing a 42% decrease in privately sponsored refugees in 2026.

The demand for private sponsorships shows that Canadians are willing and able to welcome refugees by covering the full costs and by providing full support during refugees' first year in Canada. Why reduce quotas for a program whose costs are voluntarily borne by Canadians?

Outside of exceptional moments of crisis and public interest, the private sponsorship program is often used as a family reunification tool. It is often the only way for resettled refugees to reunite with their extended family members, who they long to be with.

● (1740)

I ask that family reunification be prioritized in your study of the immigration system. Prolonged family separation has long-term economic and social implications for our country and our communities. I would be happy to speak further about my research on this topic.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Ms. Morris.

Next, we go online to Professor Triandafyllidou for five minutes.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou (Professor, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you very much for having me. My name is Anna Triandafyllidou. I hold the Canada excellence research chair in migration and integration at Toronto Metropolitan University, and I myself am an immigrant to Canada.

I want to speak today less about our selection system in Canada and more about our talent utilization system.

Canada is the most educated country in the world, thanks to immigration. We are the country with the highest percentage of people who have college or university, or higher education, in the OECD, so I take it that it's probably the highest in the world. However, we know that immigrants are overqualified by 35%. They do a job that requires fewer qualifications than they have, compared with about 18% of Canadian-born people. It's double the rate.

Time and again, when we look at studies by colleagues and economists who crunch the numbers—I'm a sociologist, so I don't crunch the numbers that much—we see that the economic and social outcomes of new permanent residents improve through the years. The express entry system is proving to be working.

We know that, right now, immigrant men meet their Canadian-born peers four years after landing, in terms of employment rates and earning outcomes. Immigrant women improve, but they don't meet those of Canadian-born women. Even four or five years after landing, they remain penalized. However, when we look at college-educated men and women—this also holds for university-educated men and women—we see that immigrant men do less well than their Canadian-born peers. Even after five years, a 15% gap remains. Immigrant women who are college-educated start with a big gap at about 40% and never catch up with Canadian-born women.

Long story short, our system has improved. We're doing much better. We're bringing in people who are highly educated; they have talent and resources, and they help build our communities and our economy. However, we have a gender problem. Immigrant women are penalized, whether they're university-educated or college-educated, so we need to look at our population policy in terms of child care support, family support, and pre- and post-school-time support.

My second point is about broader skills underutilization. We have a bit of an AI power tool hype in human resources these days. Of course, in order to make up for their lack of familiarity with the system, newcomers to Canada use AI-powered tools to write résumés and prepare for interviews. Then our businesses use AI-powered tools to read those résumés and to longlist or shortlist candidates. It seems as though we're going full circle in our excitement over AI, but we have a problem recognizing skills and professional experience.

So far, our settlement services focus on the migrant. We tell the migrant, “You have to improve yourself. You have to learn better English or French. You have to acquire a Canadian credential. You have to acquire Canadian experience.” I want to say that we need to focus more on the system. What makes their skills and talent not visible? Part of the issue is with employers. We don't recognize the reality for employers. We heard about this in the previous panel. There are small employers and big employers. They have very different needs and capacities. There are employers in big cities like Toronto and the smaller places like Drummondville that we've heard about. We need to work with them more because, for them, hiring is risk management. They often don't go for the best person; they go for the least risky person. This is very important. We need our settlement services to work with employers and to put AI-powered tools to work for this purpose—to help us prove and move the skills and experience of our newcomers.

We know that more than 50% of new permanent residents were temporary residents in Canada and that those who had higher earnings before landing will do much better in the labour market. We need to work on job offers, internship offers and entrepreneurship opportunities. We have a silver tsunami on Canadian farms—we could have migrants buying those farms and investing in them.

• (1750)

I think we need to work more in this field as a priority for building a better and stronger Canada.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Professor Triandafyllidou.

