



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 024**

Thursday, February 12, 2026

---

Chair: Jean-Yves Duclos





# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

Thursday, February 12, 2026

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for participating in meeting number 24 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Before I give the floor to our witness, I would like to resolve one issue. You probably saw the clerk distribute the text of a motion resulting from an agreement among the whips. A number of other committees have already passed a similar motion.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We will now move to our review of the subject matter of clause 371 in division 19, and clauses 380 to 385 in division 21, of Bill C-15, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025.

I now welcome Mr. Brian Sauvé of the National Police Federation.

Mr. Sauvé, I invite you to give your opening remarks.

**Brian Sauvé (President, National Police Federation):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the committee members.

[*English*]

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today on Bill C-15.

As mentioned, my name is Brian Sauvé. I'm a member of the RCMP. I'm also the president of the National Police Federation, which is the union representing about 20,000 members of the RCMP across Canada and internationally.

I'd like to begin by extending my heartfelt thoughts to all those impacted by the tragic events in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. I also want to recognize all of the members of the E Division and the K Division who have gone in to support and who have gone in swiftly and decisively, demonstrating immense courage and heroism.

Every day, members of the RCMP respond to calls that most Canadians never have to face. They confront armed suspects, investigate child exploitation, police remote communities alone and bear witness to the worst moments of people's lives. That service leaves

a mark. Over 50% of serving members of the RCMP receive some form of a disability pension. Post-traumatic stress disorder is among the top diagnosed conditions. Psychiatric disability claims have grown by over 100% in the last decade. These are not statistics. These are the men and the women who answered the call to serve and who carry the physical and psychological costs of that service.

The NPF has actively sought clarity on divisions 19 and 21 of this bill since the legislation was tabled. We have met with the Minister of Public Safety and have written to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, as well as the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. While we have received some responses, critical questions remain unanswered.

First, in division 21, we support proposed section 32.2, which confirms Veterans Affairs as the decision-maker for RCMP disability pension awards. This codifies existing practice and provides needed legislative clarity. However, proposed section 32.3 is deeply troubling. It authorizes the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety and the commissioner of the RCMP to disclose and share information with one another for the purposes of this part. It further allows Veterans Affairs Canada to share information with the RCMP for “the administration and management of the Force.” These authorities are drafted broadly, contain no limiting definitions and include no privacy safeguards.

In a letter, the Privacy Commissioner confirmed that the Privacy Act still applies. That is cold comfort to a member suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who discovers that their medical information was shared beyond what was necessary and must navigate a complaint process as a discharged civilian without resources, without support and without evidence of what occurred behind closed doors.

Today, under an existing MOU, sharing is limited and one-directional. RCMP health services provide medical information to Veterans Affairs Canada for adjudication and only the determination, diagnosis, name and regimental number flow back. The Minister of Public Safety recently outlined to us that the intent is to codify the existing MOU and not to expand it. If that is the intent, then codify it. Define the limits in legislation. Do not leave members guessing whether seeking help will cost them their career.

Second, Bill C-15, in division 19, replaces the long-standing pension indexation formula for RCMP disability benefits with a CPI-only model, effective January 1, 2027. The budget estimates that this saves \$5.8 billion over four years. That is \$5.8 billion taken from injured members of the RCMP. When Canadian Armed Forces members transitioned to CPI-only indexation under the Veterans Well-being Act in 2006, existing recipients were grandfathered under the previous formula. RCMP members are not afforded such protections under this legislation. Every recipient, including those who have been receiving benefits for decades, moves to the new formula overnight.

The legislation also permits regulations with retroactive effect. We have been told this will not be used. If so, why is it in the bill? Its presence creates uncertainty for our members planning for their financial futures. We're not asking for special treatment. We're only asking for fairness. They ask that the benefits promised when they pinned on the badge be recognized.

Thank you. I look forward to any questions.

• (1635)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you for your remarks, Mr. Sauvé.

I will now give the floor to committee members.

We will start with Mr. Gill.

Mr. Gill for six minutes.

[English]

**Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Sauvé, for being here today. We truly appreciate it. I would like to begin by offering my sincere condolences to the victims and the families following the tragic shooting in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia. Our thoughts are also with the entire community during this undoubtedly incredibly difficult time.

I also want to recognize the first responders who acted quickly and very courageously during this tragedy. You are the president of the National Police Federation; I know you take great pride in your members who you represent and rightly so. I would like to ask you to please convey this committee's appreciation and gratitude to those officers and the first responders.

How can this committee and body of Parliament help ensure that the first responders and RCMP members who responded in Tumbler Ridge have the supports that they need? Is there anything we can do from our side to make sure that the first responders are supported?

• (1640)

**Brian Sauvé:** I think you're doing it. Public support is appreciated. I spoke to our director, Jeff Swann, who is on the ground in Tumbler Ridge and has been since last night. He has expressed to me that the membership there and the community are feeling the love, for lack of a better term, whether it be from the federal government or different provincial governments, or even internationally. I think continued conveyance of that message as that community grieves and works through this tragedy would be much appreciated.

