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Wednesday, October 29, 2025

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, as Latin American Heritage Month comes to a close, I want to take a moment to recognize the vital contributions of Latin Canadians to our country and to reflect on what their experiences can teach us.

Across Canada, but particularly in cities like Montreal and Toronto, I've had the privilege of working closely with members across the Latin-American community, particularly those of Venezuelan and Cuban descent. Many of them came to Canada after living under regimes that denied basic freedoms — governments that silenced dissent, restricted free speech and placed ideology above human dignity. Their stories are often marked by hardship, loss and displacement. But they're also stories of courage, perseverance and deep conviction in the values that define Canada.

These Canadians did not come here to escape responsibility; they came to rebuild, to contribute and to protect the freedoms they cherish. They are entrepreneurs, professionals, workers and advocates who have enriched our economy and our civic life.

They have built strong, self-reliant communities while never forgetting the lessons of what happens when liberty and democracy are taken for granted.

Through my close relationship with these communities, I've witnessed first-hand their commitment to democratic principles and their belief in the rule of law, open debate and individual rights.

They are among Canada's most outspoken defenders of freedom precisely because they know what it means to lose it. As we mark the end of Latin American Heritage Month, we should not only celebrate their contributions but also heed their reminder: The freedoms we enjoy in Canada are fragile, and defending them requires constant effort and conviction.

To all Latin Canadians, especially those from Venezuela, Cuba and across the Americas, thank you for choosing and contributing to Canada and for reminding us, through your example, why this country must always stand firmly for liberty and democracy. Thank you.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Katherine Hay: Honourable senators, thank you. *Meegwetch*. I'm filled with so much gratitude. This is Women's History Month, which reminds me that we stand on the shoulders of true giants: women who dared to dream, lead and change the course of Canadian history.

Nearly a century ago, Cairine Reay Mackay Wilson took her seat as Canada's first female senator, the Honourable Senator Wilson. Her portrait hangs in the Senate Reading Room. She didn't just make history; she made space for all of us.

I am proud to serve beside the remarkable women who continue her legacy here in the Senate of Canada. Senators Bernard, Senior, McCallum, Henkel, Osler, Mohamed, Coyle, Batters, Madam Speaker Raymonde Gagné and every woman in this chamber — you are all trailblazers, and I aspire to be like you.

I celebrate you and all women who paved the way, refused to be sidelined, raised others up and broke through barriers.

Yet around the world, we have seen rights once thought secure face pressure. I remember the afternoon of June 22, 2022 — when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned — very well. I never expected to witness that in my lifetime, and I cried.

Canada does stand on firmer ground, but that depends on our vigilance. We must protect choice, dignity, equality and equity. It is the right thing to do. Women own over 18% of small- and medium-sized businesses, contributing more than \$150 billion annually. Companies with gender-diverse leadership teams are 25% more likely to outperform. Workplaces with women at the helm see higher levels of innovation, stronger governance and better culture. Why would we not bet on women?

And as we look to the next generation, to young girls or women watching today, we cannot let them down. Their courage, confidence and belief that the glass ceiling can be broken — rather than it breaking them — that is on all of us, women, men, however one might identify. It is our responsibility to show them possibility, not limits.

My mother, Jeanne Hay, did this for me. Like many other women, she is a living reminder that every woman is lifted by the strength of another who cleared some of the path forward.

Women's History Month is not just about history made, but also history in continuous making, and all our futures depend on it.

[Translation]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Kathy Baig, Director General and Chief Executive Officer of l'École de technologie supérieure. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Youance.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Hon. Suze Youance: Honourable senators, with Hurricane Melissa battering the Caribbean, I would like to speak in my capacity as ambassador for research and innovation at my Montreal alma mater, the École de technologie supérieure, or ETS.

The ETS's research institute specializing in resilient and circular infrastructure, the AdapT institute, supports innovative projects that contribute to infrastructure and community adaptation to climate change, both here and abroad.

Its projects seek to catalyze practical solutions grounded in research and collaboration in order to address critical issues, such as water management, building resiliency and environmental impact mitigation.

If we want our infrastructure to be more resilient to disasters, we need to address the complex technological and environmental challenges posed by hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, earthquakes and melting permafrost.

