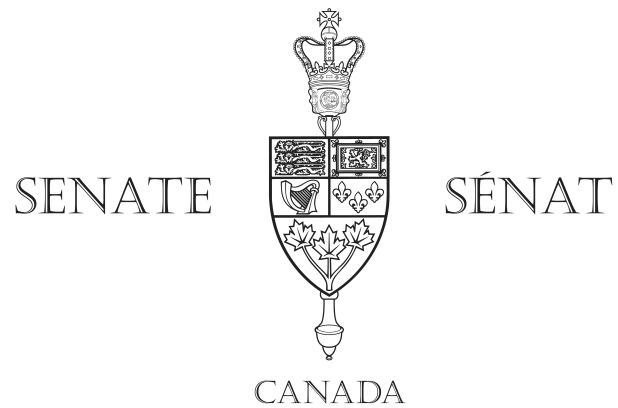




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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

OCTOBER 22, 2014, EVENTS ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, October 22, 2014, is a day none of us here will ever forget. It's impossible to remember that morning without thinking of how normal it began — the quiet streets, the familiar routine and the steady rhythm of work on Parliament Hill.

Then, out of nowhere, the sudden confusion, the sound of sirens, the lockdowns, the overwhelming sense that something we had taken for granted — our safety in this place — had been profoundly shaken.

Today, on the eleventh anniversary since the attack, we remember Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was killed while standing guard at the National War Memorial. We remember Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, whose life was taken in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu just two days prior. We hold their families in our thoughts, along with those who were injured, both physically and in ways that linger far longer.

Even now, the emotions tied to that day remain close, and so does the deep respect that many of us carry for the people who responded so quickly and courageously: first responders, the RCMP and the security teams on the Hill, who put themselves between danger and the rest of us without a moment's hesitation; parliamentary staff, officials and office-holders, who held steady throughout the chaos — many locked down, many unsure what was unfolding, but all committed to looking out for one another.

Every day since then, seeing the Parliamentary Protective Service officers stationed at our entrances, standing watch over our buildings, is a quiet but consistent and constant reminder of that day, the events that led us here and the responsibility every one of those officers takes every single day to keep us safe. That duty, born out of that tragic moment, is carried out with quiet professionalism and no small amount of courage, and we are deeply grateful to them.

We don't take that for granted, honourable colleagues: not the safety, not the service and not the responsibility that comes with being here. What was attacked on that day was the heart of our democracy, a space that stands for freedom, safety and the right of all Canadians to be represented here.

So as we remember, we also recommit to protecting those values, carrying out our responsibilities with purpose and ensuring this place remains strong, open and safe for all those who work and serve here. Thank you, honourable colleagues, and thanks to all involved in our security on the Hill.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Hon. Krista Ross: Honourable senators, I rise today with great pride to celebrate Small Business Week, an opportunity to recognize the incredible contributions of Canadian entrepreneurs and small business owners from coast to coast to coast.

The business community is made up of inspiring individuals who represent the very best of our communities. With ambition, talent, innovation and resilience, they turn ideas into reality. They create jobs, spark growth and help build a more vibrant and inclusive economy for all of us.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, are truly the backbone of the Canadian economy. They make up 48% of our GDP and employ more than 8 million Canadians. With over a million small businesses across the country, they touch every industry and every region. Whether it's your local bakery, tech start-up, family-run farm or boutique, small businesses are central to our daily lives.

As a former small business owner myself, I understand the dedication, long hours and care it takes to build something from the ground up. I know first-hand the challenges entrepreneurs face, from balancing finances and managing staffing, to navigating regulatory hurdles and shifting market conditions.

Entrepreneurship is not an easy task, but the passion and commitment of Canadian entrepreneurs never fail to inspire me. Their perseverance in the face of uncertainty is a testament to the strength and resilience at the heart of Canada's entrepreneurial community.

I'd also like to recognize the important role that organizations like chambers of commerce and local business associations play in supporting these businesses. These organizations are not only powerful advocates for the business community, they also help create connections, foster networking opportunities and provide guidance and mentorship for both new and established businesses. Our local business owners are more than just entrepreneurs; they are our neighbours, our friends and integral members of our communities. By supporting them, we strengthen our local economy and keep our communities vibrant and resilient.

