



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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1st SESSION



45th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 154



NUMBER 25

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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



## THE SENATE

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

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

[Translation]

Prayers.

**THE LATE HONOURABLE LOUIS J. ROBICHAUD,  
P.C., Q.C., C.C., O.N.B.**

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

#### TONY WAKEHAM

##### CONGRATULATIONS ON ELECTION VICTORY

**Hon. David M. Wells:** Honourable senators, last week, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador went to the polls and chose a new direction for our province. The Progressive Conservative Party, under the leadership of Premier-designate Tony Wakeham, received a clear and confident mandate from voters. I want to extend my sincere congratulations to Premier-designate Wakeham and his team.

Tony Wakeham is a long-time friend of mine — someone I know to be thoughtful, grounded and deeply committed to the people of my province. He understands Newfoundland and Labrador's challenges, but more importantly, he understands its potential.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are resilient. We know what it means to work hard, endure and build from what we have. This new government takes office at a time when energy, fisheries, technology and tourism all stand ready to drive renewed growth. It will require sound management, cooperation across all sectors and strong advocacy for our province's interests both in Ottawa and beyond.

I have every confidence that Premier-designate Wakeham and his cabinet will govern with integrity, transparency and respect for the people they serve.

Elections remind us that democracy in Canada is strong and that citizens, through the simple act of voting, continue to shape their communities and their future.

Honourable senators, I invite you to join me in congratulating Premier-designate Tony Wakeham and all those elected to serve. May they find wisdom in leadership, strength in purpose and continued pride in representing the great province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

**Hon. Victor Boudreau:** Honourable senators, it is a great honour for me to speak today to commemorate an important event. Today, we mark the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of a great Canadian, New Brunswicker, and Acadian, the Honourable Louis J. Robichaud.

"P'tit Louis," as he is still affectionately known in New Brunswick, profoundly transformed our province during his 10 years as premier from 1960 to 1970. He was also the first Acadian to be elected premier. Through bold policy changes, he modernized nearly every aspect of public life in New Brunswick, from education and health care to social services and fiscal policy. He passed away in 2005, but many of his policies are still in effect today.

[English]

Louis Robichaud is best remembered for his equal opportunity program. His reforms lifted thousands of anglophone and francophone New Brunswickers out of poverty and ensured a more equitable distribution of services and programs across all parts of the province. To this day, New Brunswickers who live and work outside of the province's three largest cities owe the viability of their communities to the changes brought forward by Louis Robichaud.

[Translation]

Earlier this year, New Brunswick's largest French-language newspaper, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, once again called for the long-awaited commemoration of Louis J. Robichaud's legacy. The newspaper's editorial team has long argued that the man who made New Brunswick Canada's only officially bilingual province deserves to be honoured. *L'Acadie Nouvelle's* editorial team even suggested a specific way to do this: Rename a section of the Trans-Canada Highway in New Brunswick. Other ideas should also be considered. I encourage New Brunswickers to contact their representatives to share their thoughts.

Today, as I speak in the Senate, the chamber where Louis served from 1973 to 2000, I am proud to join those advocating for a meaningful celebration of the life of Louis J. Robichaud.

[English]

Let us take advantage of this milestone year to pay him the tribute he deserves.

[Translation]

Happy birthday, Louis. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[English]

#### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Antoinette Perry, former lieutenant governor of Prince Edward Island, and our former colleague the Honourable Diane Griffin. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Galvez.

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

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

#### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

**Hon. Robert Black:** Honourable senators, today I rise in the chamber to recognize the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, or FAO, which celebrated its eightieth anniversary on October 16, 2025.

As you all know, I frequently stand up in the Senate Chamber to highlight Canada's strong agriculture industry. These sectors work tirelessly every day to ensure Canadians have access to healthy, locally grown foods.

However, around the world, people from all walks of life are growing hungry while food is being wasted elsewhere. This is where the FAO steps in as a leader in international efforts to defeat hunger.

Established in 1945 here in Canada, in Quebec City, the FAO is a specialized UN agency dedicated to fighting world hunger and achieving food security for all. They work to ensure that every person has regular access to high-quality, nutritious foods that support an active, healthy lifestyle.

To commemorate this eightieth anniversary, the FAO hosted the World Food Forum from October 10 to 17 in Rome, Italy, with the theme "Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future." Foundational to this theme are the FAO's "four betters" — better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

These pillars guided the World Food Forum last week, showcasing that with new innovations, sustainable practices and cooperation across nations, we can drive the vision of better food production, healthier foods, a more resilient environment and improved livelihoods.

As the FAO celebrates this anniversary, it is important for us as Canadians to reflect on food equity and food insecurity in our own country.

According to Food Banks Canada, 2024 saw a 90% increase in food bank usage in Canada compared to March 2019, with one third of food bank clients being children under the age of 18. These statistics expose that Canada also has work to do in the fight against food insecurity.

Everyone needs to eat, and it should not be a privilege to be able to put food on our tables. Every person has a right to equitable access to nutritious foods.

As the FAO says, even the smallest actions matter, like donating to your local food bank, reducing food waste, protecting soil and water and raising awareness of the importance of fighting for a fair and sustainable society where everyone can regularly access enough nutritious foods.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on 80 years of continued advocacy, dedicated initiatives and diligent effort that is providing food for families around the world who are in need.

Thank you, FAO. Your work helps make the world a more just, equitable and overall better place.

Thank you, *meegwetch.*

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Michaël Robach, Interim Executive Director of QMUNITY. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Wilson.

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

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

• (1410)

[Translation]

#### QMUNITY

**Hon. Duncan Wilson:** Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize and applaud the vital role played by QMUNITY. Since its inception in 1979, this resource centre has been offering essential programs and services to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and their allies across British Columbia.

For over 45 years, QMUNITY has fostered the growth of a united community where queer, trans and Two-Spirit individuals can meet, grow and flourish. Its programs include easily accessible social and health services, counselling, peer support groups and legal clinics. The centre also offers programs adapted to the special needs of queer and transgender youth and their family members, along with programs for adults and seniors.

[English]

Colleagues, the harsh reality is that queer, trans, and Two-Spirit individuals around the world continue to face sustained oppression and violence.

In Canada, we are increasingly seeing a backslide regarding the hard-won human rights and protections granted to gender- and sexually diverse communities. Recent and proposed laws in some parts of our country require consent for youth to have their preferred pronouns used in schools. Targeting these vulnerable kids will leave them nowhere to turn. We are all too familiar with the risks of self-harm and even suicide that bullying — let alone the state-sanctioned isolation that is being promoted in some Canadian jurisdictions — can lead to.

Colleagues, in a world where divisive and populist politics are gaining a foothold, it is community-based service providers like QMUNITY that represent a safe harbour from the storm. These organizations offer boots on the ground, often serving as the first point of contact for individuals in need of support.

As such, honourable senators, it is my distinct pleasure today to welcome representatives from QMUNITY to Ottawa as they meet officials and MPs to highlight the critical work they have done and continue to do.

By supporting organizations like QMUNITY across Canada, we enrich our society and demonstrate exactly what His Majesty called out in the Speech from the Throne: that Canada is indeed the true north, strong and truly free.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

[Translation]

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Louisane Leblanc, accompanied by her brother, Bertrand Leblanc. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Oudar.

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

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

[English]

### CANADA-MEXICO RELATIONS

**Hon. Peter M. Boehm:** Honourable senators, two weeks ago, I visited Mexico City to participate on a panel of legislators at the North Capital Forum.

This is the premier annual event organized by the U.S.-Mexico Foundation, which brings together business leaders, legislators and others from Canada, Mexico and the United States. I was invited by my Mexican counterpart, Senator Alejandro Murat Hinojosa, who chairs the Senate of Mexico's foreign relations committee.

[ Senator Wilson ]

In addition to speaking on the panel, entitled, "Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Regional Policy in Motion," with a U.S. congressional representative and a Mexican senator, I engaged in a public conversation with Mexican senators at a combined meeting of the foreign relations and North American committees of the Mexican Senate and a similar event at the Mexican Congress.

It was a good workout for my Spanish.

On the government side, I also had a productive one-on-one meeting at the foreign ministry with Mexico's Deputy Secretary for North America.

Colleagues, Canada and Mexico share more than 81 years of diplomatic relations and 31 years of free trade. Mexico is our third-largest merchandise trade partner, placing it ahead of the European Union. Last year, Canada had over \$46 billion in direct investment in Mexico, including in the energy, automotive parts, agri-food and aerospace sectors.

The new Canada-Mexico Action Plan 2025-2028 signed by President Sheinbaum and Prime Minister Carney two months ago sets out an ambitious framework for greater collaboration, including in trade facilitation and promotion; investment promotion; cooperation on ports, labour and mobility; natural disaster resilience; and security. This bilateral relationship is serious, growing and presently infused with a spirit of goodwill. It must continue to be nurtured and not fall victim to the ebbs and flows of politics. Global events like the FIFA World Cup — to be hosted in 2026 by Canada, Mexico and the United States — will only serve to bolster our bond.

Further, the review next year of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA — or T-MEC as it is called in Mexico — rests high on the public policy agendas of both countries. The Trump administration may be adopting a divide-and-conquer approach, but Canada and Mexico believe that any renegotiation should be targeted rather than all or nothing.

Our sustained economic engagement has led to increased growth, jobs and prosperity among all three partners, as well as a sturdy supply chain infrastructure. Calgary-based Canadian Pacific Kansas City is the rail network that connects all three countries. At more than 50 years old, the importance of the Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program was often highlighted by the Mexicans. I was also able to thank our Mexican friends for the vital assistance provided in fighting wildfires in Canada earlier this year.

Finally, it was clear that Mexican legislators want to meet with their Canadian counterparts more frequently.

Parliamentary diplomacy is now more important than ever. We have so much to discuss.

[Editor's Note: Senator Boehm spoke in Spanish.]

Thank you. *Gracias*.

[Translation]

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of participants in the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program.

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

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

### SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Honourable senators, this week we are celebrating Canadian entrepreneurship. From October 19 to 25, the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) is hosting Small Business Week.

For 45 years, the BDC has been celebrating small businesses by offering them conferences, round tables with industry leaders, tools to grow their businesses, and networking opportunities.

This week is entirely dedicated to them, but it is also an opportunity for us to highlight the exceptional work of our small and medium-sized businesses across the country.

[English]

COVID was tough on our small- and medium-sized enterprise, or SME, community. The post-COVID environment hasn't been much easier. Businesses continue to face labour shortages, inflation and supply chain disruptions. But entrepreneurs are resilient, resourceful and creative. When faced with adversity, they innovate and adapt to ensure their survival and long-term success.

I've always said entrepreneurs are the backbone of our economy. Wealth is created by entrepreneurs.

Every morning, a small business owner wakes up and puts everything on the line. Every day, they risk losing it all, but they do it because they love what they do. They are proud of the products they sell and the services they offer. And they do it because they are part of a community. In fact, they are a big part of our economy.

In Canada, 98.1% of all businesses have fewer than 100 employees. That's over 1 million businesses. Medium-sized enterprises represent nearly 17,000 more. Together, SMEs employ close to 8 million Canadians, accounting for 63.6% of the total private sector workforce. We also know that around 75% of business owners plan to retire in the next decade. Many of them have family-owned businesses that have served their communities for generations.

One way to preserve this legacy and create wealth for workers is through employee ownership trusts, or EOTs, a tax mechanism that allows owners to sell company shares to employees. The benefits of EOTs are many: stronger local economies, better employee performance, increased productivity and higher wages for middle-class families. More broadly, EOTs can enhance Canada's economic sovereignty, something we should all support at this pivotal time in our history. That's why it's more important than ever to foster an environment where small- and medium-sized businesses can thrive.

Indeed, I encourage all Canadians and honourable senators to continue supporting our local businesses. It's our duty to help grow our economy, especially in these uncertain times when global pressures are unpredictable and ever-changing.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

• (1420)

[Translation]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### AUDITOR GENERAL

#### 2025 FALL REPORTS TABLED

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2025 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 7(3).