Lastly, we have Mr. Nauta for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Renze Nauta (Program Director, Work and Economics, Cardus):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My name is Renze Nauta, and I am representing Cardus, a public policy think tank where I run a research program on work and economics.

Cardus recently completed a research study on the integration of refugees into Canadian society.

[*English*]

Canada, as you know, has two main streams for refugee resettlement. The first is the privately sponsored refugee program, in which refugees are integrated mainly by Canadian civil society. In this stream, Canadian families, churches and diaspora communities are responsible for raising funds and providing the necessary assistance to newcomers to help them integrate.

The second involves government-assisted refugees, who are integrated with the help of settlement agencies funded by the Government of Canada.

Cardus's study focused on the large body of research showing that privately sponsored refugees tend to have better economic outcomes than government-assisted refugees. For example, a Statistics Canada survey of Syrian refugees to Canada from 2016 found that more than half of those sponsored by civil society had found employment within one year of their arrival. This is compared to under 10% of those assisted by government-funded settlement agencies.

Privately sponsored refugees also have higher incomes on average than government-assisted refugees. These trends persist in the long run, even when you control for factors such as education level, language skills and vulnerability, suggesting that refugees sponsored by civil society have a real advantage in integrating.

[*Translation*]

Researchers have offered several explanations for why privately sponsored refugees have this advantage. For one, they receive personalized assistance by people close to them. They also have access to more social capital that their sponsors lend them. They also have a built-in community that leads to welcoming and genuine friendships. There is also some suggestion that private sponsors tend to prioritize employment over other forms of integration.

[*English*]

I believe that these are all plausible explanations, but one deserves greater attention. This is the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is a cornerstone principle of social organization; it says that actions and decision-making should be taken by the level of authority that is closest to an issue and competent to deal with it.

[*Translation*]

It is a principle that supports federalism and strong provinces and municipalities. But it emphasizes even more the role of civil-society institutions between the individual and the state.

[*English*]

It recognizes that people and institutions closer to an issue usually have better information about the individual circumstances and can provide personalized supports and solutions.

However, even more fundamentally, subsidiarity is about giving the space to people to care for each other. This is what our research uncovered. In surveys, government-assisted refugees described relationships with settlement workers as friendly, but they were not friends. By contrast, refugees and their civil society sponsors tended to use the language of family, even love.

The thick bonds formed between refugees and sponsors lead to relationships of care. This in turn leads to more personalized assistance and a stronger community to welcome the newcomers. All of this helps to produce better economic outcomes for the refugee and, ultimately, a stronger confidence on the part of the Canadian public in our immigration system's ability to accommodate them.

Canada will always need a government-assisted refugee stream, but government should do all it can to celebrate the distinctively Canadian option of private sponsorship and should encourage the participation of civil society.

Unfortunately, the government has announced steeper cuts to the privately sponsored refugee program than the government-assisted refugee program. This means that the proportion of those sponsored by civil society will decline. I believe that this is a mistake and that we should return to a mix with stronger participation of civil society.

In addition, the principle of subsidiarity is a useful guide for decision-making on all matters of public policy and should be applied to other aspects of this study as well. Our research report includes a

series of questions to guide policy-makers in their application of subsidiarity to these and other public policy questions. I recommend those questions to you in this study.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thanks to everyone for their opening remarks. That was excellent. We are now going to begin with our first round of questions, which is for six minutes.

We're going to start off with Mr. Menegakis for six minutes.

• (1755)

**Costas Menegakis:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for your excellent testimony today. I'm delighted to see Prof. Triandafyllidou here with us. She is a prominent academic from the great Greek community of Toronto. I'm delighted to see you here.

Mr. Nauta, welcome back to the Hill, sir. I'm going to start with you today.

This is something you wrote, sir: "Many in the over-credentialed working class are recent immigrants, whose professional credentials we don't accept."

Do you think speeding up the processing of transferable credentials for high-demand fields, such as nursing, would be beneficial?