Colleagues, it is before a disaster strikes that we can make a difference between life and death. We must study the risks in order to improve our buildings, ports and roads. Canada must increase its investments to address these risks and to deal with the growing threat of extreme weather events related to climate change. I hope that the inclusive, multidisciplinary approach taken by our universities, governments and industries will continue to develop and grow stronger with the help of the affected communities.

Our commitment will determine whether we succeed in reducing infrastructure vulnerabilities and in making our infrastructure more resilient and sustainable in today's environment.

• (1410)

In closing, I want to acknowledge the efforts of Canada's linesmen, who are already hard at work restoring power to the Caribbean. Good luck and thank you!

[English]

THE LATE TIM COOK, O.C., C.M.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, the past is our inheritance, but with that comes a profound responsibility, the duties of trusteeship.

I rise today to pay tribute to an eloquent, caring and passionate trustee of our story. Dr. Tim Cook, the Chief Historian at the Canadian War Museum, a pre-eminent military researcher, an Order of Canada recipient, lost his battle with cancer at the far too early age of 54, but not before penning an amazing number of books, at least 20, that captured the stories of unbearable cruelty and loss, of bravery and pain and of the camaraderie and the victories of the men and women who served and defended this country and who died for it and whose spirit we constantly seek to replicate.

In *The Secret History of Soldiers*, he echoed the quiet admissions of surviving against all odds. He captured the true meaning of service in *Vimy: The Battle and the Legend*, and in *The Fight for History*, Tim reminded us all that a nation's history — its story — is built on its past and always on the backs of those who were willing to risk it all for that nation and for the ideas at its core.

Tim Cook told the war fighters' stories. He gave them names and faces and the all-too-often-denied status of heroes and nation builders that they had earned at their peril.

A wise man once said:

One of the deepest impulses in man is the impulse to record, to scratch a drawing . . . or keep a diary . . .

And it's because the value of the past is “. . . the very basis of civilization.”

But history is also “. . . a jangle of accidents, blunders, surprises and absurdities, and . . . we must impose some order upon it.” That is what Tim Cook did every single hour of his life.

And if history is to be not just a burden on our memories but an illumination of our souls, then, Tim, you always willingly shared and bared your soul through your words — and theirs — and reminded us of the humanity of war, not just the inhumanity that often comes with its prosecution.

So a profound thank you to you and your family and your fellow chroniclers of our beginnings as a nation. You will remain mentor to the many who will read you for generations to come.

You are a great friend to Canada, to the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces, and you gave voice to thousands, from the grave, from the battlefields and bridges, and from the cockpits.

Safe travels, sir. *Sic itur ad astra* — “Such is the pathway to the stars.”

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Hlynur Guðjónsson, Ambassador of Iceland, and his wife, Lulu Yee. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator McPhedran.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ICELAND

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, on this day, I am pleased to be able to welcome to our chamber — and I want to thank everyone for your warm welcome to — Ambassador Guðjónsson and Lulu Yee as they begin to say farewell to Canada and return to Iceland.

Some in this chamber will remember Manitoba's Conservative senator Janis Johnson, one of the few Icelandic-Canadian parliamentarians who was retiring as I was arriving here, after persuading me to apply under prime minister Justin Trudeau's new system. My dad, a veterinarian, and Janis's dad, a medical doctor, were both recruited by the visionary Conservative premier of Manitoba the Honourable Duff Roblin, who later served in this chamber with distinction.

This is a special year for Iceland and Canada because 150 years ago, Senator Johnson's ancestors left Iceland and came to Manitoba, resulting now with the largest number of Icelanders outside of Iceland still living in Manitoba. In Gimli, Manitoba, one can wake and retire having spoken only Icelandic through the day.

During Women's History Month, let me tell you about October 24, 2025, in Iceland — 50 years since the "Women's Day Off." It made visible the power of women's work and sparked a global movement for change. On that day, 90% of Iceland's women took a day off. The country stopped; the world listened. It was not just a day off. It was a moment that changed so much. The "Women's Day Off" of 1975 ignited a global movement for equality. At its heart were the trailblazing women of the Redstockings movement — courageous, uncompromising and visionary. Their voices and leadership sparked change that reshaped Iceland and inspired generations worldwide.

