SENATE SÉNAT

CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 18, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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# THE SENATE

**Thursday, June 18, 2026**

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

## THE SENATE

### TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING PAGES

**The Hon. the Speaker:** We will continue with the tributes to the pages. I would like to introduce you to Noah Rolland from Woodstock, Ontario.

[*English*]

Noah is honoured to have served as the Deputy Chief Page this year as he concludes his three-year tenure in the Senate Page Program, proudly representing his hometown of Woodstock, Ontario.

[*Translation*]

Next year, he would like to work on the Hill while finishing his undergraduate studies at the University of Ottawa, where he is working on a double major in economics and political science, before deciding whether he will pursue graduate studies.

[*English*]

Noah will be forever grateful for the relationships he has built within the Senate. He would like to thank Mr. Peters, John and other members of the Usher of the Black Rod's office for this opportunity, as well as senators, other members of the administration and his page colleagues for their friendship and guidance.

Finally, he wishes to thank the Chief Page, Charlotte, for her unwavering support in leading this amazing team this year.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Noah.

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

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Next, we have Charlotte Breault Laurencelle from Ottawa.

After having had the honour of leading the Senate page team as Chief Page, Charlotte will be finishing her bachelor's degree in conflict studies and human rights at the University of Ottawa next year.

She is grateful to have had the opportunity to spend the last three years working in the Senate, and she wants to thank the members of the Usher of the Black Rod's office and the rest of the page team for their work this year and for the good times they have shared.

[*English*]

It is not every student who can say they had the chance to work at the Senate of Canada, let alone for three years. Even though her time as a page is coming to an end, Charlotte is grateful for every sitting, every committee and every moment at the Senate that made this experience so special. She is hoping to remain in the Senate while she finishes her final year of undergraduate studies and is eager to see what the future holds.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Charlotte.

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

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[*English*]

# SENATORS' STATEMENTS

## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to mark National Indigenous History Month. It is a time for all of us in this chamber and across Canada to reflect on the profound legacy, vibrant cultures and enduring contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis People.

[*Translation*]

When we look at our history, we have to be completely honest and acknowledge the grave and painful injustices of the past. We cannot and must not ignore the facts. Even as we recognize this difficult history, we also recognize the incredible strength of Indigenous communities. For generations, in the face of sustained attempts to erase their languages and culture, Indigenous Peoples have kept their traditions alive and well.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have been steadfast guardians of the air, the water and the wild creatures. Their traditional approach to resource management offers important lessons for our shared future.

[*English*]

The history of Canada is inextricably linked with the achievements of remarkable Indigenous trailblazers who have broken barriers in every corner of our society. We think of political and institutional giants like Louis Riel, a foundational Father of Confederation. We remember the Honourable James Gladstone, Canada's first Indigenous senator, and we remember Leonard Marchand, who broke barriers in the other place as the first Indigenous member of Parliament and later the first Indigenous cabinet minister.

These early trailblazers truly paved the way for leading figures we see today. We see their legacy in recent examples, like Her Excellency Mary Simon, who served Canada as the first Indigenous Governor General. I also think of our late colleague the former Senator Murray Sinclair, who I felt always provided a path forward that was rooted in grace rather than division. He beautifully argued that true reconciliation is about finding a way to put Indigenous names on buildings and by focusing our energy on adding to our history rather than erasing it or tearing it down. We see that legacy alive today in all the colleagues with whom we are exceptionally privileged to share this chamber, who represent Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast.

You work every single day to ensure these vital histories are brought to light. You bring an irreplaceable wealth of perspective, lived experience and Traditional Knowledge to our debates. You are vital, fierce voices for your communities, keeping us grounded and ensuring that truth stays at the forefront of everything we do in this institution.

The truth is that there are so many individuals whose names may not yet be etched onto national monuments but whose strength and vision built this great country.

Colleagues, National Indigenous History Month is more than a look back at the past; it is a live comment about our future. Let's ensure we are listening to the voices within this chamber and, most importantly, across the country. Let's honour the history makers who built this land and worked together towards a shared Canadian future rooted in truth, progress and true mutual respect.

Thank you, colleagues.

[*Translation*]

## CHÉTICAMP, NOVA SCOTIA

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, first of all, I would like to highlight last Friday's Supreme Court of Canada ruling that the position of Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick must be filled by a person who speaks both of the province's official languages. This ruling is an important milestone for the recognition of the Acadian people and their place in this country.

Today, I want to highlight the remarkable resilience of an Acadian community that has spent more than three decades fighting for the political representation it considered fair and necessary.

• (1340)

After more than 30 years of campaigning, appearances before four electoral boundaries commissions, as well as a case before the Supreme Court and an appeal to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, a bilingual MLA will be elected for the first time in 100 years. Since 1925, no MLA elected in the former riding of Inverness has been Acadian or able to speak French.

In the early 1990s, the people of Chéticamp began campaigning for a riding recognized for its Acadian character. The commission at the time recommended the creation of four protected ridings — Clare, Argyle, Richmond and Preston — but not Chéticamp. The province accepted this recommendation, recognizing the importance of ensuring effective representation for Nova Scotia's Acadian and Black communities.

In 2019, a new commission was established following the Supreme Court decision recommending the creation of a special riding encompassing the communities from Pleasant Bay to Margarees, including Chéticamp. As a result, the Acadian community's electoral weight increased from 13% to 34%.

This victory is now a reality. Next week, on June 23, 2026, voters in this new riding will be able to choose between four bilingual candidates of Acadian origin representing the province's main political parties. For the first time in over a century, the people of the Chéticamp region will be able to communicate with their provincial MLA in the official language of their choice.

I would point out, however, that this progress comes amid a significant decline in the francophone community's demographic weight over the past 30 years, with the number of individuals who speak French at home dropping by more than 43% between 1990 and 2021.

To Acadians from Chéticamp and the surrounding region, I want to say this: Your commitment to your language and your culture is an inspiring example for all of Canada's francophone communities. Personally, I'm looking forward to June 23, 2026, the day when a bilingual Acadian provincial MLA will finally take their place alongside the MLAs representing the province's other Acadian regions.

Thank you. *Wela'lioq*.

[*English*]

## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

**Hon. Tracy Muggli:** Honourable senators, World Refugee Day is June 20. It is a day to honour the courage of people forced to flee conflict and to reflect on how we address displacement around the world.

Among the many displacement crises today, Sudan is the most severe. More than 13 million people in Sudan have been forced from their homes, either within the country or across its borders.

That is 13 million people seeking refuge, separated from families and communities. It is children out of school, often malnourished and traumatized. It is parents making impossible choices to try to keep their families alive.

Imagine every person west of Ontario uprooted and unable to go home: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut — everyone; every citizen displaced.

However, this is so much more than displacement. El Fasher endured more than a year and a half of siege before it fell. The United Nations estimated that about 260,000 people were in the city before the takeover. Yet, by January, fewer than

35,000 people had been recorded as reaching relative safety. That gap is horrifying to me. More than 225,000 people remain uncounted.

Sudan is the most severe example, but I could also speak about Gaza, Haiti or Cuba. I could point you to Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Afghanistan and, of course, Ukraine.

Across the world, people are fleeing war, hunger and instability. Colleagues, on this World Refugee Day, I ask you to challenge dehumanizing rhetoric, to speak out and to remind people that refugees do not choose displacement; they are forced to flee. I ask you to speak up in defence of humanitarian access and to demand accountability for those attacking hospitals, water systems and aid workers.

Colleagues, Canada must not become invisible when we are needed most. Our humanitarian organizations are already on the front lines. We should start by listening to them, backing their work and incorporating their warnings into Canada's foreign policy review.

Sudan cannot be allowed to fade from view. Canadians have a simple way to say, "We have not forgotten." Through World Vision Canada's Speak Up for Sudan initiative, Canadians can call 1-877-25-RESPOND — I will repeat that like a commercial: 1-877-25-RESPOND — to lend their voices to children and families caught up in this crisis. It matters to speak up in times like this because we are all part of humanity.

Thank you, *marsee*, *meegwetch*.

## VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Darlene McLean, Executive Director of the Christian Embassy of Canada, as well as Private Marina Antoniou and Private Andrea Kim of the Band of the Ceremonial Guard. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Martin.

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

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

## POWER TO CHANGE CANADA

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the far-reaching and enduring impact of Power to Change Canada, an organization that has spent more than half a century fostering hope, character and leadership within our borders and far beyond.

Known originally as Campus Crusade for Christ, this organization has a storied 57-year history in our country. What began on university campuses has blossomed into a diverse family of ministries reaching every corner of society.

From Athletes in Action, which supports our sporting communities, to the Christian Embassy right here in our nation's capital, their mission is simple yet profound: to help people experience the life-changing power of faith.

The Christian Embassy in particular has served for 40 years as a bridge between leaders in Ottawa and the diplomatic corps, providing a space for reflection and values-based encouragement. Its executive director, Darlene McLean, whom I have known since shortly after my appointment in 2009, has been a steadfast friend and spiritual guide to many in this city, myself included.

My connection to Power to Change is deeply personal. As a first-year student at the University of British Columbia, or UBC, the mentorship I found through Campus Crusade and Athletes in Action was formative. Growing up in a home where my parents modelled an unwavering faith, these ministries provided the scaffolding I needed to integrate my beliefs with my ambitions. They helped shape the person I am today.

However, there is more to this story. Before my life in this chamber, I began a 21-year teaching career in Abbotsford, B.C., the very city where Power to Change is now headquartered.

In 1988, in one of my English classrooms, sat a bright Grade 8 student named Darren Young. I could never have imagined that, decades later, in 2024, our paths would cross again here in Ottawa, with Darren serving as the president of Power to Change Canada.

To see a former student lead an organization that so impacted my own youth is a source of immense pride and a sense of divine providence.

Honourable senators, in this chamber, we represent Canadians of all faiths and those who do not practise a religion. While I speak as a lifelong Christian, I believe we can all applaud the spirit of service that Power to Change embodies. Their commitment to the vulnerable, their dedication to families and their investment in the next generation enrich the social fabric of our nation and help make the world a better place.

## VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Marc Benoit, journalist from the *Cornwall Standard-Freeholder*. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Clement.

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

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

• (1350)

## TRIBUTE TO JOURNALISTS
## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Honourable senators, as we prepare to rise for the summer, please bear with me, as this statement is going to go in a couple of different directions.

I will kick off by paying tribute to local journalists: To the reporters working in small towns and big cities across this country, writing in newspapers and online, on radio and TV, podcasting and livestreaming to make sure Canadians know what's up. We all know that journalists are essential to a healthy democracy.

I felt it as a city councillor and a mayor when reporters came to council meetings and community events. They held us accountable, and they pulled us together. We can be more united as a community when news outlets tell our stories, whether they are heartbreaking, uplifting or straight-up truth telling.

You all know that Cornwall is my centre. So, of course, this statement is also about Cornwall and how fortunate it is to have the *Standard-Freeholder*, the *Seaway News*, *The Cornwall Seeker*, *Cornwall Newswatch* and *On a le choix*.

[*Translation*]

Yes, we have multiple sources providing media coverage in both English and French. That's rare. I'm deeply grateful to the journalists of Cornwall for the work they're doing.

[*English*]

As a senator, I rely on journalists to tell me what's happening in the world, but also to tell the stories of our work here at the Senate. Last night, at an incredible meeting with advocates for the Black Justice Strategy, I felt inspired, motivated and hopeful. Journalists were a topic of our discussions. How would we tell the story of the Black Justice Strategy? Who would care to write about it? Here, too, we are relying on local outlets across the country that will connect with Black Canadians where they are.

Honourable senators, next, I am honoured to share my statement space with Senator Greenwood. She asked that National Indigenous Peoples Day be recognized before we rise. June 21, 2026, marks the thirtieth anniversary of this day. The month of June is also National Indigenous History Month. This is an opportunity for celebration, learning and connection.

It is my hope and intention that the African Canadian Senate Group and the Indigenous Senators Working Group connect before the end of this year. Let's learn, advocate and share space together.

Lastly, the past few weeks have been emotionally taxing. I went on the record and made statements, but I didn't always feel effective. I'm going to spend the summer meeting with communities whose voices and priorities need to be amplified. Meeting with Black people and talking about their work always makes me feel inspired.

[*Translation*]

Honourable colleagues, I hope you feel as inspired as I am when you're back home this summer — inspired by your communities, by the people you care about, and by the issues that matter to you.

Thank you. *Nia:wen*.

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

[*English*]

## VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Ingrid and Christine Ruys. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*).

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

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

## JIMMY LAI

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond:** Honourable senators, at this time last year, I asked you to take a few minutes to think about Jimmy Lai, a champion of democracy and freedom of the press in Hong Kong, who has strong ties to Canada. Sadly, since then, Mr. Lai's politically motivated persecution has continued unabated.

In December 2025, he was convicted by a special Hong Kong court on charges under the National Security Law, which is legislation used in Hong Kong to silence those opposing the views of the Beijing government, ending the "one country, two systems" promised to the United Kingdom at the time of the retrocession.

This February, Mr. Lai, now 78 years old, was sentenced to remain in prison for an additional 20 years. This March, he did not appeal, convinced that it would not change anything.

Now, he remains in solitary confinement in a cell without even a view of the outside world.

Given his worsening health, there is a risk of premature death in prison. In these circumstances, we must support the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights in Montreal in its efforts to have him released before it is too late. Indeed, the G7, UN experts and many other leaders and groups are watching and calling for his release.

Colleagues, let me conclude by referring to Vladimir Kara-Murza, who was persecuted in Russia for daring to promote democracy and was released in 2024, further to international pressure. We met a few weeks ago, and he told me about the strength and courage that statements and calls for his release from around the world instilled in him when he was alone in a cell located in an isolated part of Russia.

Today, I want to make it clear to Beijing that we are still standing with Jimmy Lai and that our calls for his release will continue to resonate this summer and beyond, until Mr. Lai is free.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

# ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT, 2021

SEVENTH REPORT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMITTEE DEPOSITED WITH CLERK DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Margo Greenwood:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on October 7, 2025, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 18, 2026, its seventh report entitled *"Hailcistut: To Turn Something Around and Make it Right" The Promises of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

## STUDY ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ELEVENTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE TABLED

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the eleventh report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, entitled *Fuelled by Technology, Powered by Humanity: An interim report on a human-centred approach to AI in Canada*.

## STRONG AND FREE ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—TWELFTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. David M. Arnot,** Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 15, 2026, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 18, 2026

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has the honour to present its

TWELFTH REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized to examine Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Tuesday, June 16, 2026, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID M. ARNOT

*Chair*

(*For text of observations, see today's* Journals of the Senate*, p. 1122.*)

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

**Hon. Pat Duncan:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(b), I move that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later this day.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later this day.)

[*Translation*]

## BUILD CANADA HOMES BILL

SIXTH REPORT OF BANKING, COMMERCE AND THE ECONOMY COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Clément Gignac,** Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 18, 2026

The Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy has the honour to present its

SIXTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-20, An Act respecting the establishment of Build Canada Homes, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Tuesday, June 16, 2026, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

CLÉMENT GIGNAC

*Chair*

(*For text of observations, see today's* Journals of the Senate*, p. 1123*.)

• (1400)

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

**Hon. Toni Varone:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(b), I move that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later this day.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Varone, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later this day.)

[*English*]

## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL DENIALISM

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to residential school denialism in Canada and its impacts on survivors and reconciliation.

[*Translation*]

## LAWFUL ACCESS BILL, 2026

FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-22, An Act respecting lawful access.

(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.)

[*English*]

## FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE TLEGOHLI GOT'INE BILL

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-27, An Act to give effect to the Final Self-Government Agreement for the Tlegohli Got'ine and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

### SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026 IMPLEMENTATION BILL

FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026.

(Bill read first time.)

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 15, 2026, the bill was placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading later this day.)

### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

**Hon. Margo Greenwood** introduced Bill S-250, An Act to amend the Department of Justice Act.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### PUBLIC SAFETY

SECURITY OF CANADIANS

**Hon. Marilou McPhedran:** It's ironic that on World Refugee Day, this morning, in the Parliamentary Press Gallery, Canadian military veteran Ko Tinmaung, son of Rohingya genocide survivors, and nurse Marie Tota detailed Israeli attacks on their Sumud Flotilla ship filled with medical and other essential supplies for Palestinians in Gaza and their experiences of physical, psychological and sexual abuse by Israeli forces, as well as dehumanizing treatment by Canadian federal authorities, the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, and Pearson Airport security the moment they landed there.

Prime Minister Carney and Foreign Affairs Minister Anand refused to meet with survivors and their families. In Australia, survivors were respectfully heard by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Penelope Wong. Canada merely asked Israel to investigate itself. Why won't Canada take these abuses of Canadian citizens more seriously?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. The Canadian government takes very seriously the situation of Canadians all over the world and in those circumstances that you are referring to. I don't understand why you would think that it would be otherwise.