**Renze Nauta:** The short answer is absolutely. I can refer to another paper I wrote on the over-credentialed working class. The paper studied the phenomenon of a large number of Canadians who are in the working class, which we defined as people who are in jobs that don't require a university or college diploma. We found that more than half of them actually have a college diploma and almost 20% have a university degree. Not surprisingly, many of them, but not all, are recent immigrants. In fact, some are long-standing immigrants to Canada as well.

Our report highlighted a very significant opportunity cost to both the Canadian economy and the immigrants themselves. There's an inability for them, because of structures that exist here, to exercise their trade. I absolutely believe it is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed.

**Costas Menegakis:** In your opinion, what would be the greatest obstacle for internationally trained immigrants practising in their field in Canada?

**Renze Nauta:** We identified foreign credential recognition. This is a complicated topic, certainly, but part of the solution has to be a greater understanding on the part of regulators in Canada of what the education systems in other parts of the world are.

More than anything, political will is necessary to break through some of the differences in credential recognition across the country. There are so many different regimes in Canada. That's a factor of our being a federation, and there are occasionally legitimate reasons for this, but I think we also have to recognize that some of those differences are causing a national problem for accommodating and integrating these recent immigrants to Canada.

**Costas Menegakis:** Do you have an estimate of how much economic potential Canada is losing out on by keeping highly educated, skilled immigrants out of the fields they studied?

**Renze Nauta:** I don't have a specific number. I wish I had brought the report to this committee. If I recall correctly, approximately 74% of immigrants to Canada—or perhaps recent immigrants to Canada—who are members of the working class are over-credentialed for the work they're doing. You have to think about what kind of work those people could be doing if they could apply their education to the Canadian marketplace. I'm not sure of the exact number, but the figure I would leave you with is that 74% of the immigrant working class in Canada is over-credentialed.

**Costas Menegakis:** Wow. I mean, that's an astounding number in itself, 74%.

What specific barriers do you see in the Red Seal certification process that prevent experienced foreign tradespeople from entering the workforce quickly?

**Renze Nauta:** I'd like to focus perhaps on the solution, which is that we need faster processing and systems in place to accommodate the difficulty for immigrants with skilled trades so that they can come to Canada and perform those duties. I think it's a matter of political will to establish timelines and to establish direction to certain regulatory bodies to ensure that this gets done.

• (1800)

**Costas Menegakis:** Ms. Morris, Liberal Bill C-12 specifically redirected thousands of applications into the pre-removal risk assessment stream. Given your observation that PRRA decisions frequently contain legal errors, what is the likelihood that we direct thousands of claimants to this stream who simply shift the asylum backlog from the IRB to an already overwhelmed Federal Court system?

**Stéfanie Morris:** Thank you for the question. Yes, I think this is something many lawyers and legal advocates are warning about—that Bill C-12 is likely to switch the backlog from the Immigration and Refugee Board to the IRCC and eventually to the Federal Court, where many of these decisions are litigated. I agree that it's likely to create a backlog in another part of the government, which is not necessarily filled with public servants who are trained to make these decisions.

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

Thank you, Mr. Menegakis. I wanted to call you “Mr. Fragiskatos”, but it's Menegakis.

**Costas Menegakis:** That's okay.

He's my brother from another mother.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** We have a Greek contingent here today.

Next, we have six minutes for Ms. Zahid.

**Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to all the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

My questions are for Dr. Triandafyllidou.

You have studied migration narratives across different countries. How important is it for governments to demonstrate that immigration is being managed in a deliberate and evidence-based way, in order to counter the misinformation and polarization happening? Can you please point to some specific examples of how other jurisdictions have handled immigration policy that Canada can look to as success stories?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I'm afraid that we are the success story.

I spent over 25 years of my career in Europe. I don't think we have a healthy debate there, in most countries—both old and new immigration hosts—in terms of what the needs of the economy and society are, what our immigrants bring and how we should organize and regulate migration and integration. Canada has been the gold standard, and I'm worried we might be losing that.