Let's support our small businesses this week and every week. When small businesses succeed, we all do. Buy Canadian and support local. Thank you. *Wela'lin.*

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of members of Ottawa Fire Services, Ottawa Paramedic Service, Local IAFF, as well as Dr. Renée MacPhee, lead researcher on violence against paramedics. They are the guests of the Honourable Senators Housakos and Yussuff.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of representatives from Disability Without Poverty and DEEN Support Services. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Petitclerc.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

DISABILITY WITHOUT POVERTY AND DEEN SUPPORT SERVICES

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Honourable senators, it is a great honour for me today to welcome members and advocates from Disability Without Poverty and DEEN Support Services.

This morning, many of us gathered for an exciting and inspiring breakfast conversation to build on the momentum of the new Canada Disability Benefit. It was a moment of connection and collaboration, a reminder that when we work together, change is possible.

• (1410)

[Translation]

These organizations have come to Ottawa to draw attention to disability-related poverty and to reaffirm our shared commitment to helping people with disabilities not only survive, but truly thrive.

[English]

Together, we are building a community rooted in inclusion, collaboration and dignity because every person deserves to live in respect and independence.

[Translation]

In its 2024 report, Disability Without Poverty reminded us that one in six people with disabilities were living in poverty in 2022. That's over 1.5 million Canadians. On average, they would need 30% more income to meet or exceed the poverty line.

[English]

These are not just statistics. They represent real lives, real families and real barriers. They remind us that our work must continue so that no one is left behind.

Today, as we welcome our guests in the gallery, let us reaffirm our collective commitment in the Senate, in government and across Canada to ensure that we can all do everything that is in our power to lift people with disabilities out of poverty once and for all.

[Translation]

I want our guests to know that their courage, passion and determination give meaning to all the work we do.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[English]

WORLD OSTOMY DAY

Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize World Ostomy Day, which was on October 4.

Last year, I paid tribute to the strength and resilience of Canadians living with an ostomy. I also expressed my deep gratitude to my beloved husband, George, whose unwavering support helped me find joy, even in the midst of the struggle.

This year on World Ostomy Day, I participated in the Step Up for Ostomy 2025 campaign. I walked in memory of George, to honour his legacy and to raise awareness and support for Ostomy Canada and the thousands of lives it touches.

Today, honourable colleagues, I wish to draw your attention to summer camps designed for children and adolescents living with ostomies, such as Ostomy Canada Youth Camp, Camp Brigadoon and Camp Horizon. These programs provide connection, empowerment, critical hope and healing. Through inclusive activities, peer mentorship, education and specialized recreational, medical and nutritional support, they create safe and transformative spaces.

Organizations such as Ostomy Canada Society and Ostomy Halifax offer financial assistance and full sponsorships to ensure they are accessible to all. These camps help young people build confidence, community and lifelong memories.

Honourable colleagues, I now want to share a few words from campers and parents whose lives were changed by their experiences at one of the camps. I'll start with the youth: "It's nice to be with people who understand what it's like to have an ostomy," one person said.

Another person said, "Camp helped me realize I'm not alone . . . now I have friends for life."

And this is a third voice: "I used to hide my ostomy. Now I feel proud of who I am."

And here are some voices of parents:

Camp was a real eye-opener for my daughter. . . . She didn't know there were others with the same condition she has.

A second parent shared:

This opportunity meant so much to my daughter. . . . It was truly heartwarming to see her smiling, laughing, and simply enjoying being a kid.

Honourable senators, please join me in thanking the many Canadians who step up for ostomy by donating their time, ideas and resources to help children and youth living with ostomies feel proud of who they are and simply enjoy being a kid. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of representatives of Nature Canada, a representative from the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts and a representative from the Bird Friendly City Program. 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!

WOMEN FOR NATURE

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I rise today in recognition of Nature Canada's Women for Nature program because it brings together the collaborative voices of Canadian women with vision — women of influence who choose to demonstrate their care, passion and love for nature and to pass their values on to others, inspiring the next generation to drive change. It is an exceptional initiative, and I am deeply honoured to serve as its honorary chair.

This program builds bridges between women leaders, scientists, community champions and policy-makers, all united in their commitment to protect and restore Canada's wildlife and habitats. More than ever, we must protect our land, water and soil, the very foundations of life and prosperity. Let us remember that two thirds of global GDP depends directly on nature. Without thriving ecosystems, there is no lasting economy.

Last month, I had the privilege of representing the United Nations' Global Changemaker Academy for Parliamentarians at the Society for Ecological Restoration World Conference in Denver, Colorado. I was heartened to see the determination of scientists, Indigenous leaders and communities working tirelessly to restore degraded lands, even as some governments retreat from environmental responsibility. The message was clear: Restoration is hope in action, a reminder that every hectare healed and every species protected bring us closer to balance.