The Government of Canada cares for Canadians wherever they are in the world, and their security is a priority for the government.

**Senator McPhedran:** You asked me why I would think that, Senator Moreau? It is because of the evidence presented to the public this morning by Canadian citizens who were not only abused by Israeli forces but also mistreated by federally governed authorities at Pearson Airport.

I have known Ko Tinmaung for years and worked with him on the Rohingya genocide. I know and work with his aunt Razia Sultana, one of the foremost human rights lawyers representing Rohingya genocide survivors. I have asked that question because there is evidence.

**Senator Moreau:** Well, I'm not sure it was a question; it was more like a statement. I'm not aware of any situation involving anything at the border or in a Canadian airport today. I will certainly raise the question with the authorities, and I'll get back to you with an answer.

**Senator McPhedran:** I should be a little clearer given the time limitations. What I'm asking for is to question the inaction by the government and to ask specifically for an investigation into the CBSA and into the Pearson Airport security. Who ordered them to treat Canadian citizens this way?

**Senator Moreau:** I have no information as to how CBSA would have treated Canadian citizens in a disrespectful manner today at Pearson Airport.

• (1410)

I will get the facts straight, and I'll get back to you if there is an answer to be provided.

**Senator McPhedran:** Senator Moreau, would you like me to send you the link regarding the media conference this morning where Canadian citizens detailed the abuse they suffered not only by Israeli forces but also by Canadian federal authorities?

**Senator Moreau:** I think I can find the link myself, but if you would be kind enough to send it, that will be easier.

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[*Translation*]

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators,

I am prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the Honourable Senator Wallin on June 16, 2026. Senator Wallin raised a Question of Privilege with respect to the premature disclosure of details in a report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying. She made mention of media reports on the contents of this report, which as we know, was not tabled in this Chamber until the following day.

Rule 13-2 outlines the four criteria which a question of privilege must meet in order to be accorded priority — specifically, 1) it must be raised at the first opportunity; 2) it must be a matter that directly concerns the privileges of the Senate, one of its committees or a senator; 3) it must be raised to correct a grave and serious breach; and 4) it must be raised to seek a genuine remedy that the Senate has the power to provide and for which no other parliamentary process is reasonably available. I would remind senators that when raising a question of privilege, they should clearly outline how their case meets each of these criteria.

I am satisfied that Senator Wallin raised the matter at the first opportunity, having done so on the sitting day on which the media reports were released. Our precedents for meeting the rest of the criteria are clear: the premature release of a confidential committee report or proceeding constitutes a prima facie case of privilege.

In a report from April 2000, in response to a similar question of privilege, the Standing Committee on Privileges, Standing Rules and Orders (as our Rules Committee was then known) had the following to say on the importance of protecting the confidentiality of our in camera proceedings:

> In addition to the pre-eminent right of the chamber to have reports tabled and made available first to its members prior to their being released to the general public, your Committee also notes that premature and unauthorized disclosure of committees reports can interfere with and impede the work of the committee. The violation of the confidentiality of in camera discussions undermines the confidence with which Senators can discuss things freely, and affects their ability to carry out the work on behalf of the Senate.

At the time, the committee also recommended a process to be established to address such leaks.

These matters are so serious that the process recommended at that time was entrenched in our Rules, now appearing as Appendix IV. Specifically, that process provides for the committee to conduct an investigation into a leak and report its findings to the Senate. Once the report is tabled, the Senate would consider the matter as it would any other question of privilege, and determine next steps, which would normally involve the referral of the matter to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament

However, this case, as Senator Wallin noted, is unique. The committee in question is, or rather was, a special joint committee. With the tabling of its final report yesterday, it ceased to exist, and as such it cannot conduct the investigation provided for in Appendix IV. Consequently, we must treat this question of privilege in the normal fashion, which is itself provided for in Appendix IV.

I therefore rule that the question of privilege constitutes a prima facie breach of privilege and invite Senator Wallin to move her motion.

[*English*]

### MOTION TO REFER TO RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE ADOPTED

**Hon. Pamela Wallin** moved:

> That the case of privilege concerning the leak of information relating to the first report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament for examination and report.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

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[*Translation*]

# MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

## MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM MODERNIZATION BILL

BILL TO AMEND—MESSAGE FROM COMMONS—
SENATE AMENDMENT CONCURRED IN

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that a message has been received from the House of Commons which reads as follows:

Thursday, June 18, 2026

*EXTRACT, —*

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their Honours that the House has concurred in the amendment made by the Senate to Bill C-11, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts.

*ATTEST*

Eric Janse

*Clerk of the House of Commons*

[*English*]

## ARAB HERITAGE MONTH BILL

MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons returning Bill S-227, An Act respecting Arab Heritage Month, and acquainting the Senate that they had passed this bill without amendment.

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# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-12(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: third reading of Bill C-20, followed by second reading of Bill C-30, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

## BUILD CANADA HOMES BILL

THIRD READING

**Senator Varone** moved third reading of Bill C-20, An Act respecting the establishment of Build Canada Homes.

**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:** Yea.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

• (1420)

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on the length of the bell?

**Hon. Senators:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** The vote will take place at 2:35. Call in the senators.

• (1430)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler
Al Zaibak
Arnold
Arnot
Aucoin
Bernard
Black
Boudreau
Boyer
Burey
Busson
Cardozo
Clement
Cormier
Coyle
Cuzner
Dalphond
Dasko
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Deacon (*Ontario*)
Dean
Duncan
Forest
Francis
Fridhandler
Galvez
Gerba
Gignac
Greenwood
Harder
Hay
Hébert
Henkel
Ince
Karetak-Lindell
Kingston
LaBoucane-Benson
Lewis
Loffreda
MacAdam
McBean
McNair
McPhedran
Miville-Dechêne
Moncion
Moreau
Muggli
Osler
Oudar
Pate
Patterson
Petitclerc
Petten
Pupatello
Ravalia
Ringuette
Robinson
Ross
Saint-Germain
Senior
Simons
Sorensen
Tannas
Varone
Verner
Wells (*Alberta*)
White
Wilson
Woo
Youance
Yussuff—71

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Carignan
Manning
Martin
Poirier
Housakos
MacDonald
Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*)—9

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Moodie
Wallin—2

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

## SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026 IMPLEMENTATION BILL

SECOND READING

**Hon. Rosa Galvez** moved second reading of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise at second reading of Bill C-30 to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update 2026.

[*English*]

Like many budget bills before us, Bill C-30 is another omnibus bill. It amends a broad range of statutes, some fiscal in nature and too many that are not. That fact alone calls for careful scrutiny.

But my concern today is not about the size of the bill. It is about one specific and particular part of the bill that, in my opinion, has not received the attention it deserves: Division 8 of Part 3, which proposes significant amendments to the Pest Control Products Act.

Colleagues, throughout my professional and academic career and during my time in this chamber, I have worked on issues relating to dangerous substances, environmental contamination, toxicology and their impacts on ecosystems and on human health. It is from that perspective that I rise today.

It is not to oppose farmers, not to oppose innovation and not to oppose economic development; it is quite on the contrary. I believe Canada can have a strong agriculture sector, a competitive economy, thriving exports and robust food security. But I also believe these objectives are achieved because our public policy is guided by evidence, transparency and sound science.

The Pest Control Products Act was built on a simple yet important principle: Pesticides are substances deliberately designed to kill micro-organisms and macro-organisms. Before they are placed on the market, independent scientific experts evaluate whether the risks they pose to human health and the environment are acceptable.

That is why pesticide regulation in Canada has historically been entrusted to Health Canada and to scientific assessment processes insulated from political pressures. The purpose of the system is clear: Economic interests may be considered in many areas of public policy, but the determination of whether a pesticide is safe enough to be used should remain a scientific determination.

Bill C-30 changes this principle. The bill would require the Minister of Health to consider economic security and food security in certain decisions under the act. It would also create a mechanism allowing cabinet to authorize the use of a pesticide even after Health Canada scientists have determined that its environmental risks are unacceptable. Furthermore, cabinet could reinstate products whose registrations had previously been cancelled because of those risks.

These are not technical amendments. They represent a fundamental shift in who decides and on what basis decisions are made.

During the pre-study at the National Finance Committee hearings, senators repeatedly sought clarification on this very basic question: What exactly does "economic security" and "food security" mean? Officials admitted these terms are not defined in the legislation. They may eventually be elaborated through future policy or regulations.

In other words, Parliament is being asked — again — to grant broad new powers without knowing precisely how the key concepts governing those powers will be interpreted.

Good legislation is built on clarity. Good governance is built on transparency. Public trust is built on accountability. When key concepts are left undefined, discretion expands and accountability diminishes.

We were also told that these powers would be used only in exceptional circumstances. Yet the legislation suggests something quite different. A pesticide deemed to present unacceptable environmental risks could be authorized for three years, extended for another three years and then kept available during a phase-out for up to nine years in total. That is not an emergency situation. Actually, it resembles more of a parallel approval pathway operating alongside the scientific process and with the capacity to override it.

The scientific literature on pesticides and human health is extensive and continues to grow. For decades, researchers around the world have studied the associations between pesticide exposure and adverse health outcomes. Hundreds of peer-reviewed studies, systematic reviews and meta-analyses have linked pesticide exposure to increased risks of certain cancers, including non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia and prostate cancer. Other studies have reported links with Parkinson's disease, neurodevelopmental disorders, endocrine disruption, reproductive effects, liver dysfunction and damage to the nervous system.

• (1450)

The point is not that every pesticide causes every disease, nor is it that every study reaches identical conclusions. The point is that scientific risk assessment matters precisely because pesticides are biologically active substances whose effects can be complex, cumulative and sometimes only fully understood after many years of research. Indeed, many pesticides that were once considered safe were later restricted or banned as scientific understanding evolved.

Do you remember DDT? It came from the chemical weapons industry and was used extensively during the Vietnam War to defoliate entire trees. When the war ended, there were large stocks of this toxic substance, and DDT found a commercial application as a pesticide.

History teaches us important lessons, and we need to prioritize the precautionary approach, particularly when human and environmental health are at stake. When uncertainty exists about substances designed to kill living organisms, weakening scientific safeguards is rarely a prudent course of action.

The burden should not fall on Canadians to prove harm after acute or chronic exposure. The burden should remain on regulators to demonstrate safety before approval. This is why independent scientific reviews are so important, and this is why the authority to override scientific conclusions should be approached with extreme caution.

As an engineer who has managed infrastructure projects, I know how important the economic dimension is and that it deserves great attention. Supporters of these amendments argue that they are necessary to protect food security and economic security. Yet, the evidence presented to senators suggests that a little bit of the opposite risk may also exist.

Canada is one of the world's largest agricultural exporters. Our producers compete successfully because international customers trust the quality, reliability and safety of Canadian products. That trust is one of our most valuable economic assets. We cannot lose this, colleagues.

Our Prime Minister has repeatedly emphasized the need to diversify Canada's trading relationships and reduce excessive dependence on one single market, and I completely agree. Expanding opportunities in Europe and Asia is in Canada's national interest. However, many of those markets apply stringent pesticide standards. The European Union, for example, follows a more precautionary regulatory approach than Canada.

When importing countries perceive regulatory systems as independent, science-based and free from political influence, confidence increases. When political considerations appear capable of overriding scientific determinations, confidence erodes. Confidence, once lost, is difficult to recover. You know that from personal experience. We have seen it before.

Canadian agricultural exporters have previously experienced market disruptions when products approved domestically failed to meet the expectations of foreign buyers. The lesson is simple: Approvals granted in Canada do not determine what foreign markets will accept. Weakening confidence in our regulatory system does not strengthen our competitiveness; it may undermine it.

The irony is that many stakeholders acknowledged during briefings that the principal challenge facing the regulatory system is not excessive scientific rigour; it is capacity. If approvals take too long, the solution is not to weaken the scientific basis. The solution is to improve efficiency. If departments require additional resources, then provide them with more resources. If processes can be modernized, then modernize them. However, creating mechanisms that allow scientific determinations to be overridden addresses neither efficiency nor capacity. It changes the very nature of decision making itself.

Colleagues, as mentioned, these amendments arrived within a budget omnibus bill. They were not introduced through stand-alone legislation. They were not studied by committees with expertise in health, the environment and agriculture. The Minister of Health did not appear to explain why these significant changes are necessary. Scientists and public health experts had no opportunity to give evidence, nor did public health or environmental experts.

For a reform of this magnitude, that should concern us. The Senate exists precisely for situations such as this. We are asked to look beyond urgency, political timelines and immediate pressures. Our role is to examine legislation carefully and to ask whether Parliament has fully considered the consequences of its decisions.

Colleagues, this debate is not ultimately about pesticides. It's about governance. It's about whether scientific conclusions should remain the foundation of health and environmental protection. It is about whether evidence-based decision making remains a cornerstone of Canadian public policy. It is about whether governments should possess the authority to override scientific determinations whenever undefined economic considerations are invoked.

Science does not make political decisions. It is a capacity. If approvals take too long, the answer is not to weaken science; it is to strengthen the system. The credibility of our institutions depends on maintaining this distinction.

I recognize the importance of food security. I recognize the challenges facing farmers. I recognize the need to strengthen Canada's economy. Those objectives are legitimate, valid and important. However, they are not served by weakening public confidence in the scientific systems that protect Canadians and underpin our international reputation.

A prosperous economy and a healthy environment are not opposite objectives. A strong agricultural sector and rigorous scientific oversight are not opposing objectives. In fact, they depend on one another. Our farmers benefit when consumers trust Canadian products. Our exporters benefit when trading partners trust Canadian standards. Canadians benefit when decisions affecting their health are guided by evidence rather than expediency.

For all those reasons, I believe these provisions deserved a separate legislative process, a comprehensive study and a full, expert examination before Parliament was asked to approve them. I say that because the Pest Control Act was due for a statutory review, which would have offered an incredible opportunity for consultation. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

A change of this magnitude should not be buried in an omnibus bill. It should stand alone on its own merits. I know this specific provision in Bill C-30 is one of hundreds within an omnibus bill, and I know we need to implement what the government proposed in its election platform. However, I wanted to call your attention to this important matter so that we can keep track of what happens in the future.

Furthermore, you should know that these changes were not part of the electoral platform; they were only recently devised and incorporated into Bill C-30. As for the question about who requested this change, we did not receive an answer during the committee's deliberations.

I would like to conclude by thanking the members of the National Finance Committee for accepting my observation on this important matter.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, Canadians and future generations will not judge us by how quickly we passed legislation. They will judge us by whether we exercised the care, diligence and foresight expected of us. The most important thing the Senate contributes isn't speed; it's scrutiny and wisdom.

[*English*]

Before we break for the summer, I would like to point out that the collective brain power gathered in this chamber is immense. I recognize that. The last thing we want, dear colleagues, is to see that grey matter wasted, underutilized or replaced one day by artificial intelligence. Instead, we need to harness it now and use it to improve our policies, strengthen our laws and increase the prosperity of all Canadians.

I wish you all happy family gatherings during the summer. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

**Hon. Mary Robinson:** Senator Galvez, would you take a question?

**Senator Galvez:** Absolutely.

• (1500)

**Senator Robinson:** Thank you. Senator Galvez, in my reading of Bill C-30, I see, in clause 53(3) of the bill that the primary objective of the minister remains unchanged. I'm curious where you see the primary mandate of the minister has changed to step away from human and environmental health?

**Senator Galvez:** Sorry; you misinterpreted what I said. I'm not saying the mandate has changed; I'm saying there will now be exceptions. And those exceptions, as stated, can be overridden by a decision of cabinet, even though the Minister of Health has said there are risks from these pesticides.

**Senator Robinson:** Senator Galvez, just to be clear, do you agree with me that the primary mandate of the minister remains to focus on human and environmental health, first and foremost?

**Senator Galvez:** As I said, there has been no change to the mandate, but there is a change in the exceptions.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Would the senator take another question?

**Senator Galvez:** Absolutely.

**Senator Pupatello:** First, I want to say how much respect the chamber holds for this particular senator, who does so much work on climate change and environmental issues.

On that note, I did read your press release of last evening related to this bill in particular and to the second reading comments you made. I did call the minister's office to confirm that, in fact, the minister has the power to make changes within the six years you mentioned in your release. I wanted to clarify and make it more factually accurate, so I will read it for you:

> Could the minister cancel the exemption within the three-year time frame if the risk to human health is deemed, or there is evidence that it is too high?

And the answer is yes. So that would be a change in what you put out publicly last evening.

Two elements I would like to have enter this part of your debate on second reading are the two amendments made before the actual bill landed in this chamber. We conducted a pre-study before the actual bill arrived. There were several amendments put forward by none other than MP Steven Guilbeault. We know he has a serious history on environmental issues, and he put forward these amendments, which, in fact, order that any changes be made public 60 days after the order is made — not whenever or not made public or in secret, but posted 60 days afterwards. That is the rationale and exactly what has been done. I think that is exactly from the comments of the committee that studied the bill in pre-study.

