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# Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

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Chair: Ms. Iqra Khalid





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• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.)):** Good morning, everybody. I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 20 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Today, as the clerk has indicated, Ms. Dabrusin will be replacing our colleague Mr. Maloney. Welcome. Also, Ms. Wagantall will be replacing Mr. Cooper. Welcome to you, as well. It promises to be a good meeting.

To ensure that we have an orderly meeting today, I'll just outline a few of the rules.

I'll just note to all the witnesses that interpretation services are available. At the bottom of your screen, please select the language you want to listen to; you don't have to select the language you are speaking. When you would like to speak, either raise your hand or just alert me or the clerk.

Before speaking, I will ask that you please wait until I recognize you by name. Please unmute yourself when you speak, and then mute yourself again once you are done speaking. When you are not speaking, please ensure that you are on mute. As a reminder, all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. With regard to the speakers list, the clerk and I will do our best to maintain an orderly speaking list for all members.

To our witnesses, I have a one-minute card, and a 30-second card. These will indicate how much time you have remaining for your opening remarks, which will be five minutes. Then, as members ask questions, we'll also indicate to them how much time they have remaining, using these two cards.

With that, I would like to welcome our witnesses.

From Nisa Homes, we have Reena Vanza, who is a counsellor and mental health promoter, and Yasmine Youssef, who is the national manager. Welcome.

From Peel Regional Police, we have Chief Nishan Duraiappah. Welcome, Chief Duraiappah. It is so good to have you here. From the Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, we have Carla Neto, community programs manager.

Thank you very much to the witnesses for being here today.

We'll start with Nisa Homes. You have five minutes collectively to make your presentation, and I will be keeping time.

Please go ahead.

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef (National Manager, Nisa Homes):** Good morning, everyone.

Thank you so much for inviting us here today and for the work everyone is doing to ensure the safety of men, women and children across Canada.

As the Nisa Homes national manager, and with my colleague Reena, who is a mental health promoter, we appreciate speaking here today in support of Bill C-247.

**Mrs. Reena Vanza (Counsellor and Mental Health Promoter, Nisa Homes):** Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having us.

Nisa Homes is a group of transitional homes serving women and children who are immigrants and refugees.

We have seven homes across the country, from B.C. to Ontario. We have supported more than 700 women and children to restart their lives. Nisa Homes recognizes that housing is necessary but not sufficient for overall well-being. As such, we also provide case management, counselling, activities, child care and financial assistance.

In April 2018, Aisha came to Nisa Homes with her three young children. Although Aisha had come to Canada 10 years earlier, she was barely able to communicate in English, had none of her documents with her, had no bank account, no phone and no friends or family here in Canada.

For years, Aisha endured financial, emotional and psychological abuse, not thinking it was serious enough to seek help. Aisha told us that the only reason she left was that a neighbour called the police and her husband was finally arrested. She feared he would retaliate with even more violence and knew she could no longer live with him. Aisha told us that she'd been hospitalized in the past. However, at this point, her partner had threatened to kill her family abroad, stopping her from reaching out or accepting help.

This is a story that we often hear at Nisa Homes. These are women whose partners have coerced them to stay in unsafe homes using tactics such as isolation, threatening to harm their children or family, threatening to deport them, not giving them access to finances and not allowing them to work. These tactics result in women not only living in fear on a daily basis but also in fear of being unable to survive on their own if they were to leave.

Our clientele at Nisa Homes are not only experiencing abuse. As we know, due to their cultural or religious affiliations, as well as their immigration status, they face additional barriers that hinder their ability to find safety and security. Such barriers include things like limitations to resources, culture shock, language limitations, limited information about their rights in Canada, no support system, fear and distrust of authorities, as well as precarious living or working conditions.

• (1105)

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef:** We believe this bill can be incredibly helpful for our clientele, as many don't realize that coercive and controlling behaviour does qualify as abuse. Like Aisha, women who flee abuse often wait for things to get physically violent before they seek help. Even then, the burden still remains on them to prove that abuse did indeed take place.

We believe that in order for this bill to be effective, investments need to be made towards knowledge mobilization campaigns. These campaigns can help increase the community's understanding of what coercive and controlling behaviour is, what intimate partner violence in general is, and how this bill can help them.

This will also require training for first responders, such as police, doctors, nurses and social service providers. This training can help them identify and respond effectively to cases of coercive and controlling behaviour, because we know that often that first response can make it or break it for a survivor.

This must also be done from an intersectional lens that takes into account the different lived experiences of marginalized women, since statistics show that these women have a higher chance of experiencing violence.

We believe an inclusive approach can be achieved through investing in capacity building for community-based organizations, as well as cultural sensitivity training for service providers. Like Aisha, the majority of women who come to Nisa Homes come to us because they know we speak their language and because we provide that culturally sensitive care that is so important when they're in such a vulnerable situation.

Finally, funding needs to be allocated towards ensuring that this bill can practically assist those experiencing or escaping coercive and controlling behaviours. Examples include improved and affordable legal assistance and awareness, additional shelter beds, additional gender-based violence services and additional affordable housing.

Once again, thank you for bringing our voice to the forefront in this discussion. We hope that we have done some justice in capturing the experiences of the populations we work with.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Youssef. I appreciate that. You were right under time.

We'll now go to Chief Duraiappah.

Please go ahead, Chief. You have five minutes.

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah (Chief, Peel Regional Police):** Good day, Chair Khalid and committee members. I'm very thankful for the invitation to participate in this discussion on controlling and coercive conduct within intimate partner relationships.

As you know, my name is Nishan Duraiappah. For the past 14 months, I've had the pleasure of being chief of Peel Regional Police here in Ontario, and previous to that I policed in another jurisdiction. For context, Peel region contains 1.4 million people and has the highest percentage of visible minorities within the greater Toronto area. It is inclusive of the cities of Brampton and Mississauga, and we are also responsible for policing Canada's largest international airport, which is Toronto Pearson.

In Peel region, our officers respond to over 1,000 calls for family violence and intimate partner violence per month. Family and intimate partner violence, collectively, remain the number one call for service for us. In 2020, this equated to over 19,000 calls for help.

Tragically, despite our best efforts, some of these calls result in homicides and serious assaults. Roughly 40% of all homicides in Peel region over the last two years have been because of family and intimate partner violence. This is a priority affecting communities in Peel and across this country.

Power and control are essential to the cycle of family and intimate partner violence. Peel police support the need to pursue additional mechanisms that interrupt that cycle. The new offence proposed by Bill C-247 is an opportunity to do so. We know that there are many incidents where the ability to intervene in controlling behaviour will be an added tool to prevent future loss of life and harm to a victim.

I understand that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who support the establishment of this offence, will be providing remarks later.

Our goal here in Peel police is to find every possible way to mitigate risk, and the enforcement of coercive control can be a valuable tool. I'll briefly speak to risk mitigation tools, but I would like to emphasize that, despite the best offences being available to us, we continue to be concerned that repeat intimate partner violence creates the greatest challenge for us. The need for reform as it pertains to high-risk, repeat offenders is of importance to me.

On Tuesday, July 28 of last year, my officers responded to a shooting in the city of Brampton. Officers located a 25-year-old female deceased of a gunshot wound and a male with self-inflicted injuries. This young woman was Darian Henderson-Bellman. She and the accused male, Darnell Reid, had a relationship for about three years. During those three previous years, Reid was initially charged with domestic assault against her. He was released on bail with no-contact conditions and would go on to breach those conditions three additional times and be re-released on each occasion.

On his fourth arrest, police located a loaded handgun on his person. As a result, in May 2020 the Crown attempted to detain Reid based on secondary and tertiary grounds. He had continually threatened the safety of the public and had a history that he would not abide by any release plan or surety. The Crown, however, was unsuccessful and he was again released with a GPS monitoring device and two sureties.

For Mr. Reid, power and control were central to how he coerced the victim back into a position of risk, ultimately killing her on July 28, for which he was charged. This was despite all best efforts of police and the Crown and the prosecution of his existing offences. The release of high-risk repeat offenders who demonstrate an element of control and manipulate the vulnerable is of significant concern. I highlight this as a concurrent priority for many police leaders.

As it pertains to the newly proposed offence itself, as you know there are existing Criminal Code sections where it is an offence to use words or acts short of violence in very confined contexts. Police officers, no doubt, are optimistic that the new offence will provide proof of clear offence so that it is articulable and prosecuted.

Family and intimate partner violence and the outcomes we see are the result of complex circumstances that are as complex as the community we police. Peel police have developed a new comprehensive strategy of an integrated community safety plan built on programming and community development. It will comprise 48 officers working from a community-driven collaborative space. They will be working from a community hub to ensure that we integrate with community services and have immediate integration with service partners.

Through programs like this, enhanced legislation and the continuous pursuit of solutions that address family and intimate partner violence, we will be better equipped to make a difference in people's lives and save lives.

Thank you.

• (1110)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that, Chief. It was five minutes on the dot. That is awesome.

We will now go to Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, represented by Carla Neto.

Please go ahead. You have five minutes.

**Ms. Carla Neto (Community Programs Manager, Women's Habitat of Etobicoke):** Good morning, Madam Chair.

My name is Carla Neto, and I appear before this committee representing Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, a feminist organization serving victims and survivors of gender-based violence, and their children or dependants, since 1978.

