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Tuesday, June 9, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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## THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

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

Prayers.

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I received a notice from the Facilitator of the Independent Senators Group, who requests, pursuant to rule 4-3(1), that the time provided for the consideration of Senators' Statements be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Donna Dasko.

Is it agreed that the time for tributes be extended into regular statements until the conclusion of the anticipated tributes?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I remind senators that pursuant to our rules, each senator will be allowed only three minutes and they may speak only once.

These times do not include the time allotted to the response of the senator.

Within the Independent Senators Group, Donna has been a valued colleague, whose wisdom and generosity have enriched our work and contributed enormously to a more modern and independent Senate. She has always been willing to share her expertise and contribute constructively to the deliberations that make this institution stronger.

What stands out most, however, is the spirit with which she has approached her responsibilities. She has demonstrated that public service is at its best when it is guided by principle, informed by evidence and carried out with humility and respect.

Senator Dasko, as you conclude your time in the Senate, we thank you for your many contributions to this institution and to Canada. Your legacy will endure in the debates you have shaped and the policies you have improved. Your work has set an example for all of us and will continue to resonate in the growing presence and impact of women in politics across Canada.

Beyond your remarkable accomplishments, we will also remember your good humour, your kind and considerate nature, and the warmth and positivity you brought to every room. Your laughter and joyful spirit made working with you not only meaningful but truly enjoyable.

We wish you every happiness and success in the next chapter of your life. May it be filled with good health and the satisfaction of knowing that you have served your country with distinction.

You will be missed. Thank you.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have to say that rearranging the furniture in here left us with a bit less space. That's obvious every time we stand up.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, I rise today on behalf of the Government Representative's Office to pay tribute to our colleague the Honourable Senator Donna Dasko.

From her research background to her polling works, we know Senator Dasko likes numbers. Therefore, I thought it befitting to compile a few statistics to mark her time in the Senate.

First nominated 2,926 days ago, Senator Dasko has risen 70 times to ask the government a question, 42 times to deliver a speech on policy and 23 times to mark special moments with a statement.

Surveys are important tools of science, enabling us to cut through prejudice and prefabricated beliefs to gain a glimpse of the actual world view of our fellow citizens. Senator Dasko brought her expertise to the Senate with the knowledge that the quality of our analysis was as important as the quality of our

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## SENATORS' STATEMENTS

### TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE DONNA DASKO

**Hon. Lucie Moncion:** Honourable senators, on behalf of the Independent Senators Group, it is my pleasure to pay tribute to our colleague and friend Senator Donna Dasko as she prepares to retire from the Senate of Canada.

Since her appointment in 2018, Senator Dasko has brought to this chamber an extraordinary combination of intellect, integrity and public service.

Throughout her distinguished career as one of Canada's leading public opinion researchers, she has helped Canadians better understand themselves and the issues shaping our country. In the Senate, she has continued that work with the same rigour and commitment to evidence-based decision making.

Senator Dasko has been a thoughtful and influential voice on matters ranging from democratic institutions and public policy to gender equality and social inclusion.

Since co-founding the not-for-profit Equal Voice in 2001, she has helped to energize a generation of women to get involved in public life and elected to Parliament.

data. In this, Senator Dasko was exemplary in how she used samples of public opinion to inform her work without letting herself be defeated by an initial grumpy response or be blinded by the volatility of popularity. When Senator Dasko wields statistics, it is done with nuance, forethought and an understanding of their strengths and limitations.

Through such interventions, Senator Dasko often reminded us that we have a duty to preserve freedom in the world and to stand alongside Ukrainians as they fight for their sovereignty.

Likewise, from junk food to nicotine to the regulation of our media, Senator Dasko firmly believed that, given the right information, Canadians would make the right choices. As a result of her sustained advocacy, Canadians can now make better choices at the grocery store with new labels outlining potentially harmful contents, and news outlets compete on a more even playing field.

In her first speech on legislation, Senator Dasko noted that:

... [while] institutions can provide comfort and stability for many, for others they can represent a life of unhappiness and entrapment.

This personifies Senator Dasko's work here in the Senate, where she has pushed not only her colleagues but the institution as a whole to better serve all Canadians.

Accordingly, she turned her attention toward Parliament as she cofounded Equal Voice. At the time, in 2001, women made up 20% of MPs and 33% of senators. Twenty-five years later, they now make up 31% of the other place and 56% of the Senate. Twelve women have also become premiers. Senator Dasko's advocacy for women in politics will carry on shaping generations to come, as women propelled by her work continue to bring their own contributions to our society.

• (1410)

As a final note, it is important to highlight a statistic of Senator Dasko that would render bashful the most confident among us, and this may even be underestimated. In addition to her parliamentary duties, Senator Dasko volunteered with six organizations. After long days of work, however exhausted, Senator Dasko would show up to meetings, happy to provide insights and support for important causes.

Senator Dasko, I wish you the best in retirement, and I hope that, as you enjoy restful afternoons sipping on a drink with a clear health label, the only statistics you continue to track are those of your tennis matches.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to our colleague and friend Senator Donna Dasko as she prepares to close this chapter in her career.

[ Senator Moreau ]

Senator Dasko arrived to this chamber in 2018 as one of the country's most respected voices in public opinion, a respected business leader and a fierce advocate for women's representation as the co-founder of Equal Voice.

She spent decades at the helm of Environics Research Group Ltd., tracking and analyzing major public policy shifts shaping our nation, and she brought that exact same reliance on data, facts and rigorous research to our committee tables and to this floor every single day.

She was fully equipped to bring her immense experience and her own deep convictions to the tapestry of different backgrounds, varying ideologies and deeply held principles in this chamber.

Now, it is no secret, honourable colleagues, to anyone, least of all to Senator Dasko herself, that she and I do not often see eye to eye on fundamental questions of public policy. We come from different philosophical schools, and I think it's fair to say that we have spent the last eight years trying to save the country from each other's ideas.

But all joking aside, honourable senators, we both have always believed that true public service isn't about uniform agreement; it's about the integrity of the debate. That is exactly how Senator Dasko approached every issue in this chamber and at the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, where I had the privilege to work very closely with her.

Senator Dasko has proven herself to be an incredibly principled parliamentarian. You always know exactly where she stands — not because she is rigid but because her positions are built on a solid foundation of rigorous research, sharp intellect and an unwavering commitment to the public good. Even when we disagreed on the fundamentals, I have always held the utmost respect for her principled stance and her commitment to this institution.

We did, at times, find some real common ground as well. For me, that was found in her vital work recently on Bill S-214. Her initiative to ensure that foreign states are held financially accountable by seizing and disposing of their assets is a testament to her foresight. It is precise, timely and fiercely principled. I think it was the absolute perfect way for her to close a wonderful career in this institution.

Senator Dasko, the Senate is at its absolute best when it is filled with people who challenge us to be sharper, better prepared and more focused on the evidence. You have certainly done that in your time here, and this institution is better for it.

On behalf of the Conservative Senate caucus, thank you for your service to Ontario, the Senate and Canada. I wish you, your children and your family the very best in the bright chapters that you have ahead. Thank you so much.

**Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler:** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to Senator Donna Dasko, a colleague who has not only shaped legislation but someone who has shaped legislators across our country.

Senator Dasko has long been a prominent advocate of women's representation in politics. When the Prime Minister announced her appointment to the Senate on June 6, 2018, he heralded her as:

... a sociologist, business leader, and one of Canada's best known and respected pollsters. A strong advocate for gender equality, Dr. Dasko co-founded and served as the former National Chair of Equal Voice, and helped launch the Campaign for an Equal Senate for Canada.

The Campaign for an Equal Senate was a movement that started in 2015 with the goal of achieving gender parity in the Canadian Senate.

In 2018, at the time of her appointment, women made up only one third of the Senate. As we look around today, you see that women make up over half of this chamber.

For Senator Dasko, gender parity is not merely a counting exercise but a fundamental element of democracy.

In a 2024 interview, she stated, "Our voices should be represented in our parliaments in proportion to our population." Also, "It's actually a principle of democracy, and democracy is in trouble in the world."

One of her qualities I admire most is her readiness to lend voice to important causes, with her advocacy for Ukraine being a clear example. As a proud third-generation Ukrainian Canadian, Senator Dasko has forged a commitment to Ukraine. She is a steadfast supporter who has returned to the issue time and again, ensuring that neither Parliament nor Canadians lose sight of the human consequences of the war in Ukraine. Her support is not performative but is informed, sustained and deeply sincere.

That persistence reflects something larger about Senator Dasko's character.

The Senate benefits enormously from members who bring expertise. It benefits even more from members who pair expertise with humility, and Senator Dasko does both.

In closing, let me share with you a short story. Some time ago, I met someone who had encountered a Manitoba senator. They were, of course, very excited. When I asked which senator and ran down the list of those of us who represent Manitoba, they said, "No, no, not them. I met Senator Donna Dasko."

You see, Senator Dasko was born and raised in Manitoba, and, even though she left for other places, I know a big piece of her heart remains in her hometown of Winnipeg.

Senator Dasko, on behalf of your colleagues in the Canadian Senators Group, we wish you all the best in your retirement from the Senate. And, as a fellow Manitoban, I truly hope we see you back home soon.

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Honourable senators, it is my pleasure to join in the tributes to Senator Donna Dasko and to do so on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group.

While I knew her work over many years, I asked to deliver this tribute because I had the good fortune to become good friends during our time together here at the Senate. We have both worked together to advance the issues of an independent Senate, the role of think tanks, a robust news media, democracy and a number of things that Senator Housakos stands against.

I say that in a good spirit, Senator Housakos.

I have always appreciated her collaborative and welcoming style, her vast experience and her evidence-based rigour. I particularly valued working with her on the Transport and Communications Committee, including on the issues of CBC/Radio-Canada and local news.

For the past eight years and four days so far, Senator Dasko has served this country in the Senate and, before that, through her lifetime of listening carefully to Canadians and providing deep sociological expertise to legislative review.

For decades, when Canadians wanted to know what Canada was thinking, they looked to Donna Dasko's work as the long-time Senior Vice-President of Environics Research Group Ltd.

In this chamber, as has been mentioned, she has spoken about gender equality in Canada and has been an unyielding champion of women's rights. She co-founded Equal Voice, which is dedicated to electing more women to all levels of political office in Canada.

Whether pressing for gender-based analysis in budgeting or introducing bills to modernize national statistics or promoting women in Canadian politics, her Senate policy interventions are part of her outstanding legacy for equality.

She cared deeply not only about what the Senate does but about how Canadians understand and trust this institution.

She recently commissioned a public opinion poll, carried out by Nanos Research, which found that 79% of Canadians prefer the independent process of appointments of senators, compared to 5% who wanted to return to the old partisan system — an important last nod to the reform of the last 10 years.

Senator Dasko has used her voice to underscore the importance of defending Ukrainian sovereignty, strengthening Canada's humanitarian and military assistance and sustaining sanctions against Russian aggression.

I am particularly pleased, honourable senators, that she will co-sponsor with me and a few MPs think tank day on the Hill in September, and she will be back for that.

Donna, thank you for your decades of public service, your dedication to the truth and your tireless work to build a more equitable, inclusive, trustworthy and democratic Canada. We wish you nothing but the best in your next career.

• (1420)

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Question: How disappointed are you that Donna Dasko is retiring from the Senate? A) extremely disappointed, B) somewhat disappointed, C) neither disappointed nor delighted, D) somewhat philosophical, E) resigned and stoic.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “a tremendous amount,” how much will you miss Senator Dasko’s charm, sharp analysis, intellectual enthusiasm and sardonic sense of humour?

The Oxford English Dictionary, or OED, defines a “Pole Star,” literally, as the North Star, Polaris. Figuratively, the OED says that a “polestar” is:

A person who . . . serves as a guide; a governing principle; a guiding light; (also) a centre of attraction.

For the last eight years, Donna Dasko has been not just our polling star but our Senate of Canada polestar. She has been a moral beacon, whether she was advocating for Ukraine, for more women to run for elected office or for an independent Senate, all backed up by her latest polling data. She’s been a guiding light on national security, the future of NATO, information privacy and the protection of Canada’s North.

What about “a centre of attraction”? Yes, that too. She is an indefatigable attender of conferences, receptions and parties. Whenever I would go to an event with Donna, I was always amazed that she knew everyone, and everyone knew her. I would stand there, awkward and self-conscious, inevitably fumbling my canapes and dripping food down my shirt while she held court, connecting with everyone with grace and aplomb.

When I was first appointed to the Senate, I never expected the depths of the friendships I would make here, but Donna Dasko, Julie Miville-Dechêne and I quickly became the “three musketeers.” In her speech on Bill C-48, way back in 2019, Donna noted that we had forged unshakeable bonds of friendship during our committee travels to Prince Rupert and Terrace, B.C. Those bonds only deepened in the ensuing years, as our trio took long walks, debated public policy and shared the “fancy fries” at Zoe’s, where Donna always insisted we get our post-committee Wednesday night table, right in the middle of the action where we could see and be seen.

Yet, whether Donna and I were arguing over Canadian broadcast policy or rhapsodizing over our mutual love of Ukrainian food, we were never bored and, I trust, never boring. Two Prairie girls with Eastern European roots, one from Winnipeg and one from Edmonton, still not quite believing our good fortune of being asked to serve Canadians in this chamber.

On a scale of 1 to 10, I will miss Donna about 100. Without her political courage, dry wit, incisive reasoning, passionate commitment to equality and unerring ability to find the best parties, this chamber will be a far less interesting place.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Honourable senators, I join others to pay tribute to Senator Dasko, who has made a lifetime of contributions to equality rights, political participation, polling and lawmaking.

What is the thread that connects her life’s work in these domains? The obvious answer is that she is committed to social justice, democracy and good governance, and has found multiple ways to advance these issues.

However, I think there is a deeper explanation that has to do with her training. Senator Dasko has a PhD in sociology and possesses that quality of thinking that the famous sociologist C. Wright Mills calls “the sociological imagination.” It is the capacity to distinguish between what Mills calls the “troubles” of individuals and the “issues” that face societies. Mills saw the potential of sociology as a discipline capable of imagining the future and foreshadowing it.

That is our Donna Dasko, whose work on equality rights, especially the representation of women in politics, imagined a better future and not only foreshadowed it, but agitated to make it happen through Equal Voice, of which she was a co-founder.

The sociologist in Senator Dasko could see the obstacles in the way of individual women who sought political office as well as the collective problem of not having more women in politics. She became a part of the solution when she was appointed to the upper house in 2018, at the time, bringing the share of women in the Senate to a then-record high of 45%. Even with gender parity in the Senate today, she is continuing to work on the foundations of equal representation through her Bill S-213, calling for more demographic information from the Chief Electoral Officer.

Her legislative interests echo the thinking of Jürgen Habermas, another giant in sociology. He believed in the importance of the public sphere and the role of national debate in shaping public policy. If you ever wondered about Senator Dasko’s fixation on leaders’ debates during an election, the answer is her sociology training.

Yet another famous sociologist Anthony Giddens once described polling as having a “double hermeneutic.” The first hermeneutic is the interpretation of the polling data, and the second is how the results of the poll can shape outcomes on that very issue. Senator Dasko not only understands the double hermeneutic but she has, in her opinion polling on the Senate, added a third hermeneutic, which is the application of her own agency and political action in fostering a more independent Senate.

If it weren't for her polling on public perceptions of the Senate, we would not know that, in 2026, 79% of Canadians want future governments to continue to choose independent senators or that, for the first time in a decade of polling, positive impressions of the upper chamber outweigh negative ones.

It is the triple hermeneutic of Senator Dasko's work in the Senate that has, in part, contributed to the steady improvement in public perceptions of the upper house.

I don't know when we will have another sociologist and pollster appointed to the Senate, but in Senator Dasko we had someone who brought her expert training to the work of the upper house at the very time when changes to the Senate appointment process allowed for those skills to be applied effectively.

We will miss you, Donna, but you have taught us to have a "sociological imagination," and we will do our best to live up to your example.

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Honourable senators, it was a wonderful day for the people of Canada when Donna Dasko was appointed to the Senate. Donna is an intelligent, hard-working senator who has made a significant contribution to the collective work of this chamber over her eight years with us. Also, let me emphasize what a decent and delightful human being she is.

She came with a distinguished career as one of Canada's best-known pollsters and public opinion researchers with Environics Research Group. She has a PhD from the University of Toronto and later served as a fellow and instructor at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy.

Here in the Senate, she championed Senate reform based upon her perspective that appropriate modernization is necessary to maintain and build public confidence in our institution. In her speech on Motion No. 165, she said:

. . . most Canadians simply want a Senate that is going to work in their best interests regardless of partisan leaning.