On that, I was hoping you might make a comment that makes you feel a little more comfortable that there is control in those changes that could be made.

**Senator Galvez:** Thank you very much for your comment. I didn't hear a question, but thank you very much for that clarification.

Bravo for Steven Guilbeault, good final exiting remarks. I'm very happy.

In my speech, I said we need to track this and see what happens in reality. When these new provisions are implemented and used, I want us to keep track of what is going on to make sure that — as you said, this is not for a long period of time — if the Minister of Health says there is a risk, things will be stopped at the right moment before any damage is done to the environment or to our health. Thank you.

**Hon. Marilou McPhedran:** Honourable senators, I rise on debate on Bill C-30.

Less than three hours ago, public interest organizations joined their voices to denounce amendments to Canada's Pest Control Products Act included in the government's omnibus financial bill, Bill C-30, which is being propelled to the final vote in this chamber today.

The superficial and rushed movement of this bill has been enabled by motions passed earlier in the other place, curtailing debate and amendments. And why? Is it because parliamentarians want to start their summer?

Please listen to these independent organizations, dedicated to the well-being of this country's most precious asset — the Canadian people, human beings.

The changes to Canada's pesticide law in Bill C-30, along with others introduced in a separate budget implementation bill, Bill C-31, represent the largest overhaul of Canada's pesticide regulatory system in a generation. This comes after Bill C-5, after Parliament gave the cabinet the power to eliminate key environmental standards under the Species at Risk Act and the Impact Assessment Act.

This broad coalition of civil society organizations concerned with protecting human health and the environment, along with advocates for evidence-informed decision making and independent scientists, has called for these amendments to the Pest Control Products Act to be removed, highlighting that there was no consultation or opportunity for study by Parliament's Health and Environment committees.

Our Senate committee noted in its report:

> Given the significance and potential repercussions of these changes, the committee believes they should have warranted a separate study rather than being included in an omnibus bill.

The coalition stated:

> The Pest Control Products Act was passed in 2002. Its primary purpose is to protect human health and the environment. However, the C-30 amendments grant cabinet broad authority to overrule the Health Minister and permit the use of a pesticide found to have unacceptable environmental risks. The amendments will also require Health Canada to consider "economic security" —

— not defined —

— and "food security" —

— not defined —

— when making decisions about pesticide registration, without specifying definitions or processes for doing so.

Please listen and think carefully about your children, grandchildren and generations to come. This is a time to apply the Indigenous principle of planning Seven Generations ahead.

Lisa Gue of the David Suzuki Foundation has this to say to you:

> Perhaps the government realized that these changes to Canada's pesticide law would not hold up to scrutiny. Giving cabinet the power to authorize the use of pesticides despite unacceptable risks is a dangerous departure from science-based decision-making. It signals that environmental protections are optional, inviting further politicization of pesticide regulation, and a worrying disregard for potential health and environmental consequences.

Pascal Priori of the Association pour la santé publique du Québec and Victimes des pesticides du Québec said:

> As more and more agricultural workers suffer from neurodegenerative diseases or cancers linked to their exposure to pesticides on the job, the Carney administration's rush to further deregulate pesticides is unjustifiable and erodes confidence in our regulatory system.

Pamela Fillion of Breast Cancer Action Quebec said:

> We are deeply concerned about the weakening of pesticide protections in Canada, particularly from an environmental justice perspective. The burden and impacts of toxic exposures are not carried equally. Workers and low-income, racialized and Indigenous communities are most affected. . . . Additionally, many pesticides are known to contain endocrine disruptors which are scientifically recognized to harm bodies in ways that contribute to breast cancer and reproductive disorders that affect current generations and generations to come. Strengthening, not weakening, regulatory safeguards is essential to reducing these inequities and to preventing avoidable harm to human health and ecosystems.

Jane McArthur of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment said:

> Without any public consultation, we are being forced to accept escalating toxic hazards and real-world harm — including increased miscarriages, rising neurological disease, contaminated ecosystems, and weaker protections for children, workers and Indigenous peoples. Accepting Bill C-30 means that Canada's pesticide law will be based on financial considerations rather than health and the environment. This undemocratic process leaves us with harms that we reject. Protecting human and environmental health goes hand in hand with addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and reducing people's exposure to toxic pollution, including harmful pesticides. . . .

• (1510)

Ian Culbert of the Canadian Public Health Association said:

> Canada's pesticide law exists to protect human health and the environment. These amendments would weaken that foundation by allowing broad economic considerations and political discretion to override independent scientific assessment. Decisions about pesticides must be transparent, evidence-informed and subject to proper public and parliamentary scrutiny — not rushed through an omnibus budget bill. The federal government should withdraw these changes and undertake the full independent review of the Pest Control Products Act that has long been needed.

Bronwyn Roe, Healthy Communities Program Director at Ecojustice — an organization supporting the three young women who initiated litigation against the Canadian government this week for the high risk to their health and futures — said:

> The government is gutting Canada's pesticide protections by burying the changes in omnibus budget bills and bypassing democratic debate. Bill C-30 introduces amendments that lets Cabinet override the Health Minister's science-based decisions to favour commercial interests — even when a pesticide poses unacceptable risks. This has happened with no public hearings and no expert testimony. When science can be vetoed by Cabinet, Canadians should understand exactly whose interests are being served. It isn't theirs.

Cassie Barker of Environmental Defence said:

> Canada's pesticide law exists to protect our health and our environment. These egregious changes undermine that purpose. We urge the federal government to undo these destructive amendments and raise the bar on safety, because people in Canada deserve nothing less.

Félix Proulx-Giraldeau of Evidence for Democracy said:

> Decisions about our health and pesticides should be based on strong science and not rushed through Parliament without proper review. These changes sideline evidence and weaken the protections that keep people and the environment safe. Canadians deserve transparent, evidence-informed decision-making they can trust.

Beatrice Olivastri of Friends of the Earth Canada said:

> By forcing Bills C-30 and C-31 through Parliament in a single omnibus package, the Government is putting corporate profits ahead of public health and democratic debate. Buried in these bills are sweeping changes that would let the Cabinet override independent, science-based safety assessments. Canadians deserve affordable, safe food, transparent oversight and strong public science – not more power and profits for multinational pesticide and agribusiness companies.

Phil Mount of the National Farmers Union said:

> As farmers we are acutely aware of pesticide impacts on our own health and that of our families, neighbours, customers and our agro-ecosystems. . . .

Melanie Langille of the New Brunswick Lung Association said:

> NB Lung views strong environmental regulation as an important public health tool. These amendments would move Canada in the wrong direction by weakening protections in a system that already does not adequately reflect the needs of people with underlying health vulnerabilities, including asthma, COPD and other lung conditions. Decisions that affect environmental exposures should be transparent, evidence-based, and centred on preventing avoidable harm.

Meg Sears of Prevent Cancer Now said:

> Ballooning use of diverse pesticides is clearly contributing to rapidly increasing cancers, in younger and younger Canadians. Canada has registered hundreds of pesticides, in thousands of products. Canada's strong organic agriculture sector demonstrates that these are unnecessary. Substantial changes introduced in time-limited omnibus bills amount to dereliction of due process and science-based management of toxic chemicals to punt assessment for scientific review from Health Canada experts, to the Health Minister. Abandoning science-based pesticide regulation in C-30 and C-31, with no substantive debate, must be abandoned in favour of the overdue review of the Pest Control Products Act.

Mary Lou McDonald of Safe Food Matters said:

> These changes are unlawful — they have no fiscal component and nothing to do with the budget. They are outside the rule of law — it is a criminal offence to use harmful pesticides in Canada, but here untrained politicians can completely sweep that away without legal recourse. And they shut down democracy — no Parliamentary debate, no public consultation on changes directly affecting Canadians and the environment. And thus it was written: Canada has become an oligarchy, pretending to be a democracy.

Laure Mabileau of la campagne Sortir du glyphosate, Vigilance OGM, said, "This is the biggest rollback on the Pest Control Products Act ever seen . . ."

As I close, let me list for you the full set of organizations that have demonstrated their support on very short notice. It would be a much longer list if this process was better, more open, more thorough and science-based.

The supporting organizations are: Association pour la santé publique du Québec, Victimes des pesticides du Québec, Breast Cancer Action Quebec, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, Children's Health Defense Canada, Citizen Science Nova Scotia, the Council of Canadians, Earth Education League, Ecojustice, Environmental Defence, Équiterre, Evidence for Democracy, Friends of the Earth Canada, Friends of Goldsmith Lake Wilderness Area, GMO Free Canada, National Farmers Union, NB Lung, Pesticide Free Edmonton, Prevent Cancer Now, Quebec Environmental Law Centre, Safe Food Matters, Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides, Save Our Old Forests Association, Stop Spraying & Clear-Cutting Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia), Toronto Non-GMO Coalition, Vigilance OGM and York Region Environmental Alliance.

I share these voices with you today and ask that you give them the respect and careful consideration they deserve. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

**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.)

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 15, 2026, the bill was deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.)

[*Translation*]

## PROTECTING VICTIMS BILL

### BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

**Hon. Manuelle Oudar** moved third reading 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).

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today at third reading as the sponsor of Bill C-16, the protecting victims act.

At the heart of this bill is a desire to better recognize the challenges faced by victims of a type of violence that often goes unseen and that affects women and children in particular. The study of this bill brought together a large number of people who shared their time, expertise and experience to advance this bill.

[*English*]

I would first like to thank my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for their commitment and dedication throughout the study. I'd like to thank the committee chair, Senator Arnot; the deputy chair, Senator Batters; Senator Clement; Senator Miville-Dechêne; Senator Pate; Senator Saint-Germain; Senator Simons; Senator Prosper; Senator Tannas; Senator K. Wells; and Senator Pierre Dalphond, my lead. Thank you, my dear colleagues.

• (1520)

The work on Bill C-16 allowed us to hear a wide range of perspectives. The committee devoted more than 15 hours to its study, during which it heard from 58 witnesses, including the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada on two occasions, officials from the Department of Justice, victims' organizations, law enforcement officials, legal and other advocacy organizations, academic experts and victims and survivors of intimate partner violence and coercive control, who took the time to appear before the committee and share their knowledge and personal experiences.

Committee members met on several occasions outside regular sitting hours to continue their work. Every hour devoted to this work was well worth it. The testimonies we heard gave us a better understanding of the realities faced by victims and survivors. They also reminded us of what is at stake for the families and communities affected by violence.

Our thoughts are with Miriane Bergeron, who shared powerful testimony about how fear can gradually take over every aspect of life, slowly eroding self-confidence and the ability to act freely. Her testimony illustrated the daily reality of coercion and the long process of domination that often precedes the tragedies we seek to prevent.

We also salute Kendra Cooke, who helped us better understand the consequences of coercive control. She spoke to us about the gradual loss of her autonomy, the work required to rebuild her life and the deep love she has for her children, who are a testament to her inner strength and resilience. Her testimony reminded us of the courage it takes to move forward after enduring such hardships.

We honour the memory of Lindsay Margaret Wilson through the deeply moving testimony of her mother, Alison Irons. Lindsay was a brilliant 26-year-old woman pursuing her studies at Nipissing University. She had a promising future ahead of her. Tragically, her life was cut short just two weeks before she was due to graduate. Despite immeasurable grief, Ms. Irons chose to channel her mourning into a commitment to help other families avoid such a tragedy. Her story reminds us of what is at stake in our efforts to prevent intimate partner violence.

We also think of Bailey McCourt and her loved ones, who continue to honour her memory with remarkable dignity and commitment.

[*Translation*]

We heard powerful testimony that painted a picture of a situation still faced by far too many people in Canada.

In Canada, a woman is murdered every 48 hours by an intimate partner or former intimate partner. Women and girls account for nearly four out of five victims of domestic homicide. Fear, threats and stigma still prevent many survivors from asking for help and from reporting the violence they are experiencing. A lack of visible injuries often masks the severity of the situation. Community organizations, police forces and front-line workers witness this type of violence every day. They respond to thousands of calls from people looking for support, protection or even just someone who will listen.

Intimate partner violence affects families, loved ones and communities. Children also bear the consequences. According to Statistics Canada, children are exposed to violence in over half of all cases of femicide. Many children witness their mother's murder first-hand. Some are directly exposed to violence, while others suffer its effects for years. These experiences leave deep scars that stay with them well beyond childhood.

Implementing these protections also requires ongoing investment. The Government of Canada announced an investment of more than $660 million over five years to step up efforts to fight gender-based violence and support those affected by it. These investments are part of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and support work being done across the country by provinces, territories and community organizations.

What we heard over and over from witnesses is that more resources are needed to counter the growing trend of delays in criminal proceedings. This bill seeks to reduce the frequency of judicial stays of proceedings due to excessive delays in the criminal justice system, but that objective can't be achieved without a significant strategic increase in resources at the federal and provincial levels.

This bill has been thoroughly examined by both houses of Parliament. It has been carefully considered by parliamentary committees and has undergone a thoughtful review by the Senate.

Bill C-16 aims to address various forms of violence and exploitation.

[*English*]

One of the most significant reforms concerns coercive control. Intimate partner violence does not always begin with physical assaults. It often develops gradually through isolation, surveillance, intimidation and control. The bill creates a new offence so that the justice system can recognize this reality and intervene earlier before the situation worsens. The bill acknowledges the scope of this violence across various spheres. It also modernizes our laws to better address harms that occur in digital spaces.

The bill recognizes the gravity of homicides committed in the context of coercive control or sexual violence. It introduces explicit recognition of femicide. This measure reflects a reality that data and testimonies have highlighted throughout our study.

The proposed changes seek to make the justice system more accessible to victims and survivors. They expand access to measures that facilitate testifying, strengthen the protection of personal information and reduce certain barriers that may discourage people from participating in the judicial process.

Bill C-16 strengthens protections for children and adolescents. It provides for new measures to combat sexual exploitation, sextortion and the recruitment of young people by criminal organizations. It improves the protections available to children in the digital environment, facilitates their participation in the judicial process when they are required to testify and strengthens measures designed to safeguard their safety and privacy. These reforms aim to provide young people with a safer environment and better protect them from the forms of exploitation they face today.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-16 also takes account of the lived realities of people who are still overrepresented in the criminal justice system. It provides for measures that foster responses tailored to the specific circumstances of certain communities, with a special focus on Indigenous and racialized individuals. It also maintains judicial discretion in certain exceptional situations to allow the courts to render fair decisions suited to the circumstances of each case. Lastly, it strengthens the protections provided for people targeted by hate-motivated conduct and reaffirms the importance of a justice system that guarantees equal safety and dignity for all.

However, the committee's work also reminded us that the work doesn't end when a law is passed. That is why the observations we submitted to the government on certain issues were highlighted in our deliberations.

In fact, the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime also underscored the importance of promptly notifying victims of bail decisions and release conditions. As my colleague Senator Julie Mivillle-Dechêne rightly pointed out, it is important for victims to receive the information they need in a clear, accessible and proactive manner, without having to go through multiple steps to be informed.

• (1530)

We have therefore recommended that the government work in collaboration with its federal, provincial, territorial and municipal partners to implement measures through appropriate resources and coordination with other levels of government. Our work also highlighted the importance of ensuring that legislative reforms are accompanied by concrete measures on the ground. Witnesses emphasized the vital role played by shelters, community organizations and victim support services. They also stressed the importance of continuing training efforts for justice system practitioners.

We also heard concerns about the barriers that some people continue to face when seeking help. Indigenous women, racialized women, newcomer women and other women facing particular circumstances must be able to access services that meet their needs. Safety and support must be available to all victims who need them. These observations reflect a conviction that emerged throughout our study. The changes proposed by Bill C-16 are an important step forward, but their full impact will depend on the resources, services and efforts that will support victims in their daily lives.

There was also broad consensus that gender-based violence remains a significant challenge, that coercive control causes profound harm, that victims deserve to have their rights respected, that technological changes have enabled new forms of exploitation, and that the justice system can and must do better. The committee's work confirmed that gender-based violence continues to cause profound harm in our communities and that coercive control is a reality that warrants a robust response from our justice system. Everyone recognized the importance of strengthening the protections available to victims and ensuring that their rights are respected throughout the judicial process. Our work also highlighted the evolution of some forms of exploitation and the need for our laws to continue to adapt to the realities faced by victims today.

These findings helped shape the recommendations and observations included in the committee's report. The proposed reform is part of a broader evolution of our legislation and our understanding of the harm that victims experience. Our legal framework has evolved over time to better address victims' experiences. This evolution reflects a deeper understanding of the various forms of violence and their consequences. Bill C-16 is part of the ongoing progression of our legislation. It demonstrates Canada's commitment to remaining a leader in promoting human dignity, equality and personal safety, while strengthening the protections available to victims here in our communities.

