



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

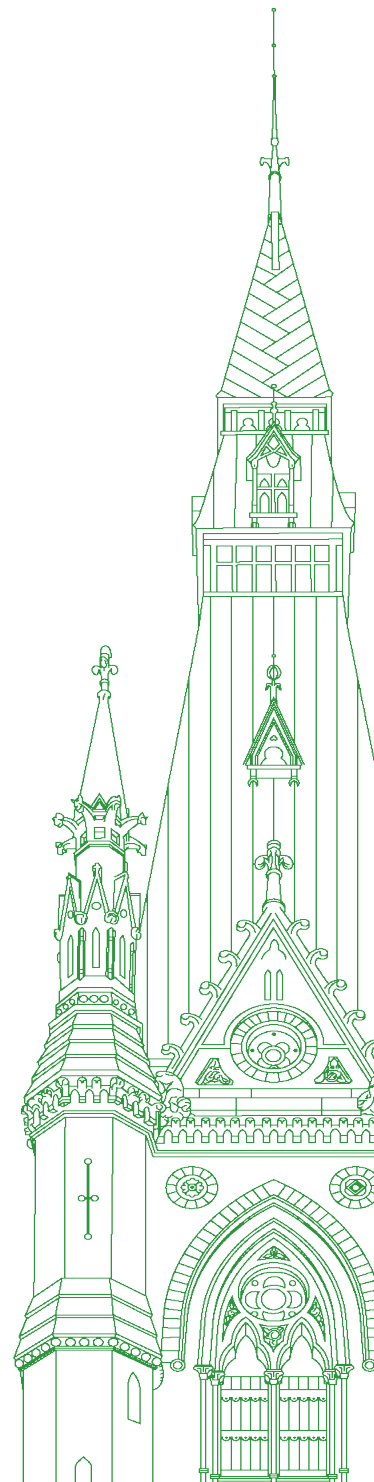
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 091

Monday, November 27, 2023



Chair: Mr. Robert Morrissey

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Monday, November 27, 2023

• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)): Good morning, everyone.

The clerk has advised that we have a quorum; therefore, I will call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 91 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Wednesday, September 20, 2023, the committee will commence its consideration of Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, meaning that members as well as witnesses are appearing in the room and virtually for this meeting.

I would advise that everybody participating can choose to speak in the official language of their choice. In the room, interpretation services are available when using your headset. If appearing virtually, please click on the globe icon on the bottom of your Surface device. Choose the language of your choice.

If there is an interruption in interpretation, please get my attention by using the “raise hand” icon, or by raising your hand if you're in the room. We'll suspend while it's being clarified.

I would also like to remind those participating in the room to please make sure their earpiece is away from the mike. That's for the protection of our interpretation personnel.

I also remind you to please address your comments through me, the chair.

If there is an issue, again, get my attention. We'll suspend while it's being corrected.

Today, in the first hour, we have appearing as a witness a very distinguished witness in the person of Madame Falk, our committee member and member of Parliament.

I take it you're doing a five-minute statement, Mrs. Falk. We will begin with your statement for five minutes, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

Colleagues, today we're considering legislation that would have a significant impact on many families in each of our ridings right across this country.

We know that bringing home a child is an exciting and life-changing event. Canada's system of special benefits, through the employment insurance program, is intended to provide parents with critical financial support during this special time in their lives.

A paid leave allows parents to have the time that they need to bond with and care for their child. All Canadian families are deserving of equal access to these benefits, but that is not the current reality.

Our employment insurance program does not reflect the diversity of families in our country. The program discriminates against adoptive and intended families. They cannot access maternity benefits and are therefore entitled to 15 weeks' less leave.

Correcting that inequity is the purpose of my private member's bill, and it is a correction that has been long overdue. While this bill is, without question, about equity and delivering parity to adoptive and intended parents, at its core it is also about the well-being of the child. A sense of security and belonging contributes to a child's healthy development. These healthy attachments form over time as a parent bonds with their child and cares for them. The benefits of attachment are lifelong. Adoptive and intended families are no less deserving of time with their child, nor is that time less needed.

For families formed through adoption and surrogacy, attachment can be more complex. The first year together is incredibly important in fostering healthy attachments. I have heard from countless families across the country that have expressed what 15 more weeks' leave would have meant for their families. The committee will have the opportunity to hear from just a few of these families. Unfortunately, every delay and every broken promise from this Liberal government means that there are more and more families that find themselves in this group.

Providing all families that have paid into our employment insurance program equal access to benefits is a common sense policy, and it should be a non-partisan issue. In fact, every political party in the House of Commons has, in some form, expressed support for this policy. My private member's bill, Bill C-318, was an opportunity for collaboration across all parties.

Unfortunately, this Liberal government chose not to collaborate and instead decided to make this a partisan issue, which has been truly disappointing for me. More importantly, it has been devastating for the families across this country that have spent years advocating this policy.

For all the families that would be directly impacted and all those following the progress of this bill, despite promising to deliver a new benefit for adoptive parents in 2019 and again in the 2021 elections, the Liberals failed to act on their promises.

When it came to Bill C-318, with the exception of four Liberal members of Parliament, the Liberals voted against this bill at second reading. In debate, one Liberal MP said that they might have to put some limitations on some of the things they wanted to do as a result of the pandemic, which from a government that has shown zero control in spending taxpayers' money simply sends a message to families that they are not a priority.

That argument also does not compute. The Parliamentary Budget Officer had calculated the minimal impact of this benefit on the EI fund, confirming that premiums would not be impacted. Of course, we all know that these parents have already paid into the system.

The Liberal member went on and said in debate that this bill won't get a royal recommendation because his bill did not get a royal recommendation. This is probably a more accurate reflection of the petty and partisan strategy of this Liberal government, but Mr. Chair, it is the Liberals who will answer for their vote and now their apparent flip-flop.

A new benefit supposedly identical to the one proposed in Bill C-318 and rejected by the Liberal government was announced in last week's fall economic statement. It offers adoptive and intended parents renewed hope.

It is not the first time the Liberals have made promises to them. These families can't afford more broken promises and political games. It's time to give them the time they need and deserve with their families.

• (1110)

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Falk, for your opening comments.

Before we get to questions, I just want to clarify something.

In the future, if a member chooses to use their speaking time to move a motion—and they have every right to do that—the motions must be dealt with in the committee, but if they go beyond their timeline, when the committee returns to its regular business, I will move to the next questioner on the list. I gave some leniency before to a number of ones. Just for clarification, if you use your speaking time to move a motion, which you have a right to do, and it goes beyond the time allotted before it's dealt with, when we return to committee business, I will move to the next speaker on the list.

With that, we'll begin this round with Ms. Ferreri for six minutes, please.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to Mrs. Falk not only for bringing forward this really important private member's bill but also for being here today and advocating on behalf of all parents.