**Sukhman Gill:** Thank you for that.

We know that, throughout the House, all members are deeply grateful for the service of the RCMP and all members who serve in that community as well. It's moments like these that remind us of the sacrifices made by the ones who wear the uniform and the importance of ensuring that they have the support that they deserve. Once again, from the entire committee, and the entire body of Parliament, we want to thank you.

Months ago, the Liberal government committed in budget 2025 to hiring 1,000 new RCMP officers to address the growth of public safety challenges. Do you know if those 1,000 officers have been hired by this date?

**Brian Sauvé:** My understanding of that is the funding of that hasn't been approved yet. That's one of the things we're talking about here today. However, yes, work is well under way with the RCMP to expedite their recruitment process, and the spots are available at the training academy in Regina to be able to accommodate an increased number of cadets.

**Sukhman Gill:** Would you be able to provide me with a timeline of when these officers might be recruited, trained and deployed?

**Brian Sauvé:** That's the question best asked of the RCMP. From my understanding, the plan for the RCMP with this next fiscal year is up to 50, if not 55, troops of cadets. We can compare that to the existing 40 troops this year. A troop is 32 cadets, so 40 troops is almost 1,300 cadets. Going up to 50 troops obviously brings that over 1,800 cadets. If they do 55 troops, then you would have another 150 cadets on top of that.

**Sukhman Gill:** I know you mentioned that your members have serious concerns with parts of budget 2025, with Bill C-15, particularly around the financial security, disability benefits, medical privacy and trust in the federal system. How do these concerns affect morale and retention among current members?

**Brian Sauv :** I don't know if they would have an impact on retention from a member's perspective. From an organization's perspective, our concern is misapplication of medical information shared from Veterans Affairs that could lead an organization such as the RCMP to make rash decisions with respect to fitness for duty, leading to an unreasonable or early medical discharge. In the retention from the RCMP side, they might be discharging more based on erroneous information. From a morale perspective, the best way to put this is.... Personally, I have trust issues. I think our membership also have trust issues with the RCMP being able to equally and fairly implement health services and occupational health services. That's probably from the morale perspective. They're worried about not being treated fairly or equitably through the RCMP system.

**Sukhman Gill:** If the government does manage to hire 1,000 new officers, could the changes in Bill C-15 in recruitment potentially worsen the staffing challenges that the force is already feeling?

**Brian Sauv :** They could lead to a greater issue with retirements and resignations, if you will, yes.

**Sukhman Gill:** I want to finish off with a fairly simple question. I know you might get a little lengthier on this, but if Parliament wanted to improve recruitment and retention, what amendments to Bill C-15 would you recommend? What strategies would you put forth to encourage young Canadians to join the RCMP while keeping experienced officers also motivated and staying on the force?

• (1645)

**The Chair:** You have about 15 seconds, Mr. Sauv .

**Brian Sauv :** I think a lot of things are being done right already. For example, the cadet training allowance is almost doubling. We will probably see an increase in interest in applicants to the RCMP over the next year.

As far as retention goes, I think it's treating people with fairness in what already exists, so your diagnosis, your benefits and your medical information are with the provider of that benefit, meaning Veterans Affairs, not necessarily with your employer.

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

Madam Acan, you have six minutes, please.

**Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome again, Mr. Sauv .

We are all heartbroken by the devastating tragedy in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. Our thoughts are with the victims, the injured and everyone who was affected, as my colleague Mr. Gill stated in his opening. Violence has no place in our communities. As the RCMP continues its investigation, Canadians are standing by our neighbours in Tumbler Ridge in solidarity and in support.

I also would like to thank once again our brave first responders who were at the scene helping the victims and their families.

My question will be on budget 2025 and how it provides additional expenditures of \$184 million over four years to retain temporary staff who were originally hired to address backlogs in the processing of disability claims with division 21 confirming Veterans Affairs Canada as the decision-maker for the RCMP disability pension awards.

It is important to understand how these investments will affect the delivery of services. Will this investment and the clarity provided help to reduce the disability claims backlog and improve timely, consistent decision-making for RCMP members?

Would you make a comment on that? Do you see any value in these investments and how they would be of help?

**Brian Sauv :** I do. There is a backlog with Veterans Affairs for application, adjudication and communication of whatever the decision is to the applicant, so whatever we can do collectively to improve that service delivery I think is a benefit to our members and also a benefit to other clients of Veterans Affairs Canada, and that's a positive.

**Sima Acan:** Thank you.

Division 21 of the bill establishes new conditions under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act. Personal information may be disclosed to handle compensation claims.

Given the sensitivity of the data, could you please speak to the safeguards in place that will ensure that RCMP members' information continues to be protected when it's shared across the departments?

**Brian Sauv :** That's my concern. It's my largest concern with this piece of legislation. The way I see it and the way we've read it, there are no protections being placed in the legislation.