Canadian criminal law exists within an international framework that directly influences how states define and protect victims' rights. Canada has signed several international conventions that set out specific obligations regarding the prevention of violence, the protection of individuals and access to justice.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women sets out concrete measures to combat gender-based violence and requires states parties to amend laws that perpetuate discrimination against women. The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires states to protect children from all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and trafficking. These commitments guide the development of Canadian legislation and require us to update our laws so that Canada keeps the promises it has made to the international community.

Several comparable countries have already updated their criminal laws to better recognize certain forms of violence and provide better support for victims. The United Kingdom has introduced a specific offence related to coercive control in intimate relationships, a reform that has prompted debate about the law in several Commonwealth countries.

Some European countries have adapted their laws to provide a better evidentiary framework in sexual assault cases and to recognize aggravating factors related to gender-based violence. A number of Latin American nations have added femicide to their criminal codes to name this reality and give it the legal gravitas it deserves. These approaches show that there is a consensus to reflect the reality experienced by victims and ensure a more sensitive judicial response. Canada has joined this trend by proposing similar adjustments that have earned it a place among the nations committed to protecting the most vulnerable.

Criminal law constantly adapts to social realities and to the needs of the people it is charged to protect. Each successive generation of legislators inherits a legal framework shaped by those who came before and is responsible for adapting it to harms that existing laws no longer capture completely.

Bill C-16 represents an important step in the evolutionary process that I just mentioned by bringing together Canada's international commitments, lessons learned from the experience of other countries, and the requirements of our own constitutional framework. It reflects an understanding that protecting victims is based on both universal principles and rules specific to our own justice system.

Bill C-16 is also based on rulings in Canadian case law. Over the years, the courts have clarified several important principles regarding victims' rights, court delays, sentencing and the protection of fundamental rights.

Many measures proposed in the bill reflect these principles. The provisions aimed at reducing court delays take into account principles recently reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. Amendments regarding mandatory minimum sentences also incorporate court rulings by providing for a mechanism that would allow judges to take into account exceptional circumstances when the situation warrants it.

The proposed youth justice reforms remain true to the principles long established by the Supreme Court, namely the importance of rehabilitation, reintegration and the limited use of detention. Other recent Supreme Court of Canada rulings have established that coercive control infringes on victims' autonomy, dignity and equality. These are the same interests that underpin the concept of "safety" in criminal law, a term used both in the proposed coercive control offence and in the provisions related to human trafficking.

The Supreme Court has also recognized that coercive control is of crucial importance, not only because it better reflects the realities experienced by victims, but also because it helps distinguish between ongoing violent behaviour and violent acts of resistance. According to paragraph 193 of a recent Supreme Court ruling handed down in May 2026, coercive control excludes:

> . . . violence associated with resistance against an intimate partner's attempts at domination or control. When an intimate partner strikes out as an act of resistance against their aggressor, the victim has not acted in a controlling or coercive manner . . . .

The bill is therefore based on principles already recognized by the courts and contributes to the evolution of our law, while respecting the Canadian constitutional framework.

Several witnesses also emphasized the importance of acting quickly. Karine Barrette from the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale reminded us that a prolonged delay in this reform would have very real consequences for victims. Each delay postpones access to recourse for people who are currently experiencing behaviour that still too often falls outside the scope of existing Criminal Code offences. The Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale expressed its eagerness to see Bill C-16 come into force to protect women who are still living under the grip of coercive control.

Miriane Bergeron, a survivor, also emphasized that coercive control is often a significant indicator of the risk of intimate partner homicide and that it is important to act quickly. Chief Thai Truong of the London Police Service expressed a similar view when he said he wanted to see Bill C-16 passed as soon as possible.

• (1540)

In conclusion, honorable senators, behind these legislative provisions are people who want to live free from violence, raise their children in safety, and participate fully in the life of their community.

These aspirations are shared by us all. They help build stronger, safer, more supportive communities.

[*English*]

The work surrounding this bill has demonstrated the importance of recognizing the various forms that violence can take and of equipping our justice system with the tools it needs to respond more effectively.

It has also underscored the importance of continuing to support those seeking help and of strengthening measures that promote their safety and dignity.

Our laws have always evolved to better reflect the realities of their time. Bill C-16 is part of this tradition. It is grounded in the values we share, the principles that guide our justice system and Canada's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable.

[*Translation*]

Each law that is passed represents an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of the people it seeks to protect. Each protection that is enhanced can help provide more safety. Each right that is recognized can help a person move forward with more confidence.

Bill C-16 is an important step in this direction. I'm calling on all honourable senators to support it so that these protections can reach the people, families and communities that need them.

Colleagues, the committee's work was very thorough and thoughtful. The witnesses' testimony confirmed both the urgent need for action and the care required to implement it. Once again, I want to thank the Chair, the committee's members and staff, as well as all the witnesses.

In light of our study, I urge you to take the next step and pass Bill C-16.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*English*]

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, I would like to take a moment to remind you to silence your mobile devices once the sitting has begun and to avoid touching your microphones with papers when delivering your speeches.

Vibrating devices on desks, including those of the seat mates of a senator giving a speech, as well as impact noises from accidentally hitting a microphone, could cause interruptions in interpretation.

Thank you for your collaboration.

**Hon. Kim Pate:** Honourable senators, Bill C-16 is presented as protecting victims, despite clear evidence that its criminal-law-based responses will perpetuate the criminalization and incarceration of survivors of violence.

At a minimum, we must address the mandatory minimum penalties that Bill C-16 proliferates, which have contributed to miscarriages of justice experienced by too many survivors, including the women whose stories are included in our *12 Indigenous Women* report: O. Q. and N. Q., who were tried and convicted of the murder of a man trying to prey on them, despite someone else confessing to the crime; S., who was criminalized as an accomplice to her abusive partner's drug dealing and allowed to plead guilty to the death of her closest friend under circumstances widely accepted to be suicide; G. S., serving a life sentence for killing an abusive partner while trying to protect herself and her children from violence.

Taken together, these cases present a pattern of marginalized women being failed by our health, housing, social, economic and legal systems, abandoned to unsafe situations, disbelieved and re-victimized if they report violence, and then blamed and criminalized if they defend themselves, in ways that erase both their experiences as victims and our collective failure to adequately intervene and prevent violence.

At committee, the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers said:

> Due to negative police perceptions and harmful racial tropes, Black women who call the police for domestic intervention are often subjected to intense scrutiny. In many documented instances, the . . . survivor was mistakenly arrested and charged with uttering threats or assault.

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund referenced:

> . . . systemic racism within policing that leads to both under- and over-policing of Indigenous women . . . .

They stated:

> . . . there sometimes is this notion of what a survivor looks like. Racialized or Black and Indigenous survivors tend to be . . . criminalized themselves or . . . identified as the aggressor . . . .

Law Professor Emma Cunliffe cited:

> . . . research that suggests that, unfortunately, police and prosecutors often misidentify the true perpetrator of harm and that this extends to circumstances of coercive control. . . . this is particularly true of women who fight back against their abusers.

The Canadian Bar Association testified:

> . . . what we see in family court is the perpetrator twisting the facts . . . such as an allegation that, ". . . she's the one who has alienated the kids against me, and she's the one who has [used] coercive control against me."

Survivor Kendra Cooke testified:

> [He had] me charged with uttering threats of death.
>
> It has been stayed because there has been no evidence produced. . . . I had to find emergency care for my kids. I can't attend school trips right now with a stay on my record. I can't work in my field.

Constitutional law professor Colton Fehr noted:

> The minimum sentences for murder are . . . problematic because they can create a strong incentive to plead guilty to manslaughter . . . a problem that often arises in self-defence cases, and is particularly prone to raise fairness concerns with battered women who kill their abusers.

Dr. Pam Palmater emphasized:

> The research shows that 18% of those wrongfully convicted of crimes were the result of false guilty pleas, and it should be no surprise that nearly all of them were Indigenous, racialized, female or living with a disability.

The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls states as follows:

> Ninety per cent of Indigenous women who are incarcerated have a history of domestic physical . . . and sexual abuse. . . . [T]he violent crimes that Indigenous women commit are defensive or reactive to violence directed at themselves, their children, or a third party. . . . The Canadian justice system criminalizes acts that are a direct result of survival for many Indigenous women. This repeats patterns of colonialism because it places the blame and responsibility on Indigenous women and their choices, and ignores the systemic injustices that they experience. . . . The Canadian state is not held accountable for how its colonial policies contribute to the victimization and incarceration of Indigenous women.

The Mass Casualty Commission ultimately declined to recommend criminalizing coercive control, concluding:

> The fact that this form of violence is misconceived limits effective responses and interventions — to the detriment of women's safety.

Instead, it made evidence-based recommendations to improve public safety, including:

> . . . promoting women's economic equality with attention to intersectional needs and providing secure and stable funding to . . . support women in poverty to access economic and personal safety.

The commission highlighted the experience of Nicole Doucet, whom I knew as Nicole Ryan. Nicole repeatedly reported to police her ex-husband's coercive control, stalking, rapes and threats to kill her and their daughter. The police insisted that they could not intervene.

When Nicole's father suggested that they try to find a way to fight back, police set up a sting operation to entrap her. An undercover RCMP officer posed as someone willing to kill her ex-husband, and she was charged with counselling the commission of murder.

When she was acquitted, the Crown appealed.

Her case went to the Supreme Court of Canada, which emphasized:

> . . . the disquieting fact that, on the record before us, it seems that the authorities were much quicker to intervene to protect Mr. Ryan than they had been to respond to [Ms. Ryan's] request for help in dealing with his reign of terror over her.

The Mass Casualty Commission identified the prevailing approach to violence against women in Canada as "keeping women unsafe."

Will Bill C-16's approach to coercive control — a criminal offence, more training and more police resources — offer victims better protection?

How has it gone in other countries?

• (1550)

In Scotland — the gold standard for criminal law-based responses to coercive control — research shows that although ". . . conviction rates have been high . . . when the offence is reported and charged," most instances of violence are not reported and most reports do not result in charges. There has been no impact on femicide rates and "most participants felt the onus was on them to keep themselves safe after reporting . . . ."

In England and Wales, there is compelling evidence that survivors of intimate partner violence continue to be criminalized, while criminalization of coercive control has ". . . not had any demonstrable impact on the rates of femicide . . . ."

In Australia, which has a legacy of incarceration of Indigenous Peoples more comparable to Canada's, the evidence reveals that ". . . risks of being mis-identified as the primary aggressor [are] . . . highest for socially disadvantaged and marginalised women . . . ." Victims report that they are concerned about perpetrators misusing the offences to magnify and amplify abuse. In New South Wales, where there was a whole-of-government effort to train police and legal system actors, provide public education and account for the experiences of First Nations people, few charges were laid. In Queensland, where none of this took place, there were more charges but few advanced. So far, there is no clear impact on the rates of femicide, but it is predicted that, like the other jurisdictions, it will have a negligible effect.

Bill C-16 is a missed opportunity to set the record straight: Mandatory minimum penalties do not deter crime but do fuel the overrepresentation in incarceration of poor, young, Black and Indigenous Peoples and especially women. Bill C-16 attempts to reinstate mandatory minimums struck down as unconstitutional by courts using a so-called "safety valve" that, except for life sentences, allows judges to not apply a mandatory minimum where the result would be unconstitutional: cruel and unusual. This safety valve does not respect Canada's commitments to implement the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls or the legal requirement set out in section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code, often referred to as *Gladue* factors.

Anywhere a mandatory minimum applies, this statutory duty to consider alternatives to incarceration, especially for Indigenous Peoples, cannot not be considered.

Contrary to the minister's opinion that Bill C-16 will safeguard the constitutionality of mandatory minimum penalties, it is vulnerable to constitutional challenges. Professor Colton Fehr stated:

> While the minimums for murder [to which the safety valve does not apply] were upheld in *Luxton* and *Latimer*, these cases applied a now-overruled methodology . . . . the incorporation of [section 718.2(e) and] . . . evidence on the impact of long-term imprisonment on individuals, suggests that these challenges have a reasonable prospect of success if re-raised . . . .

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association noted that the Supreme Court stated that to ensure constitutionality, a safety valve must provide ". . . that the residual discretion allow for a lesser sentence . . . ." — any lesser sentence, not only prison sentences. The restrictions in Bill C-16 do not allow this.

At committee, witnesses including the Canadian Bar Association, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, the National Association of Women and the Law, the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, the Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and constitutional law professor Colton Fehr all recommended ensuring the safety valve apply to all mandatory minimums in the code and/or ensure access to non-carceral sentences.

Bill C-16's approach to mandatory minimums will ripple through the court system. The most vulnerable will bear the human, social and financial costs of having to mount challenges to legislation that is not Charter compliant. There are also costs in terms of trust and credibility. There is growing and pernicious rhetoric in support of mandatory minimums and the "notwithstanding" clause suggesting that the executive needs to rein in judges, vilifying them for doing their job of applying the law and the Charter to the facts of a case — despite requirements to provide reasons that are open to scrutiny and appeal — or portraying them as out of touch despite the fact that they and not legislators are the ones who meet and hear directly from the accused, victims and witnesses in each case.

Less than a year ago, the three chief justices of Ontario issued a joint statement after provincial political actors sought to attack and undermine judicial independence for political gain by spouting the types of misinformation that Bill C-16 risks encouraging. The Chief Justice of Canada recently warned:

> Attacks on the independence and legitimacy of the judiciary are not just institutional concerns. They are warning signs, the first steps toward dismantling the constitutional safeguards that protect our democracy.

We are seeing, in real time, where this road can lead. Indeed, as government interference increases in criminal legal systems around the world, this chamber has passed legislation to mark judicial independence day. Canada's newest Governor General recently used her installation speech to underscore the need to ". . . protect the public space in which our national debates take place . . . [including] courtrooms . . . ."

She continued:

> The peaceful management of our differences is nowhere better expressed than in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter guarantees that our cherished individual rights are subject only to the reasonable limits necessary for life in a free and peaceful democracy.
>
> This is what it means to live under the rule of law.

It was 47 years ago when I worked with children who were in care and escaping incest and other forms of sexual and physical abuse. As they and I grew older, that trauma and abuse mostly led to too many of them being revictimized and criminalized: sexually exploited and abused girls and abusive boys. My work followed them through youth and into adulthood. A disproportionate number ended up in prisons.

In this place, we often hear about violence against women when a family who has lost a daughter, sister or mother demands action. Governments, even when they know better, respond with legislation that proposes not meaningful and evidence-based action but longer and more punitive criminal law responses that will result in the increased use of incarceration for poor, Black and Indigenous men but also for women.

Politicians celebrate a win, and everyone involved hopes the criminal law response will help. We continue on with no meaningful reduction in incidents of intimate partner violence or femicides until the next highly politicized death and subsequent criminal law reform.

Colleagues, as we pass yet —

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Senator Pate, the time for your speech has expired. Are you asking for another five minutes to conclude?

**Senator Pate:** Yes, 20 seconds, Your Honour.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Senator Pate:** Colleagues, as we pass yet another such bill, let us all consider the heartbreaking question posed by the Mass Casualty Commission when they asked: "Why do we repeatedly commit to addressing gender-based violence but fail to live up to this commitment?"

[*Translation*]

**Senator Oudar:** Would Senator Pate take a question?

**Senator Pate:** Yes.

**Senator Oudar:** Senator Pate, thank you for your excellent speech and for the commitment you've shown both within and outside the Senate for so many years.

Have you had a chance to look at the recent Supreme Court rulings, particularly with respect to the possibility of victims being charged after engaging in acts of self-defence? The Supreme Court explained that coercive control excludes violence associated with resistance against an intimate partner's attempts at domination or control. When an intimate partner strikes out as an act of resistance against their aggressor, the victim has not acted in a controlling or coercive manner. So women acting to protect themselves or their child from an abuser probably won't be convicted or even charged. They show no criminal intent to terrorize, isolate or dominate their partner, so under the law, coercive control wouldn't include defensive actions like these.

• (1600)

Additionally, these concerns didn't materialize in Scotland or England, which adopted the same legislative provisions. There was some concern about the possibility of victim overrepresentation, but empirical data show that this hasn't been the case.

[*English*]

**Senator Pate:** Thank you very much for all of your work on this. The challenge is that the case you're referring to is actually a civil law case involving the new tort of coercive control in civil law and family law. Yes, the judge who made that decision is someone who worked very closely on these issues at the instant level. That was reinforced at the Supreme Court of Canada.

What the information you provided fails to recognize, though, is that in criminal cases, the concern happens at the instant case, usually once the preliminary inquiry is concluded or initial information is received about the nature of abuse that the victim may have suffered. Oftentimes, then, a guilty plea is offered. Therefore, in a criminal law case, the judge often never gets to know about that incident, unless later, as in the *Naslund* case, we go back to try to undo that guilty plea and undo the injustice that happened.