Ms. Falk, we have an infertility rate in Canada of one in six couples, and I'm curious to know why you personally brought forward this bill yourself.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I think you bring to light and recognize the realities that infertility is a growing issue within the country, and more and more people, as technology and medicine advance, are accessing those treatments.

At the end of the day, this is just the right thing to do. If more and more people are accessing those treatments and if kids are waiting to be adopted, and we know that finances are very tight for families, especially when they're bringing a new child into their family, it's the right thing to do to make parity between how families create and form their individual families.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you for that.

When you look online, you see that many advocates are calling infertility a crisis in Canada, so I think your private member's bill, Bill C-318, is really critical.

From your perspective, it was a little bit shocking in the House of Commons that Bill C-318 did not have unanimous support at the second reading. Can you tell us why you think that was?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I was given different reasons throughout debate. Some said that it was because there was a royal recommendation that was needed. Others said that the government has done a lot of spending and that they need to restrain what they do.

I'm not sure why there wasn't unanimous support. I appreciate that I had the support of the Bloc, the NDP and the Green members, and as I said, four members from the Liberal party voted for it. At the end of the day, I think that it just comes down to petty partisan politics. It is unfortunate that something that is really of a non-partisan nature has turned into this.

It was also frustrating for me. I did reach out to all parties. I didn't get responses from anybody in cabinet to have a discussion about this until after the first hour of debate was already completed in the House.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you for that.

Right now, obviously we have a cost of living crisis. People are paying attention to how we spend taxpayers' money, which is ultimately what the government is. It doesn't have its own money; it has taxpayers' money.

I'm curious if you could break down what the financial implications would be of your offering this program and maybe just reiterate what it would mean. It would give 15 weeks for adopted or intended parents. What does that look like to the taxpayer, and how does that impact the budget?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: As it is right now, families that are formed through surrogacy or adoption receive 15 fewer weeks' leave, so that's 15 fewer weeks than people who chose not to go through surrogacy or adoption. What that means is that there are 15 fewer weeks of EI that can be claimed through the special benefit, so this benefit isn't labelled as a "time to attach" benefit, which would then give parity.

A lot of people don't know that when a woman says she's going on maternity leave, there are two benefits there. There's the maternity benefit and then the parental leave benefit, so this bill just mirrors that. If families want to extend their leave—because we know that this was done a few years ago—parents can then extend their parental leave if they so wish. They still have that opportunity to extend the leave in the parental portion, but it's just mirroring the maternity time.

The PBO's costing in his reports shows that there would be no impact to EI premiums for Canadians who have to pay into EI, as all Canadians do when they work for an employer, and then they remit that money.

• (1115)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: To clarify, then, nothing will be impacted, because parents—whether they are intended parents, biological parents or surrogates—are already paying that into the system, so you're not adding any more new spending.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: That's correct.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you for that.

Why do you think this 15-week attachment is so important?

I ask you this also as the critic for families, children and social development. We have a child care crisis in this country as well. A lot of the infant programs in particular are being hit very hard, so I can also see the benefit of being able to stay home longer just from a parent's perspective.

Why do you think it is so important for these 15 weeks to be added on? What do you think it will provide for the child and the parents?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I think it will make a more even playing field.

I know from talking to members of Parliament who have spoken to child care providers in their respective ridings that they have been told their day cares are closing their infant rooms because there is that opportunity to take extended leave in the parental portion. What's happening is if an adoptive or an intended parent can claim the 15 weeks less, they're going to have to go back to work earlier, but there may not be space for them in an infant room because they would be needed in an infant area.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

We'll have Mr. Long for six minutes.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

It's great to be back. Good morning to all of my colleagues.

MP Falk, good morning. Congratulations on the efforts you've made.

I would tend to look at your private member's bill as an opportunity for you to highlight a cause. It's an opportunity for you to bring your beliefs and, obviously, your passion about this to the floor to be debated.

Obviously there's a back-and-forth, but to be frank, instead of viewing it as a.... I almost sense a bit of negativity, to be honest. I would view it as a victory for you too. I think members in this House, whether they're in opposition or sitting in government, have that opportunity to bring things forth. I was happy to support you with that vote, but I think that as MPs, it's important for us to challenge government, whether you're sitting in government or you're sitting across the House.

I thank you for the work you've done on it. Obviously it's an important issue, which is why I was happy to support you, but I'm wondering if you can give us some examples.

I can certainly talk at length about adoptive parents who came into my constituency office and had their concerns about the 15 weeks that they couldn't receive, and a time for bonding and so on and so forth. Can you give us a few examples of parents who came into your office and what they went through?

• (1120)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: That's a really great question.

Thank you very much, MP Long. I really appreciate your support on this. I am glad that you are seeing that this is a common-sense piece of legislation that really is for the betterment of Canadians and Canadian families.

There are a couple of things I want to touch on.

Attachment is so important. We know that in the first year of life, generally speaking, attachment is very important for parents and baby. Also, adoption and surrogacy don't make it any less important just because it's come about in a different way. Attachment is so important for kids to feel safe, to feel secure, to grow and to have healthy coping mechanisms, especially within mental health. It's all these things. It helps with resilience. Attachment is so very important.

One thing I would like to say is with regard to negativity. I'm not being negative; I'm just being honest and stating the facts of what happened. I don't see this as a win, because it's not completed. I haven't seen any enacting legislation and I don't know if your government has the same intent with this. I don't know if things will be amended. It's been very difficult for me to have two-way communication with ministers and your government on this issue. I've been ignored. I don't want this to be perceived as me being negative; I'm just stating facts.

Also, this kind of proves the point that the Liberals are out of ideas. Numerous private members' bills have been taken from your government. We have bereavement leave; that was actually taken from the previous Parliament by your government. In this current fall economic statement, we've seen a couple of bills—namely Bill C-323 and Bill C-339—including mine, and more, that were taken from your government. I think this proves that the Liberals are out of fresh ideas and are grasping at straws.

Regarding your question about Canadians who have been through adoption and surrogacy, I absolutely think it will be powerful and impactful to hear what those Canadians have to say. I'm sure they're appearing as witnesses here.

I was surprised to find out that members of my own caucus had been adopted. I've heard their stories about how that changed the trajectory of their lives and that they were so grateful for that.

That's just to name a few. I also have adoption in my own family that has been completed and has gone through the process.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

Obviously I take exception to your comment that we're out of ideas. I can't agree with you there.

Here's one thing I wanted to ask you, MP Falk. One of the significant differences between this legislation and what we as a government have announced is allowing parents to begin leave before the arrival of the child. Is there a reason you didn't include that in your bill?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: It's a great question. Thank you for that.

The purpose of this bill was about the time to attach with a child. That could be at any age.

We did it so that it would mirror what was there already, so we didn't tip the scales and make things imbalanced at all. Again, this is about time to attach with a child to build those healthy relationships and bonds.

Mr. Wayne Long: Would you agree that this is a good change?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I have not seen the enacting legislation, so I don't know if that's in there.

