



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 022

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Chair: Marilyn Gladu



Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 22 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

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

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of members and witnesses here today. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those who are participating by Zoom, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic. Please mute yourself when you're not speaking. For interpretation, if you look at the bottom of your screen, you can pick floor, English or French to get the translation you would like. If you wish to speak, raise your hand. All comments should be addressed through the chair. Thanks for your co-operation on that.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, September 15, 2025, the committee will resume its study of anti-feminist ideology.

Now, before we welcome our witnesses, I'd like to provide a trigger warning. We'll be discussing themes and experiences related to anti-feminist ideology. This may be triggering to viewers with similar experiences. If any participants feel distressed or need help, please advise the clerk. For all witnesses and members of Parliament, it's important to recognize that these are difficult discussions, and so let's be compassionate in our conversations.

Let's welcome our witnesses.

[Translation]

As an individual, we have Tristan Boursier, doctor of political science.

From Les 3 sex*, we have Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil, director general.

[English]

From the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, we have Dina Haddish, members' coordinator. Welcome.

[Translation]

Let's begin with opening statements from the witnesses.

Mr. Boursier, you have five minutes.

Tristan Boursier (Doctor of Political Science, As an Individual): Thank you Madam Chair, members of the committee.

Thank you for inviting me to appear today on the important topic of antifeminism.

Antifeminism can be defined as a counter-movement. As such, it opposes feminism as a social movement. It opposes the core value defended by this movement, namely gender equality. Contrary to popular belief, antifeminism is not limited to sexist attitudes or ordinary misogyny. It is primarily a political world view based on the core idea that inequality between women and men is not only natural but also desirable. As such, antifeminism is an ideology in its own right that seeks to challenge, hinder or reverse progress towards equality.

It's important to emphasize that antifeminism is not a new phenomenon. Historians such as Christine Bard have shown that it has existed throughout the centuries in different forms. My work, however, doesn't focus on historical forms of antifeminism, but rather on its contemporary manifestations, particularly in digital spaces.

My research focuses mainly on Quebec and France. Nevertheless, in a globalized digital environment, it is impossible to ignore the influence of the United States, where online antifeminism is especially well structured, visible and economically attractive. Messages spread, translated and adapted, and they cross national borders with great ease.

More specifically, I'm interested in key players in this ecosystem: influencers. These are individuals whose main activity is to produce and disseminate digital content that promotes an antifeminist world view, such as videos, podcasts, memes, or paid training courses.

These aren't fringe actors; they sometimes have very large followings and develop real business models based on capturing attention. The world view they promote is very often masculinist. Masculinism can be understood as a subcategory of antifeminism. It is based on the idea that feminists have gone too far, causing a supposed masculinity crisis. According to this narrative, we now live in societies dominated by women and feminism, to the detriment of men, who they believe must therefore be protected.

Masculinist actors thus present themselves as defenders of men in direct opposition to feminism. This discourse is based on a logic of reversing power relations. Historically dominant groups are described as victims, while feminist struggles are presented as oppressive. In the cases I study, this kind of speech isn't strictly ideological; it also has an economic component and it causes real-world violence.

Antifeminism is becoming a way to monetize online content: It is a product to be sold, a lever for visibility and revenue that encourages harassment and hate speech. Digital platforms play a central role here. They facilitate the mass dissemination of this content, its algorithmic recommendations, and its access by increasingly younger audiences. This discourse is often the result of dissemination tactics that make it difficult to identify or counter with existing legal mechanisms. Nevertheless, it contributes to normalizing deeply unequal representations of social relations between the genders.

My work shows that contemporary antifeminism is not just a fringe phenomenon. Rather, it's part of a broader strategy to spread reactionary ideas. I'm increasingly seeing a convergence of antifeminism and the far right. This convergence can then feed into partisan strategies for mobilizing the male vote.

Understanding antifeminism as a structured ideology, promoted by identifiable actors and amplified by digital environments, is essential to grasping its social and political effects. This is more than just a debate about abstract ideas; it is a phenomenon that influences our perceptions, our socialization trajectories, and ultimately our relationship with democracy itself.

Thank you for your attention, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, you have five minutes.

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil (Executive Director, Les 3 sex*): Thank you.

Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the organization I lead, Les 3 sex*, which fights for the sexual rights and sexual health of women and LGBTQ+ people.

I'm sure that the individuals and organizations that testified before me have made the same observation: Antifeminist and masculinist ideologies are no longer a fringe phenomenon. They're on the rise across the country and now shape a significant part of our social and digital landscape.

These days, comments that dehumanize women and reject gender equality circulate freely both online and off-line. Too often, this rhetoric is portrayed as simply harmless or innocuous opinions. However, these ideologies have very real consequences for the dignity, safety and health of women and girls in Canada.

Behind this rhetoric lies a well-organized online ecosystem called the manosphere. It includes various masculinist communities, such as pickup artists, men's rights activists, incels and others,

who share common beliefs such as hatred of women and feminists, victimization of men and the legitimization of control and violence against women.

The figures are alarming: In Canada, one in five women has been a victim of online harassment, 80% of educators say they have witnessed sexist or masculinist behaviour among young boys, and a quarter of young people aged 13 to 18 report having experienced at least one form of technology-facilitated sexual violence.

These data aren't abstract; there are real lives behind them. Violence promoted and normalized in the manosphere can have serious consequences such as isolation, psychological distress, depressive symptoms, self-harm and even suicidal thoughts, especially as the manosphere increasingly targets very young boys. In Canada, 47% of young people aged 12 to 17 are exposed to sexist or racist content online at least once a week.

The problem is obviously not young boys. The problem is the narratives they're being fed: simplistic narratives where women become scapegoats and male domination is presented as a solution to their insecurity. These narratives have real consequences. A survey of 1,400 students in six Montreal high schools reveals that more than one-third of boys, or 34%, believe they should have the right to control who their girlfriends interact with. These narratives take root all the more easily because they are disseminated insidiously. Research shows that a simple online search, for example for physical exercises, can lead to content from the manosphere in just a few videos.

Faced with these worrying findings, however, we must not give up.

It is still possible to take action. The studies are clear. To curb the rise of masculinist ideologies, we must invest heavily in prevention, education and awareness. This isn't about stigmatizing boys, but about providing them with safe spaces to develop their critical thinking skills, understand the mechanisms of online radicalization, deconstruct antifeminist discourse, and reflect on models of healthy, egalitarian and non-violent masculinity. Moreover, this education doesn't end at school.

Adult men who have completed their schooling also need tools for digital literacy and prevention of antifeminist radicalization. In the field, community organizations are already doing this essential work. They're involved in prevention, awareness raising, support, research and crisis intervention. They are developing tools to counter misinformation, support victims and empower young people. These actions are effective; they reduce adherence to masculinist rhetoric and prevent the radicalization of hundreds of young boys.

However, these organizations are running out of steam. Demand is increasing, situations are becoming more complex and resources aren't keeping pace. Without stable, predictable and structured funding, it becomes extremely difficult to take action upstream, where prevention is most effective. Your commitment can make a real difference. It can curb the rise of hatred, prevent violence and literally save lives.

Thank you.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

Ms. Haddish, now you'll have the floor for five minutes.

Dina Haddish (Members' Coordinator, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the committee for the invitation.

My name is Dina, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, or OCRCC. We are a provincial network representing sexual assault centres across Ontario. Our member centres work directly with survivors of sexual violence and provide survivor-centred, trauma-informed services in communities, public education and systems-level advocacy.

Our remarks today reflect what our member centres are seeing on the ground and how anti-feminist ideology is undermining survivor safety, disclosure and access to justice.

Based on the work of our member centres, anti-feminist ideology is not abstract: It is producing direct and material harm for survivors of sexual violence and the organizations that support them. Centres are experiencing intensified harassment and backlash, including coordinated online attacks, intimidation at survivor-led events and the spread of narratives that frame feminism and survivor advocacy as ideological, deceptive or harmful. This environment is creating a chilling effect on disclosure and help-seeking. Survivors are choosing not to report sexual violence, not to testify, not to attend public events and not to seek services due to fear of online pile-ons, doxing and reputational harm.

Member centres are also seeing weaponization of legal and administrative processes being used to intimidate and silence survivors and service providers. The result is not less sexual violence, but less disclosure and reduced access to supports.

It is also essential for us to situate anti-feminist ideology within a settler colonial context. Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identify sexual violence as an ongoing consequence of colonial practices, institutional failures and systemic inequality. The MMIWG2S report in particular names this violence as persistent and structural rather than isolated. Anti-feminist ideology reinforces these conditions by denying systemic harm, dismissing survivor-centred and feminist analysis, and resisting accountability for state and institutional failures to prevent sexual violence.

Anti-feminist ideology does not take hold in a vacuum. It is enabled by structural conditions that weaken responses to sexual violence.

First and foremost, precarious funding to sexual assault centres, particularly for public education and prevention work, limits the sector's ability to counter misinformation, respond to harassment and engage in sustained efforts to challenge rape myths.

Second, there is a lack of coordinated national data on sexual violence, which undermines evidence-based policy-making and allows misleading narratives about prevalence, reporting and credibility to persist.

Third, gaps in trauma-informed and survivor-centred responses, especially within legal and institutional systems, create conditions in which survivors of sexual violence are retraumatized or disbelieved and anti-feminist narratives appear legitimate.

The impacts of anti-feminist ideology are not evenly distributed. Indigenous, racialized, migrant, queer, trans, two-spirit and disabled survivors face compounded barriers to disclosure, credibility, safety and justice. These survivors are more likely to experience intensified scrutiny, disbelief and retaliation when they come forward.

Addressing anti-feminist ideology and its impacts on survivors of sexual violence requires concrete policy action. We urge the committee to consider the following.

The first is stable long-term federal funding for sexual assault centres, including funding dedicated to public education and prevention work that combats masculinist, anti-feminist ideologies.

The second is stronger protections against the misuse of legal and administrative processes to silence survivors and sexual assault centres.

The third is meaningful implementation of the TRC calls to action and calls for justice related to sexual violence prevention, trauma-informed systems and accountability.

Anti-feminist ideology is making it harder for survivors of sexual violence to come forward. If we are serious about safety, mental health and justice, this reality must be addressed.