I agree that would be great. The reality is that is not how it unfolds. It's why former Justice Ratushny, when she did the self-defence review of the cases of women who had been convicted of using lethal force against abusers, she recommended that, where a Crown is willing to accept a plea to manslaughter, they should withdraw the charge of first-degree or second-degree murder and substitute a charge of manslaughter so that there is a fair chance that someone may actually go to trial.

She recommended that because when she looked at over 100 cases — and, in fact, our Ethics Officer, Mr. O'Reilly, was her counsel in that inquiry — she found that she could not review the majority of them because the women had entered guilty pleas, and with a guilty plea comes what is called an agreed statement of facts. Oftentimes, that includes very little about the abuse but has them agreeing to plead guilty. Therefore, they couldn't go behind it. That deals with the first part of your question.

For the second part, yes, I spent a lot of time in contact with jurisdictions overseas as well as looking at the research that is available. While, disproportionately, it is men charged with coercive control, when it comes to convictions, the rates start to narrow. We also see women being charged in situations where they are called as victims.

We haven't seen a difference in Australia yet in either jurisdiction, but admittedly, those are the newest jurisdictions; within the past couple of years that these provisions have been introduced. In Scotland, Wales and England, however, where they have been in place for over seven years, there has been no appreciable difference in femicide. Although there have been a number of charges, we have not seen a reduction in the number of women killed in those jurisdictions, which is why I raised those concerns.

However, like you, I will continue to work on this issue, and I'm sure that we will work together on trying to find some common —

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Thank you, Senator Pate. Your time has expired.

Do you wish to ask a question, Senator Dasko?

**Hon. Donna Dasko:** Yes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** To answer, you need to ask for more time. Are you asking for five more minutes to answer questions?

**Senator Pate:** If it's the will of the chamber.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Leave is granted.

**Senator Dasko:** Thank you, Senator Pate, for your very significant critique of the bill.

We know that coercive control is a significant and troubling phenomenon. In your view, is there any role for the criminal justice system in dealing with coercive control?

**Senator Pate:** There is always a role for the criminal legal system. I don't call it a justice system for many of the reasons I have just discussed.

However, one of the challenges is that we use criminal law, corrections and prison sentences as a way of signalling our concern when, in fact, all of the evidence, for decades now, has shown that — and the minister said it when he was before us — these provisions should not be happening alone. A significant pillar is going to be the economic, social, health, housing and educational components that go along with the provisions. This bill does not achieve that. It puts in place penalties, not the very things that all research shows are needed to help provide opportunities for people to leave abusive situations, to prevent people from being in those situations in the first place and to support people around those who are trying to leave those situations.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise to speak at third reading of Bill C-16, and I will be brief in my remarks. As you all know, I have a long-held principle in this chamber on trying to make lengthy remarks at either second or third reading. I'm sure you all remember the riveting speech I gave at second reading on Bill C-16, and I don't want to be repetitive.

However, I do want to say a few things. Protecting victims — which is what this bill is all about — is a noble cause, and the government has made a noble attempt but has fallen somewhat short.

Bill C-16 contains measures we do support, clearly, especially on victim protection, but we cannot support the overall result of this bill.

Conservatives improved the bill in the other place in important ways in their committee work, including on intimate images, AI-generated material and stronger protection for victims. The central unresolved problem remains the safety valve for mandatory minimum penalties, which has been the subject of outcry from the general public for quite a while.

As was raised at the Legal Committee, the bill sets out no clear objective statute to govern when that safety valve may be used. By allowing judges to bypass mandatory minimums so broadly, the bill fails to respect Parliament's will and weakens Parliament's role in setting meaningful consequences for crimes. I think we all know the public has been screaming for that for quite a while.

That means mandatory minimums are no longer real sentencing floors in any meaningful sense. It weakens denunciation, deterrence and confidence in the justice system. It sends the wrong message to victims of serious crimes. For those reasons, honourable colleagues, the opposition cannot support this bill in third reading.

I want to share some reflections in terms of process with respect to Bill C-16 and the role of this chamber.

Many of us have been concerned over the past few days and weeks in terms of the number of last-minute bills we received as we come to the end of this parliamentary session. We're constantly concerned by the timeline and the lack of respect from the other place when it comes to us dealing with things and carrying out our sober second thought. Nowhere is this more concerning than with Bill C-16. I think many of us in this chamber expressed — and it was eloquently expressed over a number of meetings at the Legal Committee I participated in — that there were elements of this bill that could have been tightened up to make it better. Fundamentally, that is the role of Parliament. That is the role of this institution.

For a variety of reasons, we have brought ourselves to a point in our Parliament where parliamentarians have been discouraged by government from participating in the partisan political process or becoming active members of parties, where public policy is driven at the embryonic stage. The government has made it clear that members of this house of Parliament, this Senate, this chamber, cannot participate at national caucus, where the crafting of legislation begins; it is really where the nuts and bolts of putting laws together starts. It gives the people of this institution, parliamentarians of the Senate, an opportunity at the front end to be able to craft, draft and also orient public policy.

• (1610)

This is not up to us; that is an issue for the government to address. One suggestion I can make to the government — and I think parliamentarians will agree with me that it's for the betterment of legislative work that we do here, because this is not new. Governments historically send bills here at the last minute. They look at the clock, they look at the agenda, and they say, "Get it out; it's a matter of public interest. No time for sober second thought."

But there is a mechanism in our Parliament we all know that government bills don't have to start in the House of Commons. They can start here in the chamber, in the Senate, and work their way to the House. A bill as important as this bill, as lengthy as this bill — I won't say as controversial, but I will say that a lot of voices in the country would like to be heard on this bill. I think this is an example where, instead of this bill having been tabled in December in the other house and booted around — and, of course, the legitimate art and trafficking of politics that go on in the other place are legitimate and important. We know it takes time and it's cumbersome. But sober second thought takes a little bit of time as well. It's something that we need to be doing as well on this side.

So maybe in the future, government leader, bills of this nature could be dropped into this institution, this chamber, at the front end. Give us a little bit more time and a little bit more flexibility to be able to hear the voices and make the amendments. That way, there is never the complaint of us holding up members of the House of Commons from their very important summer vacations.

I think that would bring a better end result in terms of what we need to do. Quite frankly, I think, in some instances, it would provide a better platform and launching pad for members of the House of Commons to do their legitimate work when we do the sober second thought at the front end of the process.

So, I just share those reflections. I've been here for 18 years. I'm not so sure that these are going to go any further than all the other reflections that have come before. I put them on the table, nonetheless. For all those reasons I mentioned earlier in my remarks, we do not support Bill C-16. Thank you, colleagues.

[*Translation*]

**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?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

[*English*]

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** I see two senators rising. Do we have agreement on the length of the bell?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Yes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Leave is granted. The vote will happen at 4:27. Call in the senators.

[ Senator Housakos ]

• (1620)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Adler | LaBoucane-Benson |
| Al Zaibak | Lewis |
| Arnold | Loffreda |
| Arnot | MacAdam |
| Aucoin | Manning |
| Black | McBean |
| Boehm | McNair |
| Boudreau | Miville-Dechêne |
| Boyer | Moncion |
| Brazeau | Moreau |
| Burey | Muggli |
| Busson | Osler |
| Cardozo | Oudar |
| Cuzner | Patterson |
| Dalphond | Petitclerc |
| Dasko | Petten |
| Deacon (*Nova Scotia*) | Prosper |
| Dean | Pupatello |
| Duncan | Ravalia |
| Forest | Ringuette |
| Francis | Robinson |
| Fridhandler | Ross |
| Gerba | Saint-Germain |
| Gignac | Sorensen |
| Greenwood | Tannas |
| Hay | Varone |
| Hébert | Verner |
| Henkel | Wells (*Alberta*) |
| Ince | White |
| Karetak-Lindell | Wilson |
| Kingston | Youance |
| Klyne | Yussuff—64 |

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Ataullahjan | Pate |
| Batters | Poirier |
| Carignan | Senior |
| Clement | Simons |
| Housakos | Wallin |
| MacDonald | Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*) |
| Martin | Woo—14 |

ABSTENTION
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR

Coyle—1

• (1630)

## STRONG AND FREE ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

**Hon. Pat Duncan** moved third reading of Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026.

She said: Honourable senators, it is an honour for me to rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-25 on behalf of our colleague Senator Farah Mohamed.

May I begin by offering my sincere thanks on behalf of all our colleagues in the Senate to the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. When I began my tenure in the Senate, serving on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance with our colleague retired senator Mockler, I fondly recall the hours and hours and intense work of that committee.

As I have become more acquainted and been fortunate to sit in on some of the debate at the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, may I offer my humble thanks for your collegial dedication and, dare I say, intense scrutiny of the many pieces of legislation this spring. You have been asked to provide your best advice, and I believe I can speak for all my colleagues when I offer my thanks for your efforts.

While I will not profess to be nearly as eloquent as our colleague Senator Mohamed, I do have a sense of responsibility to offer a few remarks in support of Bill C-25.

Colleagues, I mentioned the work of Senate committees a few moments ago. Our committee work, particularly the recommendations and advice contained therein, is a source of pride in the Senate. I have considered my appointment to the Senate an honour and such a privilege to be of service. It is also one of responsibility.

The sense of responsibility was acutely clear for me during my time with the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, as we refer to it. At that time, in 2024, the committee included all recognized parties and most groups in the Senate.

The 2024 *National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Special Report on Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Processes and Institutions* recommended that the government should engage political parties to determine whether party nomination processes and leadership conventions should be included within the framework of the Canada Elections Act.

Bill C-25 incorporates this recommendation. Nomination and leadership contests and their contestants will benefit from new protections against undue foreign influence, offering or accepting a bribe, intimidation and pretense or contrivance, impersonation, misleading publications, unauthorized use of a computer and broadcasting outside Canada.

May I remind senators that the National Security and Intelligence Committee is formed of senators and members of Parliament from all parties. The decisions, recommendations and reports of the committee are the reasoned work of the committee.

Just like Bill C-25, this legislation for our consideration has been agreed to by all major parties in the House of Commons. It now comes to us, and I am recommending to our colleagues to accept the advice given to us by the elected members.

Not everyone agrees all the time, just as not all recommendations from NSICOP and other Senate committees or suggested amendments respond to perspectives heard at committee.

One of the matters heard repeatedly and uppermost in recent news cycles is the matter of privacy. In that context, I would also like to take a moment to talk about the new, robust and stringent privacy requirements imposed on federal political parties.

As you all know, these measures stem from Part 4 of Bill C-4, which received Royal Assent on March 12 and clarified Parliament's long-standing intent that federal political parties' activities relating to personal information for electoral purposes are governed exclusively by the regime in the Canada Elections Act.

The strong and free elections act would build upon Bill C-4 by introducing new, robust and enforceable requirements for federal political parties' privacy policies. This includes requiring personal information safeguards and disclosure obligations in the event of a data breach. We know that political parties occupy a unique constitutional position in Canada. Unlike commercial enterprises or government agencies, their core functions — political expression, organizing and contesting elections — are deeply rooted in the freedom of expression and association protected under section 2 of the Charter.

Many of us in this chamber have engaged in political activities like seeking office and volunteering for political parties.

• (1640)

Like the independent Senate and all of us, this matter of privacy is the new normal in the days of Facebook and Instagram. I would like to offer a particular thanks to Senator Deacon from Nova Scotia, and especially to Senator Hay, for all their efforts to enlighten and educate us by offering us the opportunity to learn about AI.

For all of us, this legislation and this understanding of the new world are works in progress. It is important to note that Bill C-25 establishes a privacy floor, not a ceiling.

Every house needs a foundation upon which to build. This bill establishes a necessary baseline for data protection and creates an enforceable standard of accountability that allows for future legislative refinement.

Colleagues, these amendments and others are responsive to recommendations made by the Chief Electoral Officer, the Commissioner of Canada Elections and the Public Inquiry into Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. Parliament has entrusted responsibility to the independent Commissioner of Canada Elections for ensuring that the Canada Elections Act is complied with and enforced.

The commissioner's work is an essential element to upholding Canadians' trust in the integrity of our electoral system. Bill C-25 proposes to strengthen the commissioner's enforcement capacity by providing her with additional tools to address violations of the Canada Elections Act swiftly and effectively.

One example of this is the increase to the maximum administrative monetary penalties, which are low in the Canada Elections Act compared to those in other pieces of federal legislation, such as anti-spam legislation, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada Act and the Competition Act.

The commissioner will be required to consider whether a violation was committed by, or in association with, a foreign entity when determining the value of an administrative monetary penalty.

As you are aware, the bill also includes new abilities for the commissioner to order an individual to appear before investigators to facilitate investigations, as well as to order the preservation and production of evidence. This will not only streamline investigations but will also reduce the risk of evidence being lost or destroyed.

These changes are long overdue and will align the powers of the Commissioner of Canada Elections with those provided to her counterparts, such as the Foreign Influence Transparency Commissioner and the Lobbying Commissioner. They will also help reduce delays in completing investigations and holding those who break the law to account in a timely manner. Bill C-25 will also provide the commissioner with the authority to investigate and hold accountable those who conspire, attempt or support others in contravening the act.

The Canada Elections Act has long been recognized as a fundamental pillar of Canadian democracy. It is renowned for its election safeguards, robust political financing rules and transparency requirements, as a result of continual, gradual updates and improvements. Bill C-25 continues Parliament's tradition of improving the Canada Elections Act to respond to lessons learned and to address new and emerging challenges.

Honourable senators, as an essential element of Canada's Parliament, we have a responsibility to ensure that our elections continue to be safe and secure. This bill proposes a suite of amendments to the Canada Elections Act and is the expression of our commitment to continue safeguarding our democratic institutions and ensuring that our electoral processes remain secure, transparent and fair. The bill lays out rules that ensure our elections are free of undue influence, malicious interference and financial misconduct.

While I have highlighted only a select number of the measures contained in Bill C-25, the bill as a whole reflects a thoughtful, necessary effort to modernize our electoral framework. Ultimately, Bill C-25 is a necessary step to be taken now to enable the office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections to do the necessary work they are prepared to do immediately to safeguard the electoral process and democracy that we hold so dear. I commend its passage to my colleagues.

Your efforts to support this bill today will enable the "Strong and Free Elections Act" to ensure that our federal elections and democratic processes remain some of the most robust and well protected in the world.

Thank you, colleagues. *Mahsi'cho*.

**Hon. Colin Deacon:** Honourable senators, I would like to thank Senator Duncan for her thoughtful intervention and her service as both an elected and a non-elected parliamentarian. In both roles she has served Canada well and continues to work to fulfill her responsibilities every day.

Colleagues, I'll be briefer than I was on Tuesday. I promise.

Bill C-25 contains — as Senator Duncan was saying — many excellent and long-awaited amendments to the Canada Elections Act. Senator Mohamed did a truly excellent job of outlining the many important reforms included in the bill at her second reading speech.

These include fixing the challenge of the longest ballots, strengthening our defences against foreign interference, modernizing our approach to disinformation, and better protecting candidates, party staff and election workers. These are important reforms.

Bill C-25 also includes extensive finance and spending reforms, which are spread across clauses 15, 17, 19, 24 and 26. As Senator Duncan reminded us, over the decades, the rules around federal political party finances have been carefully codified in the Canada Elections Act, including how much money can be contributed to a political party, the accepted forms of contributions, how much can be spent in an election campaign and how those funds must be accounted for.

We are careful because a lack of uniform rules could give one party an enormous and long-lasting advantage over others. Money pays for staff, data, ads, polling and legal resources. It can also have a corrupting influence, as the world has witnessed in vivid terms over the past 18 months. No one debates why political party finances must be managed so carefully.

However, in this digital era, I would argue that data is even more powerful and valuable than money. Data is like uranium: It is immensely beneficial in medicine, energy and industry, but it is also capable of building horrific atomic bombs. I raise this analogy because I am deeply concerned about the lack of

oversight in terms of how federal political parties collect, retain, use and share the identifiable personal information of Canadian electors and youth over 14 years of age.

Without uniform controls, voter data becomes even more powerful than finances. That's because money buys data infrastructure, and data infrastructure multiplies the value of money.

Colleagues, exclusive control over the identifiable personal information of electors is a newer and much less understood threat than concerns over finances. Our democratic systems have had decades of experience managing the corrupting influence of money, as Senator Duncan articulated very well. However, they have had almost none when it comes to managing micro-targeting, voter suppression or psychological profiling, when these tactics are conducted digitally and at scale.

Obviously, the greatest danger is when one party holds both money and rich data. That is precisely why so many democracies have begun to regulate both, including jurisdictions like the EU, the U.K. and New Zealand, along with the Provinces of B.C. and Quebec in Canada.

