



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 026

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Chair: James Maloney



Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

• (1635)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC)): Good morning, everyone.

This meeting is called to order.

Welcome to meeting number 26 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[English]

Pursuant to the order of reference of February 2, 2026, the committee is meeting to resume its study of Bill C-16, an act to amend certain acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely by using the Zoom application. I would like to confirm that sound tests were made successfully.

Before we continue, I would ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents, and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. You will also notice a QR code on the card, which links to a short awareness video.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members. Number one, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. Number two, for those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best as we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

Welcome to our witnesses.

[Translation]

In the first hour of the meeting, we have the following witnesses:

[English]

from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Valarie Gates, inspector; from the London Police Service, Chief of Police Thai Truong; and from the Canadian Bar Association, Melanie Webb and, potentially, Kathy Batycky.

The floor is yours for your opening remarks for up to five minutes, followed by questions from the members.

Ms. Gates, the floor is yours.

Inspector Valarie Gates (Co-Chair, Victims of Crime Committee, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police): Thank you.

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to speak to Bill C-16 and its focus on strengthening Canada's response to gender-based violence and victim protection.

From a policing and victim-centred perspective, we are increasingly aware that intimate partner violence is not always defined by a single incident. It is often a pattern of behaviour, one that includes coercive control, psychological harm and ongoing intimidation. These patterns can be difficult to identify, document and respond to within traditional, incident-based policing frameworks.

In Canada, police report over 110,000 victims of intimate partner violence each year. However, what these numbers capture are incidents that have already reached a criminal threshold. What they do not capture is the prolonged and cumulative harm caused by coercive control, harm that often precedes physical violence and in some cases domestic homicide.

Canadian data from Statistics Canada also shows that psychological abuse is widely experienced in intimate partner relationships. These behaviours of control, intimidation and isolation often occur without physical violence and are not always captured in traditional police responses. Research has also shown that patterns of controlling behaviour and escalation are strongly associated with domestic homicide.

Bill C-16 represents a critical step forward by recognizing coercive control as part of the continuum of intimate partner violence. Importantly, the CACP recommends that the legislation explicitly include former intimate partners, regardless of living arrangements, to reflect the reality that control and abuse frequently continue after separation, often amplified and facilitated by technology.

Victim impact statements and testimonial aids, as supported in Bill C-16, are essential tools. They ensure that the lived experiences of victims are meaningfully considered and victims are supported throughout the justice process. It is encouraging that Bill C-16 is giving more weight to victims' rights.

Bill C-16 includes provisions related to sentencing in certain areas. From a policing perspective, we also see that victims' confidence in the justice system can be influenced by their experiences with the process and outcomes. This can affect their willingness to engage in what is often a long and difficult process. From a policing perspective, by the time an incident meets a criminal threshold, there has often been an ongoing pattern of control and harm. Earlier recognition of coercive control is critical to better assessing risk and intervening sooner.

We are already seeing this shift reflected internationally. Such jurisdictions as the United Kingdom and parts of Australia have introduced coercive control legislation. Their experience shows us that this is an important step. However, it's one that requires careful implementation, strong training and clear investigative guidance. In Canada we are also seeing important work emerging in this space. Research led by Dr. Carmen Gill is helping to better define and measure coercive control in ways that will support both policy and practice.

From a policing perspective, this will also require us to evolve how we assess risk, including the integration of coercive control indicators into existing risk assessment tools. However, legislation alone will not be enough to change outcomes. To be effective, this bill must be supported by clear implementation strategies, including training for police and justice system partners, enhanced risk assessment tools and the ability to gather and present evidence that reflects cumulative harm over time.

There are also important considerations related to consistency in application and the potential for unintended consequences. One of the key concerns we need to be mindful of is the risk of misidentification or unintended criminalization of victims, particularly in complex cases where victims may present as resistant or defensive, or are involved in dual allegations.

Without a clear understanding of coercive control, there is a real risk that the person experiencing abuse could be misidentified as the offender. This reinforces the importance of trauma-informed approaches and specialized expertise in intimate partner violence investigations.

At the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, we have emphasized the importance of trauma-informed, victim-centred policing. Our national framework highlights the need to move beyond reactive responses and toward approaches that recognize the full context of victimization.

Bill C-16 aligns with this direction. With the right supports in place, it has the potential to strengthen early intervention, improve victim safety and enhance accountability for those who cause harm.

To support the success of this legislation, we would recommend that the implementation be accompanied by national guidance, training and risk assessment tools to support consistent, trauma-informed application across jurisdictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. I look forward to your questions.

• (1640)

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Ms. Gates.

We will move now to Chief Truong.

Chief Thai Truong (Chief of Police, London Police Service): Chair, vice-chairs and honourable members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to appear today.

My name is Thai Truong. I'm the chief of police for London Police Service in Ontario. I am here to provide an operational policing perspective on Bill C-16.

Overall, I support the direction of this bill. I support it because it recognizes what victims, families, frontline officers, investigators, the Renfrew county inquest and the Mass Casualty Commission have shown us, namely, that serious harm in intimate partner violence does not always begin with one physical assault. Too often, it begins with patterns of control, isolation, surveillance, intimidation, threats, financial dependency and fear.

In London, our members responded to almost 7,000 intimate partner-related occurrences in 2025. Behind every occurrence is a person, a family and a picture of risk that is often more complex than one call for service can show. This is why the proposed coercive control offence is important. It pushes the law closer to the reality of survivors and gives police, Crowns and courts a clearer framework to recognize patterns before violence escalates to tragic, lethal harm.

This is not a simple implementation issue. It is a major operational shift from incident-based policing to pattern-based investigation. Officers will need training to identify coercive control, to document patterns across multiple occurrences, to gather digital and third party evidence, and to identify the primary aggressors so that this new offence is not misused or weaponized against victims.

The two-year coming into force period is responsible. It should be used deliberately for police training, Crown guidance, updated risk assessment tools, community sector engagement and consistent national standards.

I also support the bill's related measures modernizing criminal harassment, assessing threats to distribute intimate images and sexually explicit deepfakes, strengthening tools against child exploitation and sextortion, improving data preservation under the mandatory reporting act, enhancing victim rights and testimonial aids, and recognizing the connection between intimate partner violence and firearm access. They are practical community safety measures.

However, I would respectfully make one recommendation. If Parliament creates a coercive control offence, we must also address the lawful sharing of risk information before a case reaches the charge threshold. Police are not asking for broad surveillance powers. We are asking for a narrow, threshold-based harm prevention mechanism that allows risk information already held across systems to be connected before it is too late.

At an IPV call, police may identify serious warning signs: threats of suicide or self-harm if a partner leaves; escalating control, isolation or financial coercion; threats involving children, pets or firearms; and information that may be known to health, social service or victim support providers but not known to the police. Often, each agency has only part of the picture.

Privacy law, understandably, protects personal information. When interpreted narrowly, it can also create silos that prevent a complete risk assessment.

I recommend that Parliament, working with provinces and territories, consider where necessary a clearly defined IPV risk information-sharing authority. It should be limited to intimate partner violence, risk assessment and harm prevention. It should apply only at a clear threshold, such as reasonable grounds to suspect that a pattern of conduct creates a substantial risk of serious physical or psychological harm. It should involve only prescribed police, victim support, health and social services agencies. It should require minimal disclosure, documentation, supervisor accountability and review. It must be reciprocal because police cannot assess risk properly if relevant information can only flow one way.

This is not a choice between privacy and safety. It is about creating a lawful, narrow, accountable way to prevent protected information from remaining siloed until after violence occurs.

• (1645)

In closing, Bill C-16 is an important step, but legislation alone does not protect victims. Implementation does. Training, resources, digital evidence capacity, Crown-police coordination, judicial capacity, victims' services and properly funded community partners will determine whether this bill achieves its purpose. This includes support for non-governmental organizations assisting abused women and girls, and upstream investments that help prevent violence before it escalates.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Chief.

I have either Ms. Webb or Ms. Batycky for five minutes.

Melanie Webb (Chair, Criminal Justice Section, The Canadian Bar Association): Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Bill C-16.

The Canadian Bar Association represents 40,000 lawyers, students, academics and jurists across Canada. Our written submission was prepared by the criminal justice section, comprising both Crown and defence counsel, with the input of the family, child and youth and women lawyer sections. I am the chair of the criminal justice section, and a criminal trial and appellate lawyer.

I highlight in my remarks today two key concerns with this bill.

First, Bill C-16 would introduce the possibility of the imposition of an alternative remedy to a stay of proceedings where a person's right to a trial within a reasonable time has been breached. Delay has been a persistent challenge. In the 2016 decision in the *R v. Jordan*, the Supreme Court exhorted all justice participants to work together to achieve speedier trials. Unfortunately, delays have worsened in many parts of the country, for many reasons.