Mr. Wayne Long: On the proposed change, though, would you agree with that?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I would like to see the enacting legislation before I agree with anything.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Long.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank my colleague for introducing Bill C-318.

As time goes by, the ground rules for Canada's federal employment insurance program have become inequitable. My understanding is that one of the objectives of this bill is to give equitable treatment to biological parents, adoptive parents and the parents of children from a surrogate mother. The latter would be allowed an additional 15 weeks to make the system equitable.

What makes you think it will pass this time?

I'll give you another example. Previously, Bloc Québécois and Conservative Party members introduced bills on the number of weeks of sick leave. We are proposing 50 weeks of leave, and the Conservative Party had proposed 52 weeks. In both instances, we had the approval of all the opposition parties. Even all the committees were unanimous. However, at the end of the line, we were told that these bills would require a royal recommendation.

What makes you think it will pass this time?

● (1125)

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much for the question, and thank you for your and your party's support on this very important initiative.

I think this proves the point that.... I was very surprised. I don't recall what the bill number was, but a bill from one of our colleagues came to this committee to extend sick leave to 52 weeks. I was actually surprised that it passed this committee. All the members voted for it to go back to the House. We continued debate, and then it just dropped off because it didn't receive a royal recommendation.

Again, we've seen the Liberals say, "Well, we're going to offer 50 weeks." I think this again speaks to the fact that they are out of ideas. I understand the optics maybe with the royal recommendation, but I think it is a wonderful opportunity for parties to collaborate and to get things done for Canadians.

It's unfortunate that this happened in that scenario. This is why I responded maybe pragmatically or cautiously to the announcement of this in the fall economic statement, because I won't believe it's done until I see that it's done.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Our party will definitely support this bill, because we've been working hard from the outset to improve the employment insurance system. Don't forget that the system is essentially funded by worker and employer contributions, which means that people contribute to the program.

The parental system, if I can use that expression, is considered more favourable to women. We, however, believe that everyone who contributes should be treated equitably. We are in 2023. Acknowledging the same rights for everyone, whether it's a biological birth, an adoption or a child from a surrogate mother, should be a no-brainer.

What arguments could be added to ensure that it actually happens? It would be one of several measures to improve the employment insurance program. Which do you believe are absolutely essential for us to be able to say that we have finally got there?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Collaboration may be nice if... What's super-frustrating for me is that it was for sure in the Liberals' 2019 and 2021 platforms, so given the fact that it's taken this long for it to be started on their end, it seems as though the Liberals waited until somebody did the work. Drafting legislation is hard work, especially when it has such an impact on Canadians. It takes a lot of work to do the research to make sure that we're not missing things that could impact Canadians. At the end of the day, it's families that it would impact. Then they scooped it up.

I'm grateful for having gone through this process and getting it this far. I hope that each one of us will vote for this and send it back to the House, and that ultimately it does receive a royal recommendation so that we can make sure that Canadians are able to access "time to attach" benefits.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Is that all, Ms. Chabot?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Do I have any speaking time left?

The Chair: You have five seconds.

Ms. Louise Chabot: In 2015, 2019 and 2021, the Liberals promised and made a commitment to comprehensively reform employment insurance. I hope that by the time we've got to the end of our discussions, we will have succeeded in at least making some progress, although I'd like to see an even broader overhaul.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

Go ahead, Mr. Angus, for six minutes, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you, Chair. It's an honour to be here.

Thank you, Madam Falk, for this legislation.

When we talk about adoption and surrogacy today, it's a very different pattern from what would have been adoption in the 1960s. We see children who are in the foster care system who may be tran-

sitioning into families, and many children who may be older. Then, of course, there's the issue of more and more families raising children through surrogacy.

Do you have a percentage, a pattern, of what we're looking at in terms of the children and their ages and who would benefit from this legislation?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

First of all, Charlie, let me start by thanking you for supporting this initiative. I think it's very important, and I appreciate your party's support for this as well.

As for statistics, I don't have that on me, but there are so many children.... There are different veins, so to say. There are different types of adoption. We do know too that when kids are placed—and they may or may not be in foster care—sometimes they sit there for a while waiting and waiting, and it gets harder as kids get older. We have to also take into account that sometimes it's not just a single child; sometimes it's a family group. There are families out there who really want to make sure that the family is still together, and they are able to raise that sibling group together.

I would say that this reaches different veins within Canadian society. I'm especially thinking of something MP Ferreri brought up earlier about infertility. I think that's something that needs to be acknowledged. Many Canadians are struggling with infertility issues, and they will go to whatever extent they can. For some families, it's quite an investment not just in time but also in money to form their family.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you for that.

I certainly know many young people who've grown into wonderful adults and were able to be adopted into families. I'm still in touch with many of them.

Certainly in our region, in Treaty 9, adoption in indigenous communities still has a very negative and dark.... The issue of kinship and customary caregivers isn't covered in the bill. Is that right? What were you thinking in terms of the decision around that?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much for that question.

It isn't excluded in the bill. We mirrored the wording that was in the EI act. From our understanding, the way that parental leave is currently applied through regulations allows those who are in a customary care relationship the opportunity to still apply for this benefit. It would be my expectation and also my intent that the department would mirror those regulations and how they're applied, I guess.

Mr. Charlie Angus: We just had Bill C-92 pass, which gives the legal right for indigenous first nations to establish their own child and family policies, and particularly to address the inequities that were caused by the adoption of children who were taken out of their communities and lost their identity. Quebec, Manitoba—maybe not now, but then—and Alberta and the Northwest Territories are going to the Supreme Court to oppose this legislation. Have you looked at the potential impact of Bill C-92 and the challenge against first nations communities having the right to set their own adoption and family and child practices in terms of your bill?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: In regard to this bill, the intent I had was to make sure that all families had time to attach. That was parity across lines. It didn't matter how they wanted to form their families.

It doesn't matter about the culture, ethnicity or race; attachment is so important for the safety, well-being and development of any child. That's the heart and intent of this bill—to make sure these kiddos can have that time to attach and also, I think, to work through some trauma.

I think that every child, and it doesn't matter... Actually, I would argue that every single one of us around this table has gone through some type of trauma in our life. It doesn't matter what that was.

With some kids getting adopted into families, sometimes there's trauma. I think it's just so important that we make sure there is that time and an opportunity for healing. Working on oneself is always really hard and really messy, especially when you're a younger person and your brain hasn't fully developed. Experiences shape the things you do and say. The intent with this bill is to make sure there's that time to attach.

• (1135)

Mr. Charlie Angus: In terms of a strategy moving forward, I've been in opposition for 20 years, so I've lived my life trying to force government to do stuff they didn't want to do. Are you expecting this to get a royal recommendation, or are you expecting it to get blocked on a royal recommendation, and would you then try to force the Liberals to just adopt it anyway?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: That's a very good question.