In the decades since, Iceland has transformed ideals into action, becoming the global benchmark for gender equality, closing more than 90% of the gender gap. But progress is not just measured in numbers. It is built on solidarity, courage and the belief that equality uplifts everyone.

Ambassador Guðjónsson and Ms. Yee, thank you and fare-thee-well. See you in Iceland.

TEAM NUNAVUT HOCKEY

Hon. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: *[Editor's Note: Senator Karetak-Lindell spoke in Inuktitut.]*

I am so incredibly proud of the Under-18 Nunavut hockey team and all that they have accomplished.

In 2023, they made history by bringing home Nunavut's first-ever gold medal in hockey from the Arctic Winter Games. Their hard work, teamwork and dedication continue to inspire all Nunavummiut. Now in 2025, their game-worn jersey and gold ulu medal will be proudly displayed at the Hockey Hall of Fame for all visitors and hockey fans to see.

These symbols of pride and perseverance will remain in the hall's archives and will be showcased indefinitely, a lasting reminder of Team Nunavut's remarkable achievement.

As David Clark, the Team Nunavut coach, said:

This beautiful gold ulu wasn't won in 2023 during the cold February winter week in Fort McMurray. It was won many years prior to that. You see, everything in life must start with a dream that then turns into an idea. Then, a plan must be put in place to support that dream. (This is the hard part) All these boys played on our regional hockey team, which I coached from a very young age, called the Kivalliq Jr Canucks. . . . This was laying the foundation for years to come. We won big games and championships together, but we also lost heartbreaking games; the team was being built.

This month, the Hockey Hall of Fame hosted a celebration with players and coaches. Although I was not there to celebrate with you, know that I was celebrating with you in spirit. To each of the hard-working coaches and athletes —

[Editor's Note: Senator Karetak-Lindell spoke in Inuktitut.]

Your perseverance, teamwork and love for the game have brought tremendous pride to our territory. You have shown that with dedication and heart, Nunavummiut can achieve greatness on any stage.

I will read the team members: From Rankin Inlet, Coach David Clark and Assistant Coach Graham Kusugak; from Baker Lake, Assistant Coach Terrance McLean; from Arviat, Jimmy Ollie and Tucker St. John; from Rankin Inlet, Max Ammaq, Koby Connelly, Justin Issakiark, Kadin Eetuk, Kobe Tanuyak, Gregory Wiseman, Terence Pilakapsi, Sandy Tattuinee; from Iqaluit, Steven Nowdlak; from Whale Cove, Garren Voisey; from Coral Harbour, Ray Jr. Pudlat, Micah Emiktowt, Russell Matoo, Chase Harron and Prime Paniyuk.

These are the 2023 Arctic Winter Games gold medal team members. We will never forget watching that game, that moment in history.

[*Editor's Note: Senator Karetak-Lindell spoke in Inuktitut.*]

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Canadian Rangers. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Anderson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ADJOURNMENT

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, November 4, 2025, at 2 p.m.

[*Translation*]

ENACTING CLIMATE COMMITMENTS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Rosa Galvez introduced Bill S-238, An Act to enact the Climate-Aligned Finance Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Senator Karetak-Lindell]

CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION

CO-CHAIRS' ANNUAL VISIT TO CHINA,
MARCH 17-21, 2025—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Clément Gignac: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-China Legislative Association concerning the Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to China, held in Beijing and Guangzhou, China, from March 17 to 21, 2025.

[*English*]

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or previous order, the Honourable Senator Dean take the place of the Honourable Senator Boniface as one of the members of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, effective October 30, 2025.

NEWFOUNDLAND'S NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL AND TOMB OF UNKNOWN NEWFOUNDLAND FIRST WORLD WAR SOLDIER

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to Newfoundland's National War Memorial and the Tomb of an unknown Newfoundland First World War soldier.

LIFE OF VERNON AND SHIRLEY PETTEN

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the life of Vernon and Shirley Petten.

QUESTION PERIOD

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Denise Batters: My question is for the Chair of the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee, Senator Moncion.