[Senator Bernard]

Last week, the International Union for Conservation of Nature gathered 10,000 experts and leaders at its World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, all united in purpose to replace the rhetoric of delay with the courage of solutions. Their call echoed the spirit of Dr. Jane Goodall, whose lifelong work reminds us that "what you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Her legacy continues to inspire generations of women and men who choose compassion, science and courage to defend the living world.

Honourable colleagues, it may sometimes seem that nature and climate have taken a back seat to short-term economic anxieties. Yet, across the globe, countless people are devoting their lives to protect the planet we all depend upon. Let us not be bystanders in their struggle.

Later this month, I encourage you to take part in Nature on the Hill events; there will be so many. Attend the parliamentary breakfast, meet with delegations and learn more about the extraordinary work happening across Canada. These conversations remind us that our health, our economy and our future are inseparable from the health of our environment.

Finally, I warmly invite you to join Nature Canada and me this evening from 6 to 8 p.m. in the senators' lounge for a Women for Nature reception. As always, we'll have a special animal guest, one that I'm sure will, quite literally, ruffle feathers.

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 René Trépanier, Debbie Murray and Carmen Ortega, members of the Cruise Committee of the Association of Canadian Port Authorities. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Forest.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

FATHER DUFFY'S WELL

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, today I am pleased to present Chapter 93 of "Telling Our Story."

In 1834, Father James Duffy, a Catholic priest from Ireland, arrived in Newfoundland and was appointed parish priest in the town of St. Mary's, with his first order of business being the construction of a new church.

He selected a piece of beachfront property which as long as anyone could remember had been treated as common ground. Local fishermen would haul up their boats and repair their fishing gear at this site. It was also used as a footpath to the nearby community of Riverhead.

Everyone agreed that this piece of land was the ideal location for the new church. It was everyone except John Martin, the local government representative and agent for the merchant firm of Slade, Elson and Company. Martin claimed the piece of land belonged to the merchant.

• (1420)

Acting in good faith, Father Duffy approached Martin to obtain his agreement to build the church on the chosen site. Martin refused, and Father Duffy took that as an insult, and with the help of several of his parishioners, much of the church was prefabricated in secret. Then, within a day, without Martin's knowledge, the church was erected on the beachfront property.

Martin was furious with Father Duffy and those who had helped him, and he accused them all of trespassing and vowed to lay criminal charges. A short time later, Father Duffy was arrested and taken into custody and charged with inciting a riot and rebellion. He was released on bail to appear in court at a later date. Criminal charges were laid against nine of his parishioners as well.

To get to the courtroom in St. John's, Father Duffy and his parishioners had to endure a long and weary walk through bogs, barrens and dense forest in their search for justice. It was said that combining all their trips together, they walked about 1,500 miles in total. The case dragged on for three years.

It was on one of those long and weary walks while deep in the woods and all hands feeling very thirsty that some say a miracle happened. Exhausted from walking for hours, Father Duffy and the other men stopped at a clearing on Salmonier Line, but they could not find a drop of water to make a warm cup of tea. They were all about to give up when Father Duffy walked over and broke a small branch from a nearby tree. He then walked up to a large stone and tapped the rock a couple of times and then knelt at its base and scratched a shallow hollow in the earth. From the dry ground, a trickle of water emerged slowly at first, and then a steady flow of cool, refreshing and clean water appeared. The kettle was filled, the men's spirits were lifted and the legend was born.

Since that time, thousands of people have stopped by to enjoy a taste of the cool and refreshing water at a place that is now called Father Duffy's Well. It is located about a 40-minute drive from St. John's.

I must admit that I have done so myself on numerous occasions. The site has become a major tourist attraction, and visitors from far and near have experienced this very unique and special place.

Now let's go back to the courtroom. After months of delaying the case, the charges against Father Duffy and his nine parishioners were dismissed in 1837 when no witnesses appeared for the prosecution.

As a footnote, Father Duffy died in 1860 and was buried in Kelly's Cross, Prince Edward Island, where he was serving as the parish priest at the time.

Colleagues, if you visit Newfoundland and Labrador, I encourage you to come and taste the miracle of the water at Father Duffy's Well.