Thank you for your time. I welcome the committee's questions.

• (1115)

The Chair: Now we're going to go into our rounds of questions.

When there's one minute left in the time, I will give you the yellow card, and when there are 30 seconds left, you'll get the red card.

We're going to start our round of questions with Ms. Roberts for six minutes.

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses. I appreciate your time. Hopefully, we can come to some ideas on how we can improve the situation.

I'm going to ask all three of you to comment on the education piece. Does anyone have any numbers on how individuals were educated to stop their anti-feminist thinking?

Let's start with Tristan.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Do you want to answer the question, Mr. Boursier?

Tristan Boursier: Thank you for the question.

I don't work in the field of education specifically, so I don't have any recommendations to make on that issue. I would just like to point out that it seems to be an interesting avenue to explore, as highlighted by many of my colleagues who are specialists in the field.

I would also like to point out that schools are up against some extremely powerful players: the digital giants and social media. These players are creating a favourable environment for antifeminism, and they are in direct opposition to our schools. The question is whether schools are strong enough to stand up to these players who are attacking them directly.

[*English*]

Anna Roberts: Okay, thank you.

Would anyone else like to add anything to that?

Dina Haddish: Yes, I'd like to respond.

Research and practice show that anti-feminist thinking can be reduced through early education, specifically on healthy masculinities, on consent, on healthy relationships and on engaging men and boys as allies. Sexual assault centres have been leading that work in communities for decades, despite chronic underfunding and the really limited funds earmarked for public education. It's a cornerstone of the sexual assault centre model to integrate that public education piece to combat anti-feminist and hegemonic masculinities.

Anna Roberts: Last but not least is Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil.

[*Translation*]

Myène de Repentigny-Corbeil: Thank you for the question.

I agree, studies show that prevention, raising awareness and early education can help people think critically and challenge certain ideas. These studies are definitely relevant to the current movement.

I want to add that education isn't just about school. Many boys and Canadians who are no longer in school still hold these ideologies. They need to be educated and made aware, particularly when it comes to digital literacy, but also gender equality. This requires people who are on the ground and who can raise awareness.

To answer the question of whether there is specific data on the rise of antifeminism, I would say that this is a movement that is beyond us. Technologies are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Studies show that prevention will always help to deconstruct ideas that promote hatred.

[*English*]

Anna Roberts: If anyone does have any data, I'd really appreciate getting it because it'll help us to maybe advance that in our findings and ensure that we get that education piece in there.

My next question is this. We talk about anti-feminism. What about the parents? Where are the parents on this whole topic? Do you feel it's a failure of parenting?

Anyone can answer. I'm good with that.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Myène de Repentigny-Corbeil: I can try to answer that.

I don't think so at all. I think most parents have good intentions. I think there's a lack of understanding about what happens online. I think there's a need and a necessity for better digital literacy, a better understanding of control, of what's going on, but also, above all, a better understanding of what's happening online. It's about better understanding the terminology and what these ideologies can promote and how they unfold online.

I don't think it's the parents' fault at all. I think parents need this awareness and education to better support their young boys and better prevent the violence that can develop or the ideologies that these young boys can acquire at a very early age. There's a lot of focus on older children and later adolescence, but these ideologies can be transmitted as early as nine, 10, or 11 years old. Parents can play an important role, but they need to understand the situation and be aware of it.

[*English*]

Anna Roberts: I guess my question is this: If we are examples to our children and we project that in the home setting, do you not feel that this would generate beyond that, and if they are exposed to online activity, would that not be a deterrent?

I know that I've raised my son to treat women or men or anybody with respect.

Dina Haddish: I would like to respond.

Anna Roberts: Thank you.

Dina Haddish: I think supporting parents with resources is certainly essential, but it's part of a whole-of-community response and a whole-of-community approach to violence prevention.

We all have a personal responsibility to end not only anti-feminist attitudes but violence against women and gender-diverse people generally. Supporting parents with resources is part of that, because parents are essential partners in prevention, but it doesn't end with parents. There are coaches and teachers—

The Chair: That's the end of your time, Ms. Roberts.

Now we're going to Madame Ménard.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ménard, you have six minutes.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Boursier, Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, Ms. Haddish, thank you for taking the time to be with us today. Your expertise is a valuable contribution to our study, one which has been disturbing, and yet also fascinating. I believe I can speak on behalf of all my colleagues here today.

Mr. Boursier, I will start with you.

We are nearing the end of our study, and something in your opening remarks caught my attention. I feel that this is something that hasn't been explored very much. You say that the rise of feminist ideology has real economic consequences. I'm curious to hear more.

Tristan Boursier: Thank you, Madam Chair.

If I may correct you, it's the rise of antifeminist, not feminist, ideology.

What I observe in the field with my own data is that the discourse is not only ideological and political, but also, for these influencers, a way to make money, to monetize content. The two are intertwined. You have to keep both of these in mind to understand how this content and these ideas spread and manage to convince people.

Antifeminism is not new. As I mentioned, and as others have mentioned before me in this study, it has been around for a very long time. Christine Bard talks about antifeminism spanning centuries. However, what seems new is its intensity and its ability to reach younger audiences. That's why I'm focusing on digital social media to understand this.

In this context, I've noticed that antifeminist content posted by people who aren't necessarily antifeminists has increased significantly in recent years and seems to come with an increasingly professional approach to monetizing their content.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: So we can conclude that this is a business model for a lot of these people.

Tristan Boursier: Yes, I'd say so. Not everyone involved in antifeminism manages to turn a profit, but I do think that's what moti-

vates them. They have some extremely influential and popular role models. I won't name them here, as I think they've already been mentioned many times. This inspires other, much lesser known influencers who hope to cash in on this windfall too.

• (1125)

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Thank you, Mr. Boursier.

Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, you mentioned prevention earlier, and Ms. Haddish then echoed your point. Let's talk about it.

This doesn't necessarily apply to this committee, and that is a credit to its thoroughness, but what I've been hearing in the House since I arrived last April is that if prevention worked, we would know. Maybe the funds are being poorly invested and there's a better way to combat violence, and I'd like to hear your comments on that view.

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil: Yes. Thank you for the question.

I want to say straight away that it does work. Action is being taken. All the prevention efforts currently under way have prevented hundreds of young boys from being drawn into the manosphere, or at least encouraged them to think critically about these ideologies. Prevention works, but it needs to be stepped up because technology is advancing so quickly. Sometimes parents don't even understand the language being promoted; they wonder where it comes from and what it does.

There needs to be even more education at a very young age. As I said, young people see their first sexuality-related content online at the age of nine or 10. We need to educate them early on, but also as adults, because this awareness is ongoing and concrete. The data proves that it works and that we need to do even more to ensure that it keeps working.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Ms. Haddish, with regard to prevention and funding, if you would like to add your voice to that of Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, how can you enlighten the committee on the appropriateness of the government funding prevention?

[*English*]

Dina Haddish: Absolutely. It's incredibly relevant. I think our member centres see indicators every day that these programs do work, reduce harmful beliefs, encourage survivors to seek help and engage communities in dialogue about violence.

Chronic underfunding and limited reach mean that the impact is hard to see on a large scale. Data collection and scaling programs are difficult, so consistent investment in these things, coordination and support for community-based prevention efforts are essential if we want to see those long-term reductions in sexual violence and anti-feminist ideology.

Prevention works. It's just not an immediate fix. Changing attitudes, changing deeply ingrained social norms and behaviours takes sustained effort and time—years. If we want to see long-term reductions in sexual violence and anti-feminist ideology, I think we need to see consistent investment across the board.

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: In 30 seconds or less, Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, do you see a correlation between the rise of antifeminist ideology and the rise of transphobic and homophobic movements, which harm and endanger populations beyond women?

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil: Yes, it's all connected. They're based on the same foundations. It's a criticism of gender and its place in society, which restricts and confines gender to predefined roles. Sexism, homophobia and transphobia are all intrinsically linked.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Larouche, you have six minutes.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank our three witnesses, Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil, Dina Haddish and Tristan Boursier, for collaborating on this study. Listening to their opening remarks, I was reminded of the reason I wanted to study this issue.

We'd heard about the rise of antifeminism, of course. Two years ago, around International Women's Day, the Palace de Granby put on the documentary play *Projet Polytechnique*. I admit that I was deeply disturbed that evening because, beyond the story of Polytechnique Montreal, it was the journey of a victim's cousin, who retraces the events and comes to wonder why, today, we still need to talk about the causes of this antifeminist movement. This play was first staged—I double-checked the dates earlier—in 2023 at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, then toured throughout Quebec. It is actually based on the discoveries made by the two authors, Mr. Dalphond and Ms. Boucher, who investigated the dark web, the manosphere and these groups, these masculinist movements, these influencers who recruit and feed the beast of the antifeminist movement.

At the end of the play, which was mandatory viewing for students at Granby CEGEP, one of the speakers in the play asked who knew Andrew Tate and who followed him on social media. He asked people not to be shy, that we weren't there to judge them. I was really surprised to see how many of the young men at the CEGEP followed this influencer.

So, we could talk about prevention, and I'll come back to that later.

Ms. de Repentigny, you mentioned the manosphere. Mr. Boursier, you also spoke about the rise of the far right and all the convergences that are occurring within these movements. Now, how do we intervene in this clandestine web, in this manosphere? Should we, as a government, equip ourselves with the tools to ensure that statements such as “It's just a shame that Marc Lépine didn't kill more of 'em” aren't allowed to remain in these spaces? These are

serious words in the eyes of the law. What do we do about what is said on these networks? How can we intervene as a government?

I apologize for my long remarks. I will let you speak now. I'm sorry.

● (1130)

The Chair: Mr. Boursier, you have the floor.

Tristan Boursier: Thank you for the question.

I would like to point out that, unfortunately, you don't need to go to the dark web to encounter this type of content. Several studies show, for example, that if you create a new TikTok account now, the figures vary, but it will take you less than a day to encounter violent and, more specifically, masculinist content if you identified yourself as a man in your profile. It happens extremely quickly. Social networks are very quick to suggest this type of content, and it is very difficult to counter with legal measures because it doesn't always take the form you mentioned, in other words, calls for violence or hatred. Sometimes they use very specific tactics such as humour, victimization or intertwining, meaning blending with other ideologies such as libertarianism, entrepreneurship or philosophical currents such as stoicism. It is this melting pot that allows masculinism and, more broadly, antifeminism to reach and influence a diverse audience among young men.