We operate two distinct services, a 25-bed shelter for women and children escaping violence, and an outreach centre that works with women and children living in the community who are impacted by violence and poverty, many of whom are still residing with abusive intimate partners. Both sides support women to assess risk, develop safety plans, offer counselling to address the impact of abuse and trauma, and offer referrals to essential services such as housing, health care and legal services, parenting programs, as well as prevention and leadership programming for boys and girls.

I have worked in this sector for almost 30 years, working with children and women, victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, in which coercion and control are very much part of the dynamic of the abuse and terror they are subjected to.

We thank you for inviting us and commend you on your efforts in the study of this topic and the proposed creation of a new criminal offence of controlling or coercive conduct as outlined in the private member's bill, Bill C-247.

Historically, much emphasis has been placed on physically aggressive acts in intimate partner violence. In doing so, we often lacked the broader context of the relationship and missed the opportunity to see the role and impact of non-physical violence. Although we can't say that coercive control will always eventually result in physical abuse, it is fair to say that in our experience and work with victims and survivors of abuse, all physical abuse was preceded by and will continue to include coercive control.

Coercive control occurs within the context of complex dynamics in intimate partner relationships where one partner exerts power and control over the other. Coercive control is a pattern of controlling behaviours that create an unequal power dynamic in a relationship, making it difficult for the victims of such behaviour to leave the relationship, because it's less visible and therefore often seen as having lesser effect. It is also harder to identify by family and friends, but, certainly, it is equally damaging to the women and children subjected to it in the relationship.

Victims and survivors of coercive control describe their experiences as living under a constant, never-ending threat. Others describe feeling like captives trapped in plain sight. Those of us who are survivors of war recognize some of the same psychological effects and impacts in the victims and survivors of coercive control.

Coercive control in intimate partner violence has two main components, coercion and control. Coercion can be the use of force or threats of physical aggression to alter the victim's behaviour. Control is used to compel obedience by the victim by monopolizing vital resources, dictating preferred choices, limiting options and depriving the victim of essential supports needed to exercise a level of independence.

Coercive control is so effective because the victims see threats of punishment by abusers as credible, and they should. Many of the women we serve shared being stalked by their abusive partners. They also shared that threats included death, the abusive partner threatening suicide, disfigurement, removal or harm to their children, pets and family members, deportation and defamation, just to name a few.

The control victims experience at the hands of their abusive partners includes the removal of choice of decisions about their own reproductive health and rights, because the more children a woman has with the abusive partner, the greater control the abuser exercises in all spheres of her life, including using state-sanctioned structures such as the legal and family law systems to continue to coerce and control women through custody of and access to the children. Additionally, abusive partners use the manipulation of children, including threatening to kill their other parent, in this case the victim, if the children choose to reside with the victim in situations of child custody. It is common that children will even refuse to go to the shelters.

Isolation is another tactic, and, sadly, statistics show that in many of these cases where coercive control is coupled with physical violence, it leads to lethality.

• (1115)

Finally, we suggest that the strategies and efforts to address violence in intimate relationships and gender-based violence must be multipronged to address its complexity and dynamics: prevention through education, provision of supports for victims and survivors, supports for organizations that support the victims, meaningful investments and funding, and legislative changes.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that, Ms. Neto.

We'll go into our round of questions. I will remind members and witnesses to speak slowly and clearly so that our interpreters are able to interpret in a good fashion. We'll start with Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis, you have six minutes. Go ahead, sir.

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I certainly appreciate this opportunity. What a fantastic panel of witnesses.

Thank you to each and every one of you for coming here today. It's really important that we hear from you to make these very important decisions going forward. The testimony reminded me a lot of the woman from Hiatus House in Windsor, who was on our first panel of witnesses.

With regard to Nisa Homes and Women's Habitat of Etobicoke, thank you very much for your service in protecting those who need the most protection.

This question is specifically for anyone on the panel, except for the chief—I will get to you shortly, sir. Can you comment on the impact of COVID-19 on instances of domestic violence over the past year, and are there recommendations that you have on how the government could ensure that better support is provided to the survivors?

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Is there somebody specific you want to hear from, Mr. Lewis?

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** It's open to the three witnesses.

**Ms. Carla Neto:** Do you mean, specific to the pandemic?

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Neto. Go ahead.

**Ms. Carla Neto:** The pandemic came only to shed the light on the existing issues and problems. Certainly for the women we work with in our outreach centre, as I said, many of whom are still living with abusive partners, now the pandemic has created even more challenges. We have women who are not able to access our services. Although we are not having in-person services, we do have virtual services. We provide support via the phone. These women, they can't. They often call us from the washroom. They often call us from the laundry room. The level of vulnerability has increased to the degree where they're really afraid for their lives now.

In terms of what needs to be happening, violence against women is an issue that impacts...and it requires multiple solutions and the involvement of multiple members of society, the involvement of men. There has to be more than interventions. There has to be prevention. We need to be connecting with men who use violence and providing supports because they're now quarantined in the same house. The supports that women are receiving won't do much if the perpetrator himself is not receiving any support.

When it comes to the pandemic, we are seeing a lot of vulnerabilities for the women. We're seeing a lot of food insecurity, a lot of increased economic dependency on the abusive partner. Again, the solutions have to be multipronged. They have to include multiple levels of intervention and engagement.

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Thank you so very much for that answer; that was excellent.

I do see a hand raised. Perhaps I will give her one minute, and then I do have one question for the chief, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Ms. Youssef, go ahead.

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef:** In addition to what was said, that's exactly what we have witnessed, too. We've seen a huge increase in the number of calls that we've received since the start of the pandemic—more than double the number of calls we normally get—but we haven't seen as many women come to us because of that fear of living in a communal space where they might be exposed to the virus themselves—or their children—or simply because they can't reach out to us.

We've received so many random methods of reaching out to us that are not the usual. Usually, we just get calls. Now we're getting Facebook messages, Instagram messages, messages on our web chat, different ways of trying to approach us because they can't find the safety to be able to do it normally.

In addition to that, obviously the times when they do come to us, we see that the cases are much more violent than they normally are. We're seeing cases of guns being involved. We're seeing cases of children being harmed and things like that, which are not usually what we see every day, I would say, outside of the pandemic.

To echo what was also said in terms of what can be done, I do think that a wider scope of application needs to be approached. We can't just look at providing support for these women. We have to look at the overall structure in which this takes place. We have the police here looking at how they approach these situations, looking at how the legislation also affects these women.

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Thank you so much. I appreciate this very much.

Chief, first and foremost, thank you for your service, sir, and thanks also to your entire force. I have two cousins who are OPP officers and some dear friends who are as well. I can only imagine the frustration, but thank you very much for your service.

Very quickly, Chief, what would be the main frustration officers have when trying to provide help or support for survivors of domestic violence?

• (1125)

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** The main frustration, I think, in our context when we are coming upon survivors is.... It's all part and parcel, like the chicken and the egg. There is a fear of reporting, because there is a lack of confidence that the system will actually provide them the protection they're seeking. What I think goes through everybody's mind is this: Is this phone call to the police actually going to compound my situation and make it worse? I think our ability to provide the confidence to survivors that we will do our best and the Crown attorneys will do their best....

We have realized—and this is why the other witnesses here are really doing yeoman's work—is that the ability to do service provider advocacy to strengthen their ability to fill those spaces that we can't is really where it is, Mr. Lewis.

**Mr. Chris Lewis:** Thank you, everyone.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

We'll now go to Mr. Sarai.

Mr. Sarai, you have six minutes. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Thank you to all the witnesses. All of you do work that is very important in our communities, with some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

I have a Nisa Homes in my riding. They do great work and I'm very proud of them. Thank you for doing that work in a very niche community where cultural sensitivity is paramount and knowing that culture is very important. Working with those vulnerable women in a very discreet way when they come to you is even more paramount.

I am going to ask this question of either of the Nisa Homes witnesses.

How are you seeing children who live in households with controlling and coercive behaviour being impacted, especially during the time of COVID? Are they experiencing controlling or coercive behaviour in their households, and are you able to help them through your organization? Can you elaborate on that?

**Mrs. Reena Vanza:** Thank you for the question. I may step in for this one.

As the counsellor at Nisa Homes, I work directly with the women and children who come into our home, and I must say yes, absolutely, I do see the effects on the children. We know that psychological or physical abuse or any sort of abuse towards a mother does not stop at the mom. It obviously goes through the entire family system into the children.

What we're seeing with COVID right now is that the children who come in are also living in fear. Usually the children go to school, so the mom endures things, and the children come home, and moms are very good at covering things. Now, with the pandemic, everyone is in the house, everyone is in each other's face, so the children who are coming in are more prone to fear responses. I am seeing things such as nightmares. I had some children come in who bed-wet because of the fear. Many children have mistrust of authority. Many children don't want to go to school, because they're afraid they're going to be taken from their moms.

Yes, the compounding effect upon children is huge. This pertains to Nisa Homes as well as to other shelters and transitional homes. We talk and we try to collaborate to come up with best practice approaches. I can say that this is universal throughout the pandemic right now; children are being affected more than ever. Or maybe we're just seeing it more than ever because the circumstances are different right now.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** In your opinion, will Bill C-247 help children who are living in these abusive situations? Also, what more can we do to ensure that children are protected?