Senator Dasko has been a fierce defender of the people of Ukraine, championing Ukrainian culture; shining a light on historical examples of tragedy and resilience, including speaking about the Holodomor; and standing up for Ukrainian freedom, sovereignty and democracy in the face of the ongoing illegal and immoral invasion by Russia. Senator Dasko's recent sponsorship of Bill S-214, which amends the Special Economic Measures Act, disposal of foreign state assets, is just one example of her tireless efforts.

My final remarks will be about how Senator Dasko has worked hard to improve democratic legitimacy and public confidence in our institutions by ensuring the inclusion of women. Those two things are connected.

Before entering the Senate, she co-founded Equal Voice, one of Canada's most influential non-partisan organizations promoting the election of women to public office, and she served as its national chair. She also co-founded the Campaign for an Equal Senate of Canada, which advocated for gender parity in the upper chamber — a big success there, Donna, *brava!*

Throughout her career, she has been involved with the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund, which works to create gender equality through law, and numerous other initiatives focused on increasing women's political participation.

Senator Dasko has spent her career uplifting women.

To honour my dear colleague and friend Donna, I will leave you with a quote from the play on Nellie McClung — your sister — and women's suffrage, *Nothing Less*, by Ami McKay and Ken Schwartz:

Oh my sisters, rise together  
Raise your voices do not rest.  
Make your dreams from hope and passion  
Set your sights on nothing less.

Colleagues, let's honour and thank our colleague the Honourable Donna Dasko for always setting her sights on nothing less.

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Senator Dasko's children, Marion Adams and Will Adams; her sister, Trish Dasko; her brother-in-law, Howard Halagaza; and her son-in-law, Nic Metayer. They are accompanied by other members of her family as well as staff, friends and representatives from the Ukrainian Embassy and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

• (1430)

#### THE HONOURABLE DONNA DASKO

##### EXPRESSION OF THANKS

**Hon. Donna Dasko:** Honourable senators, thank you for your wonderful remarks and tributes, which I cherish and will remember forever.

Colleagues, it is my turn to say goodbye and wish the Senate Godspeed on its continuing journey.

When I was in Elmwood High School in Winnipeg, no guidance counsellor ever suggested that I should study to be a pollster or a senator. It has been my great good fortune to have pursued both of these roles in my professional life. Both are integral parts of Canada's democracy, our public policy and our politics.

Has any freshly appointed senator who has not served in the House of Commons known what to expect on that first walk onto Parliament Hill? The beautiful buildings call out our history. They call out gravitas and purposefulness. Indeed, all these things are present every day. What is not so obvious is that the

Senate is a community of senators and staff, skills, personalities and emotions. To make it all manageable, there is great dedication, collegiality and generally good humour.

I am so very grateful to all who make this place work so well through constant demands, changes and long hours. I want to thank everyone who works here, as warmly as I can, for all that you do, day in and day out, for this institution and for people like me and all Canadians.

I also want to thank those staffers over the years who have kept me prepared and in the right place at the right time with the right papers and well briefed. Thank you to Emily Horonowitsch, Arianna Knoefel and Dylan Odd. Thank you to Beth Atcheson, my policy adviser on all things legal, for your knowledge and steady advice. And for my team here in Ottawa, I say thank you to Tristram Barnes, my policy adviser, for his spirit and positive attitudes and Cathy MacDonald, who has been by my side now for six years and who has genially juggled all the plates in the air so beautifully over the years. It has been such a pleasure to work with her on so many things.

I also want to acknowledge and thank my three Independent Senators Group, or ISG, leaders over these years: Senator Woo, who first recruited me to the ISG; Senator Saint-Germain; and Senator Moncion. You have all fostered a positive and inclusive environment and led our group with wisdom and intelligence in good times and through the many challenges we have faced over these years.

My family — my daughter, Marion, and my son, William — has been with me through this incredible journey, always curious and interested in my life in Ottawa and so proud of their mom, as I am so proud of them. And my son-in-law, Nic, is an indispensable member of our family.

[*Translation*]

Nic, your calm demeanour is much appreciated. Thank you.

[*English*]

Also, big hugs to my sister, Trish, and my brother-in-law; my dear friends who are here today and those back in Toronto; and my Winnipege cousins, whom I hope to see very soon.

I also recognize members of the Ukrainian community from the embassy and from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress who are here today. Thank you very much for being here.

And then my Senate colleagues. I have worked with so many of you over these eight years on so many interesting pursuits. I feel I have got to know you so well, and what a pleasure that has been. I have made some of my closest friends here, as Senator Paula Simons has just said, and I don't know how I will get along without seeing you over the next period. It's going to be tough. I think I'm going to have to show up, come back for regular chats and make regular visits. That's my plan.

Our work is hard but ultimately rewarding. Some of my fondest memories are of travels across this country: to Prince Rupert and Terrace to study the contentious ban on oil tankers, which may soon come back as an issue; to New Brunswick and

Prince Edward Island to study the temporary foreign labour force, an issue that remains unresolved; across the North to study Arctic security, which remains unfinished; to Churchill, Manitoba, my home province, to study its economic potential, where more is to be done; and to Alberta on a tour from south to north, thanks to Senator Tannas.

Colleagues, we must reach out to this magnificent province in the coming months as they contemplate the unthinkable: separation from Canada.

Like many of you, I came to the Senate as an outsider from the public service or Parliament, but, in spite of my outsider status, I had been extremely interested in the Senate for many years, going back to the period between the Meech Lake Accord and Charlottetown Accord, when I worked with federal and provincial clients who were trying to keep Canada together by changing the Constitution. Senate reform figured into everything they came up with. It was always on the table as an initiative. Flash forward, yet another Senate reform effort on the part of Prime Minister Harper went to the Supreme Court in 2014, which I followed very closely.

Now, I have a confession to make, something I haven't told anyone till this very day. In 2013, I wrote a letter to Prime Minister Harper suggesting that he appoint me to the Senate. "Well, why not?" I said to myself. Sadly, I received no acknowledgement whatsoever of my request.

However, another opportunity would soon appear. In 2016, when I fully understood that our new Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, was introducing a new model of Senate appointments based on independence and open applications, I realized that my opportunity had arrived. I applied and was ecstatic to be appointed. I was walking on a cloud, and I came here with enthusiasm and an open mind.

It has been an absolute privilege to be a parliamentarian for the last eight years, since June 6, 2018, the same day as my brother — and here he is still beside me — and to participate in this way in the life of Canada and the issues of the day.

The new model of the Senate does not alter Canada's formal constitutional provisions for the Senate. Still, in the changes it has made to appointments and the changes the Senate has made and will continue to make as to how we work together, this new model was bound to open a new chapter in the life of the Senate, and it has done so. Of all the efforts to reform the Senate that I have seen in my lifetime, the independent Senate is the only reform that has succeeded.

Colleagues, like many of you, I also came to the Senate with a passion for democracy, public policy and politics. For most of my career, I worked to incorporate the views of Canadians into public policy and communications, as most of my clients were non-partisan public servants at the federal and provincial levels of government. I always viewed my work as an exercise in democracy, and I undertook this work in the same spirit. I always respected Canadians' views and the diversity of views, even those views I disagreed with.

The independent Senate is uniquely able to take the views and beliefs of Canadians into account in our deliberations, given our lack of direction by a partisan caucus.

Two weeks ago in this chamber, our honourable colleague Senator Batters said, “. . . we have a responsibility to listen to the views of Canadians on issues that we vote on here.”

• (1440)

I agree entirely with this view. Yet in my experience here, the views we hear from and engage with are those of civil society groups, stakeholders, interest groups and experts. We meet with them, we receive correspondence from them and we invite them to our committees. This is all entirely legitimate, I might add — entirely — but we rarely take into account the views of ordinary Canadians in any systematic way.

I tried to do this here by commissioning public opinion research in several areas I was working on, including issues facing women, gun control, support for Ukraine and, of course, the Senate. I encourage senators to do this; it is the essence of democracy to consult Canadians, to consider their views and experiences on public policy issues and, more than that, to understand their beliefs and underlying values.

In my view, the changes to the Senate make it better able to perform its formal constitutional roles and to contribute to the well-being of Canadians.

Parliament has been bicameral since its inception and, as such, it is an integral part of our governance system. The Fathers of Confederation sought to balance representation by population in the House of Commons with representation on a regional basis in the Senate, ensuring that the more populous provinces could not simply overrun the interests of the less populous. Over time, and particularly since the patriation of the Constitution of Canada in 1982 and the addition of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the protection of provincial and territorial minority interests has expanded to include other rights holders, including Indigenous Peoples, linguistic minorities and those groups protected by constitutional equality rights.

The Senate is now much more representative of Canada than it has ever been, and, in fact, it may be the most representative legislative body in the country. This chamber is now 55% women, ranking as the third highest in the world for women’s representation when it comes to upper chambers. Compare that to the dismal ranking of our elected chamber over at the other place, which ranks as number 71 in the world. We have also seen a significant increase in Indigenous senators, representing 10% of this chamber, and other appointments reflecting the diversity of Canada.

This diversity has affected how we work for the better. We have extended our reach to include a broader and deeper spectrum of views in all our work. And the Senate has led substantive responses to social movements, including truth and reconciliation, Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, gender-based violence and so many others. The single amendment moved last week by Senator Bernard on Bill C-9 and passed by this chamber is one example which proves my point.

Whatever the future of appointments to the Senate brings, I think it’s essential to the functioning of our democratic institutions and the relationship that we have with Canadians that representation of the full population be bedrock, just like the granite under our feet. This is also the basis for my Bill S-213, as I believe that the government and Parliament and Canada’s political parties must find ways to improve representation in the House of Commons, just as we are committed to doing so in other federal institutions.

The move away from partisan to independent appointments has also enhanced the Senate’s ability to fulfill another core constitutional function: that of providing sober second thought.

In two must-read essays prepared in 2018 and 2019, Senator Harder described the new Senate as no longer a rubber stamp to the government and much better able to carry out its role as a complementary body to the elected Parliament. The new Senate, he noted positively, has more vigorously debated legislation, has appended strong observations and has proposed significantly more amendments to government legislation than previous Senates have done. The new Senate, he concluded, is effective and useful and produces better public policy outcomes for Canadians. These conclusions are as relevant today as they were seven years ago.

Every new senator, myself included, has their start by trying to learn about the core and reach of the powers we have accepted to take on within this role. How do we make decisions related to our core legislative responsibilities? Independent senators consider many principles and decide as individuals what weight we give to them. We have differing views about the issues and the solutions, sometimes causing strains. We have impatience at the pace of change, sometimes causing tension. Bills that are especially important and subject to time pressures can produce significant “hothouse” friction. Human nature being what it is, it is easy to add to the sparks.

How does one proceed? This is at heart a deeply human space that requires deeply human participation and practices. Disagreement is unavoidable but must not become personal. We must be willing problem solvers, using our skills and the tools available to us. This is what most of us have done in our other careers before we got here, and we need these skills more than ever in this setting.

It is senators who must make this place work.

I think we are evolving in a positive direction. We have heard mention of the most recent poll findings on public perceptions of the Senate from this March. The four surveys I commissioned form benchmarks for how Canadian views on the Senate are changing. Still, I was reluctant to commission this latest survey, fearing that the results may be less than positive. From the Nanos survey, we heard that 8 in 10 Canadians want future governments to continue with the independent Senate, while only 5% of Canadians want a return to a partisan body where senators sit as members of a political party. Just as important, in my view, the survey shows that positive impressions of the upper chamber outweigh negative views for the first time in a decade of polling. Positive views have inched forward, and if I look at the tea leaves and deeper into the data, the reason behind that is a growing appreciation for the Senate’s role in reviewing legislation and the

growing awareness that senators work hard. This applies to all senators, not just independent senators. This is all very good news.

My experience tells me that we have to keep communicating with Canadians and engaging with them about our work. When I arrived here in 2018, the Senate proceedings weren't even televised — imagine. The other place has been televised since 1977. But here? Oh, no. We couldn't be too brash. We had to be very careful about this. This 20th century stuff was pretty doubtful — never mind the 21st century and never mind social media. We were back in the previous century. Well, we installed cameras and began the broadcast of regular Senate sittings in 2019. This is important and vital for our transparency as an institution, which, in turn, is vital for our accountability to Canadians. By the way, that survey shows that 23% of the public say they have seen the Senate on television at some point.

We've made great progress in our communications efforts in recent years with conventional media and social media outreach, but senators have to keep telling the story of our work and our worth.

Our evolving and modern Senate, I believe, is contributing to our democracy today in a more vital way than ever. The benefits are more inclusive representation, more scrutiny of government and Parliament and better policy outcomes for Canadians.

Colleagues, when we look around the world today, it is clear that democracies face numerous threats.

• (1450)

Political polarization divides societies into hostile camps where political differences undermine social relationships and discourage interaction across ideological lines, and this force is growing.

Political disinformation is the deliberate creation and spread of false or manipulated information designed to deceive the public and erode trust; it is fuelled by advancements such as AI, and this too is growing around the world.

Global authoritarianism is expanding, with approximately 72% of the world's population now living under autocratic or hybrid rule, according to a report from UN Women.

What is also shocking is that our neighbour to the south is at the forefront of democracy's decline, with all these negative trends in full force.

How are such threats to democracy affecting this country? I will make just one bold generalization based on research: In most dimensions, Canada is doing better than others in dealing with these challenges and in maintaining a healthy democracy, although, of course, there is much more that we can do.

Colleagues, I have always been optimistic about this country. Through mistakes, learning and successes, we find ways to live and prosper together.

The Prime Minister said in his moving speech on May 5, announcing the appointment of the Honourable Louise Arbour as the thirty-first Governor General of Canada:

... that Canada's place in the world is to be a country that lives [by certain] propositions and helps others to live [by] them as well.

The Senate has embraced this endeavour. Our gaze must not only be inward, since the very nature of our past and present require us to look and to reach outward as well.

The situation closest to my heart is the brutal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. I hope that the Senate will continue to advocate for and support Ukraine and contribute to peacemaking around the world. Please, honourable senators, continue this work.

My time in the Senate has deepened my confidence in this country and its institutions, leaders and Canadians.

In these tumultuous times, I urge the Senate to continue being a strong pillar of our democracy. It will be hard work. It will take a wise mix of bravery and strength.

I will miss the Senate, dear colleagues, and I will miss you.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

### CANADIAN FORCES SNOWBIRDS

**Hon. Pamela Wallin:** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to one of Canada's most cherished icons, the Snowbirds: the pride of Saskatchewan, Canada and the Royal Canadian Air Force, or RCAF.

Their crest shows four speed birds flying in formation, designed to look like a spike of wheat — a tip of the hat to their home base, 15 Wing Moose Jaw.

As aerial ambassadors, the Snowbirds follow in the contrails of the Siskins, Golden Hawks and Golden Centennaires. They first took to the skies in 1971, named by a young student at a local school contest.

The Snowbirds quickly stirred the heart of the nation, millions watching in awe the skills of the Tutor jet pilots and their elegant, death-defying manoeuvres at powerful speeds with perfectly aligned formations, the wing tips seemingly a breathtaking hand span apart, but, often, it's actually much closer.

The Double Diamond Roll is flown with four feet of wing overlap.

One of the most extraordinary experiences of my life was to fly with the Snowbirds on Canada Day on July 1, 2011, over Parliament Hill as Prince William and Princess Kate looked on during their first trip to Canada as newlyweds.

I survived. It was exhilarating and was a capstone moment in my time as Honorary Colonel of the RCAF.

As politicians call for us to put our elbows up, it is troubling that we would take down such an iconic symbol to pause the program despite the fact that funding was in place until 2030 at a time when we need shared connectors.

Now, we have a vague promise that the Snowbirds will be back sometime in the 2030s, perhaps flying a prop plane. The reviews are mixed over whether these planes would be able to deliver the thrilling performances that we have come to expect.

However, what concerns me more is that, once the government cuts a program, it usually stays cut.

After years of a hiatus, we will also diminish pilot skills and lose institutional memory. Then there's the issue of recruitment, as the Snowbirds have always been a draw to maintain — even boost — the ranks.

This pause, or perhaps cancellation, will also take a heavy toll on the community of Moose Jaw, where the Snowbirds are a livelihood for many, both on base and off.

When successive governments take turns kicking the can down the road, instead of putting the money and effort into understanding the crucial role of these warriors of the air, this is where we land.

Colleagues, let us continue to cherish this beloved team. Please let your MPs and the Prime Minister know that this is not the moment to ground the Snowbirds. They need to be back in the skies to inspire another generation.

Thank you.

#### THE LATE KHALID USMAN

**Hon. Salma Ataullahjan:** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable Canadian who passed away on May 30: Khalid Usman, a respected leader in Markham and my dear friend of 46 years.