Voters generally know when a candidate outspends an opponent, but they have no idea when they are being targeted with messaging that is specifically engineered for their personal psychological profile, or when their neighbours are receiving voter suppression messaging.

We have heard a lot about surveillance pricing of late, where retailers use our personal information to identify a price based on their calculation of the maximum we're willing to pay. Governments are quickly moving to ban this practice, which has been used increasingly for more than a decade. When that same technique is applied in the political sphere, it's called "micro-targeting."

Colleagues, when personal information is used to influence an intended target's decision, without the awareness and consent of that target, it undermines institutional trust at the very moment when the target discovers what has been happening.

• (1650)

That's one of the reasons why I believe the elements in clause 36 will come back to bite Canada. We have no idea what our 14 political parties may choose to do with the flexibility that the three national political parties have negotiated. In large measure, that's because there is no party disclosing what data they currently control and how those data are used.

Here is an overview of the potential problems and conditions that clause 36 creates:

First, there are no consistent minimum standards that the federal political party privacy regimes must adhere to. There is not that foundation, unfortunately, that Senator Duncan spoke about.

In the technical briefing, the officials admitted, when answering a question, that new higher administrative monetary penalties that have been put in place actually incentivize the political parties to have a weaker voluntary privacy regime.

Second, electors do not have the legal right to require federal political parties to obtain their consent before the party begins to collect and use their identifiable personal information — data that goes well beyond the information contained on Elections Canada's permanent list of electors.

Third, electors have no legal right to know what identifiable personal information a federal political party has gathered on them, nor do they have the right to have those data deleted.

Fourth, federal political parties are not restricted from purchasing personal information from data brokers and combining that with information contained on the permanent list of electors.

Fifth, electors' personal information can be shared with affiliated organizations like provincial political parties and with commercial third parties such as polling or social media firms, and this can happen without the electors' knowledge or consent. Once shared, those third parties are no longer bound by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA, only by the federal political party's own internally drafted privacy policy.

Sixth, political parties are prohibited from selling electors' personal information, but they are not prohibited from trading it for in-kind benefits.

Seventh, despite having no right to review what information a political party holds on them, the political party websites tell electors that they can write to the party to correct or update their information.

Eighth, parties face no restrictions on collecting identifiable personal information on minors, and only one party has explicitly chosen to not collect information on those under 14 years of age.

Ninth, in the event of a data breach, no oversight body is ever notified. The individuals affected are only notified if party officials take "appropriate steps" to review the situation, consult their own internal policies and determine that they think there is a "real risk" of "significant harm." If they conclude otherwise, the affected electors will never know that their information was compromised.

Bill C-25 codifies the ability of our federal political parties to self-regulate the identifiable personal information of Canadian electors and youth over 14 years of age without oversight. This is what the operatives of our major political parties have negotiated.

Political data indicates that only 10% of Canadians are even aware that the federal political parties set their own privacy rules. Once made aware, only 10% of those Canadians support this approach.

Colleagues, despite Senator Housakos' 43 years of experience working with the Conservative Party and despite the confidence he described on Tuesday that they ". . . go above and beyond in being careful with the data they collect and what they do with it . . . ." he would have no idea whether this is the case in any of the other 13 political parties. Additionally, he may or may not be an expert in cybersecurity risks and privacy law. I only know that I am not, but I listen carefully to those who are.

Colleagues, I support Bill C-25's many constructive and long-overdue amendments to the Canada Elections Act but outside of the conditions enabled in clause 36. I deeply fear that the clause 36 amendments will not end well and that the outcome will undermine trust in our political parties and process.

I could be completely wrong in my assessment, but over the past three years of being troubled by this issue, I have not yet been corrected by any of the experts with whom I have spoken.

Importantly, because the government invoked closure on Monday night — the very day we received the bill — our Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee could not hear from witnesses who could have provided testimony that might have rebutted these concerns.

The impossibly short timeline meant that the witnesses whom our committee wanted to hear from were unavailable yesterday, which was the one day that we had to study this bill.

As such, colleagues, I will abstain from this vote. I have not taken this decision lightly, and it is something that I have only done one other time at third reading of a government bill over my eight years in the Senate. I came to this conclusion that an abstention vote is the only way that I can register my serious concerns about clause 36 and the only way to constructively demonstrate that we tried our very best to fulfill our constitutional responsibility in this legislative review.

I do not believe that the federal political parties should be the masters of their own privacy rules and have unfettered control over their activities related to the data and privacy rights of electors. To those of you who share my discomfort, I encourage you not to vote against this bill but to join those who choose to abstain. I have absolutely no concern that this bill will pass, as both the Government Representative's Office and the opposition will be supporting it.

Thank you, colleagues, for your attention.

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** Thank you, Senator Deacon, for your excellent intervention.

Honourable senators, I want to start out by thanking Senator Housakos for his second reading speech which, together with his comments at committee yesterday, helped me get things clear as to how I should vote.

During his second reading speech, Senator Housakos said:

> When Parliament considers legislation affecting the electoral process, it's considering the framework through which democratic accountability itself is exercised. Electoral laws are not simply another area of public policy. They establish the rules by which members of the House of Commons obtain their democratic mandate. For that reason, senators should exercise particular caution before frustrating the expressed will of the elected chamber on these matters.

We also heard something similar from the government when we made some suggestions by way of amendment on this very issue in Bill C-4 only a few weeks ago. In their public message to us, they said:

> . . . there is a long tradition of the Senate deferring to the House of Commons on amendments to the Canada Elections Act, particularly those which have unanimous support of all recognized parties in the House and which govern the operations of candidates representing political parties seeking election to the House of Commons.

On top of those pretty clear messages, as we attempt to think our way through this, we received — and ultimately this Senate approved — a motion for lightspeed passage of this bill through our chamber, which is not consistent with sober second thought.

But we approved it. It was proposed by the government and approved by this chamber. MPs and political parties have made it crystal clear that they are unable to provide Canadians with privacy protection to the same level required of every other organization in Canada, and they have made it clear that they believe they are accountable for this. They are confident that they are accountable to the public for this decision that they have made and for this legislation created the way that it is, with the concerns, the downfalls, the foibles and the accommodations — let's call it — that they feel they need in order to do what they need to do to hold free and fair elections.

• (1700)

They have made it clear that if something goes wrong, they will be the ones to wear this. Fair enough. I think that is true, but where does that leave us?

I believe we have done our best through the efforts we've made here, under the circumstances, with the work we did on Bill C-4, Part 4, to raise concerns and speak about them. There was media attention and so on. We know where that led us.

We're going to come to a vote here shortly. I cannot vote for the bill because it does not deal with the issues of privacy protection that Canadians deserve, which I believe could, in fact, with effort, be protected better.

But I cannot vote against this bill because it has some important improvements and because I am, in fact, influenced by the messages we got. For me, abstention is purpose-built for this particular moment, and other senators may wish to consider it as well.

I'm confident that there are enough senators here to pass this bill on behalf of the parties and the House of Commons. I also believe that an abstention acknowledges that the House of Commons and the political parties bear the ultimate responsibility for this legislation, for better or worse.

I hope my comments give you some pause as we head for this vote. Thank you, colleagues.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I will be brief speaking on third reading of Bill C-25, and thanks to Senator Tannas for quoting the essential elements of my argument. It saves a lot of time for my speech, and I won't have to repeat them. I would like to be surgical and concise.

I do thank Senator Deacon because he has been advocating for this for a very long time. I know it comes from a genuine and sincere place but one that is really not connected with reality.

In your argument about data collection by political parties, you quoted what I said at committee yesterday. I think I highlighted what the Conservative Party generally collects. You said that I'm assuming I know what other parties collect. The truth of the matter is that, for those of us who traffic in the art of politics and in the element of election campaigns, it doesn't matter what party we're in; we spend a lot of time together. We spend a lot of time overlapping and interrelating. We spend a lot of time putting out contrary arguments and following each other very carefully in terms of what is being sold to constituents at the door. It doesn't matter if you're trafficking with Conservative or Liberal philosophies, the NDP, the Green Party or anything else or if you're running for a Senate seat in Alberta.

I can tell you, honourable colleagues, that Canadians give up a whole lot more information to big tech data on social media on a daily basis or every time they fill out an application form to get a quote from an insurance company or a bank. The amount of information that Canadians willingly and, in some cases, on an obligated basis have to provide is far more intrusive: real-time location history, browsing behaviour and history, purchase history, contact lists and facial recognition; the list goes on and on. For political parties, however, the information collected is voluntary — and I underline that — and provided by supporters. It's generally just phone numbers and email addresses. At any time, citizens can ask to be removed from mailing lists. Even while still a member, they can ask to be removed and not be solicited for money, membership or events, whatever the case may be.

Let's also not forget that, for political parties to understand their communities, it is done through various outreach and engagement. Very often, you can't exercise democracy without that outreach. Political parties are accountable. They are accountable through public security, public scrutiny, the media, Parliament and elections. Senator Tannas and Senator Deacon, I do welcome you to come join me in the next general election while we door knock and talk to Canadian citizens. I'll be more than happy to share our data forms of the information we ask and the information that is given or not given.

Then you can do that same exercise a week later with another political party. Somehow I doubt they are reinventing the wheel. All of us are doing pretty much the same things.

We have the right to do what we're doing here right now, which is to call it into question and debate it from both sides of the equation. You have your privilege to vote for or against. I have always strongly encouraged colleagues here to vote for or against. Abstention should be used on a very rare basis. You strongly believe about this, so express yourselves freely.

But I'll say this: Every time there is boundary reform — and it's required every decade or so because of population change — to adjust ridings or the electoral list, it's always done on the House side. It's never done on this side. We're allowed to put in our two cents' worth, which we're doing right now, but there is a reason why it's always done on the other side. It's always done with consensus.

You're right. When electoral reform regarding financial contributions was done, there was a consensus by everybody on the other side that things needed to be tightened up. They came to that consensus, and they tightened that up. Every time there are adjustments to boundaries, they come to a consensus. It's not done lightly. MPs get together, and they have long discussions. Then, very often, those MPs go back to their constituencies, which means the riding associations of the various political parties, and people have input even on that. It's even discussed at workshops and at general conventions of parties.

However, there is always this suspicion. We hold our political office holders in this country to suspicion levels that we don't hold anyone else. We're so disparaging of our democratic system, and we call it into question, particularly the upper house of this chamber. We stand on the shoulders of the House of Commons and the electoral results; that's the reality. When we call them into question, we call ourselves and the legitimacy of this institution into question.

For that reason, in this particular instance, there is no need to look for monsters and ghosts around every corner. I support Bill C-25. I think we should move it expeditiously.

**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.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on the length of the bell?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** The vote will take place at 5:23. Call in the senators.

• (1720)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Arnold | Kingston |
| Ataullahjan | Klyne |
| Aucoin | LaBoucane-Benson |
| Boehm | Loffreda |
| Boudreau | MacAdam |
| Boyer | MacDonald |
| Brazeau | Manning |
| Burey | Martin |
| Busson | McBean |
| Cardozo | McNair |
| Carignan | Moncion |
| Cormier | Moreau |
| Coyle | Muggli |
| Cuzner | Oudar |
| Dalphond | Petitclerc |
| Dasko | Petten |
| Dean | Poirier |
| Duncan | Pupatello |
| Forest | Ravalia |
| Francis | Ringuette |
| Fridhandler | Saint-Germain |
| Gerba | Sorensen |
| Gignac | Varone |
| Greenwood | Wells (*Alberta*) |
| Harder | Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*) |
| Hay | White |
| Hébert | Wilson |
| Housakos | Youance |
| Karetak-Lindell | Yussuff—58 |

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Batters | Pate |
| Clement | Prosper—4 |

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Adler | Patterson |
| Al Zaibak | Robinson |
| Black | Ross |
| Deacon (*Nova Scotia*) | Simons |
| Ince | Tannas |
| Lewis | Verner |
| Miville-Dechêne | Wallin |
| Osler | Woo—16 |

• (1730)

## BILL TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN PAYMENTS TO BE MADE OUT OF THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING HOUSING SUPPLY

THIRD READING

**Hon. Marnie McBean** moved third reading of Bill C-26, An Act to authorize certain payments to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of improving housing supply.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-26, An Act to authorize certain payments to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of improving housing supply. I will be less brief with this one than I was with the other two.

At the outset, let me say that no one in this chamber needs to be convinced that Canada is facing a housing crisis. Canadians know it because we are all living it. Young families who did everything right and young Canadians who went to school, got educated, learned a trade and are working hard and saving still can't afford a first home. Renters are watching more of their paycheques disappear each month, all of it going into paying more for rent or mortgages they just can't afford. New Canadians arrive in communities where there are simply not enough homes for them — new Canadians coming to what they thought was a

country that offered promise that those from humble beginnings could rise to great achievements through hard work. Seniors who wish to downsize often find the alternatives are too expensive or too far from the communities they know or simply not suitable for their needs.

Canada needs more homes, and we need them built faster than ever before. We need unnecessary costs reduced, and we need governments at every level to stop adding delays, red tape and expenses to the process of putting shovels in the ground.

Therefore, to the extent that Bill C-26 is intended to improve housing supply, that objective is a worthy one. However, the role of this chamber is not to simply applaud worthy objectives. Our role is to examine the legislation before us and ask whether it is well designed, respects Parliament, protects taxpayers and is likely to achieve the results the government claims. If there is a likelihood of achieving those results, it needs tangible benchmarks and targets. On those tests, Bill C-26 raises serious concerns.

Honourable colleagues, this is a remarkably short bill. In substance, it does one thing: It authorizes the Minister of Finance to make payments to provinces and territories totalling $1.7 billion for the purpose of improving housing supply. The amount of each payment is to be determined by the minister, and the money may be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund at times and in a manner the minister considers appropriate.

Honourable colleagues, the Consolidated Revenue Fund is there for emergencies — specific emergencies when you can't go to Parliament in order to seek leave and have it granted for that fund to be used. It is really for extenuating circumstances. You will all be very hard-pressed to find circumstances other than national emergencies where any government would go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

That is essentially the entirety of this bill. Like so many bills before it, Bill C-26 provides unfettered discretion for the minister and increases the power of the executive branch. This is a concerning pattern with this government. Out of curiosity, I asked AI to provide me with a list of instances where the Carney government has increased the power of the executive since taking office. After thinking for 48 seconds — not that long, even for AI — it gave me 60 examples. Senator Harder, that's remarkable, actually. When I responded, "Are there more?," it thought for 17 more seconds and gave me 20 more examples.

Colleagues, Bill C-26 is not an anomaly in this respect. Under this government, it is a norm. Consider the fact that, despite the bill's stated intent of improving housing supply, there is no definition of improving housing supply. There is no allocation formula for how the money will be divided. There are no eligibility criteria. There is no requirement to publish federal-provincial agreements. There are no requirements to report how many homes will be built, where they will be built or when. There is no requirement to demonstrate that the provinces are reducing development charges, accelerating permitting, cutting red tape or lowering the costs of construction. Also, there are no clawbacks if the money fails to produce results.

These are not minor omissions; they go to the heart of the matter: Why is the government asking Parliament to approve $1.7 billion when the bill does not tell Parliament, with any precision, what that money will buy you?

**Senator Martin:** Another blank cheque.

[*Translation*]

**Senator Housakos:** In yesterday's committee of the whole, we asked the minister that question multiple times. He didn't have an answer. We asked him how many homes could be built in Canada with that $1.7 billion. He didn't offer any numbers. He talked about estimates for Ontario, but he didn't supply a national target for Bill C-26.

We pressed him. He replied that the government did not want to impose rules or targets on the provinces and territories. We asked whether the provinces should lower construction-related taxes. He said there were no strings attached to the money. It's a direct transfer. It's free.

In other words, colleagues, this $1.7-billion bill is premised solely on the hopes of the minister and various levels of government. Governments hope the bill will make things better, but they don't know if it will work. There are no metrics in place to measure the success of this $1.7-billion initiative.

[*English*]

That is a big number, even for the Senate.

In other words, colleagues, this bill is a $1.7-billion exercise in wishful thinking — in hoping, in dreaming. The government hopes and dreams that it will help, but it doesn't know if it will. It is not implementing any metrics, measures or benchmarks for its success after we pass this bill.

This is quite alarming, not just because we are talking about $1.7 billion but because it is entirely possible that these measures could end up stimulating demand more than increasing supply, which would make housing affordability worse, not better.

Colleagues, Canadians need more than spending announcements that blur the distinction between activities and results. As I said at the beginning of my speech, our role is to examine the legislation before us and ask whether it is well designed, respects Parliament, protects taxpayers and is likely to achieve the results the government claims.

Bill C-26 fails on each and every front.

