



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION



45th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 154



NUMBER 47

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

Publications Centre: Publications@sen.parl.gc.ca

Published by the Senate
Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to mark the beginning of Black History Month, a time to reflect not on a separate history, but on a foundational pillar of our Canadian story. This is a history defined by grit, excellence and unwavering commitment to the promise of this country.

We are speaking of people who, in the face of systemic barriers, refused to wait for a path to be cleared. They cleared it themselves.

We see this resolve in the life of Lincoln Alexander, a proud Conservative who broke every glass ceiling in Canada's Parliament as the first Black member of Parliament, the first Black federal cabinet minister and Ontario's first Black lieutenant-governor.

We see it in the defiance of Viola Desmond, who demanded that Canada reconcile its laws with its values, and in the courage of Willie O'Ree, who stepped onto the ice for the Boston Bruins and proved that our national game belongs to everyone.

This same thread of excellence runs directly through the history of this very chamber. We look to the legacy of Anne Cools, who made history as the first Black person ever appointed to the Senate.

Following in that trail-blazing tradition was our former colleague Don Oliver, yet another proud Conservative and a steady voice for the idea that every Canadian should have the opportunity to succeed based on their own work and their own character.

Colleagues, having had the privilege of serving with Senator Cools and Senator Oliver and of being under their tutelage, I can say with complete sincerity that they truly represented the very best of Canada and of this institution. That same standard was later furthered by the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean in her service as Governor General.

Their stories are woven into the same fabric as that of the Black Loyalists of the 1700s, the No. 2 Construction Battalion of the Great War and the streets of Little Burgundy in my hometown of Montreal, where legends like Oscar Peterson and Oliver Jones turned a neighbourhood into a global cultural powerhouse.

Honourable colleagues, these are not just Black stories; they are the iron and timber of the Canadian identity. These Canadians did not simply endure; they transformed this country. They took

the ideals we discuss in this chamber — justice, opportunity and the rule of law — and worked to make them a reality for everyone.

Our country is stronger, freer and more prosperous because of their work. We owe it to their legacy to ensure that the merit and contribution they championed remain the bedrock of our national character.

Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

THE LATE MADELEINE KÉTÉSKWEW DION STOUT, C.M.

Hon. Joan Kingston: Honourable senators, Canadian nurses lost a national leader, Dr. Madeleine Kétéskwew Dion Stout, on December 30, 2025, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Madeleine was a nurse, a Cree speaker and a pre-eminent scholar. She was a member of the Kehewin Cree Nation in Alberta and attended the Blue Quills Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta.

As a child in a family of 12, she had her first encounter with a nurse, whom she credits for motivating her to study nursing. She graduated as a registered nurse from the Edmonton General Hospital in 1968 and earned a nursing degree from the University of Lethbridge in 1982.

A more extensive history of her childhood and formative years, as well as the events of her later career, can be found in a tribute published by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in 2021 entitled "Nursing and Indigenous peoples' health: reconciliation in practice."

In 1983, Madeleine became a special adviser to the then Minister of Health and Welfare Canada, Monique Bégin, and in 1985 she was appointed as the inaugural director of the Indian and Inuit Health Careers Program.

Madeleine went on to receive a Master of Arts degree from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, where she taught in the School of Canadian Studies. At Carleton, she served as the director of what was then the Centre for Aboriginal Education, Research and Culture. She was appointed by prime minister Jean Chrétien as a member of the National Forum on Health and later as Vice-Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Madeleine was President of the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, now known as the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association.

For decades, she worked with Indigenous Peoples, nursing colleagues and Canadian society at large as a nurse, researcher, educator, lecturer, reformer, philosopher and policy leader. In all of these roles, she helped to shift health matters to Indigenous community control.

Increasingly reclaiming her Indigenous name in her later years, Kétéskwew drew on her Cree lens and her kinship ties in all of her life's work, leaving an indelible mark in shaping health and wellness in Canada.

Madeleine received many honours. She was named one of Canada's top 100 nurses during the celebration of the Canadian Nurses Association's centennial anniversary in 2008, and she received several honorary doctoral degrees, including those conferred by the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. In recognition of her national influence on Indigenous health care in Canada as a nurse, researcher and advocate, she was honoured with an Inspire Award in 2010 and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2015. In 2021, Madeleine became an Honorary Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Nursing.

Madeleine's wisdom, intellect and lifelong profound commitment to improving the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples will continue to influence the landscape of nursing and health care for generations to come.

Thank you, *hiy hiy*.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Suliman and Andro Antoun. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Robinson.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE ANTOUN AND JAZMATI FAMILIES

Hon. Mary Robinson: Honourable senators, I rise today to honour two families whose journeys to Canada were shaped by loss, courage and extraordinary resilience.

First, let me talk about the Antoun family — Salim, Mary and their children, Sandra, Suliman and Andro.

In 2012, in Zabadani, Syria, young Sandra overslept and missed her ride to school. That vehicle later struck an explosive device, killing all her friends. Around the same time, Andro's school was evacuated moments before it was destroyed by a bomb. These and other catastrophes made the family's decision very clear: They had to leave.

They fled to Mary's home country of Lebanon, where Sandra — self-taught in English — worked with an NGO helping Syrians apply for resettlement abroad. When Salim later suffered a heart attack, the family's savings, meant to fund their passage out of Lebanon, were exhausted by medical bills. Then a door opened. An old friend, Bashir, living in Prince Edward Island urged them to apply to Canada as Canada was providing passage.

• (1410)

In January 2016, the Antoun family arrived in Charlottetown, welcomed by their sponsors and Bashir. Today, Sandra owns the Habitat for Humanity home built for their family. Suliman and Andro have graduated from the University of Prince Edward Island, or UPEI, in engineering and business respectively, and now they live in Ottawa. Mary, the heart of their family, sadly passed in 2024.

The Antouns proudly became Canadian citizens during the pandemic.

Next is the Jazmati family: Joseph, Yvonne and their sons George, Jonny and Roy. They fled Damascus after their home was struck by an explosive device, seriously injuring George. Arriving in P.E.I. that same 2016 night, the children soon began to thrive. Roy built his first snowman. Yvonne pursued child care work. Joseph, a pharmacist for 27 years in Syria, volunteered at the Charlottetown hospital and later worked at Lawtons pharmacy.

The Jazmati family became Canadian citizens in 2019. Today, they live in Laval, Quebec, and they're fluent in French — a language they taught themselves while still in Syria.

These families remind us that refugees do not arrive empty-handed. They arrive with skills, determination and a deep commitment to giving back. Their stories reflect the unsinkable spirit of the Syrian people and of the very best Canada can be.

Senators, I ask you to join me today in celebrating the Antoun and Jazmati families. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Tiffany Callender, Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE), and Emmanuel Ngue, Chief Executive Officer and Principal Engineer of EN Solutions Hydro. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Gerba.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Amina Gerba: Honourable senators, in 2026, Black History Month is celebrating 30 years of official recognition in Canada. This year's theme, as chosen by the federal government, is "30 Years of Black History Month: Honouring Black Brilliance Across Generations — From Nation Builders to Tomorrow's Visionaries." This theme reminds us that the history

of Black communities is not just a legacy of the past but that it is also being written today, particularly through policies, entrepreneurship, innovation and wealth creation.

Honouring this intergenerational excellence requires more than just words. We need public policies that can transform potential into long-term success.

[*English*]

In this spirit, it is particularly important to highlight concrete initiatives that support Black entrepreneurship in Canada. The Black Entrepreneurship Program, and in particular the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund which is administered by the Federation of African Canadian Economics, or FACE, allows Black entrepreneurs to access capital, grow their businesses and contribute to the country's economic vitality, despite persistent systemic barriers.

[*Translation*]

This morning, during the presentation of the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, we saw first-hand the outstanding work of all the organizations involved in its operation.

[*English*]

I would like to especially recognize the leadership of Ms. Tiffany Callender and the FACE Coalition team. Their vision, commitment and determination have been essential in translating public policies into tangible results, enabling thousands of Black entrepreneurs to succeed and thrive. Congratulations to FACE. I want to also highlight the job of innovators like Mr. Ngue.

[*Translation*]

These innovators are doing amazing things. Honouring Black history and Black excellence also means recognizing past struggles, addressing current inequalities and creating a future where every Black entrepreneur can reach their full potential.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Lyle Vanclief, former Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and his wife, Sharon Vanclief. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Black.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Senator Gerba*]

ROY KEITH BYRAM, C.M., O.Y.