Khalid had the unique ability to connect with people, whether they were young or old, making them feel that their opinions mattered. He always greeted everyone with a smile, and his laughter echoed in any room he was in.

It was no wonder that he won over the hearts of the people of Markham. There, he became the first Canadian of Pakistani origin to be elected to the town council. He served as city councillor, representing Ward 7 for 14 years.

During his years in politics, Khalid ran for the provincial Liberals. As colleagues know, I am Conservative, but the two of us got along very well. We both believed in the importance of political representation in all parties and in all levels of government — representation honoured not by simply being there but by standing up, giving voice to and making room for the community we represent.

Khalid's legacy extended far beyond elected office. He raised millions of dollars for charitable initiatives, including those that benefited local hospitals, such as Markham Stouffville and the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre in Pakistan.

His last big fundraiser was for York University.

He approached every task with the same sense of purpose: to make his community stronger, kinder and more united.

The Friday before his surgery, I met Khalid. He assured me that he was undergoing commonplace surgery. Imagine my shock and horror when I found out that he was not doing well. He was in critical condition. I was absolutely devastated when I heard about his passing.

Our community has not yet come to terms with his passing. I haven't. He left behind a massive void. Markham mourns the loss of a dedicated leader. Countless charitable organizations mourn the loss of a staunch supporter. But family and friends mourn the loss of a man whose generosity of spirit touched countless lives.

His sister told me that, when their father passed away, Khalid told his three sisters that he was their father now. The younger sister confided to me when I met her that she felt she had lost papa all over again.

To me, Khalid was family. He was an uncle to my daughters. We shared a similar passion: politics. We would go on in endless discussions, a Liberal and a Conservative engaging in respectful debate.

Khalid left behind his wife, Dr. Abida, his three daughters and grandchildren. To them and to all who loved him, I extend my deepest condolences. May his legacy serve as an inspiration to future leaders of this country.

Thank you.

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from Survivors Circle for Reproductive Justice. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Boyer.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

• (1500)

### QMUNITY

**Hon. Duncan Wilson:** Honourable senators, I rise today during Pride Month to raise awareness of an incredible service provider based in my hometown of Vancouver: QMUNITY.

I have spoken about QMUNITY in this chamber before and how they have been a lifeline for 2SLGBTQ+ people across British Columbia for 48 years.

Their programming, which they provide to thousands of people each year, includes access to low-barrier mental health and social services, counselling programs, peer support groups and legal clinics. This has grown to include a health clinic and community-based pharmacy.

Importantly, they also offer programming to meet the unique needs of queer and trans youth and their families, while also providing dozens of programs geared towards adults and seniors.

QMUNITY has been operating in a tiny and outdated space for many years. Happily, they are now preparing to move into a 13,000-square-foot purpose-built facility perfectly situated in the heart of Davie Village, Vancouver's queer hub.

This is long overdue, and the new space will now match the breadth of programming they provide and the clientele they serve. This will also be the largest queer community centre in Western Canada.

To support this goal, QMUNITY has launched a campaign to raise \$6.5 million to bring their new home to life.

[*Translation*]

Although QMUNITY has already raised almost 75% of its fundraising target, the organization was unfortunately unable to apply for federal funding through Women and Gender Equality Canada to support this project. QMUNITY remains hopeful that the government will contribute to making one of Canada's most ambitious queer community spaces a reality. I share that hope.

[*English*]

To borrow the words from QMUNITY themselves:

This project is about more than Vancouver. It is about ensuring that queer, trans, and Two-Spirit communities in British Columbia have somewhere to turn when they need support . . . for generations to come.

Colleagues, during June, a month of celebration for our community, I am grateful to be able to celebrate and support the work of QMUNITY and all the good they do across my home province.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all honourable senators who aren't yet members of the Canadian Pride Caucus to join. It's a great way to show solidarity, but it's also your ticket to fabulous events such as tonight's Canadian Pride Caucus evening garden party, graciously co-hosted by the German ambassador at her official residence.

I'd like to conclude by wishing you all a happy Pride Month.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

**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 Debbie Henderson. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Oudar.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

[*English*]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

#### FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Peter Harder:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, which proposes changes to the code.

(*For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 1007.*)

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Harder, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

**JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE DAY BILL**

FOURTH REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Paulette Senior**, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, presented the following report:

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights has the honour to present its

**FOURTH REPORT**

Your committee, to which was referred Bill S-219, An Act to establish Judicial Independence Day, has, in obedience to the order of reference of May 5, 2026, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

PAULETTE SENIOR

*Chair*

• (1510)

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

(On motion of Senator White, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

**GOVERNOR GENERAL**

ADDRESSES AT INSTALLATION

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(k), I move:

That the Address of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P., at the Installation of the Right Honourable Louise Arbour as Governor General of Canada on June 8, 2026, together with the reply of Her Excellency the Governor General thereto, be printed as an appendix to the *Journals of the Senate* of this day and form part of the permanent records of this house.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

**BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION BILL, NO. 2**

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN COMMITTEES TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

**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:

1. in accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine the subject matter of all of Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, introduced in the House of Commons on May 6, 2026, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;
2. in addition, the following committees be separately authorized to examine the subject matter of the following elements contained in Bill C-31:
  - (a) the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry: those elements contained in Division 13 of Part 4;
  - (b) the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy: those elements contained in Divisions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 of Part 4;
  - (c) the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade: those elements contained in Division 11 of Part 4;
  - (d) the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights: those elements contained in Division 10 of Part 4;
  - (e) the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples: those elements contained in Division 14 of Part 4;
  - (f) the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs: those elements contained in Division 5 of Part 4;
  - (g) the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs: those elements contained in Division 16 of Part 4;
  - (h) the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology: those elements contained in Divisions 9 and 12 of Part 4; and
  - (i) the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications: those elements contained in Division 17 of Part 4;

3. each of the committees listed in point 2 that are authorized to examine the subject matter of particular elements of Bill C-31: *[English]*

(a) submit its final report to the Senate no later than October 9, 2026; and

(b) be authorized to deposit its report with the Clerk of the Senate if the Senate is not then sitting;

4. as the reports from the various committees authorized to examine the subject matter of particular elements of Bill C-31 are tabled in the Senate, they be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting, provided that if a report is deposited with the Clerk, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting following the one on which the depositing is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*;

5. the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to take any reports tabled under point 3 into consideration during its study of the subject matter of all of Bill C-31;

6. the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to deposit its report with the Clerk if the Senate is not then sitting; and

7. for the purposes of this order, rule 12-18(2)(c)(ii) be understood as requiring the agreement of all leaders and facilitators, or their designates.

*[Translation]*

#### APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 2, 2026-27

FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-32, An Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027.

(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.)

[ Senator LaBoucane-Benson ]

#### APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 3, 2026-27

FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-33, An Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027.

(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.)

#### CHRISTIAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

FIRST READING

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition)** introduced Bill S-249, An Act respecting Christian Heritage Month.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

*[Translation]*

#### CANADA-FRANCE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

MISSION TO FRANCE, MARCH 4-8, 2024—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association concerning the Ninth Conference of Paris, held in Paris, France, from December 15 to 17, 2025.

ANNIVERSARY D-DAY, JUNE 2-8, 2024—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association concerning the Fiftieth Annual Meeting, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Montreal, Quebec, from September 1 to 6, 2025.

## ANNUAL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 1-6, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association concerning the Eightieth Anniversary D-Day, held at Juno Beach, Normandy, France, from June 2 to 8, 2024.

## CONFERENCE OF PARIS, DECEMBER 15-17, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association concerning the Mission to France, held in Paris, France, from March 4 to 8, 2024.

• (1520)

[English]

## THE SENATE

## NOTICE OF MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO CALL FOR IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF DR. GULSHAN ABBAS

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Gulshan Abbas, arbitrarily detained by the authorities of the People's Republic of China since 2018, and to seek verifiable information regarding her health and legal status, in coordination with international partners, as well as regarding the systematic repression and arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang.

## QUESTION PERIOD

## INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Senator Moreau, your government's so-called new AI strategy, released last week, has drawn attention for its focus on data sovereignty and the goal of scaling Canadian AI champions. However, when Liberal governments speak of building national champions, Canadians have reason to be wary. Time and again, we have seen public funds go towards well-connected insiders with limited transparency and questionable results, from SNC-Lavalin to WE Charity, to GC Strategies Inc. and, most recently, to PrescribeIT.

With significant new investments now planned in AI and data infrastructure, can you explain what specific safeguards and accountability measures would be put in place to ensure these initiatives do not become another avenue for insider contracting and political favouritism?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question, Senator Martin. It gives me the opportunity to say that Canada is in a global race to capture economic innovation while ensuring data security. Those questions are frequently raised here in the Senate. That is why the Prime Minister launched *AI for All*, Canada's new national AI strategy: to build trust, expand opportunities and reinforce our sovereignty. When you want to build trust, you do it with the utmost transparency, and that's what the government is committed to doing.

**Senator Martin:** Thank you, senator.

Accountability must be at the core of any credible strategy on AI and data sovereignty. Given ongoing concerns about transparency in federal procurement, can you explain why the Department of National Defence reportedly undervalued, by approximately \$30 million, the disclosed cost of an American defence software contract with Palantir? How does this situation align with your government's stated commitment to data sovereignty and to full transparency for Canadians?

**Senator Moreau:** Thank you for the question.

You're right. Canadians expect rigorous measures to protect their data every time the government works with an external provider. The government is ensuring all data infrastructure has multiple levels of scrutiny to ensure security, especially in the context of national defence. The contract attributed to Palantir was attributed to a Canadian branch and was authorized following an open and competitive bidding process.

## CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

**Hon. Dawn Anderson:** Government leader, an advanced procurement notice entitled NORAD Northern Basing Infrastructure, or NNBI, for N.W.T., was posted online. Within the NNBI, it states that the Government of Canada is working to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. It requires successful proponents to develop an Indigenous Benefits Plan, or IBP, as part of the multiple design-build contracts. The IBPs will outline proposed initiatives and opportunities for Indigenous participation, including subcontracting, employment and training activities.

Reconciliation is not synonymous with economic benefits. It is a constitutional imperative grounded in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. The honour of the Crown imposes a non-delegable obligation on the Crown to meaningfully consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous rights holders when Crown conduct may adversely affect their rights, titles or interests.

How does the government justify characterizing contractor-led employment and procurement initiatives as “reconciliation,” when the constitutional obligations of consultation and accommodation rest with the Crown itself and cannot be delegated to private contractors?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** The commitment of the government towards reconciliation is transparent in all of the actions that the government has taken so far. The government is not delegating any of its constitutional duties to private partners.

The government understands. We did that with Bill S-2, and we did that lately regarding the proposition of amendments on bills, and the constitutional duty of consultation is taken very seriously by the government. I mention that as the representative of the government here in the Senate.

There’s nothing that could support the fact that the government is undertaking to delegate or delegating this constitutional duty to any private party.

**Senator Anderson:** The N.W.T. Gwich’in and Inuvialuit are parties to constitutionally protected modern treaties. Their rights cannot be reduced to employment, training or subcontracting opportunities offered through an IBP. The Crown has a constitutional obligation to uphold those treaty rights directly, rather than relegating Indigenous participation to a contractor-led procurement exercise.

Will the government uphold the honour of the Crown by working directly with Indigenous rights holders to develop an IBP before selecting a successful proponent to ensure that Indigenous rights holders are partners and decision makers, not merely beneficiaries, on their own traditional lands?

**Senator Moreau:** The government is committed to working with all Indigenous communities to make sure that we are going forward as far as reconciliation is concerned. We’re working with Indigenous communities on every issue that concerns those communities. It shows in many actions that have been taken so far by the government, and we intend to continue on that path.

## TREASURY BOARD

### RED TAPE REDUCTION OFFICE

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Senator Moreau, I would like to ask about the Treasury Board’s Red Tape Reduction Office, which was created to make our regulatory system more efficient, reduce barriers to investment and lower costs for businesses.

Building on the Red Tape Review from last year, the Treasury Board Secretariat consulted stakeholders and regulated entities between December 2025 and February 2026 on practical ways to reduce red tape in five key areas.

[ Senator Anderson ]

Can you share some of the findings from those consultations? What were the main concerns and recommendations raised by the stakeholders, and what opportunities were identified to eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens, support economic growth and make it easier for Canadian businesses to compete, invest and innovate?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. The government has heard a consistent message from businesses and stakeholders. They want regulatory processes that are faster, more predictable and easier to navigate. Stakeholders highlighted opportunities to reduce duplication across jurisdictions, improve regulatory service standards, accelerate approvals and make greater use of digital tools to simplify interaction with the government.

There have already been some success stories, like with Health Canada, which is now leveraging trusted international partners to speed up approvals, helping certain drug reviews reach Canadians quicker. And the Canada Energy Regulator has reduced timelines for routine applications from 191 days to just 79 days.

**Senator Loffreda:** Thank you for that answer. Two weeks ago, the President of the Treasury Board and Ontario’s Minister of Red Tape Reduction co-hosted the first-ever meeting of ministers responsible for reducing red tape. Ministers discussed how AI could help modernize government services and reduce regulatory burdens.

How is the government exploring the use of AI to speed up decision making, improve compliance and deliver more efficient services, while maintaining strong safeguards and public trust?

**Senator Moreau:** Thank you. The government objective is to harness its benefits while maintaining the trust and confidence of Canadians, just as I answered Senator Martin’s questions. Artificial intelligence presents a significant opportunity to improve the public sector, reduce administrative burdens and help government deliver services more effectively to Canadians. The government is already using AI to support administrative decision making and continues on that path as well.

• (1530)

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Hon. Krista Ross:** Thank you. Senator Moreau, recently, a parliamentary association trip to Türkiye, in the midst of missiles in the region, was rightly assessed as high-risk.

As such, two RCMP protection officers were dispatched on the trip. However, senators on the trip were explicitly told, “We’re not here to protect you . . . only the MPs.”

Upon looking into this, I’ve learned that the RCMP Regulations spell out who is eligible to receive personal protection from the RCMP. The protection of MPs stems from a 1985 ministerial designation authorizing the RCMP to protect members of Parliament and their immediate families where risks or threats have been identified.

The RCMP has maintained that the designation is restricted to members of the House of Commons and not all members of Parliament, such as senators in this chamber.

What is the government’s rationale for this interpretation?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** My understanding is that it is not an interpretation made by the government; it’s an interpretation made by the RCMP officers. My understanding is that whenever a rule, law or regulation refers to Parliament, it means both chambers, the House of Commons and the Senate. I was not aware of that interpretation by the RCMP. I will get back to you with an answer, but it seems to me that the minister obviously has to have a conversation with the RCMP to make sure that they understand the rules as we do.

**Senator Ross:** Thank you, Senator Moreau. It sounds as if we’re in agreement. I certainly hope that the government is concerned with the safety and security of all members of Parliament from both chambers. I’m hoping the government would be open to addressing this inequity. It could be done through a change in the RCMP’s interpretation, so that the term “members of Parliament” includes all parliamentarians, or through a new ministerial designation to specifically address senators.

Will you report back to us your findings on this issue?

**Senator Moreau:** Not only will I report back to you on this issue, but I think we have an understanding here that “members of Parliament” means members of the House of Commons and senators as well.

## TRANSPORT

### AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** Senator Moreau, Division 17 of Bill C-31 proposes to address the growing backlog of 97,000 air travel complaints by authorizing their resolution by third parties. This approach would move away from an in-house process at the Canadian Transportation Agency and toward the model used to resolve complaints in the U.K. and Europe.

In the bigger picture, Gábor Lukács, President of the Air Passenger Rights advocacy group, has called on the government to harmonize its Air Passenger Protection Regulations with the European Union’s gold standard regime.

Senator Moreau, as Bill C-31 is an omnibus budget bill, do you agree that Division 17 should receive focused study in the Senate, with the opportunity to hear from voices such as Dr. Lukács?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for that question, Senator Klyne. Yes, I do agree. That’s the reason why the deputy leader tabled a notice of motion earlier today, providing, at paragraph 2(i), that the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications would study elements contained in Division 17 of Part 4. We agree with the premise of your question, which this directly answers.

**Senator Klyne:** Thank you for that, Senator Moreau.

Quality passenger air service is vital to building one Canadian economy. This includes efforts to build regional partnerships, mobilize labour and kick-start major projects service and supply.

On June 19 of last year, the Competition Bureau recommended increasing foreign investments to help lower prices and improve the quality of air service. Almost a year later, the government has yet to formally respond.

Senator Moreau, when can Canadians expect a response?

**Senator Moreau:** You’re aware, senator, that I cannot comment on future investments of the government, but I can tell you that the government is convinced that foreign participation in Canadian infrastructure projects highlights not only the quality of the project itself but also that Canada is a strong, reliable and competitive environment for investment.