I was the Deputy Chair of the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee for all of 2018 and 2019. In 2018, the committee had 20 meetings, with no election and no prorogation. In 2019, even with a federal election, the committee still had 16 meetings. It does have the power to meet during dissolution and prorogation.

You became the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee chair in mid-2022. In 2023, the committee only had 13 meetings, with no election and no prorogation. In 2024, there were only 12 meetings, with no election and no prorogation. Your committee passed the \$139-million Senate budget last December and didn't have another meeting until June, with a full six months between meetings. You've only had four meetings this year.

That's not even close to good governance or proper accountability of taxpayer dollars. Why, under your leadership, has there been such a decline in the frequency of Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee meetings, where senators can get answers for taxpayers?

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Thank you for the question. Senator, you know that during prorogation, the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee steering committee meets, and it met on a regular basis. Under my leadership, steering continued its work. All proper reports have been provided to the committee members, who have had the opportunity to have answered any questions regarding any decision made by steering. There is transparency in the committee work, and this information is available.

Senator Batters: The full Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee can also meet. At the last meeting, you told this committee's senators that a "for information" agenda item meant there was no opportunity for discussion or to ask questions about it.

Actually, "for information" means there is no motion for a vote. It doesn't mean dictatorship with no discussion and no questions. You pointed to the lengthy meeting agenda as the reason for skipping questions, but if your committee met more frequently, your agendas would not be so long. Are these infrequent meetings just another way of avoiding proper accountability and debate?

Senator Moncion: It is unfortunate, senator, that you present a committee, especially the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee, the way you do. This committee takes its role extremely seriously. Any senator who wants to ask a question about information items or anything on the agenda can

do so. When there is not enough time during a committee meeting to answer some of the questions or have proper discussions, they are taken at the next meeting. A lot of these questions are brought to other meetings so that senators have time to scrutinize —

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

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Moncion, more and more decisions from the committee, certainly ones on policies affecting our staff, appear to be taking place in camera. That was certainly the case with the adoption of the new values, ethics and conflict of interest code for senators' staff adopted in June of this year, as well as a subsequent decision to pause the code pending further review. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for people to understand not only the rationale for the decisions but also their obligations, especially when the decisions themselves are not being communicated to senators and staff until weeks or even months later.

Could you please explain the rationale for making so many decisions in camera and why it then takes so long to inform us of those decisions?

Senator Moncion: Thank you for the question, senator. The ethics and values code for the senators' staff was a document that was studied for four years. A lot of information was provided to staff. Staff and senators were consulted.

You had, at the time, a member, Senator Seidman, representing your party at the Subcommittee on Human Resources. That policy was presented to the Senate on June 19 in camera because this is information that touches on personnel issues. When we brought it back in September, we received communications regarding some discrepancies that may be irritants to staff. We decided to pull that policy for now and have a —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Moncion. The time is up.

Senator Martin: Could you please tell us why this new policy was necessary? Was there an incident under the old code that warranted changing the policy?

Senator Moncion: Thank you very much for the question. That policy was 40 years old, so the review was from 1985. This is part of the review of all policies and procedures that is taking place at the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

• (1430)

The 40-year-old policy needed a review, and like I said, we did work according to a schedule. We did consult. It seems that there is still work to be done, and it was pulled so that the policy can be improved and brought back —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, senator. Your time has expired.

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My question is also for the chair of the Internal Economy Committee.

There have been an extraordinary number of exemptions over the last couple of years that have been given to colleagues. These have created quite an elastic situation when it comes to the rules and applications of those rules, which have led to some media stories over the last little while. That concerns all of us because it disparages the reputation of this institution.

As the chair of the Internal Economy Committee, can you confirm for us that all the exemptions that have been granted by steering to various colleagues — I'm sure some are legitimate — have been reported to the committee? Have those reports also been filed here in the Senate Chamber?

Senator Moncion: Thank you for the question.

If we are speaking of the media inquiries that were brought forward in the last few weeks, senator, none of them came to steering. They were associated with senators' expenses, and they were related to expenses that were permitted under the *Rules of the Senate*.