For context, for example, Veterans Affairs is where a member applies for a disability benefit. They reach out to the RCMP to receive information such as an injury report that happened in a police car crash, which is shared with Veterans Affairs to assist in the determination of that injury or disability application. Veterans Affairs makes its adjudication and provides a response to the member, and then shares back with the RCMP the name, the regimental number, the diagnosis and the determination. It doesn't share any of the information that is provided by the member to make that determination, any of the application information or the percentage of disability, for example.

Veterans Affairs Canada operates on a table of disabilities. You can have a 25% disability for post-traumatic stress disorder and 20% for hearing loss. Someone at the RCMP could infer that you are 45% disabled, because you have a 25% and a 20%, which is not true at all. The fear is that, by sharing that information, we end up in a world where the employer, the RCMP, is saying that they are no longer fit to be a police officer; therefore, off they go versus getting treatment, getting care and having access to that care, so the worry is the oversharing of information without protections in place.

• (1650)

**Sima Acan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sauvé.

As stated in the budget, and as my colleague Mr. Gill also asked you about, 1,000 RCMP officers and an additional 1,000 CBSA officers will be hired throughout this year if the budget is approved.

My experience is with the RCMP, because I go out with the police frequently to understand better. I also recently had the privilege of visiting the Cornwall port of entry, where I saw first-hand the important work that the RCMP and the CBSA are doing together, and what they are doing to curb smuggling.

This committee has heard testimonies about the need for consistent funding to support our frontline RCMP officers and how much investment strengthens the agency's operational capacity. With that in mind, budget 2025 represents a meaningful first step towards providing our federal law enforcement agencies with the resources and supports they need.

Could you please expand on the answer you previously gave to Mr. Gill and speak to how these investments, like the cadet recruitment allowance, are the first steps towards enhancing officer capacity to detect, disrupt and ultimately stop criminal activity, especially in sensitive areas like Cornwall?

**The Chair:** Again, answer in about 15 seconds.

[Translation]

**Brian Sauvé:** I might be able to respond in 20 seconds.

[English]

I can clarify. It's my understanding that the 1,000 new personnel, which I think should be 1,000 new police officers, is over a three-year period. It's not immediately in the first year. The cadet training allowance had not been increased in 18 years, so it's a welcome increase for those who are leaving their families for six months in Regina to have \$1,000 a week versus \$500 a week.

All of those are good moves in the right direction to accomplish the goal of increased border security, increased frontline capacity, increased proceeds of crime investigations, increased cybersecurity and all of that great stuff.

**The Chair:** Very good. Thank you so much.

[Translation]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille for six minutes.

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Sauvé, today we are analyzing a few clauses in Bill C-15; however, as you are no doubt aware, the budget implementation bill contains nearly 600 clauses covering all kinds of topics. Today, we are examining a few clauses that mainly affect the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act. It affects other members too.

I understand from reading another brief that, apart from RCMP officers, there were also civilian members prior to 2016. They will also be affected if these clauses pass without amendment. I am thinking of disability pensions that existed before 2016, based on the rules in effect at that time.

Could you tell us more about this? If this passes, the lives of civilian members would change, since their pensions would be reduced.

**Brian Sauvé:** That is undoubtedly true. However, the RCMP still has civilian members, although none have joined since 2016. I think there are approximately 2,400 civilian members. The same superannuation plan applies to both civilian and regular members of the RCMP.

All the changes we are discussing here affect not only regular members of the RCMP, but also civilian members, and even officers.

[English]

I'm doing advocacy for the officers for management.

[Translation]

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** I spoke with some RCMP officers. In Valleyfield, managing the borders is very time-consuming because our riding is located in southern Quebec. Whether you talk to managers, senior officers, or officers, it's the same struggle. Currently, the government wants to reduce retirement benefits. It wants to have a negative impact on pensions, especially for those individuals who are eligible for disability benefits.

To my knowledge, people who are already receiving disability benefits and who have unfortunately had to leave their jobs because they are no longer able to work have organized their finances based on a predictable income. The change will mean that their disability income will decrease overnight as of January 1.

Have I understood correctly?

• (1655)

**Brian Sauv :** Income will not decrease on January 1. The indexation will change going forward. It will be based solely on the consumer price index, or CPI, and not on the higher of the CPI and a calculation based on the salaries of certain groups in the federal public service. The annual inflation-based increase may decrease.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Even so, we know that a disabled person who has been unable to continue their career expects to receive, on average, an increase of around 2.5% per year. Depending on the assessment, the increase could be reduced to 0.5%, which is a significant amount for a disabled person. They have to forego this income, which was nevertheless predictable over time.

I am quite struck by the fact that the rules of the game are being changed for people, for professionals with disabilities. I do not understand why the government is making this change, unless it is to save money at the expense of people with disabilities. That is my interpretation of the situation.