The government is strengthening our trade corridor infrastructure, and I’m quite sure we stand behind your question. Unfortunately, I cannot provide you with any more —

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

## FINANCE

### ECONOMIC POLICY

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Senator Moreau, the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s latest economic outlook reveals some concerning news.

While nominal GDP — the broadest measure of the federal government’s tax base — is projected to rise, this appears to be driven largely by higher energy prices, not stronger economic growth. In short, the PBO now expects weaker real GDP growth in Canada in both 2026 and 2027 than previously forecast, while GDP inflation is set to jump to 3.5%, up sharply from earlier projections.

Senator Moreau, why is your government relying on inflation-driven revenues to deceptively improve its fiscal picture rather than enacting policies that produce real economic growth for this country?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** We're saying that further economic growth for this country will be achieved by diversifying our trading partners; that's what we're doing, with 12 strategic agreements, by investing in major projects, by enabling our companies to invest and innovate faster, by attracting new investment from abroad to our businesses and by spurring the modern economic sector. That's the reason why Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, the second-lowest deficit-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and the strongest credit rating: AAA from Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

**Senator MacDonald:** Senator Moreau, higher nominal GDP may help government revenues, but Canadians experience it as higher prices and weaker purchasing power.

Will the government acknowledge that this so-called improvement in the tax base is not a sign of a stronger economy and explain instead what concrete steps it will take to create real growth in this country?

**Senator Moreau:** As far as the government is concerned, we are quite happy — and I imagine Canadians are happy — to see Canada has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and the strongest credit rating. The government has managed our finances in a way that has reduced our deficit for 2025-26. We have the second-fastest-growing economy and the most competitive long-term interest rate in the G7. This is not too bad.

#### STATE OF THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Your view of a good economy is very different than that of more than 50% of Canadians.

The term “stagnation,” government leader, refers to a prolonged period of sluggishness and a failure to develop, grow or advance. In microeconomics, it denotes an extended period of weak economic growth, typically characterized by high unemployment, flat job creation and stagnant wages. Does that ring a bell?

Senator Moreau, there has been considerable debate over the past few weeks over how to define the state of the economy over the past two quarters and whether we're in a recession. But would you at least agree that over the past several years, Canada has clearly been experiencing a period of stagnation?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** I guess that there are a lot of economists who do not share your view that we are in a technical recession, Senator Housakos. I guess that is quite clear. I know that your leader in the other place thinks that we're in the worst recession, but the worst recessions in this country have been under Conservative governments —

**Senator Housakos:** They all say we have stagnation.

**Senator Moreau:** They all have that answer?

We're acting on macroeconomic issues, as I told your colleague Senator MacDonald, and we're also working on microeconomic issues like providing immediate relief on groceries last June 5, ensuring children have food at school, protecting jobs unjustifiably affected by tariffs and strengthening Employment Insurance so those who face the worst of it can still provide for their families. That's what we're doing.

**Senator Housakos:** Senator Moreau, record population growth driven by years of an uncontrolled, broken immigration system under your government has helped inflate headline GDP figures. Meanwhile, GDP per capita productivity, housing affordability and overall living standards have declined, especially among young people's demographic.

Canadians are feeling poorer than ever before, and this has nothing to do with which government is in power. These are just the facts. Does this not suggest your government's policies have been masking underlying economic weakness rather than addressing the root cause of Canada's stagnation?

**Senator Moreau:** I disagree with your premise, Senator Housakos.

• (1540)

The government is working very well on trade diversification. We are attracting investment. We had the second-largest foreign direct investment stock-to-GDP ratio in the G20 in 2024. Canada is consistently ranked as the top destination for foreign direct investment confidence, and Canada has the world's most educated workforce.

We're in a good place. We're strong, and we will continue to make sure that our economy is growing.

**Hon. Krista Ross:** Senator Moreau, in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's recently tabled *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, she projects that the budgetary deficit will increase from \$36.3 billion — which it was in 2024-25 — to \$71.8 billion in 2026-27 as modest revenue growth is outpaced by growth in expenses. At the same time, the report also states that the public debt charges are projected to increase from \$53.4 billion to \$58.9 billion in 2026-27.

Does the government agree with these projections, given that they are different from those in the recent Spring Economic Update?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** The government is aiming for a long-range situation. We are working on every aspect of the economy, as I mention almost on a daily basis to Senator Housakos. We are working on affordability. We are working on child care. We are working on trade diversification, and it's an ongoing situation.

It's quite difficult, and the government stands behind its declaration surrounding the Spring Economic Update, as we did before, and the government is making sure that through its actions, it is making our economy grow to help Canadians in need.

**Senator Ross:** I'm not sure if your answer indicates that you do agree with the projections of the Parliamentary Budget Officer or not, but I'll proceed with my supplementary question.

With the current economic outlook and billions of dollars in spending in the supply bills that we have just received today, what are the overall plans to keep us on a healthy economic course?

**Senator Moreau:** The government is working daily to keep us on a safe economic course, and the Prime Minister is committed to ensuring that we can diversify our economy, and that's the best way to ensure that we have prosperity in the future.

We are in a geopolitical situation where our major partner is changing the way it is related to Canada, so we have to diversify our economy, and that's what the government has committed to do.

[Translation]

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### FORCED LABOUR

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne:** Senator Moreau, here are some disturbing revelations related to the results of the legislation that I sponsored, which requires companies to report on the risk of forced labour in their supply chains.

According to a study on international human rights conducted by a group of Canadian lawyers, four companies that do business in Canada, namely, Canfor, Hyundai, Kia and Masonite, did not tell the whole truth when they indicated in their public reports that, to the best of their knowledge, there was no forced labour in their supply chains.

There is credible evidence that all of these companies were using Alabama prison labour. Inmates worked for low wages for private companies under threat of punishment if they refused the work.

Are you concerned about that?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Senator Miville-Dechêne, let me be clear that the government believes that it is important to ensure that our supply chains are free of products made with forced labour.

Under Bill S-211, the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act, the government and companies are required to report potential labour rights violations as well as the steps taken to identify and mitigate risks. The government has announced a \$3-million investment this fiscal year to ensure that the principles enshrined in the law are upheld.

As for your question about whether we're concerned about it, you are addressing the government, and of course we're concerned about it, especially given that, this fiscal year, the government is funding efforts to ensure compliance with the law.

In addition, CBSA may seize shipments suspected of containing goods produced through forced labour. In that regard, we are supporting the Canada Revenue Agency.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** Since you're concerned, are you going to investigate? Many experts argue that prison labour, like what happens in Alabama, is akin to forced labour under international law and Canadian law.

I think that's serious. It also seems like the tables have turned, considering that the Trump administration is accusing Canada of allowing goods associated with forced labour to cross its border.

**Senator Moreau:** In the preface to your main question, you referred to certain auto manufacturers.

The auto sector is partly governed by the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, article 23 of which says that the Statement of Shared Commitments to upholding the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Rights at Work and specific provisions concerning forced labour are provided for in the agreement.

This means that not only must the laws of Canada be respected, but so must the provisions of international agreements between Canada and the United States.

[English]

## FINANCE

### STATE OF THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Government leader, whatever label you choose to put on your poor economic performance and the fact that your government always blames, of course, the United States for every dead sparrow that falls from the sky, and despite the fact that every day we still trade billions and billions of dollars of products that they buy from us to keep our economy afloat, the truth is that your immigration-broken policies have created a scarcity crisis in this country, and the results speak for themselves.

Canada has experienced years of declining GDP per capita, nearly \$1 trillion in lost investment, rising food insecurity and youth unemployment approaching 15%, which is something we have never heard about before in the past in Canada.

We all acknowledge that today in 2026 if young people in this country don't have parents or grandparents with means, they're having a hard time finding shelter and getting a start in their lives. Prime Minister Carney recently described the challenges as a bumpy period.

Senator Moreau, do you acknowledge that Canadians, particularly young people, are experiencing a decade-long erosion in their standard of living, and will you disagree with the Prime Minister that this —

[*Translation*]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Thank you, Senator Housakos.

[*English*]

**Senator Moreau:** I generally don't disagree with the Prime Minister. I agree with him that we have to work very hard to make sure that the economy is growing. That's what the government is doing by diversifying our economy, by having trade agreements with many other countries, by creating jobs — as a matter of fact, we are creating jobs — by ensuring that children at school have healthy food and by ensuring that affordability is there for the people in need and that the homeless are taken care of.

We are acting on housing. We are acting on affordability as a whole, and that's why this government was elected. We're working on it, and we're delivering for Canadians.

**Senator Housakos:** Those are great talking points when a government gets in at the initial stage of its term. It has been over a year. We are now into the thirteenth or fourteenth month, and, actually, the housing starts have declined. Youth unemployment is increasing. Young people are finding it more difficult to feed their children and give them the kind of start that young Canadian people of our generation and the generations before took for granted.

After a decade of poor management, will this government agree that we need to take action today?

**Senator Moreau:** The National School Food Program is now permanent and helping 400,000 children. Those are facts, and those are actions that the government is taking to help Canadians in need. That's what the government will do.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the federal government will have a declining deficit-to-GDP ratio over the medium term. It is not only the government that says that, but those confirmations also come from very credible bodies.

## JUSTICE

### MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE REVIEW COMMISSION

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Senator Moreau, I rise today requesting an update on the Miscarriage of Justice Review Commission. I receive letters from incarcerated individuals across the country, and recently one of the letters asked about that commission and when it would begin its important work.

Recent reporting from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, or APTN, quoted our colleague Senator Pate, calling the wait for justice in this country extraordinary. We passed the

bill creating this commission in December 2024. The most recent government update I could find was in March 2025 — over a year ago.

A CBC article from February of this year quoted a government official who said that efforts were ongoing to appoint a suitable chief commissioner.

Is this still the case? The government has promised to move quickly, but Canadians have been waiting a year and a half. What is the government doing right now to get this commission off the ground so that it can be doing its important work?

• (1550)

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** In a direct answer to your question, yes, it is still ongoing. I don't have an update today regarding specific appointments, but I understand the work to establish the commission remains ongoing, and the government remains committed to making the commission operational as soon as possible so that potentially wrongful convictions can be reviewed through this new, independent process.

The government agrees that individuals who may have been wrongfully convicted deserve a review process that is fair, accessible and independent.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Senator Moreau, yesterday the African Canadian Senate Group had a meeting, and we discussed the lack of Black representation on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Rights, Equality and Inclusion, so there is concern, as you know.

I want to add my voice to those of Senator Senior and Senator Bernard, who raised this last week in the chamber. What more have you heard from the Prime Minister's Office about how Black voices will be heard and anti-Black racism will be addressed by this government?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** From last week, I heard nothing more, but, as I mentioned to Senator Bernard and Senator Senior, I raised the question with the Prime Minister's Office on the same day the question was raised, and I think it's a very serious situation.

Concerns regarding representation and diversity in appointments are taken seriously. I can assure you the Prime Minister is taking the situation very seriously and that we will have more to report in the future.

[Translation]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CRIMINAL CODE

#### BILL TO AMEND—MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons returning Bill S-228, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sterilization procedures), and acquainting the Senate that they had passed this bill without amendment.

[English]

### PROTECTING VICTIMS BILL

#### BILL TO AMEND—MOTION TO AUTHORIZE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER ADOPTED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate)**, pursuant to notice of June 4, 2026, moved:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. pursuant to rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), introduced in the House of Commons on December 9, 2025, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and
2. for the purposes of its study, the committee be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, with the application of rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) being suspended in relation thereto.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** It is moved by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Petten:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. pursuant to rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures), introduced in the House of Commons on December 9, 2025, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and

2. for the purposes of its study, the committee be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, with the application of rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) being suspended in relation thereto.

**Hon. Denise Batters:** I thought maybe we would hear a bit about this. I would like a point of clarification from the Deputy Leader of the Government, if possible.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** She is not on debate, so questions are not allowed.

**Senator Batters:** I was wanting the Deputy Leader of the Government to perhaps explain the purpose for this pre-study, given that this bill is already at report stage in the House of Commons. There is no opportunity for the House of Commons to do any amendments at this point; it would only go through a third reading debate.

I just wondered what the government's position is as to why a pre-study is a helpful thing for this bill to have before the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Batters, if you wanted to enter on debate, maybe you could advance your point of view, but Senator LaBoucane-Benson is not on debate, so she's not in a position to answer the question.

**Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper:** Honourable senators, I rise today on this motion, feeling a bit like a broken record. Several times in the past, I have warned about this chamber feeling pressured to become what many would view us as a rubber stamp.

Senator Batters mentioned this in her question to Minister Fraser in the chamber, and several senators — including myself — have lamented the pace at which we are being demanded to work.

The familiar chorus of senators delaying the advancement of important legislation by doing our work is both irritating and tiresome. Yet, time and time again, we give in. We adjust and we make accommodations. For what? To gain a brief reprieve from the court of public opinion. But at what cost?

I would argue the short-term avoidance of reputational harm has far longer-lasting consequences in the future. Several times, the Senate has proven that its measured advice, which comes from thoughtful, in-depth study, has been proven sound by court decisions after amendments were rejected by the elected chamber.

My Conservative colleagues often pointed out concerns around the Charter implications of the infamous Bill C-69. While that advice was not taken by the other place, the courts later sided with them. On October 13, 2023, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the Impact Assessment Act enabled the federal government to have too much overreach into provincial jurisdiction.

As another example, this chamber weighed in heavily on the original bill on medical assistance in dying, or MAID. Senators attempted to remove the requirement that death be “reasonably foreseeable” for patients seeking MAID, yet that amendment was removed by the other place.

Former senator Pratte noted that he found keeping the reasonably foreseeable death criterion to be a “serious and cruel mistake.” On September 11, 2019, the Superior Court of Quebec ruled in the *Truchon* case that it was, indeed, unconstitutional and issued a declaration of invalidity for that part of the law.

• (1600)

This chamber has also used its sober second thought to identify technical errors in bills that would have had major consequences. Let us look at the past Parliament, where three instances come to mind.

Bill C-26, the cybersecurity bill, had a numbering error that the Senate caught. Had it not been caught, it would have repealed half of the bill.

Bill C-13, the official languages bill, saw a Senate staffer — a Canadian Senators Group staffer, I might note — catch a drafting error that excluded francophones outside of Quebec from making complaints to the commissioner under the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act. While the Senate did not pass an amendment because there was “not enough time” to send a message in the late days of June, the error was later corrected in Bill C-69, the Budget Implementation Act, 2024, No. 1.

Finally, with Bill C-12, the Senate caught a significant drafting error related to the Guaranteed Income Supplement, or GIS, provisions under the Old Age Security Act in the Budget Implementation Act, 2021, and moved to correct it in this bill, which amended the same sections that contained the error.

Retired Senator Dennis Patterson noted:

Now we are being told not to do that because, if we do, we will jeopardize the payments to tens of thousands of seniors. We are being told to look the other way and wait for future legislative measures. If Bill C-12 had been introduced earlier and with enough time to also have it properly reviewed, maybe there would be more willingness to let the Senate do its job as a revising body. I am dismayed at how often we are forced to abandon our duties as senators in the name of expediency.

As Senator Patterson was dismayed, I am also dismayed at the constant and consistent call to move faster, object less and go along with the message.

Everything is a legislative priority this late into the session. Everything needs a pre-study. Everything needs us to sit outside the regular committee times.

The constant push for pre-studies has made me wonder about a few things. I wonder why we chose to pre-study an electoral reform bill rather than pre-study this bill weeks ago. Lives will not be lost if electoral reform waits until September for clause by clause. Yet, we have held extended hearings and spent time

pre-studying it rather than the legislation that Minister Fraser argued Canadians “can’t afford” to wait for. Now we have no choice but to initiate a pre-study in the dying days of this session, trying to get as much on the record as possible and have the time to at least try to do a decent job studying this bill rather than to rush speedily and recklessly through a bill that creates new Criminal Code offences. The Senate works best when we have the time we need to do the detailed work that allows for the insight, wisdom and technical, eagle-eyed precision that I spoke of earlier.

Colleagues, let me end on a thought that may seem out of place, but it is related to the subject matter of a pre-study motion.

Pre-studies have also forced us to take time away from other business. While some may scoff at the idea of dealing with Senate public bills over a pre-study of government legislation, I do want to point out the fact that, while there has been discussion about changing the rules to have fewer public bills on the Order Paper, we have a backlog. We cannot keep ignoring that backlog because it will only get longer until the rules maybe change.

I will vote for this pre-study not because I think it is the right thing to do but because I think it is the only thing that can be done out of manufactured necessity, but I will do so begrudgingly.