Hon. Pat Duncan: Honourable senators, lately Canadians have often heard “Building Canada Strong.” On December 11 of last year, 31 of our country's best were honoured by the Governor General of Canada and invested into the Order of Canada.

I would like to speak of just one of those who were honoured — someone who has built Canada's North strong and enhanced Canada's reputation internationally for construction excellence in extreme cold climate conditions: Keith Byram.

Keith's engineering work has included construction work throughout the North — in B.C., the Yukon and Alaska — on the Alaska Highway and the Dempster Highway, part of Diefenbaker's Roads to Resources. Yes, he also designed the pedestal for a DC-3 plane, the world's largest weather vane at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Integral to success is a strong family. Keith's wife Gwen and their daughters Karen, Lori and Jennifer are a family involved throughout the business Pelly Construction.

In 1989, there were no large hard rock mines operating in the Yukon. Budgets for road construction were minimal. Pelly Construction was doing major roadwork in Alaska. Keith, the entrepreneur-engineer, had carried around a little piece of paper from a trade magazine. It was a tender notice to build a runway in Antarctica for the British Antarctic Survey.

Keith showed it to Gwen, and her immediate response was, “Are you crazy?” To which he replied, “It's what we do.” One of the greatest adventures for the Byram family and many Yukoners began.

Winning the contract for the runway construction was one part. Relocating people, construction equipment, food and supplies from the Yukon to the Antarctic in time for two short construction seasons was another.

It included transporting the equipment from the Yukon to Skagway, Alaska, barging it to Vancouver and loading everything onto ships to transport the operation to Antarctica.

The numbers help to truly appreciate this story: three ships, 100 containers of materials, 1.25 million litres of fuel, two tugboats, five 35-tonne Caterpillar rock trucks, three bulldozers, two loaders, two drills and two crushers, plus a grader and 70 employees. Oh, and there were also 14,400 cans of beer.

The complete story of the Antarctic runway has been published in the words of Keith and his family, with the assistance of Patricia Cuning and the MacBride Museum, in a beautiful volume released in January 2025.

For those lucky enough to travel to Antarctica, you likely landed on the runway that the Pelly Construction crew built.

Keith, the Byram family and Pelly Construction are also known for their generous philanthropy, notably to the Yukon Hospital Foundation and the construction of Mount Sima ski hill, as well as the Whitehorse food bank and local cultural organizations.

Keith, we are truly grateful to you, the Byram family and Pelly Construction. We honour your contribution to Canada and the circumpolar world. You have led and continue to lead the way, building and strengthening Canada here at home and on the world stage.

Thank you. *Shāw nithān. Mahsi'cho.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Her Worship Cynthia Block, Mayor of Saskatoon and the city's first female mayor, and Rebecca Cormack, Chief of Staff for Mayor Cynthia Block. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Muggli.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Jacqueline Koerner, fellow at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

IAN DUNCAN

CONGRATULATIONS ON GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HISTORY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Hon. Marnie McBean: Honourable senators, today I wish to recognize Ian Duncan, an extraordinary educator and innovator from my hometown of Toronto. He was one of the recipients of the 2025 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching for his remarkable initiative, the Historytellers Project.

This prestigious national award celebrates those who bring Canada's past to life in classrooms across the country and inspire students to think critically about the past and its relevance today.

I was privileged to serve as a project editor, with Senator Cormier, on the Historytellers Project. That close involvement gave me a first-hand view of the care, rigour and creativity that went into its development as well as the profound impact it had on its students.

Created in partnership with the ArQuives, Canada's 2SLGBTQIA+ archive and the largest independent queer archive in the world, the Historytellers Project invites students to explore and tell the histories of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada whose stories have often been overlooked, erased or misunderstood.

By engaging directly with archival records, photographs, letters, oral histories and community documents, students are challenged to confront the realities of discrimination, resilience, activism and belonging that have shaped generations.

Through this project, young people do not simply learn about the past; they become historians themselves. They analyze primary sources, ask critical questions and present narratives that broaden our national story. They come to understand that Canadian history is richer and more complex when all voices are included.

His research guide for students is outstanding. It demystifies the research process while encouraging curiosity and critical thinking and empowers students to transform evidence into meaningful stories that deepen our understanding of the past.

In forging a partnership with the ArQuives, Mr. Duncan has built an inspiring bridge between classrooms and community institutions, demonstrating how collaboration can deepen learning while preserving lived experience and collective memory.

Mr. Duncan joins other winners from Toronto, such as Katy Whitfield, who won in 2015 for her project, Historical Thinking Missions, through which students conducted historical research and fieldwork to learn about the history of Toronto's St. John's Ward.

On behalf of this chamber, I extend my warmest congratulations to Ian Duncan, as well as the other winners, on this well-deserved national honour.

His leadership in education, commitment to inclusive storytelling and dedication to his students remind us that teaching can shape not only minds but our shared future. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Zainab Abdurrahman, President of the Ontario Medical Association. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Burey.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE LEGAL AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO STUDY CERTAIN
ASPECTS OF SUBJECT MATTER AND NATIONAL FINANCE
COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER ITS REPORT

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the
Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable
senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will
move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules,
previous order or usual practice, if Bill C-4, An Act
respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and
another measure, is adopted at second reading:

1. it stand referred to the Standing Senate Committee on
National Finance;
2. the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and
Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine and
report on the subject matter of Part 4 of the bill;
3. the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance:
 - (a) be authorized to take into account any report
from the Standing Senate Committee on Legal
and Constitutional Affairs to the Senate on the
subject matter of Part 4 of the bill, during its
consideration of the bill; and
 - (b) submit its final report to the Senate no later than
the end of Routine Proceedings on February 24,
2026, after which it shall be deemed to have
reported the bill without amendment, with the
bill then being placed on the Orders of the Day
for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate;
4. the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and
Constitutional Affairs be authorized to deposit its
report with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not
then sitting; and
5. for the purposes of these studies, both committees
have the power to meet, even though the Senate may
then be sitting or adjourned, and that rules 12-18(1)
and 12-18(2) be suspended in relation thereto.

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND BORDERS BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE TO STUDY CERTAIN ASPECTS
OF SUBJECT MATTER AND NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER ITS REPORT

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the
Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable
senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will
move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules,
previous order or usual practice, if Bill C-12, An Act
respecting certain measures relating to the security of
Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian
immigration system and respecting other related security
measures, is adopted at second reading:

1. it stand referred to the Standing Senate Committee on
National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs;
2. the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,
Science and Technology be authorized to examine
and report on the subject matter of Parts 5, 6, 7 and 8
of the bill;
3. the Standing Senate Committee on National Security,
Defence and Veterans Affairs:
 - (a) be authorized to take into account any report
from the Standing Senate Committee on Social
Affairs, Science and Technology to the Senate
on the subject matter of Parts 5, 6, 7 and 8,
during its consideration of the bill; and
 - (b) submit its final report to the Senate no later than
the end of Routine Proceedings on February 24,
2026, after which it shall be deemed to have
reported the bill without amendment, with the
bill then being placed on the Orders of the Day
for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate;
4. the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,
Science and Technology be authorized to deposit its
report with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not
then sitting; and
5. for the purposes of these studies, both committees
have the power to meet, even though the Senate may
then be sitting or adjourned, and that rules 12-18(1)
and 12-18(2) be suspended in relation thereto.

ADJOURNMENT

[Translation]

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

CONNECTED CARE FOR CANADIANS BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-5, An Act respecting the interoperability of health information technology and to prohibit data blocking by health information technology vendors.

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

(On motion of Senator Moreau, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

• (1430)

[English]

SENATE'S SELF-GOVERNANCE AND THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the Senate's self-governance and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

QUESTION PERIOD

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMON BENEFIT DELIVERY PLATFORM

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Our seniors have been waiting for months for their Old Age Security benefits, while your government has caused the cost of a program to skyrocket from an estimated \$1.8 billion to \$6.6 billion. Deloitte has already collected \$388 million, double the amount of its initial contract, and yet departmental employees are saying that they have been left to fend for themselves. Why is the government continuing to give tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars to Deloitte, actuaries and others with no accountability or explanations, while Quebec seniors are not getting the payments they are entitled to?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I had the opportunity to answer a question from Senator Forest on this same issue yesterday. At that time, I said that 7.4 million files had been transferred to the new system.

The goal going forward is for the new system to be more efficient and cost effective and for seniors to get their benefits on time.

Of the 7.4 million OAS files that were transferred, over 98% of cases have been resolved and the payments were made promptly. I am told that the department is actively working to quickly resolve the small number of cases still pending, the remaining 2%, because, of course, even 1% is too much.