**Mrs. Reena Vanza:** I think it will help them. We're talking about power and coercion here. A lot of the time, as we know, when it comes to violence it's the physical violence that people look for. Can we see a bruise? Can we see the physical assaults that we can protect the mom from? The children see the coercion; they see the power and the control. They hide under their beds and in their bedrooms. They witness the part that we don't see.

I think it will give women—their moms or their guardians—empowerment, that we are able to step in and do something about this. It doesn't have to get physical. I think giving that power to the woman translates to giving power to children and seeing that there is protection for us out there.

Yes, absolutely, I think this bill will protect children and women, and it will make a huge difference in how women feel empowered with their own families and their children.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Thank you.

Chief Duraiappah, this question is for you.

A Canadian Press article from October 20 suggested that some police departments have experienced similar or fewer domestic abuse call rates since the beginning of the pandemic, despite the rise in domestic abuse, in contrast to the rise in calls to helplines.

What has been your department's experience with calls of this nature over the last 10 months?

• (1130)

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** That's an accurate depiction of what's happening in Peel region.

As the previous witnesses stated, the isolation that individuals have experienced has stopped their ability to call the police, but it is disproportionate to the actual demand on service providers. We've seen service providers having more people in an intimate partner violence situation seeking help, and we have seen a slight reduction in calls to police. This is the perpetual issue of the fear of calling us when one is in an isolated situation.

We know that the trust in police in 2020, based on geopolitical circumstances, has probably also compounded that factor. We know that some regions across the GTA have seen a slight spike...but your comment is accurate for Peel region.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Thanks, Chair.

Chief, you reiterated that there's a trust factor.

Do you think that some may see this legislation as preventative and some may see coercive and controlling as an actual criminal offence, so it's in the eye of the beholder? I think it's the latter. It is a criminal offence in itself.

Do you think it will help to build that trust, as the police will be able to do more preventative measures—and hopefully the Crown, as well—so that people trust the police more and will approach the law rather than just transitional shelters or other women's shelters?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** We welcome it as another tool. Any opportunity to mitigate risk in the cycle of intimate-partner violence is a positive one, particularly because many individuals who call us don't think we're going to be able to help. We've stepped into

homes where there is an absence of violence, and an officer ends up leaving, with no action or outcome.

What this does is to provide us with the ability, in the absence of violence, to disrupt that cycle. I agree that my people need comprehensive training, and our Crown needs clarity on how it will be prosecuted and standards of proof, but I can tell you that it is certainly a positive, positive thing, for sure.

**Mr. Randeep Sarai:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin, you have the floor.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being here today to discuss this important matter. I am very happy to hear their testimony.

My questions will have to do with the procedural side of things, and I would like to address them to Chief Duraiappah.

Chief Duraiappah, I have a two-part question. First, where do you place a possible controlling or coercive conduct offence on the spectrum of offences related to acts of violence, such as assault, harassment, threatening or conspiring to commit assault?

Second, how would one of your police officers determine that such conduct, such an offence, was indeed going on when he arrived at the site of the alleged offence?

[*English*]

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Thank you for the question.

My first thought on the placement of this offence is that I see it as one tier below the violent commission of offences such as assaults. I see it almost in the space of one or two existing criminal offences, such as threatening and criminal harassment. At the moment, the Criminal Code criminalizes language before there's an act of violence, and I sort of see it in that subset of offences. However, what it has allowed us to do is to peel back that ambiguous space of coercion, which was never embodied in really specific language. I do see it in that space.

With regard to the second part to your question, it is a new, complex element that we're asking frontline responders to be able to discern. I agree with the witnesses. It is a huge new subset of training, but I am confident that this element of training [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

• (1135)

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Chair, I'd like to ask Chief Duraipah for clarification, if I may.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes. I think the chief was frozen there for a little bit.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** All right. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Please go ahead, Monsieur Fortin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I may have been unclear.

Chief Duraipah, in your opinion, what situations would not fall under the definition of harassment, assault or threats, but would fall under the definition of controlling or coercive conduct? Could you give me an example?

How can a police officer who shows up at a home from which a distress call originates determine that it is not harassment, assault or threats, but rather a situation of controlling or coercive conduct?

Do you have any tools to help police officers determine that?

[English]

**Chief Nishan Duraipah:** Thank you for the clarification.

I'll just be frank and honest. That is actually a concern for us as well.

The standard of proof for offences like criminal harassment or threatening is very specific and has a very confined context. I know that for my officers and for our Crown attorneys who will have to prosecute it, the standard of proof will need to be extremely clear and articulable for terms like "controlling" or "significant impact", especially when the defence is reasonableness.

We do have a question mark. I would have to say this is an element that we hope gets defined more clearly in the form of a standard of proof that the prosecution or the Crown attorneys can run with, and therefore we can derive articulation to our officers.

We need to define.... Are they going to be prohibited from attending a social event in a declined state, or is it actually controlling their finances?

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Chief Duraipah. I don't mean to be impolite, but I only have one minute left. You know, my time is limited.

According to your testimony, I gather that you support creating such an offence.

Tell me about a situation you have experienced where you could not have charged someone with harassment, threats or assault, and you could have charged them with controlling conduct.

Can you tell us about a situation like that in 30 seconds?

[English]

**Chief Nishan Duraipah:** Absolutely, sir.

The very quick answer is that sometimes we don't meet the threshold of criminal harassment or threatening. We just don't meet the definition, but we are clearly aware that the individual has imposed psychological, verbal or non-verbal pressures to restrict mobility, finances and a variety of different artifacts such as that.

That would be the immediate area where an individual is able to articulate how they've been negatively impacted, from being mobile, free financially...child care, possession, their employment or activities being restricted in those ways, which don't actually get to the point of a threat. This will be the space that—

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Chief Duraipah, have you often found yourself in situations like that?

[English]

**The Chair:** Sorry, Monsieur Fortin. We're out of time.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I understand.

[English]

**The Chair:** Maybe in the next round, Monsieur Fortin....

We'll go to Mr. Garrison now for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

• (1140)

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to start by thanking all the witnesses, but in particular those frontline service providers, such as Women's Habitat and Nisa Homes, who deal with these terrible tragedies every day and are doing so during a pandemic. My hope is that the staff there are also able to acknowledge the impact of COVID on them and the increased demand and are able to take good care of themselves in providing these services.

I noticed during Monsieur Fortin's questions that witnesses from both Nisa Homes and Women's Habitat wished to speak. Instead of starting with my questions, I'd like to let them respond, as they had their hands up.

Perhaps we'll start with Nisa Homes, and then Women's Habitat.

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef:** Thank you so much, Madam Chair and MP Garrison.

I did want to clarify some issues with regard to how we can see whether coercive or controlling behaviour is taking place. We've seen it through a lot of our clients, who come to us having no access to finances, as the chief mentioned, no access to any means of communicating with friends, family or even resources, no access to phones, no access to computers, and no access to even being able to leave the home. Sometimes they're confined to the home. Although there's no threat, no actual "If you do XYZ, I will do XYZ", they're just not allowed access to these items. They're not allowed access to a bank account or to study or to work or to any means that basically allows them independence and allows them to be able to take care of themselves if something were to happen or if they were to leave, which kind of puts them under the control of the abuser.

I hope that clarifies that situation.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Ms. Neto, I think you also wished to respond on this.

**Ms. Carla Neto:** Yes. Thank you. Some of it has already been said.

I think when the police appear at a home and the perpetrator, or the man, is impeding the woman from speaking, perhaps wanting to be the interpreter or saying things like, "Well, she doesn't really understand English very well", or "She's sick and she's not doing well", and is clearly trying to keep the police from speaking to the person, that is an indication. The evidence of coercion or control will be assessed later. Once that victim is in safety, and once charges have been laid through the investigation, it is very easy to find out.

Some of my colleagues already mentioned the control, the extreme control, the surveillance of the person even at work. The person goes to work and their abusive partner is calling, questioning colleagues, picking the person up at the door, and not allowing the person to go to family members or to speak to friends. They're controlling every movement. It is not difficult to assess coercive control.

I think on the question the chief was trying to answer, it may be difficult, when you attend a call, to ascertain whether there is coercive control, but it is not difficult when you observe and see what's happening. Is this person speaking freely or is there an appearance of fear?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thanks to both of you for those clarifications.

Early on in the pandemic, when I talked both to women's service providers and to the police in my own riding, we saw a sharp spike in demand. When I talked with all of them, they told me there was a pattern of behaviour that was pretty easy to determine. They felt that the bill I eventually drafted moved from an incident focus to a pattern focus. I wonder whether you think that will be useful for both the enforcement and the victims.

I'll start with you, Ms. Neto.

**Ms. Carla Neto:** Absolutely, there is a pattern. There is a pattern of control. That means that the abusive person has the same control in every aspect—the way you think, the way you speak, what you do, your social media. In fact, they're not just controlling the social media. They're also threatening to use images, for example, that the

person doesn't want to share with family members and friends on social media. So it will absolutely be critical.

I think this pattern of coercion and control has always existed. It exists whether or not there's physical violence. I think we have been placing so much emphasis on the actual physical violence that we forget that the physical violence doesn't just happen all of a sudden. It starts with control. It starts with coercion. It starts with verbal and emotional and psychological abuse.

• (1145)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Ms. Youssef, do you think such a bill would help victims recognize that the behaviour they have been subject to is actually unacceptable?