I saw in a document that there would be savings of about \$5.8 billion over four years. It's funny, that is about the same as the \$5 billion in cost overruns for a single software program to manage old age security. I have to say, I find it a little strange that the numbers align.

As a social worker, I am also concerned about information sharing. You said it in English, but I would like to hear you say it in French. When a person with a disability has their application reviewed by the RCMP health services, it is forwarded to Veterans Affairs Canada, which also reviews it. The department makes a diagnosis, estimates the percentage of compensation, and communicates it. There is a kind of firewall, a security measure. There is not a great deal of information sharing. I am struck by the fact that the government really wants to intervene in this area.

In your opinion, what is the government trying to achieve by sharing this information? I do not understand the rationale behind this decision.

**Brian Sauv :** Personally, I am also not convinced about the rationale behind this. I just have my suspicions, if you can call them that.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Let's call them assumptions.

**Brian Sauv :** My assumption is that the RCMP, or the RCMP's occupational health and safety unit of the RCMP, does not understand the reality that individuals with a disability face. The RCMP thinks, for example, that because I have PTSD, it needs to put me in a bubble so I am not retraumatized.

However, it does not take into consideration the fact that I already live in a bubble, because I am being treated by a psychologist. I had the opportunity to learn how to work with PTSD.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** If they discovered that you are very—

**The Chair:** Mrs. DeBellefeuille, I am sorry to interrupt you.

It breaks my heart to do this, but I must give Mr. Au the floor for five minutes.

[English]

**Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC):** Once again, thank you, Mr. Sauv , for coming to make your presentation.

I echo what's been said by my colleagues. Our hearts are with the community in Tumbler Ridge. Also, we would like to convey our thanks to the first responders, including the RCMP officers. It's really impressive that, as it's been reported, the RCMP officers arrived in two minutes. I can also imagine that when they arrived and saw what was happening, it could have been some kind of a shock and a difficult experience for them.

As a person with a background in mental health service, I am concerned about what you said in the opening remarks that about 50% of officers in the police force received some kind of a disability pension or allowance. To me, this is a very large number.

Have you seen an increase or has it always been the case like that? Is it quite a stable number or have there been some changes over time?

• (1700)

**Brian Sauv :** For disability benefit applications?

**Chak Au:** Yes.

**Brian Sauv :** Early in my service, when I started 20-plus years ago, the members of the RCMP—and I will say Veterans Affairs Canada is a victim of its own success—were probably not broadly aware of the benefits available to them through Veterans Affairs Canada. About 12 years ago, it went on a marketing campaign in partnership with the RCMP. You saw the development of the online My VAC Account and the dedicated liaison officer from the RCMP with Veterans Affairs doing educational symposiums.

People became aware that they could apply for benefits. At the same time, this government, or actually successive governments regardless of stripe, have been reducing stigma and increasing awareness of mental health injuries. There are "it's okay to not be okay" messages and Bell Let's Talk days. All of those things have been happening in concert, so whether you're a member of the RCMP or a municipal police service, the stigma has been breaking down to come forward with whatever the injury might be. Here we are today seeing a lot of growth in post-traumatic stress, as well as hearing loss and tinnitus and all sorts of different benefit applications.

They have increased, but I think that's Veterans Affairs Canada being a victim of its own success and other things that have been happening in society as a whole.

**Chak Au:** In that regard, I remember in the previous meeting you mentioned that your organization indicated that about \$8 million of investment in proactive mental health will support and generate up to \$15 million in savings if this is going to be implemented.

Do you still stand by the numbers?

**Brian Sauv :** I do. That was, I believe, in our federal budget submission from last fall, and there has been a lot of work done through the RCMP and the University of Regina, or CIPSRT, about what's called the mental health model. It is about giving cadets, as they go through training in the first number of years of their career, the ability to learn what mechanisms and what they can do in their day-to-day life will help them to be more resilient.

Dr. Carleton at the University of Regina will tell you that the RCMP hires extremely psychologically healthy people, beyond the average of the Canadian populace. This mental health model is now available to be expanded to the entirety of the RCMP population.

In addition, we have adopted and modified somewhat the world-class reintegration program from the Edmonton Police Service, which is peer-led. If I'm involved in a member-involved shooting... For example, the members in Tumbler Ridge might now have a fear of going into a school. How do we reintegrate them slowly from a peer-led perspective to be fully operational and not be afraid of schools?

That has been showing great success. I think 86% of members who have gone through that program have been returned operational. The mental health model is one thing. The tools to be more resilient and the reintegration program are for those who have experienced some form of psychologically traumatic incident where there's a barrier to being operational. That program can bring them back to work.

**Chak Au:** Good, thank you.

Going back to—

**The Chair:** Sorry, MP Au, to interrupt.

We now go to MP Powlowski.

**Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Sauv , we have spoken many times. You know what I'm going to talk about, which is getting more RCMP for Thunder Bay. They have been trying, but there are just not enough new people coming out, and when they do come out, they seem to end up going into contract policing, where you have a contract with forces like on the Prairies. I know there are measures in this budget that would hopefully improve our ability to recruit new people, and the extra money for cadets and the 1,000 new officers.

You said it's going to be over 1,000 over three years. When can we expect to have more boots on the ground?

• (1705)

**Brian Sauv :** As a full complement, we have more boots on the ground almost daily. Weekly, we have troops graduating from Depot in Regina.

Now, as far as federal policing is concerned, I continue to pressure the commissioner about our serving members in contract policing who have identified a career desire to move into a federal policing role—whether that be in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie or Windsor—that they be released and their ability to transfer and move on with their careers should be moved forward.

When we went through the COVID pandemic and Depot had to shut down, it caused a challenge for turning out cadets. It's almost a

year, a year and a half, challenge to get back up to capacity. Divisions in the contract world were holding on to their resources and not allowing them to transfer out because there weren't enough coming in from Depot to replace them.

We're at a place now where that argument doesn't hold water in my world anymore. If you want, as a member of the RCMP, to leave La Loche, Saskatchewan and move to Thunder Bay, then you should be allowed to do so.

**Marcus Powlowski:** Maybe you could explain why that is still happening. I take it then that the police themselves would like to have that ability and they do want to go to federal policing. Why do they want to switch over to federal policing?

**Brian Sauv :** I think it depends on any member's career progression.

Some love the uniform and will do the uniform for life. Some want to do it for a certain period of time and move into proceeds of crime or move into VIP protection or border security or national security.

I think one of the competing pressures we saw coming out of the challenges with recruiting and training through COVID is that we saw a reinvestment or an increased investment by different provinces and jurisdictions into their provincial police services agreement.

For example, the Province of British Columbia invested \$230 million, which we're very thankful for, to fill previously frozen positions in B.C. The Province of Saskatchewan authorized filling that province up to the annex in their contract, and the Province of Nova Scotia similarly. There were all of these competing demands for every cadet who was graduating out of Depot and, unfortunately, up until now, federal policing has been on the back burner. I'm glad to see it's now on the front burner.

**Marcus Powlowski:** Has it changed? From what you said, it could be that the individual jurisdictions would deny their officers' requests to transfer to federal policing, but you're saying now that has been changed?

**Brian Sauv :** I'm saying it's my perspective that the argument for holding someone back in La Loche, Saskatchewan or Airdrie, Alberta shouldn't hold water anymore, because there are enough cadets who are going to and graduating from Depot, so they should be allowed to transition to their new roles if they've identified federal policing as a role they'd like to go into.

**Marcus Powlowski:** Is this the policy of the RCMP that they give the power to the individual jurisdiction to be able to restrict their officers from leaving?

**Brian Sauv :** Well, the commanding officer of the division obviously has control over their manpower and how they deliver under their provincial police service agreement, or municipal police service agreement or municipal police unit agreement, depending on the province or the jurisdiction.

**Marcus Powlowski:** Wouldn't RCMP command be able to override that and make it a rule to say, no, the individual commanders cannot restrict their people moving to other positions?

**Brian Sauv :** Well, that's a good question for the commissioner.

**The Chair:** That's too bad because we now have to move to a different MP, and in this case, it will be Madame DeBellefeuille.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. DeBellefeuille for two and a half minutes.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are here to ask questions about and debate the clauses in Bill C-15 that affect you. As you know, the government has already increased pensions by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over. However, it has not done so for seniors aged 65 to 74, thereby creating two classes of retirees.

Do you feel that this also creates inequities for veterans and RCMP officers with regard to pensions?

Based on my understanding of Bill C-15, it does not affect veterans, only RCMP members, even though they currently fall under the same rules.

Have I understood correctly?

• (1710)

**Brian Sauv :** Yes.

In the future, there will be three types of veterans: RCMP members, veterans, veterans discharged post-2006 and veterans discharged pre-2006.

RCMP members seem to be classified as veterans discharged post-2006. There will therefore be two groups: post-2006 veterans and pre-2006 veterans.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Basically, the government is supposed to look after the common good. It is supposed to meet the needs of its people.

I cannot understand why it wants to create division between veterans who receive a disability pension and those in the RCMP. I cannot understand the rationale behind this.

Do you have any assumptions as to why we are discussing legislation today that will change the lives of RCMP officers?

I just do not understand. Can you speculate? Is it just about saving money?

**Brian Sauv :** Here is my assumption.

[*English*]

“They didn't think it through.”

[*Translation*]

As I suggested in my opening remarks, we could include a grandfather clause for everyone receiving a disability pension until January 1, 2027. The new rules would come into force after January 2027.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Can you propose any amendments we could make to the bill? We will have to prepare a report and submit our recommendations to the Standing Committee on Finance.

Basically, you are proposing that we include your recommendation on the grandfather clause in our report.

Is that correct?