Senator Housakos: Surely you agree that this program exists to benefit seniors, not consultants. This is not the first time your government has failed to deliver on a federal program, both in terms of deadlines and budget.

When will you finally start managing taxpayers' money responsibly instead of making Canadians pay for your failures?

Senator Moreau: Yes, the program exists to improve the situation in the years to come. Governments, whether federal or provincial, often have IT failures. I am prepared to admit that, Senator Housakos.

However, in the huge file we are dealing with, 98% of the cases are processed on time. You are right. I agree that these programs should be designed first and foremost for Canadians, not for consultants, but sometimes consultants can help to ensure that the programs work properly.

[English]

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

NET-ZERO ADVISORY BODY

CANADA-INDIA RELATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My next question is also for the government leader. Yesterday, you touted trade diversification as a priority for your government, pointing to a series of hollow MOUs and rhetoric for strategic partnerships. Yet, one of the biggest failures of the previous, old Liberal government was the breakdown of Canada's relationship with India. That failure led to the collapse of trade talks and an imposition of tariffs of up to 30% on Canadian pulse crops — which are killing our province of Saskatchewan — which account for 95% of our agri-food exports to India.

After nine months in office, the new Liberal government has seen no progress on Canada-India trade relations. Can you give this chamber just a general sense of the status in regard to the negotiations between Canada and India on trade?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): It is well known in this chamber that the Prime Minister is working very hard to improve all our relations with other countries. Ever since the Americans have changed their way of doing things and of dealing with Canada and the Canadian economy, we are making every effort possible to open new markets for Canadian enterprises. This includes India.

Yesterday, I mentioned what the Prime Minister has already done with the foreign missions that he had gone on. It's beneficial to all Canadians, not only to those in agriculture but to every Canadian and every enterprise in Canada. We are opening new markets, and this is how we will improve our economy. I think the Prime Minister is just beginning. He has many other things to announce and to do to make sure we will have the most resilient economy among the G7.

Senator Housakos: The announcement and the attempt to sign a deal with India started back in 2015 with previous governments. It has been 10 years of inertia. Actually, we have the old Liberal government that blew up the Canada-India relations.

My question is simple: What is taking so long? The Prime Minister has gone to Qatar, to China, to the U.A.E. He has travelled the world, but he couldn't find time to stop in one of the biggest emerging economies in the world. So this is the question: Is it maybe that the old ministers stuck in the new Liberal government are the people who are causing the same problem?

Senator Moreau: Just to reframe the timeline, the new government was elected nine months ago. In nine months, the Prime Minister has made more deals with more countries than any other Conservative government has done in the history of this country.

I think Canadians are quite proud of their Prime Minister, and that's the reason, as I mentioned yesterday, you are still on that side of the room.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Senator Moreau, in June 2021, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act received Royal Assent. That act called for the establishment of the Net-Zero Advisory Body, or NZAB, an expert group established to provide the minister with independent advice with respect to Canada's emissions targets and emissions reduction plans. Senator Yussuff was a member of NZAB.

Climate experts Simon Donner, who was the co-chair, and Catherine Abreu resigned from NZAB following the MOU with Alberta and the recent shifts in climate policy on which they were not consulted and which they thought would result in our 2030 targets being out of reach.

Senator Moreau, can you tell us why the Net-Zero Advisory Body was not consulted in the development of and adjustments to recent key government climate policies and actions?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Senator Coyle. As you probably know, I cannot comment on the specific conversations that were had regarding some of the government policy decisions, including this one. However, the government recognizes that the fight against climate change is not only a moral imperative but an economic one, too.

This government has taken significant steps in advancing Canada's progress on climate action. First, the government introduced its Climate Competitiveness Strategy, which works to drive down emissions while building a strong economy of the future through measures like strengthening industrial carbon pricing, enhancing methane regulations and through Clean Economy Investment Tax Credits. The government is also building major projects as groundwork for a net-zero Canada, like the North Coast Transmission Line, the Nunavut hydro project, the Darlington nuclear facility in Ontario and high-speed rail between Quebec and Ontario.

Senator Coyle: Thank you, Senator Moreau. Karen Ross, one of the four remaining members of NZAB, has called on the government to put the group on pause until the minister appoints six new members, stating that the board is functionally and operationally unable to fulfill its mandate. And we do have a law, right?

Senator Moreau, when will the Minister for Environment and Climate Change appoint new qualified members to the Net-Zero Advisory Board? And will the government develop an effective process for NZAB to provide independent advice to the government so that Canada can achieve —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, senator.

Senator Moreau: Thank you for the question. The government is grateful for their dedicated service on the board, which helped guide the government's work in advancing decisive climate action in Canada. That's the answer to your direct question.

Considering next steps, it will take the time needed to identify strong candidates. Appointments will be made consistent with the board's mandate and needs.

TREASURY BOARD

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Senator Moreau, on January 15, the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner submitted an urgent funding request to the Treasury Board to, in her words, "... avert collapse" of the whistleblower regime.

[*Translation*]

As more people learned about the office, the number of submissions received increased from 245 in 2022 to 638 in 2025. Unfortunately, the annual budget for the commissioner's office has not kept pace.

• (1440)

Senator Moreau, does the government intend to move quickly to provide emergency funding to the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner in order to ensure that public servants and the public continue to have confidence in the whistle-blower system?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Dalphond. To maintain growing trust in the system and ensure that the federal public service responds to questions adequately and correctly, with unwavering integrity, the government takes the issue of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner seriously.

Based on my information, Mr. Ali, the President of the Treasury Board, recently spoke with the Integrity Commissioner, specifically about budget-related questions. Unfortunately, I'm not in a position to disclose the subject matter of their discussions, but I assume that the budget issue was raised.

Senator Dalphond: Thank you for that answer, Senator Moreau, which I hope is encouraging. Can we expect that Treasury Board officials will agree that, over the medium to long term, the office's budget needs to be increased and widespread public service cuts need to be made judiciously, while preserving organizations like that one, because they are crucial to public trust?

Senator Moreau: The government's objective in reducing expenditures isn't to create a blanket policy, but to proceed intelligently, ensuring that we offer the best services to the people of Canada. Considering the number of these services, it's imperative to maintain the integrity of the system, of the public service as a whole and of its actions to ensure they align with the legislation passed by the Government of Canada.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

INVESTMENTS IN KOSHER AND HALAL MEATS

Hon. Josée Verner: Senator Moreau, Canadians were surprised to learn in January that the government will spend \$40 million by 2030 to provide financial support to halal and kosher meat producers.

This announcement sparked a strong reaction in Quebec and within Canada's Hindu community, which is concerned that the federal government is promoting slaughter practices based on religious rituals.

How do you justify using public funds to satisfy the expectations of Jewish and Muslim consumers, when Canadians expect religious neutrality on the part of the state?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Verner. The program provides a \$25-million contribution over two fiscal years, until 2027, to cover the cost of consultations and to reduce investment costs for this type of slaughterhouse, specifically for beef and veal producers, to ensure greater competitiveness and more effective measures. The program is broadly aimed at the agricultural sector and is not specifically based on any kind of religious principles or considerations.

Senator Verner: Currently, kosher and halal meats are not subject to clear and consistent labelling across the country to inform consumers about the ritual slaughter of non-stunned animals that characterizes their production.

Could you ask the Minister of Health to quickly establish a regulation to this effect so that all consumers, regardless of their beliefs, can make informed choices at the grocery store?

Senator Moreau: Thank you, Senator Verner, for that question, which is first and foremost a suggestion. As you know, I usually take suggestions from my fellow senators seriously, and I'll certainly pass on your proposal to the minister. I will inform you of the response as soon as possible.

[*English*]

FINANCE

EXECUTIVE POWERS

Hon. Marty Klyne: Senator Moreau, I'm hearing questions in Saskatchewan about the government's proposal to expand executive powers in Bill C-15. This proposal is in the budget bill, currently in Senate pre-study.

The questions concern Division 5 of Part 5 of the bill being studied by our Finance Committee. This measure would empower ministers to grant exemptions to any federal regulation or act of Parliament — except the Criminal Code — to individuals or organizations to test new ways to "... encourage

innovation, competitiveness or economic growth.” Althia Raj raised questions about this measure in the *Toronto Star* on December 6.