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef:** Yes, I do think so, if it is combined with the training necessary and the awareness. I think that's the part that ends up being missed. A lot of times when we have women come to us, they don't realize it until we tell them: this, this and this—it's abuse. With that awareness piece, I think it would definitely help women recognize it sooner, hopefully not get to the point where physical abuse is taking place, and hopefully get the help they need before that.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Mr. Garrison.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** We'll now go into our second round of questions, starting with Madame Findlay for five minutes.

Go ahead.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Thank you to all the witnesses.

Having practised in the family law area [*Technical difficulty—Editor*].

**The Chair:** Sorry, Ms. Findlay, your voice isn't really coming through.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Sorry, my boom wasn't down. My apologies. I'll just start again. Thank you.

I want to thank you all very much for being here for this important topic.

Having practised family law for many years, I'm well aware of these situations and have, in fact, seen situations where civil restraining orders and criminal orders are just pieces of paper to abusers, who have then actually killed their partners or severely hurt them after.

I know this is all too real, and it crosses all socio-economic sectors of our society, but I think often it's particularly hard on new Canadians, who have less understanding of our judicial system and the supports that so many of you provide.

This question is for Chief Duraiappah.

I want to thank you for your service to the Peel community. I understand that your area has been one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I can only imagine the complexities that brings to your policing. My understanding is that half of Peel's homicides in 2019 were intimate partner or family violence, which seems like an incredible number to me—13 out of 27, I'm advised.

Did Peel see a similar split during the pandemic in 2020?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Thank you for the question.

Yes, the same split was roughly what we saw last year in our homicides. Domestic or intimate partner, family-related homicides were just shy of 50%.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Earlier this week, we heard testimony from a survivor of domestic violence that victims are often not believed by law enforcement. Have you seen this in your work, and what would you suggest could be done to rectify that issue?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** With certainty, over the progression in maturity that policing and law enforcement have seen.... Without a doubt, survivors' experiences have probably seen a lack of reception from policing, but it's my experience now that it has matured so much in the last decade. Our shift to looking at risk and mitigating risk versus dealing with what we see being presented at the doorstep has changed insofar as now we are equally frustrated with our inability to stop the cycle of violence.

Now I think survivors experience a general frustration with the lack of effectiveness of the tools we have. In their minds, without a doubt, they interpret that—and I'm not speaking as a survivor—as our not taking it seriously or not managing it well.

For example, this proposed legislation, although not a panacea, is another arrow in the quiver.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** My understanding, and I have law enforcement people in my own family, is that there is a lot more education of officers on de-escalation but also perhaps more sensitivity to these situations where the mandate is more to believe the person complaining, at least initially, to try to defuse the situation rather than just walking away from it. Is that correct?

• (1150)

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Absolutely, that is true. I'll use the word "maturity" again, which we've seen in equipping our officers from a standpoint of understanding what's behind the behaviour, whether it be a perpetrator or what a victim is presenting...has increased.

To go to a previous question, we've been equipped with a variety of tools. One of the questions was, how are we going to determine the course of behaviour? We do have risk assessment tools that can come alongside us to help an officer peel back the nuances that aren't so obvious.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** We have very little time left. You brought up an issue of someone out on bail with no-contact orders and it led to the death of a victim. How would you see stopping those tragedies in the future in terms of police versus courts?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Very simply, clearly we don't need to criminalize everybody, but repeat high offenders who show a propensity for victimization I think need to be treated differently

from people who are provided a GPS. There's a slew of other criminals whom I'd happily provide the GPS to, or I'd hope the courts would, but somebody who repeatedly reoffends—intimate partner or gun and gang violence—in my view needs to be seen a little differently at the court level from a reform standpoint.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much.

We will now go to Mr. Kelloway for five minutes.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hello, colleagues.

Thank you to the witnesses. It's been said by each MP: Thank you for the work you do at the grassroots. It's exceptionally important.

Also, I have a very quick story. Twenty years ago, I married into a police family. My father-in-law was the chief of police and my brother-in-law is now the chief of police in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. Twenty years have given me a great appreciation and a deeper understanding of the work involved in policing; it's vast and at times very complicated.

Chief Duraiappah, my questions are going to be directed to you, based on the family I married into. I want to address a question around our government's approach in the past little bit. As you know, we implemented a firearms ban after the tragic incident in my home province in the spring. I'm wondering if you could tell the committee about the role of firearms in the home and how it impacts domestic violence. Does this impact coercion and control?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** The access to firearms—legal or illegal—is just another factor that compounds the risk to an individual. With the legislative ability, especially the new bill, we know there are opportunities now for application to the firearms officer when there's even just a risk or a possibility of risk to look for either a temporary retraction or prohibition of the firearms.

I keep coming back to that quiver analogy; we'll take any tool we can get. I think there's no one solution to mitigate risk for intimate partner or family violence, but every incremental change that can help us round off a corner, even though it might not be dealing with the highest or most immediate risk, in my view is a benefit to us.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thank you, Chief.

I remember reading that you and the Peel Regional Police were looking at alternative ways to deal with domestic violence. I'm wondering if you can unpack for the committee a bit more about the ideas you were exploring and how these may have changed in light of the pandemic.

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Absolutely. Really, it reflects a fundamental shift from our being the emergency responder and dealing with everything in that wheelhouse of enforcement and leaning on our community partners to help invest in other spaces.

What we've done is apply an emphasis on social development, risk mitigation and of course prevention. We'll always be trying to do our best in the law enforcement space. An example of how we're doing that here is that we really deconstructed things. A few weeks from now, I have 50 officers starting in a community centre—not a police facility—and they are going to be the sole subject-matter experts to be able to respond in the soup-to-nuts response for intimate partner or family violence and be responsible for case-managing them.

The idea is that we want the seamless integration for community service providers to be with us on the ground floor, an immediate integration into legal aid, settlement services, mental health, housing. There are a lot of stigmas. Some of those partners are also cautious about seeing uniforms or investigators in their building too, but this is the paradigm shift, where we recognize we're better together and we have an opportunity to improve that. The emphasis is going to be on getting upstream.

We know that domestic violence.... By the time we're called, it's probably the 10th time—I think our witnesses will have better stats than me—the individual has experienced something.

We want to get them off-ramp far earlier, sir.

• (1155)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, how much time do I have?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Okay. I'll try to make this one quick.

Chief, it's an “in your opinion” question.

Beyond what you just mentioned, what would be the best way to change the frontline approach to domestic violence, apart from introducing a new offence of coercive control in the Criminal Code?

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Really, thinking outside the box—

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Yes, exactly.

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** In the way we respond to mental health, for some reason police officers are still the 24-7 go-to for mental health, but we're not mental health professionals.

If you apply the same concept to intimate partner familial violence, if we showed up at a doorstep with a community service provider or a specialist who had nothing to do with policing and had the ability to engage somebody, even for us to be the secondary, that's thinking outside the box, where we just don't own that space. That would be a brilliant pilot to be able to see, somebody who is a gateway to a variety of services, because here we're very diverse, right from settlement services to transitional housing, or whatever it might be, instead of an officer trying to broker that and trying to discern that.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** That would be an amazing pilot.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much, Mr. Kelloway.

We'll go now to Monsieur Fortin for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My thanks to Ms. Youssef and Ms. Neto for the clarifications they made earlier in the definition of what would be considered controlling or coercive conduct. The clarifications were interesting and helpful.

I will now turn to you, Chief Duraiappah.

In your last response, you spoke of the possibility of working together with social workers and psychologists. I am interested.

First, how are police officers equipped to respond to such situations? I am not talking about weapons, but rather response tools.

Second, working collaboratively with social workers could help police officers, but could steps be taken in advance to prevent individuals from engaging in controlling or coercive conduct?

[*English*]

**Chief Nishan Duraiappah:** Tools right now are very limited to law enforcement-related abilities, enhanced interviewing skills. We have about six or seven risk assessment tools that our intimate partner violence investigators would utilize. Then we shift and lean on our service partners.

To roll into your next question, for example we might be at somebody's house five times over a period of four months and we might resolve the dispute, but there's no case management during the week with us sitting with settlement services, supports for survivors, in order to triage and maybe do a door knock mid-week where we could not only provide the victim support but even come alongside the perpetrator in a way that gets them off track.

That concept doesn't exist, and that would be an upstream one before we're at a 911 call.

We have the data. I have loads and loads of data about how many times I've been to Chief Nishan's, for example, but that never gets shared with other providers to see how we could take it off-ramp and get the right services to the right people at the right time.

• (1200)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Monsieur Fortin.

We'll go to Mr. Garrison now for our final round, for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the chief for his testimony, but I want to take the last few minutes here to go back to the three witnesses who are frontline service providers.

I was going to ask them about how we increase trust in the system, but I'd like to give each of them 30 or 45 seconds just to re-emphasize anything from their presentation or anything they think we have missed in this panel.

Maybe we could start with Ms. Vanza, then go Ms. Youssef, and finally Ms. Neto.

**Mrs. Reena Vanza:** Mr. Garrison and Madam Chair, thank you so much for this.

I think the panel is great. The one thing I do want to drive home, and I raised my hand earlier, is that this bill is very important because we talk about physical harm, physical abuse, but as a registered psychotherapist who works directly with trauma, I can tell you that victims or survivors are quite resilient in getting over the physical abuse. It's the coercion, the power, and the control; it's that aspect that takes over their life for the rest of their lives and also impacts the children.