[English]

### LEADERS' DEBATES COMMISSION

*DEBATES – DEMOCRATIC EXERCISES SERVING THE VOTING PUBLIC:  
A REPORT ON THE LEADERS' DEBATES COMMISSION 2025 FEDERAL  
ELECTION EXPERIENCE—REPORT TABLED*

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Leaders' Debates Commission entitled *Debates – Democratic exercises serving the voting public: A report on the Leaders' Debates Commission 2025 federal election experience*.

## AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

### NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY ROLE OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR IN FOOD SECURITY

**Hon. Robert Black:** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry be authorized to examine and report on the role of the agriculture and agri-food sector with regard to food security in Canada;

That in particular, the committee examine:

- (a) the current status of food security in relation to the Food Policy for Canada created by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada;
- (b) how the agriculture and agri-food sector could improve food security, in particular in Indigenous, Black and Northern communities, and in other rural and urban communities facing challenges with access to food;
- (c) the factors that influence food security including agricultural production systems, climate change, corporate concentration in the agri-food sector, among other factors related to agriculture;
- (d) the federal measures that are currently in place to address food security issues, especially related to farmers, local food production and food sovereignty; and
- (e) the potential areas of improvement of these federal measures to enhance food security;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

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

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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 the order adopted on June 4, 2025, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable Jill McKnight, P.C., M.P., Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, will take place on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 2 p.m.

## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SPORTS BETTING ADVERTISING BILL

### THIRD READING

**Hon. Marty Deacon** moved third reading of Bill S-211, An Act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill S-211, An Act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues on the Senate Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications and their chair, Senator Smith, for expediting this bill by going straight to clause-by-clause consideration. I hope that was both a reflection of the fact that the bill is a carbon copy of Bill S-269, which had cleared the Senate in the last Parliament, and also an acknowledgement that this is a problem that is not going to get better on its own — that this legislation is needed now.

I would also like to thank the prior iteration of the Transport Committee and their chair, Senator Housakos, for their thorough study on Bill S-269, which no doubt gave today's committee the confidence that due diligence had been done and that it was reasonable to go straight to clause-by-clause consideration.

As I have done in my prior comments on this legislation, I'll remind my colleagues how we reached this place. As many of you will recall, in 2021 Parliament passed Bill C-218, which amended the Criminal Code by removing the longstanding prohibition on betting on the outcome of any “. . . race . . . or fight, or on a single sport event or athletic contest.” It removed one line from the Criminal Code that made reference to single sports betting. In effect, that permitted provinces to allow for single sports betting in their own jurisdictions.

That is interesting because the ads we see permeating every phone and television screen across the country are all from Ontario, the only province where private companies are allowed to operate. To date, every other province or territory only allows for single sports betting through their own lottery corporations. Yet, I have heard from Canadians from coast to coast to coast that they are growing tired of, and increasingly concerned about, seeing these Ontario-based ads.

As a result, in June 2023 I introduced Bill S-269, which was able to clear the Senate at third reading in June last year but died on the Order Paper in the House when Parliament was prorogued. As with Bill S-269, the bill before us today, Bill S-211, would do a number of things if passed.



It would compel the government to work with cabinet, provinces and other stakeholders to identify measures to regulate the advertising of game sports betting in Canada, such as by limiting or banning the participation of celebrities and athletes, restricting the use of non-broadcast advertising or by limiting the number, scope or location of such advertisements; identify measures to promote research and intergovernmental information-sharing in relation to the prevention and diagnosis of minors involved in problematic gambling activities and provide support measures for those who are impacted by it; and set out national standards for the prevention and diagnosis of problematic gambling and addiction and provide support measures for those who are impacted by it. Those are worth noting, because this is a bill that has three or four key areas that we are quite concerned about.

It would also task the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, with reviewing its regulations and policies to assess their adequacy and effectiveness in reducing the incidence of harms resulting from the proliferation of advertising of sports event betting.

Colleagues, on its own, this legislation would not ban gambling ads outright. While that is what I would love to see, I do appreciate there are Charter implications in that, and I believe that if I had sought a complete ban through this legislation, it would certainly have had a much rougher ride. As the saying goes, “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.” If the government decides that a full ban is warranted after this bill becomes law, or even before, I would not be happier, but that will be for them to decide.

Short of a full ban, there are avenues the government can take in crafting a national framework. One example is a whistle-to-whistle ban, which would ban broadcast ads for betting companies both five minutes before and five minutes after an event takes place. It is my hope that would include sponsored intermissions and half-time segments that see talking heads give betting odds instead of the game analyses we’re accustomed to. This aspect has received more attention over the past year. Some of it was very subtle last night during the Blue Jays game.

Other options include a ban on ads in arenas or fields where children and youth frequent; a ban on in-game promotions within the apps themselves, which entice players to gamble by offering house money to bet with if they sign up; and a ban on all gambling ads during the time of day when children and youth are more likely to see them.

As a reminder, not too long ago, to gamble meant to put on your winter coat, leave your home and go to a casino, something I will elaborate on a bit later.

• (1430)

Many other countries, like the U.K., Australia and Germany, have implemented these and other policies to some degree. We have learned a lot. Italy has banned ads outright. Admittedly, for all these jurisdictions, it remains a work in progress.

Just last week, the University of Bristol found that during just one Premier League match, viewers were subject to 5,000 visible gambling advertisements — this despite a self-imposed whistle-

to-whistle ban by the industry, but one that did not cover other forms of visible advertising, such as shirt sponsorships, pitch-side hoardings and logos on stadium structures. It’s all a work in progress, but the take-away here is that other jurisdictions are at least doing something. And why? Because they legalized single-event sports betting before we did, and they are also reckoning with the outcomes.

As I’ve mentioned at second reading and other comments on this issue, we have good benefit of foresight here. We can see where this is headed, but we’re deciding to steer straight toward that iceberg anyway if we do nothing.

The lay of the land in Canada as it exists is somewhat of a Wild West — no disrespect for the Wild West, by the way. As I mentioned so far, it is only Ontario that has opened its market to private gambling, through its regulated iGaming market. And yet, these ads are seen from coast to coast to coast.

As we heard at committee for Bill S-269, this might in fact be illegal. It should bother every jurisdiction that has not loosened its market that its own population is being encouraged to place bets with companies that legally they cannot bet with. If they had held back on privatizing because of a more cautious approach, then why should their populations be bombarded with ads from the one province that has decided to open the floodgates? This is at least one thing a national framework would undoubtedly address, and address well.

As it is, protections from gambling ads nationally will only be to the level of the lowest common denominator. The internet and even traditional cable care little for provincial and territorial boundaries, and all Canadians deserve the same degree of protection from gambling promotion and its associated harms.

And what do these harms look like? A recent report by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, or CCSA, stated that the sheer volume of ads Canadians are being subject to normalizes the behaviour, leading people to think of betting as an integral part of sports and, by extension, healthy and safe. Even in Ontario, where celebrities and athletes were banned from promotions, there are some workarounds. These individuals can appear in what purport to be public service ads, put out by the companies that encourage you to “bet within your limits.” This is almost worse because it still affiliates an athlete with a brand, but also tells people that as long as you know your limits, this is a safe and healthy practice.

The CCSA report also found that the type of gambling being promoted — the single-event betting and “in-play” betting — is associated with a greater risk of harm and that it promotes increased gambling intensity, frequency and expenditure. What’s more, single-event sports betting promotes an illusion of control. Whereas slot machines and roulette are on their face games of chance, shows and websites dissecting betting lines and games convince the participant in sports betting that a degree of knowledge will give them an edge. Who will hit a home run? Who will get the most receiving yards? Who will score on a power play? All these and so much more are things you can bet on during a game.

As the last and most concerning point, the report found that exposure to gambling promotion earlier in life is associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing gambling harm and developing gambling problems later in life, such as family issues, loss of employment and even suicide. However, to be clear, all populations are vulnerable. This affects all age groups. We're focusing on young folks, particularly young men, but nobody is immune at any moment in time.

I have said it before that young people are most at risk, but really, colleagues, it is almost exclusively young men who are most predisposed to the harms of gambling promotion and addiction. I have heard from countless fathers who are writing to me and contacting me because they are scared to see their teenage sons gain an interest in gambling, that the line between sports betting and the sports themselves is being blurred to the point of not existing.

One such father, Dr. Shawn Kelly, came to my attention when he co-authored a recent Canadian Medical Association Journal opinion piece about the ubiquity of gambling ads, their harms and our failure as a country to respond adequately. Dr. Kelly, a pediatrician and adolescent addiction medicine specialist here in Ottawa, was kind enough to come to the Senate to discuss this matter two weeks ago with my ISG colleagues. You will recall seeing him when he was recognized in the gallery.

Outside of his comments on general trends and consequences, some of which I have already mentioned, he also shared personal details, like how in his practice he is meeting children, some as young as 14, who are struggling with gambling behaviours. He said that prior to 2021, this was almost unheard of, but it is becoming a commonplace occurrence now in his practice, and parents didn't even notice the problem until there were financial losses, school avoidance or emotional crisis. I visited schools, and it was not uncommon for me to see someone vaping in one hand and gambling with their phone in the other.

He also mentioned that this crisis hit home, literally, when his 7-year-old son asked him while watching hockey highlights, "Dad, what's the difference between over-under and plus/minus?"

Colleagues, the harms from gambling promotion are particularly insidious because of the vehicle by which the addiction occurs. There is a natural friction between consumers and purveyors of other vice industries like alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. One has to see an ad and physically go somewhere to acquire these items. There is at least a lag or delay between promotion and engagement. With gambling, the promotion and engagement are seamless and can happen within seconds of being on your smartphone.

The sorts of addiction we have with our phones and social media, which we have all been guilty of at one time or another, apply directly to gambling habits as well. Let me quote from a

recent article I came across in the American Institute for Boys and Men:

Beyond easier access, much of the increase in online gambling is due to the fact that gambling companies have engineered their games to be ever more difficult to resist. They feature the same behavioural nudges and dopamine delivery mechanisms as social media platforms. These are not your grandparents' slot machines.

Every part of a gambling app is designed to be fun, easy to use, and hard to quit. After a cursory age-verification process . . . bettors can deposit money as easily as buying anything else online. The apps have their own version of the endless scroll, with a constantly updating menu of things to bet on. . . .

. . . "Imagine being a gambling addict and always having a slot machine in your pocket except you also need that slot machine to stay in touch with friends/family, to get jobs and contact coworkers, for banking, for navigation." . . .

This author goes on to state that in the U.S., compared to states that did not legalize online gambling and single-event sports betting, states that have legal online gambling:

. . . have seen an increase in bankruptcies and auto loan delinquencies, a reduction in credit scores, as well as reduced savings and investment in low-income households . . . .

Colleagues, as this is the fourth time I've risen to speak on this subject in this chamber, I've noticed a trend in some of the questions that are asked around this topic, and I'll try to address those here.

The first and most common question is this: Where is the revenue from online gambling going? Specifically, is it going to support public programs meant to address gambling addiction and its associated mental health effects? In each province, revenue from provincial lottery corporations or the tax revenues from private betting go into each province's consolidated revenue fund.

To determine how much of that revenue is going to addiction programs, you would have to look up their respective budgets, look to see what is going into the public health spending and then see how much money came in from these revenues. The report that I mentioned earlier found that funding for gambling harm prevention and reduction by public health, non-profit and other organizations has largely been neglected, as a multitude of social issues compete for limited public health funds.

Furthermore, the report found that funding for research on gambling-related harms in Canada falls desperately short of meeting this moment. So, I can say with some confidence that no, gambling revenues are not being earmarked to go to programs that combat gambling addictions or to study their societal effects; hence, that is also included in this bill.

The other question I often hear is this: What would scaling back the advertising mean for broadcasters and sports leagues that rely on the revenues it brings in? This is more anecdotal on my end, but as far as the broadcasters go, I think they'll be just fine. Broadcasting in Canada is largely run by three corporations, which, given the recent slate of mergers and acquisitions we have seen in the news these last few years, have pretty healthy bottom lines. One company even owns the team all of Canada is rooting for at the moment.