Introducing an alternative remedy to a stay risks weakening incentives for governments to invest in the criminal justice system to address these issues. This could ultimately result in even longer delays. Timely trials are critical not only for the accused but also for victims of crime. As recognized in the *Jordan* decision, delays prolong the suffering of victims and prevent closure. Delays can also undermine public confidence in the administration of justice. There is also a risk of added sentence reductions, which, combined with existing ones, may produce unfit outcomes.

Second, the proposed exemption in Bill C-16 that would permit a sentence below the minimum term set out in the Criminal Code, where it would amount to "cruel and unusual punishment for that offender", would still mandate a minimum term of imprisonment. This limits the range of options available to the sentencing judge, including the conditional sentence order. We recognize that this proposal attempts to insert a safety valve to mandatory minimum sentences. However, in our view, the wording of the exemption will not allay our long-standing concerns. We suggest that the provisions proposed in clauses 1 and 2 of Bill S-208 instead may be a preferable framework.

We submit that both of these proposals will not reduce but may indeed increase court delays, resulting in unintended negative impacts upon victims. We urge careful reconsideration of these provisions.

Thank you. I'd be happy to address any questions you may have.

I now turn the floor over to my colleague Ms. Batycky.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Ms. Batycky, you have just over two minutes.

Kathy Batycky (Lawyer, The Canadian Bar Association): Thank you.

I'm speaking on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association's family law section. As family law lawyers, our concern is not whether coercive control exists but whether this offence is drafted with sufficient precision to protect the victims, without creating unintended harm in high-conflict family disputes. Our core message is this: Careful drafting is essential. It will strengthen the offence, protect survivors and avoid unintended harm to the families it meant to help.

We have three main concerns.

First, the pattern requirement is vague. The offence provides no guidance for the frequency or duration of conduct required, creating a risk that isolated incidents are captured or that conduct years after a relationship has ended is not captured. The pattern must be more precisely defined to avoid capturing conduct outside of what is intended.

Second, we recommend introducing a "reasonable foreseeability" standard. Liability should turn on what conduct could reasonably be expected to cause fear for safety in the circumstances, not solely on subjective intent. This would improve clarity while preserving the purpose of the provision.

Third, we urge caution with a "recklessness" standard. Replacing intentional wrongdoing risks criminalizing emotionally charged but non-coercive behaviour, commonly seen at separation, raising concerns about overcriminalization and fairness.

Finally, we just want to give you the message that criminal law alone cannot address family violence. There is a risk of misinterpreting cultural practices, such as financial pooling or collective decision-making, as coercive control. At the same time, diverse communities experience coercive control more acutely. Investments in unified family courts and training for police and justice system participants, as well as community supports, are essential.

Thank you.

• (1650)

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you.

We're commencing our first round. We'll start with Mr. Lawton.

You have six minutes.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

I'm going to devote most of my time to asking you questions, Chief Truong. I appreciate your coming here from London.

In 2023, London declared intimate partner violence, and femicide specifically, an epidemic. We have seen in our broader community a range of very high-profile cases. You had Cheryl Sheldon in 2024, who was allegedly killed by her boyfriend. You had Caitlin Jennings and Tiffany Gates killed by their partners in 2023. You had the.... I choke up thinking about it. Breanna Broadfoot, 17 years old, was killed by an intimate partner who had been released, and there were signs that something like that could happen.

You mentioned the 7,000 calls you get a year. Do you have a sense of how many of these are repeat offenders? How many of these are the same people? Is there an escalation or repetition of the conduct that's resulting in these calls?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you.

Chair, through you, I don't have that data before me, sir.

Andrew Lawton: It is not uncommon to have people who are engaged in behaviour where there have been previous interactions with police—bail releases, conditional sentences and previous calls. That's not an uncommon occurrence in this case. Is that correct?

Chief Thai Truong: That's correct.

Andrew Lawton: I know that you and I have spoken about and this committee has previously studied bail. We saw in the Broadfoot case and in others really tragic examples of people who have been released and who have committed further acts of violence.

When we're looking at things we can do to intercept and stop that escalation, what more can we do? What would you like to see us as a committee do, either within Bill C-16 or even as part of broader measures you'd love to see brought forward?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you for the question.

I would like to see some clarity on the application of Bill C-75 and what that has essentially done to the policing sector with respect to individuals we encounter on a daily basis who are the repeat offenders you are speaking about, as well as the application of prioritizing or having more of a balance toward determining release by really focusing on the victim and the community. I would like there to be more of a balance in the way we address those individuals who should be held for bail. There should be careful thought given to any type of release for those individuals.

Andrew Lawton: When it comes to sentencing, after someone has gone through the process and been convicted, do you find that conditional sentencing—for example, house arrest—is resulting in people being out of custody who really shouldn't be?

Chief Thai Truong: In that particular instance of individuals who are breaching conditional sentence orders, we are seeing repeat violent offenders breach regardless. If they are released on a judicial order into the community, it's very common that those violent offenders find ways to breach those conditions.

• (1655)

Andrew Lawton: One of the topics that's come up in this committee's work, and in particular on Bill C-16, is that of mandatory minimum sentences. We've heard even from a witness in today's session that there is a belief emanating from legal theory rather than reality that mandatory minimums don't have a place in our system.

I suspect I know the answer to this: Do you support strong mandatory minimum sentences for a series of crimes?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you for that question.

I do, because we have to look at the impact on the victims of the crimes. In that regard, the sentences handed down by the courts after a conviction have to be balanced and reflective of the crime committed. If you're looking at the principles of denunciation and deterrence, that is important to consider.

Andrew Lawton: We heard, before this committee's study, from survivors of intimate partner violence that one gap in the system is that victims aren't always notified when the accused perpetrator is released.

Is this something you've encountered? Do you have any guidance for how we could address that through the law?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you for that.

I think it comes down to a matter of resourcing. That is an issue. The courts are overloaded. Police officers and police organizations are overloaded as well.

That is something that definitely needs to happen. When offenders are released, in theory and in practice, victims should be notified. When that doesn't happen, it typically is a result of workload.

Andrew Lawton: I know that in London, which is a large community, you have had to arrest and charge people with child sexual exploitation and abuse material.

Do you believe that a one-year mandatory minimum sentence for someone who has hundreds or thousands of images or videos of children being abused is cruel and unusual punishment?

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Please answer in 10 seconds or less.

Chief Thai Truong: I think the sentence must reflect the severity of the crime, and in those instances, that crime is very severe.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Mr. Lawton.

Mr. Chang, you have six minutes.

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today. My first question is for the CBA.

The CBA often emphasizes the importance of balancing strong protections with charter compliance. How do you assess Bill C-16 in striking that balance?

Melanie Webb: Thank you for that question.

For the most part, there are many provisions in Bill C-16 that we do support—I should mention that. For example, there are provisions referring to restorative justice and alternative measures, which I think may actually help with some of the challenges we face in terms of court delays.

That being said, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we continue to have a serious concern with regard to the proposed structural framework to introduce an alternative remedy to a stay of proceedings when there has been an acknowledged or recognized breach of the constitutional right to a trial within a reasonable time. That is an area of significant concern in terms of charter compliance.

Wade Chang: Could you please speak to how sentencing-related reforms in the bill, including any mandatory elements, interact with the principle of proportionality and judicial discretion?

Melanie Webb: Thank you for that question.

As I'm sure this committee is aware, the CBA has long opposed mandatory minimum sentences for a number of reasons. They fetter judicial discretion. They do not deter crime. They have a disproportionate impact on indigenous persons and racialized persons. They can thwart plea negotiations, but they can also impact plea negotiations in that they can result in outcomes or, shall we say, pleas to charges that are not necessarily appropriate.

With respect to the framework that's been proposed in Bill C-16 to insert a safety valve to the mandatory minimum sentences in the code, we recognize that this is an attempt to do that. What we have a problem or a concern with is that this still requires a minimum term of imprisonment, so that still limits the range of options available to a sentencing judge. To be clear, I'm sure that in the vast majority of cases of offences that carry mandatory minimum sentences, those offenders will be sentenced to prison time, but sentencing is very much an individual's exercise. There are always exceptional circumstances.

I appreciate that the wording of this proposed safety valve says that a court shall impose a shorter term of imprisonment if, in the circumstances, the minimum punishment "would amount to cruel and unusual punishment for that offender".

However, there may be circumstances where, for example, a conditional sentence order may be appropriate and, to be clear, it would be in rare and exceptional circumstances. Nonetheless, it's our view that this option should remain on the table to allow for those very rare and exceptional circumstances.