*Wela’lin.* Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne:** Senator Prosper, would you take a question?

[*English*]

**Senator Prosper:** Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Senator Miville-Dechéne:** Like you, I would prefer to have more time rather than less to conduct a study. That said, there have been delays in the House of Commons, so, thanks to the pre-study, we are able to get started on our work and to have more days with more focused hours to devote to this important bill.

You didn’t say much about the content, which deals with the issue of women and femicides, but let’s not forget that this bill is primarily for victims. Victims’ groups want this bill because it addresses an issue that I have worked hard on and that many Quebec women have worked hard on, and that is the issue of coercive control, which is very important and often precedes femicide.

There is also the issue of deepfakes, which especially affect women in all sexual matters, and the issue of child luring. These are all things that the government should have addressed a long time ago. I agree that we are lagging behind on this issue. However, why not use the last two weeks that we have left to do as much work as we can on this bill? I wanted to hear your thoughts on that.

[English]

**Senator Prosper:** Thank you, Senator Miville-Dechêne.

I do agree that there are many significant aspects of Bill C-16 that need to be dealt with. In fact, they should be prioritized within our committee. That is not to say that more thought could not be given in terms of planning and allowing us to really map this out with a more extended timeline. I understand we're subject to the time limits we have, but to do proper work and proper study, ideally, having more time to discuss witnesses, to agree on witnesses and to order the multitude of subject areas that need to be studied would be preferable.

Thank you.

**Hon. Pamela Wallin:** Would you take another question, Senator Prosper?

**Senator Prosper:** Yes, I would. Thank you.

**Senator Wallin:** Thank you very much.

I share your concern about the pre-studies and the frequency with which we are being asked to indulge in this, to make this happen, to set schedules aside and do it. It troubles me because bills often change in process in the other place. They're modified. New concerns come to light from new groups who, after the fact, read about this legislation.

In fact, the government recently put the brakes on its own bill to check again with the Department of Justice about the validity of the bill.

It's my belief — I'm wondering if you share it — that bills should only come to us once the House of Commons, the elected house, has really done their best work and put a bill through all of the constitutional and legal hurdles.

We're watching today parts of Bill C-22 being, at the last minute, studied at committee, but the government is only allowing proponents of the bill to speak. The Privacy Commissioner has been denied a voice on a bill that fundamentally affects privacy.

This is very concerning. I'm assuming we share this view.

• (1610)

**Senator Prosper:** We share that view, and I tend to agree with your suggestion that only after it has undergone proper treatment and scrutiny from the other place should it come here, ideally. Thank you.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond:** Senator Prosper, would you take another question?

[English]

**Senator Prosper:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Senator Dalphond:** The House of Commons committee completed its study of Bill C-16. It was reprinted with all of the amendments that were agreed to in committee and the bill is at third reading in the House. Don't you think we have enough information to conduct a pre-study?

[English]

**Senator Prosper:** I certainly think we have enough subject matter to undertake a pre-study. My point, more or less, goes to the timing and dialogue that needs to take place within steering and the committee itself to properly map this out.

At this juncture and with this timeline, yes, everything needs to be done to meet those priorities, but, again, it goes to the point of the need to give this chamber the respect that it rightfully deserves to properly do the work we need to do. Thank you.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Are senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

[Translation]

## NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH BILL

### THIRD READING

**Hon. Amina Gerba** moved third reading of Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month.

She said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to rise at third reading as the sponsor of Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month. At this final step in the legislative process, we are confronted with an important decision about whether to adopt a bill intended to institutionally and annually recognize the fundamental contribution of immigration in building Canada.

Bill S-215 would designate November as "National Immigration Month." This choice is highly symbolic. It connects back to a pivotal date, November 1, 2001, when the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act came into force. The act continues to provide the legal framework for immigration and refugee protection matters to this day.

Immigration in Canada is therefore deeply anchored in our legal architecture. It is also a social and economic reality. Immigration is part of Canada's DNA and remains one of its greatest assets.

As our new Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Louise Arbour, so aptly said:

It is through our differences, and our fundamental right to express them, that we will nourish critical thinking, creativity and innovation. It is through our differences that we will build our common future.

Before returning the bill to us for third reading, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology heard from a diverse range of witnesses representing community groups, academia and institutions. Their discussions served to highlight the powerful symbolic significance and the impact of recognizing a national immigration month, as well as its potential for raising awareness and fostering social cohesion.

I would like to sincerely thank the Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, Senator Moodie, and all the members for carrying out such a high-quality study. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our honourable colleagues who spoke in this chamber in support of Bill S-215: Senators Miville-Dechéne, Ravalia, Mégie and Atallahjan.

I would also like to thank the many witnesses who testified. The fact that you were all so engaged, insightful and supportive greatly contributed to moving this initiative forward. I am deeply grateful to you, and your support is invaluable and much appreciated.

In addition to the work done in Parliament, it is important to note that this bill enjoys broad and growing support across the country. Numerous community, non-profit and institutional organizations expressed their support for the idea of designating a national month to recognize immigration. Among them are stakeholders I brought together for a round table discussion who specifically highlighted the importance of doing more to celebrate immigrant journeys and strengthen the collective understanding of their contributions to Canadian society.

This support is not limited to a single sector or region. It reflects a shared sentiment across the country, in both urban and rural communities, and throughout the provinces and territories. It reflects a growing recognition of the fundamental role that immigration plays in our collective development.

This recognition is not new. In the Speech from the Throne in 2001, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Canada's first immigrant Governor General, said:

[*English*]

"Immigrants have enriched Canada with their ideas and talent."

Honourable senators, Canada is, at its very core, a society shaped by immigration. This reality is not a secondary element of our national history. Rather, it is a fundamental pillar of our collective identity.

[ Senator Gerba ]

From Indigenous Peoples — the first inhabitants of this land — to the successive waves of immigrants who have arrived from all corners of the world, our country has been built through the meeting and intertwining of diverse human journeys.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

As another illustrious Governor General, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, said in 2008, Canada is home to the world.

Along the way, immigrants have made significant contributions in cultural, economic, scientific and social domains. Some of their journeys have also been marked by historical injustices, exclusionary policies and systemic discrimination. It is our duty to acknowledge that candidly.

This complexity is precisely why we need to engage in the kind of institutional reflection this bill would promote. However, Bill S-215 is not just about understanding our history. It is also about the present and the future. Today, immigration is a key force in Canada's dynamism. It contributes to economic vitality, innovation and cultural diversity. It helps ensure the availability of essential services in many sectors, such as health care, agriculture, tourism, education, infrastructure and technology.

Canada is undergoing a demographic transformation. As our population ages, immigration remains an important factor in social stability and renewal. The purpose of a national immigration month is not to change public policies on admissions or immigration thresholds in Canada. It is not an administrative management tool. Its purpose is to promote recognition and raise awareness.

The aim is to designate an annual forum where we can collectively reflect on the place of immigration in our society, highlight the contributions of immigrants and foster a better understanding of the challenges related to settling, integrating and retaining newcomers. In a context where debates on immigration can sometimes be polarized, such a forum can help set the record straight, encourage dialogue and strengthen social cohesion.

Beyond statistics and institutional frameworks, there are fundamental human realities. Every year, thousands of people choose Canada as the place where they want to build their future. They bring with them their skills, experiences, cultures and aspirations. They help build our communities and contribute to the richness of our social fabric.

Behind every immigration policy, there are life stories, families, and tales of resilience and adaptation. Recognizing these journeys does not mean idealizing immigration. It simply means acknowledging its reality in all its complexity and depth.

Honourable senators, by passing Bill S-215, we will send a clear message, specifically that Canada fully recognizes the vital contribution of immigration to its development and celebrates the richness of its diversity, and that Canada wants to strengthen social cohesion through recognition and the duty to remember.

[English]

A national immigration month alone will not resolve all the challenges associated with immigration. However, it can serve as an important anchor — an opportunity to foster greater understanding, recognition and appreciation of this essential dimension of our society.

[Translation]

Colleagues, that is why I ask you to support Bill S-215 at third reading. Thank you.

[English]

**Hon. Salma Atallahjan:** Honourable senators, I rise today as the friendly critic of Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month.

I would like to begin by thanking Senator Gerba for introducing this bill.

Every community in our country bears the mark of immigration — the mark of those who crossed oceans with little more than hope, who chose Canada as their new home and who, in turn, helped to shape it. New Canadians have opened businesses on our main streets, strengthened our health care system, enriched our culture, advanced scientific discoveries and contributed to our prosperity. Their efforts are woven into the fabric of our national life.

By designating the month of November as “National Immigration Month,” we would provide an opportunity to reflect on the contributions immigrants have made to our communities and to celebrate the diversity that continues to strengthen our country. It would also encourage Canadians to learn more about the experiences of newcomers and the role that immigration has played throughout our history.

Colleagues, it takes immense courage to leave behind the familiar and build a future in a new land. It takes determination to learn new customs, navigate new institutions and create a sense of belonging. Those journeys deserve recognition.

At a time when millions around the world are searching for safety, opportunity and freedom, this bill sends a simple message: We recognize the contributions of those who have chosen to make Canada their home.

Thank you.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Are senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.)

## COMPETITION ACT

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Klyne, seconded by the Honourable Senator Audette, for the second reading of Bill S-239, An Act to amend the Competition Act.

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to offer a critical assessment of Bill S-239, An Act to amend the Competition Act, also known as “Canadian Prosperity Act.”

I want to begin by acknowledging our colleague the Honourable Senator Marty Klyne for sponsoring this legislation and for his commitment to strengthening economic opportunities across our federation.

My purpose today is to examine whether this bill promotes freer internal trade, reduces unnecessary costs for families and businesses, and delivers real results in a balanced and effective way. Although Bill S-239 is a focused measure, it addresses a long-standing challenge: the hidden barriers that divide our country economically across various sectors and regions. These barriers are not always visible to the public, yet they shape the prices families pay, the opportunities available to workers and the competitiveness of Canadian businesses.

• (1630)

Honourable senators, let me first outline what the bill proposes. It amends section 10.1 of the Competition Act to allow the Commissioner of Competition to include recommendations in market or industry inquiry reports.

These recommendations would identify barriers to internal trade, including any act, regulation, rule, order or bylaw that unduly affects competition. For federal institutions, the government must respond within 120 days and publish that response. Provinces and territories may respond if they choose. The short title, the Canadian prosperity act, reflects the goal clearly: to identify obstacles so that goods, services and people can move more freely across our country.

This objective matters. Internal trade barriers impose significant costs on Canadian families and businesses. Estimates suggest these barriers act as a substantial drag on our economy, raising prices and limiting choices for consumers while making it more difficult for companies to grow and compete. Studies have indicated that meaningful progress on removing these barriers could add tens of billions of dollars to our gross domestic product over time.

The effects are felt in everyday life. Higher costs for goods that cross provincial and territorial borders, restrictions that limit where workers can take their skills and regulatory differences

that complicate business operations all contribute to a less efficient economy. In a period when many households are managing tight budgets and global economic conditions remain uncertain, reducing these domestic frictions represents a practical way to ease pressure on families and support broader economic resilience.

In principle, I support the intent of Bill S-239. The bill starts from a sound foundation in its intent. It seeks to use an existing expert body, the Commissioner of Competition, to highlight problems that drive up the cost of living and slow economic growth. However, this bill raises questions about whether a Royal Recommendation may ultimately be needed. It gives the Commissioner of Competition the new function of adding recommendations about internal trade barriers inside market study reports. This creates new work for the bureau that goes beyond its current mandate.

The bill also requires certain federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations to reply to the commissioner's recommendations within a strict 120-day deadline. Creating new required work and timelines across government will impact time and resources. In addition, the bill requires the commissioner to send report copies and then post all federal responses on a public website. This adds ongoing administrative and website work for the Competition Bureau.

While these costs may well prove modest, they are the kinds of practical implications that deserve closer examination. Committee study would allow us to assess the resource impact more precisely and determine whether any amendments to the bill are warranted.

Honourable senators, we must also consider other practical shortcomings. The bill relies primarily on recommendations and this 120-day federal response period. While transparency is welcome, we know from experience that reports and responses do not always lead to action. Recommendations can be useful, but without clear follow-through, there is a risk that important findings will sit on shelves rather than translate into meaningful change. Accountability matters. When governments identify problems, Canadians deserve to see whether those problems are being addressed over time.

Most internal trade barriers exist at the provincial and territorial levels. The voluntary nature of provincial and territorial responses respects our federal system, which is important. However, it also limits the bill's reach. Past agreements, including the 1995 Agreement on Internal Trade and the 2017 Canadian Free Trade Agreement, or CFTA, sought to reduce barriers but left hundreds of exceptions in place, particularly in skilled trades and regulated professions. A more effective approach would actively encourage mutual recognition of standards. If a product or service meets safety and quality requirements in one province or territory, it should generally be accepted in others without repeated approvals. This principle reduces duplication, lowers compliance costs for businesses and supports a more integrated national economy. Encouraging

provinces and territories to take practical steps forward while respecting their authority offers a disciplined way to make progress without imposing one-size-fits-all solutions.

We must also avoid creating new layers to the process. Asking the commissioner to produce additional analysis is useful, but the focus should remain on direct relief rather than expanded studies.

The bill would benefit from a clear emphasis on high-impact sectors where barriers create the greatest harm, such as agriculture, energy, transportation and resource development. These sectors are vital to our economy, particularly in regions like British Columbia. When regulatory differences complicate the movement of agricultural products, energy resources or transportation services, the costs are ultimately borne by consumers and by workers whose livelihoods depend on these industries.

Farmers in one province or territory should not face extra hurdles when selling to markets in another. Energy producers should not lose opportunities because of differing provincial and territorial rules. By directing attention to these practical areas, the bill can deliver faster relief to families who feel the impact at the grocery store, the gas pump and the job site. A focused approach would help ensure that the bill's efforts are directed where they can produce the most tangible benefits.

The bill rightly focuses on competition, but it could connect more clearly to the principles of fiscal responsibility and long-term economic strength. Reducing barriers is not only about efficiency. It is about lowering the cost of living so that families can keep more of what they earn, and businesses can create stable jobs. When internal barriers raise costs and limit opportunity, they place additional pressure on household budgets and on public finances over time. A more integrated domestic economy supports fiscal responsibility by helping to grow the revenue base without requiring higher taxes or increased spending.

Committee study of this bill should consider how these changes could complement other efforts to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens and strengthen Canada's economic foundation. In this way, the bill can contribute to a broader agenda of prudent governance that prioritizes sustainable growth and value for taxpayers.

Honourable senators, we have seen this challenge before. Successive governments have recognized that internal trade barriers impose real costs on Canadian businesses, workers and consumers. Yet well-intentioned efforts have often produced agreements that appear meaningful on paper but deliver only modest results in practice.

The transition from the 1995 Agreement on Internal Trade to the CFTA in 2017 offers a clear example. Both initiatives sought to reduce barriers to the movement of goods, services and labour across provincial and territorial lines. The CFTA introduced a more ambitious approach and stronger dispute resolution provisions.

• (1640)

More than eight years later, however, hundreds of exceptions remain, and regulatory differences continue to fragment our economic space. In sectors such as skilled trades and regulated professions, workers who are fully certified in one province or territory can still face lengthy and inconsistent processes when seeking work in another. These frictions raise project costs for employers, contribute to labour shortages in key industries and limit economic opportunity for individuals and families. The lesson is clear: Good intentions and reporting mechanisms are not enough on their own. What matters is whether recommendations lead to timely and concrete action that improves the daily lives of Canadians.

Honourable senators, I have raised these points not to slow progress but to help ensure Bill S-239 receives the careful scrutiny it deserves. Therefore, it should advance to committee for study.

Senator Klyne, thank you for advancing this because your focus on wanting to break down the barriers for better provincial-territorial cooperation across our one nation is really important, and I do support that. Thank you for that.

Thank you, colleagues.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Senator Klyne, do you wish to ask a question?

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** No. I wish to speak to the point of order, which is simmering in that little basket.

Colleagues, I would like to respond to the points that have been made —

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Your Honour, he has already spoken on this debate, so I don't think he can intervene again.

**Senator Martin:** You can ask a question about —

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** I want to make sure I understand. Are you raising a point of order, Senator Klyne?

**Senator Klyne:** No. There is a point of order being made here.

**Senator Housakos:** You can ask a question.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Excuse me, Senator Klyne, just a moment, please. Are you asking for the question?

**Senator Klyne:** Yes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Are honourable senators ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yes.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** You want to ask a question to Senator Martin? Is that it, Senator Klyne? Is that what you want?

**Senator Klyne:** Well, I would like a question of the Senate —

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Just to be clear, Senator Klyne, are you asking a question to Senator Martin, or are you asking for the question to be asked?