I had one more point in my comments that I didn't get to.

I'm concerned that a lot of criticism of the government's immigration policy has reflected on immigrants. The way it has been reported in our country, even in the mainstream media.... They talk negatively about the policy so that, at the end of the day, the average citizen or average permanent resident is thinking immigrants are the problem. We have forgotten how much immigrants did during the pandemic to keep our hospitals, food processing chains and basic services going.

There are even some studies that say, “Oh, we've had too much of an influx from South Asia, in terms of study permit holders. That's a problem.” I don't think it's a problem. The problem is the whole thing with international education and how international students have been subsidizing our own kids' education. Also, as mentioned in the previous panel, this fuels gaps in employment, in which employers don't want to improve wages and conditions.

**Salma Zahid:** Thanks for indicating the contributions of immigrants.

Your research emphasizes that migration is a long-term, structured reality, rather than a crisis.

In this context, what specific policy choices can government make to strengthen public trust in the immigration system while maintaining high levels of immigration, particularly when public perception may not align with economic needs? That's the problem with public trust right now.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I think we need to tell those stories. In Canada, there are many stories of people who came here as permanent residents or temporary permit holders for study or work and transitioned to being citizens or permanent residents. They are building our businesses and communities. We need to tell those stories in terms of both numbers and real stories people can relate to.

I'm concerned that we've been focusing on smaller problems, rather than seeing the bigger picture. We know we're an aging society. We know 40% of our medical and paramedical personnel are non-Canadian-born. We even know we are short on family doctors. There are many family doctors who cannot practise because their credentials are not recognized. We need to tell those stories.

There is an additional complication, these days: social media. People always read the newspaper they agree with and watch the TV channel they agree with. Right now, we have the algorithm proposing, to each of us, which people we agree with. This is a very important issue that risks polarizing debate.

I also want to comment on the erroneous connection between affordable housing and immigration. Housing prices started rising in 2019 and 2020, when we had the lowest immigration. Then they kept rising. There are other dynamics there. It seems to be a pure, mathematical equation—"We have so many people, and we have so many houses." That is very simplistic, and economists tell us it's wrong.

• (1805)

**Salma Zahid:** You have written extensively about identity, belonging and the role of integration in shaping the social cohesion. You also mentioned in your opening remarks about the integration of the new immigrant movement. What are the most effective policies Canada can adopt to ensure that newcomers integrate successfully, while also strengthening a shared sense of belonging among all Canadians? How does this link to rebuilding trust in the system overall?

**The Chair:** You have 45 seconds.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I'll say transparency—speak honestly to the citizens. What are the things we got wrong? Are there things we need to make right? Also, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. We have to work in different parts of the system.

I also want to emphasize that, as I said before, we have a gender issue. We have highly skilled women who don't get the supports they need. If we saw the government supporting the households and supporting the women to realize their talent, it would certainly improve trust in the institutions.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Ms. Zahid. Thank you so much, Professor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deschênes, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Alexis Deschênes:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here and for their insightful contributions.

I'd like to offer a Quebec perspective. In Quebec, we receive a significant number of asylum seekers, for many geographical rea-

sons. According to the latest figures, 37% of asylum claims are made in Quebec, even though we account for 22% of the Canadian population. There is a proposal that Quebec has been advocating for some time, and which the Bloc Québécois also supports: We need to find a mechanism whereby each province takes in a number of asylum seekers that roughly corresponds to its population, to ensure that everyone does their bit and that we can welcome them properly.

I'd like to go around the table and begin with a very open-ended question: What is your view on the proposal to distribute asylum seekers among the provinces?

Ms. Morris, you may answer first.

**Stéphanie Morris:** I'm sorry, I'll answer in English so I can better express myself.

[*English*]

With regard to asylum claimants, 37% make their claims in Quebec. You're asking about the redistribution of refugee claimants across Canada.