I don't believe we need to risk the mental health and well-being of a growing cohort of Canadians to ensure that the revenue stream from sports betting advertising to these telecoms continues undiminished.

As for the sports leagues, the North American big four — the NFL, NHL, NBA and MLB — will survive if these ads are scaled back. They are not being banned; they are being scaled back.

• (1440)

I appreciate that this is largely up to the U.S. to handle, given that's where the majority of these teams are located and broadcast from, but there is a push in the States to scale back these ads as well.

And it goes without saying that now is not the time to throw up our hands in defeat because the U.S. is doing something. One concern that is exclusively Canadian — the Canadian Football League, or CFL — does give me some pause. I can't say definitively that removing a good portion of gambling promotion revenue from this league would not hurt its bottom line. But, as I've explained, this promotion to the degree we have seen causes a great deal of harm. Where do we draw the line?

CFL teams cannot adorn their helmets or fields with tobacco ads, cannabis ads or promotions for adult websites. Why should betting sites be the exception? This is especially true when gambling addiction has empirically been proven to be just as, if not more, harmful than two of the three examples I have shared with you.

Honourable senators, this is a problem we bear responsibility for. I include myself in this, as I voted for Bill C-218. Sending the bill before us to the floor of the other place will go a long way in trying to make this right, and I truly hope we can do that soon.

As a senator, this is important to correct. As a Canadian who has coached and led teams from the grassroots to Olympic, Commonwealth and Pan American Games, I have witnessed first-hand what sport, the power of sport and the opportunity of sport can be.

I have participated in outreach and mentored in many countries where I have witnessed the joy of young people being given very basic equipment and facilities that allow them to learn and lead through sport. That is what sport should be and what we should celebrate. We hear directly that these lines are being blurred.

As this is hopefully — for me and for you — the last time I rise in the chamber to discuss this issue, I would like to give thanks. I've already mentioned my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, both in this Parliament and the last, who passed this bill unamended.

As the critic of both former Bill S-269 and the bill before us today, Senator Housakos rose to give two speeches in support in the eloquent and knowledgeable way that he is so good at.

I thank Senator Saint-Germain who questioned Minister Guilbeault on this very topic when he was here a few weeks back. And I also thank Senator Downe who has spoken in favour of this bill at every opportunity, and, as you saw today, he is publicly calling on the government to implement a full ban.

I signed onto this call myself because, as I mentioned, although this bill does not seek to go for a full ban, if the government decides to take it upon itself to do that, I would be happy.

Outside of this chamber, I would like to thank Dr. Kelly, whom I've quoted today, and Dr. Bruce Kidd who reached out to me in the early days of this bill and has started his own public campaign through his BanAdsForGambling website.

And I also thank our former colleague, dear Senator Cotter; he was my lawyer and my mentor, and he was integral to us learning so much about the Charter and the Supreme Court's previous rulings as well as the crafting of former Bill S-269 and, thus, the bill that is before us today.

Honourable senators, it's great to be back in this chamber after some time away healing from surgery. I have missed you. It's been an honour to work with all of you on this important issue. When the time comes, please vote to send this bill on its way to the other place. Thank you. *Meegwech*.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak briefly on Bill S-211, An Act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising. Senator Deacon said it all very well, and there's not much to add.

This bill is from our honourable colleague, and the only reason it's still before us is it didn't quite make it to the finish line in the last Parliament.

I won't take too much of your time. We have already discussed this bill at length during the Forty-fourth Parliament, both here in the chamber and at the Transport and Communications Committee. I remain the friendly critic of this bill, as I did in the iteration of the previous bill.

While we may not yet fully understand the connection between the decline of traditional sports broadcasting and the industry's growing dependence on sports betting advertising revenue, one thing is clear, honourable colleagues: Sports betting advertising is a clear and widespread problem.

Unfortunately, we will not enjoy the Blue Jays chase for the World Series without being exposed to sports betting advertisements every few minutes over the next week. However, we can do the sensible thing and quickly move this bill forward to the other place — where it was before the election — so one day soon, we can all follow the success of Canada's sports teams in a safer, ad-responsible broadcasting environment for everyone, both for the Blue Jays and the Montreal Canadiens when they make their run for the Stanley Cup this year, as well as the Vancouver Canucks, if they make the playoffs this year as well, of course. We won't delve into the sports elements of our Canadian federation.

I would like to thank Senator Deacon for her leadership on this issue, her commitment and her patience. I wholeheartedly support the passage of this bill at third reading, and I hope our colleagues in the other place give it the serious due consideration that it deserves. Thank you, colleagues. Go Jays!

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE PROMOTION PROHIBITION BILL

### SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Brazeau, seconded by the Honourable Senator Sorensen, for the second reading of Bill S-203, An Act to prohibit the promotion of alcoholic beverages.

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, so I move the adjournment of the debate for the remainder of my time.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

## CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne, for the second reading of Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** Honourable senators, I'm rising to speak briefly on Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. I'd like to start by commending Senator Pate for bringing the bill forward but also, more importantly, for everything that she does for the forgotten people, the downtrodden people in our society and, most specifically, prisoners in jail. You're relentless. I've come to recognize you have to be. It's the only way it gets noticed and talked about. Thank you.

I attended the Legal Committee where we looked at this bill in the last Parliament. It passed committee, it passed here in the Senate and it went over to the House of Commons and died on the Order Paper there. Now it's back.

I was against the bill in the last Parliament, and it should be no surprise that I'm still against the bill now. I have some concerns. The bill has a laudable goal, which is to provide prisoners with access to mental health services. I'm surprised that doesn't happen. We heard lots of information and statistics about mental health and its relationship to criminality and incarceration. There was a lot of frustration raised at committee from groups regarding the money that should have been there — and was there somewhere — in Correctional Service Canada, but it was not being applied at all to the purpose that it was intended for. I don't think we ever really received a straight answer on where the money is and how the services are being provided in any proper way to incarcerated individuals.

The bill, I think, is a product of that frustration, where it gets pretty darn specific about how to deliver mental health services to people who are incarcerated. I guess my first issue, which I raised in the last Parliament, and I'll raise it again — I don't intend to make a fuss about it like I did in the last Parliament by asking the Parliamentary Budget Officer to do a study on the cost. But there's a cost to this. As you know, with Senate public bills, we're not supposed to be spending government money on what we're proposing.

• (1450)

The PBO said that the cost of the bill was somewhere between \$5 million and \$2 billion, depending on how you wanted to look at it. The strict reading of the bill requires prisoners who declare the need for mental health services to be transferred to a mental health facility for treatment, but it doesn't say that they must receive treatment when they're transferred there. The PBO said that we don't necessarily need to cover the cost of treatment; we just have to cover the cost of driving them to the hospital to be refused and sent back.

In my opinion, it was kind of a technical thing that we were leaning on to say, “We can pass this bill because it really only costs \$5 million.” The problem with that is that if we want to see the bill do what it’s supposed to do, or if, indeed, in the spirit of the bill, Correctional Service Canada wants to actually do something about this, it’s going to cost hundreds of millions or billions of dollars more. Nobody really knows because it would be up to the federal government to negotiate the services, build hospitals or do whatever they need to do to provide the service. That is clearly not allowed under our system of Senate public bills.

We’re considering a bill that either we think is only giving inmates a round-trip ride to the hospital parking lot once in a while, and then back again with no service, in which case, it’s a proper public bill, or we’re hoping or expecting they will receive the service and the money will be spent, in which case, it is not an appropriate public bill. That’s my first real concern.

Second, I also have a concern that it puts many of the decisions and the call to action in the hands of the individual inmates. While I understand the intention behind that, I also expect that there are many people in prison who don’t want to be in prison and might actually like to be transferred somewhere else. So I think it’s susceptible to abuse if it were ever to be used. I don’t know how to mitigate that while still giving the benefit of the declaration of the need to the inmate. That’s my other issue.

The third issue is a little more thorny for me. I believe the public sentiment around these kinds of issues has changed drastically in the last five years. We’re at a different time in our public discourse, so I question the timing and our sense of public support for sending a bill like this to the House of Commons and the time that we will invest in moving this bill through the process and over to the House of Commons. That’s, I guess, the final thing I wanted to mention.

Debate is the least costly time that we spend on Senate public bills. The expensive time is in committee. That’s when we are taking away from the impactful studies that we used to be known for — and hopefully will be known for again or better known for again. It takes away from other public bills that might have more support or are more urgent, more innovative or less complex.

I want to raise that, colleagues, because I believe that with the plethora of Senate public bills that we had in the last Parliament and that we are clearly going to have in this Parliament, we need to be, in our behaviour and the way we consider these public bills, more thoughtful and more purposeful about second reading.

It used to be that second reading was a prize we afforded every bill. We would say, “Let that go through and senator so-and-so will get it properly considered at the committee.” We only had a few, so it didn’t matter. However, we can swamp our committees with public bills if we’re not careful. It gets back to this dilution of the value of the committee work, which is a huge component of the value that we deliver to Canadians as the Senate.

With complex bills like this, we really need to be purposeful when we consider moving them along in the process past second reading. We know this bill. We’ve seen it before. This is a good

one. It’s complex and a little bit controversial. So I think this is a good time for us to be more purposeful and thoughtful about how we approve at second reading.

I’m going to ask that we register ourselves for or against this bill in a standing vote today with the soonest bells that our whips and liaisons feel are appropriate. Thank you, senators.

**Hon. Marty Deacon:** Will Senator Tannas take a question?

**Senator Tannas:** Yes.

**Senator M. Deacon:** Thank you very much. I think the memories are strong. Eighteen years ago, there was the loss of Ashley Smith in one of our prison centres. I was part of the immediate community involved with consultation about what supports would be provided and what supports would not be provided for young prisoners there.

You talked about attending committee. Did you talk at all about services to the prison? We’re talking about the cost of folks going to hospitals and appropriate mental support, but was there also conversation about service on site?

**Senator Tannas:** There was a lot of testimony around the lack of service, regulations, legislation, intentions and statements that said one thing while the reality was something completely different. I do not for one minute want to argue that what is being delivered in the prisons today is acceptable. It’s not. But that’s a behavioural issue and a management issue. I don’t believe it’s a legislative issue, especially when we give them the loophole of being able to drive the guy to the parking lot and drive him home without having spent any time, money or effort on actually seeing that that person receives help.

If we really believe, as many of us do, that Correctional Service Canada does what they want, then why would we be shocked if they do what they want with this? We’ve given them this loophole of not actually having to deliver the service. According to everything we heard, on balance, it didn’t appear that what was supposed to be done — even with some money that had been allocated for this — was being done.

**Hon. Hassan Yussuff:** I want to start by thanking Senator Tannas for his thoughtfulness in his remarks and presentation in considering the bill.

Like many of us, I struggle with a lot of the things we talk about in this place, with a profound sense of loss about what we know is wrong and what we know is unacceptable behaviour in the 21st century, yet, somehow we can’t find a way in the legislative arena to get ourselves to that place to do what is supposed to be the right thing.

• (1500)

I live in a community where there is a halfway house not too far away. I know many of the people let out from there often never get the services required to rehabilitate when they return to society. Yet we let them out anyway, with some kind of hope or prayer that they have reformed themselves to now be better citizens.

How is it that, in a society that has a Constitution that led to fundamental principles of human rights, we still allow those in prison to be isolated in a way that damages them so much that when they are released, they never have the capacity to move forward?

My question is very direct. Our federal-provincial relationship, in the almost 160 years that we have been struggling with it, has never been a perfect assembly of how we exercise responsibility. But at some point, as legislators, we must force the federal government to perform its role, because it certainly has oversight over the prisons that it has responsibility for.

I don't know how we accomplish that, but I think this bill shines a light on it. Maybe you can reflect on some things you were thinking about as you heard this in committee.

**Senator Tannas:** I agree with you. The last committee hearings — and we spent a fair amount of time at the Legal Committee on this bill — certainly helped to shine a light on the subject. We can also do that here through our ministerial Question Period if we so choose.