• (1700)

Wade Chang: Thank you, Ms. Webb.

My next question is for Chief Truong.

From your perspective, how are you seeing online harm such as exploitation and sexploitation impacting your own community?

Chief Thai Truong: There is an increase of online harm to society with the advancements of technology in the digital age that we are in. That comes with criminal exploitation, where criminals are going to exploit areas within society. That is an area the criminals will continue to exploit from an organized crime perspective and from an individual perspective. We are seeing that this is a concern.

Wade Chang: Police services across Canada have raised concerns about youth being recruited into criminal activity online. Could you speak on how this is evolving and whether the measures in Bill C-16 help address this trend?

Chief Thai Truong: Yes, we're seeing that as something right across the country. Young people, more and more, are being involved and recruited into crime. I support the legislative amendments to Bill C-16 dealing specifically with the recruiting of young people for crime.

Wade Chang: If you could prioritize one change, legislative or operational, to improve victim outcomes, what would that be?

Chief Thai Truong: I would go back to my recommendation. A large part of this bill is naming and identifying femicide and coercive control. From the Mass Casualty Commission and the Renfrew county inquest, we know that there was a communication breakdown, if you look at some of the themes, where government and non-government organizations all have a piece of information but they're siloed. We're siloed because of privacy rights, and there's no formal way for us to share information with community and vice versa.

To answer your question, if there was federal legislation in place that is created or allows some direction in information sharing, that will essentially identify individuals at risk. It will identify suspects or individuals who are likely involved in coercive control. We know that those individuals are more likely to commit femicides.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Chief. That's your time.

[Translation]

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

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Mr. Truong and the other witnesses for being here today.

Ms. Webb, I would like to further explore the issue of mandatory minimum sentences. You talked about them in your remarks.

If I understand correctly, you prefer the approach taken in Bill S-208, which is currently in the Senate but has not yet been studied by our committee. Unless I'm mistaken, when I looked at the bill, I don't think it includes mandatory minimum sentences. In fact, it seemed to give the court all the latitude it needed. I have to say that, fundamentally, I'm not opposed to that.

That said, those in favour of mandatory minimum sentences want them above all in order to keep offenders in prison for as long as possible, but they also want to send society the message that these are serious crimes that deserve a minimum sentence. I'm not going to give you my opinion on that, but those are roughly the two things that we're hearing.

After you answer my next question, we can talk about the safety valve.

In your opinion, is Parliament sending society the right message by setting a mandatory minimum sentence for a crime?

• (1705)

[English]

Melanie Webb: As I indicated in my remarks earlier, the CBA has been opposed to mandatory minimum sentences for several reasons. Certainly, I think we share the minister's and the government's concern for public safety and for ensuring that sentences appropriately fit the crimes that people have been convicted of, but with respect, mandatory minimum sentences are inappropriate for the reasons I've already articulated.

I should also indicate, to reiterate, that we are not of the view that they truly deter crime in the way I think some might hope mandatory minimum sentences do.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: In your opinion, isn't it important to send society the message that particularly violent crimes deserve minimum sentences?

[English]

Melanie Webb: What I would say is this: In criminal justice, in criminal law, for many offences, there are established sentencing ranges that the appellate courts have set out in many cases, and they are well known to the courts. It would be a rare and exceptional case for a sentence to fall above or below that range.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Okay.

My speaking time is limited, but I'd like us to talk about the famous safety valve.

You said earlier that, in exceptional circumstances, a mandatory minimum sentence could be harmful. Under Bill C-16, however, the court could waive the mandatory minimum sentence in exceptional circumstances because it would be unfair.

Doesn't that protection seem sufficient to you?

[*English*]

Melanie Webb: Our concern with respect to the safety valve that's been proposed is that when you look at the other provision that's elsewhere in the bill, you see that it does mandate a minimum term of imprisonment. What that means, in effect, is that this will completely eliminate the possibility of a conditional sentence order for any sentence that carries a mandatory minimum sentence, because conditional sentence orders cannot be imposed for offences that carry a minimum term of imprisonment. That's really our main concern there.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: I appreciate that. Thank you for the clarification, Ms. Webb.

I'd like to discuss another topic with you, but I don't have much time left.

I thought I heard you say that Bill C-16 would undermine the fight against unreasonable delays, so to speak. I'd like you to elaborate on that.

We think the approach taken in Bill C-16, which seeks to establish specific criteria for calculating delays, could help prevent mistrials. Would you not agree with that?

[*English*]

Melanie Webb: To be clear, the CBA has not articulated a concern with respect to the guidance or direction that's been provided in other provisions with respect to how to evaluate delay in complex cases. Our concern is with respect to the introduction of an alternative remedy to a stay of proceedings, which would be a significant change—a completely new change, I should say—in respect of how we treat paragraph 11(b) charter violations—

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Ms. Webb, I apologize for interrupting you, but, as I said, my speaking time is limited.

I agree with you, and I understand. We agree that, ideally, all trials should be held within 18 to 30 months. In practical terms, however, that is unfortunately not always possible.

What would you suggest that is different from what's in Bill C-16 to prevent unwarranted mistrials?

[*English*]

Melanie Webb: First of all, I think we should.... Again, our concern is that this is going to have the effect of potentially leading to even longer delays in the system.

I should just say that I was called to the bar almost 18 years ago, and I remember when trials took markedly shorter time, even for serious criminal offences. Now we are seeing trials that routinely take 18 to 30 months or longer. It's our concern that if this frame-

work is imposed, who knows where we'll be in 10 years? Perhaps we'll be seeing trials routinely taking five years and up.

Rather than perhaps—

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Ms. Webb, thank you. We're out of time. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Fortin.

[*English*]

That completes our first round.

Moving on to the second round, we will start with Ms. Rood.

You have five minutes.

Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Chief Truong, thank you being here from London. It's great to have you to testify on this important piece of legislation.

Chief, Bill C-16 creates a sweeping safety valve that lets judges ignore mandatory minimum sentences for almost every serious offence, including many violent and repeat offences, whenever they decide the minimum would be cruel and unusual.

Given the documented rise in violent crime and repeat offending in London, do you believe this change will make it harder for your officers to keep dangerous offenders off the streets? Will it undermine the deterrent effect that mandatory minimums have historically provided?

Chief Thai Truong: I would say that it is very important that sentences reflect the severity of the crime. That is extremely important. It is important with respect to denunciation and deterrence, but it is very important when you have victims involved. If the victims see that the sentences that are handed out are not proportionate to the crime, it creates a loss of confidence in the justice system and a loss of confidence in society. It also causes implications in policing and trust with police in the court system.

Lianne Rood: Right now, we have the government packaging this massive weakening of mandatory minimums inside a bill that is being sold as protecting women and children. I'm wondering if you, as chief, support or oppose giving judges this new discretion to go below mandatory minimums for serious violent crimes in London. Do you believe it will help or hinder your force's ability to reverse the local crime increases that we're seeing right now?

Chief Thai Truong: Mandatory minimums that are imposed typically are imposed on serious offences that impact the community. That's why you have the mandatory minimums.

As a police chief, I can't opine on what-if. What I can tell you is that as a police chief, I strongly feel that sentences need to reflect the severity of the crime, full stop.

When that does not happen, there's an erosion of trust and safety in the community. When that does not happen, it impacts my officers in London and their understanding and their confidence in the justice system. When serious offenders do not receive the sentences and punishment reflective of the crime and the harm that they've caused to the community and to victims, it is a huge blow to policing and our officers.

Lianne Rood: Chief, we know that London is experiencing increased gun violence, intimate partner homicides and repeat offenders cycling through the system. Why should Parliament hand judges a blanket power to water down the sentencing floors that target the worst offenders? Perhaps from a frontline policing perspective, will this so-called safety valve make your job tougher by encouraging lighter sentences for those very criminals that your officers arrest over and over again?

• (1715)

Chief Thai Truong: For the particular offences that we're speaking of, the offences that involve harm and violence to the community, the mandatory minimums are important.

Again, on the safety valve that is being proposed, I would say that the positive aspect from a policing perspective is that.... In principle, when sentences are not being handed down that are reflective of the mandatory minimums that are in legislation, it causes challenges to our organization and policing as a whole.

Lianne Rood: Chief, I have about 30 seconds left.

Given that your officers are the ones who are arresting these repeat violent offenders day after day, would you support splitting Bill C-16 so that the positive victim protection measures can pass quickly, while the mandatory minimum safety valve is studied separately?

Chief Thai Truong: I would support the passing of Bill C-16 as quickly as possible.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you. That's your time, Ms. Rood.

Ms. Dhillon, you have five minutes.

Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I will start with Mr. Truong.