I assume that they will not give a royal recommendation, even though they have been petitioned by Canadians for a royal recommendation on this bill. As I said in my opening remarks, one of the members said, "Well, my bill didn't get a royal recommendation, so your bill isn't going to get a royal recommendation." That's the intent behind it, which is really unfortunate.

Again, as I said previously to MP Long, not until I see the enacting legislation will I know what their intent is with this moving forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

We'll have Mrs. Gray for five minutes.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank our colleague for bringing this private member's bill forth. It was a true privilege of mine to be the seconder of this bill.

As someone who was adopted at birth, it really means a lot. I spoke about it. It was a very personal speech that I gave. I also have another sister who was adopted at birth, and I know that in our family's case, my mom didn't work. She was a teacher, and she had to take quite a bit of time off. It did put a lot of personal financial strain on our family. That's just a personal note.

I'm really glad to see something like this come forth, and I think it's really important.

Someone who wrote into the committee—and you touched on it really briefly—spoke about child care spaces, but her comment had to do with the extra expense of children under 12 months, which I thought was a really interesting comment from her.

Is that something that you've heard as well?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Absolutely. I have heard from family members and constituents, Canadians, that when infants have to go into an infant room in day care, they have to pay more money for them just because they're little infants. They need a little bit more caring and a little bit more attention because of that lack of ability to communicate with adults. It does cost more money to put an infant child in care, and it doesn't necessarily mean that it ends at 12 months, either. It kind of goes on milestones for that child.

Based on milestones met and the needs and the time that the child needs, the day care or day home that they would be in would decide when that child could be moved to the toddler room, for example, as opposed to the infant room, which does sometimes come with a decrease in child care price.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you very much.

I know that we're going to hear from some witnesses over the coming days, but for now I want to bring us to other important committee business.

I would like to move the following motion:

Given that,

the committee received a letter on November 9th from the Auditor General of Canada offering to appear on her Reports looking into the Inclusion in the Workplace for Racialized Employees, Modernizing Information Technology Systems and Benefits Delivery Modernization programmes,

the committee immediately invite the Auditor General of Canada and relevant officials to appear for two hours on these reports, subsequently followed by the appearance of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages; the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities; the Minister of Citizens' Services; and the President of the Treasury Board, separately, accompanied by all relevant officials, for 1 hour each.

This is in reference to our last meeting, when we were discussing a similar motion; however, there was an amendment and a sub-amendment. This is to clean that motion up and to bring consensus for some of the comments that were made at that committee. This motion is to take into consideration some of the discussion from all members at the last committee, so I'm hoping that this is an easy motion that we can approve today.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1140)

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gray.

The motion is in order to be debated. We have a motion before the committee.

Go ahead, Mrs. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to ask the clerk for clarification as to the comment that the chair made earlier about the timing for having resolution to a motion that's brought forth at the committee, when the debate and vote would happen and how that works into the committee timing.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mrs. Gray; you must have misunderstood me.

I said that the motions are non-time limited and only can be dealt with when they come to the end, but if a member moves it in their time slot and the debate proceeds beyond that, and the committee dispenses with the motion, I would continue on with the next questioner in the committee. It had nothing to do with the timeline under the motion.

Right now, when you moved it, you had about two minutes left in your timeline. If the timeline to dispense with the motion moves beyond that and the committee is still in committee timeline, I will return to normal business with the next speaker on the list.

Just so we're clear, there is no restriction on the timeline to debate your motion or who participates.

Go ahead, Mr. Fragiskatos, on the motion of Mrs. Gray.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I will move an amendment to the motion so that it reads.... I'm looking at the last sentences. This is the change, and I'll speak slowly for the clerk: "appear before the Committee for no fewer than one hour each, in two panels of three, to consider the supplementary estimates", and the date would be stricken as well. The motion would be amended to end after the "(B)".

We should proceed to a vote, Mr. Chair, unless you have others....

The Chair: The member has called for a vote on his amendment.

Go ahead, Ms. Ferreri, on the amendment from Mr. Fragiskatos.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thanks, Chair.

For clarification—and I know the clerk will probably read this out again, but I was writing—you want two panels of three ministers. Is this correct?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: That's what I said, yes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: There would be two panels of three ministers for one hour each. What we had discussed the last time in committee was that this is not enough time.

I don't understand the rationale here, other than you don't want the ministers to testify and to answer questions. That's the only thing that makes any sense here. That is not enough time to have two panels of three ministers with one hour each.

We need accountability. We need transparency. We need to know how the Liberals are spending taxpayers' money. This amendment is not sufficient to do that.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri.

We have Mr. Aitchison, Ms. Gray, Mr. Fragiskatos and then Mr. Angus.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): I wonder if Mr. Fragiskatos is going to clarify this. My understanding is we're asking for an hour from each minister, but Mr. Fragiskatos's amendment would limit it to an hour in two separate meetings, or two hours for three ministers, or an hour for three ministers and then another hour for another three ministers. Is that what you're asking?

Also, there's no timeline for when this would happen. It could happen just whenever—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: They would act, and we would.... Go ahead.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I'm not quite done yet.

It would be at any time, whenever these three ministers could coordinate their schedules to come and talk to us and answer some questions. Then there would be only an hour for the three of them. Then we'd have to see if the next three ministers could coordinate their schedules at some time before the end of time, and they could come speak to us. Is that what you're asking for?

• (1145)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I am on the speaking list. I was going to say something, but....

The Chair: Mr. Aitchison, direct your questions through the chair.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering if that's what Mr. Fragiskatos is asking for.

The Chair: He will address that when he comes, if that's clear.

We'll go to Ms. Gray and then Mr. Fragiskatos. Then I have Mr. Angus and Madame Chabot.

This is on the amendment, Ms. Gray.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Basically what the Liberals are asking for is to have three ministers here for one hour. Here's how this will practically play out: Each of the ministers could give a five-minute intervention. What that means, therefore, when you look at the rounds, is that as the official opposition we would get two questions—maybe three, but probably just two. That means we would get to ask one round of questions to one minister. One of the ministers we may not even be able to question. That's only one round of questions. You're looking at, potentially, either six or five minutes.

That is really unacceptable, especially considering that we have a new minister, the Minister of Citizens' Services, who has a mandate letter. This is a minister who has not come here before. We'll be able to ask him a few minutes of questions. That is absolutely unacceptable.

We have a lot of really serious issues that we're dealing with in this government. This is a real lack of transparency. This is a lack of accountability. By tying it down to this, we don't even have an opportunity.

That means that only one of our members will be able to ask one round of questions, potentially, to two ministers. Most of the members on this committee won't even have an opportunity, on the official opposition side, to ask questions.

This is really unacceptable. I don't know why this government wants to reduce transparency and accountability.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Gray.

Mr. Fragiskatos is next.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I've made the point. It's been understood.

If we really wanted to play games here, I suppose there could have been scheming to ensure that no ministers would appear, but we're not saying that.