I hesitate to think this could be a solution to the problem, because in the long run, people have selected certain places to settle in for particular reasons, which could be to their benefit and to Canada's benefit economically in the long run. Let's say we're talking about asylum claimants who have gone to Quebec because they speak French in particular, or they have family in the region. As we know, a lot of people crossing from the United States into Canada are coming because they have anchor relatives in Canada.

If they come to those regions because they want to be close to their culture, their language and their family, and then they're relocated to other places, I can see this being a real challenge for long-term integration—socially, economically and in terms of belonging. I would be hesitant to say that this will provide the solutions to this issue.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Deschênes:** What are your thoughts, Mr. Nauta?

**Renze Nauta:** Thank you for the question.

I'd also like to speak in English so I can be more precise.

• (1810)

[*English*]

I would approach your question by going back to the very end of my remarks, in which I talked about the different kinds of questions that policy-makers have to ask themselves to get at this idea of subsidiarity, which is a crucial concept for what you're talking about.

In my paper, one thing I address is that governments have to ask themselves questions about who's closest to the issue and should actually deal with it. Sometimes decisions are made by a government that's far away from the situation and not sufficiently attuned to the local realities of what's going on. Involvement of the Government of Quebec, or the government of some municipalities in Quebec and civil society, is going to be an important factor in this question.

There are also questions of efficiency. Which level of government is going to deal with it most efficiently?

I would skip to the last set of issues when it comes to subsidiarity, and that's questions of capacity. I talk about the capacity of a society to absorb the asylum seekers you're talking about, as well as the capacity of levels of government to address an issue. Sometimes the federal government doesn't have the capacity to deal with everything. It is in the government's interest to delegate some authority to lower levels of government or to civil society itself.

I would say that the combination of identifying which level of society is going to be best able to understand the issues that are happening with asylum seekers in Quebec and which level of society is best able to decide on capacity are both parts of this principle of subsidiarity that are relevant to your question.

[Translation]

**Alexis Deschênes:** Thank you.

To wrap up, what's your opinion on the issue, Professor Triandafyllidou?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Thank you for your question.

I think solidarity between provinces is a principle inherent to the federation. I also agree with Mr. Nauta on the principle of subsidiarity. It is true that this is somewhat a quirk of Quebec's geography, but it is also an honour, in a way, because Quebec is the Canadian province most committed to public assistance, offering the greatest protection to its people.

[English]

I'm proud of Quebec for being so solidarity-minded. It has a very active civil society. Beyond that, the local and the provincial authorities could decide on redistributing people among the smaller communities in Quebec that are aging fast and need a workforce with younger people. This might be a solution.

[Translation]

**Alexis Deschênes:** To your knowledge, is there any mobility among asylum seekers?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Are you referring to voluntary mobility?

**Alexis Deschênes:** Yes.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I think there's voluntary mobility towards Toronto and, generally speaking, towards major cities, for the reasons my colleagues mentioned earlier, notably networks such as family, friends and fellow villagers. There is also, as we heard the previous group of witnesses discuss, the whole issue of reception centres for asylum seekers.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor.

Thank you, Mr. Deschênes.

[English]

This completes our first round of questions. We'll now go to our second round of questions.

We have Mr. Redekopp.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know that we talked about a motion. I want to move it now and get it out of the way.

You've all seen the motion to do with Bill C-3 and the fact that we didn't quite get it right for the reporting information that we wanted from the department. The new motion would fix that. I think we've all seen that.

I won't read the old motion; we know what that one is. I'll briefly read the motion as it is. I move:

That the committee having adopted the following motion on March 25, 2026

—and I'm not going to read that part of the motion—

and that the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has provided a written response back to the committee explaining that the wording of the motion is too narrow to capture all citizenship applications made under the provisions under C-3;

the committee request that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada provide the committee, on a quarterly basis, with a written report, in both official languages, covering the preceding quarter, of all relevant data (including what was captured by the motion adopted on March 25, 2026) related to citizenship applications and all new citizenships granted as a result of the provisions in Bill C-3 as categorized by the terms of the original motion; and that the first such report, provided to the committee by no later than July 15, 2026, shall include all applicable data since Bill C-3 came into force.