That is why I'm here today, to drive that home, so thank you for giving me the time to clarify that point.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Ms. Youssef.

**Mrs. Yasmine Youssef:** Thank you so much again for giving us this chance.

I echo what I said earlier. I think it really does come down to training first responders and providing them with the tools, as mentioned, so that they can correctly identify, when they go into a home, and can see whether or not there is...even if they have a doubt, they can see the red flags, and then in accordance with that, can respond.

I do love the idea of having, along with a police officer, someone who comes from this background—a subject matter expert in domestic violence, in intimate partner violence, who can give a 360 view, basically, and assess what's going on, something a police officer may not be able to do, given their limited training.

As mentioned earlier, there are many examples. One example I want to quickly mention is this. We had a client whose partner refused to let her breastfeed at certain times. He would control when and how she would breastfeed. That just compounded the trauma that she was experiencing. I'll leave it at that.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you, Ms. Youssef.

With the chair's indulgence, maybe we can give 30 seconds to Ms. Neto.

**The Chair:** Please go ahead.

**Ms. Carla Neto:** Ditto to everything that has been said. I want to just emphasize that coercion, domestic violence, is not an issue that happens to other races; it's a human race issue. When police show up at a particular door, police come in realizing that this is not "these people's" issue. They come in with a full understanding of

what coercion and abuse and control are and engage in interference skills—as the chief said, engage in paying attention to the behaviours.

Thank you so very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

With that, we conclude our questioning.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for a very informative discussion. I really appreciate all the work you do. If you have any information or clarifications that you'd like to follow up on, please send us written submissions through the clerk.

Thank you once again. I really appreciate it, and I think I echo all members of our committee.

We'll suspend now for a minute as we let in our next panel and do their sound checks really quickly.

Thanks again, everyone.

- (1200) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
- (1210)

**The Chair:** I call the meeting back to order.

I have a few comments for our witnesses before we get started.

Please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, please click on your microphone icon to activate the mike. Ensure that your language is selected to the language that you would like to hear, not the language you would like to speak, so you can get proper translation of what is being said in both official languages.

When you are speaking, please speak slowly and clearly into the mike. When you are not speaking, please ensure that your microphone is on mute. I have a one-minute card and a 30-second card, which I will be using to monitor the time as we go through this.

Without further ado, I'll introduce our witnesses today.

We start with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, represented by Kimberley Greenwood, who is vice-president of the board of directors, and Francis Lanouette, who is the co-chair of the crime prevention, community safety and well-being committee. Welcome.

We also have the National Association of Friendship Centres, represented by Christopher Sheppard, who is the president, and Jocelyn Formsma, who is the executive director.

Lastly, we have The Redwood, represented by Abimbola Ajibolade, executive director, and Raheena Dahya, who is a lawyer and family law mediator.

With that, we'll go into our opening statements by witnesses, starting with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

You'll have five minutes collectively to make your remarks. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

**Chief Francis Lanouette (Co-Chair of the Crime Prevention, Community Safety and Well-being Committee, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police):** Good afternoon.

Thank you to the members for the opportunity to appear before this committee.

My presentation today will be delivered in two parts. The first will present the position of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) on the proposed legislative amendment. The second will support the CACP's position by demonstrating the limitations currently imposed by the Criminal Code when it comes to intervening in cases of intimate partner violence.

Chief Greenwood will address the prevalence of intimate partner violence in Canada and how the addition of a coercive control law could interrupt violent assaults, therefore protecting our victims sooner, before physical or visible harm comes to them.

Let me begin by stating that the CACP supports the creation of a new Criminal Code offence for coercive control between intimate partners. With this action, Canada reaffirms its commitment to do everything possible to make gender equality a reality.

As we focus on the new offence being proposed by Bill C-247, we would like to draw your attention to recommendations 1 to 4, found on page 10, of a brief prepared by the University of New Brunswick: support for the creation of a new criminal offence of coercive control; ensure the inclusion of former intimate partners regardless of living arrangements; a comprehensive description of coercive control behaviours; the implementation of a risk assessment tool for police officers so they can clearly identify the elements that constitute coercive control behaviours.

The University of New Brunswick conducted a workshop in Quebec last November, with the active participation of the CACP, as part of a research project on coercive control behaviours. I would like to share an excerpt of the testimony of a female police officer, a team sergeant, that clearly demonstrates the current limitations for police intervention:

The problem I see at our level is when there is no criminal offence. For example, there is no assault, no threat, no harassment, just to name a few, but there are clearly coercive control behaviours. We find ourselves in a kind of fog. We do not have concrete tools at our disposal, nor do we have many possible intervention options. This means that we often go back to the station with a case of family dispute or of assistance to the public when we know full well that something unhealthy was going on. However, our authority under the Criminal Code of Canada did not provide us with a legislative option to intervene. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for us to tell ourselves that we will be back to that address, with the hope that, at that time, there might be a legal reason to take concrete action and that it is not too late.

As you can see, our police officers have the victims' best interests at heart, but in the absence of a clearly established criminal offence for coercive behaviour between intimate partners, they cannot intervene adequately. This testimony clearly outlines the current limitations of the Criminal Code and the importance of implementing legislation in this area.

• (1215)

[English]

I now turn the presentation over to my colleague, Chief Kimberley Greenwood.

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood (Vice-President of the Board of Directors, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police):** Good afternoon.

In Canada, it is reported that intimate partner violence accounts for one quarter of all police-related....

My apologies, I'm having some problems here.

**The Chair:** That's fine. Would you like—

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** I think we're fine now. I'm sorry about that.

**The Chair:** Okay, go ahead.

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** As police officers, we know that by the time a domestic violence charge is warranted, it is likely that the victim has been experiencing some form of violence or controlling behaviours at the hands of their partner for a significant period. Those who are charged with domestic violence usually engage in a variety of negative behaviours designed to exert control over their victims. We are advocating for the inclusion of coercive conduct as a criminal offence, because we have seen first-hand what happens to those who experience this type of sustained behaviour.

Victims may not understand that their partner's actions can lead to aggressive and assaultive behaviours and may seem withdrawn when police respond by coming to their homes. It is imperative that we provide officers with the tools and the training to recognize coercive and controlling tactics to support and assist the victims.

While this type of behaviour is seen as unacceptable, there is not a wide awareness of what constitutes coercive control, what the warning signs are and what options victims have available to them. Coercive control is not a single event that can be witnessed or documented with photographs and medical evidence. It is a variety of tactics carried out over a period of time and designed to deprive, humiliate, isolate and dominate. It is the kind of behaviour that chips away at victims and makes them more and more susceptible as it continues. A risk assessment tool for police officers would help to ensure that all aspects of coercive control are recognized and acknowledged.

We are also advocating to ensure that former intimate partners, regardless of their living arrangements, fall within the scope of this offence. For many victims, the proliferation of technology and social media means that even though they have taken steps to end a relationship, they may never be free from the controlling behaviour of their—

• (1220)

**The Chair:** My apologies, Ms. Greenwood, we're a little bit out of time.

We'll go to our next witnesses, and hopefully the remainder of your testimony can come out during questions.

From the National Association of Friendship Centres, we have Mr. Sheppard and Ms. Formsma. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Christopher Sheppard (President, National Association of Friendship Centres):** Thank you.

*Atelihai, Christopher Sheppard, uvanga.*

Good afternoon, committee. I'm Christopher Sheppard, president of the National Association of Friendship Centres. I want to recognize that I'm joining you today from Treaty No. 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. I'm thankful for the welcome I've received while being a visitor on their land. I am joined by the NAFC executive director, Jocelyn Formsma, and we thank you for the invitation to appear before you today.

The NAFC represents over 100 local friendship centres and PTAs in every province and territory in Canada except Prince Edward Island. Friendship centres are urban indigenous community hubs that provide a wide range of programs and services for demographics of all indigenous people—first nations, Métis, Inuit, urban and 2SLGBTQ+—including programs for babies, families, children, youth, adults and seniors. We offer services in justice, health, violence prevention, housing, homelessness, economic development, employment and training, early learning and child care, education, indigenous languages and culture.

Collectively, we are the largest and most comprehensive urban indigenous service delivery network in Canada. In 2019, 93 friendship centres served approximately 1.4 million first nations, Inuit, Métis and indigenous people across over 1,200 programs in 238 buildings, and employed over 2,700 people.

Bill C-247 may be helpful in some situations for persons experiencing controlling and coercive behaviour. However, on our review of the bill, first nations, Inuit, Métis, urban indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ people will still be reliant on the justice system to provide solutions if they choose to engage with this new section of the Criminal Code, should this bill pass. Further reliance on justice systems potentially subjects indigenous people to existing and continued broader issues of systemic racism barriers. We have numerous examples where indigenous people experience harm from systems in cascading and sometimes deadly ways. The success or accessibility of this potential new section of the Criminal Code is similar to other sections and relies on reporting of incidents and high levels of trust in these systems, which currently does not exist.

Without further action that is targeted at systemic racism in justice, housing, education and health systems, it remains likely that urban indigenous people will not be able to access the benefits that this bill hopes to achieve.

In a recent report on urban indigenous people and public service accessibility in Quebec, a survey was conducted regarding urban indigenous interactions with public services. The report submits that the survey results show that violence is widespread, but that services are greatly under-utilized. It is clear that both an apprehension of the public service system and a lack of familiarity with its services hinder urban indigenous people's access to prevention and

intervention services for sexual and domestic violence issues. One participant is quoted as saying, "My ex was beating me and the police didn't believe me."