Senator, this seems like a very broad application of executive power in terms of overriding laws for anything innovative. Could you please comment on the thinking behind and goals of this measure?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Yes. The measure concerns what we call sandboxes. Regulatory sandboxes are spaces where the government allows innovative ideas or technologies to be safely tested for a limited time — I underline “limited time” — without applying all the usual rules. This helps the government see how these innovations work in practice and identify obstacles to their adoption.

Bill C-15 would make the development of sandboxes simpler and more uniform by giving ministers the power to grant exemptions without having to change each law separately until we know if innovations are properly working.

Senator Klyne: Thank you. There seems to be some reasonableness behind what you said, but this proposal is similar to a change made in Bill C-5, a government bill, to allow executive overrides of many federal laws for major projects. In that case, the House of Commons made amendments to reduce the number of laws that can be overridden. If senators have such amendments in this case, would the government be open to seriously considering these suggestions?

Senator Moreau: I must mention that the government also published a new policy on regulatory sandboxes that specifies the conditions for using sandboxes, namely consultation to increase transparency.

Of course, the government is always open to good suggestions. If you have some, you can count on me to relay those suggestions to the minister responsible.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CRIME PREVENTION

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, extortion and gun crimes, which I asked about yesterday, are not the only public safety challenges on the rise in B.C. BC Hydro is now reporting that in just the past two months, 1.3 kilometres of copper cables have been stolen from its network in the city of Surrey alone. In fact, nationally, copper wire theft has grown by 200% annually since 2021 and by over 300% in my province of B.C. in the past 18 months. These crimes disrupt essential services, endanger public safety and place added costs on families.

Senator Moreau, what is your government doing to address the rising copper wire theft in British Columbia and across the country?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): When you raised the issue of the Surrey situation yesterday, I reported that arrests have already been made. I

pointed out that the government is now spending more money on police and resources to ensure that all Canadians feel safe everywhere and that kind of scheme will be prevented.

The government is committed to doing whatever it can to ensure police forces are well equipped to face things like the copper situation that you are raising today, as well as what you raised yesterday regarding the Surrey extortion scheme.

Senator Martin: The issue regarding the theft of copper is that it’s the work of a highly organized criminal organization that operates without fear or consequence.

How are Canadians supposed to be reassured by your government’s approach to crime when those responsible for justice and public safety today were also part of the Trudeau cabinet that systematically dismantled the criminal justice system over the past 10 years?

Senator Moreau: We had the privilege of having the justice minister here before the Christmas break. He was quite clear that we want to be tough on crime and that the government will be. As a matter of fact, we are introducing new legal measures, and we are amending the Criminal Code so that those crimes will be punished, and we are funding police forces at the same time to make sure that Canadians can feel safe everywhere in Canada.

• (1450)

FINANCE

COST OF FOOD

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): It’s been 10 years of this dismantling, so a lot of work will be done.

I’m switching to another very important issue: According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, their annual report released yesterday indicated that more than 6 million Canadians are living with heart disease or stroke. What’s really concerning is that one of the most preventative measures to address risk factors — a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables — is becoming increasingly out of reach as food prices continue to rise. Under your government, food inflation has made it harder for families to make healthy choices.

Senator Moreau, while your government is proposing temporary Goods and Services Tax, or GST, measures, the root causes of food inflation remain unaddressed. Will your government support Conservative efforts to lower food prices by removing the Liberal food packaging tax and the industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): I’m pleased to report that next week, we will be studying Bill C-19. What Bill C-19 does is it will provide immediate relief on grocery purchases so that Canadians will be able to have access to nutritious food. It provides more than \$400 to a single person, more than \$500 to a couple and more than \$800 to a family with two children. It’s part of the measures that we are putting forward to make the cost of living more affordable.

It's just one of the measures because, as you know, there are many others. I often point to a list of what the government is doing as part of a global approach to ensure there's more affordability everywhere in Canada for low-income and moderate-income Canadians.

Senator Martin: Bill C-19 will be a short, temporary GST measure. The real issue is what we need to do to support the health of Canadians. More Canadians are relying on food banks, and when staples like lettuce are up 40% while canned vegetables are up 12% and continue to rise sharply in price, families are forced to focus on survival, not prevention.

Will you support the Conservative measure of eliminating the tax —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, senator.

Senator Moreau: I'm asking you this question: Will you support the Liberal measure as the official opposition on Bill C-19? Will you adopt the law rapidly? Affordability is not only a question of food. It is always a question of lowering tax. That's what the government did for 22 million Canadians.

Again, at the House of Commons, your colleagues voted against the budget that will be cutting the consumer carbon tax, providing immediate relief on groceries, investing in affordable child care and cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers. Those are measured —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CANADIAN INNOVATION

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Senator Moreau, Canada has earned international recognition as a leader in high-quality, impactful research. Can you outline what specific, timely measures the government is implementing to ensure that Canadian research — a lot of which is publicly funded — does not just remain world-class academically but also results in more domestic commercialization, stronger Canadian-owned intellectual property and higher productivity across our economy?

I ask the question because a recent analysis by the C.D. Howe Institute confirms that while Canada produces high-quality research and ranks well in academic research and development, or R&D, we generate far fewer patents than expected from that research.

I've often highlighted how Canada struggles to commercialize its ideas, and when it does, entrepreneurs are too often eager to sell to foreign buyers.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): The government understands that Canada's growth has been held back at times by weak productivity associated with low investment toward intangible assets like intellectual property. This government is taking concrete steps to turn this around, which has been reflected in the results-driven approach of the last nine months — not the last 10 years.

This government has made significant investments to elevate intellectual property, or IP, programs such as the IP Assist program, totalling over \$150 million. Canadians will also be encouraged to hear that we have the Intellectual Property Strategy to help Canadian businesses understand, protect and access IP.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for that answer. That is very positive and hopeful, like we say.

Senator Moreau: Thank you.

Senator Loffreda: Things will change rapidly, hopefully.

Perhaps it's time for the government to consider tying public dollars to commercialization outcomes here in Canada so that firms scale up domestically rather than sell their innovations abroad, because the problem is there too.

Could you elaborate on what support programs the government does have in place for those initiatives?

Senator Moreau: To further strengthen the intellectual property ecosystem in Canada, the government will conduct an intellectual property performance review to identify new ways to retain and commercialize intellectual property here at home.

More specifically, the government is already moving toward providing further flexibility to innovators in Bill C-15, with the formalization of regulatory sandbox processes, just as I mentioned to your colleague Senator Klyne.

Extending similar measures in controlled —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Canada has committed over \$38 billion to modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, and Arctic defence, yet critical infrastructure gaps remain. The Nanisivik Naval Facility is still not operational after years of delays; forward operating locations, such as those in Inuvik and Iqaluit, are under-equipped for potential future Royal Canadian Air Force — notably F-35 — operations; and many Arctic communities lack dual-use infrastructure that supports both sovereignty and community resilience.

My question to you is: Given growing adversarial activity across the entire northern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, and serious concerns raised by defence experts about Canada's readiness, will the government provide a clear timeline and funding breakdown for the operationalization of Arctic infrastructure critical to NORAD and the Canadian Armed Forces deployability in the Arctic?

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): Canada is a proud Arctic nation, and we have a responsibility to protect and secure the region.

The government knows that defending the North and Arctic requires a consistent, long-term, well-equipped Canadian Armed Forces presence. The government is investing over \$72 billion through the new defence policy — Our North, Strong and Free — and nearly \$40 billion to the NORAD modernization plan, which supports an increased Canadian Armed Forces presence in the North and Arctic.

The government must ensure that it has appropriate and well-situated refuelling facilities across all three of Canada's coasts to support our Royal Canadian Navy's important work. This is why the government has invested over \$107 million in the Nanisivik facility.

Senator Patterson: Thank you very much. I'm very interested in infrastructure in particular.

Canadian military cooperation and interoperability across NATO — and especially with the Nordic partners — will be one of the critical elements in strengthening defence and deterrence in our North, and this starts with training together.

Will the government commit to expanding participation in the Canadian-led Operation NANOOK to highlight the unique security challenges in the North and create long-term partnerships?

Senator Moreau: The Prime Minister has announced that Canada and NATO allies have agreed to a new Defence Investment Pledge of investing 5% of annual GDP by 2035 to ensure our collective security. As part of this pledge, Canada will invest 3.5% of the GDP for core military capabilities, expanding on recent investments, and this means that the training will be positively impacted by that.

FINANCE

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the government leader.

Government leader, even CTV is now reporting that Canada's economy is on life-support and heading into a recession. After a decade of Liberal rule and nearly a year under the new Liberal rule, Canada is facing soaring debt, collapsing productivity and an exodus of investment approaching \$1 trillion.