Andréanne Larouche: At this point, shouldn't someone be held accountable for what is said? Shouldn't large platforms be held accountable for hateful content that can be found on social media? Two years ago, following the documentary entitled *Je vous salue salope*, a petition circulated on this subject, which I supported. Some people are calling on the government to take action on hateful content.

Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil: Thank you for the question and for raising these issues.

I think it's always very difficult to see that we're not always moving forward in the same direction, and then that we're moving backward. I think we need to keep talking about Polytechnique because the reality is that there's still a lot of violence. I would also add that it's always a continuum. We tend to talk about “online” and “offline”, but everything is connected.

Ms. Haddish will probably agree with me: Online violence will have an impact on in-person violence. We're talking right now from a computer. You have your phones. Everything is intertwined as part of this continuum. When we see this online violence or hear these comments, they have an impact on everyday life.

I do think that the platforms should bear much of the responsibility. We saw it last year: Meta now allows us to say that women are objects and that homosexuality is a mental illness. I think the platforms have a responsibility. Then there's the fact that our power to act against the platforms is fairly limited. I think we need to focus on prevention and awareness, sharing information and encouraging critical thinking about this very insidious content. Think of Andrew Tate and the pickup artists movement, which shares workouts and ways to improve one's appearance, and so on. We need to develop a critical mindset towards this content, which is why awareness and prevention are so important.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Larouche.

[English]

Now we will go to Ms. Cody for five minutes.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for joining us at committee today. It's greatly appreciated to hear more from everyone.

My questions are going to be directed to Monsieur Boursier.

Can you tell us briefly, in your own words, what feminism is to you and how you would define anti-feminism?

• (1135)

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Boursier, you have the floor.

Tristan Boursier: Thank you for the question.

There are all sorts of feminist movements. There are several ways of looking at it. We also talk about waves when it comes to the history of feminism. In a nutshell, it's just about equality between genders, not just between men and women, but between all genders.

As I said in my introduction, antifeminism is opposition to this value, to this fight for equality. Just as there are a variety of feminist movements, there are also a variety of antifeminist movements. In the discussion, for example, we focused on masculinism, which is a subcategory of antifeminism.

[English]

Connie Cody: Thank you for that.

Would you agree that the number one job of government is to keep us all safe?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: Yes, safety is an important value in a democracy.

[English]

Connie Cody: Okay, that's great.

Now, I have here stats that actually show that from 2015 to 2024, intimate partner violence against women increased by 38.64%; hate crimes against women increased by 725%; and total sexual assaults are up by 76%. Would you agree or disagree, based on your definitions and the steady decline of women's safety, that this government

has anti-feminist policies? Are these policies doing a good job protecting and standing up for women?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: I haven't assessed the current government's policies, so I can't comment as a political scientist on their effectiveness. However, what I do see is that there's been an increase in various types of violence against women, whether they are crimes or offences, and that there's also been an increase in the acceptance of antifeminist values among the population, particularly among young boys.

[English]

Connie Cody: Okay.

You've dealt a lot with studying the online harms and what is happening.

This committee has hosted previously a witness who monetizes rhetoric specifically designed to sow division and create conflict. One of the quotes is, "I feel very honoured that I can break awful men's brains (and, apparently, careers) simply by existing".

Would you agree that female influencers who use their platforms to antagonize others and specifically create gender-based conflict are doing more harm than good to the cause of feminism?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: I don't know who you're referring to and the quote is out of context. This is the kind of issue we need to debate in a democracy, in a calm and non-violent way, and there are different ways to approach it. I can't comment further since I'm not familiar with the context of the quote.

[English]

Connie Cody: Okay.

My next question is for Dina Haddish.

I want to ask you the same question. Could you tell me briefly, in your own words, what feminism is for you and how you would define anti-feminism?

Dina Haddish: Yes, absolutely.

The sexual assault centre movement started with grassroots feminists organizing in the seventies. Feminism is a movement and a set of ideas that seek gender equality and justice, challenging violence, discrimination and barriers that affect women, girls and gender-diverse people.

Anti-feminism refers to those ideas and narratives we've discussed today that oppose or undermine feminist principles that are fundamentally egalitarian, often by dismissing gender equality, questioning survivor credibility in the context of violence and attacking organizations that seek to support gender equity and survivor safety.

In short, feminism works to reduce harms and promote equality, and anti-feminism works to resist that.

Connie Cody: In your line of work, you see a lot of harm being done to women, and you must notice that it has increased. Do you feel that in the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in the harms toward women?

Dina Haddish: Absolutely. Over the past decade, our member centres have seen a notable increase in harassment, intimidation and barriers to disclosure, as well as shifting social tides that allow folks to come forward and disclose more often, but without a subsequent increase in resources and supports for survivors. The harm may not always be reflected in official statistics, but the risks to disclosure, and to access to supports as well, have grown significantly over the past decade.

• (1140)

The Chair: Very good.

Now we go to Ms. Khalid for five minutes.

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to make a quick point. We're talking about the online space and anti-feminist ideologists dominating that space, yet we just asked you a question about the negative impacts of women trying to own that space and claiming their own identities online.

Dr. Boursier, if I may, can I please have your comment on that?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: I'm not sure I understood the question. Could you please be more specific?

[English]

Iqra Khalid: Well, we're talking about the online space. What we've heard in the testimony today is about it being dominated by people who are making money from anti-feminist ideology.

When we talk about women taking ownership of the online space as well—to be more identity-seeking, I guess, and to be proud of their identity—we tend to say, no, you should be a little more meek; you shouldn't be attracting attention to yourself, and you should continue to play the victim and be inside and not take ownership of that space.

Do you think that rhetoric is helpful to this conversation?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: Yes, absolutely. When we look at who antifeminists go after, namely feminist activists online, it's clear that feminist women are the first to be attacked by this rhetoric.

It's not just rhetoric, however. It's been said before, and I'll say it again: Violence can manifest in very concrete ways, such as the malicious online disclosure of personal information about feminist vloggers to encourage people to go to their homes and threaten them, or the disclosure of the names of their family members in order to harass them.

Obviously, harassment can be extremely intense and relentless; it can go on for a very long time. In fact, the documentary that's already been mentioned here, *Je vous salue salope*, shows very clear-

ly how this discourse is extremely virulent and primarily targets feminists and women online.

[English]

Iqra Khalid: Thank you for that. I really appreciate that analysis.

You talked about how feminists are being doxed, being targeted. Their lives are being threatened, and their charter rights are being violated.

Let's talk about accountability for these people. I know that a lot of the conversation around this study has been about prevention, which I think is very important, and about education, which I also think is very important, but it's a generational transition. As you said, Tristan, violence against women has been going on for centuries and thousands of years. Where are we with the accountability?

Our government has introduced Bill C-16 to address some of those exact issues that you mentioned of feminists and women being targeted online, in physical spaces and in workspaces. What more do you think we can do in terms of holding people to account who are using anti-feminist ideology to make money, to incite hatred and to further perpetuate the violence that women face, sometimes for political gain?

[Translation]

Tristan Boursier: Thank you for the question.

I haven't studied the bill in detail, so I won't be able to make an assessment. What I can say is that Canada is not the only country that is extremely concerned about the phenomenon. It exists in other western European countries, as well as our neighbour to the south, the United States.

The European Union, for example, has passed the Digital Services Act. It's not being applied 100%, but it has some worthwhile advantages. The act could be worth looking into, particularly since it requires platforms to be more transparent about their business model and the reasons why you are recommended online content that is sometimes hateful, anti-feminist or racist.

Making platforms more accountable through legal mechanisms is a path that absolutely must be considered, obviously.

[English]

Iqra Khalid: Thank you.

Mylène, do you want to comment on this as well?

• (1145)

[Translation]

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil: Yes, thank you.

It's not only feminists who are restricted, but all women who speak out, regardless of their political stripe. We cannot take part in this culture of victim blaming. We cannot tell a victim that she shouldn't have been online or that she shouldn't have shared a particular photo of herself. Instead, we need to go to the source, which is the people who perpetrate these acts.

[English]

Iqra Khalid: Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I mentioned the people involved with the play. Now I'm going to mention Guylaine Maroist and Léa Clermont-Dion from the documentary we're talking about, *Je vous salue salope*. I urge anyone who hasn't seen it to take a look.

Mr. Boursier, you talked about platform accountability, among other things. Marie-Eve Carignan, full professor and director of the UNESCO Chair in the Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism, believes something similar. She came to testify before the committee, as did David Morin, co-chair of the same research chair at the Université de Sherbrooke. He criticized the lack of statistics and research to properly document the rise in online radicalization and hate.

In your opinion as a political scientist, why is it important to get more data? What difference can that make?

Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil or even Ms. Haddish could also answer.

Tristan Boursier: I'll take the liberty of answering first.

Yes, I agree with that. There is a lack of resources on the issue and a lack of data across Canada. There are surveys, some of which are fairly localized, but with the current data, we have enough information to know that we need to continue to dig into the issue, because it's a worrisome situation that doesn't seem to concern only Canada. If we look at other countries where the phenomenon is somewhat better documented, such as the United States, or to countries where it is a bit more institutionalized, such as France, it is clear that this is extremely worrisome and disturbing.

Therefore, we need better tools so that we can later provide more resources and avenues for prevention and for the regulation of platforms.

Andréanne Larouche: Ms. de Repentigny-Corbeil, you work in the field, and you, Ms. Haddish, work in centres. How do you see this?

Mylène de Repentigny-Corbeil: One of the necessary methods is to ensure that, for every piece of masculinist content, there is educational content that is promoted to raise awareness online. It's important to involve the platforms as well, because they have a wide range of users and they can reach a lot of people.

While waiting for data, we have set up a project on the ground called Cyberheroes. It deals with masculinism and the rise of that

ideology. The problem is that, half the time, the content we are trying to promote online is reported to the platforms and then removed by them. We're being prevented from publishing it. The content is censored because it's too political, because we're talking about the far right and the rise of masculinism.