When you look at myself and Senators White, Petten, Marshall, Wells and Ravalia, who have all drank from the well, it is easy to believe it could also be the fountain of youth.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

TOWARD FAIR AND EQUITABLE PUBLIC HEALTH – ENDING HIV/AIDS AND STBBIS—REPORT TABLED

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 14-1(3), I ask for leave of the Senate to table, in both official languages, the report entitled *Toward Fair and Equitable Public Health – Ending HIV/AIDS and STBBIs*.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[English]

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

CANADA-AFRICA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

BILATERAL MISSION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL AND THE REPUBLIC OF CABO VERDE, MARCH 16-21, 2025—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Amina Gerba: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association concerning the Bilateral Mission to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Cabo Verde, held in Dakar, Senegal, and Praia, Cabo Verde, from March 16 to 21, 2025.

[English]

BEAR WITNESS DAY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECOGNIZE MAY 10 OF EACH AND EVERY YEAR AS BEAR WITNESS DAY

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate recognize May 10 of each and every year as Bear Witness Day to honour Jordan River Anderson and his family and to raise awareness of Jordan's Principle and the ongoing challenges that First Nations children and their families face to access products, services and supports due to inequities and jurisdictional disputes within and across governments.

QUESTION PERIOD

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Percy E. Downe: I have a question for the Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

In the summer of 2024, *The Globe and Mail* published an editorial. The headline was "The Trudeau Senate is not a better Senate." In that editorial, they note that the Senate had the equivalent of 372 full-time employees in 2017, and as of last year — "last year" being 2023 in this case — it had 493, which is a 32% increase representing 121 more employees. Do you know if these numbers are correct?

Hon. Lucie Moncion: As far as I know, senator, the numbers are correct.

Senator Downe: *The Globe and Mail* editorial goes on to indicate that — and this is, again, a quote from the editorial — "What cost taxpayers \$813,356 a senator per year a decade ago now costs \$1.3-million."

Could you table in the Senate what the salary cost was for employees in 2017 and what it was in 2023?

Senator Moncion: Will do, senator.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the following Address be presented to His Majesty the King:

To His Most Excellent Majesty Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

We, Your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both houses of Parliament.

Hon. Baltej S. Dhillon: Honourable senators, I rise today in this chamber for the first time with deep humility, gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility.

Before I begin, I acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe People. I honour their generosity, their stewardship and their patience in the face of history — a reminder that reconciliation must live in our actions, not just our acknowledgments.

I also acknowledge that I live on the shared, uncaded traditional territories of the Qayqayt, Katzie, kwikwəłəm, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen First Nations of the Coast Salish People, whose enduring presence and stewardship continue to shape where I've called home for decades.

I am reminded of the words of His Majesty King Charles III who spoke of his deep connection to this land:

Every time I come to Canada... a little more of Canada seeps into my bloodstream — and from there straight to my heart.

This sentiment resonates with me profoundly. Canada shaped my values, tested my convictions and gave me the opportunity to serve. It is, therefore, an extraordinary privilege to stand here carrying the trust of the communities I represent, especially those whose stories have too often been told outside the rooms where decisions are made.

• (1430)

I owe this moment to many: my wife of 36 years, Suroj, who is not my better half but my better everything, whose strength and patience have carried me through more than one storm; my two

daughters, Onkar and Rasna, who have become formidable champions of justice in their own right; my family and friends, whose love and quiet faith gave me courage when the path ahead seemed uncertain; and now the heartbeat of our family, my grandson Jovin, who reminds me how important our work is in this august chamber.

I owe this moment to mentors and colleagues, who opened doors when others preferred them shut. To all of you, my colleagues, who have welcomed me with open arms — thank you — shared words of encouragement — thank you — and offered your advice freely — thank you. When I'm asked where I work, I tell folks, "I work with the giants of Canada."

And, yes, I also owe this moment to the former Prime Minister, for the trust he placed in me. I would be remiss if I didn't mention our small but mighty team who are here today, the engine of our work in our office, Roya, Benedicta, Rima and, watching in B.C., Narayan.

Above all, I thank the Creator, whose presence has been my compass throughout every chapter of this remarkable journey.

As I begin this next chapter of service, one question keeps returning to me, a question that has shaped nearly every choice I've made: What does justice really look like in the lives of the people we serve? Justice, for me, isn't marble statues or legal abstractions; it's a living thing. It is a lens through which we decide who gets heard and who gets forgotten. My understanding of justice was not born in textbooks or institutions. It was taught to me through the Sikh faith, my faith — a faith that insists justice must be rooted in humility, service and moral clarity.