As for the other exceptions, every one of them is reported back to CIBA, and that is done in the public portion of the meeting. Every senator who is a member of the Internal Economy Committee has had the opportunity to question every exception that has been granted.

Many exceptions are brought forward. Not many are approved.

Senator Housakos: There was once a practice at Internal Economy in which no exception requests were being made, so the question I have is: Why are a large number of exceptions being brought before CIBA all of a sudden? Why are we not just sending senators to the Committee of the Whole in order to plead their case?

Senator Moncion: Thank you for the question.

There are two things there, senator. I will give you a rule reading; I think it's rule 15-6(1), but I would have to check the number. It provides the opportunity for senators to present exceptions at steering and at the Internal Economy Committee. When steering refuses a request, the senator can appeal the request at Internal Economy. This is the procedure that has been used.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: My question is for the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. Senator Moncion, can you tell us whether every caucus and group in the Senate participate in the steering committee's meetings?

Senator Moncion: Thank you for the question. Yes, senator, all of them are there.

Senator Saint-Germain: In that regard, can you tell us whether decisions are made by majority voting?

Senator Moncion: Decisions are almost always made by majority voting, and the chair usually doesn't vote. Sometimes there is dissent, and any dissent is included in the information reported to the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wallin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Quinn, for the second reading of Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying).

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying).

I support Senator Wallin and thank her for both her unwavering advocacy as well as her very moving speech, which reflected her personal angst and pain. Thank you, Pamela.

Allowing advanced requests for medical assistance in dying for those who are diagnosed with dementia and who wish to make their intentions known while they still have the capacity to do so is, in my opinion, a reasonable expectation. It is also based on my experience in managing the complexities of dementia in all its guises as a family physician who managed a long-term care unit for over 30 years.

Colleagues, this is not an easy subject. It touches the deepest questions of autonomy, dignity and compassion. It invites us to reflect on what it means to live — and, yes, what it means to die — with respect and choice.

Let me emphasize, colleagues, my deeply held respect for those of you who may hold a view contrary to my own.

Across this country, thousands of Canadians are living with dementia. It is one of the most feared diagnoses, not only because of what it takes from the person afflicted but also because of what it takes from the people who love them: memory, recognition and personality. The things that make us who we are can fade slowly and painfully. Families often describe this as a long goodbye.

And yet, for many, the most distressing aspect is not the disease itself but the loss of control that comes with it. Canadians who support advanced requests say, "I don't want to be kept alive when I no longer know who I am." However, under our current law, that wish cannot be honoured. Once a person with dementia

loses the capacity to consent, they lose the legal right to access an advanced request, even if they made a clear and well-considered request in advance.

As a result, many individuals face an impossible choice: They must either seek MAID earlier than they would otherwise wish, while they still have the capacity, or risk being denied it altogether if they wait too long. This is not a choice, in my opinion, consistent with compassion or common sense.

Honourable colleagues, this issue is not new. Parliament has wrestled with it since the very beginning of the MAID debate. The Council of Canadian Academies studied advance requests in depth. Polls consistently show that a large majority of Canadians — upward of 80% — support allowing advanced requests in cases of dementia. The voices calling for the change are not abstract. They are our neighbours, friends and loved ones. They are physicians, nurses, ethicists and families who have lived through the heartache of watching someone they love endure years of decline long after that person has said, “Please don’t let this happen to me.”

• (1440)

We have already taken important steps. In 2021, with Bill C-7, Parliament expanded access to medical assistance in dying, or MAID, and removed the requirement that a person’s natural death be reasonably foreseeable. That legislation also committed the government to further study the question of advance requests. However, since then, progress has been slow, and Canadians are waiting.

This is not about rushing a decision; it is about respecting the deeply held wishes of competent adults who want to plan for their future with both honesty and dignity.

The ethical foundation for advance requests is clear: The principle of autonomy, the right of each individual to make informed choices about their body and life, does not evaporate with the onset of cognitive decline. It is the same principle that underlies the consent to surgery, treatment and, ultimately, MAID itself.

Critics sometimes worry that allowing advance requests could put vulnerable people at risk. That concern is legitimate and must be addressed through strong safeguards. Advance requests must be voluntary, informed, written, witnessed and clearly tied to pre-specified conditions, such as the loss of the ability to recognize loved ones, communicate or live without constant distress.