The Chair: Thank you. Mrs. Larouche's time is up.

Now we'll go to Ms. Vien for five minutes.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Thank you.

Good morning, everyone. I'll ask my questions quickly, because I have a little less time in this round.

Mr. Boursier, thank you for being with us today. You talk a lot about digital platforms. To your knowledge, would you be able to identify other forums where anti-feminism exists and evolves? I'm thinking, for example, of religious movements. I won't name one in particular. Even my religion, Catholicism, could be targeted for shortcomings such as the fact that women are not allowed to be ordained as priests. I'm thinking of religious movements, advertising or fiction programs, for example. Have you looked at the whole picture to determine whether, in addition to digital platforms, there are also other areas of public life where the phenomenon exists?

Tristan Boursier: I haven't measured the rise of anti-feminism across society. That would be an ambitious project that would take a lifetime of research, I think.

However, I will take the opportunity to say that online anti-feminism does not come out of nowhere. We live in a sexist and patriarchal society that anti-feminists can use to legitimize their thinking as desirable and "truthful" for them. This is something that happens.

As for religion, I'm not an expert. In my area, there is more in common with the Catholic religion, but that is likely not the only one. David Morin, I think, would have more to say on this than I could.

• (1150)

Dominique Vien: I understand that this isn't exclusive to the platforms, but what you're saying this morning is that they are often where this happens as we speak.

What do you have to say about the women who subscribe to this kind of model? I took note of what you said in your presentation about the business model. There are actually women who follow these men. Recently, before the holidays, there was a kind of big event in Texas attended by women who subscribe to the precepts and values promoted by men who subscribe to anti-feminism. What is your take on that?

Tristan Boursier: Yes, there are even female anti-feminist influencers. They are in the minority in the field I study. However, some of them are very high-profile. Being women gives them an excuse for making sexist or anti-feminist comments. They use the fact that they are women to say that it is impossible for a woman to make anti-feminist comments. This is something that has been studied in the literature on the subject. For example, researcher Magali Della Sudda has studied what she calls “right-wing women” and how women can speak out against gender equality while asserting their womanhood. There are internal tensions in their positions and in the battles they are waging. It's a whole topic in the literature, but these women are still in the minority, in any case, from what I observe.

Dominique Vien: We should also not throw out the baby with the bathwater. We should not rope in women who, with their partner, make the decision to stay at home to raise their children. That is their legitimate right.

You said that masculinism arose because, it claims, feminist women have gone too far. In what way have they gone too far in the opinion of men who denigrate women and don't believe in gender equality? How are they supposed to have gone too far?

Tristan Boursier: That would be giving these men a voice here, but their world view is quite disconnected from objective data. They feel that men are at a disadvantage in all aspects of our society, whether in the economy, politics or court decisions. As a result, they see themselves as victims of society. In short, they consider that feminism has gone too far in every respect.

I would also like to remind you that their narrative is different from a criticism of feminism that might come from feminists, insofar as they propose no alternative. They are also not saying anything that would be an egalitarian alternative to the feminism they criticize. This is clearly a blanket opposition to feminism in general.

Dominique Vien: I will close by saying that, when I was in college, at CEGEP, the father of my boyfriend at the time, when he learned that I played soccer, told me that it was a guy's sport. Today, there are girls' teams in hockey and in every other sport. Good news, all is not lost.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

For the final five minutes, we'll go to Mr. Chen.

Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll begin with Ms. Haddish.

For survivors of sexual violence who also identify as two-spirit, LGBTQ+, Black, indigenous or racialized, are crisis services and supports sufficient for them?

Dina Haddish: Thank you for this question.

Crisis services are essential, but they're not currently sufficient to fully address the compounded barriers that come with systemic racism, discrimination and culturally unsafe services, which make disclosure and access to support more difficult. Services exist, but

gaps still remain in providing culturally relevant, safe and trauma-informed approaches.

Centres do provide excellent support services, but structural inequities mean that some survivors experience additional barriers preventing full access to services. It definitely is an area that needs further investment.

• (1155)

Shaun Chen: It sounds like there are lived experiences that need to be shared to better understand the compounded barriers that women of colour, for example, face. Why do you believe those stories are not being heard?

Dina Haddish: When we think about rates of sexual violence, barriers to accessing reporting are already very high. Survivors facing repeated barriers without clear support reinforces the sense that their safety and voices are not prioritized.

Structural and effective action in that way requires investment from government in services to increase access to culturally relevant and sensitive services, not only for racialized folks but along the gamut of trans, two-spirit and gender-diverse survivors, to ensure that services are being not just replicated but tailored to specific contexts, marginalizations and structural barriers that folks experience.

Shaun Chen: Thank you.

What can the federal government do to better support survivors experiencing intersectionality and to ensure that organizations are working to address diverse needs in a culturally responsive way?

Dina Haddish: I think the biggest thing governments can do is support this by funding organizations to provide specialized programming. Sexual assault centres are operating at a deficit year over year to provide services. There are lengthy wait-lists. It's about funding organizations to provide services, period, but expanding that support to provide specialized programming for culturally relevant services, rooted in training staff in equity and cultural safety, is also extremely important.

Shaun Chen: Can the federal government do this work alone? Can the federal government solve this issue alone? Who are the other stakeholders who you believe need to be at the table to contribute to addressing these issues?

Dina Haddish: Absolutely. Violence prevention and response are the responsibility of all of us. It supersedes federal governments. It's federal, it's provincial, and it's at the local and grassroots levels as well. A piece of that responsibility lies with governments at all levels to ensure that we're not only providing [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] instances of gender-based and sexualized violence as they occur.

Shaun Chen: Thank you.

In speaking of the last 10 years, I know that we've seen in provinces and at other levels of government legislation being introduced that excludes and is harmful to trans and gender-diverse youth. How do policies like this impact the overall objective to create a more equitable society for women?

Dina Haddish: I would say that policies that are not inclusive of trans and gender-diverse survivors and youth create barriers, prevent access to services and reinforce stigmas, which undermines the goals of survivor-centred support and sexual violence prevention as a whole.

When we create equitable policies that can ensure that services, education initiatives and support services recognize and respond to instances of violence for a variety of gender identities, they create safer spaces for youth to come forward, to access help and to participate fully in prevention initiatives.

The Chair: That is the end of our time for the first panel.

I want to thank all the witnesses for their contributions today. That was great.

We'll suspend briefly to bring in the next panel of witnesses, and we'll come right back.

• (1155) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1200)

The Chair: We are back at it.

Before we introduce our new witnesses, I just want to give a few reminders. For the witnesses here in the room, you'll be able to get your hearing devices and set which language you want—English, French or the floor, which gives you both. It is the same on Zoom. It's at the bottom of your screen. I would ask that you wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. If you want to speak, raise your hand. For those on Zoom, please use the "raise hand" function. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Let me introduce our witnesses.

[*Translation*]

We have Francis Dupuis-Déri, full professor and member responsible for the *chantier de recherche sur l'antiféminisme* of the Réseau québécois en études féministes at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

[*English*]

We have Dr. Kyle Ganson, assistant professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.

[*Translation*]

We have Pascal Vaillancourt, director general of the Interligne organization.

Welcome to all of you.

Mr. Dupuis-Déri, we'll start with you for five minutes.

Francis Dupuis-Déri (Full Professor, Chantier sur l'antiféminisme, Réseau québécois en études féministes, Université du Québec à Montréal, As an Individual): Thank you very much

for having me. It's a real pleasure to be with you. I am pleased that the House of Commons is studying the issue of anti-feminism.

Along with others, I've been researching anti-feminism for over 20 years now. I've been awarded research grants. I've conducted research in partnership with women's groups in Quebec. I've published, as author or co-author, many books on anti-feminism. Some have been published in multiple languages. My work is cited regularly.

I'm currently completing research that might interest you on sexist, homophobic and transphobic students in Quebec's public elementary and secondary schools, in partnership with the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement, a union of elementary and secondary school teachers. We met with about 50 teachers. During my career, I have conducted probably at least 150 individual or group interviews with feminists on the issue of anti-feminism and handed out 200 questionnaires on the subject.

I will share my definition of anti-feminism with you. You've heard it from other experts as well.

Anti-feminism is a broad movement with various currents. As in all social movements and political forces, there are different currents, trends and priorities among anti-feminists. There's obviously religious anti-feminism. There are also nationalist anti-feminists. My interests lies mainly in the anti-feminism known as masculinism. This is the narrative that men are in crisis because of women, feminists and the feminization of society. It is often based on a narrative that refers to pseudoscientific theses, common sense, the stone age, mammoth hunters, comparisons of human beings with animals, often primates, or hormones. However, the pseudoscientific references are generally false, misleading and misunderstood.

The vast majority of masculinists are men, but some of them are women, as was mentioned in the previous panel.

In my book *La crise de la masculinité: autopsie d'un mythe tenace*, a study of this type of narrative, I found, based on the work of historians, that in the west, in Europe and North America, people have been saying that men are in crisis because of women for at least 500 years. In fact, today, men in every country, whether Haiti or the United States, whether they are the poorest or the most powerful in the world, say they are in a crisis of masculinity, whatever the political system, whatever the legal code, as we have heard for centuries.

I will continue quickly because I know my time is limited.

According to my understanding and my thesis based on socio-economic, sociopolitical and socio-cultural criteria, variables and indicators, men are not in crisis today because of women and feminists in Quebec and Canada. However, even a false crisis narrative can still have political, social and cultural ramifications.

A crisis narrative creates different things in the public sphere. First, it targets a problem. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the cause of the problem was obviously the virus. In this case, the problem is women and feminists. Women and feminists are designated as a problem for society, a problem for the family and a problem for men. A crisis narrative that is part of the public sphere designates victims. In this case, it's men, primarily heterosexual men, but also boys. A crisis narrative that is brought into the public sphere necessarily calls for help. It calls for resources to be mobilized to help victims. In this case, men are asking for resources and saying that too many resources have gone to women.