**Brian Sauv :** That's correct.

We were talking about it this morning. No doubt, we could propose some amendments or recommendations for you to consider in your debate on Bill C-15.

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Okay.

Is—

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mrs. DeBellefeuille. I am sorry to have to interrupt you again.

Mr. Lloyd for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Sauv , for being here.

As I've said in regard to members who put themselves in harm's way to protect communities in Tumbler Ridge and everywhere else across the country, our thoughts are with them and their families.

I want you to talk more about your privacy concerns in regard to the legislation we're talking about today. Can you elaborate on that?

**Brian Sauv :** I can.

For those who are not aware, Veterans Affairs Canada is considered to be the WSIB, if you will, for members of the RCMP. If you're talking about a workers' compensation regime for a municipal or provincial police officer, it's a separate government agency. WSIB Ontario is not the OPP. If I make an application to WSIB Ontario, they may seek information from my employer to confirm the police car accident or whatever, but they're not necessarily going to share medical information with my employer. That is the trend around the world.

What we see here is the fear that Veterans Affairs Canada is going to allow the sharing of personal medical information with the RCMP, whether it be percentage of disability, treatment reports from psychologists, medication that's been prescribed, prognoses of betterment or diagnoses. This information could then be used by the RCMP in an occupational setting to make determinations about a member's future as a police officer.

**Dane Lloyd:** Would that be available to all members?

**Brian Sauv :** It would be.

**Dane Lloyd:** There was a recent article this week about the Minister of Public Safety committing to maintain the RCMP's current structure of contract policing for those provinces that want to continue with it. There are, however, concerns about the funding being provided to the RCMP to fulfill its federal policing mandate and its many other mandates.

With current and projected funding levels, are you confident that the RCMP can carry on with all these duties effectively?

• (1715)

**Brian Sauv :** I think we have to establish that we're moving in the right direction. I've spoken about the 1,000 new personnel, who should all be police officers or sworn members of the RCMP. That's a move in the right direction.

Is it enough? No. We will continue to advocate for more. If you go back to the Senate report on the RCMP, or even to the report we did last year, we should probably have 3,000 more to effectively do what we do.

It's a step in the right direction, and we'll continue to press for better.

**Dane Lloyd:** With my remaining time, can you elaborate more on the proposed changes to the RCMP disability pension?

**Brian Sauv :** Which one is it? The sharing of medical information is one. The indexation proposal is the second one.

**Dane Lloyd:** It's the proposal on the indexation.

**Brian Sauv :** It's my understanding—the way I read this—that currently indexation decisions annually on those who receive a disability pension are based on two formulas. It's the greater of either the CPI or the federal wage growth formula—whichever one is higher annually is applied.

The proposal here is that effective January 1 next year only CPI would apply to all—even those who are already retired and in receipt of a Veterans Affairs disability benefit. That could impact future wage growth or future pension growth over time.

**Dane Lloyd:** My apologies for not researching this myself. Over the past five years, which one has grown at a greater level, the wages or the CPI?

**Brian Sauv :** I believe they've used the federal wage growth formula six times in the last 20 years.

**Dane Lloyd:** Okay, so it's not the most often used, but it can be quite significant when there is a gap. Isn't that true?

**Brian Sauv :** It can be, yes.

**Dane Lloyd:** You're concerned that your members will be left behind by using the CPI-only formula.

**Brian Sauv :** That's our members, as well as retired members and their spouses who receive death benefits once a retired member passes.

**Dane Lloyd:** Do you have thoughts on why the government would put a retroactivity clause in there? They said that they're not going to use it. What are your thoughts on why that would be included?

**Brian Sauv :** As I mentioned earlier, I have trust issues. I am a police officer, and I think most police officers have trust issues. We are suspicious by nature.

I'm not sure why they would put that in there. Who knows what the motives are?

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We have MP MacDonald for five minutes, please.

**Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.):** I'll cede to MP Ramsay.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

MP Ramsay.

[*Translation*]

**Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.):** Mr. Sauv , to your knowledge, what was the last year that salaries were indexed?

**Brian Sauv :** RCMP salaries—

**Jacques Ramsay:** I am talking about pensions. When was salary indexation used rather than CPI indexation?

**Brian Sauv :** I am not sure of the exact year.

**Jacques Ramsay:** It has been several years, has it not?

Recently, we have mainly been using the consumer price index.

Am I wrong?

**Brian Sauv :** I am not certain of the year. I am almost certain that it occurred six times over the past 25 years.

**Jacques Ramsay:** It occurred six times over the past 25 years.

**Brian Sauv :** Yes.

**Jacques Ramsay:** I understand that veterans are subject to this dual system.

Can you confirm that?

**Brian Sauv :** Yes.

**Jacques Ramsay:** Other than veterans, does the federation know whether there are any other employees who are entitled to this dual indexation system?

**Brian Sauv :** We have regular members of the RCMP, civilian members of the RCMP and RCMP retirees who are already receiving a disability pension from Veterans Affairs Canada.