The result is clear: According to Statistics Canada's latest real GDP figures, Canadians are on track to be poorer than the year before for the third consecutive year.

• (1500)

Senator Moreau, instead of doubling down on the failed Liberal record and more Band-Aid solutions, why won't the Prime Minister join the Conservatives in legalizing rapid resource development, repeal job-killing laws and finally restore investment productivity and prosperity for Canadians? You copied our program just a few hours before the last election, which put you on that side. Why don't you take this good advice, and maybe you might stay on that side?

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate): We have been on the same side for quite a long time, and I think it is because we have good ideas. We are open to other ideas, as well, to stay on the same side, Senator Housakos.

As far as the economy is concerned, the Prime Minister is opening 2.2 billion new customers for Canada through strategic partnerships with the European Union, China and Qatar and new free trade deals with Ecuador and Indonesia. And for almost two years now, inflation has remained within the Bank of Canada's target. It was at 2.4% recently, and interest rates are stabilizing at 2.25%.

The government is putting more money in the pockets of Canadians for their costliest expenses: housing and groceries. That is why we're at the place where we are — and the place where you are, as well.

Senator Housakos: Government leader, stealing our ideas at five minutes to midnight before the last election is hardly a success story. In between elections, you go back to your regular line, and what did it do? It led to your previous leader being shown the door. We're trying to save your current leader the same embarrassment by saying to stop waxing poetic about trying to spend your way out of the problems that your government has created through the years and start taking fiscally responsible steps.

Senator Moreau: Senator Batters says that those were Band-Aids. I think that Canadians like Band-Aids, because they were voting for all of the measures the government was putting forward during the last election.

Again, I know that you don't like the numbers, but inflation has remained within the Bank of Canada's target for the last two years, and interest rates are stabilized. I think those are good economic measures and since —

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moreau.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-12(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: second reading of Bill C-4, followed by second reading of Bill C-12, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Rodger Cuzner moved second reading of Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure.

He said: Honourable senators, I feel privileged today to speak on Bill C-4, the making life more affordable for Canadians act.

However, before I commence my formal remarks, I hope senators will allow me a brief moment to reflect on a very important event that occurred yesterday. In light of what is transpiring in politics south of the border, it has even greater significance here in Canada today. Many were in attendance yesterday and also watched online. At the risk of sounding effusive about yesterday's event, it truly showed Canada at its best. Of course, the event I am speaking about is the honouring of our twenty-second prime minister, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, at the unveiling of his official portrait.

I see Senator Housakos clasping his chest.

I was struck by the class, dignity, mutual respect and even the sense of humour displayed by folks who come from different political perspectives and who yet were unified, not only in honouring Mr. Harper but in honouring our country.

It was clear from both Mr. Harper and the current Prime Minister during their speeches yesterday, the importance during these difficult times, as we confront unprecedented challenges internationally — and, yes, even domestically — of setting aside our differences and squabbles and focusing on what we all agree on: That is that we live in one of the greatest countries in the world and that our unity rises above partisanship.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cuzner: That is what we saw yesterday: a former prime minister, a Conservative, being honoured by a current prime minister, a Liberal, both expressing a deep sense of respect for each other, rooted in a love of the country, highlighting that we all have more in common than we think.

Yesterday was a special moment in our history in which those present understood that, during these difficult and challenging times, setting aside our differences for unity can be a source of inspiration for all of us and for Canadians across this country.

Thank you for your grace in allowing me to say these words. Hopefully, yesterday's ceremony frames the essence of Bill C-4. Because it is about the kindness, understanding and generosity that Canadians show for each other and for our common good.

Honourable senators, as you know, Bill C-4 was one of the first pieces of legislation advanced by the new government, and, as the bill's sponsor in the Senate, I would like to thank the Minister of Finance and National Revenue for entrusting me with the responsibility of advancing this important piece of legislation designed to make life more affordable for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is my honour to do so, as I believe the tax relief contained in this bill is the right action for the government to take at this time.

I appreciate the opportunity to explore in more detail the key elements of the bill that I hope make it worthy of your support, colleagues.

In terms of the stated goal of this bill, which is reflected in its title, it would first legislate the delivery of the government's middle-class tax cut, which is targeted at providing tax relief to nearly 22 million Canadians, saving two-income families up to \$840 a year.

Second, it would provide for the elimination of the Goods and Services Tax, or GST, for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued at up to \$1 million, which would save them up to \$50,000 on that purchase. It would also lower the GST for first-time homebuyers on new homes valued between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

Third, it would legislate the removal of the consumer carbon price following its cancellation, which was effective on April 1, 2025.

Finally, following extensive consultations among all the parties in the House, the bill contains some technical provisions to better clarify the framework for activities of federal political parties relating to personal information.

Let me address how this bill will achieve its core intent of making life more affordable.

In terms of implementing the government's proposed middle-class tax cut, it would reduce from 15% to 14% the tax rate applied to the lowest income tax bracket — the tax rate that is applied on up to \$57,375 of an individual's taxable income — which would be effective as of July 1, 2025. In effect, virtually everyone who owes tax will benefit from this tax rate reduction.

Moreover, the Department of Finance Canada estimates that the bulk of total tax relief will go to those with incomes in the two lowest tax brackets, which is to say those earning under \$114,750, with nearly half of the total value of the tax relief going to those in the lowest bracket. That means it would be going to those hard-working Canadians who need financial relief the most at this time. What's more, they would start receiving this financial support in a timely manner.

We know that hard-working Canadians are continuing to feel the impacts of ongoing challenges, including trade and tariff uncertainties and global inflation.

• (1510)

With the announcement of the government's middle-class tax cut, however, the Canada Revenue Agency updated its source deduction tables for the period of July to December 2025 so that employers and pay administrators have been able to reduce tax withholdings as of July 1, so many Canadians have already begun benefitting from this lower tax rate.

But this brings me to a point of clarification about the implementation of this tax reduction that honourable senators should be aware of. Because the tax cut is coming into effect halfway through 2025, the aggregate benefits of the cut will not be as high this year as they will be next year and subsequent years. That is because, as we know, income is reported and tax is calculated on an annual basis. As a result of the one-percentage-point cut in the lowest tax rate coming into effect halfway through the year, the full-year tax rate for 2025 would be 14.5%, while the full rate in 2026 and future years would be 14%.

This means that, in aggregate dollar terms, the middle-class tax cut is expected to provide \$2.6 billion in tax relief to Canadians in 2025, but that this would jump to \$5.4 billion in 2026, which would be the first full year at the 14% tax rate.

Going further forward, this middle-class tax cut is expected to deliver over \$27 billion in tax savings to Canadians over five years starting in 2025-26. That represents significant support for Canadians facing broad challenges of affordability. The bill, however, also addresses an area where affordability challenges are particularly acute.

Canada is facing a steep housing supply gap, one that threatens affordability, opportunity and the ability for Canadians to build a life and future here at home.

Desjardins Economic Studies published earlier this year a report concluding that:

Over the past quarter century, the average selling price of a home in Canada has ballooned by more than four times, while the average household disposable income has only slightly more than doubled. Benchmark home prices now consistently exceed what the average household can afford in several provinces.

This is just one study among many reaching similar conclusions.

So it is clear that the current state of housing markets in Canada presents a serious affordability challenge for many Canadian home buyers, particularly those who are just starting out in life and are in the market for their first home.

I think we can all appreciate that this is not just a serious challenge, but a complex and multifaceted one involving issues of both housing supply and demand, with both sides of the equation being influenced by a range of other complex factors.

The government recognizes these issues. More significantly, it recognizes that a multifaceted problem requires and demands multifaceted solutions.

The government has, for example, in recent years announced a range of measures aimed at both increasing the supply of housing and helping Canadians make that first down payment on a home.

Bill C-4 is important because it would complement the range of existing supports the government is providing Canadians to make their first payment on a home. Specifically, it would do so by eliminating the GST for first-time home buyers on purchases of new homes valued at up to \$1 million. This new first-time home buyers' GST rebate would mean upfront savings of up to \$50,000 on the purchase of their first home.

The rebate would also lower the GST on homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million for first-time buyers. In short, the rebate would be phased out in a linear manner for new homes valued between \$1 million to \$1.5 million. So, for example, under the linear phase-out, a new home valued at \$1.25 million would be eligible for a rebate of 50% of the maximum first-time home buyers' GST rebate of \$50,000, which means they would still save \$25,000.