It sometimes even leads to misinterpretations, even from women's perspective. I noticed, for example, that last year the federal Department for Women and Gender Equality celebrated International Men's Day on November 19. In a way, it fell into the trap of masculinists, who were ecstatic. They want this international day, which has no official or institutional status, to be recognized. However, the Department for Women and Gender Equality decided to fall into the trap.

I will conclude by saying that the crisis can be expressed in extreme ways. In Canada, unfortunately, Ontario was the target of three anti-feminist attacks in 2018, 2020 and 2023. Two happened in Toronto, once with a van and once with a knife. Then, in June 2023, in a gender philosophy class at the University of Waterloo, the professor was attacked with a knife and two of her students were injured. All three attacks were overtly anti-feminist.

• (1205)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Now we'll go to Dr. Ganson.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Kyle Ganson (Assistant Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you so much, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to be here today.

The core problem I really want to highlight is the way that problematic masculine gender norms turn the male body into a social project, a visible performance of power, dominance and control. In this context, 25% of boys and men are engaging in any muscle-building behaviour; one in five boys is exercising to build muscle every day of the week; and 6% of males will use anabolic-androgenic steroids in their lifetime.

For many, this is not merely about fitness or aesthetics. It is about adhering to an ideal of manhood that carries significant social and political meaning. Online platforms supercharge this dynamic. Boys and men are drawn into endless feedback loops that insist that their worth, status and even safety depend on how their bodies look and perform. These loops are saturated with influencers and com-

munities across social media that position the male body as a symbol of transformation, functionality and social power.

Social media serves as a deep well of how-to knowledge for achieving and maintaining a muscular, lean and strong body and a chiselled, attractive face. Current trends like looksmaxxing and mainstream manosphere ideologies, namely that boys and men must maximize their attractiveness to compete in a world where they believe girls and women now have the power, are associated with appearance obsessions linking physical attractiveness to self-worth and comparisons that turn the body into a battleground, framing failure as personal inadequacy and success as a way to reclaim power.

The mental and social health consequences are significant. For many boys and men, the pursuit of these ideals is accompanied by anxiety, compulsive routines and deep insecurity rather than well-being. What's more, many of these behaviours correlate with physical fighting, weapon carrying, criminal offending, intimate partner violence and polysubstance use.

We know that eating disorders and muscle dysmorphia are also on the rise among this population. Many boys and men will be drawn into virtual spaces that promote misogyny and extreme ideologies, leading to anti-feminist beliefs.

There are three drivers to explain why these behaviours and ideas take hold.

The first is the idea of belonging. These communities provide a sense of identity and brotherhood, fostering mutual support and collaboration toward shared goals that many boys and men struggle to find elsewhere.

The second is status. The body becomes a visible marker of worth. Muscularity and physical attractiveness signal power in on-line and off-line hierarchies.

The third is control. In a world where many boys and men feel increasingly powerless, the body and the symbolism attached to it promise a way to regain control—of course, often at the expense of others.

What should we do? The solutions must be targeted, multifaceted and interdisciplinary, and they must be framed to call boys and men in and not push them out.

I offer five integrated recommendations drawn from this analysis.

First, we need to reframe masculinity as positive and inclusive and avoid isolating language. Using terms like “toxic masculinity” can alienate boys and men, hardening grievances and fuelling backlash. We should highlight how masculinity can be positive and inclusive to encourage more boys and men to participate in change efforts.

Second, we need to build and fund positive male communities. We need mentorship, coaching and peer engagement initiatives that reduce isolation and foster healthy environments where boys and men can practise connection, accountability and care without relying on the dominance script.

Third, we need to destigmatize and provide resources for mental health in boys and men. Share messages that normalize help-seeking for issues that are often seen as feminine, including anxiety, depression and poor body image. Help boys and men develop the language to identify, understand and express their thoughts and emotions clearly, and then create the space to listen.

Fourth, we need to promote health and media literacy with a critical perspective on masculinity. Help boys and men identify harmful online communities and health behaviours and encourage reflection on the body ideals associated with masculinity. This literacy inoculates against algorithmic feedback loops that tether self-worth to dominance and appearance.

Fifth, we need to address the root of the issue and enhance regulations for online platforms that enable the spread of content negatively impacting boys and men. Eliminating algorithmic rabbit holes and feedback loops that push men towards harmful content will help them, no matter what.

In closing, if we understand how the male body is being used to perform and perpetuate problematic masculine gender norms and how online platforms supercharge this dynamic, we can build pathways towards healthier, more equitable expressions of masculinity. These pathways keep boys and men engaged, reduce harm and improve mental and social health outcomes for boys, men and everyone else around them.

Thank you.

• (1210)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to Monsieur Vaillancourt.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for five minutes.

Pascal Vaillancourt (Director General, Interligne): Thank you, Madam Chair, for this invitation.

First of all, I would like to thank you for welcoming me.

My name is Pascal Vaillancourt and, since 2015, I have been the director of Interligne, formerly known as Gai Écoute, a community resource created by and for LGBTQ+ communities.

For 45 years, our flagship service has been a help, listening and information line available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, across Canada, in English and French. Each year, nearly

20,000 people use our service by chat, by telephone or by text message.

Although the majority of requests and services come from Quebec, since 2022, we have been actively working to raise Interligne's profile across Canada, particularly within francophone minority communities. Our team is trained and accredited in prevention and intervention for people experiencing suicidal ideation, which is essential in the current context of increasing distress.

Through our help, listening and information service, Interligne receives the stories, suffering and distress of LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones. Since the pandemic—but especially over the past two or three years—we have observed a clear intensification of this distress. There are more calls involving suicidal ideation and an increase in requests for help related to psychological distress. These findings are consistent with the minority stress model, which shows that repeated exposure to stigma and hostile discourse deteriorates mental health, leading to anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts.

Our internal statistics from the help line confirm significant increases in the following categories: discrimination and racism, up more than 308%; victims of violence, up 110%; concerns regarding the social climate and political context, up more than 119%; gender dysphoria, up 529%; and needs related to psychotherapy or support services, up more than 293% over the past year. We do not claim a single causal explanation, but these increases are consistent with the spread of hostile discourse that we document in our services and in our interventions.

To strengthen our observations, Interligne commissioned the polling firm Léger in 2024 to conduct a nationwide survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ communities. A total of 86% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported at least one mental-health challenge in the past year, compared with 64% of respondents outside the community. Seventy percent fear a rollback of rights, and 68% report experiencing at least one situation of discrimination or insecurity in the past 12 months. These results align with what we observe daily through our help, listening, and information services.

How does anti-feminist ideology fuel homophobia and transphobia?

On the ground, we're seeing that anti-feminist ideology and anti-LGBTQ+ discourse are increasingly intertwined. Under the guise of protecting women or children, narratives of moral panic and biological essentialism are used to exclude trans women and to normalize hostility toward LGBTQ+ communities. These dynamics, which are well documented in academic research, contribute to social polarization, the normalization of hate, and a significant rise in violence, with harmful effects both for LGBTQ+ communities and for the women who are ostensibly being “protected”.

Let's talk about trans women, particularly the targeted violence and discrimination they face.

Through our listening line and our legal clinic, a substantial portion of reported situations concern transphobic violence aimed specifically at trans women, such as workplace discrimination, refusal of housing or loss of housing, harassment, and explicit threats. These realities align with academic work conducted in Quebec and Canada on heightened vulnerability when public discourse delegitimizes identity and rights, including research from UQAM's research chair on sexual diversity and gender plurality.

Let's turn to the rise in generalized violence.

What our teams see day after day is a clear rise in violence. Calls and reports describe more frequent and more overt assaults, as well as threats and harassment that shift from the street to digital spaces, and vice versa. Dating apps, which should be spaces for social connection, have for many become places where they are exposed to hatred: homophobic or transphobic insults, organized traps to lure gay men or trans people into situations of intimidation or assault, and increased reliance on community-based protection mechanisms. We're talking about the sharing of screenshots in trans peer groups, peer-to-peer alerts, and so on. The result is fear, withdrawal, and chronic stress, with measurable consequences that we hear and respond to on our line every day.

Let's talk about our presence in schools.

In educational institutions, discomfort around LGBTQ+ issues is increasing, and hateful discourse is becoming normalized. During our classroom interventions, we hear more and more violent comments directed at these communities. Boys are significantly more likely to express such comments, according to what we observe and what community organizations working in these environments report.

• (1215)

Once again, we're also seeing the instrumentalization of rhetoric that presents itself as feminist in order to open the door to transphobic discourse. The idea is to "protect women" by excluding trans women. This is a form of benevolent sexism described in social-psychology research.

This context makes prevention more difficult, weakens safe educational spaces, and exacerbates the distress experienced by LGBTQ+ youth and by our facilitators, who now face at times intimidating comments in the classroom.

In conclusion, what we observe at Interligne through our listening service, our legal clinic, our work in schools, and our other programs confirms the reasons behind the deep distress experienced by LGBTQ+ people, which was also reflected in our 2024 Léger survey. The rise of a more radical and ideological right, along with anti-feminist ideologies, isn't merely theoretical. It's intertwined with anti-gender movements, fuels homophobia and transphobia, normalizes violence, and worsens psychological distress, particularly among trans women, non-binary people and youth. In this context, we must stand together. We therefore believe in the importance of strong political commitment to maintaining support resources for LGBTQ+ people, where quick and appropriate access—

The Chair: Thank you. I'm sorry to have to interrupt you.

Pascal Vaillancourt: That's fine. I was done.

The Chair: We may have some questions for you.

We're going to start with Ms. Vien.

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

Dominique Vien: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon. Thank you all for making yourselves available today.

Mr. Dupuis-Déri, welcome and thank you for being here today. I have many questions for you.

You said that men are not in crisis because of women. Are they in crisis? If so, why?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: My position is that we, as men, are not in crisis. That being said, men can have issues. Obviously, there are areas, realities and sociological consistencies that show that men have certain issues on a number of fronts.

If we look closely, however, we see that it's not because of women and that women are not mainly making the decisions. I'm thinking of socio-economic categories, for instance. We know that major socio-economic decisions are most often made by men. If men have issues, then women are not responsible for these issues, except of course when it comes to interpersonal relationships, where person X can obviously feel sad because of person Y.