• (1815)

**The Chair:** Are there any questions? Is there any debate? No.

Does everybody support it?

(Motion agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

**The Chair:** Thank you so much. You now have three and a half minutes left.

**Vincent Ho:** We have three and a half minutes. We'll make it quick, then.

My questions are for Professor Triandafyllidou.

Have you ever advised on government policy or contributed to government policy before? Has your expertise ever been consulted or your research ever been referenced in any capacity?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Yes.

**Vincent Ho:** You're listed as an expert panel member for the Century Initiative. Is that correct?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Yes.

**Vincent Ho:** Can you explain to this committee a bit more about what the Century Initiative is and what it advocates for?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Okay.

I have to tell you that I arrived in Canada in 2019 to take up the excellence chair after a highly competitive selection process of world-class scholars in migration. I discovered the Century Initiative. Later, as a function of my role during the pandemic, I was asked to join what is called the national reference panel. The Century Initiative convenes us once a year for two hours to ask for our opinion on several initiatives that it's undertaking.

This is my level of commitment and involvement.

**Vincent Ho:** The Century Initiative has publicly supported a goal of growing Canada's population to 100 million by 2100 through significant and sustained increases to Canada's population growth rate. Is that correct?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Yes.

**Vincent Ho:** Do you personally support that objective?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I don't support a specific number. I support the population policy that includes immigration but also employment, re-skilling, upskilling and families and households, particularly women and other equity-seeking groups.

**Vincent Ho:** In your view, is this target a desirable, realistic, necessary—

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** No. It's a slogan. I think it's a slogan, and it's not desirable as such.

**Vincent Ho:** It doesn't sound like a slogan. It's listed as an objective.

Have you ever considered whether Canada has the housing infrastructure and labour market capacity to sustain this level of growth?

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I'm more of an expert on employment rather than housing. I have personal opinions as an informed citizen about housing, but I'll speak about employment.

With regard to employment, the labour market is not a set number of positions. We know that immigration in Canada has created more positions than it has filled. We know that immigration is a driver of our innovation and of our resilience in the face of a fast-aging society with an exponential need for care workers, so in this sense—

**Vincent Ho:** You have talked about—

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** As I said before, I deliberately chose to focus my comments on talent and skills utilization.

**Vincent Ho:** Exactly. That's where I want to go. You have talked about, in this testimony today, the underemployment of skilled immigrants. Why are you suggesting expanding those intake levels to 100 million if there are already issues with integrating and utilizing the full range of skills immigrants are bringing?

**The Chair:** Reply in 15 seconds, please.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** I want to clarify that I provide an expert opinion, when asked, to the Century Initiative. I have no other relationship or commitment to their goals. If I'm asked to provide my expert opinion, I provide it. This is part of my job at TMU. As I explained about the 100 million, in my view, it's a number that was cast as a slogan. It doesn't work. I think what works is that we take our plans and we look at our policy.

I want to go back to a question that was addressed to me—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor. That is well over time.

Thank you, Mr. Ho.

Next, we have five minutes for Ms. Sodhi.

**Amandeep Sodhi:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to note that I will be sharing half my time with my colleague Mr. Fragiskatos.

My first question is for you, Ms. Triandafyllidou. In your research, you have examined how public trust is closely tied to whether people feel migration is well managed. Could you speak to how the federal government's recent measures that aim to restore a sense of balance and control, such as moderating intake levels or better managing temporary resident volumes, affect long-term public confidence in our immigration system?

● (1820)

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Yes—and thank you to the honourable Ms. Zahid for asking me that question, which I hadn't properly addressed earlier.