In our tradition, equality isn't a theory; it's a daily practice. We are taught that every person carries an inherent dignity that demands recognition. Justice asks us to act without bitterness, serve without ego and lead without losing sight of those we are meant to uplift.

Those teachings are the thread running through my life — from a boy in British Columbia trying to make sense of a new world to a police officer standing at a crime scene and now to a senator standing among you. My story began in 1983, when my family and I arrived from Malaysia — and if you haven't been, you should, because the food is great there — carrying little more than faith in our hearts and hope in our suitcases. That hope was tested often — by cold winters, strange accents and systems not always ready to make space for people like us. However, Canada, at its best, grows by inclusion. This country was built by people who planted trees, knowing they might never sit in their shade.

For new Canadians, for racialized Canadians, for Sikh Canadians, belonging wasn't automatic. It was built one act of participation at a time. Our former colleague Senator Sabi Marwah, whose big shoes I'm trying to fill, said it best:

The Sikh Canadian story is a story of pioneers and settlers . . . of fighting for equality and justice — to the eventual engagement in all walks of life. . . . It is, in fact, a story of Canada.

That story continues, my friends, in every young person daring to see themselves in our institutions and in every community that chooses contribution over complaint.

Those same values — service, equity, responsibility — guided me into the public service.

You might know that I joined the RCMP. I joined the RCMP because I believed in the call to serve. I didn't join to make history; I joined to make a difference. But, as many of you know, history sometimes volunteers you, and I got "voluntold."

When the right to wear my turban in uniform was questioned, I found myself in a storm I had not sought. There were protests and petitions. There were caricatures of Sikhs depicted in racist calendars, large signs on Canadian highways with a "no entry" sign over the image of a Sikh and, yes, even pins — because it wouldn't be complete without pins — small enamel circles that read "Keep the RCMP Traditional," all because a young Sikh boy wanted to serve his country as himself.

For some, it was a crisis of tradition. For me, it was a test of conviction. The rule eventually changed, not because the institution broke, but because it realized it could stretch without snapping, and it continues to realize that. The work is not done.

My colleagues, I invite you to my office any time for a latte and to see a display of these pins — I have them. They were still being sold in Calgary just two years ago. They are a souvenir of how fashionable opposition to inclusion once looked in enamel.

In time, that RCMP uniform became more than a controversy. It became a calling. Some colleagues called me "Turbo Cop." It's okay to laugh. Not because I was fast, but because I rarely knew how to slow down. At the detachment, they called me "Matt" — now we're really dating ourselves — after the sheriff from "Gunsmoke." I took both as compliments. They meant I had earned something more precious than headlines — trust.

That trust between public servants and the public is sacred. I learned that justice isn't only about enforcing laws. It's about earning confidence, understanding fear and meeting people with humanity.

I have stood beside victims of gun violence. I have seen families whose grief was met with bureaucracy instead of compassion. And I have seen how organized crime thrives in the shadows we refuse to confront.

Justice cannot be reduced to rules alone. Rules create order, but order without fairness is just control. Real justice asks that we listen before we legislate, see before we judge and build systems strong enough to hold our differences.

I have known prejudice — sometimes shouted, sometimes whispered. And like many Canadians, I've learned that hate is not always loud. Sometimes it's politely silent. People often ask how I endured. The truth is that I was blessed with a faith that taught me I could choose to be a victor, not a victim. Those words start the same but end in very different places.

That choice to move forward without bitterness has kept me grounded. But no one should have to rely on resilience alone. Our systems must protect fairness and dignity before harm takes hold, not after.

After decades in law enforcement, I know that public confidence is never a birthright. It must be earned through transparency, accountability and humility. Institutions are not automatically just. I have some experience with that. They become just when the people within them make that choice daily.

• (1440)

One of our dear senators Senator Sinclair said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast every day.” And now, as a senator, that principle still holds true for me. We are not here merely to protect systems; we are here to perfect them.

Good intentions are not enough. They do not always lead to just outcomes. My purpose here is not to defend the status quo — and I have a track record of that — but to expand the definition of justice and to make it real for those too long left outside our protection, recognition and concern.

I believe in a Canada that doesn't fear difference but finds its strength in it; a Canada where a child in a turban, a hijab or a kippa never doubts they belong in a courtroom, a classroom or a uniform; a Canada where identity is never a barrier to contribution and where inclusion isn't an act of charity, but the minimum standard of a just society. That vision isn't a dream. It's a project, one that demands courage over comfort, one we call Canada.