• (1220)

Dominique Vien: You defined antifeminism and said that it's a movement with several undercurrents, including religious and nationalistic ones. Your interest is with the masculinist ideology.

Is there or could there be some intersectionality between the three? I'm referring to my earlier question to Mr. Boursier.

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Good question. When we started to study these issues with sociologist Mélissa Blais in the early 2000s, there was the separated and divorced fathers movement, who were sort of the public voices for the masculinist movement. I don't know if you remember that. We were curious and wondered where they stood on racism, immigration and so on. We didn't really find anything.

What we see today—and I think Mr. Boursier mentioned this with regard to the Internet—is an increasingly closer amalgamation of far-right positions, which are, unfortunately, much more prevalent now in our societies than they were 20 years ago, and masculinist ideologies. These ideas have resonance and find an echo in today's society. Both ideologies use mostly the same logic: they're victims of minorities, immigrants, other religions, the gender-diverse community and women. It's all about presenting men of the white majority as victims of something and stating that they need help. So there's a form of allyship there.

Dominique Vien: Thank you.

You mentioned, and your predecessor said more or less the same thing, that people have been actively fighting against equality for 500 years. Is there a path forward? Are we done for? Is there any hope?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: You're asking the wrong person: I'm pessimistic by nature. Of course, the women's movement in Quebec and Canada has achieved substantial progress over the last two or three generations. What women have gained is not insignificant.

However, there is pushback, which is to be expected—there's always some pushback when an unfair system moves toward fairness. In the world of political science, pushback is commonplace. We may wish there was none, but it's there. This form of equality is no exception. We have to understand that gender equality is complicated because it touches upon the most personal and intimate relationships. It's not like a statement of principle for pay equity, for instance, important as that may be. It's about interpersonal relationships, especially for heterosexuals, and family dynamics.

Dominique Vien: I've often said that it seems like there are fewer men in sectors occupied mainly by women in recent years.

You're associated with the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement for a research project. In day cares, in early childhood centres, in schools and even in high schools, there aren't enough significant male figures that go out and play football with the boys during lunch time so that they can expend some of that masculine energy they have in them. You see where I'm going with this. Is there a lack of guys in prominent roles to talk to our boys?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: I actually read the studies on the subject by Pierrette Bouchard, Jean-Claude St-Amand and other experts in educational studies. It is my understanding that whether teachers are male or female doesn't have a significant impact on educational outcomes. Also, no study has found any conclusive evidence on non-mixed schools. Some masculinists are suggesting that we should go back to separating children in boys-only and girls-only schools.

The recipe for doing well in school isn't complicated. Kids need to be encouraged to like reading. Easier said than done, I know. Sports can help kids feel more integrated in school, but purely from an educational standpoint, it's—

Dominique Vien: It's about having prominent, wholesome male figures who are comfortable in their own bodies, who respect women and who support equality. Are there enough male figures in key positions?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: We could have more, sure, but what I'm saying is that a good female teacher can guide boys to success.

• (1225)

Dominique Vien: Thank you.

Am I out of time, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Dominique Vien: Thank you very much, Mr. Dupuis-Déri.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Vien.

[*English*]

Now we have Ms. Nathan for six minutes.

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank all of you for being here. We could certainly benefit from the knowledge that you could share with us today.

I want to direct my first question to Professor Dupuis-Déri.

You've alluded to this. I just want to get your view and get you to elaborate on that. Do you feel like political leaders lately are using anti-DEI or anti-woke language to deliberately appeal to young men who are feeling angry or left behind? In other words, are political leaders using their social media to maybe attract men who hate women, by using their fear? Can you talk about this and give some examples of what you have seen lately?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Thank you very much for the question.

Far be it from me to engage in self-promotion, but I wrote a book in 2022 specifically on the anti-woke movement. That movement is actually an attack. We know that the word “woke” includes feminists, antiracists and the gender-diverse community. Attacking the woke ideology means attacking feminism and, of course, DEI programs, as you said.

It's old rhetoric that we've seen before in the U.S., at the time of Ronald Reagan, for example. You may remember that in the 1980s, they were already talking about angry white men who were the victims of every minority imaginable and saying that Black women and lesbians were stealing jobs. That was the narrative being pushed on TV and on the radio at the time, as documented by sociologist Michael Kimmel in the U.S., with that same example of a Black woman or lesbian coming to steal your job. That's what they wanted men to believe.

Just today, Fox News described Donald Trump's tariffs as “manly”. The Fox News chyron explained that Trump's tariffs will fix the masculinity crisis. That kind of rhetoric leads white men, mostly from the lower or middle class, to believe that they're victims of women and minorities. It's a real problem, because women aren't responsible for plants closing, for free-trade markets emerging and for businesses being relocated. That didn't happen because of women. Anyway, these men still have much better salaries, if only because they work in industries that still exist.

[*English*]

Juanita Nathan: Thank you so much for that answer.

I will go now to Mr. Ganson.

Mr. Ganson, I want to ask you about the AI tools that are used both to recommend content and to moderate online spaces, including detecting harassment, hate speech and non-consensual images. From your perspective, how do failures or biases in AI moderation systems contribute to the spread of anti-feminist or gender-based harassment online? Also, what impact does this have on young people's mental health and willingness to seek help or participate in public spaces?

Kyle Ganson: I think that's a great question.

We're already seeing, number one, AI-generated imagery or content in the context that I work in, which is body image and the perpetuation of body ideals, that is actually doing that. It's perpetuating a very particular appearance for males and females. That, of course, is perpetuating pressures for young people in particular to look a specific way. The content then gets promoted over and over again through the algorithms, through those rabbit holes, and through the engagement that happens online with people's comments, liking, sharing and so on. That is perpetuated by AI-generated algorithms, so it just continues to explode.

Of course, young people are on social media a lot, so they're seeing this information and they're internalizing this information. It can be very harmful to how they see the world and how they see themselves, leading to mental health struggles and leading to anti-feminist beliefs or misogynistic ideas, and so on.

Juanita Nathan: Thank you for that.

I'll go to Mr. Vaillancourt.

You were going to make some recommendations and we cut you off, so I'll give you some time to make those recommendations.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Pascal Vaillancourt: Actually, my recommendations are quite simple. We see the rise of hate everywhere. With the masculinist and antifeminist rhetoric being so prevalent, people need to be supported with robust resources. At this point in time, the ecosystem—I'm mostly talking about my LGBTQ+ ecosystem—is very fragile at the grassroots level. Interligne is the oldest community resource in Quebec. We've been active for 45 years and we're still very vulnerable. A lack of support for people in distress can lead to suicides and a lot of suffering.

One of our recommendations is to make sure that resources are maintained across the country, in every province, to support communities impacted by antifeminist rhetoric.

Of course, we also need to fund prevention and awareness campaigns in different communities to make sure that we can reach men from all walks of life.

Thank you.

[*English*]

Juanita Nathan: Thank you.

The Chair: Excellent.

That's the end of your time.

We will now go to Madame Larouche.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for six minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank our three witnesses, Mr. Vaillancourt, Mr. Ganson and Mr. Dupuis-Déri, for being here today.

Mr. Dupuis-Déri, something you said in your remarks caught my attention. Regarding International Men's Day on November 19, you said that the government fell into the trap. Can you expand on what you meant by that?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Yes, thank you for this request for clarification.

For a number of years, men's movements—masculinist movements—have demanded that some departments be rebranded. They targeted names in Europe such as “Status of Women” and asked that the word “equality” be included. When equality is introduced, it obviously opens the door for men to be considered.

To be clear, I'm not saying that we shouldn't think about men and masculinity from a similar perspective as the status of women, but it opened the door nonetheless. We saw it in Europe and the same thing happened in Quebec, where funding that is supposed to be dedicated to supporting women is open to men's groups that try to make their way in and get some of the money. New conditions and criteria can also be set, like telling women's groups that they must include men in their activities if they want to access funding that is supposed to be there specifically to support women's groups.

International Men's Day is not officially recognized by the UN. Usually, when organizations, departments, Canada or Quebec—I mention Quebec because that's where I am—celebrate international days, there's an understanding that they're officially recognized and not created by special interest groups.

When the federal government decided to celebrate International Men's Day, openly masculinist or antifeminist platforms and media applauded gleefully. They saw it as a victory for them, a sign that their rhetoric about men's suffering at the hands of women had found some resonance. I'm thinking about the very delicate matter of suicide, which I studied, for which women are not to be blamed, and other similar issues.

On top of that, in Quebec, International Men's Day, which is November 19, happens to be right at the beginning of the 12 Days of Action to End Violence Against Women campaign, and that creates distortion.

Andréanne Larouche: Right. Thank you for taking the time to clarify your position.

My next question is also for you, but if Mr. Ganson and Mr. Vaillancourt have anything to add, they are more than welcome to.

How can we make the distinction between criticism of feminism and antifeminist hate speech?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: That's a very good question, and not an easy one.

Mr. Tristan Boursier, who spoke earlier, answered it in part. Actually, the question is: Do the people who criticize feminism have anything to propose in terms of advancing gender equality and women's freedom, independence, empowerment and safety? People who criticize just to criticize are basically on the antifeminist side of the fence.

We know that feminists are actually very critical of one another. There is no consensus, and the feminist movement is not a monolith. Feminists criticize one another because they disagree on the best ways to advance equality and freedom for women. However, people who do nothing but criticize, sometimes under the cover of comedy, sometimes in a threatening manner, sometimes while making explicit threats of violence or even death, are antifeminists.

• (1235)

Andréanne Larouche: The focus of your research is antifeminism and masculinism. How are toxic masculinity and traditional masculinity linked to antifeminism?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: We have preconceived ideas about masculinity, what is male and what is female. I will mention some everyday objects that might seem completely mundane to you, but are actually very significant. Consider, for example, how deodorants and razors for men and women are marketed. For men, it has to evoke strength, so the deodorants and razors I use have names like Mach3, Power Plus, Arctic Force or Xtreme Defense. When my significant other puts on her deodorant or uses her razors, they have names like pure, morning breeze, cherry or peach.

There are specific values associated with men and women. For men, it's strength, domination, combativeness, competition and aggressiveness, while for women, still today, it's things like what I just mentioned. Just look at birthday cards for one-year-olds, you'll see that it's still the message that is put forward today, in 2026, in drugstores like Jean Coutu in Quebec. Women are associated with softness, passivity, patience and kindness.