Based on these support parameters, the Parliamentary Budget Officer concluded that the new first-time home buyers' GST rebate included in Bill C-4 would provide an average savings of around \$27,000 to first-time home buyers on their purchase of a new home.

So, by supporting Bill C-4, senators — which, I might add, was amended in the other place at the committee stage to move the coming-into-force date ahead — we would be providing a significant increase to the already substantial federal tax support available to first-time home buyers through programs like the First Home Savings Account, the RRSP Home Buyers' Plan and the First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit.

As honourable senators are aware, a home is the largest and most important purchase most people will ever make, and it is more than just a financial investment: It's a major first step for Canadians setting out to build a family, an investment in their future, an investment in peace and comfort as they work to build a life for themselves and their families and an investment in their retirement.

So by supporting Bill C-4, we would be allowing more young people and families to achieve their dream of home ownership and begin investing in their futures, their families, their peace and comfort and their retirements.

Governments across the country have committed to building more housing. Federal, provincial and municipal governments are coming together to address this problem. The measurements in this bill do not stand alone; there is a wider effort to build homes at a federal level. Build Canada Homes is playing an important role in helping as well, recently announcing that six locations across the country have been chosen to team up with provinces and municipalities to create new homes for Canadians.

Just before the break, the City of Ottawa and the federal government stated they have come to an agreement to accelerate the construction of 3,000 homes in this city. The Prime Minister said at the time the plan is to “. . . deploy financing to help unlock an additional 1,000 housing units in the City’s portfolio.”

He also said:

Under this agreement, the City will reduce or waive development charges, permit fees, and property taxes on priority projects for 2,000 new housing units.

In my home province of Nova Scotia, they have struck a deal with the federal government to address housing shortages as well, as announced on December 14 of last year. This agreement would see the construction of 1,430 homes in Nova Scotia.

In Longueuil, Quebec, Build Canada Homes has announced an agreement to build 1,055 new homes; 40% of these will be non-market housing units.

There was also a deal struck to build on federal lands in Toronto, which will see 540 homes built; 40% will be affordable. Edmonton has been earmarked for the construction of 355 new homes. In Winnipeg, a project has been struck with Treaty 1 First Nations to build 320 new homes.

Projects are moving forward across the country. There is obviously much more to be done to move the needle forward, but in a very short period of time, the government has signalled that building homes for Canadians is a priority.

This brings me to the third component in Bill C-4, which is also a third good reason to lend your support for this piece of legislation.

As we know, one of the first things the Prime Minister did upon assuming his responsibilities was to cease the application of the federal consumer fuel charge, effective April 1 of last year. However, while this was effectively accomplished through government regulations, Bill C-4 would take the next step beyond the regulatory ceasing of the fuel charge by completely removing the federal consumer carbon price from Canadian law.

In making this change, the government has committed to refocusing federal carbon pollution pricing standards on ensuring that carbon pricing systems are in place across Canada on a broad range of greenhouse gas emissions from industry.

• (1520)

The government has been clear that a price on pollution for large emitters would continue to be a key component of its plan to build a strong economy and a greener future, and it has been clear in committing to a system that is fair and effective.

Industrial carbon pricing is one of the most important greenhouse gas emissions reduction policies in the government’s plan to meet Canada’s 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target. Carbon pricing systems for industry are also designed to keep costs low to protect against competitiveness risks, while driving investment in the technologies that will shape the clean economies of the future and create good jobs.

Bill C-4 is therefore an important step in setting the government on this path to a cleaner, sustainable and more prosperous future. However, as I noted at the outset, even though affordability is Bill C-4’s primary focus, it is not its full extent.

The bill also includes some technical provisions to clarify Parliament’s long-established intent that the activities of federal political parties relating to personal information fall exclusively under federal jurisdiction and the Canada Elections Act.

For one thing, this would clarify that federal political parties cannot be required to comply with provincial personal information protection laws, in keeping with Parliament’s intent that the Canada Elections Act provides for a national, uniform, exclusive and complete personal information protection regime for these parties across Canada. This has been the case since May 31, 2000, which is when the Canada Elections Act was repealed and replaced through a major modernization.

Second, the bill also proposes additional requirements for a federal political party’s personal information policy going forward, including that it be available in both official languages; be written in plain language; state the types of personal information it retains, uses, discloses, disposes of, et cetera; and explain how the party carries out its activities in relation to personal information using illustrative examples. Eligible and registered federal political parties and persons acting on their behalf would need to ensure that they comply with their personal information protection policies.

In the minister’s appearance in this chamber on Bill C-4 back in the spring, he also mentioned, “We also added administrative monetary penalties in the event of a breach.”

I understand that some senators would prefer a different regime be put in place, but I think it has been clearly demonstrated that the elected representatives in the other place

would prefer what the government is proposing in Bill C-4. While Parliament's intent on these matters is long established, the explicit inclusion of these measures in Bill C-4 ensures greater clarity of this intent and timely implementation.

So here we have a whole range of very good reasons for us to support a timely passage of Bill C-4. It would first implement the government's middle-class tax cut for hard-working Canadians, saving them hundreds of dollars a year. It would then make the first-time home buyers' GST/HST rebate a reality, saving them up to \$50,000 on their purchase of a new home valued at up to \$1 million.

As I noted, this is an important complement to existing measures the government has introduced to help Canadian homebuyers make their first down payment, including the First Home Savings Account, or FHSA, the RRSP Home Buyers' Plan, or HBP, and the First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit, or HBTC.

I believe demand-side measures like the first-time home buyers' GST/HST rebate will be key to balancing out the supply side of the housing equation, where the government is advancing a comprehensive plan to build more homes using a Team Canada approach that brings all of Canada's governments to the table in accelerating the expansion of our housing supply.

Further, Bill C-4 would permanently legislate the removal of the federal consumer fuel charge, allowing the government to refocus and reinforce its carbon pollution reduction efforts in a way that is fair to Canadians and supportive of clean growth. Taken together, the measures included in Bill C-4 would help set the stage for a more affordable and prosperous Canada, including by allowing Canadians to keep more of what they earn.

I believe now is the right time to deliver this financial support, as Canadians continue to feel the impact of ongoing challenges, including the uncertainties brought about by developments on the trade and tariff front.

This bill has been delayed for quite some time, as we know, and I believe now is the right time to move it to committee for further study and provide for the timely passage of Bill C-4, which would make this support for Canadians a reality.

Thank you, *meegwetch*. I would be happy to take questions.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Cuzner, thank you very much for your speech. I have a few questions for you.

First, the income tax cut in Bill C-4, which the Liberal government boasted initially would deliver real change, will actually only save the working poor about \$11 a year. That is what Senior Economist David MacDonald told the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance recently. Yet, in the April election, Prime Minister Carney stated this tax cut would benefit a two-income family by about \$825 a year.

This senior economist told the Senate committee that the Liberal claim was misleading. Mr. MacDonald told senators:

The drop in the bottom bracket rate has been pitched as an affordability measure, but provides effectively no benefit to those in poverty and little benefit to those in the middle class.

Senator Cuzner, how can the Carney Liberal government claim this miniscule measure, amounting to less than a dollar per month for the working poor, provides Canadians with substantial affordability relief?

Senator Cuzner: Thank you, Senator Batters, for that question.

I would think, obviously, the numbers provided by the officials at Finance — a department with 600 officials in it — cannot be cast aside by one economist. They are confident that this initiative will benefit 22 million Canadians and that there will be a benefit of \$840 per year for a couple. This is one measure for Canadians to help with affordability. It is obviously driven by affordability. It is one of only many. We know that the grocery goods and service relief in Bill C-19 is going to be another measure. I hope all senators support that measure as well.

Certainly, I think we sometimes have to take a leap of faith with the people who provide us with those kinds of numbers, figures and data when we present this, and I hope that the senators see the merit in that.

Senator Batters: That economist was actually from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which generally stands up for the working poor in Canada.

I want to go on to another question. As you noted in your speech today, Finance Minister Champagne came to the Senate for a Committee of the Whole in June, where we had some opportunity to ask him questions about Bill C-4.

Since the government finally saw the error of their ways on the consumer carbon tax and was getting rid of it, I asked the minister this question:

Minister, I want to know how much money — how many billions of dollars — your Liberal government took out of the pockets of Canadians for the carbon tax you charged them for six years. You have been the minister for several months, so you must know the number. How much is it?

Surprisingly, he did not give me a number. So I quoted from an April article in the *National Post* that estimated that the total the government had collected over the length of the carbon tax program came out to almost \$45 billion.