You just mentioned the quick passing of Bill C-16 as being important. To follow up on that, how do delays in the justice system affect your ability to investigate crimes and support victims at the same time?

Chief Thai Truong: Are you talking about delays that...? Can you be more specific about the delays that you're speaking of?

Anju Dhillon: It's delays in the justice system. It's at the prosecution stage, I suppose.

Chief Thai Truong: I understand.

Obviously we want justice served as quickly as possible. The longer the delay the greater impact it has on victims for resolution. It also has an impact on the offenders as well to be tried reasonably. Of course, when charges are laid we want the case to move through the court as quickly as possible.

Anju Dhillon: Okay.

Bill C-16 introduces a two-year delay before the coercive control provisions come into force. Given that these offences require identifying patterns of behaviour over time, how important is that period for ensuring that police have the training and tools necessary to properly recognize, investigate and apply these provisions?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you. That's a good question.

I think the two-year delay in this legislation is very important and, as I've already mentioned, it's responsible. It allows us to prepare for the legislation and the understanding of coercive control. It gives us an opportunity to ensure that we don't do any harm to any victims as we interpret this legislation. It will require time for us to train our officers, work with the judiciary and learn from community organizations, community groups and experts, so that we get it right.

Anju Dhillon: Perfect.

We are living more and more in a digital age and environment. In your view, do the measures in this bill better equip law enforcement to protect victims, especially children?

Chief Thai Truong: I do. I think this is a positive step forward. I think that with this bill, we also have to think about its application and how Bill C-14 is its companion bill, which is also important for us. With your comment about supporting and protecting victims, both bills have to be supported.

Anju Dhillon: Thank you very much.

My next questions will be for Ms. Webb.

From your perspective, are the proposed offences and measures drafted with sufficient clarity to ensure consistent application by the courts?

• (1720)

Melanie Webb: Thank you for that question.

I'm not sure if you are referring specifically to the deepfakes, for example, and the new provisions that would apply to those types of offences, or if there are other types of offences you had in mind?

Anju Dhillon: You could speak to the deepfake ones since we're seeing them more and more as well.

Melanie Webb: Yes. The CBA actually supports many of the proposed refinements to those kinds of provisions. We actually indicate in our brief, in considerable detail—probably in more detail than is useful for me to get into my response today—that perhaps there are some ways in which it may not capture certain kinds of images that might be, for example, of a fictitious or an imaginary animal, and bestiality. We actually make some suggestions to refine those amendments further to capture some certain other types of scenarios.

Anju Dhillon: Thank you.

Are there any amendments you would recommend to strengthen the bill while maintaining its objectives?

Melanie Webb: We make a number of recommendations in our written brief, which is fairly extensive. I should indicate that there are topics that I haven't commented on to date, for example, the admissibility of sexual activity evidence in the private records regime.

I should say that the CBA is supportive of some of those proposals as well. We actually welcome some of those changes, but we also still have concerns about other types of changes, for example, the treatment of therapeutic records and what we view as being an impossible standard to meet. That's one area that we suggest amongst others that could be improved.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Ms. Webb and Ms. Dhillon. That is your time.

[Translation]

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

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Truong, earlier, in your presentation, you talked about the importance of training. You mentioned training, resources and various elements.

I would like you to give me some examples of training that could be useful to police officers that is not currently available.

[English]

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you. That's a great question, sir.

When you're looking at coercive control, it's a nuanced offence. It is something that not everybody understands. As police, we're used to responding to incidents where we see the crime evidently in front of us. As an example, with an assault you see the injuries. It's clear.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: I apologize for rushing you, but I had two and a half minutes, and I only have a minute and a half left, which is really not much time.

If I understand correctly, you're saying that police officers should be given training on what coercive control is. Is that correct?

[English]

Chief Thai Truong: Yes, sir.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Okay.

I only have a minute left, but I'd like to discuss another topic with you.

Bill C-16 includes sentences for the recruitment of young people for the purpose of committing a criminal act. I would like to know whether or not you think that is sufficient.

If you don't think it is sufficient, I was thinking about doubling the sentence for an adult who recruits a young person, particularly from criminal organizations, that the individual would have received if he had committed the crime himself. For example, if a member of the Hells Angels recruited a 12-year-old to commit a crime, he could face double the sentence that the young person would receive.

What do you think of that?

[English]

Chief Thai Truong: I hear what you're saying, sir. I'm in full support of sentences being reflective of the crimes committed. If it's a serious offence, such as recruiting young people for organized crime, I feel there should be a strong sentence that's reflective of that.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you, Mr. Fortin.

[English]

Folks, we have six minutes left. I propose reducing the time for the last two speakers to three minutes each, starting with you, Mr. Lawton.

Andrew Lawton: Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms. Webb, you mentioned that your organization, as a general rule, does not support mandatory minimum sentences. Do I understand correctly that your view is that judges can be trusted to mete out the fair and appropriate sentence in all cases?

• (1725)

Melanie Webb: I think judges have a remarkably difficult job, particularly in sentencing. I think that judges across this country do a remarkable job of sentencing individuals as they should be.

Andrew Lawton: To follow that to its logical conclusion, why have maximum sentences or an upper limit for sentences if judges can work within ranges?

Melanie Webb: That's a bit of a different idea.

First of all, I would say there are offences for which the judges certainly do hand out maximum sentences, but not for every offence. There are certainly certain types of offences where we will rarely see, for example, a life sentence, but it remains on the books and it's still possible that a life sentence could be imposed for certain kinds of offences other than murder.

Andrew Lawton: Thank you. I'm making the point that if we constrain sentencing on one end, it doesn't seem entirely abnormal to constrain it on the other end too.

Chief, we know that London, sadly—which is not at all a reflection of your work—is a hotbed of human trafficking by virtue of where it is along the 401. Human trafficking is not something that's dealt with in C-16, but we know there is a very direct link in some cases between abusive relationships and human trafficking.

What can we do better as a committee in regard to human trafficking as we try to intercept escalations in femicides and abusive relationships with women? What would you like to see from legislation that would help that?

Chief Thai Truong: That's a good question, sir.

I would actually say the coercive control directly applies to human trafficking investigations and human trafficking offences. Often, the traffickers are involved in intimate relationships with the young woman or the young girl, so I think that applies.

Andrew Lawton: Thank you very much.

I'm glad you were able to take up our invitation to join us here.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Thank you.

Mr. Chang, you have three minutes.

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): We're changing the time, so I'm going to take that, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Okay. Go ahead.

Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you to my colleague as well.

Chief, it's great to see you in Ottawa. We're very fortunate to have you serving in London.

In fact, I want to ask about that service. How long have you been a police officer?

Chief Thai Truong: It has been 25 years, sir.

Peter Fragiskatos: I'm sure you've seen, through the course of your career, a number of things that are in need of continued attention, to put it mildly—

Chief Thai Truong: That is correct.

Peter Fragiskatos: —that have affected you and other officers in your position who have served so long.

How do you think this bill will help address some of the gaps that exist in the criminal justice system?

It's a general question, but I think it's fundamental to the matter at hand.

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you, sir.

This is a bill that our police officers and I are in full support of. It's important, and it addresses the needs of victims. It addresses new legislation, which creates new offences. It addresses the issue of deepfakes, and it also addresses the Jordan decision. I think it's a good piece of legislation, and I'm supportive of it.

Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Chair, this is my last question.

You've become known in London for being extremely engaged with civil society organizations. One of those is the London Abused Women's Centre, which has called attention to the femicide offence and has advocated for that. I think it is, in no small part, because of

their advocacy, but also the receptiveness your organization in London has shown to such an offence.

Can you talk about the femicide offence, what's being proposed, the importance of that and how it reflects a broad sentiment on the ground among organizations like the London Abused Women's Centre?

Chief Thai Truong: Thank you, sir.

In London, we're pretty blessed with great organizations that are working in this space, such as the London Abused Women's Centre. A lot of organizations have been calling on the government to name femicide. This legislation does just that: It recognizes femicide, and it recognizes coercive control. Truly, it is a piece of legislation that deals with and responds to the Mass Casualty Commission and the Renfrew county inquest, which are really trying to prevent further femicides from occurring.

People and communities in London are supportive of this particular piece of legislation.

• (1730)

Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Larry Brock): Okay. That completes the first round.

Witnesses, I'd like to thank you all for your participation.

I know I had to cut off quite a few of you, and I apologize for that, but we do have time constraints. If you were cut off but feel there is more to add to a question that was put to you, feel free to put that in writing and submit it to the committee for consideration.

I want to thank you for your participation.

We're going to suspend for a few minutes while we transition to the second panel and change out the chair.

For the second hour, the chair will be Monsieur Fortin. He will also be allowed to ask questions in addition to his responsibilities as chair, and that's with the agreement of all three parties.