Andréanne Larouche: What's more, products for women are more expensive. So that marketing obviously has monetary value.

Mr. Vaillancourt, you spoke a lot about education. You can begin to answer my question, but I'll get back to it during my second round because I know I'm running out of time. Regarding the importance of education, you mentioned platforms. Other witnesses also told us that the loss of traditional media outlets and the decline of diversity of voices had an impact.

Pascal Vaillancourt: Our work is about education. At Interligne, we do a lot of awareness-raising and we see results. The more we raise awareness, the more results we see, especially when we start with younger students. The context in schools and classrooms is fairly difficult right now, but we don't have the resources to go very often. But the impact is there, and I think we have to go. The younger the students are, the better the chance of changing mentalities is.

I believe my time is up.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's right.

Now we go to Ms. Roberts for five minutes.

Anna Roberts: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I have a question, and I'm going to start with Francis.

Does anti-feminism manifest differently in different languages or cultures?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: That's a very good question.

As far as language goes, I don't know, but when it comes to culture, then yes, some references are different. I mentioned in passing that pretty much every community has a nationalist or grassroots antifeminist movement. In Quebec, for example, when women started demanding the right to vote in the early 20th century, the anti-suffragette activists claimed that the suffragettes came from Great Britain, that it was a Protestant idea, that it wasn't Catholic and it wasn't for francophones. They said that it was a foreign concept. It was their way of saying that Quebec women didn't need the right to vote because it was a foreign thing. We see that regularly in many different parts of the world, even within the African-American community in the U.S. in some ways. Black feminists complain that some men in the community say that feminism is a white thing that doesn't concern them, while Black feminists say that African-American feminism does exist.

So yes, there's a reorganization of the antifeminist logic or rhetoric that's related to the historical context, the cultural context and the religious context as well, obviously. The Vatican has its own arguments as to why feminism is problematic. Conservative Jews or conservative Muslims will have other arguments.

[English]

Anna Roberts: I'm going to ask the same question of Kyle and Pascal.

Kyle, do you want to answer that?

Kyle Ganson: Can you repeat the question one more time?

Thank you.

Anna Roberts: Sure. Does anti-feminism manifest differently in different languages and cultures?

Kyle Ganson: That's a really good question.

I don't have the expertise on different cultures to be able to say one way or the other, but I would imagine yes. I think we see that in how different belief systems in different cultures with different religions operate around what gender roles are and the beliefs around what people should and shouldn't be doing.

I would say yes, but I don't have enough expertise to say yes or no.

• (1240)

Anna Roberts: Okay. Thank you.

Pascal.

[Translation]

Pascal Vaillancourt: With respect to LGBTQ+ communities, in all societies—or most societies—LGBTQ+ rights emerged after the expansion of women's rights. In addition, because of this correlation, when LGBTQ+ rights come under attack, we can also be concerned about what may happen to women's rights.

Right now, we're very much in the midst of that. We're seeing attacks through institutions and the media, and in many different contexts. We are feeling these attacks on several fronts. In terms of the effects, it's a bit like what I mentioned earlier in my remarks: right now, we're all seeing the consequences of these attacks. That's what I wanted to tell you.

[English]

Anna Roberts: It's interesting. I'm going to ask a bit of a funny question now. My late husband always said to me, "Happy wife, happy life". I have to say, he was a true gentleman, regardless of gender and who you were. I was raised in my culture by my grandparents to treat everyone equally.

How do you feel about that statement?

I'll start with you, Mr. Ganson.

Kyle Ganson: I've heard that statement before. It's a colloquial statement that is said quite often.

Going back to what was said earlier around gender, gender notions are everywhere. Objects are gendered and movies are gendered—everything is gendered. Sayings like that are gendered. We are embedded in a community and a world where gender is omnipresent, and that creates dynamics. That's obviously why we're here at the table today.

Sometimes it's good in a fun way. Other times it's not; it's misogynistic and anti-feminist. That's what I think about that.

Anna Roberts: I'm going to end it with this. I've raised two children, male and female. My husband passed away. Regardless, when I spoke to both of them, it was on the same platform. Regardless of whether I, as a female, will open a door for a male, or a male will open a door for a female, it doesn't matter. We are equal.

Would you say that's correct?

Kyle Ganson: Are you asking me?

Anna Roberts: Yes.

Kyle Ganson: Okay.

In different settings, there are different levels of equality. That's an important distinction. Maybe in a certain family, there might be some equality between roles and between genders. There's very clearly a difference in equality at higher levels of companies, etc. Maybe it's context-specific.

That's my initial response to that.

The Chair: That's your time.

We're going now to Madame Ménard.

[Translation]

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

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Vaillancourt, Mr. Ganson and Mr. Dupuis-Déri, thank you for your enlightening expertise. Your testimony is deeply troubling. This subject is one we're passionate about.

Mr. Dupuis-Déri, I'll start with you.

At the very start of the study, we heard from Jake Stika from the organization Next Gen Men. He introduced us to something quite interesting from a behavioural standpoint. He invited us to take a trip back in time. He had us focus on the population of young men. In the past, these young men were sometimes receptacles for various discourses, different hypothetically antifeminist messages.

Today, it may seem counterintuitive, but we are apparently able to reach and penetrate this population through digital spaces, but it's in the physical space where increasingly violent actions are being expressed. It's as though the digital sphere somehow manages to normalize behaviours that then manifest in the physical world.

What can you tell us about that migration, that shift from a more passive role to a very active one?

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Thank you for the question.

That will give me a chance to speak briefly about the research I have just completed with the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement. I remind you that it involved a focus group of about 50 teachers. We invited them to participate by announcing that it would be a discussion about sexist, homophobic and transphobic students. So, in principle, I imagine they came with these experiences in mind. We had about 50 witnesses in seven regions of Quebec, plus respondents to questionnaires.

I'll spare you the details, but what we found is completely discouraging and distressing. Studies show, as Mr. Vaillancourt mentioned, that homophobic and transphobic prejudices, among other things, are developing. They develop to a lesser extent in girls, but they do develop. There are girls who are homophobic and transphobic. However, as you just mentioned, this is expressed mainly among boys. We're seeing insults, students contradicting teachers or telling female teachers to go back home to take care of their children instead of stealing a man's job. We're also seeing LGBTQI+ flags being burned in several schools across Canada.

These students greet each other. I realized that a certain phenomenon is spreading among our youth in schools, namely, Nazi salutes. This is happening in other countries as well, such as France, Germany and elsewhere. Young people "entertain themselves" by making Nazi salutes.

My explanation is that it's not just based on the so-called social media that everyone talks about. We are in a political era that has an impact on young people, because although the young people participating in our societies are not necessarily highly politicized, they understand what is going on. Teachers told us that when Donald Trump was elected, boys would say that they had won, that teachers could no longer tell them what to do or what to say, and that they had the right to say that they were against gay people and that there would not be a drag queen in their school. So they follow Elon Musk. They make Nazi salutes. They say Elon Musk is the richest man in the world, so how can female teachers tell them what to do? They believe they have the right to say and do whatever they want. They are therefore being influenced by the most powerful masculinist figures on the planet who took control of the White House. This is not a figure of speech or a metaphor; this is what is happening right now in 2026, and it has an impact on society as a whole, because these are the most influential men in the world.

• (1245)

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Thank you very much.

Mr. Vaillancourt, I'll continue along the same lines. In your opening remarks, you talked about statistics and volume. I would like us to talk both about quantity and quality. I think that's what's relevant to this committee.

Can you shed some light on the volume and nature of calls related to the rise of antifeminist ideology that Interligne receives?

Pascal Vaillancourt: We haven't noticed an increase in our statistics, that is, each year, there are about 20,000 requests for Interligne's support, listening and information services. However, we have noticed a worsening, an increase in the reasons for these calls.

In the past, when people contacted us, the most frequent reasons were a desire to come out and a request for support in that process, or psychological distress.

At present, there is still psychological distress, but it has risen sharply. However, what is new is that certain reasons have become the most frequent ones, such as violence, assaults in the street or attacks on dating sites. These are things that we hear much more often today, things we didn't hear in the past, or that previously, we felt we were in a period of progress. Right now, we feel there has been a setback of several years.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: I have just a few seconds left.

As you mentioned, Interligne operates across the country, so we can assume that some people who may have fewer physical resources have access to a crisis line, and therefore to support. Is that correct?

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry. That's your time.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Professor Dupuis-Déri, you seem to be passing your pessimism on to me. You're bringing back memories for me when you talk about school.

My question is also for you, Mr. Vaillancourt and Professor Ganson.

I had the opportunity to visit a school. I was initially going there to speak with students during the lunch hour, but afterward, the teacher told me that, as the spokesperson for the status of women, I should know that violence among young students is increasing, and that already in high school they are trying to control their girlfriends. The teacher told me that she tried to talk about diversity. She displayed a diversity flag in the classroom and had told the class that after the break they would talk about the communities, but the flag had been torn down. She told me that in school they can no longer talk about diversity, and that gay, lesbian and other couples are no longer open.

So what can we do? People talk about social media, but as you said, Professor Dupuis-Déri, they now have completely uninhibited role models south of the border.

There is also the influence of pornography in all this. Can we talk about the influence of more violent pornography, about better digital education, and about making space for other kinds of discourse in traditional media? What solutions can we consider?

You have one minute left to share.

Francis Dupuis-Déri: I'm often asked what we should do for boys, but since we really don't have much time left, it's important to say that we also need to think about girls. These girls are the ones interacting with these boys. We shouldn't only ask what we must do for our boys. There are also tools that need to be given to girls to help them deal with these boys. I'm thinking especially of heterosexual girls. They have brothers and friends. It's often in high school that they are at the age of their first sexual relationship and first romantic relationships. What people tell me on the ground is that influencers have repercussions on these adolescent couples. Boys who listen to Andrew Tate become much more coercive. So we mustn't forget the girls. We must give them the tools to understand the situation and to defend themselves—individually and collectively—against these boys.