**Jacques Ramsay:** Elsewhere in the public service, are there other employees who are entitled to the same dual indexation?

• (1720)

**Brian Sauv :** No, because they are covered by the Government Employees Compensation Act. So they have access to their provincial or territorial compensation plan for such pensions.

**Jacques Ramsay:** You referred to the period before 2006 and the period after 2006 for veterans. Before 2006, they were entitled to indexation based on salary increases, and after 2006, they were not entitled to it.

Is that correct?

**Brian Sauv :** That is correct. That is my understanding.

Before 2006, all veterans receiving a disability pension were covered by a grandfather clause under the new legislation, and they were entitled to both indexation formulas. However, after 2006, only indexation based on the consumer price index applies.

**Jacques Ramsay:** Okay.

Let's say I'm an RCMP officer and I suffer from depression. I would normally see my doctor, who would recommend I take time off work. At what point is health services consulted? Is it handled by the doctor? Then, after two or three years, I imagine there would be a disability claim.

I would just like you to help me understand who is involved in the information chain on the illness and when.

**Brian Sauv :** I will respond in English, because it is easier for me.

[English]

Yes, if a member is facing depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder or symptoms of those, they can seek treatment through a psychologist for diagnosis and help. That is under the supplemental benefits regime that already exists for our members, providing up to six sessions with a psychologist. Then a report is submitted to the RCMP about the progress that's happened in those six sessions, and it asks for an additional six sessions for a member to then go back to see a psychologist.

All of that plays to the diagnosis. If there's a diagnosis, it would be used to seek further psychological care in the Veterans Affairs process, not necessarily with the RCMP. Should that member be on sick leave, then reporting to the RCMP health services on a regular basis is required, usually every 30 days, with a prognosis for a return-to-work date.

**Jacques Ramsay:** You can answer this in English.

[Translation]

Let's say I become disabled.

Is the employer entitled to know this information at some point? You are saying you do not think it should.

Can we think the employer should be told, that it is justified? There is nonetheless a risk to the employee and other employees since the RCMP deals with some extreme situations.

**Brian Sauv :** It depends.

[English]

For example, the RCMP has what's called a salary continuance sick leave model, because we have no short-term disability insurance plan. We have a long-term disability insurance plan that you can access only by discharging from your job. We have a salary

continuance model, which means the responsibility is shared between the member—the employee—and the employer.

If I'm suffering from brain cancer, for example, the RCMP keeps the salary taps turned on while I seek treatment. They help me with treatment, and then I get back into my work. If I'm suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety or alcoholism, the RCMP keeps the salary taps turned on while I seek treatment in order to get back to work. Sometimes that might mean a six- to eight-week in-patient treatment.

Those are things the RCMP is definitely made aware of to assess fitness for duty. However, the information that I provide through my psychologist that would perhaps be shared with Veterans Affairs to make a disability assessment is a little more in depth than what's provided to my employer for fitness for duty. That's the worry—the sharing between the disability pension provider's assessment and the employer.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I left you a little more time because I thought everyone was quite interested in your compact and content-intense answers.

That brings me to you, MP Mantle. Welcome to the committee. You have five minutes, please.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to be here.

Thank you, Mr. Sauv , for attending and providing your valuable testimony, including on proper resourcing for the RCMP.

I want to ask you about resourcing at the border. That was a topic of much discussion several months ago. It's perhaps died down a little bit.

At the time, the government spent, I think, about \$5 million to lease two American Black Hawk helicopters. Do you think that was a wise use of funds for securing the border?

• (1725)

**Brian Sauv :** I think it accomplished the goal at the time. From my perspective, we have written to the commissioner that we think those pilots and those assets of the RCMP should obviously be within our bargaining unit. They should have the same training as our members. They're flying them around. What is the plan to internalize that if it continues to be the way forward?

**Jacob Mantle:** You said you thought it achieved the objective. What do you think the objective was?

**Brian Sauv :** Well, at the time, obviously, it was an immediate response to ensure safety of the border, and leasing those particular helicopters gave a fairly quick ability and a quick chance to work around procurement, which is another topic entirely.

**Jacob Mantle:** Did it make the border safer, in your opinion?

**Brian Sauv :** I think I've seen them flying around my place. I'm in the Swanton sector. I know that some folks in Manitoba have expressed satisfaction at seeing them. I know folks from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia through to Alberta have expressed satisfaction.

Has it made the border safer? It is becoming another tool. More tools are always better. Whether it's a drone or whether it's a helicopter that can relay information to the units on the ground, those tools are always welcome.

**Jacob Mantle:** Has the government indicated that it will make those tools part of the RCMP, or are you still waiting to know whether these will be contracted out and not come from within the RCMP?

**Brian Sauv :** If I read between the lines, I'm hopeful that they will become some form of fixed assets for the RCMP in due time. The procurement challenges still exist.