Thank you.

• (1730)

(Pause)

• (1735)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): We are now resuming the meeting.

Welcome, everyone.

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

From the Child and Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada, we have Leah Zille, co-chair of the board of directors.

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

• (1740)

[*English*]

Leah Zille (Co-Chair of the Board, Child and Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada): Thank you, Chair and members of the committee, for the invitation—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Ms. Zille, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I have to mention the other participants before I give you the floor. That was my mistake.

We also have, Lindsay Jolie, chief operating officer of the Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre; Marta Hajek, executive director of Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario; and Dr. Naomi Parker, co-director of the Kindex Research and Knowledge Centre.

Each of you will have five minutes for your opening remarks. The committee members will then have questions for you.

Ms. Zille, you now have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Leah Zille: Thank you, Chair and members of the committee, for the invitation to appear today.

My name is Leah Zille, and I am here today on behalf of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada. I am joining you from Port Moody, British Columbia, on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Kwikwetlem, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Stó:lō peoples. I am grateful to live and work on this land.

In partnership with Kindex, we have submitted a written brief outlining the research, systems context and key issues raised by Bill C-16. Today I will focus on how these issues show up in the day-to-day realities of the children we support as they move through the court process.

Across the country, child and youth advocacy centres support children and youth who have experienced abuse. We bring police, child protection, victim services, and medical and mental health supports together around the child with the goal of reducing further trauma and limiting how often children have to share what happened to them. We do this work because we know children can heal. How systems respond plays a critical role in that.

When children come to us, they are already carrying far more than they should have to. We see the fear, the confusion, the shame, the hurt. Our 51 CYACs across Canada are designed to support them in a trauma-informed way, but those same children still need to move through a justice system that was not designed with children in mind.

We are encouraged by Bill C-16 and strongly support its direction. That said, we see a clear opportunity to strengthen how this bill shapes the court experience for children and youth.

I'd like to highlight the importance of strengthening access to testimonial aids. We cannot overstate the impact the courthouse experience can have on a child.

Picture an eight-year-old walking into a courthouse, arriving at the same time as the accused. They wait for hours, not really understanding what will happen. Waiting causes their anxiety to build. They are brought into a room full of adults and asked to speak about deeply personal experiences with all eyes on them, answering the same questions in different ways, pressed to be sure and to repeat details. Many leave that experience feeling unsure of themselves or as though they were not believed. That can be devastating, but that is the context in which we are asking children to participate.

Children provide their best evidence when they feel safe and supported. Testimonial aids are not extras; they are essential supports that make participation possible. Bill C-16 takes important steps to strengthen recognition of these supports and improve transparency when their use is not granted, but we are concerned with the challenges with consistent application.

These supports are still often treated as something that must be requested or decided late, rather than as tools that strengthen participation and the quality of evidence. For children and youth, testimonial aids should be presumptive, not exceptional. They should be considered early and applied consistently across jurisdictions, because when they are not, what we see is increased anxiety, difficulty participating and, in some cases, children disengaging from the process altogether.

Legislative reform is an important step, but it is not enough. For these changes to be effective in practice, the committee should ensure that programs providing testimonial aids are properly resourced to meet increased demand and that supports such as accredited facility dogs and remote testimony rooms are consistently available. This will require strong federal, provincial and territorial collaboration to ensure effective implementation on the ground.

We also need adequate resources, training and infrastructure to support consistent application and equitable access across the country, because access should not depend on where a child lives or who is involved in their case.

A similar challenge shows up when it comes to advancing victims' rights, particularly in access to information. Families are often left trying to piece together what is happening. They do not always know what comes next or what to ask for. That uncertainty creates stress for caregivers, and that stress directly affects a child's ability to heal.

Strengthening the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights is an important step. It reinforces the right to information and begins to shift responsibility onto the system, but in practice much of the system still depends on families knowing what to ask for. Information should be proactive, clear and timely, not something families have to seek out. Families should receive core information about what is happening, what comes next, what supports are available and how their child will be supported, along with a consistent point of contact. When information is clear, families are better able to support their child and children are better able to stay engaged.

In closing, I want to reiterate that we are in support of Bill C-16. It reflects important progress, including in its recognition of online harms, while also pointing to the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated response to the risks children face in digital environments.

Accountability also matters, and sentencing should reflect the seriousness of harm to children. However, what matters most to families is how the system functions along the way—that it is timely, coordinated and avoids adding further harm.

We know children can heal when the systems around them support that healing. How our systems respond matters. The justice system is an integral part of that response. This is an opportunity to get that right.

We would encourage the committee to ensure that this legislation supports and protects children in healing so that they can move forward with their lives and get back to feeling like kids again.

• (1745)

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Zille.

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

[*English*]

Lindsay Jolie (Chief Operating Officer, Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Lindsay Jolie. I am the chief operating officer at Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, located in Toronto, Ontario. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today.

Boost CYAC is a multidisciplinary community-based organization that provides a coordinated response to children, youth and families impacted by abuse and violence. As one of Canada's leading CYACs, for over four decades we have served thousands of children and families each year through partnerships with police, child protection, health care and mental health services.

Through this work, we see first-hand the full trajectory of harm, from the bravery of first disclosure through investigation, testifying at court, mental health supports and ongoing services.

What we see with the clients we support are not isolated incidents. We see continual patterns of children being contacted, groomed, manipulated, threatened and harmed. These situations escalate quickly, are increasingly facilitated by technology and have

immediate and severe impacts. By the time a situation meets a criminal threshold, harm has already occurred.

Within that context, Boost CYAC supports key elements of Bill C-16 that reflect these realities.

We are very supportive of two distinct but related aspects of this bill.

First, the recognition of AI-generated and manipulated images is critical. We are increasingly seeing situations in which images are altered or entirely fabricated through the use of emerging technologies. A child does not even need to share an image to become a victim.

Second, and importantly, the bill's strengthened response to threats to distribute child sexual abuse materials is incredibly significant. At alarming rates, children and youth are threatened, isolated and controlled through fear, often before anything is ever shared. The impact is profound, and this change reflects the reality of how exploitation is happening.

We also want to highlight the importance of Bill C-16's recognition of offences related to inviting a child to expose themselves. In practice, what we see is not about consent or curiosity. It is about power, coercion and control. These interactions are often the entry point to exploitation. They begin with trust building, quickly shift into pressure and escalate into threats. Recognizing this clearly in law is critical for protecting children.

One additional point to highlight is the bill's recognition of patterns of coercion and control. What we see in our work, whether in children, witnessing or youth experiencing intimate partner violence, are not isolated incidents but patterns of behaviour that are often hidden and highly manipulative and that escalate over time. These patterns rely on secrecy and confusion, and children and youth sometimes do not recognize what is happening. They may experience pressure or self-blame or believe that the situation is their fault.

Recognizing these patterns of coercion in law is a significant step toward increasing understanding and awareness. Boost CYAC is a leader in prevention education, and we believe that knowledge is power. Youth need to understand what coercion is, clearly and explicitly. By naming and criminalizing these patterns, Bill C-16 will help validate young people's experiences, support earlier identification by the adults around them and strengthen our ability to intervene or stop harm before it happens. That is essential for prevention.

We are also encouraged by the strengthening of the mandatory reporting act through the changes proposed to it. Exploitation investigations are complex and take time, and too often key evidence is lost before systems can respond. Extending preservation timelines, requiring more complete technical information and including all Internet platforms are the start of holding tech companies more accountable and will meaningfully improve the ability to identify offenders and intervene earlier.

Bill C-16 strengthens Canada's ability to respond to this harm, and we see that as a meaningful and important step forward. We cannot, however, rely on criminal law alone. Right now, the online spaces where this harm is happening are operating freely, without consistent, enforceable standards to keep children safe. There is limited or no accountability for how these environments are designed or how risks to children are managed. That needs to change.

We encourage the government to take the critical next step of passing clear, enforceable online safety legislation that requires technology companies to design for child safety; address high-risk environments, such as private messaging; and be accountable for reducing harm.

Protecting children online should be a fundamental responsibility, and right now we're behind. Other countries have taken this step. In the U.S. and Australia, enforceable online safety laws are already driving platform safety, accountability and faster removal of harmful content. The evidence is clear that when governments set expectations, platforms start taking the protection of children seriously. Canada has an opportunity to do the same.

At Boost CYAC, we are proud to be leaders in this field, working every day alongside our partners to support children and families impacted by abuse. This harm is not going away. It is evolving, and it is becoming more complex.

We want to thank the government for taking the protection of children seriously and for the meaningful steps reflected in Bill C-16.

• (1750)

We look forward to continued prevention efforts by this government.

Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Jolie.