Honourable senators, we had the minister here yesterday. The government again — because of timelines and time constraints — put a barrel to our heads and told us we had to get this out quickly. We had the minister before this chamber, and other than the fact that this bill spends $1.7 billion, which will be spread out at the discretion of the minister across provinces and territories, with no strings attached, to continue to — and, by the way, this is what the minister responded yesterday at Committee of the Whole when he was asked to give the precise way this would function; he said that we're giving the money to the

provinces, and we trust they are going to do the job, using the same structures they have been using over the last decade. They are not changing anything.

What do you think the odds are that just spending more money will solve the problem when the provinces will continue to do the same things over and over? We have seen zero results. It is not as if we have seen some good results over the past decade and that a priming of the wheel will give us better results.

One comes to the conclusion when you hear the minister answer that. Yesterday, when we asked the minister what his benchmarks and expectations are on a national basis — I think you all heard multiple questions in English and French — it was hope. It was pie in the sky, where you spend more and eventually receive less. Of course, we have seen the example there that spending more doesn't always get more.

• (1740)

Colleagues, I'm very concerned because I have been engaged in the political process for a long time. I have been in politics for decades. Senator Carignan, where I come from, when a government goes to a discretionary fund, pulls out $1.7 billion with no checks or balances and sends that money across the country on a hope and a whim, we call that a political slush fund. At the discretion of the government and the minister, they will give that money in envelopes — oodles of it — to the levels of government and the regions they want, fulfilling certain politically expedient objectives.

Even the sponsorship scandal that brought down a Liberal government once upon a time had more parameters, objectives and goals — and involved far less money — than this.

Honourable senators, on that logical basis — while there are some bills that come from the House that I find constructive and even some that have hopeful objectives, there are some that affect the core of my belief in fiscal and legislative responsibility. This particular bill really offends the core of my fiscal point of view on our fiduciary responsibility as senators.

For that reason, the opposition will oppose Bill C-26.

**Hon. Denise Batters:** Would Senator Housakos take a question or two?

**Senator Housakos:** Yes.

**Senator Batters:** Yesterday, I had the chance to ask the sponsor of the bill, Senator McBean, a couple of questions after her speech. I was hoping maybe the government might have some more information on those topics for today. However, that is not the case because there wasn't a third reading speech, so I'm assuming the government doesn't have any further information to relay on those points. A couple of the things I found particularly troubling were, first, that this is a very unusual occurrence. As Senator McBean explained, this type of Consolidated Revenue Fund was last used during the COVID pandemic. Of course, that was very much a time of crisis, but it was also a time when Parliament was rarely sitting.

Is that something that provides you additional concern? Also, when I asked Senator McBean yesterday about the amounts the different provinces will be receiving under this — I asked particularly about my home province of Saskatchewan — Senator McBean answered that this is not yet public. The provinces apparently know, but the numbers are not public.

So, if we don't even know which provinces are getting which amounts of this $1.7 billion, how can anyone in this chamber actually vote for that? It could simply be a matter of which premiers the Minister of Finance happens to be getting along with that week.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Was that a question?

**Senator Batters:** Isn't that correct? Do those things cause you concern?

**Senator Housakos:** Senator Batters, I will not call into question the various reasons senators have for voting for or against various legislation. Probably the only way I can explain it is to say that some senators are more hopeful than others and some are more optimistic than others. Maybe after many years of being in this Parliament, you and I tend to be a little more skeptical and pragmatic regarding how the government approaches expenditures of this nature.

Also, in all fairness to Senator McBean, I thought you did a very good job handling many tough questions yesterday, senator. Congratulations on that. We cannot blame any sponsor or colleague in this place for the fact that the government and the minister did not have answers to those critical questions. The truth of the matter is that yesterday, we asked for the minister specifically to provide more information. It was not forthcoming.

I only assume there will be enough pressure in the months ahead and oversight by both the Senate and the House to make sure the government is diligent in dealing with the $1.7 billion. For certain, the opposition will be keeping an eye on this from coast to coast to coast.

**Senator McBean:** Would Senator Housakos take a question?

**Senator Housakos:** Of course. Today, I think I'm being paid by the word.

**Senator McBean:** Today, the government and the Province of B.C. announced a one-time transfer of $284 million to British Columbia to reduce barriers to new construction. This would flow directly from the passage of Bill C-26. Do you not agree that this is important funding going to the Province of B.C. to improve housing?

**Senator Housakos:** There is no doubt it is important. What I would love to see, though, is more concrete deregulation from the provinces already putting into place housing projects. I would like to see that deregulation meet investment from the federal government. I would love to see the targets when the investment is going out to these provinces, which we have not really seen so far.

More importantly, if we really want to tackle the cost of housing, we would also like to see the government get rid of the commercial carbon tax that is currently driving up costs in terms of construction and transportation products. All of these things are related. We would also like to see the immigration system fixed; it has been broken now for a decade. We have seen an influx of immigrants, though the government has curtailed it. They have made announcements about reducing the number of immigrants over the past 12 to 14 months, but this was more of a knee-jerk reaction.

We still have a labour shortage in the country, and we have an immigration system that is not corresponding to our needs. That has to be addressed because we have seen over the past decade that the runaway immigration system has caused a scarcity crisis.

There are many things the government should be doing in a thoughtful way, in a more deep-dive policy way than they are, rather than just sending money to provinces. The provinces will argue — in terms of a public relations exercise — that all these hundreds of millions of dollars going to the various regions will be helpful to accelerate housing starts.

Looking at the actual number of housing starts per province over the past two years — as someone who comes from the business world — I would be looking at the structural system we have in place provincially more than the amount of money they are getting from the federal government.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Are honourable 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.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is there an agreement on the length of a bell? If there is not an agreement, it will be one hour.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted for 15 minutes?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Leave is granted. The vote will take place at 6:02. Call in the senators.

• (1800)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler
Al Zaibak
Arnold
Aucoin
Black
Boehm
Boudreau
Boyer
Brazeau
Burey
Busson
Cardozo
Clement
Cormier
Coyle
Cuzner
Dalphond
Dasko
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Dean
Duncan
Forest
Francis
Fridhandler
Gerba
Gignac
Greenwood
Harder
Hay
Hébert
Ince
Karetak-Lindell
Kingston
Klyne
LaBoucane-Benson
Lewis
Loffreda
MacAdam
McBean
McNair
Miville-Dechêne
Moncion
Moreau
Muggli
Osler
Oudar
Pate
Petitclerc
Petten
Prosper
Pupatello
Ravalia
Ringuette
Robinson
Ross
Saint-Germain
Simons
Tannas
Varone
Wells (*Alberta*)
White
Wilson
Woo
Youance
Yussuff—65

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Ataullahjan | Manning |
| Batters | Martin |
| Carignan | Poirier |
| Housakos | Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*)—9 |
| MacDonald | |

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Patterson | Wallin—2 |

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

## SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026 IMPLEMENTATION BILL

NINTH REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Leave having been given to revert to Presenting or Tabling of Reports from Committees:

**Hon. Claude Carignan,** Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 18, 2026

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has the honour to present its

NINTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic updated tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Thursday, June 18, 2026, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

CLAUDE CARIGNAN

*Chair*

(*For text of observations, see today's* Journals of the Senate*, p. 1133*.)

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 15, 2026, the bill was placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later this day.)

[*English*]

THIRD READING

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello** moved third reading of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026.

She said: Honourable senators, as we wind up this session, I hope that this bill is actually the highlight of the last several weeks that we have been together here in this chamber. I am going to watch the clock.

Honourable senators, it is an honour for me to rise today at the third reading of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026.

The Senate's National Finance Committee began its study of the bill in early May and concluded over 20 hours of study and added an extra session in early June to be more thorough.

[*Translation*]

To give you an overview, this bill contains provisions that implement several of the measures outlined in the 2026 spring economic update, notably those aimed at improving Canada's tax system, promoting greater equity within the banking sector, supporting workers and strengthening the resilience of our national food supply.

I would like to begin with the measures in Bill C-30 relating to income tax and excise tax, which are an important part of the bill.

[*English*]

With respect to income tax, Part 1 of the bill introduces amendments to the Income Tax Act and related regulations intended to improve the functioning of the tax system. This includes modifications to the labour mobility deduction for eligible tradespeople. It was originally introduced in Budget 2022 to help recognize the financial burden of working away from home. It allows tradespeople to claim transportation, meals and temporary lodging costs of up to $4,000 annually. Notably, the amendments reduce the minimum distance threshold from 150 kilometres to 120 kilometres, and it increases the annual deductible to $10,000, which is up from $4,000.

Over 2,500 workers took advantage of this deduction last time, and 40% of them hit that cap of $4,000. The reduction by 30 kilometres will likely mean more people are able to claim as well.

The Executive Director of Canada's Building Trades Unions, Sean Strickland, appeared before the National Finance Committee. He was in support of this era of nation building and recognizes that one of the challenges is the availability of skilled trades. The building trades do fully support these measures in Bill C-30, which increases the labour mobility deduction to $10,000 and decreases the kilometres to qualify to 120 kilometres.

Starting in 2027, importantly, the maximum deduction increases in line with inflation, so we may not deal with this again.

Taken together, these changes would provide meaningful tax relief to tradespeople who travel for temporary job opportunities in the construction trades.

[*Translation*]

The $10-million capital gains tax exemption for eligible business transfers to employee ownership trusts and worker cooperatives was due to expire at the end of 2026. This measure makes it permanent, offering relief and long-term security to business owners planning for the succession of their companies.

By facilitating the transfer of ownership to employees, this measure will help ensure the long-term viability of small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly where there is no successor within the family or external buyer. Instead of facing closure, businesses could remain rooted in their communities, saving local jobs and the social fabric.

[*English*]

In Part 1, section 2.1.3 helps new homeowners. The original Home Buyers' Plan allowed people to withdraw funds from their RRSPs to purchase a home. They had 15 years to repay the amount withdrawn and had to make their first repayment two years after the withdrawal. The 2024 budget pushed that first repayment from two years to five years between 2022 and 2025. This clause in this bill pushes it out again for those first withdrawals to land between 2026 and 2028.

This extension once again recognizes that these initial years after purchasing a home can be financially demanding, as new homeowners often face a combination of mortgage payments and a host of other costs. This proposed postponement gives those new homeowners a chance to breathe.

[*Translation*]

Another tax measure set out in Bill C-30 provides temporary immediate expensing for eligible greenhouse buildings. These provisions would enable producers to fully write off the cost of building new greenhouse facilities in the year the expenditure is incurred, rather than spreading it out over several years. This would encourage the expansion of greenhouse production and help strengthen Canada's year-round domestic food supply. This measure forms part of a broader federal approach aimed at tackling rising food prices and strengthening food security.

[*English*]

As a quick reminder, the government has also introduced cost of living support through the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit, immediate assistance for food banks via the Local Food Infrastructure Fund and the continued development of the National Food Security Strategy focused on reinforcing domestic supply chains.

Part 2 of the bill introduces measures that are intended to provide temporary relief for specific sectors.

[*Translation*]

In response to recent fuel price increases, due in part to the evolving geopolitical situation in the Middle East, Bill C-30 amends the Excise Tax Act to provide temporary relief by setting federal excise tax rates on gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel at $0 from April 20 to September 7, 2026. That will get us through the usual summer travel season, up to Labour Day. At least 25 million drivers in Canada will save 10 cents per litre on gas and 4 cents per litre on diesel.

[*English*]

This temporary relief is reducing the pressure on fuel prices for Canadians at a time when it matters most. There is additional tax relief measures for beer, spirits and wine producers, a further two-year extension of the 2% cap on the inflation adjustment for those excise duties and an extension of the temporary 50% reduction on excise duty rates for the first 15,000 hectolitres of beer brewed in Canada for another two years.

• (1820)

Together, these two measures are expected to provide over $30 million in relief to this sector through 2028. Don't forget that those brewers have been facing higher packaging costs thanks to American tariffs on aluminum cans since 2025.

For our information, we have 1,200 small and independent craft breweries and brew pubs operating across Canada, supporting thousands of jobs, and we have over 600 wineries in Canada. They'll likely be having a toast to this measure should it pass.

Division 3 of Part 3 amends the Canadian Payments Act to make it so that the Canadian Payments Association, which is known as Payments Canada, and the people who work for it or represent it, such as employees, directors or officials, are legally protected from being sued for most types of civil liberty when they are performing their duties in good faith under the Canadian Payments Act. The only exception is contractual liability, meaning that they can still be held accountable if they breach a specific contract.

This change helps attract more members and promotes more competition within the payment system. In 2025, interestingly, Payments Canada settled more than $411 billion every day in business through these payment structures, so what they do is important. That's likely all the legal money flowing from one account to another.

Division 4 of Part 3 amends the Employment Insurance Act. This current measure, which provides up to five additional weeks of regular EI benefits to workers in seasonal industries in 13 targeted EI regions in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the Yukon, would be extended until October 7, 2028.

Division 5 of Part 3 introduces a change that would slightly lower the contribution rate for the base Canada Pension Plan, or CPP, from 9.9% to 9.5%, beginning on January 1, 2027. In practical terms, this means that both employers and employees would pay less into the CPP on earnings within the base pensionable range, resulting in savings of approximately $133 for both sides. It is a solid indicator of the CPP's long-term viability.

[*Translation*]

I also wanted to discuss a few measures related to transportation and information sharing.

Division 6 of Part 3 amends the Canada Transportation Act to require airports to provide the Minister of Transport with the information needed to develop policies, and it specifies how and to whom this information may be communicated. In practical terms, this amendment would allow the government to access the essential information it needs to assess the reforms of the Canadian airport system.

[*English*]

Divisions 7 and 8 of Part 3 outline amendments to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act and the Pest Control Products Act to clarify the agency's mandate and to take into account considerations relating to food security and the cost of food. There was a significant positive response to this from agriculture stakeholders. The amendments also authorize the Governor-in-Council, in defined circumstances, to exempt certain persons, activities or products from the application of legislation administered by the agency to ensure that consideration of economic security or food security does not have unintended consequences in those defined circumstances.

Finally, amendments to the Pest Control Products Act would now require the Minister of Health to consider, wherever appropriate, factors such as national economic security, regional economic security and national food security. The legislation also allows the Governor-in-Council to authorize the use of a pest control product in emergency situations. This authority applies in cases of serious infestations and can be used when it is considered necessary to protect national or regional economic security or Canada's food supply. The Governor-in-Council may also set specific conditions on how the product can be used.

Honourable senators, concerns were raised both in the other place and during the pre-study of the bill by the Senate Committee on National Finance about these new exceptional powers being granted in Parts 7 and 8 of the legislation.

In its report to the Senate on the pre-study of the bill, the committee commented:

> . . . these powers should be exercised only in exceptional circumstances and that decisions to use them should be made transparently, be informed by scientific evidence, and involve consultation with stakeholders. As well, they should be subject to strict oversight, such as by systematically producing an assessment whenever such a power is used.

Colleagues, those concerns were heard by the government, and the government has amended Bill C-30 in committee in the other place to beef up transparency and scrutiny of any decisions made under these powers. We think that the report of the National Finance Committee produced that kind of impetus for them to do so.

New reporting guidelines have been incorporated to ensure timely reporting to Parliament, accompanied by justification for the exemption order, to allow for greater scrutiny and accountability to parliamentarians.

The Chair of Crop Protection of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada gave an example of how it could be used.

Seventy-five per cent of the rutabaga production on Prince Edward Island was wiped out due to a serious infestation. There was a pest control tool that was phased out, and so too was the production of rutabaga. The crops were ruined. It is now no longer commercially viable to grow this vegetable, limiting the ability to produce our own food here in Canada.

The summary remarks this witness made were as follows:

> If a critical pest management product is delayed, unavailable or removed without a viable alternative, the result can be lost crops, reduced yields, poor quality, higher costs and less Canadian-grown food.

I have to mention that, given some of the debate we had in the house this afternoon, farmers do not want to use pesticides. Every vegetable or fruit grown with pesticides is more costly. So they want to grow their crops without them, and only use them when they are necessary, because they won't have a crop if they don't.

Honourable senators, as Canadians continue to face ongoing economic pressures, including uncertainty in global trade and other profound shifts in our global landscape, it remains paramount that federal measures be carefully advanced to strengthen Canada's economic resilience and support key sectors. The bill before us seeks to do just that.

[*Translation*]

It would help Canadians who need it the most, whether it is workers facing uncertainty, families struggling with the rising cost of living or industries adapting to an ever-changing environment.

Honourable senators, Bill C-30 provides a concrete and measured response to the challenges Canadians are currently facing, while allowing Canada to build on its existing strengths.

[*English*]

I ask all senators to give the bill their careful consideration and, ultimately, to support Bill C-30. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Clément Gignac:** Honourable senators, I would like to take a few moments today to discuss the second observation that was added to the recent report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.

While I wait for my speech to arrive, I will just wing it.

I am going to discuss the temporary suspension of the excise tax. This temporary suspension took effect on April 20 and will end on September 7.

