



MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OTTAWA, Thursday, February 5, 2026
(22)

[English]

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology met this day at 10:32 a.m., in room B45, Senate of Canada Building, the deputy chair, the Honourable Sharon Burey, presiding.

Members of the committee present: The Honourable Senators Burey, Greenwood, Hay, Karetak-Lindell, McPhedran, Moodie, Muggli, Osler, Petitclerc and Senior (10).

Participating in the meeting: Diana Ambrozas and Laura Blackmore, Analysts, Library of Parliament.

Pursuant to the order of reference adopted by the Senate on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, the committee continued its consideration of Bill S-212, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada.

WITNESSES:

Indigenous Services Canada:

Jennifer Novak, Director General, Mental Wellness and Health Promotion, Health and Social Sector;

Kirsten Mattison, Director General, Children, Families and Learning.

The committee resumed clause-by-clause consideration of Bill S-212.

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Greenwood that Bill S-212 be amended in clause 4, page 4, by adding the following after line 29:

“(3.1) In conducting consultations under paragraph (3)(a), the Minister must ensure that child and youth participants are engaged in a culturally safe environment and in ways that respect their own respective cultures and that they are provided with the opportunity to participate in their own respective languages.”.

After debate and with leave, the amendment was withdrawn.

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved that Bill S-212 be amended in clause 4, on page 4, by adding the following after line 29:

“(3.1) In conducting consultations under paragraph (3)(a), the Minister must make every reasonable effort to ensure that child and youth participants are engaged in a culturally safe environment and in ways that respect their own respective cultures and that they are provided with the opportunity to participate in their own respective languages.”.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved that Bill S-212 be amended in clause 4, on page 5,

(a) by replacing line 5 with the following:

“(c) the Inuit Child First Initiative;”;

(b) by replacing line 9 with the following:

“Girls; and

(e) any commitments made by the Government of Canada in relation to early learning and child care, including commitments specific to Indigenous early learning and child care.”.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The chair asked whether clause 4, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that clause 4, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that clause 5 carry.

The chair asked whether clause 6 shall carry.

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved that Bill S-212 be amended in clause 6, on page 5, by replacing line 18 with the following:

“6 (1) Within 36 months after the day on which this Act”.

Jennifer Novak and Kirsten Mattison were invited to the table and answered questions.

After debate and with leave, the amendment was withdrawn.

It was agreed that clause 6 carry.

The chair asked whether clause 7 shall carry.

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved that Bill S-212 be amended in clause 7, on page 5, by adding the following after line 33:

“(1.1) In carrying out the duty referred to in subsection (1), the Minister shall consult with the persons identified in subsection 4(3) of this Act.”.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The chair asked whether clause 7, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that clause 7, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that clause 1, which contains the short title, carry.

The chair asked whether the preamble shall carry.

The Honourable Senator Greenwood moved that Bill S-212 be amended in the preamble, on page 1,

(a) by adding the following after line 21:

“Whereas First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youths have the right to grow up in a culturally safe environment and in their own respective cultures and languages;”;

(b) by adding the following after line 28:

“Whereas First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families are best supported by programs and services that are culturally appropriate and led by Indigenous peoples and Canada is therefore committed to upholding the right of Indigenous peoples to be consulted to obtain their free, prior and informed consent for the content of the national strategy as it pertains to Indigenous children;”.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The Honourable Senator Petitclerc moved that Bill S-212 be amended in the preamble, on page 1, by adding the following after line 34:

“Whereas Canada has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which, in Article 7, sets out an obligation on States Parties to take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children;”.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The Honourable Senator Hay moved that Bill S-212 be amended in the preamble,

(a) on page 1, by adding the following after line 34:

“Whereas the well-being of Canada’s children and youth cannot be achieved without a sustained focus on mental health, particularly in light of the urgency of the current mental health crisis across Canada;”;

(b) on page 2, by replacing line 4 with the following:

“And whereas investing in the well-being, physical and mental health, and growth”.

At 11:14 a.m., the committee suspended.

At 11:20 a.m., the committee resumed.

Resuming debate on the motion in amendment to the preamble of the Honourable Senator Hay.

After debate, the question being put on the motion in amendment, it was adopted.

The chair asked whether the preamble, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that the preamble, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that the title carry.

It was agreed that the bill, as amended, carry.

It was agreed that the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel be authorized to make necessary technical, grammatical or other required non-substantive changes resulting from the amendments adopted by the committee, in both official languages, including updating cross-references and renumbering of provisions.

After debate, it was agreed that observations be appended to the committee's report.

It was agreed that the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be empowered to approve the final version of the observations being appended to the report, in both official languages, taking into consideration today's discussion and with any necessary editorial, grammatical or translation changes as required.

It was agreed that the deputy chair report Bill S-212, with amendments and with observations, to the Senate, in both official languages.

At 11:30 a.m., the committee adjourned to the call of the chair.

ATTEST:

Ferda Simpson

Clerk of the Committee