We're serious in this, and in fact, Mr. Chair, it would be interesting if you go back into the record. I'm not sure about HUMA, but at other committees during the years of Stephen Harper you would certainly find efforts along the same lines of what Mrs. Gray has put forward, which was Conservatives entirely blocking the path for Conservative ministers to appear.

We're not doing that. We do want ministers to appear here. We do want members around the table to be able to ask questions and therefore hold the government to account. That's precisely what the amendment would do.

I'll just end there. I think it's quite clear. Mr. Aitchison now understands where I'm coming from and we're all good. At least, I'm good.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fragiskatos.

Next I have Mr. Angus, followed by Madame Chabot and then Madam Ferreri on the amendment.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

As a visitor to your committee, I'm fascinated by this. Requesting six ministers is certainly audacious. I've been in opposition so far back that... I'm so old that I remember when Paul Martin was here. I remember when Stephen Harper was here. God, getting a minister to a committee was life-changing. Six ministers—that's something. I think the most I've ever seen is two.

I would have suggested a narrower focus with a longer time, so that you could actually drill down. If you want six ministers, even getting them to all appear at the same time.... Who knows when that's going to happen? Good luck with it.

We're interested in the amendment because I don't think you could take on this many ministers in this order as it stands now for the supplementary estimates. I just think that's much too big an appetite. If they want to reduce the number of ministers and extend the time, we'd be open to that, or we'll follow the debate and see where it goes.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, the floor is yours.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We did indeed debate this at the last meeting. I would remind you that I agree the committee should meet each minister for an hour. The initial motion proposed appearances of two hours for each minister. That's too long.

At the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, our work involves several departments, including the Minister of Labour and Seniors, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. It wouldn't be the first time that the committee received several ministers in order to question them. It has been done before. Having six ministers is a bit much, but it is part of our committee's terms of reference. I believe all these areas are important.

I therefore disagree with the amendment that has been moved. As I previously said, a period of one hour with three ministers would be too short to ask them about their mandate letters, which we haven't seen, and about expenditures for renewal. I therefore disagree with the proposal to have three ministers appear in a single hour. I believe we wouldn't have the required latitude to exercise our democratic mandate to question ministers.

Our committee has many responsibilities. We already received the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. We know how important this is. However, there are other ministers who have to be met to talk about matters like work, employment and the family. I believe it's fair to suggest that each should come for an hour.

Accordingly, I will vote against the amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Chabot.

Madam Ferreri, go ahead on the amendment.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I think the comment coming from the Liberal side, from Mr. Fragiskatos, of threatening no ministers is—

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I wasn't threatening.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: It certainly felt like a threat, MP Fragiskatos.

What message does it send to the Canadian public when you say, “If you want to play games, then we’ll bring no ministers”? It’s, “Fine. We don’t have any accountability. We don’t have any transparency. You know what? We just won’t have anyone show up. We’ll give you little scraps.”

I think that was very, quite frankly, arrogant. You work for the Canadian people. You are spending their money. They deserve accountability and transparency.

That’s through you, Mr. Chair.

The second point I’d like to make is to my NDP colleague who is visiting today. I’d say thank you for doing that, but he’s left the room. I find it a little bit shocking that the NDP are supposed to be for the people, and as somebody who stated earlier in today’s meeting that he’s been in opposition for 20 years, he should know how important it is to call these people in to committee to get answers.

Let’s just put out on the table right now what has come out this morning, as anybody knows who was listening to the news. The number of people accessing a food bank in Ontario has increased by 38% from the previous year, making this the largest single-year increase ever recorded by Ontario’s food bank network. More than one in six visitors say they are employed, which is an 82% increase over 2016 to 2017, and a 37% increase over the previous year.

We are asking for the ministers who are in charge of our most vulnerable Canadians to come here, be transparent, and make solutions—to come to the table with solutions for how we’re going to help our most vulnerable. These are the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities and the Minister of Labour and Seniors. If you’re not getting countless emails and phone calls from seniors and people who are struggling, you’re not doing your job. There’s also the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Therefore, this subamendment is 100% skirting accountability and transparency, which is, sadly, what we have come to expect from this NDP-Liberal coalition that we’ve seen here today.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Go ahead on a point of order, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It’s on this kind of smear that I’m in this NDP-Liberal coalition. She can debate the facts, but she doesn’t need to throw that falsehood around.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I would remind members to keep their comments to the debate at hand, on the motion. We’re currently debating the amendment of Mr. Fragiskatos.

Seeing no further debate, I will call for a recorded vote on the amendment of Mr. Fragiskatos.

Mr. Clerk, please read the amendment, and then we will go to a vote on the amendment.

• (1155)

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Jacques Maziade): The amendment is as follows: “appear before the committee for no few-

er than one hour each, in two panels of three, to consider the supplementary estimates (B)”.

(Amendment agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

The Chair: We’ll have a recorded vote on the motion of Ms. Gray as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5 [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: Actually, we only have three minutes left of the first round. I will go to Mr. Van Bynen to conclude the first hour with Ms. Falk on Bill C-318.

Go ahead, Mr. Van Bynen.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move away from the politics of this discussion and talk about the merits of the bill.

I do commend you for bringing this bill forward.

As my first question, how would the bill create parity for adoptive parents and intended parents of children born through surrogacy and how do the attachment needs of children born through surrogacy differ from those of other adopted children?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much, MP Van Bynen, for that question.

It will add the additional 15 weeks so that adoptive parents or intended parents who have a child through surrogacy will be able to get those benefits.

What was your second question?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: How would the attachment needs of children born through surrogacy differ from those of other adopted children?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Well, attachment is attachment. I said previously that it doesn’t matter what age. That first year within placement or birth is so very critical for health and development, specifically in regard of attachment to that child. It helps them feel safe and secure, helps with resiliency skills and helps with development, not only physically but also mentally and cognitively.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you.

How was it determined that 15 weeks was an appropriate length of time for the attachment benefit?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Attachment is lifelong. It's not just "one year, 365 days and the job's done". Attachment is something that needs to be constant. The first year, of course, is very critical, as I have said numerous times, especially when we are looking at children who may have experienced trauma. It's important to have that time with their family to work through that, to help them feel comfortable, safe and secure. There isn't just a number: "Oh, 365 days: Check. I'm attached. I'm good." It's something that continually goes on and on.

In parenting specifically, that's why we definitely want to have an attachment with our children once they get into those teenage years when kids sometimes have more difficult experiences in schools and such. It's good to have that attachment and bond secured so that parents can be there to help guide their children, have conversations with them and grow their relationship with them throughout life.

• (1200)

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Okay. Thank you.

What is the rationale for only providing this benefit in the week in which the child is placed, rather than much earlier?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: We mirrored the current existing legislation.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm probably out of time, am I?

The Chair: You have one minute if you have a question for Mrs. Falk. We have reached the one-hour time, but if you have one more question for Mrs. Falk....