This is the most costly tax measure in this bill, with a price tag of $2.4 billion. Like some of my colleagues, I expressed concerns about this measure, as we fear that this suspension may not be fully passed on to consumers. In fact, I questioned the minister on this matter and asked him if he could share his observations at the end of the suspension period. Given that the Department of Natural Resources can track these results on a daily or weekly basis during their inspections, they have a way to determine the oil companies' profit margins. It is fairly easy to track.

• (1830)

However, experience with a similar measure south of the border suggests that my fears are well founded.

[*English*]

Interestingly, according to research done by the University of Kansas, based on temporary gasoline tax holidays put in place by the Biden administration, consumers typically did not receive 100% of that tax cut. Depending on the state of local competition in the U.S., in fact, the benefits for the consumer ranged from 60% to 80%. The remainder was captured somewhere in the supply chain by refiners, wholesalers, distributors and retailers through higher margins.

In addition, higher-income households, which consumed more fuel because they had more cars or bigger cars, benefited, on average, three times more than lower-income families.

They concluded that temporary gas tax relief is an inefficient form of consumer assistance. It is not me saying it; it is what they said.

In addition, it sends a bad signal to consumers — to not change their behaviour by shifting from a conventional car to a hybrid or electric car or by using public transit instead if they reside in an urban area.

Targeted rebates may be more effective, since direct payments ensure households receive 100% of the government support.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, this is very interesting. That's why I'm speaking today. Yesterday, the Alberta government launched an initiative. Premier Danielle Smith announced a $100 rebate for all Albertans. Why? To compensate for gas prices going up as a result of the Iranian conflict. There's a similarity there.

In fact, Alberta's current laws provide for an automatic temporary reduction or suspension of the provincial tax when the price of oil reaches a certain threshold. The Alberta government obviously makes a lot of money when the price of oil rises, so the government wants to share the wealth with Albertans. The current law states that the tax should be reduced at the pumps, but they're going to change the law because the government has chosen to do so.

Why is the government choosing a rebate instead of suspending the tax? According to Premier Smith, that is because it's a more effective way to help consumers. A study out of the University of Kansas says that this is the best way. Alberta reached the same conclusion:

> Rather than relying on retailers to pass on the fuel tax relief, this approach will ensure elevated oil revenues deliver real benefits to Albertans, benefits that don't disappear at the pumps.

I think it's a good idea.

> According to the Premier, when the federal government suspended its fuel excise tax, those savings were erased within days, likely ending up in the pockets of retailers and producers.

Honourable senators, given the time and the circumstances, I think everyone is keen to vote on Bill C-30, so I will conclude by respectfully urging the federal government to draw inspiration from the governments of Alberta, Norway and the United Arab Emirates in the future. These governments allow consumers to endure fluctuations in international oil prices and provide direct assistance to households in need through tax measures other than temporary gas tax rebates. That was the thrust of my speech. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Honourable senators, I wasn't expecting to deliver my speech following a quote from the Premier of Alberta, approved by Senator Gignac.

Colleagues, I rise today to speak to Bill C-30, an act to implement certain provisions of the 2026 spring economic update.

It's interesting that Bill C-30 deals with the 2026 spring economic update, while Bill C-31, which has yet to be passed, deals with Budget 2025. We're passing an economic update bill before we pass the budget bill.

Over the past few days, we have considered Bill C-32 and Bill C-33. In both cases, the same concern emerged: Parliament is increasingly being called upon to approve expenditures or

powers without all the information it needs to fully exercise its role. Bill C-30 takes this logic even further. In several of its provisions, Parliament is asked to delegate decisions today that will be made tomorrow by regulation, order-in-council or ministerial decision.

I shall therefore focus my remarks on four areas: the expansion of regulatory powers, the new provisions concerning federal airports, the temporary suspension of the excise tax on gasoline and diesel and, finally, the amendments to the Pest Control Products Act.

Honourable senators, one of the most striking observations arising from the study of Bill C-30 is the government's growing tendency to ask Parliament for sweeping powers and then govern by regulation or by order-in-council. This trend isn't limited to C-30. As I pointed out during the study of Bill C-32, 23 of the 38 government bills introduced so far assign new powers to a minister or to the Governor-in-Council.

This number should stop us in our tracks. These are no longer one-time occurrences. They've become a trend, where Parliament sets the general direction, and practical decisions are gradually transferred to the executive. No one is disputing that governments must have tools to address exceptional situations. However, Parliament must not become a mere delegating body.

When he appeared before our committee, Minister Champagne explained that geopolitical changes, supply chains, health crises and national security issues justify a modernization of government powers.

I understand that argument. However, there are several provisions that allow for exceptional measures to be adopted without the usual public consultation. Some even allow for normal regulatory processes to be bypassed. When exceptional powers can be maintained for several years, we must ask ourselves whether we're still dealing with an exception or whether it has become the rule. As Senator Oudar pointed out to the Minister for Finance, something presented as a simple exception could last for up to six years while bypassing several of the usual regulatory mechanisms. She had this to say:

> True, it's a system that functions by exception. I readily acknowledge the importance of food safety and the economic realities. However, the legislation states that this system that functions by exception can last up to three years and can be renewed for a further three years. So we're talking about a six-year system that functions by exception. When an order-in-council of this nature is issued, it isn't subject to the Statutory Instruments Act. There isn't any prepublication. A number of systems that function by exception come one on top of the other.

This is a fundamental issue. Parliament exists to ensure a balance between government efficiency and accountability. In a parliamentary democracy, speed can never replace accountability.

Honourable senators, the second issue concerns the new provisions relating to airports. This is set out in Division 6 of Bill C-30. Proposed section 50.2 grants the Minister of Transport the general authority to collect information about the Canadian airport sector from a wide range of stakeholders.

• (1840)

The criterion is quite broad, based as it is on what the minister deems necessary and on the activities that, in his view, could affect an airport's value. Simply put, the minister will have the power to require certain aviation sector stakeholders to give him information whenever he says the information is necessary.

At first glance, the government is telling us that it just wants more information, which may seem reasonable. However, a closer examination of the wording of the bill raises some questions. The government is seeking new powers to require information from a wide range of stakeholders. This information would be used to assess various scenarios for the management and, potentially, the ownership of federal airports.

A number of witnesses and senators have tried to understand the government's real intentions. Is this just about gathering information? Is it part of a conversation about infrastructure modernization? Is this the beginning of a process that could lead to the sale, transfer or privatization of certain public assets, such as airports or parts of airports?

To date, answers remain incomplete. The minister told us that no decision has been made. We take note of that response. However, if no decision has been made, why seek such broad powers at this stage?

Airports are not ordinary assets. They are strategic infrastructure for our country. They play a vital role in regional economic development, ensure citizen mobility, contribute to our national security, and enhance the economic appeal of many regions across the country. Several senators expressed concerns about the potential impact of these new powers on regional airports. Senator Forest highlighted the vital role that this infrastructure plays in economic development, attracting workers, tourism, and regional connectivity.

When asked about the government's intentions, the minister stated that no decision had yet been made and that the current goal was simply to obtain the information needed to conduct due diligence. That answer, however, leaves a fundamental question unanswered: For what purpose are these new powers being sought?

The affected communities need predictability. They need to know what the government's vision is for the future of this strategic infrastructure.

Once again, as members of Parliament we are being asked to grant authority today without knowing exactly for what purpose it will be exercised tomorrow. I believe that the government will need to demonstrate greater transparency when it comes to its objectives.

Honourable senators, I will now turn to the third issue that warrants consideration: the temporary suspension of the federal excise tax on gasoline and diesel.

I understand the reasoning behind this measure. The cost of living remains high and the government wanted to provide Canadians with immediate relief.

However, this measure will cost approximately $2.4 billion, and many questions remain unanswered. Senators Gignac and Dalphond talked about how difficult it is to measure what proportion of this tax cut will actually benefit consumers.

When prices rise rapidly for other reasons, consumers often see only a fraction of the advertised benefit. It is therefore reasonable to ask whether more targeted measures could have provided better support to the most vulnerable households. As Senator Gignac pointed out, the government should provide a detailed assessment of the results obtained once the measure has come to an end. Good public policy must be measurable.

The final example that I'd like to discuss shows perhaps even more clearly the trend toward transferring decision-making authority from experts to the executive. Bill C-30 amends the Pest Control Products Act to allow the Governor-in-Council to authorize or reinstate the use of certain pesticides, even where a scientific assessment concluded that their risk to the environment or to human health is unacceptable. The government justifies this measure on the grounds of economic security or food security.

The question remains: Who should have the final say when a scientific finding and a political consideration collide? Through this provision, the government ultimately transfers the decision from a scientific framework to cabinet. Once again, we see the same phenomenon observed in recent bills: greater discretionary powers being granted to the executive to meet objectives that are defined later by regulation.

Some committee members have expressed concerns about these changes. For instance, the committee's eighth and ninth reports on its pre-study of Bill C-30 states the following:

> However, other members expressed concern that introducing economic and food security considerations into the application of this act raises significant public policy, health, environmental and governance issues that warrant further scrutiny. In any case, the committee urges caution in the application of these new emergency powers.

In conclusion, honourable senators, the committee's report emphasizes that Bill C-30, as an omnibus bill amending several non-financial acts, was studied for a limited period of time that restricted opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny. It notes that the Minister of Health didn't appear before the committee to explain proposed amendments to the Pest Control Products Act and that a number of experts and organizations that submitted briefs weren't given the opportunity to appear before the committee. Given how serious these changes and their potential repercussions are, the committee says they warranted a separate study rather than being included in an omnibus bill.

In that regard, in a brief signed by about 20 Canadian scientists, Maryse Bouchard, a full professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique and author of several studies on the effects of pesticides on health, expressed concern about the fact that cabinet, which is made up of elected officials who are subject to political and economic pressure, could overturn decisions made by Health Canada scientists on the toxicity of pesticides. She and 20 scientists affiliated with 13 Canadian universities signed this brief to urge the government to withdraw the amendments to the Pest Control Products Act found in Bill C-30 and Bill C-31 and to instead focus its efforts on improving the implementation of the Pest Control Products Act. According to these scientists, the proposed amendments lack clarity when it comes to the definition of "national economic security, regional economic security or national food security" and there is no provision in the Pest Control Products Act that provides for such an assessment.

With Bill C-30, Parliament is being asked to approve today a power whose specific parameters will be determined tomorrow. That is exactly the kind of shift in decision-making authority that should urge us to be cautious.

Honourable senators, Bill C-30 contains measures that respond to real concerns expressed by Canadians. It also contains several initiatives to strengthen the Canadian economy in a challenging international environment.

However, our study also highlighted some significant issues. We observed a trend towards more expansive regulatory powers. We observed increased reliance on orders-in-council. We noted vague, imprecise provisions that are cause for concern. We noted a lack of clarity regarding the future of certain strategic assets. We raised questions about the effectiveness of certain temporary tax measures.

Our role is not to stand in the government's way. Our role is to rigorously examine the consequences of proposed decisions, support what works, improve what can be improved and offer a reminder that transparency, responsibility and accountability remain the cornerstones of our parliamentary democracy. Canadians elect a Parliament to debate important decisions, not to progressively transfer authority to the executive branch.

Governing effectively is important, but so is governing transparently. When a government asks Parliament to delegate more powers to it, it must be prepared to demonstrate why those powers are necessary and what limits will constrain them. That is why I remain concerned about several provisions of Bill C-30 and the growing concentration of powers that they illustrate.

• (1850)

I hope I have convinced the majority of senators to vote against this bill.

Thank you, honourable senators.

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

[*English*]

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on the length of the bell?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted for 15 minutes?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** The vote will take place at 7:05. Call in the senators.

• (1900)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler
Al Zaibak
Arnold
Aucoin
Black
Boudreau
Boyer
Burey
Busson
Cardozo
Clement
Cormier
Coyle
Cuzner
Dalphond
Dasko
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Dean
Duncan
Forest
Francis
Gerba
Gignac
Greenwood
Harder
Hay
Hébert
Kingston
Klyne
LaBoucane-Benson
Lewis
Loffreda
MacAdam
McBean
McNair
Moncion
Moreau
Muggli
Osler
Patterson
Petitclerc
Petten
Prosper
Pupatello
Ravalia
Ringuette
Robinson
Ross
Saint-Germain
Simons
Sorensen
Varone
Wallin
Wells (*Alberta*)
White
Wilson
Youance
Yussuff—58

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Carignan
Housakos
MacDonald
Manning
Martin
Poirier
Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*)—9

ABSTENTION
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR

Oudar—1

• (1910)

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, it is now seven o'clock. Pursuant to rule 3-3(1), I am obliged to leave the chair until eight o'clock, when we will resume, unless it is your wish, honourable senators, to not see the clock.

Is it agreed to not see the clock?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

## EXPRESSION OF THANKS AND GOOD WISHES

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, as we prepare to suspend for the summer break, I want to take a moment to focus on the season now coming to an end and express my deep gratitude to you.

In the past few months, this chamber has examined crucial bills and conducted studies on issues that affect Canadians directly.

[*English*]

This has been a demanding and productive year, one that reflects the Senate's essential role as a chamber of sober second thought.

Beyond the bills we have examined and the debates we have held, it is often the work we do not see that defines a parliamentary year.

[*Translation*]

In particular, I want to acknowledge the exceptional work accomplished in recent weeks for the installation ceremony of Her Excellency the Right Honourable Louise Arbour as the thirty-first Governor General of Canada. This historic event once again highlighted the professionalism, rigour and excellence that are the hallmarks of this institution.

[*English*]

I want to thank the many teams and staff members who support our work every day. Much of their contribution takes place behind the scenes, yet it remains essential to the strength and effectiveness of Parliament.

Their dedication, professionalism and commitment allow this institution to serve Canadians with excellence.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank my team, as well as everyone who works in the offices of senators. Your discreet, constant and rigorous work is indispensable to the smooth functioning of this institution.

I want to pay special tribute to Vince MacNeil, my chief of staff, who is retiring after a remarkable 36 years of service to the Parliament of Canada.

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

**The Hon. the Speaker:** For those of you who know Vince MacNeil, it will be obvious why he is not in the gallery today. He is very self-effacing.

I would like to add that his exemplary commitment to the Senate and Parliament, his professionalism, his judgment and his sense of humour have enriched our institution and inspired many people over the years. We would like to express our deep gratitude to him and wish him every success and happiness in this new chapter of his life.

[*English*]

As we prepare to return to the provinces and territories we represent, may the weeks ahead remind us why we chose to serve in the first place.

I hope you find time to rest, to reconnect with family and friends, and to return renewed, carrying once again the energy and sense of purpose that strengthen this institution.

[*Translation*]

In keeping with tradition, I would like to remind you not to forget to turn off your phones from time to time.

[*English*]

I wish each of you a wonderful summer.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, and I hope you have a lovely summer.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

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

[*English*]

## ROYAL ASSENT

### MOTION TO SUSPEND SITTING TO AWAIT WRITTEN DECLARATION ADOPTED

**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 sitting be suspended to await the announcement of Royal Assent, to reassemble at the call of the chair with a fifteen-minute bell.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Leave is granted. Accordingly, the sitting is suspended, and the bells will start ringing 15 minutes before the sitting resumes.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (2020)

[*Translation*]

## ROYAL ASSENT

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

June 18, 2026

Madam Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Louise Arbour, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 18th day of June, 2026, at 7:49 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ken MacKillop

*Secretary to the Governor General*

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bills Assented to Thursday, June 18, 2026:

An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places) (*Bill C-9, Chapter 15, 2026*)

An Act to amend the National Defence Act and other Acts (*Bill C-11, Chapter 16, 2026*)

An Act respecting Arab Heritage Month (*Bill S-227, Chapter 17, 2026*)

An Act respecting the establishment of Build Canada Homes (*Bill C-20, Chapter 18, 2026*)

An Act to amend certain Acts in relation to criminal and correctional matters (child protection, gender-based violence, delays and other measures) (*Bill C-16, Chapter 19, 2026*)

An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to enact An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts, 2026 (*Bill C-25, Chapter 20, 2026*)

An Act to authorize certain payments to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purpose of improving housing supply (*Bill C-26, Chapter 21, 2026*)

An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026 (*Bill C-30, Chapter 22, 2026*)

[*English*]

## ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

**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, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, September 28, 2026, at 6 p.m.;

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day;

That, for greater certainty, committees normally scheduled to meet on that day and those separately authorized by the Senate to meet on that day be authorized to meet, even though the Senate may then be sitting, with rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto; and

That, notwithstanding the order adopted on June 10, 2026, Senate committees be authorized to meet from September 21, 2026, to the end of the day on September 25, 2026, with rule 12-18(2) being suspended in relation thereto.

**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.)

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(*At 8:26 p.m., the Senate was continued until Monday, September 28, 2026, at 6 p.m.*)

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