Again, when I pressed him on that, Minister Champagne did not answer what the amount actually was., so I asked him to provide that to us in writing. I did not receive any sort of answer.

Given that it is now seven or eight months after that time frame, do you know what that answer is?

• (1530)

Senator Cuzner: No, I absolutely don't, and I don't think anybody would expect me to know that number. What I know is that the gas tax was something that — and I know there are many strong voices in the chamber who advocate on a regular and continual basis for the reduction in greenhouse gases and who are working toward a greener, more sustainable economy. There has been some disappointment in the cancellation of that gas tax.

The fact is that Canadians have made their minds up through that constant message of "It's a bad thing." When election time came, 80% of Canadians supported the two parties that said they would cancel the gas tax — 80% of Canadians supported that initiative. That's why we got that back, but I certainly wouldn't be able to provide her with the answer that she seeks.

Senator Batters: Thank you. Being that you're the sponsor of this government bill, perhaps you could ask the government to provide you with an answer and give it to us, since you are the person to whom we need to ask questions. I don't believe the government is going to put up a speaker on this for us to be able to ask the government a question, so you are the person to try to get those answers. I would appreciate that.

My last question on that is about another area I questioned Minister Champagne on in June at the Committee of the Whole. It was on what seemed to be an unintended consequence of reducing the value of the Disability Tax Credit by virtue of that tax cut in Bill C-4. There was a small amendment needed that was being advocated for by the National Disability Network. It was an area that Senator Petitclerc questioned the minister about that day. When she didn't get an answer, I followed up on it. The National Disability Network had written the minister a letter which listed several examples of situations where persons with disabilities would have actually been negatively impacted by the reduction of the Disability Tax Credit, even with that modest income tax factor factored in.

Minister Champagne was kind of doubting that. I asked him to refer to that letter and to definitely respond to that. I asked him for a written response to those examples, and he ended his questioning by me by saying, "Senator, we will respond to that letter and provide you a copy." I never received such a copy. We checked back today to make sure I didn't miss it in my inbox or something like that. I'm quite certain I didn't receive a copy. What's the answer to that? Have they made that amendment? If not, why not?

Senator Cuzner: Thank you very much, Senator Batters, for that. It will give me the opportunity to thank the senators who showed up at the initial briefing on Bill C-4 and brought that forward in a very strong message. We were able to press the minister at the time, Minister Champagne. You would know that in the budget implementation act, he did, in fact, make those taxpayers whole on that. He has fixed it.

I recently met with Amanda MacKenzie. She's the government relations person for March of Dimes Canada. I believe that's where the initial letter would have come from. They are very pleased. They get the vast majority of their actual data and information from Inclusion Canada, and Inclusion Canada said, "Yes, this fixes the problem in the budget bill." I would hope that the senator wanting that fixed will be able to support the budget bill.

Senator Batters: I just want to follow up on that. Are you saying, then, that they decided not to amend Bill C-4, but, instead, they amended the budget implementation act, which was drafted and introduced much later than this bill, Bill C-4? And Bill C-4 did just get passed in the House of Commons quite recently.

Senator Cuzner: The provision to make them whole was included in the budget bill, yes. It was brought forward, and, again, I thank the senators who invested the time to bring that forward.

Hon. Paula Simons: Would Senator Cuzner take another question?

Senator Cuzner: Absolutely.

Senator Simons: Senator, you began your comments by talking about the non-partisan nature of the unveiling of former prime minister Stephen Harper's portrait yesterday. You talked about the way parties can come together.

One way that parties have come together is to deal with Part 4 of this bill, in which all parties have agreed to a privacy provision that is far lower than that which we impose on our businesses and on our public sector, and it means that the information that parties gather about voters is uniquely vulnerable.

Can you please explain to those of us who are not elected and not members of political parties why political parties should be allowed to carve themselves out a privacy regime that is so dramatically less effective than that which we impose on private sector operators?

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Cuzner: Thank you very much, Senator Simons.

This was the first opportunity that the government had to bring forward a clarification on a piece of legislation that was passed in May 2000. It was passed by the House and signed off on and passed by the Senate. It not only provides a clarification but also goes beyond the clarification. I had mentioned in my speech what it also calls for. The minister said in his presentation here, when he was in the chamber, that they also included monetary fines for those who don't comply.

I absolutely respect the fact that you're not a member of a political party. I have been, may still be. I apologize for that. You refer to yesterday's ceremony. There was a former Conservative prime minister and a Liberal prime minister, and both of them paid their respects to the people who showed up and volunteered, unlike down in the States, where most people are hired guns.

Here in Canada, we still do it with people who step up. I know for a fact that in every riding in this country, if they have a financial officer, that financial officer is a certified accountant. Every time they sign off on a document, their reputation is on the line.

Asking for each party to have someone who is responsible for privacy, that's what the government feels would be just at this time, and they think nothing in this bill precludes further provisions on personal information. They think that this is appropriate at the time.

Senator Simons: Would you take a follow-up question?

Senator Cuzner: Yes.

Senator Simons: The challenge when you say there are fines for people who break the rules is that the parties themselves, as I read this act, are allowed to set their own rules. It seems to me that because all the parties think this is a great idea, it is, perhaps, proof of the obverse. Of course, the parties like this system because it holds them to a lower account.

Don't you agree that more needs to be done to protect the extraordinary amount of demographic and economic information that parties collect on voters, especially because we're not just talking about a bunch of well-meaning volunteers; we're talking about extremely well-funded analysts who create voter lists that are rich in information valuable not just to political parties but to all other kinds of operators?

Senator Cuzner: I'm not naive enough to think that there are no nefarious actors here. I know it's not mandatory to report breaches, but even so, in 25 years, there have been four breaches. Two were accidental. Information is like water; it finds its way out, so people know about those breaches.

Again, there's nothing in the legislation that precludes the government from going further. Right now, we know that what the government wants to do is to clarify their position at Elections Canada.

We should take pride as well, as Canadians, in Elections Canada and the trust we put in Elections Canada. Most Canadians see it as fair, impartial and professional. We're recognized around the globe for the work that Elections Canada does. The government is placing their trust in that process.

Senator Simons: I have a follow-up question, if I may.

Senator Cuzner: Yes, yes.

• (1540)

Senator Simons: It's my understanding that the Chief Electoral Officer opposes this legislative regime.

Senator Cuzner: I know that the Chief Electoral Officer would like deeper and more complete rules around the protection of personal information, but I'm not aware that he opposes this initiative.

[Senator Cuzner]

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Colleagues, it is a pleasure to be back with you after a seven-week break that gave us time to recharge our batteries and get ready to resume our work, which includes this speech.

Before I comment on Bill C-4, I'd like to say a few things now that we have an opportunity to define the relationship between a new government and a reformed, more independent Senate.

Most of us wouldn't want to go back to being an echo chamber for party lines coming from the other place. Rather, we want to add value to the work of Parliament while remaining mindful of the restraint required of our unelected chamber. That's why listening is important to us, especially listening to people who've been ignored or forgotten by the government or political parties.

We also want to make sure that this chamber functions effectively, while encouraging a thorough consideration of the important issues presented to us.

With these broad principles in mind, I will now speak to Bill C-4.

Senator Cuzner gave us an excellent presentation on the importance of the bill's tax measures. I thank him very much for that.

It is also important to remember the discussions that we had with the finance minister, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, on June 17, during a committee of the whole meeting on the subject matter of Bill C-4. From what I understand, Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the bill — which are found in the first 20 pages of a 23-page document, so the majority of the bill's content — propose a reduction in the lowest income tax rate, a GST credit for first-time home buyers and the repeal of the complex consumer carbon tax system. These are real financial measures, and they reflect recent election promises.

The principles underlying these parts of the bill can therefore not be challenged by the Senate. However, that does not mean that we should not carefully study the content of the bill and the impact of these parts at the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and suggest amendments to correct any errors or oversights.

However, Part 4, which would amend the Canada Elections Act, is a different story.

[*English*]

Part 4 of the bill begins by setting out its purpose as authorizing political parties to “. . . carry out any activities in relation to personal information” It adds that, in so doing, they “. . . cannot be required to comply with an Act of a province or territory that regulates activities in relation to personal information”

Clearly, Part 4 is not a budgetary issue. As Elizabeth May said at second reading in the other place, these amendments do “. . . not belong in an affordability act at all.”

Why, then, include this Part 4? The answer is that it is simply an attempt to fast-track amendments to the Canada Elections Act.