Although this study was completed in Quebec, these issues are widespread across Canada and rely on the kind of disaggregated data that we need but currently do not have in order to give a clear picture of the urban indigenous situation. How are indigenous people supposed to report non-overtly violent acts while systemic racism and overt violence against our people persist?

NAFC submits that adequate programming to support urban indigenous people in understanding their rights as well as accessing their rights is crucial. Friendship centres remain a safe place for all indigenous people to access cultural programming and ultimately foster community connection. Friendship centres across Canada are offering wraparound programming every day, which allows victims of abuse to feel safe in disclosing abuse and to feel supported in reporting it to the police.

For accessing legal services and navigating the health system, it is essential that indigenous-specific supports like friendship centres receive adequate funding in order to be able to continually run these programs.

We conducted a literature review of reports and recommendations that they make regarding indigenous justice. The key themes that emerged are these. One is the need to train and educate non-indigenous people on indigenous history, heritage, culture, identity, laws and current realities. However, when reviewing publicly available federal responses, we found little in the way of mandatory or ongoing training on indigenous matters for any national or federal law enforcement entity.

Two is to increase funding to indigenous communities for public programs and organizations that benefit indigenous people. There are few funds available for justice-related programming.

Finally, increase participation of elders within the justice system, increase education and training for indigenous people on the Canadian justice system, and increase and promote proper use of Gladue reports and courts. We found that these activities are very sparsely implemented across the country. Urban indigenous people are continually caught in jurisdictional matters between federal and provincial governments; law enforcement and justice are no different.

● (1225)

The NAFC has offered and continues to offer its perspective, expertise and knowledge of urban indigenous communities and community members to inform the federal government and guide effective remedies, both now and as we continue on this journey.

We look forward to being a part of this conversation and to any questions you might have.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sheppard.

We'll now go to The Redwood. You'll have five minutes combined.

Ms. Ajibolade and Ms. Dahya, please go ahead.

We can't hear you, Ms. Dahya. There is no sound.

Can you try unplugging your headphones and plugging them back in?

**Ms. Raheena Dahya (Lawyer and Family Law Mediator, The Redwood):** Is that [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]?

**The Chair:** It's not working.

Maybe we can start with Ms. Ajibolade and then we'll have the IT call you, Ms. Dahya.

Please go ahead.

**Ms. Abimbola Ajibolade (Executive Director, The Redwood):** I'm going to switch roles with Raheena. The plan is for her to make the presentation today, and we'll go back and forth with questions that the panel might have.

**The Chair:** I've stopped your time, so you should be okay.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** Can everyone hear me now?

**The Chair:** Yes, that's perfect.

Please go ahead.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** Thank you for inviting us to participate today.

We wish to acknowledge and express our gratitude to the indigenous peoples upon whose traditional lands we reside.

The Redwood provides programs and services, including shelter services, to support women and children to live and thrive without abuse, homelessness and poverty. We work for social change through learning, collaboration and advocacy.

We are deliberate with our language, which is informed by an anti-oppressive, feminist, trauma-informed and attachment-informed lens. It is compatible with a transformational justice framework. As opposed to the language of “perpetrator” or “abuser”, we refer to these people as people causing harm, or causers-of-harm. We recognize that harm manifests itself in a variety of ways, including torture and murder.

Our principal concern is rooted in ensuring the safety of our clients, their children and the community at large. We operate on a harm-reduction basis, in which we meet concerns by listening to, educating and respecting the wishes of survivors, as they are the experts in their own lives and their own needs.

Coercive control is a serious issue that contributes to the harm against and homicide of women and children. It also contributes to the causers-of-harm's own death by suicide. We are pleased to see the federal government taking this issue seriously, as evidenced by amendments to the Divorce Act and the bill being contemplated today.

Coercive control is the most lethal form of intimate partner violence. You've heard from our colleagues today about it in great detail. However, I wish to draw your attention to coercive control and violence's counterpart, violent resistance. For brevity, I will simply point out that violent resistance is a form of violence that responds to coercive control. It can therefore be seen where coercive control exists, but coercive control is the cause and any criminal measure should acknowledge this.

Criminalization of any form of family violence has its benefits and harms. Among the benefits we recognize that criminalization of any social ill sends a signal to society that the elected government as representatives of this society take the issue seriously and find the conduct morally reprehensible.

What we reportedly hear from our clients is that—

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** A point of order, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Give me one second, Ms. Dahya.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** The interpretation—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Fortin, do you have a point of order?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I am told that the interpretation is no longer working.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Please go ahead again, Mr. Fortin. Your voice chopped out for me again, and I didn't hear what you said.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** The interpretation was no longer working, but now it seems to be working.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you. I appreciate that, Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Dahya, can you go ahead? You have two minutes remaining on the clock.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** What we repeatedly hear from our clients is that they want to see supports for people [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] who caused them harm so that they can overcome their harmful tendencies. We'll make submissions about this in a written form.

It is our experience that educational and social programs aimed at healthy relationships and safely leaving an unhealthy or violent—

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Chair, it is still not working. There is a problem with the interpretation channel. The audio is constantly cutting in and out.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you for pointing that out, Monsieur Fortin.

Mr. Clerk, can you just double-check to see if the interpretation is coming through? It's coming through for me, so I know the French to English is working.

Are any other members having a similar challenge? I don't see anything.

Can I just get a confirmation from the clerk?

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I can hear now, but there were interruptions when the witness was speaking. We could hear only every other syllable.

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Marc-Olivier Girard):** Madam Chair, the interpretation is functioning for me. It's working well.

We're told, though, that the Internet connection with our dear friends from The Redwood is not ideal. That might explain some issues that the interpreters are currently having with the interpretation.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Ms. Dahya, can I please ask you if you can just slow down? Speak slowly and clearly, so that if there is a lag in the interpretation we're able to accommodate.

You have a minute and a half left on the clock.

Please go ahead.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** Yes, of course. We'll make written submissions to fill in whatever we missed.

The benefits of criminalization could outweigh the harms if it takes into consideration the complexities of the criminal law system, the family law system, the immigration system and the unique vulnerabilities of immigrants, family relations and family systems principles, and if it is based on a sound understanding of different types of intimate partner violence and incorporates measures to protect and—

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Chair—

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Dahya—

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** The interpreter is telling me that the audio is constantly cutting in and out. Under these circumstances, she is not

able to provide a faithful interpretation of what the witness is saying.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you for pointing that out, Mr. Fortin.

Ms. Dahya, your sound is really choppy and we're having difficulty providing interpretation. Perhaps you can make your submissions in writing and send them to us, and we can go on to the rounds of questions, as I understand that time is also of the essence here as we try to go through our rounds of questions.

We'll go into our first round of questions, then, with Ms. Wagan-tall, for six minutes.

Go ahead.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses I had the opportunity to hear this morning in regard to this bill.

It is a step in the right direction as far as prevention goes to intervene at a stage of coercive control before physical violence takes place. However, in conversation around this with the previous witnesses as well, there was talk about that prevention. It just brought to my mind the fact that the perpetrators whom The Redwood witness was talking about needing assistance as well to deal with their issues...takes us back to where this really all begins. There are negative factors in our society that create the behaviours that encourage intimate partner violence.

For example, very dear to me is something that we've been working on in the House of Commons: dealing with the ease of access to pornography in our society. It scars and impacts attitudes towards women from a very early age in life when exposure to pornography exists. I had a meeting with the provincial YWCA of my province. They were very discouraged to see how easy it was to get that access. I'm wondering if the witnesses—perhaps someone from the police perspective and then the others as well—could comment on how important this is and if it would be a factor that they would see as important for the government to address.

• (1235)

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** Thank you very much for the question, which is focused on the police perspective at this point.

When we look at the trauma that children and youth experience through even Internet child exploitation with these types of offences, we continue to invest in and investigate areas of pornography to ensure that we are addressing the needs of our communities. This is a focus not just for police but for the whole judicial system, and we need to continue our focus in this area.

The use of pornography to degrade individuals in intimate partner situations is a form of coercive control, definitely. Coercive control is all-encompassing, but that is one area we would certainly study if we were to use such a tool as the framework.

Police services across the country have implemented the Canadian framework for collaborative police response to intimate partner violence, and an additional framework that focuses on sexual violence. When we look to our partners in the United Kingdom, we know that they have a guideline specific to coercive control behaviours. These domestic violence tools, these tools for coercive control, look at all of the different behaviours. Pornography would be one of many.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that and I would love to hear more, but I would like to hear as well whether the other witnesses have a perspective on that and how it is impacting the amazing work they do as well.

Thank you.

**Ms. Jocelyn Formsmma (Executive Director, National Association of Friendship Centres):** Madam Chair, may I speak?

**The Chair:** Yes, go ahead.

**Ms. Jocelyn Formsmma:** Thank you.

I just want to highlight that through friendship centres, we actually have a program that's running out of the Alberta region, called "I am a kind man". This is a program that engages directly with men who have been violent and works with them to basically work through their issues. The idea is to hopefully work with them to get to a place where they are no longer violent.

A lot of our programming does focus on prevention, including children and youth programming focusing on cultural connection, and then providing those safe spaces so that young people, if they are experiencing sexual assault or other kinds of abuse, will have a safe place and mentors to come to.