The behaviour needs to change. The more we try to legislate something as narrow as this and yet get it wrong — which you can argue we have done here, because the bill doesn't compel them to do anything other than drive them to the hospital. Of course, morally it does, and now it doesn't qualify for us to be doing it, so there is that.

We must be careful when using our legislative powers. We should have reasonable assurance that they will be used in the way that we are intending. Then it is up to us to ensure that happens through questions and the way in which we can highlight the subject.

All I wanted to do today was raise my concerns — remind people of what they were — and suggest that sometimes we really need to make hard choices regarding what moves through the process here, given the number of private members' bills that senators are now inclined to introduce.

Thank you.

**Hon. Pierrette Ringuette:** Senator Tannas, would you take a few more questions from me?

**Senator Tannas:** Of course.

**Senator Ringuette:** I will try to be short and to the point.

You are indicating that you see a point of vulnerability that must be clarified and solidified within the project. Do you not think that is best done by going to committee, hearing from witnesses and proposing amendments?

**Senator Tannas:** I think if we propose an amendment that would cure the problem, we will disqualify the bill, because it will require spending an enormous amount of money.

**Senator Ringuette:** You would think so, but the action of the amendment has not been proposed, so we don't know.

I'm trying to say that until we, as a collective group of responsible citizens, decide on a different process with regard to private members' bills that we currently agree upon, I don't see why we should deprive one private member's bill from one senator or any other private member's bill going to committee and going through the process.

**Senator Tannas:** If you want to suspend second reading, debate and vote. But the fact is that we have second reading and we all vote. The reason is because we all have that moment to consider the principle of the bill and whether we could ever see ourselves supporting it.

We now have another consideration, which is the allocation of precious time that we don't have enough of and has many calls on it, and that is committee study.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain:** During its study, was the committee able to demonstrate that mental health problems requiring hospital treatment are more acute among incarcerated individuals than among the non-incarcerated population? Was it able to determine the impact that the implementation of this bill may have on the already glaring lack of services for people who have greater needs and still live in society? In other words, during its study, was the committee able to draw a parallel between preventing criminalization and effectively treating mental health issues in non-incarcerated individuals?

[*English*]

**Senator Tannas:** I don't recall. I don't want to say one way or another.

However, I think it is clear that addiction, mental health and incarceration are all a circle, and the root cause of addiction and incarceration is in many cases mental health. Until we get those root causes on the table, whether it is addiction or incarceration, I think we will continue to go around and around.

**Hon. Lucie Moncion:** Senator Tannas, Bill S-205 was in the House of Commons, and it died there on the Order Paper because the House of Commons was not working on any of our bills. We agree on that.

I understand the arguments that you are making about private members' bills. I just don't understand why you are making them with respect to this one in particular, because this one has gone through the process. It will be the same with the bill that I will be introducing.

I want to understand the rationale, because I think you are trying to get us to understand that we bring a lot of private members' bills into this chamber and it boggles the work we do in committee. Then we have senators who bring all kinds of issues to this chamber, and because of the legislation and the way Parliament was working, the work we were doing here was stalled. I think we are just picking up where we left off and sending back a lot of things that we worked on, and want the House of Commons to now work on, so that when the work from the House of Commons comes to us, we will be able to concentrate on the government's bills.

Do you agree?

**Senator Tannas:** I'm not sure. All I know is what I have said. I have concerns about time and believe we must be more serious at second reading regarding what we can afford to do.

I proposed a fairly controversial bill during the last Parliament. I intend to propose it again. The principle of it is pretty clear, and I fully expect that at second reading we will hear people express their concerns about the principle and potentially say they cannot support it, no matter if it goes to committee and comes back whole — they will never support it and will therefore vote against it.

That is at the root of feeling I needed to speak today. We are in a new era with the public, but we need to establish a new era here with our thoughtfulness and purposefulness around private members' bills and that we are prepared to stand up and register our vote on a subject when called at this early stage. We need to do some triage if we are going to be successful and leave enough time for committees to do that important work on subject matter studies.

Thank you.

• (1510)

I'm conscious of the time. I'll answer other questions, but I would like to see us go to a vote.

**Senator Moncion:** On this one, I couldn't agree more with you, senator. That's where we are looking at different controversial bills here that should not have been voted on in the last Parliament and probably in this one.

I think we agree on the fact that there is a lot of work that needs to be done, and I think there is a thinking process that needs to come into every private member's bill that comes into this place. I think it is a conversation that we haven't had with different senators on private members' bills.

I think we agree on this, but I would like to know if we are on the same page here.

**Senator Tannas:** Yes, I think so.

**Hon. Kim Pate:** Thank you, Senator Tannas, for your very kind introduction to your intervention.

For the purposes of the chamber, I want to ask you if you recall that before this was a private member's bill, it was actually the amendments the Senate made to Bill C-83. It wasn't a private bill. It was a bill that had a Royal Recommendation.

As you rightly pointed out, \$74 million has not been accounted for by the government. That included spending they had allocated for external mental health beds, so not just for the drive to the hospital and back, but actually beds that were not contracted.

Part of the evidence we heard was that having these kinds of measures could assist in actually ensuring that those resources are made available and, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer showed, at a cost that would be a saving of upwards of \$100,000 per year per prisoner.

Is my recollection of that correct, from your perspective?

**Senator Tannas:** Right. We were the ones, and it may have been your amendment. I don't know whose amendment it was that was put in this place that ultimately generated this amount of money that was going to go into this that quite clearly hasn't.

I go to the same question, which is that it doesn't appear that legislation is working in getting the corrections people to do what the legislation says. It is a management issue.

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Thank you very much, Senator Tannas, for your comments. I agree with you strongly that we should be willing to look at private members' bills or Senate public bills and vote for or against them. I think the way you have laid it out is a respectful way, and we do that in a respectful way.

The point I want to make is in part to your comment, but the comment that is sometimes made is that we in the Senate spend too much time on Senate public bills, that people are following their pet projects. I'm not suggesting that is what you are saying.

I want to make the point that as well as I understand it, we only deal with Senate public bills after we have dealt with government business. Government business is always number one, and these other bills that we are introducing never hold up government bills, and they should not. Sometimes they may, but they should not. I think that's the general agreement that we have. We have Senate public bills we bring forward, but it never delays the business of the nation, the business of the state. That's our number one.

**Senator Tannas:** Thank you for that. You are right that in terms of legislation, we always deal with government business first, and it's important the public understand that.

The issue is in committee work, where there is an obligation that committees deal with legislation before studies. We got off track on studies during COVID, frankly, and we are slowly getting our momentum back where we are agreeing to do impactful studies that will create interest and give voice to issues

that the government ought to consider, but private members' bills chew up a lot of committee time that is not now available for committee studies.

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** I know Senator Tannas wants to move on, but I just want to make a statement and ask a question to ensure we are clear on things.

Senator Pate brought up Bill C-83. I was the sponsor of Bill C-83, and she and I worked on that bill together. For those who weren't around for Bill C-83, it is about structured intervention units, or SIUs. Specifically, the structured intervention units in Canada are correctional facilities designed to separate inmates from the general population for security or other reasons while providing an environment for targeted interventions and rehabilitation.

I'll jump ahead. The purpose and goals here were separation: to manage inmates who cannot be safely held in mainstream population; intervention: to provide targeted interventions and programs to address the risks and needs that led to the inmate's transfer; reintegration: to facilitate a safe and structured return to the mainstream inmate population; rights: to ensure inmates in SIUs retain the same rights as other inmates to the extent possible while acknowledging some limitations due to security — key features in the daily routine, out-of-cell time, human contact, meaningful way of engagement, access to services.

The one thing that you mentioned, and we seem to be swerving around it, is it was a good bill. It had good intent. It had the right things going into it. But the problem was that it seems the Correctional Service Canada will go its own route. I had them promise me that they would operationalize this, and they had a plan to operationalize it and see it through. I think four months later, Senator Pate and I went to check it out — no sign. There was no progressive reintegration programs that were being used to make these inmates feel safe going back into the community and to make the community feel safe they are being reintegrated.

So there is something wrong with all these bills we are talking about, and that is the corrections following through on these things and executing them with precision and conviction, especially the program side for integration and rehabilitation. We need to tackle that. I didn't follow the last committee meetings and whether they got boiled down in those questions as well.

Would you agree with that?

**Senator Tannas:** Thank you for that question and for the history. You brought it back as you went through that.

I think that's the case. We talk a lot of times about whether it is a legislative issue or a behavioural issue. We have certain elements of the federal government that have developed excellent immune systems for ignoring legislation they don't like. More legislation probably is not the answer. A tough minister is probably the answer and good investigative journalism and louder voices bringing the public forward.

All I want, colleagues — and we can get to hearing from others on debate — is we should not let controversial bills get a free pass to committee. It is easy for us to, on a voice vote, let it go. We should be prepared to make a stand one way or another. We can justify it however we all individually want to justify our vote, but we should vote.

• (1520)

**Senator Pate:** I agree with you. One piece that has been left out, in addition to what Senator Marty Klyne introduced, is that one of the amendments was judicial oversight. In the amendments that we made to Bill C-83, as Senator Klyne indicated, was a promise by the government that another form of oversight would be put in place. That oversight was put in place, and then it expired, and nothing was done.

Judicial oversight provides a different opportunity, I would suggest. I'm asking whether you agree that if, in fact, courts have to review this, it would mean that that documentation has to be produced, which would allow it then to be public in a way now that what you're describing — the behavioural issues — could happen without the eyes of the public seeing it.

**Senator Tannas:** That would have been an excellent bill to bring forward. It would have highlighted that we were dealt with in bad faith, as were the sponsor, others here and Parliament. So to simply have a bill that reintroduced judicial oversight would have been an interesting way for us to proceed, as opposed to trying to come up with something else. But just simply to reintroduce judicial oversight where it belonged would have been something that many people could have supported, including me.

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** Thank you, Your Honour. I didn't intend to speak to this, but I will be brief. I thank Senator Tannas for some of his good points.

From what I have seen, the debate has gone down two different paths. We are talking about Bill S-205, but we're also talking in general about private members' bills in this house. They both warrant some time and discussion.

First, I will say this about private members' bills. They are an essential part of the work we do here in this institution, but we also have to be very cognizant that this institution's primary goal is to review government legislation. The good news is that, as we've seen so far in this Parliament, there is none. So, we need to find things to preoccupy ourselves with, so far. However, we also have to be equally careful that when we do engage in private members' bills, we understand that, as the upper chamber in the Parliament of Canada and as an appointed body, we have a very narrow path to follow when we use legislation.



Our most important privilege in this institution is our ability to advocate, to lobby, especially for those of us who sit in a national caucus, we lobby our counterparts on the other side. Those of you who don't, still have other avenues that you can use. Of course, you can advocate via written form, you can articulate here through reports, and so on and so forth. But we have to be very careful when we use the ultimate tool that we have constitutionally, which is the tool of legislating, that we respect our role.

Number one, our legislation should never incorporate expenditures. That is a principle that this upper chamber has respected now for a very long time. When we cross that line, we have to be disciplined to bring ourselves back. Before we actually engage in private members' bills, we must ask whether we are respecting our constitutional role. That is something that must be evaluated.

Second and equally important, does it have broad potential consensus in the chamber? Is there enough support in the five groups in order for a senator to initiate a private member's bill? After that, if you want to take it to the next level, ask yourself this: If it does go to the other house, will there be a significant group championing that particular piece of legislation? If any one of these elements has no tick mark beside it, colleagues — I think the point that Senator Tannas is trying to make is this: Let's not create a bottleneck and actually become an obstacle to private members' bills that are truly in the public interest, which could be appropriately addressed by committees and could be voted on.

All of you know this: My view is that every parliamentarian here has the right to be heard, every bill has the right to be debated, and every bill needs to be voted on. However, if we don't respect the criteria I just outlined, we are actually defeating the purpose of this institution, but we're also hurting our legitimacy. The reason is because in the other house, they look at the work we do. They look at it when the legislation crosses over to their place. When they see legislation that raises red flags, they just toss it to the side, and we become a caricature of Parliament rather than a significant contributor to the legislative process.