**Senator Klyne:** I am asking for the question to be asked.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Okay. Are honourable senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Klyne, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy.)

## CARIBBEAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING

**Hon. Paulette Senior** moved second reading of Bill S-248, An Act respecting Caribbean Heritage Month.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today on this unceded and surrendered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation to ask for your support for Bill S-248, An Act respecting Caribbean Heritage Month.

This bill seeks to designate every July as Caribbean heritage month. I want to start by introducing you to an expression. It's one I grew up with and one I learned from my grandparents, particularly my grandmother, a woman whose love and discipline indelibly shaped the woman that I am today — if you knew her, you would agree — and one that my fellow Jamaicans have carried with them for generations: *Wi likkle but wi tallawah*. In Jamaican patois, it means: We are small but we are mighty. It reminds us that our size does not determine our strength, our power or our impact. I can think of no expression that better exemplifies the spirit of the Caribbean: *likkle but tallawah*.

Honourable colleagues, I was born in Kingston, Jamaica, but spent most of my early childhood in country in Clarendon, an agricultural parish where hundreds of years ago my ancestors were enslaved and forced to work sugar cane fields to produce sugar for European consumption — a parish where, in 1690, these enslaved Africans revolted against the tyranny of slavery, resisted oppression and lived as free men and free women in the Mocho Mountains as Maroons. More than 300 years later, sugar cane still grows in Clarendon.

As a child, my grandparents raised me. My parents, like many of their generation across the region, moved to Ontario to establish themselves before bringing their children two by two to Canada.

My father got a job as a mechanic with the Toronto Transit Commission, and my mother worked as a housekeeper at the Fairmont Hotel for 25 years until her retirement. I was the last to arrive as an 11-year-old, a *liddle* girl with big dreams in a new land.

I still remember my Aunt Rose, a woman who had never travelled in her life, passing on a sage piece of advice on how to survive in Canada: “Walk fast,” she said. “Canada is cold.”

Today, I stand in this august chamber as a senator of Canada, a proud Canadian, a proud Jamaican and the embodiment of *tallawah*.

But I am not here today to tell my story. I came to tell you ours: the stories of over 750,000 Canadians of Caribbean descent who have made Canada their home. Because what brought me from Clarendon to this chamber is the same force that has driven Caribbean people to build, to contribute and to thrive in this country for generations. *Wi tallawah* — all of us, every single one.

Honourable senators, before I tell you why naming July as Caribbean heritage month is a long-overdue recognition, it would be remiss of me to not tell you what the Caribbean is. Because, far too often, Canadians reduce the Caribbean to a vacation destination — sun, sea and sand, all beautiful and enjoyed from the comfort of an all-inclusive resort. That is the postcard. It is not the people. It is not the culture. The languages we speak in the Caribbean are English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Creole and Papiamentu. Our people are warm and proud.

- (1650)

We represent a mix of cultures, descendants of the following groups:

Indigenous Taino and Kalina peoples who migrated from South America and were there with established civilizations long before Columbus set sail in 1492; the Kalina, called “Caribs” by European settlers, which is where the region gets its name — Caribbean; Africans, who endured the indignity of being brought in chains on merchant ships from the bottomless pit of slave dungeons in West Africa to a new world in the Caribbean, forced to create wealth for Europe through their enslavement, denied basic rights, yet showed resilience in resisting slavery and holding on to elements of their culture; Indian, Chinese and Irish workers brought as indentured servants also to work the sugar cane fields; and finally, Europeans, who came as colonizers, planters and merchants and whose descendants remained.

We were all born on the same soil, shaped by the same sun, part of the same kaleidoscope.

[ Senator Senior ]

Our history is as rich as the soil that grows our spices in Grenada, sweetens our sugar in Antigua, holds oil in Guyana and roots us wherever we are planted in the world.

Our pride as a people comes from this history and from our deeply ingrained knowledge of our resilience. We are a kaleidoscope, not a monolith. We emerged from colonialism, slavery, indentureship and hurricanes. Through our grit and resilience, we built something extraordinary because that is who we are: resilient, proud and still here.

Honourable colleagues, I want to dispel a myth: the myth that Caribbean people arrived in Canada recently as newcomers, as people who showed up after the Canadian story was mostly written. In reality, for generations, we have been co-authors of this story.

Colleagues, the relationship between Canada and the Caribbean is older than Confederation itself. For centuries, Caribbean footprints have shaped Canada’s economy, culture and history.

From as early as the 17th century, Canada and the Caribbean were connected by trade. Salted cod from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia sailed south to feed enslaved workers on Caribbean sugar plantations from Haiti in the north to Trinidad in the south. Rum and molasses flowed back to the Atlantic in return. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the prosperity of Atlantic Canada was built on this exchange.

Today, Caribbean delicacies made from salted cod like ackee and salt fish in Jamaica, accra in Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, cook up rice in Guyana, fishcakes in Barbados or buljol in Trinidad exist because of this trade.

In Newfoundland, Jamaican rum shaped working-class culture in fishing villages and community halls, so much so that being “screeched in” with a shot of Jamaican rum became a modern rite of passage to welcome visitors to Newfoundland.

Today, over \$6.3 billion in goods and services flows between Canada and the Caribbean each year. As Canada looks to further diversify its trade relationships, the Caribbean has the capacity to increase its trade with Canada.

Colleagues, a few minutes ago, I mentioned the Maroons, the descendants of Africans who escaped slavery in Jamaica and built free communities in the mountains. These Maroon colonies existed for over a century. However, in 1796, following their defeat in the Second Maroon War, over 500 Maroons were exiled from Jamaica and sent to Halifax — our Halifax.

In their four years in Halifax, these Caribbean men and women built the Halifax Citadel, Government House and the community of Preston, an area that is today the heart of the African Nova Scotian community. A proud daughter of Preston, Senator Bernard, sits in this chamber.

The Halifax Citadel today remains one of the most iconic fortifications in Canadian military history, built by Jamaican Maroons. Every year, over 200,000 people visit the citadel, and I am sure few of them know this history.

You see, colleagues, Caribbean people helped build this country literally. Before Confederation, before Calgary and before Canada, Caribbean people were already here. Caribbean people were already writing the Canadian story. Caribbean people were already punching above their weight.

This shared history is complicated. It demands to be known. It demands to be acknowledged.

In the 20th century, Caribbean people came to Canada in waves. In the first wave in the 1950s and 1960s, Caribbean women, like the Honourable Jean Augustine, came to Canada as domestic workers under the West Indian Domestic Scheme. They cleaned homes, raised children and sent money back to the islands to take care of their own families.

In the second wave were professionals. The points system introduced in 1967 brought thousands of doctors, lawyers, teachers and engineers from the Caribbean to Canada. They arrived. They stayed. They built.

My parents were part of this second wave. By the time I arrived in Canada, they had already established themselves and bought their first home in Toronto. I am still in awe of their sacrifice, determination and work ethic.

That generation instilled in their children — in me — the value of education and taught their kids that, if they worked hard and got an education, they could achieve the Canadian dream.

In the 1970s and 1980s, waves of Haitian refugees, like our former Governor General Michaëlle Jean, escaped the Duvalier dictatorship and made Montreal their home in places like Bourassa and Saint-Michel.

Today, the Caribbean continues to send its richest resource, its people, to our shores. International students enrich campus life at our colleges and universities. Temporary foreign workers pick our fruit in Bowmanville and Niagara, and care for our elderly as personal support workers. Professionals work in our banks, courts and even these hallowed halls. Entrepreneurs make our country more prosperous.

The spirit of *tallawah* lives in each of the over 750,000 Canadians of Caribbean descent. Wherever we go, from coast to coast to coast, we bloom where we are planted.

As I look around this chamber, I see colleagues like Senators Moodie, Yussuff, Youance and Burey, all of whom have Caribbean roots. I also see Senator Clement, whose father hails from “T & T” — Trinidad and Tobago. We are all planted in Canadian soil, nourished by different journeys, blooming in this chamber.

In sports, I think of gold medallists and world champions like Donovan Bailey, Perdita Felicien, Andre De Grasse, Jennifer Abel and Brendon Rodney, who have worn the Maple Leaf with pride and brought great honour to Canada.

In culture, every summer, my city of Toronto hosts the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, a cultural celebration that brings in over \$450 million annually to Ontario and brings over 2 million visitors to the city. Toronto’s Caribbean Carnival isn’t just the largest street festival in Canada; it is the largest street festival in North America.

In business, I think of titans like Wes Hall, Frank Bayliss and Michael Lee-Chin; in science, the late, great Dr. Juliet Daniel, whose discovery of the KAI1 gene fundamentally changed breast cancer research. In politics, Rosemary Brown, Marci Ien, Jean Augustine, Celina Ceasar Chavannes, Marjorie Michel, Leslyn Lewis and Hedy Fry. If my time permitted, I could go on and on, colleagues, with this list of Canadian elected officials with Caribbean roots. So far, I have only listed the women. But what each of these women did was lift others as they climbed, breaking barriers, opening doors for others and blooming in Canada.

- (1700)

Honourable senators, let me take you beyond Canada for just a moment because the case I am making is not only about what the Caribbean has given this country; it is about what small islands, with less than 1% of the world’s population, have given the world.

Trinidad gave the world soca and the steel pan, the only musical instrument invented in the 20th century. Haiti gave the world its first Black Republic. Toussant Louverture defeated Napoleon’s armies, and with that, hastened the end of the transatlantic slave trade.

Jamaica gave the world reggae. More specifically, Jamaica gave the world the late, great Bob Marley, a.k.a. Robert Nesta Marley, a man from rural Jamaica who reminded the Caribbean people to “emancipate yourselves from mental slavery . . .” and reminded a turbulent world that “. . . every little thing gonna be alright.”

There are places in Africa, the Pacific and Europe where people may have never heard of Ottawa but know every single word of “No Woman No Cry.” Think about that for a second.

St. Lucia gave the world two Nobel Laureates — Derek Walcott and W. Arthur Lewis — all from an island whose population is the same size as P.E.I.

Despite over 60 years of a crippling blockade from the U.S., Cuba gave the world its doctors and nurses. Its medical internationalism has sent tens of thousands of health care workers worldwide to respond to pandemics, plagues and natural disasters.

Barbados gave the world rum, Rihanna and is now leading on the most urgent issue of our time: climate change.

The Bridgetown Initiative, championed by my hero Prime Minister Mia Mottley, has fundamentally transformed the global conversation about climate finance.

She stood at Davos, she stood at the United Nations, and she stands tall to speak truth to power, telling the world that the rules of global finance are not designed for small island developing states, which do the least to cause climate change but suffer the most from it. She is right. The world is listening, and she is making the world listen to a country of 280,000 people.

*Wi likkle*, with half of a percent of the world's population, but *wi tallawah* in our impact.

Honourable senators, Canada has a long tradition of designating heritage months: Asian Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Tamil Heritage Month, Polish Heritage Month and Black History Month. I could go on. These designations are not just symbolic; they are an act of national acknowledgement. I urge you to support Bill S-248. Support for this bill is consistent with Canada's long-standing support for multiculturalism. It is consistent with this chamber's previous support for other heritage months. This is a straightforward bill: no gimmicks, no hidden clauses and no financial implications.

In voting to support this bill, you will be saying "yes" to the over 500 Canadians who signed a petition to the House of Commons asking for this recognition.

Colleagues, support for this bill also comes from 26 organizations across Canada, including the Indo-Caribbean Canadian Association — and I want to especially thank Ryan Singh for his advocacy — the St. Lucia Canada Foundation, the Guyanese Association of Manitoba, Barbados House Montreal, the Jamaican Ottawa Community Association, the Bahamas Cultural Association of BC and the Trinidad and Tobago Cultural Society of British Columbia.

These organizations, among others, are asking with one voice for us to see and recognize their contributions to Canada. I urge you to listen and to support this bill.

In conclusion, colleagues, I think back to that little 11-year-old girl from Clarendon, Jamaica, who moved to Canada in 1973 to be reunited with her family — the girl who was one of two Black children in her class at Hillcrest Public School who didn't see herself reflected in her civics and history classes and certainly didn't see herself reflected in the culture. Recognition of Caribbean Heritage Month was warranted then. It is long overdue now.

The Caribbean has been woven into the fabric of Canada since before Confederation. We built Halifax's Citadel. We drove Atlantic prosperity in the 17th and 18th centuries. We staffed hospitals, schools and government offices. We drove buses and cleaned hotel rooms. We cared for children and the elderly. We stood at the top of podiums, the Maple Leaf proud on our chests. We danced to the sweet sounds of Soca in the streets of Toronto. We fed this country through our farm workers and our Caribbean restaurants. We ascended to elected office. We sit in this august chamber today. Yet we are still waiting for Canada to say, formally, we know you are here, we know what you contributed and we celebrate these contributions.

[ Senator Senior ]

Bill S-248 says that. This recognition is not a favour. It is not a gift. It is not charity. It is simply the recognition that, as we say in Jamaican patois, "Every mickle mek a muckle." Every contribution, past and present, from a Caribbean Canadian, adds up.

It has always added up, and it is time Canada said so. *Wi likkle*, but *wi tallawah*. I urge all honourable senators to support Bill S-248.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** I'd like to compliment Senator Senior on, as usual, a very thoughtful and substantive intervention. Also, I have to say, who can disagree with any of the points that were brought up? Who can disagree with any of the elements of Bill S-248? This is a community that has made a substantive contribution to Canada. People who come from various countries in the Caribbean have a long history in this country and have made contributions on all levels. I won't recite your already wonderful speech.

Honourable colleagues, we have to get into a habit that, when there's an ultimate consensus on such important issues, we don't allow time to just lapse and let things clog up the Order Paper. With leave of the Senate, I suggest that we call the question, move it to committee expeditiously and get on with the work that needs to be done.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Are senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Housakos, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.)

• (1710)

## CRIMINAL CODE

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

**Hon. Fabian Manning** moved second reading of Bill C-225, An Act to amend the Criminal Code.

He said: Honourable senators, when beginning a speech such as I am today, I would usually say that I am pleased to do so, but to be honest, speaking to a bill dealing with the scourge of intimate partner violence throughout our country is not something that gives me any degree of pleasure or satisfaction.

With that said, having the privilege to speak at any level on behalf of the victims of intimate partner violence and their families is a responsibility that I take very seriously.

The opportunity to stand here on the floor of the Senate of Canada and be a voice for the voiceless is something that I have never taken for granted or will ever underestimate.

Today I am speaking to Bill C-225, An Act to amend the Criminal Code. This bill was presented to the House of Commons by Frank Caputo, Member of Parliament for the British Columbia riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. The bill passed third reading in the other place a few weeks ago, on April 27, and I want to thank MP Caputo and all the members of the House of Commons for their support for the bill.

Mr. Caputo has worked tirelessly on this piece of legislation, and now that it is before us here in the Senate, I will be asking for the consent of all my colleagues to get this very important and timely piece of legislation across the finish line.

Some of you have inquired into how this bill came about. Sadly, it came about because of a terrible tragedy that occurred a little less than a year ago, on July 4, 2025. On that fateful day, Bailey McCourt, a 32-year-old mother of two, was fatally attacked in broad daylight in a Kelowna, British Columbia, parking lot. Her husband, James Edward Plover — reportedly with a hammer — attacked Bailey and her friend Carrie Wiebe, who was present in the car at the time.

Bailey succumbed to her injuries, while Carrie survived with multiple very serious injuries. Plover was pursued by police and was arrested a short time later. As of February 2026, he is facing charges of first-degree murder and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle.

The extremely sad part of this story is that hours before the fatal attack that took Bailey's life, her husband was in a Kelowna courtroom, where he was convicted of domestic violence charges, which were assault by strangulation and uttering threats against his estranged wife.

While you may find it very difficult to believe, Plover was not remanded in custody and was allowed to walk out of that courtroom under existing bail conditions while awaiting

sentencing. Yes, it is just so difficult to believe that he left the courtroom that day with very few restrictions and within a few hours attacked and killed Bailey.

The failure of our justice system to protect Bailey and countless other victims across this country galvanized her family and numerous others to actively petition the federal government to develop and legislate stricter bail laws concerning intimate partner violence. Eventually, the efforts of Bailey's family and others, along with the tremendous support and dedication of MP Frank Caputo, have led to the development of the bill that is before us here today, Bill C-225.

This enactment amends the Criminal Code in order to:

(a) create a new specific offence of murder in the first degree if the murder is committed against an intimate partner in the context of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct;

(b) provide that if an offender commits manslaughter against their intimate partner while engaging in, or after having engaged in, a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, the court must consider whether to impose a sentence of imprisonment for life on the offender, and, if that sentence is imposed, an adult offender is ineligible for parole for 10 to 25 years;

(c) create new offences in respect of included offences in which violence is used, threatened or attempted against an intimate partner; and

(d) increase the detention period of things seized under section 490 of the Act from three months to 180 days.