I won't speak specifically on pornography, but I'd just say that there are those intergenerational effects from trauma, from sexual assault, from residential schools or from child welfare and other matters. I can't say it's not an issue, but I would say that some of those other cultural systemic factors are probably more conducive to our seeing people becoming violent in intimate partner relationships and other relationships.

I'll just leave it at that for now. Thank you.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Thank you. I appreciate that very much.

I'll ask another question here.

I am wondering, to those of you involved in on-the-ground services and doing the great work you're doing, whether you feel you have the necessary resources to provide the supports for survivors, and whether there is a greater difficulty right now in light of COVID restrictions.

I would appreciate your comments on that. I don't know if The Redwood folks are able to participate or not at this point.

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Ms. Dahya, would you like to go ahead? We can't hear you.

You have 30 seconds, Mrs. Wagantall. Would you like to ask Mr. Sheppard, perhaps?

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Sure, that would be fine. Thank you.

**Mr. Christopher Sheppard:** It's— [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

**The Chair:** I have stopped your clock, Mrs. Wagantall. You still have 30 seconds.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** That's great.

Ms. Formsmma, I would be pleased to hear from you.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** Are you able to hear me?

**Ms. Jocelyn Formsmma:** Ms. Dahya, I hear sound.

Do you want to try her first, since she hasn't had a chance yet?

**The Chair:** Please go ahead, Ms. Dahya.

**Ms. Raheena Dahya:** What I can say is that The Redwood has started the iDetermine platform, which is a platform for women who seek to leave abusive relationships or cope with abusive relationships. It's also available to non-binary people.

It was launched and it has already exceeded 70% of the projected user rate since the pandemic has begun. We're seeing that it clearly underscores a need for more resources and more supports in this area.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That concludes our time, Mrs. Wagantall. Thank you very much.

Now we'll go to Mr. Virani for six minutes.

Go ahead, sir.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for the work they do on the front lines to address such a pressing issue.

I want to say a very warm welcome to the folks from The Redwood, which is a shelter based in my riding that not only serves folks in Parkdale-High Park but assists women and children throughout Toronto and provides incredible service and incredible safety to them. Thank you very much.

I have three questions, so I would ask Ms. Ajibolade and Ms. Dahya to keep their responses to about 45 seconds.

The first question is simply about the racialized women you serve at The Redwood.

Abi, if I could turn to you first, can you talk a bit about—and we've heard this from other witnesses—how coercive control manifests vis-à-vis newcomers, immigrant populations and racialized women in particular? What kinds of characteristics does it feature when it's coercion vis-à-vis a racialized woman? Thanks.

**Ms. Abimbola Ajibolade:** Thank you, Mr. Virani.

This plays out in different ways. Just like all of my colleagues previously have shared, we serve a lot of women from different backgrounds—racialized women, like you said—and it's something we see play out all the time, things that women are sharing with us when they first come into the shelter. Sometimes they tell us, "You know, it's not that there is any physical form of abuse, but I shiver when this individual comes into the house."

Like Raheena would have shared, we've been doing a lot of work lately with racialized women in particular—black women and Muslim women—with our Building Muscle project, and that's to really hear from these communities how all this plays out, including coercive and controlling behaviour.

One of the strong things we keep hearing from them is that they don't always want to involve the state. So many things are involved in that. Overpolicing, child protection issues and all of these issues—even immigration—play out in what informs this decision.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** We also heard a bit—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Virani. I'm just going to stop you for a second. I've stopped your time.

Ms. Ajibolade, can you try turning your camera off? Maybe that will help the load on your Internet, if that's okay. Thank you.

You'll still be able to answer questions, but with the camera off. Perhaps that will help our interpretation.

Go ahead, Mr. Virani. You're on two minutes and 50 seconds so far.

• (1245)

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Thank you very much.

Abi, we've also heard that one of the factors of coercive control is financial control and controlling women's finances. Some of the work you guys do at The Redwood is about economically empowering women who are fleeing abuse, so could you talk about how economic empowerment is critical in combatting coercive control?

You were also the recipient of a \$1.6-million grant from the federal government that helps with apprenticeship and training programs, getting women involved in the trades. How does a program like that help you with the economic empowerment that helps combat coercion and control?

Over to you, Abi.

**Ms. Abimbola Ajibolade:** We also believe that if you can break the cycle of poverty, you can help break the cycle of abuse. Many women struggle with putting food on the table and a roof over their heads, and many times they've told us, "I think I might have to go back to this abuser, although this person is causing me harm." This begs the question whether a woman needs to pick between having food on the table or being able to pay her rent and living with abuse. This program—

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Can I ask you one last question? The time is running short.

We've also heard about how coercion and control are different if there are firearms involved. I hope you followed the firearms announcement we made earlier this week. It talks about having a "red flag" provision, whereby you could look at the digital footprint of a person who's in the home, see if they have a tendency towards violence, and remove a gun from the home.

How would that impact the work you are doing in terms of the clients you serve at The Redwood? Would that help keep women safer?

**Ms. Abimbola Ajibolade:** Absolutely.

We have a tool kit for accessibility and how to manage risk, and one of the biggest questions is to check whether there are firearms involved. It helps us to also assess the validity of how lethal this relationship is and what people should be watching out for. Absolutely, I believe it would be....

I haven't had time to read the gun violence act from the government, but I know that this is a crucial part. This is something that women talk to us about, especially when their partners have access to firearms.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Thank you so much.

In my conclusion, again I want to reiterate that the work you are doing, that so many of the witnesses here are doing, is critical in terms of keeping people safe. We thank you for it. What we're trying to look at is how to empower you to do that work and to keep people as safe as possible, given this pandemic. Thank you for the work you are doing.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Virani.

Now we'll go to Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Good afternoon, everyone.

My thanks to the witnesses for joining us today.

I would like to come back to some procedural questions that I had for the representatives from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

Chief Lanouette, Chief Greenwood, where do you think the offence of coercive or controlling conduct would fit into the full spectrum of domestic violence offences, such as assault, harassment, threats, and conspiracy?

As I understand it, it would be ongoing behaviour, but I would like more details on that.

Second, on what principle would a police officer coming into an individual's home be able to determine that this is truly controlling or coercive conduct?

**Chief Francis Lanouette:** Thank you for the question.

The first part of your question refers to the seriousness of the offence. I would probably put it in the same category as criminal harassment. The offences related to coercive control will probably come before an offence involving bodily harm, since coercive control often occurs before acts of domestic violence, to use your example. I would therefore place it in that category.

In terms of evaluation, the police officers would of course have to be trained after the provision was put in place and they would have to have evaluation tools at their disposal. For example, in the United Kingdom, a risk identification, assessment and management tool called Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) has been developed. This tool allows police officers to properly assess coercive control.

• (1250)

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** On a daily basis, are there often situations where you cannot charge someone with assault, harassment or another offence, but where you could have charged them with controlling or coercive behaviour?

**Chief Francis Lanouette:** It probably happens quite frequently. I don't work in the field anymore, but that's probably what my fellow officers would tell you.

There are situations of financial abuse, for example, meaning financial control by the husband. The husband may also prevent the wife from leaving the house, from using social media or from seeing friends.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Perhaps I misspoke. Here's what I meant to ask.

Are the police often called on to intervene in cases where a woman, for example, claims that her husband does not let her access her bank account?

Is that situation common or hypothetical?

**Chief Francis Lanouette:** That sort of situation could happen.

People close to the situation are often the ones who inform us of this type of behaviour. So the victims do not necessarily call the police, but rather family members or someone in the neighbourhood. They inform us of the situation and we are called to go and check what is happening at the address in question.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Okay.

I would like to hear Chief Greenwood's views on the same issues. In particular, I would like her to comment on the challenge with evidence. Crown prosecutors would ultimately have the burden of establishing the facts that could constitute this offence.

Chief Greenwood, can you talk about the big picture?

[English]

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** Thank you very much.

There's nothing worse than officers leaving a residence knowing that there's nothing they can do, so I think it is critical.

The director has spoken about training not only for our officers but for the prosecutors and judges, ensuring we have the tools so that we can identify when somebody is expressing extreme jealousy, or if any threats have been made to the children or to the individual, or there's constant stalking and texting, and whether it's financial, the removal of things.... It's really about ensuring that we look at whether there are other situations going on in the family home.

The use of this, whether it's the DASH tool or the framework, is helpful to the officers so that they have a standard, a guideline, to

ensure they're bringing the best results possible during their investigation so that it can be prosecuted effectively.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** The brief submitted by the association refers to a risk assessment tool.

Could you quickly tell me about that?

What type of assessment tool would you like to have?

[English]

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** As one of the tools, we look to our partners. We know that Australia, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France have already adopted forms of legislation that recognize this, and they have existing tools.

We are working with Dr. Gill from the University of New Brunswick. She is helping us. One of her goals is to develop for all police officers this tool that can be inserted into the current framework we have on our collaborative response to intimate partner violence.

It is really about collaboration. We can't do this alone as police officers, so we need to ensure that we have academia at the table and also that we have the service providers there, who are subject matter experts and can support victims—the survivors and their children—in this type of offence.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Greenwood.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Fortin.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Garrison, the time is yours now. You have six minutes. Go ahead.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

We all know that the COVID crisis has placed extra strain on organizations providing support to women fleeing violent relationships, but also on all the community organizations that are providing those frontline services.