I want to say that public trust is maintained and increased when there are no big shifts in policy. When we go toward one direction and then we go completely toward the other direction in any policy, that's when the public trust is eroded.

Of course, it's also when the public discourse starts being, “Oh, our immigration system is broken.” I want to emphasize the role of economic actors, of employers and big business, in Canada. In 2022 they were shouting out loud, “We don't have enough talent. We don't have enough workers. Businesses are leaving Canada because you don't bring in enough workers.” In the fall of 2023, so in about 16 to 18 months, they were saying, “You've inundated the country with immigrants.”

This wasn't helpful. The very big shifts in the policy were not helpful. They eroded the trust. I think we also need to face the reality that Canada is no longer a one-step immigration system. It hasn't been for the past 10 to 15 years. I mean, 50% of our new permanent residents have previous temporary worker or study permits in Canada. In a world in which we are connected in real time to far-away places, to expect that people will do everything abroad, come here on the first day, be permanent residents and make one decision for life—that doesn't reflect our reality. People come as temporary work permit holders or international students. They start families here and they apply for PR.

Likewise, some PRs leave. It's not because Canada is bad. It's because highly skilled people are mobile, and—

**Amandeep Sodhi:** Professor, I don't mean to cut you off. Thank you so much for your answer. I'm just trying to be mindful because I am sharing my time. I'll let my colleague ask his question.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you to my colleague for splitting her time.

Thank you to our witnesses.

So much has been said here today. Each of you is an expert in your field. That's why you're here. We appreciate that.

I'll ask each of you for a concise summary of one recommendation that you want this committee to keep in mind in terms of the study we're carrying out.

Mr. Nauta, I'll begin with you. Respond in one or two sentences. I apologize, but it has to be concise.

**Renze Nauta:** My recommendation would be to be very mindful of the role of civil society in carrying out the functions that we usually associate with government. A subpoint to that, by way of a second sentence, is that we should rebalance the cuts to refugees between privately sponsored refugees and government-sponsored refugees to emphasize the private sponsorship.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Thank you.

Ms. Morris, go ahead.

**Stéfanie Morris:** My recommendation is that in the immigration levels plan, protected persons should be granted permanent residence outside of the quotas, because they are already here. They are almost certainly going to become permanent residents.

**The Chair:** Could you repeat what you just said? We'll restart the time. The interpreters had a hard time interpreting that.

**Stéfanie Morris:** My recommendation is that protected persons be granted permanent residence, outside of the immigration levels plan numbers. They are already here. They are already working. They're almost certain to be granted permanent residence. The delay they experience because of these quotas causes them to live in limbo for a long time without access to family reunification and other benefits for both Canada and themselves.

**Peter Fragiskatos:** Finally, we'll go to Professor Triandafyllidou.

*Christós anésti*, by the way.

That means “happy Easter”, for the benefit of members. We just celebrated Greek Orthodox Easter.

Please go ahead.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** It looks like a great Canadian conspiracy.

I think we need a predictable system—no huge changes—and clear pathways from temporary to permanent residency. People are not packages. We cannot send them back if they've lived here for four, five, six or seven years.

Also, I really think we have a problem with skills underutilization. It's not about credential recognition. It's about the recognition of professional experience. We need to be more innovative in that and work more with employers. We need to focus on the employers. Our settlement services focus only on the migrants. They need to focus more on the employers to make the match.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

That was great.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deschênes, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

[*English*]

I will be tight with the time, Monsieur Deschênes.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Deschênes:** That's fine, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

I have a question for you, Ms. Morris.

Earlier, we spoke briefly about Bill C-12. In this case, the government acted very quickly. In fact, as soon as the bill was passed, it sent letters to asylum seekers to inform those who had applied more than a year ago and who had arrived from 2020 onwards that their asylum claims were inadmissible. I have a copy of the letters that were sent. Asylum seekers are told that they may be eligible to apply for a pre-removal risk assessment.