To simplify the summary of the bill and to move away from the legal jargon, once Bill C-225 is passed into law, the bill will make murder of an intimate partner first-degree when there is a history of coercive control. It will create the offence of violence against an intimate partner, and it will increase sentences for violence against an intimate partner. It will create a reverse onus for those on peace bonds, and it will increase time for the holding of evidence after seizure.

In response to the scourge of intimate partner violence in Canada today, the passage of this bill would hold repeat offenders, strengthen our justice system's response to cases of intimate partner violence and protect, in a more substantial way, the victims of such.

MP Caputo is a former parole officer and Crown prosecutor, and he was recently quoted as saying that he is “. . . convinced that our laws on intimate partner violence have been inadequate in addressing the seriousness of this insidious crime.”

I couldn't agree with him more.

When this bill is passed, it will be fittingly referred to as “Bailey's Law” to honour the legacy of Bailey McCourt and to put in place a law in our country to ensure Bailey's family — especially her two children — know that Bailey's life on this earth was not in vain.

I want to take a moment to thank Bailey's family for their tireless advocacy in continuing to push for these necessary changes to our justice system. I want to especially thank Bailey's aunt Debbie Henderson, who is with us here today, and her family, Shane, Trish, Paige and Karen.

Colleagues, there are no boundaries when it comes to intimate partner violence. It happens in many forms of relationships, including marriage, common law or dating relationships, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of the partners and at any time during a relationship and even after it has ended. It may occur in both public and private spaces as well as online and in many other ways, but they all have to deal with the issue of one person gaining control over another individual.

Intimate partner violence is all about control, and that is the major factor behind the development of Bill C-225.

The cloak of secrecy around intimate partner violence has created a travesty of justice that has prevailed because of that level of control, along with fear, stigma and the absence of a law to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

When it comes to the statistics on intimate partner violence in Canada today, the numbers are staggering, even for the very small number of incidents that do get reported to the police. Remember: The police believe that fewer than 10% of intimate partner violence cases are reported. Here are some of the numbers: Police reported cases of intimate partner violence in 2024 totalled 128,175 individuals — 356 victims per 100,000 population aged 12 and older. Since 2018, intimate partner violence among victims aged 12 and older grew by 14%.

To look at the gender differences in those of victimization, the rate of women and girls was 553 per 100,000 aged 12 and older and 158 per 100,000 for men and boys aged 12 and older. Women and girls experience intimate partner violence at a 3.5 times higher rate than the rate of men and boys.

The number of homicides related to intimate partner violence grew in large numbers, with 79% of cases being women and girls. The highest rate of police-reported intimate partner violence cases in Canada was in Saskatchewan, at 714 per 100,000, for a total of 737 cases, with Manitoba coming in at second place, with 607 per 100,000, for a total of 568 cases.

Approximately 61% of Indigenous women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime, compared to 44% of non-Indigenous women. Twenty-one per cent of Indigenous women experienced physical abuse by an intimate partner versus 11% of non-Indigenous women.

2SLGBTQI+ Canadians, particularly transgender and sexual minority individuals, experience substantially higher levels of violence and intimate partner violence compared to heterosexual counterparts, which indicates systematic vulnerabilities.

[ Senator Manning ]

• (1720)

One statistic that I believe is the most important eye-opener of all when it comes to the level of intimate partner violence in Canada is this: Every 48 hours in this country, a woman is killed by her intimate partner. It is a frightening statistic in a land known for our free and law-abiding society.

Intimate partner violence is a leading, pervasive and serious threat to individuals and communities across every province and territory in our country. The number of victims — particularly women — is alarming and underscores the need for targeted and sustained action. The impacts of intimate partner violence are profound and far-reaching, affecting not only those who experience violence directly but also their families and loved ones, such as Bailey's, and our society as a whole.

I want for a moment to take you all the way from Kelowna, British Columbia, to the other end of the country, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. My home province also has alarming statistics when it comes to intimate partner violence. As you are all fully aware, I currently have my own bill before the House of Commons, Bill S-242, dealing with the serious issue of intimate partner violence, which was brought to my attention by another victim of IPV, Georgina McGrath of the town of Branch.

Unlike Bailey, Georgina survived her attacker and has now become a leading advocate for intimate partner violence victims.

A few days ago, the new Government of Newfoundland and Labrador officially declared gender-based violence an epidemic in our province and appointed a 12-person task force to deal with the growing issues surrounding IPV. I am delighted that Georgina has been appointed as one of the members of that task force.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Senator Manning:** The reason I wanted to take you across the country to my home province is because I want to tell you about another tragic story, which may have been prevented if a piece of legislation such as Bailey's Law had existed in Canada at that time.

A couple and their two children came to our province from Syria around 2014-15 and settled in St. John's, where three more children were added to the family.

In the fall of 2023, the young mother of five went to the police about alleged abuse at the hands of her husband. In December of 2023 and January of 2024, charges were laid against the husband alleging abuse going back over a decade. The long list of charges included assault with a weapon, making death threats and forcible confinement.

At one point, the mother and five children were placed in a shelter for family members experiencing domestic violence. After, they returned to their home, where new doors and locks were installed on the house as an added security measure.

Court documents show that there was an arrest warrant issued for the husband in January 2024 after he failed to show up for a scheduled court appearance. He was taken into custody but was released in late January on the condition that he not have contact with his wife, children and a list of others.

On March 5, 2024, the mother of five dropped off her children at their school. A very short time later, it is alleged that the husband — the father of the five children — kidnapped his wife from a neighbourhood near the school and took her five kilometres away to an abandoned house in Outer Cove just outside the city limits. It is there that he allegedly entered the abandoned house and killed his wife.

The alleged murderer was twice released from custody while facing up to 12 very serious criminal charges, all dealing with intimate partner violence.

Today, these five children are basically orphans but are blessed in a great way by a large, loving and supportive Syrian population in our province.

Do we need tougher and more substantive laws in this country to deal with people like the husband who killed this mother of five? Is there any one law that will stop the scourge of intimate partner violence in Canada today?

Regretfully, there is not any one law to stop intimate partner violence. However, by coming together in this chamber today and giving Bill C-225, Bailey's Law, the attention it deserves, we can go a very long way toward preventing what happened to Bailey in a parking lot in Kelowna, British Columbia, and what happened to a mother of five children in an abandoned house in Outer Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador.

From coast to coast, intimate partner violence is a problem.

The tried-and-true saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure rings thoroughly through the pages of Bill C-225. We need this piece of legislation. The families of Bailey McCourt and countless other victims across this country need this bill as well.

When dealing with any piece of legislation addressing intimate partner violence, I am constantly reminded of the words of former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, which I will read in this chamber once again:

Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And, it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

Bill C-225 is one seeking support across party lines; it is as non-partisan as any bill before us could ever be. This bill is not about MP Caputo. It is not about me or any of us here in this chamber or in the other place.

Bill C-225 is about all the thousands and thousands of victims of intimate partner violence across our country who need to be protected from the cowards who inflict immeasurable harm, then, in so many cases, freely walk away and never have to pay for their crimes.

Bill C-225 is also for the many families who are victims, such as Bailey McCourt's, who are left to pick up the pieces after the low-life perpetrators dish out their violence.

Having a daughter and a granddaughter myself in today's world, and seeing the statistics of intimate partner violence rising steadily across our country, I will continue to stand up for the victims and their families where and when I can. That is why I am proud to be the sponsor of Bill C-225 here in the Senate today.

My wish today is that we can all come together to facilitate the quick passage of this bill so it can become the law of the land before we mark the first anniversary of the tragic death of Bailey McCourt on July 4 last year.

Colleagues, I hope you feel the same way as I do. Thank you.

**Hon. Baltej S. Dhillon:** Honourable senators, this bill is known as Bailey's Law. I would like to start there.

Behind most legislation of this kind is the name of a person whose loss became the reason Parliament finally acted. MP Frank Caputo, the sponsor of this bill, thanked Bailey McCourt's family — and I want to thank Bailey's aunt for being here today — for their courage and determination in helping bring this law forward. I join him in those thanks. Making grief public in the service of others is one of the most generous things a family can do.

Bailey's Law passed third reading in the House of Commons on April 27, 2026. It now comes to us, and the numbers tell us why it cannot wait. My friend Senator Manning has shared some of these numbers, and they bear repeating.

Over the past decade, 79% of intimate partner homicide victims were women and girls. In 2024, police across Canada reported 128,175 victims of intimate partner violence, at a rate of 356 per 100,000 Canadians aged 12 and over. Since 2018, that rate has risen by 14%. Women and girls experienced intimate partner violence at 3.5 times the rate of men and boys. In the most extreme cases — homicides — intimate partners accounted for 100 deaths in 2024 alone.

These are not statistics; they are lives. For too long, our criminal law has treated intimate partner violence as a variant of ordinary violence, as if assaulting a stranger and assaulting the person you share your life with are equivalent. They are not. One is random; the other is a betrayal of trust, intimacy and sometimes financial dependence. One happens once, but the other too often happens in a pattern: escalating, cyclical and frequently invisible to the systems meant to stop it.

• (1730)

In its final form, as passed by the House, Bill C-225 makes four significant changes to the Criminal Code.

First, it creates a new specific offence of violence against an intimate partner. Until now, the Criminal Code has treated assault as assault, distinguishing only for peace officers. Bill C-225 adds a second distinction: intimate partners. When an offence is named, it is tracked. When it is tracked, patterns become visible. When patterns become visible, we can respond.

Second, the bill addresses homicide. When a murder is committed against an intimate partner in the context of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, it is classified as first-degree murder, regardless of whether it was planned and deliberate in the traditional sense. Where manslaughter occurs in those same circumstances, the court must consider whether to impose a life sentence, with parole ineligibility for 10 to 25 years. This clearly says that killing someone you have controlled and terrorized is among the gravest crimes under our laws.

Third, the bill extends the period for retaining seized evidence from 90 days to 180 days. The bill had initially proposed a one-year period, and the version of the bill before us proposes 180 days. In my view, this is an improvement that frees officers from filing repeated court applications simply to retain seized items during complex investigations, particularly those involving digital evidence or forensic analysis.

Fourth, the bill strengthens reverse onus provisions for bail in intimate partner cases, requiring accused persons with prior intimate partner violence, or IPV, convictions or those already subject to peace bonds in relation to an intimate partner to explain why their detention is not justified.

Colleagues, as the critic of the bill, let me take a moment to address some of the main concerns during committee stage in the other place regarding this bill. The scrutiny it received at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women from victim advocates, including Bailey's family, victim services organizations, and the National Police Federation, made it better. Let me explain how.

The most serious concern raised at committee was that the bill, in its original form, proposed to automatically classify all killings of an intimate partner as first-degree murder. The problem, as the testimony from the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale made clear, is that this framing does not distinguish between types of perpetrators. Consider three people who might kill an intimate partner: a controlling abuser who kills to maintain dominance; a person who commits an isolated act of violence; and a victim of sustained abuse, who, in a moment of terror or desperation, kills their abuser. Under the original bill, all three would have faced the same charge: automatic first-degree murder.

As Louise Riendeau of Regroupement testified, while self-defence remains an available defence, in cases where a victim has not reported prior abuse, which is most cases, that defence

can become very complex. A law designed to protect victims would, in some cases, punish them with a mandatory 25-year parole ineligibility. That is not what we want. This was a fundamental concern, and the bill was amended to address it directly. The version before us today no longer automatically elevates all intimate partner killings to first-degree murder. The standard is now a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct. This is a crucial distinction that targets any abuser who systematically terrorized their partner before killing them rather than sweeping in victims who acted in self-defence.

The National Police Federation, or NPF, made the same point in committee: Protecting victims has to be central to the bill's application and intent. A related concern came from Sabrina Nadeau of *À cœur d'homme* and from witnesses that commented on the government's similar initiative. Their argument was this: Domestic violence is not a series of isolated incidents but, rather, a pattern of progressively escalating behaviours. Charging individual acts without recognizing the pattern is like documenting bruises without ever asking how they got there.

This critique shaped the current bill significantly. The coercive and controlling conduct standard that now anchors the first-degree murder and manslaughter provisions is precisely the pattern-based framework that witnesses called for. Rather than treating an intimate partner killing as a stand-alone event, the law now asks: Was this the culmination of a pattern of systematic abuse? If it was, the full weight of the law applies.

The National Police Federation raised concerns that were equally important. Their president, Brian Sauvé, testified that front-line officers are not experts in determining, in the moment, whether a situation meets the threshold of an intimate partner violence offence. Officers make operational decisions under pressure, reacting with incomplete information. If the charge approval process puts excessive scrutiny on those split-second judgments, it creates the opposite effect on enforcement powers.

The response in the current version of the bill is sensible: Tagging offences to an intimate partner context allows information to be shared across police services and gives officers arriving on scene crucial risk context, even when the suspect is unknown locally. At the same time, the charge approval process, with Crown counsel review, should remain the appropriate place for a more nuanced determination about whether the intimate partner context has been properly established.

The NPF also raised a concern that points beyond the bill itself. They advised that new provisions requiring enhanced information sharing are constructive and preventative, but their success depends entirely on the availability of mental health and forensic resources, particularly in rural and remote communities. Without adequate federal, provincial and territorial investments, these provisions risk becoming unfunded obligations that are downloaded onto already stretched police services.

That is a message for this chamber and for this government: Passing this law is necessary but not sufficient. The shelters, mental health services and the community supports that interrupt violence before it reaches the criminal justice system must follow.

Colleagues, as critic of the bill, I also want to be clear about what this bill does not do. Bill C-225 is a criminal law response to intimate partner violence. It is a necessary response. However, witnesses at committee were right to ask: What about upstream investments? What about women's shelters, social services, mental health supports and community infrastructure that can interrupt the cycle of violence before it reaches the criminal justice system?

Intimate partner violence is not a phenomenon that begins with a crime; it begins with conditions, such as economic precariousness, isolation, coercive control and the absence of alternatives. Criminal law can provide retribution for victims and their families, but it cannot, by itself, prevent. Isn't that what we — families and Canadians — would want: to prevent intimate partner violence in the first place?

This is where governments — federal, provincial and territorial — play an important role. Continued investments from governments in prevention are just as important, if not more so than legislation, because it interrupts the chain of conditions that leads to abuse.

• (1740)

I support Bill C-225. I support it because 128,175 Canadians were victimized by intimate partners last year, and most of them were women. I support it because 100 Canadians were killed by intimate partners in 2024, and we have not done enough. I support it because the communities most affected by this violence have been asking for exactly this kind of response, and they deserve to see it enacted.

I support it because of Bailey.

This bill is the result of consultations with women's groups, with victims, with the police and with the communities most affected.

My apologies, colleagues. This has also affected my family. My sister, who if not for her family intervening at the right time, may not be here today.

The House Standing Committee on the Status of Women heard difficult testimony and allowed it to reshape the legislation, which is now before us in this chamber amended, improved and more precisely refined.

Every officer, including myself, who has stood at a door, in the dark, unsure of what they will find inside, and every officer who has seen what coercive control does to a person over months and years understands why this bill matters. I support it. I urge its swift passage.

And to Bailey McCourt's family: Parliament hears you. We will try our best to honour that. Thank you, colleagues.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Manning, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.)

## THE SENATE

MOTION TO CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO CREATE A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO ENGAGE CANADIANS ABROAD—  
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Woo, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boyer:

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to create a national strategy to engage Canadians abroad.

(On motion of Senator Housakos, for Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

## NEED FOR SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Moodie, calling the attention of the Senate to the need for the safe and productive development and use of artificial intelligence in Canada.

**Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper:** Honourable senators, I would like to begin by thanking Senator Moodie for initiating this inquiry and for calling attention to the need for the safe and productive development and use of artificial intelligence in Canada.

Artificial intelligence, or AI, has become ubiquitous in society. Every day, we consume information generated by AI, or we may talk with an AI bot. AI is summarizing our health appointments for doctors and pulling research for students. It is also reportedly firing missiles in Iran.

On June 8, *Forbes* released an article entitled “Tech Rivals Unite To Stop AI-Designed Bioweapons.” The article explains that the executives of major tech companies, such as OpenAI, Anthropic, Google DeepMind, Microsoft AI and Meta, all signed an open letter to Congress. In summation, *Forbes* writes, “. . . the technical guardrails keeping biological weapons out of the wrong hands are rapidly eroding.” Indeed, Senator Moodie, this inquiry is timely, relevant and important.

I wanted to wait a bit before participating in this inquiry. By waiting, I was able to participate in important discussions about the intersection of AI and First Nations perspectives and attend a discussion about AI and safeguarding democracy. I benefited from the newly released Canadian AI strategy: AI for All. And I benefited from Senator Hay’s excellent learning seminars entitled “AI Explained.”