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: No, I'm fine. Thank you.

The Chair: With that, thank you, Mrs. Falk, for appearing for the first hour as a witness on Bill C-318. Do you have any closing comments?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much, Chair and committee, for having me here to explain the bill. I sincerely hope that I have everybody's support on this going forward, and that there is a miracle and the Liberals decide to give a royal recommendation.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Falk.

With that, we will suspend for a few moments while we prepare for the second hour of witness testimony on Bill C-318. We'll suspend for three minutes.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1200)

The Chair: The three minutes have passed and we're ready to resume with the second hour and witness testimony on Bill C-318.

We have with us, in person in the room, Julie Despaties, executive director of Adopt4Life.

• (1205)

[Translation]

We also have with us Ms. Anne-Marie Morel, president of the Fédération des parents adoptants du Québec.

Ms. Despaties, you have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Julie Despaties (Executive Director, Adopt4Life): Thank you for having me here today.

[English]

Adopt4Life was founded in 2014 and provides education, advocacy and community to the tapestry of families connected by adoption, kinship and customary care relationships, as well as those at risk of breaking down because of complex needs, and the professionals who support them.

We envision a future in which every family has equitable access to support, resources and community. By breaking down isolation and supporting vulnerable families in need of innovative parenting approaches, we enable family preservation as well as strong and healthy connections.

Today I stand in front of you as the executive director of Adopt4Life, but most importantly as an adoptive mom. I'm carrying the message of my children and thousands of families who have raised their voices since 2018 so that future families formed through adoptions do not have to face the additional burden that a short 35 weeks of parental leave creates and adds to their complex parenting journey.

Today I am here to remind us all to listen to the basic yet fundamental ask of thousands of children and youth who have come to us and asked us to make the legislative change that will ensure that all children and youth awaiting permanency in Canada are given enough time to attach to their new parents and caregivers. For over eight years, Adopt4Life, along with CYPCC and partners across the country, has been advocating a new benefit leave for adoptive parents who are providing permanency to children.

Why is time to attach so critical? Becoming a family overnight is not easy. When you receive the call that you will have your children coming in, there's nothing that prepares you to be fully ready to navigate that complexity of parenting.

As well, the landscape of adoption has changed over the past 20 years. Today, children who are waiting to be adopted are often over the age of 7, and often in their teens and part of sibling groups. In fact, across Canada, we are seeing an overrepresentation of children with coexisting medical and neurodevelopmental challenges within the child welfare system.

Once a child enters child welfare and is later adopted, they have experienced significant breakdowns in attachment and many losses, and often complex trauma. They have endured many moves and many disruptions, significantly impacting their attachment and making it difficult for them to trust the adults in their lives. Can we blame them?

The current 35 weeks of parental leave is just not long enough and therefore adds unnecessary stress to families, thus increasing the risk of breakdown in placement and adoption. This was evident in a formal study led by Western University in partnership with us at Adopt4Life in 2018. The study revealed that during the transition into their new families, over 50% of children were experiencing significant sadness and complex needs and were struggling with mental health.

Meanwhile, 94% of adoptive parents said they would have benefited from 15 weeks of attachment leave and 72% said the current leave did not provide enough time for their children to transition smoothly into their homes. What is more critical is that 21% said the current leave prevented them from adopting a child with complex needs.

Canada must do better for all its children. The additional time of attachment leave will allow children to spend a full year with their new parents, affording them more time to create strong bonds and develop the attachment that they need to begin trusting and integrating into their new family.

I founded Adopt4Life after welcoming a sibling group of three older children. They were eight, 11 and 13. The initial year was not easy for them, or for us as parents. I knew we needed a community to come together so that we could effect the changes needed to ensure that parents and caregivers would be well supported so they could be strong for their children.

● (1210)

I would like to leave you with these thoughts.

If we want a stronger tomorrow for our children, we must do right by them. As my good friend Irwin Elman, a former Ontario child and youth provincial advocate, says, you can't legislate love, but you can legislate the conditions in which love can flourish. Time to attach is essential to creating the right conditions for love to flourish, especially during the first year together, when it is most needed.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all MPs, all ministers and all civil servants who have stood by the Time to Attach campaign and supported the needs of children and youth. Most especially, my gratitude goes to all MPs who have dared to walk the path and share their permanency journey with us. Your stories live with me.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Despaties.

Ms. Morel, you have the floor now for five minutes.

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel (President, Fédération des parents adoptants du Québec): Thank you for giving the Fédération des

parents adoptants du Québec the opportunity to testify about Quebec's experience of adoption leave.

The Fédération is a non-profit organization founded in 1986 which provides services by and for adopting parents to provide them with support, information and guidance on resources, and to defend their interests.

That's the background against which the Fédération demanded and obtained benefit equity between biological parents and adoptive parents under Quebec's parental insurance system.

As you know, Quebec workers who have leave for the birth or adopting a child receive benefits under this system, not under employment insurance. The benefits are more generous as part of the overall family policies in place in the province. However, when the system came into force on January 1, 2006, there was an 18 week difference between the amount of leave for adoptive families and biological families. This inequity naturally affected adoptive workers, and their children, because adopted children were the only ones in Quebec not to be able to have a year of parental presence when they entered the family. It was worse than inequitable; it was discriminatory, as clearly demonstrated by lawyer Éric Poirier and law professors Carmen Lavallée and Daniel Proulx of the Université de Sherbrooke in their article entitled "Le régime québécois d'assurance parentale: un système discriminatoire à l'endroit des enfants adoptés". It's undeniable that this type of worker protection system has a direct impact on children.

Since January 1, 2021, Quebec has been providing adoptive parents with benefits equivalent to those received by biological parents in terms of length of time and level of income replacement. This measure, which reinstated full equity, has a relatively minor impact on the financial health of the program, because adoptive parents are significantly less numerous than other parents. In 2022 in Quebec, adoptive parents collectively received only 0.5% of the benefits awarded to new parents. The financial stability of the program therefore does not depend heavily on this factor.

Not only is the additional time allowed for adoptive parents to be with their children beneficial to parents and children alike, but also for employers. As reported by many adoptive families that have benefited from the additional weeks available under the recent accommodation and support benefits for adoptions, employees return to work with better mental attitude because they have had the time needed to integrate the child into a daycare setting, which requires considerable resourcefulness for adopted children. They don't appear to feel as guilty as adoptive parents used to, when they were unable to comply with experts' recommendation that they should spend at least a full year with their newly adopted child. They also had more time available to help the child make up for any developmental delays or health setbacks, and to bond as a family.

In fact, spending more time with a child who has had some ups and downs in life and a break from a biological mother and, as is often the case, from many caregivers in adoptive families, it's an investment that gives children a chance to reach their full potential and contribute to society. It can also prevent certain types of harmful behaviour and learning problems stemming from the kinds of psychological harm that can require a working parent to take time off from work.