Ms. Hajek, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[*English*]

Marta C. Hajek (Chief Executive Officer, Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario): Distinguished Chair, committee members and fellow panellists, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and contribute to your study of Bill C-16.

To Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, this bill represents an opportunity to address ageist inequities by more fully recognizing the risks of coercive control faced by older Canadians.

As CEO, I am speaking on behalf of an organization that is provincially funded and has spent over three decades addressing el-

der abuse, its growing complexities and root causes. Since Ontario's introduction of the first strategy to combat elder abuse in Canada in 2002, we have focused our work on coordinating community response, raising public awareness through education and training frontline service providers across all sectors to prevent, recognize and effectively respond to abuse and neglect of older persons.

While we are not legal experts, after 34 years in this sector, we know of what we speak. Along with our Canadian colleagues working in this space, we are deeply troubled by the diminishing personal safety of older Canadians, and that warrants us sending up flares.

Older adults in Canada are facing escalating risks. During the pandemic, incidents of abuse dramatically increased by as much as 800%, by some accounts. The drivers of that increase were social isolation, dependency and reduced oversight. They have not receded but, in many cases, have become entrenched.

At the centre of this serious form of elder abuse is coercive control.

The Department of Justice defines coercive control as a pattern of behaviour used to dominate another person. It causes a power imbalance through intimidation, emotional abuse and financial control. For older adults, it can restrict access to assets, interfere with health care and medical decision-making, limit mobility and isolate individuals from their social supports.

It is not a single act but a pattern—a slow tightening that erodes independence, dignity and personhood. It is most often not perpetrated by intimate partners. Statistics Canada reports that 36% of older victims of family violence are abused by their children, compared with the 28% who are abused by their spouses. That would indicate that the majority of elder abuse occurs outside of intimate partner relationships.

Bill C-16, as currently drafted, limits protections against intimate partner violence and creates a serious and indefensible gap. While an older person subjected to coercive control by a spouse would be protected, another abused by a child, grandchild or caregiver would not be. Harm does not change based on the relationship, and the law should not either.

We see the results of that gap every day. Psychological harm erodes a person's sense of self and, in many cases, their will to live. These conditions shape end-of-life decisions, increase mortality risk and quietly shorten lives.

The federal government is right to recognize coercive control as a form of gender-based violence and a precursor to femicide, but interpreting the scope of Bill C-16 too narrowly risks excluding a significant and gendered form of harm: when coercive control is exercised by family members, particularly against older women.

Older women face distinct vulnerabilities as they are living longer, are more likely to be widowed and are dependent on family for housing, financial support and basic necessities of life. Unlike intimate partner bonds, they are not relationships that can be easily exited. Leaving an abusive situation means risking homelessness, loss of care or complete isolation. These scenarios, or where dementia is an added factor and the older person cannot articulate what is happening, create forms of entrapment. It may not always result in femicide, but unchecked, it can result in prolonged suffering, neglect and preventable deaths.

To put this in context, as of January 2025, there were 771,939 Canadians aged 65 living with diagnosed dementia, with 414 being added each day, and of these, 61% are older women. Living with dementia does not mean forfeiting their rights to protections afforded others.

Expanding the scope of the bill to include relatives and informal caregivers does not stretch the intent of the bill. It fulfills it. House procedure is clear: Amendments must remain within the principle and scope of the bill. Addressing coercive control in family relationships, where the same patterns of domination and harm are mirrored and exist, directly aligns with its purpose. To exclude these relationships—

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Ms. Hajek, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but your time is up. My job is very thankless.

Ms. Parker, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[*English*]

Naomi Parker (Co-Director, Kindex Research and Knowledge Centre): Thank you, members of the committee and Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to appear before you today.

My name is Naomi Parker, and I'm appearing on behalf of Kindex Research and Knowledge Centre. Kindex supports the 51 child youth advocacy centres across Canada in generating evidence and mobilizing knowledge about best practices in responding to child abuse.

I am also the director of research at Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre in Calgary, Alberta, where we respond to the most complex and severe cases of child abuse through an integrated and trauma-informed model. More than 140 professionals from child protection, law enforcement, health care and victim services, as well as Crown prosecutors, work together under one roof, supported by tools such as accredited facility dogs and remote testimony courtrooms. This coordinated approach allows us to respond faster and reduce system-induced trauma to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children and youth.

It is from this frontline and research-informed perspective that I want to voice my support for the intent and direction of Bill C-16,

which includes several reforms directly relevant to protecting children and youth. I want to thank my colleagues Lindsay and Leah for the relevant content that they've already spoken to. As Leah mentioned, we have submitted a full brief.

Today I would like to focus briefly on three pressing issues where targeted amendments and implementation considerations could further strengthen the bill's impact for children and youth.

The first is around sentencing for child sexual offences. It remains inconsistently applied, despite Supreme Court guidance in *R v. Friesen* that these crimes are inherently violent and cause profound lifelong harm. We ask that the progress on mandatory minimums in this bill be paired with the introduction of graduated sexual offence categories to enable the justice system to respond proportionally to the full range of harms experienced by children and youth. Without this proportional structure, very different forms of harm continue to be collapsed into the same offences, and this limits both accountability and recognition for victims.

Next, Bill C-16 appropriately recognizes coercive control as a stand-alone harm in adult intimate partner relationships, but it fails to extend that recognition to children, despite clear research and practice evidence that coercive control is central to child abuse, exploitation and trauma, including cumulative harm and harm to children who witness this control. This omission leaves some of the most common and damaging forms of violence against children legally under-recognized and structurally invisible.

Finally, formalizing consistent trauma-informed frameworks, including the presumptive admissibility of high-quality child forensic interviews that meet national standards, would strengthen evidentiary reliability while reducing retraumatization of children. This approach would better align legal process with what we know from research about child development, memory and disclosure, while improving both fairness and efficiency in prosecutions. These areas for future reform would complement Bill C-16 and further align the justice system with the lived realities of the child victims.

I want to emphasize from this research-informed and practice-informed victims' rights perspective that the real impact of Bill C-16 will be determined not only by what it promises in legislation but also by how it is implemented, enforced and resourced. For children and youth, legal rights that exist in theory but that are applied unevenly offer little protection in reality, particularly when the victim has no independent power or advocate within the system. A trauma-informed justice system requires deliberate implementation, clear accountability and sustained investment, including training for justice actors, infrastructure to support testimonial aids and mechanisms to assess whether the reforms are being realized consistently across jurisdictions.

Importantly, much of this implementation capacity already exists. The national Child and Youth Advocacy Centres network provides coordinated victim-centred and trauma-informed systems whose core mandate is child protection and victim support. Strengthening this network of 51 members across the country is a practical and efficient way to ensure that Bill C-16 translates into real, protective change for children, not just procedural reform on paper.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill on ways that can meaningfully improve safety, participation and outcomes for children across Canada. Thank you.

• (1800)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Parker.

We will now begin the first round of questions.

Ms. Kronis, you have the floor for six minutes.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Ms. Zille, it's always a pleasure to have someone here from my home province of British Columbia.

I want to pick up on your comments about the justice system not being designed with children in mind and the opportunities you described to build on what's being proposed in Bill C-16 in terms of the importance of ensuring that children feel supported, safe and believed.

In particular, online child sexual exploitation cases in B.C. have risen dramatically, as you know, more than doubling between 2021 and 2023, with the B.C. RCMP reporting almost 16,000 cases in 2023, which is up from 4,600 in 2021.

Bill C-16 does include measures to protect children and address exploitation, but from your perspective, does it prevent repeat harm from known offenders?

Leah Zille: Can I ask you to repeat that one more time?

Tamara Kronis: I was wondering whether you see anything in Bill C-16 that would help prevent repeat harm from known offenders in the context of the explosion in child sexual exploitation cases that we see in B.C.

Leah Zille: I don't know if I have a solid answer to that, but in terms of supporting children, our Child and Youth Advocacy Centres are designed to support those children when they come in through our doors.

Tamara Kronis: Thank you for that.

Could you speak a bit to what happens to a young or disabled person psychologically when they're targeted multiple times by the same individuals?

Leah Zille: When we see children having...

I'm sorry. Just give me one second to organize my thoughts.

Tamara Kronis: While you're doing that, I might turn to the witness from Boost.

How easy is it to keep offenders off technology when they're out on bail?

Lindsay Jolie: That's an interesting question but one that I think is outside my scope of expertise. That would be, I think, part of bail conditions, which I'm knowledgeable about, but I'm certainly not an expert in that area.

You asked a question earlier about repeat offenders. Adjustments to the mandatory reporting act seen in Bill C-16 would support that reduction in repeat offenders through law enforcement having access to fulsome materials when they're conducting an exploitation investigation, where they will have full records and the preservation period is extended. I believe that would allow for better evidence collection by providing more information and maybe making it easier to bring that individual to justice. I think that could be related, though I'm not a law enforcement expert. I'm only speaking to my experience working in the child advocacy space.