Do you think this way of communicating in writing is correct and in line with procedures?

[*English*]

**Stéfanie Morris:** Absolutely not. I think these letters lack procedural fairness.

The first statement is that people should leave Canada as soon as possible, but later it's mentioned that they may be able to submit a pre-removal risk assessment. The majority of these people, if not all, will be able to submit a pre-removal risk assessment, or they will not be removable because they're from a country that has a moratorium on removals.

I think the letters are quite misleading about what the real possibilities are for them. They're causing panic in the community. I am afraid it will cause some people to return to situations of persecution out of a lack of understanding of the system.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Deschênes:** Earlier, you also said that, as a result, many asylum seekers awaiting a decision would end up in the pre-removal risk assessment process. This is a different process, which does not involve a quasi-judicial tribunal, but rather an immigration officer.

Do you believe there should be in-person hearings as part of this review, or would that add nothing further?

[*English*]

**Stéfanie Morris:** Absolutely. A pre-removal risk assessment assesses the same legal test as a refugee claim. They're still assessing whether someone has been persecuted or their life is at risk. They're assessing a very complex question.

Sometimes the people making these applications don't have all the evidence that someone might want to see on paper. If they have the opportunity to speak orally to present their evidence and the opportunity for their lawyers to answer any questions, then they have the procedural safeguards.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Deschênes.

[*English*]

Thank you, Ms. Morris.

We have one and a half minutes for both Mr. Davies and Ms. Zahid.

**Fred Davies:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

One of the biggest issues in my riding is health care. We have two hospitals in my four communities that have been closed by Niagara Health. We could use 100 doctors in Niagara right now. We could fill the lost capacity.

I have a really simple question. Where is the choke point? Where is the certification bottleneck focused?

Mr. Nauta, do you have a solution or suggestion that would help unlock the roughly 18,000 doctors in Canada now who are not able to practise?

**Renze Nauta:** You're addressing a very important issue. I'll follow up with the number of immigrants who are in the working class who have not just a college diploma but a university degree, which would be the people who you're talking about. The working class are people who are in jobs that don't require any college diploma whatsoever.

In terms of a choke point, it's difficult to pinpoint except to say that it is a systemic issue, because this issue has been ongoing for decades. I remember doing policy 20 years ago, and we were talking about it then.

What this says to me, coming back to the principle of subsidiarity that I was speaking about, is that when something is of such a systemic nature, in that case, it justifies and requires a national action. Even though—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nauta. I'm sorry; we've gone past your time.

Thank you, Mr. Davies.

We have one and a half minutes now for Ms. Zahid.

**Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Chair.

My question is again for Dr. Triandafyllidou.

When looking at global migration patterns, how impactful is climate change as a driver of migration? How is this likely to evolve over the coming times, and what steps should government be taking today?

• (1830)

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** Climate change has initially impacted people into displacement within their country in the hope of returning.

It usually activates a chain reaction in which people, for instance, move from a rural area to an urban area to look for employment. If they find employment, sometimes this will fuel international migration. We don't have direct climate migration or, say, climate refugees in Canada, and it's very difficult from a legal perspective to ascertain that someone has moved mainly for climate reasons, but it is very important to look ahead on how these things will affect local economies and local systems of production and what the chain reaction will be.

Also, a lot of the strongest climate impact is in places where states have less capacity to look after their citizens.

**Salma Zahid:** Thank you.

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

Thank you, Professor Triandafyllidou.

**Dr. Anna Triandafyllidou:** If I have 30 seconds, can I respond to the previous question about the doctors?

**The Chair:** No, I'm sorry, but any submission you make to us formally will be considered as part of the study, so feel free to follow up with us.

I want to say a huge thank you to all of our witnesses and thank all the members for their patience today and for their excellent questions.

This concludes our meeting today. Have a great rest of your evening.

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