Those are my thoughts on private members' bills in general. It is a subject worthy of discussion and coming to a consensus on, but I hope we all respect those broad guidelines that have been respected in this chamber for decades.

Vis-à-vis this particular bill, I believe it's a bill that doesn't warrant support for the simple reason that it doesn't respect one of those principles, which is that it will incur financial expenditures, which we don't have the right to vote on as a body. That has been a clear principle which we have respected for a long time. That is why I will be voting against this bill. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** I have a question for Senator Housakos.

Senator Housakos, I am just reflecting on your good words around private members' bills. I do agree with some of what you say, but this is my concern, and I'm not hearing it from you. This bill was actually passed by the Senate and went to the other

place. It has been tested to the degree that we test our bills. Would you agree with that? What makes this bill different, and why would we try to stop it now?

**Senator Housakos:** As I clearly highlighted, obviously, it was a mistake by this chamber to do that and support a bill that would invoke expenditures, which we don't have the constitutional right to do, any more than we have the right to amend a budget bill that comes over to this place.

With all due respect, I don't think I supported it the first time around. So, for the same reasons, I'm not supporting it the second time around. However, I'm also pleading to colleagues to take under consideration our constitutional rights regarding what we can and cannot do and to respect that. We can correct the mistake that we made in the previous Parliament.

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

**Senator Housakos:** Yes.

**Senator Batters:** In your remarks today, you were speaking about how one of our most important duties is to advocate. Another essential duty that we have in this chamber of Parliament is to vote. Isn't that what we are actually being asked to do here at second reading for this bill, to vote yes or no on this senator's bill, as to whether or not we support the principle of the bill, which is actually what a second reading vote is?

**Senator Housakos:** Yes. Agreed.

**Senator Pate:** Thank you, Senator Housakos, for your intervention. Didn't we request a ruling on whether this bill required a Royal Recommendation? And wasn't the Speaker's ruling clear in the last Parliament that it did not?

**Senator Housakos:** That's an entirely different subject, but I will broach it briefly. As we all know, this is one of the chambers in the Westminster system where the Speaker has a very unique role. The Speaker in this chamber is a barometer for consensus; he or she is not an arbitrator. That is unlike the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Speaker of Westminster or any other Speaker in a Westminster-style parliament.

As we all know very well — and it has been exercised on a number of occasions — the chamber decides. The majority rules, but the majority can be wrong from time to time, as we can appreciate, even though I did not agree with the Speaker's ruling itself at that particular time. As we all know, in this system, we have the right to challenge the Speaker.

It is not unusual in a chamber like ours, where the majority makes the wrong decision, that the Speaker can acquiesce to it. That is his or her right. If the Speaker does not acquiesce to it, he or she can also be voted down by the majority. A Speaker's ruling, to be frank with you, in this upper chamber, doesn't have the same level of strength as the Speaker's rulings on the other side.

**Hon. Marilou McPhedran:** I have a question, if Senator Housakos would take it.

**Senator Housakos:** With pleasure.

**Senator McPhedran:** When a bill passes and becomes law, can you think of any bill with significance that actually makes changes in our society that doesn't have some cost associated with it?

**Senator Housakos:** There are many such bills. Some bills amend the Criminal Code. We had a bill creating Lebanese National Heritage Month. We pass motions and bills here on a regular basis that don't have any monetary element attached to them. We, as a result, can pass those bills. We can initiate them. We can amend them. We can do whatever we wish. There are tons of bills in this place that we pass that don't have money attached to it.

• (1530)

**Senator McPhedran:** Thank you very much. Just to clarify my question, it was about bills that actually make a significant change in society, as this bill would. Any kind of change in a governmental system — and laws affect governmental systems — is going to incur some kind of cost. The threshold, as I understand it, is much higher than that. This appears to be a discussion about creating another threshold, which is a lower threshold than we have typically been guided to follow.

**Senator Housakos:** The Parliamentary Budget Officer has clearly stated that this could cost Canadian taxpayers up to \$2 billion. That is ludicrous. Senator, you will agree with me on the fundamental principle that in the Westminster model, there is no taxation without representation. It's clear: We have lived by that principle in the lower and upper chambers of this democracy for a long time. You will agree with me that just on that principle alone, we don't even have any reason to be debating this form of a private member's bill.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**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. Is there agreement on the length of the bell?

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

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Do we agree to a 15-minute bell?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** The vote will take place at 3:47 p.m. Call in the senators.

• (1540)

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

#### YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Al Zaibak	Klyne
Arnold	MacAdam
Audette	McBean
Bernard	McCallum
Black	McPhedran
Boehm	Miville-Dechéne
Boniface	Mohamed
Boudreau	Moodie
Boyer	Muggli
Busson	Osler
Cardozo	Oudar
Clement	Pate
Coyle	Petitclerc
Cuzner	Prosper
Dasko	Quinn
Deacon ( <i>Nova Scotia</i> )	Ringuette
Dean	Robinson
Dhillon	Ross
Francis	Senior
Gerba	Simons
Gignac	Surette
Greenwood	Wells ( <i>Alberta</i> )
Hay	White
Hébert	Wilson
Ince	Youance
Karetak-Lindell	Yussuff—53
Kingston	

NAYS  
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler	Martin
Arnot	McNair
Batters	Patterson
Carignan	Poirier
Dalphond	Saint-Germain
Downe	Smith
Harder	Tannas
Housakos	Varone
Loffreda	Verner
MacDonald	Wells ( <i>Newfoundland and Labrador</i> )—21
Manning	

ABSTENTIONS  
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Duncan	Petten
Forest	Pupatello—5
LaBoucane-Benson	

• (1550)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Pate, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.)

[Translation]

**JURY DUTY APPRECIATION WEEK BILL**

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Lucie Moncion** moved second reading of Bill S-226, An Act respecting Jury Duty Appreciation Week.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today as sponsor of Bill S-226, An Act respecting Jury Duty Appreciation Week, to speak at second reading.

Bill S-226 would designate the second week of May each year as national jury duty appreciation week.

Enshrining this week in law would officially recognize the contributions and dedication of the thousands of Canadians called to serve in this capacity every year. This recognition has become increasingly necessary to raise awareness among governments, employers and members of the public about the mental health issues associated with this civic duty.

Unfortunately, during the previous Parliament, this bill, formerly Bill S-252, died on the Order Paper because of prorogation and the election. I am therefore reintroducing this bill for your consideration in hopes that the work done during the last Parliament will be taken into account to allow for quick, efficient deliberation.

After the multiple speeches I've given in this chamber and in committee, I'm sure that many of you have a clearer understanding of the reality facing many Canadians called on to perform jury duty. For senators who haven't heard those speeches or who may be less familiar with that aspect of our judicial system, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer a few reminders and present you with information relevant to an informed debate.

On June 4, 2024, this bill reached third reading in the Senate after it was carefully scrutinized by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. No amendments to the bill were ever proposed, but it took some years to reach that outcome.

In 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights conducted a study on counselling and other mental health supports for jurors. The study culminated in the release of a report in May 2018 entitled *Improving support for jurors in Canada*. The report contained a series of recommendations calling for strong federal leadership considering that the administration of justice is the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments. This is where my bill comes in.

A motion I moved in this chamber calling on the government to recognize Jury Appreciation Week was adopted on May 12, 2022. The Government Representative in the Senate then spoke in support of the motion on behalf of the government and the Minister of Justice. His speech highlighted the invaluable service provided by jurors and reiterated that adopting a motion is a modest gesture. In the same vein, I believe that official recognition through a bill is a very modest gesture, given the sacrifices that jurors and former jurors make to ensure the proper functioning of our judicial and democratic systems.

Following that motion, I introduced Bill S-252. This bill is identical to Bill S-226, which is the subject of my speech today.

As part of its study of the bill, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology heard from a number of witnesses at its meetings on February 8 and February 15, 2024. I invite you to read their testimonies.

• (1600)

The witnesses unanimously reiterated the urgent need to formally recognize the contribution made by former jurors to the justice system, particularly given the major sacrifices they must make and the consequences associated with performing their duties, such as post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosed in some who served as jurors in particularly difficult criminal trials.

[English]

I had the privilege of appearing before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology as part of that study. The members of the committee listened to my testimony with compassion. The committee members not only showed great sensitivity toward me and other witnesses, but also took a pragmatic and analytical approach to examining these issues. The committee's report does not contain any amendments, but it makes three constructive observations.

The first concerns the lack of diversity in juries in Canada and recommends that the federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments try to identify measures to improve the diversity of juries in accordance with the intent to be judged by a jury of our peers.

The second observation concerns vicarious trauma experienced by jurors and those in mental health programs and services. Health Canada defines vicarious trauma as follows:

. . . the experience of bearing witness to the atrocities committed against another. It is the result of absorbing the sight, smell, sound, touch and feel of the stories told in detail by victims searching for a way to release their own pain. . . . Vicarious trauma is the energy that comes from being in the presence of trauma and it is how our bodies and psyche react to the profound despair, rage and pain.

Understanding the science behind our experience can be powerful in our recovery, and having access to evidence-based programs is crucial. I wish I'd known the notion of vicarious trauma when I was going through difficult times as a result of my experience as a juror.

With respect to this second observation, the committee recommends the creation of a comprehensive government program focused on trauma management to support and protect the well-being of jurors.

The third observation draws attention to the financial impact on the participation of Canadians on jury duty, not only in terms of lost wages but also the lack of adequate compensation for expenses incurred in the performance of jury duty, including childcare and travel. These barriers partly explain the lack of diversity on juries. In response, the committee proposes that the Government of Canada consider using the Employment Insurance program to provide financial support to jurors during their service.

On the subject of financial compensation, Tina Daenzer, a former juror who testified before the committee, explained as follows:

Jury pay is still woefully inadequate in order to ensure a truly well-balanced jury panel. In fact, in Ontario, it has not changed since I sat on the Bernardo trial in 1995. The initial ten days are unpaid until the tenth day, when you receive \$40 per day.

Millions of Canadians work in minimum wage jobs or in the gig community, which means that they are financially unable to participate in the jury process. If we truly want a jury of our peers, then we need to ensure that every Canadian can participate.

The former jurors and other witnesses heard by the committee were unanimous in their view that this week of appreciation is necessary not only to raise awareness but also to recognize and celebrate those who have exercised this duty.

The advocacy of many former jurors, the work of the Canadian Juries Commission and of their CEO Mark Farrant, as well as the study we did here in this chamber and in committee, have had some impact on the modest increase in juror pay in certain provinces. Just a few weeks ago, on October 1, juror compensation in Ontario was increased to \$120 per day from the first day of service. Attorney General Doug Downey stated that the reform was ". . . long overdue . . ." and noted that the province's jury fee structure had been ". . . neglected . . .", having remained unchanged since 1989. That was the year I sat as a juror.

This is great progress and shows that advocacy can make a difference. A national jury duty appreciation week would lay the groundwork for sustained advocacy and educational outreach on a broader scale, ensuring that progress continues across the country.

[Translation]

Introducing a jury duty appreciation week could help improve decision-makers' awareness of gaps in the support available.

Inadequate financial support, particularly for people on low incomes, is a major stress factor that makes Canadian juries less representative and diverse than they should be. Jurors are currently paid less than minimum wage.

Employers often underestimate the difficulties that employees called upon to serve as jurors encounter. Support and compensation offered by employers, provinces and territories is generally negligible and insufficient. Inadequate support can make jury duty difficult for employees. It can sometimes lead to financial hardship and even job loss.

Then, once the trial is over, our society expects jurors to return to their normal lives as if nothing had happened.

Employers often see this long absence as a holiday. Raising awareness among employers in particular is essential. They need to be aware of the challenges jurors face, and they must be prepared to support employees who are called upon to fulfill this civic duty.

We must challenge these unrealistic expectations and start talking about how to remove these barriers so we can build a fairer, more inclusive system.

[ Senator Moncion ]

Supporting the well-being of the women and men who make sacrifices to ensure the proper functioning of Canada's justice system and our democracy is essential. This includes providing adequate financial support and ensuring job security and access to mental health resources for jurors.