Last week, I attended an event at Mila, the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute and the largest AI research facility in the world. After the meeting, I had a fascinating conversation on the concept of agentic AI with Dr. Hause Lin, a research scientist with MIT and Cornell University. He is also a fellow with Mila.

This type of AI, as it was described to me, pursues a goal and makes its own decisions along the way, much like an assistant or agent you hand a task to and let run with it. These AI agents already exist and are quite popular, but they come with risks.

Iason Gabriel and Arianna Manzini released a paper in 2024 entitled “The ethics of advanced AI assistants,” which posits human control must be maintained to ensure that our morals and ethics remain at the heart of decision making.

The paper asserts:

AI assistants will likely have a significant level of autonomy for planning and performing sequences of tasks across a range of domains. Because of this, AI assistants present novel challenges around safety, alignment and misuse.

With more autonomy comes greater risk of accidents caused by unclear or misinterpreted instructions, and greater risk of assistants taking actions that are misaligned with the user’s values and interests.

More autonomous AI assistants may also enable high-impact forms of misuse, like spreading misinformation or engaging in cyber attacks. To address these potential risks, we argue that limits must be set on this technology, and that the values of advanced AI assistants must better align to human values and be compatible with wider societal ideals and standards.

Pillar 1 of the new AI strategy is called Protecting Canadians and Safeguarding Democracy.

To accomplish this, I believe that any legislation must take a forward-thinking, future-proofing approach to this rapidly shifting technology. We cannot pass legislation that approaches AI as though it is static, rather than evolving.

• (1750)

Two years ago, I could not have imagined the way AI would be interwoven into everything we do. Similarly, two years from now, AI will no longer be the same as we know it to be today.

Agentic AI is quickly becoming the way of the future, whether Canada is ready for it or not. We must also turn our minds to legislation that contemplates the use of “bossware,” surveillance pricing and dark patterns, issues that many of us are only starting to learn about.

Safeguarding democracy will require legislative and policy reform to counteract mis- and disinformation campaigns through the use of AI “deepfakes” and AI bots to manipulate voter views. It will require us to invest more into research and ensure that our researchers have access to key data currently being held by large entities such as social media companies.

Under the European Union’s Digital Services Act, very large online platforms and search engines are legally required to share platform data with qualified, vetted researchers. However, according to some researchers, very little data, if any, has been shared. It will take political will to ensure that researchers have the resources and data required to study systemic risks, like election manipulation, illegal content and the spread of misinformation.

Pillar 2 speaks to “Empowering Canadians” through education initiatives and targeted investments, while Pillar 6 speaks to “Building trusted partnerships and global alliances.”

Importantly, in October 2025, a joint letter was signed by “. . . more than 160 academics, experts, advocates, civil society and human rights organizations across Canada . . .” who felt the 30-day consultation period was woefully inadequate. Fenwick McKelvey, an associate professor of information and communication technology policy at Concordia University, pointed me toward the site of an initiative called People’s Consultation on AI, self-described as “. . . a parallel and independent process . . .”

It seems, from those submissions, that trust in the government’s approach was lacking before the strategy was even released. If you do not start from a place of trust, it will be difficult to build trusted partnerships.

After publication of the strategy, a June 6 article in *The Walrus* was published with the title “Canada Finally Has a National AI Strategy. Experts Hate It.” Nearly every contributor decries the government’s approach to forge boldly ahead with AI adoption while belatedly engaging the public through education initiatives on the assumption that trust will naturally follow.

As Alissa Centivany from the Starling Centre for Just Technologies and Just Societies says in the article, “The strategy misconceives public trust as a means to an end.”

The article continues:

A recent scan we undertook showed over 218 AI applications being trialled and used by the Canada Revenue Agency alone. Many of these are licensed from private companies, whose business interests are opaque even to the civil servants who implement them. . . .

While I do not think Canada can afford to fall behind other countries that are quickly adopting new technology to streamline their inner workings, we cannot scale too much too quickly.

The article includes a cautionary story of a bot used by the CRA that was later pulled, as it was found to be incorrect 67% of the time, reinforcing that many around the world are now putting their trust in still-developing systems.

I heard a story of a person who took a photo of a fresh cut on their finger and asked AI what to do. According to Dr. Lin in an email exchange:

Because agentic AI can think, decide, remember and even offer comfort, it’s easy to let it; but every ability we stop using weakens, like an unused muscle.

Pillar 4, “Building the Canadian sovereign AI foundation,” and Pillar 5, “Scaling Canadian champions,” are both aimed at improving sovereignty over AI.

To ensure sovereignty, we must be mindful of every action. Disturbingly, the *Toronto Star* published a series of investigative reports on the tens of millions of dollars that DND has spent with the U.S. data and AI company Palantir, the same platform the U.S. military uses to power and coordinate weapons.

The article in *The Walrus* also says:

. . . it is difficult to see how the government can remedy the harms of consolidated tech power and wealth anytime soon.

This raises an often-repeated question for those critical of the wholesale embrace of AI: What policies, legislation, regulations and investments must we make to ensure that the benefits of AI are not concentrated in an elite few? How can we ensure that Pillar 3, “Powering AI adoption for shared prosperity,” is achieved?

A report published by the University of Oxford entitled *Agentic Inequality* speaks to the potential for agentic AI to foster inequalities in power, opportunity and outcome. Computing power and the associated infrastructure all cost money. AI companies have rapidly accumulated wealth and are valued at numbers so high, they have some questioning whether the AI bubble will soon burst.

The abstract of this report explains:

This paper introduces and explores “agentic inequality” – the potential disparities in power, opportunity, and outcomes stemming from differential access to, and capabilities of, AI agents. . . .

Already, this concept has been raised by First Nations, who point out that “AI for All” is not achievable for those communities that cannot overcome the infrastructure divide. Without targeted investments and co-developed strategies around data governance, data sovereignty and compute ability, First Nations can actively be left behind in the new AI age, adding to the already sharp disparities between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities.

But it’s not all doom and gloom. A 2024 paper by Michael Henry Tessler et al., entitled “AI can help humans find common ground in democratic deliberation” and published in *Science*, describes research demonstrating how AI systems can help diverse groups find and reach consensus.

I believe that technology itself is neutral. However, development without guardrails is dangerous. Well-funded research will be essential.

These conversations, events and readings have led me to one conclusion: There is a lot more I would need to know before feeling confident when voting on any legislation involving AI. There are many ethical, social and other far-reaching implications with this technology; I am hopeful that we can get the guardrails we need in place quickly enough.

Thank you, *wela’lin*.

(On motion of Senator Kingston, debate adjourned.)

- (1800)

**NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA DAY AND EXTRA  
RELEVANCE OF FLAG GIVEN CURRENT  
GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION**

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Cardozo, calling the attention of the Senate to National Flag of Canada Day and the extra relevance of our flag given the current geopolitical situation.

**Hon. Iris G. Petten:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Senator Cardozo's inquiry calling the attention of the Senate to National Flag of Canada Day and the extra relevance of our flag given the current geopolitical situation.

When we think about flags, we often think of symbols hanging from buildings or waving in the wind, but flags are much more than pieces of fabric. They represent identity, culture, history and belonging.

In Newfoundland and Labrador especially, flags tell stories about the people who live here. Take the Franco-Newfoundland and Labrador flag. Adopted in 1986, it reflects both French heritage and local identity. The blue, white and red represent the community's French origins, while the two yellow sails are the colour of Acadia and symbolize the arrival of their ancestors. One sail contains a tamarack branch, representing Labrador, and the other features the pitcher plant, the provincial flower of Newfoundland and Labrador. The design represents movement and resilience.

The Labrador flag carries its own story. Two years ago, Labrador celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its flag. Designed by Michael S. Martin in 1974, the flag was created to reflect Labrador's geography, people and cultures. The colours each carry meaning: white represents snow, blue represents water and green represents land. The spruce twig symbolizes the three founding nations of Labrador — Inuit, Innu and White settlers alike — growing from the same branch, while remaining distinct. The provincial government described the flag as a symbol of "solidarity, resilience and a deep-rooted love" for Labrador.

Even Newfoundland and Labrador's official provincial flag is packed with symbolism. Designed by Newfoundland and Labrador artist Christopher Pratt and adopted in 1980, its colours each have meaning: white for snow and ice, blue for the sea, red for human effort and gold for confidence in ourselves and the future. The design also contains symbols of the fishery, Indigenous artwork, a maple leaf and even a sword when displayed vertically, representing sacrifice in war.

All of these flags show something important: People use flags to express who they are.

That brings me to the Canadian Maple Leaf. For many Canadians, the Maple Leaf represents shared values and moments of unity. One powerful example came during the repatriation of an unknown First World War soldier. On May 25, 2024, a delegation of Canadian Armed Forces members flew to Normandy, France, as part of Operation DISTINCTION. Their purpose was to bring home the remains of an unidentified Newfoundland soldier who died in the First World War.

The Canadian delegation, which I was honoured to be a part of, received his remains during a ceremony in Beaumont-Hamel before he was flown to St. John's.

For much of Newfoundland's history, the Union Jack served as the country's flag and remains a cherished symbol for many today. Yet, on that day, as a Newfoundland soldier finally came home after more than a century, it was the Maple Leaf that draped his casket. In that moment, the Maple Leaf covering the casket, on the shoulders of the pallbearers from the 1st Battalion and 2nd Battalion of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, symbolized remembrance, sacrifice and national pride.

Recently, Canadians have shown a renewed attachment to the flag. Last year, in St. John's, despite wind gusts reaching 110 kilometres per hour — or, as we would say back home, it was "blowin' a gale" — people still gathered outdoors for a Canadian Flag Day rally. The event came after comments from our southern neighbours. Instead of weakening national identity, those comments seemed to strengthen it.

Across the country, people began speaking about the Maple Leaf with renewed appreciation. One Canadian described the flag as representing values like civility, humility, kindness and compassion and as a symbol of being distinctly Canadian. At the same time, stores reported that Canadian flags were flying off the shelves ahead of National Flag of Canada Day celebrations.

What connects all of these examples is identity. Flags matter because people matter. They allow communities to say, "This is who we are." They connect us to our history, our values and each other.

While Canadians come from many different cultures, languages and regions, the Maple Leaf brings those identities together under one shared symbol — a symbol that continues to inspire pride from coast to coast to coast.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator White, debate adjourned.)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE MEANS OF INCREASING DEMOCRATIC INCLUSION AND STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

**Hon. Marilou McPhedran**, pursuant to notice of June 2, 2026, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine and report on the means of increasing democratic inclusion and strengthening democratic resilience, with attention to the possible expansion of the right to vote under Section 3 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which states: “Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.”;

That, in particular, the committee examine:

1. the constitutional and legislative evolution of the right to vote in Canada, and the alignment of current requirements with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and Canada’s international human rights obligations, within the context of potential franchise expansion;
2. the ways of removing barriers to democratic inclusion faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit, Black, gender-diverse, racialized and other marginalized youth, and the potential impact of their inclusion on democracy in Canada;
3. the information available on voting or other participatory decision-making arrangements in Canada and other jurisdictions that include members younger than 18;
4. the administrative and operational readiness of federal election machinery to support the possible enfranchisement of younger citizens, including voter registration and information systems, the National Register of Electors and the National Register of Future Electors; and
5. the evidence on strategies to foster lifelong democratic participation, including the integration of effective civic literacy within education systems and digital environments;

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit 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 on this study 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.

She said: Honourable senators, I stand to ask you to support my motion to authorize the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights to study the means of increasing democratic inclusion and strengthening democratic resilience and to report back to this chamber by March 31, 2027. I note that the committee can extend the report date with the agreement of the Senate.

You will recall that last Thursday evening, with only my motion left, the Senate was adjourned. I welcome this opportunity to speak to this motion so close to the imminent summer adjournment of Parliament and my mandatory retirement.

I have assured Senator Moreau and Senator Housakos that I’m looking forward to the conversation that we might have this evening on the merits of this motion and the question of whether this motion is of the same substance as Bill S-222, should they choose to pursue the question.

The term “same in substance” is key to the useful principle in the “same question rule” that protects the time and attention of this chamber so that questions already determined in that session of Parliament cannot be revisited.

• (1810)

Colleagues, the “same question rule” uses the singular “question.” The rule does not prevent further deliberation by senators on a related topic of their choice, particularly when it is much broader than the question. When a study on the topic — in this case, democratic resilience and inclusion for Canada — has been offered, at most, in such a study, expanding voting rights to include 16- and 17-year-olds is one possibility of a great many other ways and means, many not requiring any new laws, that merit the time and attention of senators, who are central to the viability of our democracy. An expanded study of various democratic resilience measures is much bigger and much broader than a single bill to make a single legal change.

Is such a study, as is being proposed here, the same in substance as a bill to make only one change? No. The committee study does not culminate in any legislation and in no way seeks the same result as a vote on a bill.

The question in Bill S-222 was a legislative judgment. The study order of reference that I’m requesting now is an investigative mandate.

[Translation]

Senator Carignan said:

Honourable senators, I’m somewhat sad to say that I will be voting against Bill S-222. However, I will wholeheartedly support any effort to further explore this issue through a committee study.

[*English*]

And Senator Moncion said:

After eight years of trying, perhaps we should look into other alternatives. That could mean a study in committee. The committee could send its report to the House of Commons, where it could serve as a guide should the House wish to use the arguments set out therein to amend the Canada Elections Act. . . .

Clearly, these two senators — who voted against the bill — nevertheless made the point about the value of the Senate having a thorough study of this question. That is, indeed, the same in substance were such a study to be proposed, but that is not what I have placed before you this evening for your consideration. I'm talking about our democracy. Democratic resilience and democratic inclusion are two aspects of ways in which we could be looking at the future of our democracy through the resources that this chamber has that really are not rivalled anywhere.

You know I come from academia, and I can assure you that Senate studies both have credibility and are considered citable sources in academic research. A study of this kind could make a very positive difference on a very large scale for our country and for our democracy.

I would like to also remind a number of senators who are in the chamber this evening that you were all invited to — and many of you did attend — the round table that I convened here in the Senate, where I invited Canada's top researchers on democracy, on the much broader question, the broader issues of our democracy.

When I came up with this idea, it was because I realized that in a number of countries in Europe — including, of course, countries where changes have been made to expand voting rights — the research was far better and far deeper than anything that we really have here in Canada. So, I came up with this idea of inviting our top experts in our country to come here to meet each other and talk with each other. Indeed, they did, in November.

In planning this, I was told that there are about 24 known experts in this country, including 5 research chairs, on various aspects of democracy. I was also advised by my academic adviser that we would be lucky if we had 8 to 10 of them show up. Indeed, of those invited, 23 out of the 24 recognized experts in this country came to the round table. A number of them, at breaks and whatnot, said — and some of them said in their remarks — that this was the first time that there had been a gathering of this sort for them in Canada. Indeed, a number of them observed that it was the first time they had met each other.

To be able to sit around a Senate table with so many senators sitting with them, listening, asking questions and engaging was considered by many of these experts to be a very strong incentive for them to look at other questions that had been raised by colleagues. It's the kind of conversation that creates a far deeper understanding of possibilities. It's looking to the future. It's asking questions about what we are doing. It's exploring ways in which things have happened in other countries.

[ Senator McPhedran ]

What I'm describing here, colleagues, is what we do when the Senate decides to study something. So, it is my hope, knowing that our academic experts in this country are already positive about Senate initiatives and already willing to participate, and knowing also, as I do, that international experts are very prepared to provide even more information. Perhaps in some ways most importantly, I know — I guarantee — that there are young people in this country from many different racialized communities, young people of diversity in every aspect of diversity that you could name, who care deeply about our democracy, who are worried about the legacy that we are leaving for them and who very much want to and are ready to engage with senators in dialogue, in exchange.

This motion is asking you to support what the Senate does best — to reach out, to welcome, to make it possible for different points of view from different parts of our country and different parts of the world to be heard, to be respected, to be documented and then to be shared in ways that can only be positive for strengthening our democracy.

Colleagues, I would ask that you consider this motion, and I would ask for your support this evening.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Are senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

[*Translation*]

## **BANKING, COMMERCE AND THE ECONOMY**

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT  
ON STUDY OF ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CAPITAL MARKETS  
FOR SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

**Hon. Clément Gignac,** pursuant to notice of June 2, 2026, moved:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Thursday, November 20, 2025, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy in relation to its study on access to credit

and capital markets for small- and medium-sized enterprises as the basis for growth and improved productivity in the Canadian economy be extended from June 30, 2026, to October 31, 2026.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

*(At 6:20 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)*

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