We should remember that health professionals have upheld rigorous standards of assessment, ethics and accountability. We can and must trust them — and we can trust Canadians — to approach advance requests with the same care.

Honourable colleagues, other jurisdictions have shown us the way. The Netherlands, Belgium and Spain have frameworks for

advance requests for assisted dying. In those countries, experience has shown that clear rules, professional oversight and open communication can protect both autonomy and safety.

In my own practice, I reflect on and consider the person who sits with me as their physician, with their spouse and their children, and says:

When I no longer know you, when I can no longer feed myself, when I am no longer the person you love — please honour my wish for peace.

To deny that person the ability to make such a choice is to deny the very essence of self-determination that is a human right. This is not about forcing a choice on anyone. It is about extending choices to those who want it.

No one should be compelled to make an advance request, but for those who seek the comfort of knowing that their future suffering will not be prolonged against their will, the law should not stand in the way.

Colleagues, as senators, we are called to bring both wisdom and compassion to difficult questions. Let us move forward together, guided by empathy, respect for human dignity and the voices of Canadians who have asked us to listen.

Honourable colleagues, these are conversations we are going to continue to have even after this bill has gone through this chamber. I urge you all to consider three areas as we continue this discussion.

The first, which this legislation addresses in part, is explicit legislation for advance MAID requests for those with dementia and similar conditions while competent. Let a living will carry the weight of the law, waiving final consent if predefined triggers — like loss of capacity or intolerable suffering — are met, overseen by ethics boards and closely monitored.

The second is mandatory integration of palliative and dementia-specific care in MAID assessments. No one should view death as the only viable option when housing, respite or therapy could ease the burden. Let us invest in the Alzheimer Society of Canada’s call for national dementia strategies, ensuring that MAID is always a choice and not a funnel.

The third — and perhaps the most critical — is rigorous safeguards against coercion. We must require independent assessors for all dementia-related requests, prioritizing the patient’s “own words and reasoning,” as the Ontario commission has advised. Let us reject any slide towards nonconsensual proxies. Proceeding with a direct voice is not compassion; it is peril.

Colleagues, dementia robs 76,000 new Canadians annually of their stories, independence and very essence. We owe them a system that honours foresight and not fate. Let us extend this promise without eroding life's protections. Debate this, amend it, advance it — before yet another family whispers, “What if we'd acted sooner?”

Advance requests in cases of dementia are not about hastening death. They are about ensuring that the final chapter of life is written with the same autonomy, integrity and care that we all value throughout our lives.

Colleagues, for many Canadians and their families, this issue is deeply personal. They are not asking for the right to die; they are asking for the right to decide. Let us have the courage to give them that choice.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY DEFENCE PROCUREMENT
IN CONTEXT OF COMMITMENT TO INCREASE DEFENCE SPENDING

Hon. Hassan Yussuff, pursuant to notice of October 28, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs be authorized to examine and report on defence procurement in the context of Canada's commitment to increase defence spending;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit its reports on this study with the Clerk of the Senate, if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the reports be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than June 18, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Senator Ravalia]

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE STRENGTHENING OF
FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS' ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE
RESPONSIBILITIES

Hon. Allister W. Surette, pursuant to notice of October 28, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to examine and report on the strengthening of federal institutions' arts, culture and heritage responsibilities in official language minority communities and in Canada more broadly;

That the committee specifically examine issues relating to:

- (a) the training and professional development of human resources, including the development of digital skills;
- (b) support for artistic, cultural and heritage infrastructure, including digital capabilities;
- (c) the alignment of domestic and international initiatives to support cultural sovereignty, protect the diversity of cultural expression and ensure the online discoverability of cultural content produced by and for official language minority communities; and
- (d) the implementation of the legislative and regulatory provisions that apply to federal institutions with regard to:
 - i) providing services of equal quality in both official languages;
 - ii) enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities;
 - iii) promoting the presence of strong institutions serving those communities;
 - iv) fostering the full recognition of both official languages in Canadian society; and
 - v) protecting and promoting French; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2027, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion? (Motion agreed to.)

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(At 2:50 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.)

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