Why the rush, you may ask? As you may know, colleagues, in 2000, our Parliament enacted the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA, to establish “. . . rules to govern the collection, use and disclosure of personal information . . .” by federally regulated private sector organizations. Senator Simons has referred to this. The Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees compliance with PIPEDA.

Unfortunately, such protections do not apply to federal political parties. They care about business, but not that type of business, I suppose. They collect information and use personal data. Parliamentary records show that they wish to be free from such a comprehensive set of rules on privacy and the use of personal data, and especially oversight by an independent expert in privacy.

Considering the absence of federal rights and protections until now, in March 2022, the B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner concluded that B.C. residents were constitutionally entitled to the protection provided by the B.C. Personal Information Protection Act. This act, which is similar to the federal act I referred to, requires that citizens be informed of the personal information that is being held, how it is being used and to whom it has been disclosed. The B.C. act also includes the right to ask for a correction of an error or omission in personal information.

Federal political parties challenged that decision. In a judgment released in May 2024, the Supreme Court of British Columbia dismissed political parties’ attempt to annul the decision of the B.C. Privacy Commissioner. Subsequently, the political parties filed an appeal. In June 2025, the B.C. Court of Appeal stayed the appeal, pending the outcome of Bill C-4.

Here is the reason for the rush: If Part 4 is adopted, the provisions against the application of provincial laws will be deemed to have come into force on May 31, 2000 — yes, 25 years ago. That will end the pending appeal, of course.

Part 4 thus seems to be an attempt by the new government to use a financial bill as an expedient means to enact unrelated items, a practice that this chamber has deplored on many occasions. The problem with the inclusion of non-budgetary issues in financial bills is that such issues are buried among financial issues of great importance and are often subject to time constraints, preventing a thorough review of the non-financial provisions. That problem is compounded by the fact that in the other place, these omnibus bills are reviewed only by their Finance Committee and are not spread between committees like in the Senate.

Unfortunately, this is the case with the bill before us. Although the House of Commons Finance Committee dedicated six meetings to Bill C-4, there were no questions raised by its members on Part 4. Further, its report proposed various amendments to Part 2 but said nothing about Part 4. However, on

the website of the House of Commons Finance Committee, you will find seven briefs raising concerns, proposing amendments or asking for the removal of Part 4, including from the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, OpenMedia, the Centre for Digital Rights, the Information Commissioner of Canada and the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

On December 11, 2025, after a few short speeches, the bill passed without a formal vote as part of an adjournment motion. Everyone was happy to leave the Hill. Furthermore, while Part 4 requires federal parties to adopt and publish a privacy policy on their websites — something Senator Cuzner referred to — it doesn’t ask for much in terms of content. It only needs to designate a privacy officer and indicate their name and contact information; outline the types of personal information collected and how they will use it; and describe the training provided to the data handlers to protect personal data.

Unlike the federal acts, Part 4 does not include statutory requirements for parties: first, to identify in advance of collection the purposes for which personal information is collected; second, to obtain individual consent; third, to limit the collection of personal information to the identified purposes; fourth, to limit the use and disclosure of personal information to those purposes; fifth, to provide means for individuals to seek access to their information; and sixth, to allow individuals to exercise a right of correction. There is not even a requirement that the data be kept in Canada, so maybe it’s processed in the U.S. or maybe elsewhere.

• (1550)

Unfortunately, this lack of substantive content is not a first. In 2023, Bill C-47, Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1 included amendments to the Canada Elections Act to “. . . provide for a national, uniform, exclusive and complete regime . . .” — it sounds a bit similar to what we have before us — for the “. . . collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of personal information” by federal political parties.

The Supreme Court of British Columbia concluded that it was an empty shelf and it could not be proposed to the Province of B.C. That’s why we now have a bill that says provincial laws cannot apply.

Once reviewed by our Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, it was reported that the proposed amendments created a framework but did not establish the promised regime. The committee added that such amendments should have been introduced in a separate bill to “allow for a thorough study.” The current bill is a similar attempt to enact a mere framework despite the fact that in March 2024, a controversial bill to amend the Canada Elections Act, which died on the Order Paper, included substantive provisions for protecting personal information, including provisions on access and distribution, the steps to be taken in case of a data breach and a prohibition from selling this data.

In support of these provisions in Bill C-65, the parliamentary secretary, who initiated second reading of Bill C-65 in the other place, said, “We have a Privacy Commissioner and many parliamentarians who I believe are very much concerned about the privacy issue. . . .”

I think he’s right. We have shown it so far, and we will show it more. Speaking of the bill, he also said:

Federal privacy regimes would also bolster privacy requirements for political parties and would ensure a single, complete and comprehensive federal privacy regime.

Unfortunately, unlike Bill C-65, what is proposed in Part 4 of Bill C-4 is essentially a container without any real content, leaving Canadians vulnerable to insufficient data protection policies adopted separately by each political party. It doesn’t go as far as even Bill C-65 proposed. It is far from a single and comprehensive privacy regime for political parties.

Some will say that parties consider it more important to protect the way they choose to operate than the privacy rights of Canadians. For one thing, I am troubled by that because, domestically and internationally, privacy is a right of fundamental importance.

As the Supreme Court of Canada said, “The ability of individuals to control their personal information is intimately connected to their individual autonomy, dignity and privacy. . . .”

Accordingly, the Supreme Court has, on numerous occasions, recognized that privacy protection legislation is of a quasi-constitutional nature. Furthermore, the Supreme Court has acknowledged such legislation plays a fundamental role “. . . in the preservation of a free and democratic society.”

Incidentally, in the previous Parliament, when Minister Champagne was the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, he sponsored Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, 2022, and the preamble of the bill stated:

. . . personal information is essential to individual autonomy and dignity and to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms in Canada

I am sure that as the finance minister, he still believes that this is the case, and he understands our concerns.

In conclusion, while I see no constitutional issue with Parliament ousting provincial standards and imposing a single, complete and comprehensive privacy regime on federal political parties, as they have done on federally regulated enterprises and undertakings, the bill before us seems to merely create the illusion of protecting personal information and the privacy of voters.

For these reasons, I consider that Part 4 should be thoroughly reviewed by our Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. Thank you for your attention.

[Senator Dalphond]

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Senator, will you take a question?

Senator Dalphond: Yes, but we don’t have much time left.

The Hon. the Speaker: Before you answer, I just wanted to mention that your time is up. Would you like more time to answer the question?

Senator Dalphond: Can I ask for three more minutes before we adjourn?

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Wallin: Just seeking your opinion as a lawyer and a judge on this issue, as Senator Simons pointed out and as other senators have as well, Part 4 of Bill C-4 discriminates against private sector interests and their requirements on privacy. Do you see a constitutional or a legal issue surrounding that or a challenge that may be possible at that level?

Therefore, would you recommend that Part 4 be hived off from this bill so that it can be dealt with?

Senator Dalphond: Thank you very much. That’s a very good question.

I’m recommending that this be sent to committee for a thorough review where experts can testify. That can be done in an expeditious way in the coming week and maybe during the break. Bill C-4 motions intend to allow for that.

That being said, I won’t opine on the constitutionality, except that I think Parliament could be entitled, legally speaking, to regulate federal political parties. Will a regime be established for federal political parties that is different from business? The answer is “yes.” We also have the Privacy Act that applies to government departments and federal agencies. We have separate regimes: one for enterprises, one for the government and one for political parties. What I wish we can have are regimes that provide equal rights and that may be adapted to the situation of political parties.

For me, I’d be interested to know what they have within the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party when they canvass at my door and ask me questions. They don’t tell me, “We’re going to record what you say and put it in your file.” I would like them to tell me, “We will ask you questions, but before you answer, you are entitled to remain. If you answer, we will use the information in our data, and we may do many things with it, such as transferring it to somebody else or sharing it with whomever.” I wish they would tell me that, and then I would answer their question by saying, “Thank you very much for your visit” and then lock the door. That is how I will protect my privacy.

I think that is what's missing in this bill. It is too minimalist to address some of the concerns I have. Maybe the committee can report on that. Maybe the ministers can come with an undertaking that something will be done to address the next step of the regulation of privacy issues for political parties. Thank you.

Senator Wallin: It's not just the questions that are asked, senator, but it's also the observations that those whom are collecting the information may make by looking at how many

children are in the house or how many cars are in the driveway, which may not be factual at all. That is included, and it poses, I think, a different issue and a more problematic one.

(On motion of Senator Deacon (*Nova Scotia*), debate adjourned.)

(*At 4 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 4, 2025, the Senate adjourned until 1:30 p.m., tomorrow.*)

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