While the needs of adoptive families are certainly very different, they are no less important. Every extra week spent with an adopted child in the first year after adoption has an impact on their development and their lifelong relations with others.

Thank you.

• (1215)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Morel.

[English]

We will begin with Mrs. Falk for six minutes.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Thank you very much, Chair.

I'd like to thank both of the witnesses for being here today and for being willing to contribute to this study in a very thoughtful and meaningful way.

Julie—if it's okay if I call you Julie—I'd like to start with you.

What are some of the risks for the child when parents return to work quickly after the 35 weeks of parental leave?

Ms. Julie Despaties: As you can imagine, when children join us, they're not little ones. They need a lot of time to know that you're going to be around and you're going to be present. When you have the stress of going back to work, you bring new stress into a house that's already filled with a lot of stress because you're adapting to one another. We haven't benefited from the initial nine months to become accustomed to one another and then the full year of growing and getting the attachment and having the child know they are secure.

As I mentioned earlier, they don't know how they can really trust the adults in their lives. They don't know if you're going to just leave, like many of the foster care families that have left before and have moved around and all of that.

Adding the 15 weeks would truly allow for a child to live a full cycle of one year and therefore to live without the ambiguity of not knowing how that will be. The three months that are missing are so crucial. Truly, they impact these family dynamics as a whole as well.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: What are the risks for the parents of returning to work too quickly?

Ms. Julie Despaties: As a parent, if I may speak a bit about my own experience, I was on the receiving end of a lot of the struggles that my kids were experiencing. Stress is toxic, so when you are confronted with having to go back to work, your mental health can be impacted. Post-adoption depression is a reality. Even though you've been wanting to grow your family through adoption, that

doesn't mean there are no struggles, so we need to make sure we're supporting our families.

If they return to work too quickly, often they end up having to pull back from working. Yesterday afternoon we had a community gathering of parents here in Ottawa, and I met with a few new adoptive parents. Actually, both of them were single moms. One had just returned to work, but she told me that she had to take six months out of pocket as a single mom: She had to draw from her own savings to really make sure she was going to be the mom that her child needed.

If we could, as parents, I promise you that we would want to go back to work, because it's nice to be stimulated outside of the house, but it's also important that we do the things we do so that our children can be strong, because once they're securely attached and they know they can trust us, the sky is the limit. As much as our abilities are, they can really navigate this world differently.

I just want to add something else. I just spoke to another lady who is on her parental leave currently. Again, she's a single mom and she can't afford to defer the time to return to work, and she's really hoping that this will be embedded before she has to go back to work.

It's really important for parents that the stress of work not be competing with the stress of transitioning and adopting children into their homes.

• (1220)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Julie, because you did talk a little bit about your own experience, I also want to ask you what impact the 15 fewer weeks had on you and on your family's adoption journey, if you feel comfortable with that.

Ms. Julie Despaties: Absolutely. I just never went back to work. We had, as I mentioned earlier, a sibling group of three older children, all together, and I called them my triplets. They were all talking back and all different ages. When they came to our home, I'd receive calls from the school daily, and I had to put supports in place. Even 10 years ago, support was hard to line up. Today, post-COVID, it's actually getting harder, and there are long lists.

You don't know the children who will be coming into your home, so it takes a lot of time and energy, spending days on the phone, searching and leveraging all of your connections so you can get your kids the right supports they need.

For me, I signed on the dotted line for life, so I was working around the clock, around my own clock, to be available anytime to drop in, because I truly don't believe that any employer, as good a worker and as committed a person as I am, could ever have afforded me the time I needed to go and pick up my kids and be there for them.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: With the remaining seconds I have, I want to thank you, Julie, for all the work you've done, and for being willing to be vulnerable in public about some of the struggles—and also joys—you've had in adopting your sibling group.

Ms. Julie Despaties: Thank you, Rosemary. It's a pleasure to speak about something I'm so passionate about. Ultimately, a family needs enough time to be able to thrive together.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Falk.

Mr. Coteau, go ahead for six minutes.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

It's nice to see you again, Julie. I think the last time I saw you was in 2021, when you came to see me in my office, or we met virtually then. I'm aware of the work the organization has done over the years and the work we did back at the Ontario legislature when I was the minister for children and youth services—the new benefits we put in place back in 2016.

I want to say thank you for all the work everyone is doing to support children in general.

Contrary to what we heard the Conservatives say at the beginning, my whole life has been about supporting young people. This government, I think, has done the most work of any government to support young people—the dental benefits, the child benefit and child care for \$10 a day. These are big programs for kids. I want to remind the Conservatives, who are critical of the pathway to get here, that they had a decade in government and did nothing on this file. I'm proud to be part of a government that is constantly looking for ways to improve and looking for ways to support children.

My first question is this: What do you think of the proposed changes in the fall economic statement? This is to both witnesses. Is what you saw and read in the actual document aligned with where you want to go?

We can open the floor to anyone, but I'd like to hear both witnesses respond, please.

Ms. Julie Despaties: Thank you.

First of all, as my former minister and funder, you know how passionate I am about ensuring that all our children are thriving.

I will remain non-partisan here. I will say that to us, what matters is that 15 weeks of time to attach be offered to adoptive parents, kin and customary carers. We need to support families where they need it, so that they can thrive and have enough time to attach, without having external stressors compete with this.

• (1225)

Mr. Michael Coteau: Would the other witness like to comment on the fall economic statement piece that was published and reported on?

[Translation]

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: I fully agree with what Ms. Despaties said. And, knowing that they are also entitled to these weeks of benefits, people won't be subjected to the stress of seeing the leave period come to an end. Thanks to these additional 15 weeks, parents would have peace of mind and no longer wonder how they're going to find the money they need to take unpaid leave. As I was saying earlier, there is really a strong consensus among experts on

the fact that adoptive parents should stay at home for at least a year with their child. Professionals say this to potential parents during assessments, and they really try to organize their lives accordingly.

As Ms. Despaties put it so well, many adopted children have special needs and may need treatment of various kinds, such as speech therapy, physiotherapy or occupational therapy. These are treatments to which people have access in the private sector, if they aren't available in the public sector. The foregone income of a parent who has to take leave without pay when adopting would no longer be an option to spend time with their children afterwards.

Removing financial stress from the shoulders of parents by giving them a year's leave changes everything. That's what families have been telling us for the past two years.

[English]

Mr. Michael Coteau: The relationship between a parent and a child at that initial stage in a young person's life, as early as possible.... It could be right when they're born; it could be in the first several years.

I remember when I was back at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and some of the statistics on how, when a child feels safe, when a child is comforted in the right way, when a child feels protected, it changes the trajectory of that child's life and the success that the child finds in life. When you go back to the very basics for raising a child, it's some of the things that we just assume and we take for granted that can have the largest impact in the success of a family and especially that child.

Again, I just want to say thank you for the work you're doing. I know it's been a long road to get to this point, but to me, this is a major win for children in this country and for families.