I'm very glad to have the National Association of Friendship Centres here. I want to pay tribute to the Victoria friendship centre, which is located in my riding, and which at the beginning of the pandemic leapt right in to provide necessary services without necessarily having the funding in place. Always, I think the experience locally here is that there's a presumption that somebody else is supposed to provide the services to urban aboriginal people.

I'm going to ask a general question that I think I know the answer to, and that is about how friendship centres are coping in providing these services during the pandemic, and whether they've been able to access additional funding to meet the needs, such as the increases in calls for assistance in family violence.

**Ms. Jocelyn Formsa:** Thank you for the question. I'll speak very quickly and see if our president would like to add anything.

Just to mention this, on the previous question about the economic and financial coercion, we'll be submitting to the committee "Honouring Her Spark", which is the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan's anti-violence action plan that focuses specifically on economic support for indigenous women, so look forward to that.

I would say that in the early days we really got caught in the jurisdictional issue between federal, provincial and municipal governments in not knowing which level of government was going to step forward to support urban indigenous people. We were fortunate to receive support from the indigenous community support fund, which is ongoing.

On a broader scale, we are currently in a program renewal year for the core programming for friendship centres. We're seeking support to not only renew this program but to renew it with enhancements so that we can be part of the rollout for the MMIWG action plan. We can continue the programming we're doing and also enhance the programming we're doing.

As well, as for being part of this "build back better" for Canadian society, we don't think we will be able to do that unless we have full support for urban indigenous people.

I'll leave it at that for now, but thank you for the question.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Okay.

If The Redwood centre can manage their technical problems here, I have a similar question for them. Will they be able to access additional funding to cope with the additional demands generated in terms of family violence by COVID?

**Ms. Abimbola Ajibolade:** Yes. We have been very grateful for the support we've received.

Earlier on, when the pandemic had just started, we were already in the process of launching our iDetermine platform, which is a 24-7 live chat and texting option. We were planning to launch it sometime in July when we started it in 2019, but we were able to expedite that and launch it earlier, in May. As I mentioned earlier, we thought that we would serve about 400 to 500 women on that platform in a year, but in six months from the launch date, we had received 700 calls on that line, and it's non-stop, with three or four going on at a time throughout the day, 24-7.

Getting that support to quickly launch that platform was very helpful for us, and it really got that support into the hands of women as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you very much.

I want to turn to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

We've had two different stories reported to us, and I wonder if perhaps Chief Greenwood could tell us if there is a pattern.

Certainly, locally at the beginning of the pandemic, all my local police forces reported a spike in increased calls of domestic violence, whereas other jurisdictions have said that there was a lull and

an actual decrease in calls for support. Has there been a common pattern across the country?

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** Thank you very much for that question.

The pattern across the country is very different. It is very locally focused. I will speak to the jurisdiction that I work in, which is the City of Barrie.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March, we saw a dip in our calls for service specific to intimate partner violence or family disputes. We did see it come back to what our four-year averages are. We think that was based on isolation. Once we saw some reopening in the province and the ability for people to get out, seek help and gain the resources they needed to support them through this, we saw a peak, and since then it seems that we have returned to normal averages.

Thank you.

• (1300)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thanks very much.

We have very little time left. I just want ask you this. Since I started working on the issue of coercive controlling behaviour, I discovered that other organizations were already also working on this problem. Can you tell me when the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police started working on this problem of coercive and controlling behaviour?

**Chief Kimberley Greenwood:** The issue of intimate partner violence is something that has been worked on for many years. We have been working on this issue through the community safety, crime prevention and well-being committee for approximately a year. We have ramped up and are doing workshops across the country to ensure that police officers have the right tools and to see what their experiences are so that we are able to support new legislation, which we hope to see through this group.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Chief.

Thank you, Mr. Garrison.

At this time, I would like to thank all of our witnesses. I really appreciate your testimony. If there are clarifications that you would like to add or any other statements of fact, please do send them over through the clerk. We would be happy to receive them.

At this time, I want to go over something really quickly with our members. Witnesses are free to leave if they would like to.

As members know, Bill C-218 has been referred to our committee at this time. I would like to ask members about this. If we give precedence to bills that are referred to us, should we be going into our bill study first or sticking with our current schedule of COVID and delays in the justice system?

I would propose that if we are going to go to Bill C-218, we can invite the sponsor of the bill for the second hour of the next meeting on Tuesday, then have two meetings with witnesses—two full panels—and then have one meeting on clause-by-clause. I leave it to members to decide if that's the route they would like to go.

Mr. Virani.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** We've just concluded four meetings and the testimony is fresh in our minds. My respectful suggestion would be that we use the time we had allotted next week to wrap up this study and give direction to the analysts, etc. Once that's done, if there's a gap in between when the analysts are bringing back the report, etc. and the final conclusion in tying up this report, we can commence Bill C-218 at that time.

I think two meetings ought to be sufficient. I think there's all-party support for this bill, so it should be a fairly quick analysis of Bill C-218 on safe sports betting.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Mr. Virani.

Just to clarify what we have on the schedule for the next meeting, the first hour is specifically for giving drafting instructions to the analysts for this current report. The second hour was initially being set aside for witnesses for the COVID and justice study, but I'm wondering if we should then invite the sponsor instead.

Mr. Garrison, I saw that your hand was up, but now it's not.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Let me just agree with Mr. Virani. Provided that we take the time next week to give instructions regarding drafting for this report, I'm okay if we move to the study of this bill. It is normal for the committee to give way to consideration of bills.

I think the number of sessions you suggested would be good. While I think we've had some tussling over who gets credit for this bill, I think that, as Mr. Virani says, we have general all-party support for the bill.

**The Chair:** Mr. Moore, do you want to weigh in here?

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Madam Chair, what is your suggestion regarding the timing for Bill C-218 in terms of days of study? You're suggesting the first hour would be the second hour of our meeting on Tuesday, and then we'd have a full meeting on—

**The Chair:** I'd say two full meetings after that.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** So there would be two and a half meetings.

**The Chair:** That would be just for witnesses, and then we'd need one meeting for clause-by-clause.

**Hon. Rob Moore:** That sounds fine to me.

**The Chair:** That would be a total of 12 witnesses plus the sponsor, so 13 witnesses in total. The sponsor would be invited for Tuesday in the second hour, from 12:00 to 1:00. Then we can go into the 25th. We would basically do clause-by-clause on March 11 and complete the study at that time.

Mr. Moore.

• (1305)

**Hon. Rob Moore:** We can have a subcommittee meeting on this, but I'm presuming that would mean that after we deal with Bill C-218 we would then return to our previous schedule for COVID-related impacts on the justice system.

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

Can I ask members for a—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Madam Chair, I have a question.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fortin, you have the floor.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Have we set a date for the next subcommittee meeting?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The next thing, as I had outlined in our last meeting, is that on Tuesday coming, in the first hour, we'll be giving drafting instructions to the analysts for this study on domestic violence. For the second hour, I am proposing that we invite the sponsor of Bill C-218, Mr. Waugh, to come and speak to his private member's bill. Then, we will have two further meetings on Bill C-218, then one for clause-by-clause, and then we will get back to our established schedule.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** My question was about a possible meeting of the subcommittee to set a schedule. If I understand correctly, no meeting has been scheduled yet.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We just did that. That's what I was hoping for, to save some time by doing it now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** I would like us to schedule a subcommittee meeting next week to discuss my motion to form a special committee.

It is a recommendation to the House to form a special committee on the appointment of judges. I would like to discuss it in subcommittee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I will look through the schedule to see if we can find an opening for a subcommittee meeting. At this time, it seems that it is not going to be possible as we are giving drafting instructions and then starting the study on Bill C-218. However, we will absolutely make sure that you have ample opportunity in a steering meeting to speak to your motion as well.

I understand the limitations on time right now. I just want to quickly see, Monsieur Fortin, if Monday the 22nd by noon is okay for witnesses from each party. With the 12 witnesses, excluding Mr. Waugh as the sponsor, it would be four witnesses for the Conservatives, four for the Liberals, two for the NDP and two for the Bloc.

Are we agreed on that breakdown for Monday, February 22 at 12 noon?

Monsieur Fortin.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** The next meeting was not scheduled for Monday, but for Tuesday.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Oh, sorry, Mr. Fortin. The meeting is on Tuesday, but I'm talking about the deadline to submit your witnesses for Bill C-218.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Okay.

My concern is not about the list of witnesses, but about having a subcommittee to agree on the recommendation. It seems simple to me. I don't think it will take us much time—less than one hour—but we would have to make a decision.

It's a matter of bringing a recommendation to the House. I don't want us to debate it among ourselves. I just want us to adopt the

proposal and recommend it to the House for consideration. I think we could take care of it quickly in subcommittee—in 30 minutes—before the next meeting.

We could meet at 10:30 a.m. next Tuesday to deal with this issue.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** How about we continue this discussion after we finish giving our draft instructions to the analysts at our next meeting on Tuesday? We have a full hour. Maybe we can take some of that hour to talk further about when we should be having a steering committee meeting to discuss your motion, if that's okay.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Okay.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is that okay?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** We will discuss it on Tuesday.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fortin. You're a really great man. I appreciate your patience.

With that, I adjourn this meeting.

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