Bill S-252 is the key to creating an environment conducive to achieving these goals.

Based on my experience as juror number one in a first-degree murder trial, conversations with former jurors and stakeholders, and the reflections of our parliamentary committees, I've come to believe that federal leadership is necessary.

Over the years, the bill's relevance has been proven time and time again, and it has earned broad support from stakeholders and numerous parliamentarians.

Essentially, this bill proposes a nationally celebrated initiative that will help address the fragmentation in our current system, which fosters disjointed discussions between various organizations and the provinces and territories, not only concerning the administration of justice, but mental health services as well. While respecting the jurisdictions of the provinces and territories, the bill lays the foundations for cooperative federalism in juror support and builds a bridge between a variety of civil society actors who work in fields related to justice, education and health.

[English]

The Senate has already voted in favour of recognizing jury duty appreciation week through a motion and in favour of this legislation at third reading. Colleagues, I hope I can count on your support for this modest and simple legislative proposal.

I'd like to quote Tina Daenzer once again, this time on Canadian society's lack of appreciation for jurors. During her testimony before the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee on Bill S-252, she said:

If the job of sitting on a jury is so important to our entire legal system, why are the people selected so underappreciated in both adequate pay and mental health support? Many studies have shown that recognition in the workplace boosts engagement, attracts better employees, helps employees find meaning and reinforces the positive. As a country, we should all want that not just for employees but also for those who are chosen as jurors. We must ensure they feel supported and appreciated, and at the end of the trial, they can walk away feeling like it was a rewarding and enriching experience.

• (1610)

[Translation]

I therefore humbly ask for your support so that this bill can be quickly sent to the other place. Thank you for your attention.

[English]

**Hon. David M. Wells:** Would Senator Moncion take a question?

**Senator Moncion:** Yes.

**Senator D. M. Wells:** You mentioned some of the purposes behind giving recognition to jurors, and I understand those. You also mentioned other things that could either be follow-ons or part of this. You mentioned more diversity on juries, but also a stipend, whether federal or provincial. That's not part of the bill. Would that be one of the benefits of giving recognition?

**Senator Moncion:** Thank you for the question. That's right. Jury work is not well-known. For example, when I became a juror 37 years ago, I didn't know what I was getting into. I was summoned to the courthouse. We sat down. There was a bingo barrel. They put all the names in there. Your name comes up. In my case, I had to walk up to both of the accused. They had to agree to every juror who came up.

If you are not chosen, you go home. But if you are chosen, what's next? You are sequestered when you work on the judgment, but you also spend the next 10, 20, 40 or however many days in the courthouse, except for weekends. These are all things that people don't know.

People don't know about the different reactions that may arise once you leave the court. To elaborate, in my case, there was a first-degree murder conviction. One of the things I left the courthouse with was this question: Had I made the right decision? Had I condemned two men with a fair and just decision? That haunted me for a number of years.

I still have information on these two gentlemen. A few years ago, I looked to see if they were on the internet. One of them was. That person now lives in Vancouver. He visits universities and gives lectures to law students. Something he said was that he had committed the murder. He was explaining the circumstances and saying, "I'm not asking for forgiveness. I'm acknowledging this was done and that it was wrong."

For me, having that closure on everything told me the decision I made was the right one.

When you are a juror, you have no knowledge about this. When you are an employer, you have no knowledge of what it entails or why your employee has to be there. The jury appreciation week is to provide that kind of information.

In Ontario, they now prepare commissioners who are in the courthouse to help newly named jurors understand the work they will do and how long the trial might last. Today, they help them understand the work that they will do, why they are doing it and what it entails in terms of mental health issues that may arise from what they see and are exposed to. This week will bring many things to the surface and help people understand this important part of our judicial system — which is unknown to most Canadians.

**Senator D. M. Wells:** Thank you for that answer. Senator Moncion, would you take another short question?

**Senator Moncion:** I will take a short one.

**Senator D. M. Wells:** Are you familiar with other jurisdictions that have such an appreciation day, week or month? If so, are you familiar with what the results were?

**Senator Moncion:** Thank you for the question. It is done in some states in the United States, and the level of success is good. That is why people from Ontario — Mark Farrant, who participated in a very difficult trial, along with Tina Daenzer, who was on the *Bernardo* case — started talking about creating this for Ontario. It was the first jurisdiction where it was brought forward here in Canada. They are now working with jurisdictions across Canada to get this to other provinces because of the way our system is made. There are some examples in the United States, and their levels of success are pretty good.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

## NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Galvez, seconded by the Honourable Senator Pate, for the second reading of Bill S-229, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (Gatineau Park).

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-229, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (Gatineau Park).

[English]

I want to thank Senator Rosa Galvez for introducing this bill and also recognize the support of all the members of Parliament from the National Capital Region who have been long-time supporters of this idea.

As a senator who lives in the National Capital Region, I have a particular interest in this bill. Having been a resident of Ottawa for many years now, I have often had the opportunity to enjoy Gatineau Park.

Indeed, the park has a special place in the hearts of my family members. Over many years, we have been there many times, and the photographs we have taken over those years record the history of our family and the growth of our children. Often we would go with other friends and family, who were often visitors from beyond the National Capital Region. This is indeed what thousands of people and families do in this region.

This enormous green space of 361 square kilometres perched on the doorstep of our national capital contains the legendary Meech Lake and over 50 other lakes; world-class trails for cross-

country skiing, hiking, and mountain biking; three rock-climbing areas; three large campgrounds; several unique ecosystems; and the historic Mackenzie King Estate.

I urge you to visit Gatineau Park when you are here in town. If you are really short on time, come and visit my office. I have done many paintings of the area, and you can at least get a sense of them. I assure you, I am not selling these paintings; this is not a promotion.

The stunning Eardley Escarpment, the southern edge of the Gatineau Hills, divides the Canadian Shield from the Saint-Lawrence Lowland. It is host to a large number of rare plant and animal species; about 90 plants and 60 animal species found in the park are at risk. Gatineau Park is a critical conservation area with a biodiversity that merits attention and protection.

[Translation]

This park is one of the jewels of the National Capital Region, and it is time to protect and preserve it for future generations. Gatineau Park is a major attraction for the National Capital Region. It improves residents' quality of life and strengthens their sense of pride in their region. This is the second-most visited federal park in Canada after Banff National Park, with 2.6 million visits annually. However, despite its popularity, it is not a real federal park because it is not enshrined in federal legislation. Bill S-229, which is before us today, seeks to remedy that situation.

[English]

This bill puts the park on a secure legislative footing. Gatineau Park is not included in the national parks system. This needs to change. To correct this, Bill S-229 would make a series of amendments and additions to the National Capital Act.

• (1620)

Let me just quote from one clause of the bill. This is clause 3 in Bill S-229, where they are amending section 10 of the National Capital Act. The proposed section 10.01 says:

Gatineau Park is dedicated to the people of Canada, including the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation, for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to this Act and the regulations, and the Park shall be maintained and made use of — and its ecological integrity protected — so as to leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Passing this bill and putting Gatineau Park on a statutory footing should be the first significant step to advancing the vibrant, integrated national capital that Canada needs for the 21st century and beyond. I hope that the successful passage of this bill will inspire further infrastructure and beautification improvements to our national capital.

Colleagues, I want to situate Gatineau Park in a larger or grander vision to enhance a proud national capital. Here are a few ideas that I would like to put forward. Indeed, I think in some ways our national capital is looking a little tired and needs some serious invigoration.

In addition to this idea of the national park, I want to support the idea that has been put forward by many to pedestrianize Wellington Street in front of Parliament Hill, thereby enhancing the security of Parliament Hill and making the Hill and the area more beautiful and attractive for visitors.

I would like to suggest the need for a new museum of science and technology which is modern, new and located downtown rather than in a random former bread factory and industrial park in the south end of Ottawa. I have nothing against the south end of Ottawa, but you know what I mean.

Another suggestion is for a graffiti and street art museum. One of the places where that could be housed fairly quickly is in the Hudson's Bay department store which is across the street and sitting empty and will likely be empty for some time.

There have been ideas for a portrait gallery that have been put forward by many over the years. A good spot for it would be this very building when we move out of here in about 2032-33.

It's a good idea.

Another idea that had been put forward by many is to have a botanical garden in the National Capital Region. These would contribute enormously to preserving and enhancing our cultural heritage and promoting our country.

[Translation]

Gatineau Park is one of our great national treasures. We owe it to our children to ensure that Gatineau Park is preserved for them.

[English]

Colleagues, this bill is about the environment, biodiversity, recreation and enjoyment for visitors from across Canada and around the world. These are the objectives that this bill will fulfill.

I hope that you will join me in voting to send Bill S-229 to committee for appropriate consultation and review.

Thank you, colleagues.

**Hon. Lucie Moncion:** Senator Cardozo, will you take a question, please?

Senator, what does making Gatineau Park a national park change for the park?

**Senator Cardozo:** Right now, it doesn't have legislative authority. It is simply a park that can stop being a park at any time. You could change the nature of the park. You could allow it to have any amount of development. When you have a national park, then it puts a stop to the threat of that kind of development and ensures that it is there for a long period of time. It certainly enhances the ability and the importance that are given to it by governments and communities to constantly maintain it and advance its various facilities.

**Senator Moncion:** It is just that Gatineau Park is a very large area. We could possibly ask the same thing for the Algonquin Park. I'm not sure it is a national park; it might be. I might be wrong, but I don't think it is. I think it is a good idea, but I just find it is a very large area to make it a national park. Wouldn't you agree?

**Senator Cardozo:** Actually, no. In comparison to Banff National Park and many of the other national parks in various areas of Canada, it isn't that large. It is large in terms of it being close to an urban or suburban area like Gatineau and Ottawa. There are, in fact, some residences in the park which are kind of grandfathered in there. At various times, the National Capital Commission has had first right of refusal if anybody wants to sell their property. So there is a move to try and not so much move residents out of there but to decrease the number of residents within the park over time.

I don't think it is too large. I think it is a reasonable size. One of the things it does is say this is where it is going to be. There are pages and pages in Schedule 2 of language that I certainly don't understand, but it has a whole lot of very detailed descriptions of the boundaries of the park. So it is not going to be fenced in, but it is a series of roads and sometimes streams or mountains that define the area that will be the park. Essentially, it maintains the area that is currently considered to be Gatineau Park.

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** Would you take a question?

**Senator Cardozo:** Sure.

**Senator Klyne:** I'm a little at a loss here. Did you say "streams and mountains"?

**Senator Cardozo:** I think streams more than mountains.

**Senator Klyne:** Okay. I feel as if I'm in a city hall in Regina here talking to someone who wants to do something with one of the parks. Who is the actual owner of that? Is it the City of Ottawa, or is it the National Capital Commission? Who presides over this and can make these decisions and give tax authorities and so on and so forth?

**Senator Cardozo:** The current owner of the park is the National Capital Commission. It is not the City of Gatineau or the City of Ottawa. It is an area that has been defined by the National Capital Commission. What this does is take that area and make it into a national park, put it under both authorities.

**Senator Klyne:** Would you take another question?

**Senator Cardozo:** Sure.

**Senator Klyne:** How does it land here? Why aren't those you've just cited not taking this within their own realm, because they are set up to do that? Do they need legislation to get this done?

**Senator Cardozo:** Certainly, the point of this bill is to take what is more of a practice and an understanding in terms of the National Capital Commission authority and raise it to the level of being a national park. It requires legislation for that to

happen. As you know, that legislation could begin in the House or in the Senate. Senator Galvez has been working with the members of Parliament from the National Capital Region. Together, they decided it would be more convenient to begin that bill here in the Senate, and that's what Senator Galvez has done.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1630)

## CRIMINAL CODE

### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition)** moved second reading of Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today at second reading of Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders), to seek your support for the Senate to adopt this bill without referring it to committee so that it may move directly to third reading and be sent to the other place.

Bill S-233 seeks to add an aggravating circumstance to the Criminal Code for assaults committed against health care workers and first responders while performing their duties. It does not create a new offence but simply clarifies that when a court imposes a sentence for an assault against these professionals, it is required to consider this circumstance as an aggravating factor, while maintaining judicial discretion in determining an appropriate sentence.