• (1805)

Tamara Kronis: Thanks. I'm coming at this from a place where we've seen high recidivism, and I'll give you an example: A Nanaimo man was arrested just a couple of weeks after being released on a child sexual abuse possession charge.

You went into detail about the steps of exploitation. You talked about the grooming and the threats. What I want to ask you about is that every single one of those things is a separate offence. In circumstances when someone, say, shoplifted, was arrested and released, and then stole a car—and we have a lot of situations locally of someone returning to the scene of the crime—what happens is that each one of those counts in terms of trying to decide whether the person will be let out on bail the next time something happens.

In child luring cases and in child sexual exploitation situations, a lot of the time we don't actually find out that four or five crimes have been committed until after the person is arrested. The luring is a crime, the threat is a crime and the distribution of the material is a crime, but they are often characterized as one offence.

One of the things that Bill C-16 would not do is remove the principle of restraint in bail conditions. I'm wondering whether you think it would be important for this bill to recognize each of the crimes that are encapsulated in a single charge as separate crimes for the purposes of bail.

Lindsay Jolie: That's a really big question. Again, I want to say that it's a bit outside of my area of expertise.

I think bail conditions are a really important aspect of the criminal justice system, particularly for our young victims. They are often the only things that are keeping that child safe or allowing that child to have a sense of safety, because so often offenders are released while they're awaiting trial. Though I can't speak specifically to it, I do think that any way we can increase those—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Jolie and Ms. Kronis.

Mr. Chang, the floor is yours for six minutes.

[English]

Wade Chang: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Zille, from your perspective, how important are the protections in Bill C-16 for improving outcomes for young victims?

Leah Zille: When it comes to things like testimonial aids for children, we're definitely seeing progress in the right direction. However, there are still opportunities within the bill to strengthen those responses for kids.

We know that testimonial aids reduce stress and trauma for children participating in court. They support clear and more complete evidence, and without them, some children are unable or unwilling to testify. This really is about how, when we're strengthening those aids, we're making participation possible. We see a direct difference in how children engage when those supports are in place.

Wade Chang: Could you please speak to the importance of trauma-informed approaches when prosecuting offences involving children?

Leah Zille: Keeping children at the centre is absolutely critical. The goal really is around being able to balance participation in the system and procedural fairness, but that's really ensuring that children have a voice and an opportunity to be heard, and that the system is wrapping around them to reduce stress and support their participation in the process so that they can get on the path to healing.

Wade Chang: How do measures like evidence preservation and strengthened tools for online harm support the work being done by an organization like yours?

Leah Zille: I think that question might be better directed to Dr. Parker, who has some of the background on forensic interviewing.

• (1810)

Naomi Parker: Thank you, Leah.

I will answer a bit about child forensic interviewing, but I believe you're asking beyond that scope as well with the online harms.

Children give their most accurate evidence when they're interviewed once, early, by trained professionals, yet our system still re-

lies on repeated in-court testimony, which retraumatizes children and degrades their reliability. Presumptive admissibility of high-quality forensic interviews would reduce that harm, improve evidence quality and strengthen—not weaken—fair trials under Bill C-16.

Wade Chang: Okay. Are there any additional supports or resources needed to ensure these legislative changes are effective in practice?

Naomi Parker: If presumptive CFIs were included, which is not currently in the bill, but if they were, we would need to set up national standards. There are evidence-informed protocols that other countries have adopted, such as the NICHD, which is the acronym they use, and the training would need to be standardized across police forces for how they're implemented.

In terms of further training, there would also need to be judicial training on the understanding of how those child memories play into the child forensic interviews, and trauma-informed adjudication beyond the kind of sexual assault myths, which currently exist in the training that currently exists.

Wade Chang: Thank you very much.

My next question is for Ms. Hajek.

Elder abuse is often non-physical. Does the current legal framework adequately capture coercive and controlling behaviour?

Marta C. Hajek: Not necessarily...no. What we're trying to do by providing some insights around this is to make sure that coercive control extends to all persons who are relevant in the older person's life in providing care, formal or informal.

Wade Chang: Would Bill C-16 improve protections for seniors, or do significant gaps still remain?

Marta C. Hajek: Again, we want to ensure the language includes older adults and those people they have relationships with who either are providing basic necessities of life or are within their social support networks. As it is right now, it's not sufficient in terms of capturing that target audience.

Wade Chang: In your experience, what are the biggest barriers preventing seniors from reporting abuse?

Marta C. Hajek: The list is long, but first and foremost, it is the stigma of suddenly being judged that they have allowed this to happen to themselves, or the shame of disclosing to other individuals.

More importantly, if the older person is living in the same home as the abuser, there is always that threat and the fear of repercussions from actually reporting it. Also, for the most part, most adults do not want to incarcerate their family members. They just want the abuse to stop.

Wade Chang: I will now go to Dr. Parker again.

Your research highlights early warning signs. At what point should intervention occur to prevent an escalation?

Naomi Parker: Do you mean escalation of abuse?

Wade Chang: Yes.

Naomi Parker: I believe that by.... I'm not going to speak about the mandatory reporting as much, because my colleague Lindsay did.

There is training that could be done for allied professionals on the recognition and reporting of abuse, because there are very clear signs of what that looks like. We know that abuse that is repetitive and coercive has incredible harms. That does also connect to—although it's not what you're asking about—the need for graduated charges.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Parker and Mr. Chang.

I will now turn the floor over to our distinguished colleague Mr. Fortin, which is me. I will let the clerk keep track of my speaking time, which is six minutes.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Ms. Parker, I have a question for you about youth recruitment. Bill C-16 would create a new youth recruitment offence with a maximum sentence of five years. So we're talking about recruiting someone under the age of 18 to commit a crime.

Do you think the sentence provided is sufficient, should it be longer or is it useless?

[English]

Naomi Parker: Thank you for this question.

I'm not necessarily prepared to speak to the sentence length. That's not my area of expertise, but I will say, from decades of research and frontline experience, that this type of coercive control is central to child abuse and sexual exploitation.

Children are controlled through fear, dependency and the normalization of that. They will do things even without physical force, because they can sense that resistance feels unsafe or futile. That is a heinous crime that needs to be considered seriously.

• (1815)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Parker.

Ms. Jolie, in your opinion, does Bill C-16 properly address the issue of the recruitment of young people?

[English]

Lindsay Jolie: I have to echo my colleague's comments. It's not my area of expertise to talk about youth and crime. I am not prepared to respond to that.

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Is there anyone here who has expertise in this?

[Translation]

Ms. Zille, what is your opinion on the recruitment of young people?

[English]

Leah Zille: I think it's important to recognize that the work we're doing in child and youth advocacy centres is around supporting the victims of crime, and that recruiting isn't in our area of expertise. I don't have the expertise to be able to comment on that or have an opinion specifically on that piece.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you.

Ms. Hajek, your organization deals specifically with cases of elder abuse. That is something that concerns me and that I think is as important as the issue of harm to young people. Those people are often defenceless and need better protection.

Bill C-16 establishes a number of measures, including with respect to coercive and controlling behaviour. That will certainly help your clientele.

I would like you to tell me whether there are other measures that you think would help better protect seniors.

[English]

Marta C. Hajek: It's just the recognition that regardless of the language we choose in the legislation, it is essential to take this back to the experience of the older adult themselves. More often than not, they're afraid to disclose and they cannot tell their story. If they remain in isolation and behind closed doors, that escalates and often does lead to homicide or other things that are worse than that.

It's important for us to have conversations with older adults and to have an avenue where they are feeling empowered to safeguard their own selves in community. It really comes down to how everything we do as an organization is through that preventative lens. We're trying to educate older adults to look out for things like frauds and scams, but on the coercive control piece, it does limit a person's life when someone is taking control of the older adult's finances and they have limited health care access. Often that can lead to mortality as well.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): You say they need to be better informed. In your opinion, are the tools available sufficient, or should we consider providing other tools to train seniors on preventing potential fraud or abuse?

[English]

Marta C. Hajek: There is our organization, as well as the organizations across Canada, my colleagues who are involved in this work in various provinces and territories. There are a lot of resources out there. We have helplines, and we have different information and referral services.

For the most part, though, if the older adult is coerced, where they are isolated from the community and don't have access to those resources, there are other measures that can be put in place. For example, we can work through local police departments to do wellness checks, not necessarily showing up at the door in a uniform but checking in. We could also teach our neighbours to check on their neighbours. If you haven't seen somebody for a few days, what's to stop you from knocking on the door and saying, "I haven't seen you for a while. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

As a society, we have an obligation to look out for each other and to be supportive of those who don't have those resources.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Ms. Hajek, as you probably know, Bill C-16 addresses the issue of femicide. Do you have anything to say about that?