• (1250)

Pascal Vaillancourt: I would like to say that sexuality education is needed at a younger age, with topics that, of course, follow children's developmental stages. We can't neglect education. I think that's still the direction we need to take, and we must repeat the information constantly.

The Chair: Excellent.

Ms. Larouche, that's the end of your time.

[*English*]

Now we'll go to Ms. Cody for five minutes.

Connie Cody: Thank you to our witnesses for coming today and joining our committee.

I have a few questions, so I'll try to get through as many as I can. I'll start off with Dr. Ganson.

Recently, I asked the Minister of Women and Gender Equality to define “anti-feminism”. The response I got was that the term “may be used contextually in research, consultations, program delivery and evaluation, and monitoring and reporting, where appropriate.”

In your opinion, is this a clear and full definition of anti-feminism?

Kyle Ganson: It doesn't sound like a full definition of anti-feminism. It sounds like the ways in which the term “anti-feminism” could be used. That's kind of what I'm understanding. I think Mr. Dupuis-Déri mentioned a pretty wholesome definition of anti-feminism earlier. I think those are different ways in which you are thinking about how we can understand that we should be including anti-feminism into our thinking across those levels, like in research and program evaluation, etc.

Connie Cody: Hearing that, if anti-feminism is not clearly defined in government, do you have any ideas for what we can do to measure what the target is and how Canadians will see results, so that protecting women becomes measurable rather than rhetorical?

Kyle Ganson: I think that's a good question.

I think a consensus definition would be a really good place to start, so that it can be widespread. Then we can create different ways of measuring that within research, programs or policies. Figuring out what that definition is through a consensus process that

includes researchers, policy-makers, advocates, people on the ground and individuals would be a great place to start.

Connie Cody: Can you name a program or an approach that works to protect women without painting boys and men with a broad brush, while still holding offenders accountable?

Kyle Ganson: That's a very good question.

There are none off the top of my head that I can clearly identify. I think an important piece of the puzzle is not to use a broad brush and say that all men are bad. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I think that if we do that, we isolate men who can become allies or be part of the process to address these issues. I think it's a big challenge not to do that.

Connie Cody: I asked a previous witness this, and I'll ask you. This committee previously hosted a witness who monetized rhetoric specifically designed to sow division and create conflict. She wrote, “I feel very honoured that I can break awful men's brains (and, apparently, careers) simply by existing”.

Would you agree or disagree that female influencers online who use their platforms to antagonize men and boys and specifically create gender-based conflict are doing more harm than good to the cause of feminism?

Kyle Ganson: For women, I think it would be probably harmful to try to trap people or get people into situations where they are monetizing themselves or perpetuating narratives that are unhelpful to the greater good. Yes, I think that would be a problematic thing, for sure.

Connie Cody: I have some time, so I'd like to go over to Monsieur Dupuis-Déri.

You said that the crisis of masculinity can be used to shut down women's issues, but we're also seeing serious problems hitting men and boys—suicide, homelessness and kids falling behind in school. How do we acknowledge that reality without letting it derail women's safety? What happens if we don't? If we get that wrong, what's the downstream risk of recruitment into anti-feminist movements?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Unfortunately, I don't have time to answer all those questions.

I wrote an entire chapter on discourse around men's suicide, and I showed that it's not women's fault. The good news is that for several years in Quebec, there has been a real focus on prevention among men, and this has reduced the male suicide rate. None of this is linked to women. We're dealing with antifeminist rhetoric because it places the blame on women.

In terms of education, for more than 100 years, the academic performance of boys has been—

• (1255)

[*English*]

Connie Cody: Mr. Dupuis-Déri, I have little time. I just have one quick question that I forgot to ask you.

When young men lash out, is it possible that some of what we're seeing is also a reaction to feeling that they're being blamed or that their identity is being written off?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Masculine identity is doing just fine. We have plenty of male role models in society. Our heads of state are male. Our richest leaders in the country are male. We have male celebrities. God is male. The Devil is male. Jesus is male. We have a lot of male role models. We don't have a problem when it comes to male role models.

[*English*]

The Chair: Excellent.

Now we'll go to the final round of questioning.

We have Ms. Khalid for five minutes.

Iqra Khalid: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for their very engaging testimony today.

As I said in the previous round, it's not just about prevention and education; I think there needs to be an accountability piece as well. As we know, it's not just social media that perpetuates anti-feminist ideology. This is ideology that has existed since the beginning of time—since Adam and Eve, as many would say.

Professor Dupuis-Déri, I'll start with you, if that's okay.

Can you talk about accountability? I know that we just introduced Bill C-16, which holds boys and men to account for their violent acts toward women. It also goes on to talk about coercive and controlling behaviour, online harms, etc. Do you think that bill goes far enough? Are there other steps that we would take while balancing out prevention measures and also holding a stick along with that carrot?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Thank you for the question.

Unfortunately, I don't know the details of the bill, but Simon Lapierre, who works in social work at the University of Ottawa, Rudolf Rausch, who is an intervention worker with men in Quebec, and Accord Mauricie, which works with violent men, all say that the first question we have to ask is whether men accept responsibility for their violent actions, or whether they are looking for excuses, such as a violent father, alcohol, unemployment or a partner who doesn't listen to them. As long as they keep finding excuses, they're not truly engaged in the process of change or transformation, and they are likely to do it again.

Simon Lapierre even proposes, along with others, that there should be specific standards for men's resources—resources for violent men—to ensure that this is the kind of approach being taken. The understanding is that several men's organizations do not push men to feel or declare themselves responsible. Their excuses are listened to and, as a result, they don't progress, they don't change, and unfortunately, they remain a source of threat to women.

[*English*]

Iqra Khalid: Thank you for that.

I will continue that conversation, then. Do you think that there's a systemic culture of letting men escape from holding themselves re-

sponsible? As an example, we call somebody a “rapist”, not a “rapper”. I guess it's very similar to “therapist”. Is that language, that culture, that creating and coddling of victimhood among men and boys hurting the narrative and the support that women and gender-diverse people should receive?

[*Translation*]

Francis Dupuis-Déri: Yes, of course. These are countermeasures, backlashes. It must be said that antifeminist is a reaction to feminism, and feminism is a reaction to sexism. So first there was sexism, then feminism, and now antifeminism. It's a struggle.

There are political battles to try to give meaning to this. In recent years, there has been the #MeToo movement. Long ago, after the Polytechnique massacre, three Canadian men launched the white ribbon campaign against violence against women. So there are men actively involved in the fight against violence toward women, adopting feminist perspectives. We have to keep that in mind. Feminists are not all-knowing, don't possess all awareness and are not all-powerful, but they are the ones who best understand violence against women. They are the ones who experience it and who support the victims.

And of course, this often sadly echoes violence against gender and sexual diversity.

[*English*]

Iqra Khalid: That's perfect.

Mr. Vaillancourt, would you like to comment on that as well, please?

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Pascal Vaillancourt: I fully agree with what Mr. Dupuis-Déri just said. I think we often minimize the so-called “boy's club” culture in our society, this culture of protection or silence. It allows men to commit incredible acts against women or LGBTQ+ communities, yet they are protected by this culture of silence.

We have to find a way to bring in allies, because many men support or take part in feminist initiatives. Obviously, these men don't have the lived experience. In LGBTQ+ communities, we place a great deal of value on lived experience. It's the same thing here, except that we can't overlook the importance of allies in our communities. I think we need to find a way to continue to engage these people and give them more of a voice.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

That's the end of our panel for today. I want to thank the witnesses for their contributions. It was very much appreciated.

For the members, there are just a couple of things. You will see in the updated calendar that the clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-225 is moved to March 10, to give the legislators time to put the amendments package together, so the deadline for amendments will be March 4 at noon.

Ms. Khalid.

Iqra Khalid: Thanks, Chair.

My understanding is that there is agreement among the parties on this private member's bill. Maybe we could move it through our committee a bit faster and put the deadline as February 20 for amendments to be submitted. We could have time to work through them with the parties instead of waiting until the last minute, if that's okay with you, Chair.

The Chair: It's really up to the will of the committee, but we have witnesses set up to come on both February 12 and February 24. Do we want to cut off one of those days? Otherwise, you'd be sending in the amendments before you hear the rest of the testimony.

Iqra Khalid: Is that okay?

The Chair: Is everybody okay to do that?

Iqra Khalid: If there are further amendments based on testimony, I'm sure members can move those amendments from the floor.

The Chair: Okay. It's February 20 for the amendments to be due.

I'm assuming that you want to finish the clause-by-clause on February 26, then. Okay.

Is everybody in favour of that?

Madame Larouche.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche: Madam Chair, I would ask you for a moment. We had planned to discuss the amendments on February 25. What urgency justifies moving the discussion forward and holding it on February 20?

[*English*]

The Chair: This is the suggestion of Ms. Khalid, to the will of the committee.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche: Do my Conservative colleagues also agree with that?

Dominique Vien: Are these the amendments for Bill C-225?

Andréanne Larouche: Yes. The question is whether we agree to move the discussion forward and discuss it on February 20 instead of February 25.

Dominique Vien: Yes, but on February 26, we still have a meeting on Bill C-225.

Andréanne Larouche: That's correct.

Dominique Vien: We can't do that beforehand.

[*English*]

The Chair: My understanding is that there has been agreement on amendments. There has already been discussion, so the idea is that we don't expect to have more amendments come out from the witnesses on February 24. We think that the amendments that have been discussed should be available. If we get them in by February 20, they can put the legislative package of amendments together so that we could do the clause-by-clause on February 26.

Failing that, if the committee doesn't want to do that, we would do the clause-by-clause on March 10.

Madame Larouche.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche: I think it can be justified for that reason. We're moving the discussion forward to try to speed up the process a bit. We'll see to what extent there is unanimity. Stay tuned. We still have some time. I invite my colleagues to do our job as parliamentarians.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Khalid.

Iqra Khalid: If Madame Larouche needs a bit more time, I'm happy to make it February 23.

I do want us to have the package before we go into clause-by-clause and before we start hearing from witnesses, so that we can really tease out with the witnesses what the proposed amendments look like.

The Chair: Let me check with the legislative clerk, and we'll bring that back to the committee at our Tuesday meeting next week.

With that, we'll adjourn.

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>