It is important to recognize that this bill is not new. The original version, Bill C-321, was first introduced in the House of Commons in the Forty-fourth Parliament by MP Todd Doherty, whom I want to thank for his continued leadership and continued advocacy on this issue.

I also want to pay tribute to and point out that today we have with us here in the gallery Mr. Paul Hills. He is a Saskatchewan paramedic and a representative of the Saskatoon Paramedic Association. He has been the driving force behind this important piece of legislation. His work to highlight the growing violence faced by front-line workers has been essential in moving this mission forward and has laid the groundwork for what we are discussing here today.

Bill S-233 is, therefore, identical to Bill C-321 and corresponds to the version that was amended and unanimously adopted by the House of Commons. After its adoption in the other place, Bill C-321 was referred to the Senate, where it was studied by the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and reported back to the chamber without amendment. It was unanimously supported by our committee.

Bill C-321 had, therefore, completed all parliamentary stages. The only reason — and I stress the only reason — that this bill did not become law was due to the dissolution of Parliament. It died on the Order Paper when the Forty-fourth Parliament

ended. There were no objections to its content, no delays, no controversy and no disagreement. The bill was fully supported, fully vetted and ready for final passage.

Colleagues, this fact is critical to our deliberation today. We are not examining a new or untested legislative proposal. We are resuming consideration of a bill that has already been scrutinized, supported and validated through every stage of the legislative process in both chambers. Its content remains unchanged, and its scope is limited, as it represents a targeted and modest amendment to the Criminal Code.

[*Translation*]

The Senate has already established clear precedents for fast-tracking consensus-based bills without referring them to committee when their objectives are focused and not controversial. During the Forty-fourth Parliament, bills such as S-202, S-206, S-214, S-223 and S-245 were passed using this expedited process. More recently, during the Forty-fifth Parliament, the Senate followed the same procedure for Bill S-210 and Bill S-227. Bill S-233 is fully in line with this parliamentary tradition.

[*English*]

As we consider this legislation, the reality of violence against front-line workers continues to worsen: 75% of Canadian paramedics report having experienced violence at work; 61% of nurses have reported being victims of harassment, threats or assaults; and in 2021, 70% of emergency physicians said that violence in emergency departments had increased over the previous five years.

Just this past Sunday, in Hamilton, Ontario, an ambulance parked outside Hamilton General Hospital was deliberately set on fire moments after paramedics had off-loaded a patient. Police reported that a man had thrown an accelerant into the vehicle before fleeing on foot. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the ambulance was completely torched and destroyed.

The suspect, a 31-year-old man, has since been arrested and charged with arson — disregard for human life. This shocking incident is a stark reminder that these acts of violence are not isolated; they are happening here in our own communities, and they directly endanger those who already risk their lives to save and serve ours.

These figures and recent events illustrate a human and professional crisis to which we can respond today with clear and concrete action by sending a message that Parliament will not tolerate violence against those who protect and care for Canadian citizens.

Bill S-233 reflects a non-partisan effort grounded in respect and recognition for first responders and health care workers alike. Discussions held with many senators, representing all the groups in the Senate, have already shown a shared understanding and a willingness to act swiftly.



In this regard, I would like to highlight the constructive and collegial approach of Senator Yussuff who expressed his support for the bill, recognizing both its necessity and its merit, and I thank him.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank Senator Ravalia, who isn't with us this week because of other Senate duties, for his kind support as the friendly critic of this bill in the previous Parliament.

[Translation]

It should also be noted that Canada would not be alone in taking this step. A number of comparable democracies, including France, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, have already adopted similar measures recognizing the particular vulnerability of first responders and health care professionals, and providing for stiffer penalties when they are victims of violence. Bill S-233 therefore aligns Canada with a clear and consistent international trend.

[English]

By adopting this bill now, the Senate will demonstrate that it can act with efficiency and compassion when moral urgency is evident and consensus is strong.

I, therefore, invite you, honourable colleagues, to grant your consent for Bill S-233 to be adopted at second reading without referral to committee and to proceed directly to third reading and transmission to the other place without delay.

The Canadians who depend on these everyday heroes — our first responders and health care workers — deserve to see this legislation completed soon in respect of what they do and how much they do for us Canadians. Thank you.

**Hon. Hassan Yussuff:** Honourable senators, I rise today to support Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders).

As you know, this is not a new idea. As the friendly critic, I note that this bill is essentially the successor to Bill C-321, which in the Forty-fourth Parliament passed unanimously through the other place and carried the clear mandate of recognition, respect and protection for those who serve, care for and protect us.

As someone who has spent a lifetime advocating for workers' rights and dignity in the workplace, I can say with confidence that the crisis of violence against health service providers and first responders is real. Across Canada, we've heard stories of paramedics assaulted, nurses overwhelmed by abuse and home care workers fearful of coming to work.

When the House of Commons committee heard from union witnesses — people who know this reality first-hand — they made the human cost painfully clear. Linda Silas from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions told MPs that two thirds of nurses reported incidents of physical assaults over the past year, and 40% of those nurses were physically abused more than once a month while engaged in their duties. Such a high rate of violence would be unthinkable in any other profession, and it needs to be stopped.

This bill is a clear message: To those who answer the call when we are vulnerable, the justice system will stand with you. To those who attack you while you're working, we say you will be held to account.

I ask my colleagues not to delay. The other place already sent Bill C-321 forward with unanimity in the last Parliament. We didn't get the job done before it was dissolved. We have the opportunity to do so now. The Senate should act promptly so that this important protection becomes law without undue delay.

The problem we face is not abstract. The Standing Committee on Health in the other place shared this in its 2019 report:

Beyond the numbers, there is the human toll. There is the care aid who is sexually assaulted by a home care client with dementia. There is the nurse who is punched in the jaw by a senior suffering from delirium. There is the personal support worker who doesn't know how she could possibly face going back to work. . . .

• (1640)

We also know that the pandemic years have magnified the pressure on health care workers and first responders. There are more cases, more stress and more danger.

Paul Hills of the International Association of Fire Fighters, representing more than 27,000 paramedics and firefighters, told the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in 2023:

. . . we strongly support Bill C-321. . . .

. . . this legislation and the tougher penalties it proposes will build a strong foundation to address the growing trend of violence towards first responders and health care workers across Canada.

We must recognize that when someone serving in an emergency room, in a firetruck or in long-term care is assaulted, we not only injure that person; we injure our system of care, our community trust and our collective sense of safety.

Bill S-233 and Bill C-321 do that. The text of the former Bill C-321 — now mirrored in Bill S-233 — amends the Criminal Code by adding section 269.02:

When a court imposes a sentence for an offence . . . it shall consider as an aggravating circumstance the fact that the victim . . . was . . . a person who provides health services, including personal care services, or a first responder engaged in the performance of their duty.

In simpler terms, if you assault someone who is providing health services or working as a first-line responder in the performance of their duties, that fact becomes a formal aggravating circumstance in sentencing.

This is not about creating new offences; it's about saying that when our society asks you to risk your safety to serve, the justice system will recognize that. When you are attacked, the courts will treat that as a weighty factor.

That is why the Senate should not delay the passage of this bill.

In the last Parliament, we already saw that the other place gave unanimous support to Bill C-321. That was a powerful bipartisan signal. This bill is ready. The policy rationale has been tested in committees in the two houses of Parliament over the last two years. We must ask what is left to debate. The principle is settled among parliamentarians: We protect those who protect us. The only remaining step is to act. Delaying sends the wrong message to health service providers who face abuse and violence, and to our communities that expect their safety to be upheld.

Moreover, as someone who has dedicated my life to working for fair treatment and respect for working people, whether at the bargaining table or in the legislative chamber, I believe legislation like this reaffirms our basic dignity.

In addressing the potential concerns and underscoring inclusivity, some may ask if this bill goes far enough. Are additional protections needed? Is the scope correct? These are reasonable questions.

The bill's language was carefully considered in committees during the last Parliament, and amendments in committee in the other place broadened its scope to include persons who provide health services rather than applying a narrower definition of health care professional. It complements, not replaces, occupational health and safety laws. It focuses on sentencing in that when someone assaults a front-line worker, our courts will recognize the victim's service role as aggravating.

Prevention and workplace safety matter, too, but this bill sends a necessary deterrent and a symbolic message now.

Colleagues, in conclusion, let me restate this: Bill S-233 is the legislative embodiment of a societal promise. It is a promise that those who provide health services, personal care, home care and hospital care, and those first responders who rush toward danger on our behalf, are not forgotten, not expendable and not unprotected.

We have before us a measure that unites parliamentarians, that addresses a pressing real-world problem and that offers a clear, symbolic and practical improvement to our Criminal Code. Let us not delay this bill or study it further. The path is clear. Instead, I ask this chamber to join Senator Housakos and me in sending a message of support, solidarity and respect by supporting this bill

and moving it as quickly as possible back to the other place without delay. In doing so, we honour the men and women who serve, we strengthen our justice system and we signal to all Canadians that violence against those who care for us will not be tolerated.

Thank you.

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against persons who provide health services and first responders).

As Senators Housakos and Yussuff have pointed out, the bill is relatively straightforward: It would require judges, upon sentencing, to consider an assault on a health worker, health service provider, paramedic, firefighter or other first responder in the course of their duties as an aggravating circumstance.

The original version of this bill, which was then known as Bill C-321, focused specifically on health professionals, but the version that arrived at the Senate, which has now been re-presented by Senator Housakos, has been expanded to include all those who "provide health services." That means it could now encompass people, such as health care aides who are providing home health care to seniors, caregivers or nannies who are often trapped in conditions of employment that make it difficult for them to escape from abuse, registered massage therapists who might be at risk of sexual assault by clients and medical staff at abortion clinics who risk being assaulted by anti-abortion activists.

If, indeed, we are not going to hear from witnesses on Bill S-233, with Senator Tannas's words ringing in my ears, I do want us to know that there is still room for debate and discussion about aspects of this bill. When we were in meetings last year at the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, we heard some truly disturbing testimony from witnesses about the increasing frequency and increasing violence of attacks on health workers and first responders, a situation that has gotten much worse, we were told, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and in parallel with the rising problems of fentanyl addiction and large homeless encampments.

Although the evidence we heard was largely anecdotal, there seems little doubt that the problem is real and intense. According to testimony from the BC Nurses' Union, 39% of their members report being exposed to weapons on a monthly basis. Half of them report experiencing physical violence at least once a month. A staggering 99% of respondents in British Columbia said they experienced "reportable incidents," which are assaults and threats that technically rose to the level that they could have been reported to their employers. And yet more than half of the nurses surveyed said they did not report anything to their employer because they lacked faith that anything would be done about it.

Here, we come to the complications and conundrums within Bill S-233. The new sentencing provisions in this legislation only have force and effect once people are arrested, charged

and convicted. This bill, in no way, protects nurses or health aides who are so frequently assaulted by patients with dementia, nor does it protect paramedics and firefighters dealing with people in the grips of drug-induced psychosis or a manic episode. If a patient or client lacks *mens rea* — if they can't form criminal intent — they are unlikely to be charged or prosecuted. In such cases, the assurances offered by Bill S-233 cannot act as a deterrent or a protection. They can't safeguard vulnerable health workers or first-line responders in any way.

These new sentencing protocols could certainly be applied to a violent husband who assaulted a paramedic trying to care for his injured wife or to a frustrated patient stuck in a hospital waiting room who attacked a triage nurse. Although, even in those instances, you would have to assume that someone lashing out in anger in one of the worst moments of their lives might not be considering that deterrent effects of a Criminal Code amendment.

Bill S-233 would be of no help in the case of a man with Alzheimer's who groped a health aide or someone being roused from fentanyl toxicity by a shot of naloxone who lashed out blindly at their rescuer. Tweaking the Criminal Code feels like we are doing something, but after listening to the all the testimony at committee, I fear it is more of a gesture than a solution to the crisis in our health care system. Some of the most powerful testimony we heard at committee came from Erin Ariss, a Registered Nurse and Provincial President of the Ontario Nurses' Association.