My colleague from British Columbia Senator Wilson once said, “. . . by protecting minorities, we protect the vast diversity that's central to our Canadian identity . . .” That isn't just good politics, folks. That's good nation building.

In Sikhism, we call it *Chardi Kala*, a state of relentless optimism. It's the refusal to surrender to cynicism, even when the path is steep and challenging. That spirit, the spirit of *Chardi Kala*, has carried me through challenges I never chose but had to face. It reminds me that while we don't choose every battle, we do choose how we meet it — with resentment or with resolve, with bitterness or with purpose and hope. And so, I rise today in the spirit of *Chardi Kala*, not as someone who believes justice is a finished idea but as someone who believes it is a shared responsibility.

Honourable senators, the path we walk in this chamber shapes both laws and lives. If we are to rise to that responsibility, let it be through a vision of justice that listens before it instructs, includes before it defines and builds a Canada where dignity is not conditional and representation is never symbolic or token.

[Senator Dhillon]

As King Charles III reminded us, “We owe it to this generation . . .” — and my grandson, Jovin — “. . . and those who succeed us, to think and act for the greater good of all.” That is the country we are still shaping together. And I am deeply honoured to walk this journey beside all of you.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator LaBoucane-Benson, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) moved, for Senator Housakos, third reading of Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders).

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, I want to start by thanking and congratulating Senator Housakos on his efforts to move this bill quickly through our chamber while respecting the Rules. It's a testament to the fact that it is possible to work expeditiously while providing senators with the opportunity to choose whether to debate or not and, ultimately, to vote.

We now have three examples in the last two weeks of bills that have moved efficiently through this chamber that had the similar attributes of being well supported on all sides, having been through the study and debate process in the Senate, and for which we are following the Rules as we bring these bills to a final vote.

For the new senators and maybe to remind others, I would like to note that we in the Canadian Senators Group, or CSG, understand we've developed a bit of a reputation for saying no to any request for leave, and that is not correct. We want to put on the record that we believe it's important to protect the rights of senators to say no and to follow the Rules, which are there to give everyone equal and fair opportunities for debate.

We believe that leave should be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with proper consultation and justification. We believe that this can be provided in exceptional circumstances, and we have done it in many, many cases. But for these bills, including this one, we believe that we should follow the path that's outlined in the Rules and that we should be able to quickly and efficiently get them through.

Now, back to Bill S-233, I again would like to congratulate and thank Senator Housakos for introducing this bill from its House version in the last Parliament and for taking charge and moving it forward. I — like all senators, I'm sure — support the aims of this bill wholeheartedly.

I'm delighted and honoured to see that we have some first responders here in the chamber today to witness the vote that I hope will be in the next minute or two. I want to say that any assault on a person who provides health services or a first responder should, indeed, be considered as an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.

I support the bill. I look forward to being part of its passage and sending it to the House of Commons. Thank you.

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, first and foremost, I have to say, as many of you know, I've been a member of this chamber for a long time, and there are some days where, believe it or not, I ask myself, "What am I doing here?" But there are some days when you get an immense sense of pride that you're helping to do some really good work.

It happened to me recently, not a few months ago, when Senator Boehm and I worked on Bill S-203 that passed unanimously in this chamber thanks to the support of every single senator and became law. That was one of the proudest moments I've had as a legislator, although we have a lot of work to do on that issue, Senator Boehm. I think today, with the hard work of Senator Yussuff and everyone involved in this chamber over the last several weeks, we were able to see the overwhelming sense of support for this bill by many senators, and I thank you for bringing us to this point.

I echo the words of Senator Tannas. There is nothing more important for us as parliamentarians and Canadians than to support and be there for those who are there for us in the moments that are so important to us. It's our small gesture to let you know that what you do for us on a daily basis, we appreciate from the bottom of our hearts.

• (1450)

Colleagues, I know this bill will get the red carpet treatment. I know Senator Yussuff and I have taken the initiative today to reach out to the House leaders in the other place. They've assured us they're going to roll out the green carpet with the same degree of enthusiasm and give it the due diligence both it and you deserve. Thank you, all, for making this happen. I call the question.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A GUARANTEED LIVABLE BASIC INCOME BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan, for the second reading of Bill S-206, An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

HELLENIC HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Tony Loffreda moved second reading of Bill S-220, An Act to designate the month of March as Hellenic Heritage Month.

(On motion of Senator Loffreda, debate adjourned.)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ROLE OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR IN FOOD SECURITY

Hon. Robert Black, pursuant to notice of October 21, 2025, moved:

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.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 2:56 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.)

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