Is femicide of elderly persons widespread or is it more uncommon as of a certain age? What are your thoughts on that?

[English]

Marta C. Hajek: In 2024, for example, there were 7,622 police-reported senior victims of family violence. In Ontario, nearly half, or 47%, were femicide victims, and most of those were over the age of 55. They were killed by a family member, and often the accused was their son. It is escalating. Different review committees have commented, like the Ryan inquest, for example, and there are recommendations within those inquests on how to deal with it.

• (1820)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you, Ms. Hajek. My time is up.

Mr. Lawton, you now have the floor for five minutes.

Andrew Lawton: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Dr. Parker, you mentioned in your opening statement that you would propose graduated offences and have a range there. We haven't had the benefit of receiving your brief yet. Could you explain what it is you're referring to, please?

Naomi Parker: Our current criminal law treats child sexual abuse as discrete acts, and there's one section in the Criminal Code, section 271, which is the one charge available. Without graduated offence categories, it means that very different forms of sexual abuse, for example, an unwanted touch of a breast or long-term, repetitive penetrative sexual assault, are absorbed into the same charge. It obscures the differences and the severity of the impact.

This directly contributes to the inconsistent charging and sentencing, and it can leave survivors feeling that the system did not

fully understand what happened to them. It also does not give police and prosecutors clear tools that can help them better match the realities they investigate. That's why I paired that conversation with the conversation around mandatory minimums.

Andrew Lawton: I realize and respect that your expertise is on the victims and not necessarily on the law itself. However, is it your view that it would perhaps insulate us from having to deal with a safety valve and some of the reasonable hypotheticals that could come up in a legal discourse surrounding mandatory minimums because there's so much latitude under what is currently being captured by the offence versus what you're proposing? Is that what you're getting at?

Naomi Parker: I'm definitely not a constitutional lawyer, so I'm not going to speak about the safety valve. However, I think that the graduated offence categories, which we have heard about repeatedly from police officers we work with, would help them in the investigative process. It would help them recognize the harm happening to the victims and the level of evidence available to support them.

Andrew Lawton: Just to confirm, have you already submitted that recommendation to the committee clerk?

Naomi Parker: That specific recommendation is not in our brief, but I can follow up and put it in.

Andrew Lawton: I would appreciate it if you could do that quickly. We're going to be doing our clause—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Hold on a second, Mr. Lawton; I've stopped the clock.

Ms. Parker, could you slow down a bit? The interpreters are having trouble keeping up with you.

[English]

Andrew Lawton: Thank you. Usually, it's me who has to slow down their speaking, so welcome to my world, Dr. Parker.

If you could submit that—and do it rather quickly, if you're able to, as we'll be doing clause-by-clause review on Monday—I'd be very interested in seeing what you believe would help the legislation.

On the victim side of things, I have spoken to the committee before about my experience. I was a victim of sexual abuse as a child. When I was grappling with this as an adolescent and into adulthood, the idea of having to testify about it was a terrifying experience even then. Children don't have the maturity or awareness to know to be terrified because it is such a foreign experience.

We also have due process. Any time justice legislation comes before this committee, we end up in this back-and-forth where victims' rights seem to be subordinated to the rights of offenders and whatnot.

Could you speak, from your experience, to the lasting scars that can come not just from the victimization, but from the way the legal system can aggravate and recreate that victimization?

Naomi Parker: Absolutely. The justice system, as it exists right now, is driven by system capacity, fragmented investigations and repeated adjournments, so children often wait years to provide their case, and their disclosures are duplicated or trials are postponed.

We know children's memory is affected by their developmental stage as well, so when they have to tell their stories repeatedly when they are questioned in a court, it absolutely creates trauma. We know that children and youth are recanting and choosing not to participate in the system because it is causing them so much harm.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Ms. Parker, our interpreters are at a loss. I would respectfully ask you to slow down, if possible. It's not your fault, it's the system's fault. Thank you in advance.

• (1825)

[English]

Andrew Lawton: I appreciate your trying to help me maximize my time, nevertheless, Dr. Parker.

I have just one final question I'll ask you.

When we have these discussions, how much of this do you believe is a legal issue that needs to be solved within the legislation versus training and awareness issues that need to be dealt with through the provincial court systems and also through police agencies?

Naomi Parker: I definitely do not see it as black and white or either-or. There are definitely system capacity issues, but the system is trying to do everything for everyone. You need to protect the accused's rights, the victim's rights and the system itself. There are definitely training issues, but there are also judge and Crown prosecutor capacity issues.

At Luna, specifically, we can assess a case within four days—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you very much, Ms. Parker.

If I understand correctly, Mr. Housefather and Ms. Dhillon are going to share their speaking time, which is five minutes. I'll let them decide who goes first.

Anju Dhillon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll start with Ms. Hajek.

[English]

During consultations on coercive control, stakeholders noted that this is a complex and sensitive offence that requires system readi-

ness to be implemented effectively. The bill includes a two-year coming into force period to support that preparation.

From your perspective, how important is it that this type of implementation period exist?

Marta C. Hajek: Respectfully, what we would like to see is... That two-year waiting period would leave so many other people behind. We hear cases of individuals every day who are experiencing the effects of abuse. They can't wait two years to suddenly become part of this legislation.

Anju Dhillon: You are proposing that it be done as quickly as possible.

Marta C. Hajek: Yes, I am. For example, for someone who has been coerced out of their life savings and now has to live in a box under the expressway, has been left homeless or is maybe living in their car, what recourse do they have? Is it to wait two years for legislation to change, or is there something we can implement sooner to help improve their quality of life?

Anju Dhillon: We have heard of an interest in whether similar approaches could apply in other contexts. Given the complexity of this new offence, how important is it to continue engaging with stakeholders and fully assess how it is working before considering any further expansion?

Marta C. Hajek: Respectfully, I think the consultative process has been exhausted. We can give countless examples of situations we deal with every day. Prior to COVID, we were dealing with maybe 250 cases. Now we are doing 1,900 within three months. That should tell you the increase in terms of what that abusive behaviour is doing to the older population.

Anju Dhillon: In your opinion, what could be the cause of this pronounced increase?

Marta C. Hajek: People are finding more heinous and more complex ways of undermining the autonomy and independence of an older person. Again, when COVID happened, a lot of families lost their jobs or whatever. Suddenly, they were moving into their mother's or father's home and taking it over. Where the older adults had command of this home and welcomed their children, they're suddenly living in the basement and the family has taken over. They have little access to proper food, proper medication and proper health care.

Behind closed doors—and this is the hardest part for us to tackle—we really don't know what's going on. We would like to see consequences for coercive behaviour—and these home takeovers, for example.

Anju Dhillon: Are there elders who are approaching you when it comes to denouncing what's going on?

Marta C. Hajek: A lot of the time, an older adult is reluctant to disclose what's happening because the very person who is abusing them is also the one they rely on for the basic necessities of life, so they're very guarded in terms of revealing what's actually happening. Unlike in children's abusive situations, where you can call children's aid, there are really no adult protective services that you can pick up the phone and call and someone suddenly swoops in and changes what's happening in your home.

We need to be a bit more concerted in our efforts of reaching out to older populations and supporting them while they deal with these issues.

• (1830)

Anju Dhillon: I understand.

Go ahead.

Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you very much.

I want to come back to that because, of course, I agree that the number of senior scams going on is horrendous in terms of the grandparents scam and all of this. There's an increased amount of fraud against seniors that we need to educate about and deal with.

Coming back to coercive control, which is a criminal offence, I agree that we need to eventually expand this limited definition of coercive control to a broader group, like they do in the U.K. now in England and in one state in Australia. One of the most difficult things is that spouses don't have to live with one another at a certain point. With children and parents, it's harder to disentangle.

Do you believe that making this a criminal offence will cause more seniors to speak out and go to the police, or do you think the problem seniors have with denouncing this will just remain?

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Your time is up, Mr. Housefather, but I'll give Ms. Hajek a few seconds to answer your question.

[*English*]

Marta C. Hajek: It will take more than a few seconds. I would be happy to provide additional information in a written brief.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Rhéal Éloi Fortin): Thank you very much, Ms. Hajek.

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today. I apologize for the interruptions; unfortunately, that is a constraint we are under.

Your testimony is important to help us better understand various situations and find the most appropriate solutions.

If any of you want to send us additional information or documents, please feel free to do so. The clerk will get them to us.

Thank you and have a nice evening.

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

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

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

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

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

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