**Jacob Mantle:** Thank you for that.

In some of your submissions to the government, you requested that the Privacy Commissioner be consulted. Did the government accept that request? Did the government consult the Privacy Commissioner on your concerns?

**Brian Sauv :** We just went straight to the Privacy Commissioner ourselves. I hope that the Privacy Commissioner and the government have those discussions because we just started discussions with the Privacy Commissioner on our own.

**Jacob Mantle:** You have not heard from the government about whether it will engage on your concern on that issue?

**Brian Sauv :** No, we have not.

**Jacob Mantle:** I assume you would reiterate your request to the government to work with the Privacy Commissioner on these concerns.

**Brian Sauv :** I would.

**Jacob Mantle:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP Mantle.

We'll finish with MP MacDonald.

**Kent MacDonald:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to Mr. Sauv  for being a witness here today.

I'd just like to offer my thoughts and prayers to the community of Tumbler Ridge as well, and to the first responders who were in a very difficult situation.

I come from Atlantic Canada and remember the devastating day at Portapique. I know the response time was amazing. I was truly impressed by that and those RCMP officers who put their lives on the line without question.

I want to comment on the budget 2025 release. I know there was some confusion about whether the adjudication of the RCMP officers was going to continue under VAC. I'm pleased to see that's been clarified. Some of your membership reached out to my office trying to get clarification, so I'm glad that component has been clarified.

I guess I would just further add, in regard to consumer price indexing, that in your previous comments you would like to maintain the options of salary growth and CPI, whichever is higher. Do you not feel that the CPI is more closely aligned with the cost of living expenses as they go up?

**Brian Sauv :** I think it depends. Yes, CPI is aligned with the cost of living expenses, but the way the formula is used right now is that it's the greater of the two, so even if the CPI is aligned with the cost of living expenses and the federal wage growth formula is half a per cent higher, then the federal wage growth formula is the one that is used, which would exceed the cost of living expenses in that year.

**Kent MacDonald:** The disability benefits we are referring to are disability benefits for officers who obviously are on disability. They're not serving.

• (1730)

**Brian Sauv :** They are.

**Kent MacDonald:** They're still serving?

**Brian Sauv :** It's a combination of both. You can be a serving member in receipt of a disability pension. For example, I might be in a foot pursuit, jump off a set of stairs and break my ankle. I make a full recovery, but now my ankle gets really sore in the cold. Even though I'm fully operational, I can have a disability pension award for that sore ankle, which carries on into retirement.

**Kent MacDonald:** Thank you for the clarification on that.

I'm just kind of pivoting to something else and calling on your experience to speak to recruitment and retention in the RCMP.

We've heard discussions about the 1,000 officers getting hired. In my community, I speak with RCMP officers who have served a long time. In their minds, there has to be a better job done of recruitment and retention because it's an aging police force, just like an aging population. Do you have any suggestions for government along that line?

**Brian Sauv :** It's funny—you're almost taking words out of my mouth for the next discussion I'm going to have with the commissioner. Demographically speaking, from about 2006 to 2008, the RCMP went on a very similar recruiting push in which there were two troops a week, in some instances, graduating from Depot. If you do the math, that's 20 to 21 years ago, and the life of a police officer in the RCMP now is about 27 years, give or take. Are we thinking about two troops a week retiring in six to seven years or five to six years, and what is that going to do to our attrition in the future? We still need to keep our foot on the gas pedal, if you will, over the next decade in recruitment so that we can impact what might come in the way of attrition.

**Kent MacDonald:** Another point I've come across is that there are a lot of challenges in policing when they go to a mental health issue in a first nations environment. We've had some success in having first nations police officers working with the RCMP. Obviously, you see benefit in that. We have to do a better job of recruiting first nations officers to work in their communities.

**Brian Sauv :** We do. I would encourage the government to expedite or restart its review of the first nations indigenous policing program to make those services an essential service, which would allow them consistency in recruiting and predictability in budgets, which would allow for sustained staffing levels and the ability to integrate with other police services and jurisdictions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, MP MacDonald.

Thank you, Mr. Sauv , for this presentation and for all the work you put into it.

[*Translation*]

We will meet again on February 24 to resume our work on Bill C-8. Until then, I wish you a good week in your ridings.

Mrs. DeBellefeuille, do you wish to speak?

**Claude DeBellefeuille:** Mr. Chair, I have a quick question about next steps regarding our recommendations. How will we share

them with the finance committee? We had set a deadline for sharing our recommendations.

We need to hear from the minister. Has his new appearance been scheduled?

Could you enlighten us on next steps and how we should send everything to the Standing Committee on Finance? When will the Minister of Public Safety appear at committee?

**The Chair:** That is an excellent question. The answer will disappoint you because I do not yet know exactly how we will proceed. We need to coordinate with the clerk's team and, of course, the minister's team to determine his availability. So we will work with the people around the table to provide you with the answer to this very relevant question.

Thank you, everyone. I wish you a good rest of the day and a good week in your respective ridings.

---





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>