• (1650)

Let me quote from her testimony:

As nurses and health care workers, we are subject to violence and abuse every single day, and it is on the rise. We provide care when someone is in crisis, yet the existing measures in place do not take care of us.

We are on the front lines in the hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and in our communities. When we work in teams, we are most often understaffed. When we work alone, such as in home care, there is no one else around, no one to call on when a situation becomes unsafe. As nurses, we are assaulted, pushed, spat on, sworn at and experience intentional needle-stick injuries.

I worked on the front line as a nurse in an emergency department for 20 years, and while I worked at the bedside, I've been assaulted too many times to mention. I had my hand broken by a patient. I've been threatened with a gun, a machete, box cutters, knives, and assaulted with the equipment that we use to provide care. I was kicked in the abdomen when I was eight months pregnant with my son.

Her testimony came as a metaphorical gut punch to us too. So I asked her if any of the attacks that she personally endured were ever investigated. Was anyone ever charged or convicted?

I think her answer surprised many of us around the table. "No," she said. There had never been a single charge laid.

When she was a young nurse, she told us, a patient said to her:

... "I will kill you and your two beautiful children, who I noticed are out in the car waiting for you after your shifts every day."...

She tried to report that, she told us, "... but nothing was done..."

Senator Prosper then asked her to explain why that was the case. She described working in a culture that taught nurses to downplay their injuries and to expect no support from their managers, a working culture where they were pressured not to report assaults but to accept them as a routine part of the job, on pain of being fired. She testified:

If we don't care for our patients or residents or clients, depending on the setting, that could be considered patient abandonment and could result in a suspension of our licence to practise.

That is always hanging over our head, and we are taught — it is pervasive within health care but also in school — that you put yourself second, that you care for your patient, no matter what.

The other thing that you will find across all sectors of health care, and particularly for nurses, is that if you are assaulted, or subjected to violence, quite often ... You are blamed for the violence or the assault and that it was a delay in care, or it was something that you missed, and, therefore, it is your fault as the nurse.

We heard disturbingly similar testimony from Paul Hills, the President of the Saskatoon Paramedic Association, who is here with us today. Let me quote from Mr. Hills:

In Saskatoon alone, we've had ambulance windows smashed while paramedics were attending to patients inside. Medics have been attacked with weapons. This year, an ambulance was stolen with two medics working inside on patients. One person was tossed around inside the vehicle, and both medics sustained injuries resulting in time away from work.

I have had my life, and my family's lives threatened too many times to count. ... I don't have the ability to have anonymity in my job. Any person can find out which attendant was at their call. I'm in the phone book. I'm down the street, and gang members, rival gang members, they can find me. They track me from work. They know where my family lives and where my kids go to school. That's the kind of thing that really hits home when you get told that in the back of your ambulance. We've had bats, machetes and knives pulled on us and removed guns from patients all while trying to provide care.

But just as with nurses, Mr. Hills said there is little or no legal support, much less protection, for paramedics who experience assaults on the job. He told us:

... we don't often report these things. We do and have come to the point where some of this is, supposedly, part of our job, because there have been situations where we've been turned away by the legal side, by Crown prosecutors saying, "It is part of your job. You getting pushed down the stairs, it's not really a big deal." ...

He went on to explain that paramedics and firefighters exist in a male-dominated space, a macho space, where they are conditioned to never show emotions and never ask for help, where they are taught not to complain or look like victims.

And this is the central challenge presented by the legislation. It will not work if complaints are not filed and if charges are not laid.

At committee, we heard again and again about a toxic culture of silence, a culture of stoicism, which discourages health workers and first responders from pressing charges, and about a culture of neglect, which discourages police from investigating these complaints and discourages Crown prosecutors from laying charges. Worse than that, we heard heartbreaking testimony about the failure of health care managers and first responder organizations to protect their workers from being assaulted in the first place.

Even at its best, Bill S-233 can only enhance punishment after the fact. And it became more and more obvious, as we heard more and more witnesses, that we need to be far more proactive. We must find better ways of protecting vulnerable workers from being attacked at all. We can't just shrug our shoulders and write off assaults as part of the job. We can't expect our health workers and first responders to accept violence as a commonplace cost of doing business.

Bill S-233 may accomplish something — by underlining our national denunciation of violence against the very people who are sacrificing so much to protect and care for us. It can send a message that we, as Canadians, will not tolerate these repeated attacks on some of the most heroic and essential members of our community.

But then we have to back that legal and political symbolism with concrete practical action. We need our health care system to protect and defend workers on the job. We need our paramedics and firefighters to be safe on the streets. We need to break down the walls of silence that prevent people from reporting violence and dismantle workplace cultures that normalize violence as part of the job.

We need to do that not just to protect individual workers on the front lines but to make sure that we still have people willing to serve as nurses and health aides and paramedics and firefighters next year, in 10 years and long after that. Otherwise, we will have just added a line to the Criminal Code to soothe our consciences.

[ Senator Simons ]

I want to end these remarks by thanking all the brave witnesses who testified for their blunt and powerful testimony. I want to thank every single Canadian health care worker and first responder for their service to their patients, their communities and our nation.

And I personally want to thank especially the nurses, the health care aides and the paramedics who have done so much to care for members of my own family in their times of medical crisis. In those times of stress and fear and grief, I probably did not take the time to thank you enough. But bless you for all that you do. May you be safe and stay safe, and may you have the respect you deserve as you continue in your vital, valued work. *Hiy hiy.*

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

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

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, I would like to remind you to put your earpiece on the sticker at your desk when not in use and to avoid manipulating it.

[*Translation*]

That will help us reduce the risk of an audio feedback incident. We have a great deal of respect for our interpreters, and we care about them. Thank you for your cooperation.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

STUDY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES—TWENTIETH REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED DURING FIRST SESSION OF FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the twentieth report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, entitled *Missing Records, Missing Children*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on October 7, 2025.

**Hon. Michèle Audette** moved:

That the twentieth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, entitled *Missing Records, Missing Children*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on July 25, 2024, during the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament, and placed on the Orders of the Day in the current session pursuant to the order of October 7, 2025, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-23(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Indigenous Services.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

• (1700)

STUDY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES—TWENTY-FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED DURING FIRST SESSION OF FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the twenty-first report (interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, entitled *Respected and Protected: Towards the establishment of an Indigenous human rights framework*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on October 7, 2025.

**Hon. Michèle Audette** moved:

That the twenty-first report of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, entitled *Respected and Protected: Towards the establishment of an Indigenous human rights framework*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on December 12, 2024, during the First Session of the Forty-fourth Parliament, and placed on the Orders of the Day in the current session pursuant to the order of October 7, 2025, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-23(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada being identified as minister

responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[English]

## THE SENATE

MOTION PERTAINING TO THE SITUATION IN GAZA—  
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

That, in light of findings and orders from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court on the situation in Gaza, the Senate call on the Government to examine the risk to Canada and Canadians of complicity in violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and to report on its findings within three months of the adoption of this motion.

**Hon. Tony Dean:** Honourable colleagues, I rise today to speak to Senator Woo's motion with respect to any degree of support the Government of Canada might be providing the State of Israel in the context of the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

Senator Woo's motion would ask our government whether any of its policies or exports conflict with its international legal obligations in the context of a genocide. It's a call for an audit of arms exports and any related aid or support to Israel in the context of the war in Gaza.

Colleagues, this has been a brutal, bloody and devastating war.

All of us here, and Canadians across the country, were horrified by the brutal attacks by Hamas on October 7, 2023, in which almost 2,000 Israelis and foreign nationals — including 815 civilians — were killed and 215 were taken hostage. The first victims of the Hamas attack were women, members of the Israel Defence Forces, who were working on the front line as border monitors that day, and whose repeated warnings of irregular activities on the other side of the border in the days leading up to the attack had been ignored. The relatives of these women are pressing for a long-delayed inquiry into why Israel's reputed border security apparatus was so easily breached that day.

Nevertheless, as we would expect, the government of Israel and its cabinet struck back. Israel's response has seen

68,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza. Almost half of them — 34,000 — have been women and children. More than 170,000 have been injured by missiles, bombs and high-powered weapons which inflict massive damage to limbs and body tissue, as they are designed to do. The death and casualty figures include independent Middle Eastern journalists. I mention that because the broader global journalistic community has, of course, been banned from entering the war zone by the government of Israel.

Compared to other recent global conflicts, the numbers of known deaths of journalists, humanitarian and health workers and children are among the highest. Thousands more uncounted dead bodies are thought to be lying under the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza.

As of May 2025, traumatic injury deaths are estimated at 93,000, representing 4% to 5% of Gaza's pre-war population. The number of injured is greater than 160,000.

As a result, Gaza has the most child amputees per capita in the world; the war in Gaza has caused disabilities for more than 21,000 children.

Alongside this human carnage has been the purposeful and massive destruction of Gaza's hospitals and health clinics, water and sewage infrastructure, homes, places of business and facilities that prepare food.

The distribution of emergency aid has been seriously disrupted. We have seen emergency rooms purposely destroyed in the midst of lifesaving surgeries; we see emaciated Palestinian children and infants; we see entire families annihilated; and we see bloodied children wandering down destroyed roads crying for their parents — as we imagine might have also been seen in Israeli villages on October 7, 2023.

In the context of this vast swath of devastation in Gaza, emergency food distribution previously organized and delivered by the UN relief agency was replaced by a contract organization that we learned just last week, at a Senate committee, was operated predominantly by military contractors with an inclination to shoot and kill some of those queuing for food. These food distribution sites — which have, thankfully, now been replaced — became death traps. With no other choice, those needing to feed their starving families, including children who walked long distances, were literally risking their lives for a bag of flour, and many died as a result. They were purposely killed while seeking food for their families.

The common denominator in this story, colleagues, is that Gaza has become a literal death trap, one purposely designed and lethally delivered by the Israel Defense Forces, many members of which will live with this politically and religiously driven slaughter for the remainder of their lives. It will haunt them as it haunts us.

The parents of hostages are not cheering this; neither are many other Israelis. Those cheering this carnage are, for the most part, religious zealots in positions of power and influence, who have used the opportunity of this war to expand illegal settlements in Gaza and drive out Palestinian farmers and their families, killing many in the process. Against this devastating backdrop, Senator Woo is asking us what we can do about this.

• (1710)

The first is to inform ourselves. The second is to speak out, as I am doing today, which I do not find easy, given the collateral damage to our Jewish friends here in Canada and around the world.

The second is to speak out against harassment and violence against Jews. It is repulsive that schools and synagogues across this country have been attacked and damaged. It is repulsive that our Jewish friends and colleagues feel intimidated and threatened, and every effort must be made to respond to this.

Third, I note the findings of the International Court of Justice that Israel has violated the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. To this, we add efforts such as Senator Woo's motion, the goal of which is to ensure that our government is not wittingly or unwittingly condoning or supporting the tragedy in Gaza. By this, I mean that it is not supplying — directly or indirectly — materials that could intensify or extend the horror in Gaza.

Colleagues, I don't say these words lightly. I don't make this statement lightly. I have examined my own conscience. I have dug into my religious upbringing, and I have been horrified over and over again. I would like to know that our government is not in any way aiding or abetting this brutal and savage crisis. And to the extent that it has, even in small ways, it should now shut this down immediately and table its response to Senator Woo's motion which essentially, colleagues, is saying as we would say, I think, in this chamber, "No more, no more, no more."

Colleagues, I ask you to consider supporting this motion. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXAMINE AND REPORT ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF HOUSING

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition),** for Senator Carignan, pursuant to notice of October 9, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on federal programs and initiatives to support the creation of housing, including, but not limited to, the:

- (a) launch of the Build Canada Homes agency and how it will coordinate its operations with those of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in the delivery of affordable housing programs;
- (b) conversion of federal lands into opportunities for housing development;
- (c) off-site construction;

- (d) role of municipalities; and
- (e) development of affordable housing;

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2026, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report; and

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

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

*(At 5:14 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)*

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