I just want to say that it took this government to make it happen, and we're going to continue to work and do everything we can to support young people in this country. There's no question that when young people are off on the right pathway, it builds our country economically and socially and allows us to achieve our dreams as a country. I just want to say thank you so much for everything you've done, and I want to say thank you to the entire sector for getting us to this point. It's your hard work that has brought us to this point, no one else's. It's your work. Thank you so much.

I'll end there, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Coteau. Your time is through.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Despaties and Ms. Morel, thank you for coming. We can sense your commitment to families, parents and children alike, in the process.

I would add that it's also a struggle for equity. It's a feminist issue. What we're talking about is the right of women to care for their children equitably and calmly, independently of how the child became a part of the family.

Ms. Morel, you mentioned the RQAP, Quebec's parental insurance plan. We in Quebec take pride in it. It was just recently added to the child care services provided by the network of early childhood centres established over 25 years ago now. I believe it was part of a family policy concept.

How did this argument help you in your struggle to achieve equity within the RQAP in 2021?

• (1230)

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: It clearly helped us argue on behalf of children too. The employment insurance system is mainly focused on employees. However, that helped us make people aware of issues that affect children. Indeed, the fact that parents would be able to spend time with their children has an impact on all kinds of other services in society, including the education system and the health system. Earlier, someone mentioned how important a bond of attachment was in making children feel secure. It also has an impact on the ability to learn. For children to be able to function in a school system, they have to have learned to feel secure at home. All of these considerations enabled us to argue our case more convincingly as part of a family-oriented system.

On the other hand, a problem was created by the fact that some people were afraid of discriminating in favour of biological parents over adoptive parents. Their concerns were quickly dispelled because providing more to some parents did not take anything away from protecting pregnant workers or other workers. It was just a matter of having everyone receive benefits for different needs.

The system therefore was a huge step forward for families. Today, we can see the positive repercussions on their children and their work.

Ms. Louise Chabot: That was going to be my next question.

It's certainly an impressive victory. We would like to see the same outcome federally.

In Quebec, the new rules have been in place for just over two years. Have you noticed any changes since then?

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: Among other things, what we've seen is that more parents who adopted an older child were willing to take a full year off work, even if their child was going to school. It enabled them to handle all kinds of other tasks throughout the day. For example, they were able to fetch the child at lunch time, have lunch with them, and then fetch them again at the end of the day. The preparation of the evening meal and all the other parental tasks are done, making them fully available to be with and bond with their child. This has been confirmed by experts. Previously, adoptive parents of an older child were less likely to extend their leave at their own expense, causing an impact on the child's educational success and on the family bond. That's one of the factors that we've seen.

Previously, we used to receive all kinds of calls from desperate parents. We have been getting far fewer now because they no

longer have that burden. Nor do they have to feel guilty any more for having to take a young child to child care or to school when they did not feel ready to leave the nest. It's important to understand that to an adopted child, child care, whether in a family setting or in an institution, may look like another host family or another orphanage. The time spent by parents with children to make them understand that this time it's really true, and that it's a permanent family, is critical as time goes by, when children have to make their own way through various institutions.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Ms. Despaties, what would this struggle of yours, which I hope will be successful, change in society?

Ms. Julie Despaties: I believe it would create stronger families, strengthen our country and enable our children to develop to their full potential. No matter where they happen to be, when children feel that they have a strong bond with an adult and can rely on that adult, there are fewer obstacles and pitfalls.

I'm envious of the many Quebecers who've been able to take advantage of the new leave system. I hope the rest of Canada will also be able to.

• (1235)

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Ms. Despaties and Ms. Morel.

It's a matter of political will. We hope that everybody will give consideration to what you've achieved and adopt this proposal.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[English]

Mr. Angus, you have six minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for your extraordinary testimony.

Madame Despaties, what is the advance period for a couple who would be adopting? How much advance warning are they given to prepare for this life-changing moment?

Ms. Julie Despaties: There's not a...how can I say? I'm looking for my words. There's not a trajectory that can say you're going to have two months or three months. You can get a call to be presented with a child, and then a few weeks later, a few days later or a few months later, they will be moving in with you. It really depends on the circumstances, and it changes from experience to experience.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I know. I was surprised. A couple I know were called and told they were going to be adopting. They had to drive 300 kilometres and then they were told it was not on. The trauma for the family really struck me, as well as the preparation, the need to have economic issues in place. They had to spend everything on the chance....

How important is it that we have those economic supports in place for the family?

Ms. Julie Despaties: I think it's really important for parents to know they have support and that their jobs are not at risk in growing their family. Knowing that they can count on a system that has their backs so that they can help us develop our children is really important.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You told a story of adopting three...were they siblings?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Yes, they were siblings.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That's extraordinary. I raised three daughters. If they had all arrived at the same time, I probably.... I don't know what I would have done.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would have lost what's left of my hair.

How common is it that when you're adopting now, you're adopting siblings, pairs and children who are older and coming out of foster care?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Eleven years ago—it's going to be 11 years shortly since we met our children—I would say it was quite rare to grow your family with three older children, but today, sibling groups are normal, and so are older children.

We have children across Canada, teens, who are really longing for permanency. Sometimes there may even be 18 or 19 years old, but because they're older doesn't mean that the parent who is growing their family doesn't need time in welcoming them. We actually need a lot more time, because they have experienced so many more losses and struggles along the journey before they join us.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I was pleased that you mentioned Irwin Elman, who I think is one of the great heroes. He was the very first person Doug Ford fired when the Ford government came in. I mean, Irwin Elman kept children alive with his work.

I mention him because, in my region, adoption has some very dark sides to it because of what's happened in indigenous communities. I think of Azraya Ackabee-Kokopenace from Grassy Narrows, and Amy Owen and Courtney Scott from Fort Albany. We also lost Kanina Sue Turtle, Chantel Fox, Jolynn Winter—we lost all these children, and Irwin Elman documented what happened to them. They went into a black hole in this foster care system.

Adopt4Life has called for support for kinship and customary care. These indigenous children could have been raised and protected in their communities and in their culture.

Do you have language that could help us for the legislation? Have you looked at the importance of kinship and customary support so that indigenous children are not being taken out of their communities and dropped into the black hole that they are all too often thrown into?

Ms. Julie Despaties: We would be absolutely delighted to be working alongside you to make sure. We know how kin like grandparents and aunties and uncles and customary care are so important to the lives of our children, so they deserve to have the right support. We would be delighted to work alongside you to make sure that this is reflected in the language of any legislation.

• (1240)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Again, I think Irwin Elman is the ultimate expert I've met—he and Cindy Blackstock—in terms of understanding children. There's a reality facing indigenous children who cannot be raised by their parent, necessarily, or their parents, but can be raised in the customary culture. How do we make sure that we don't repeat these mistakes so that we give adoptive parents all the support they need and so that we give older siblings that support?

I would certainly encourage you to speak more with Irwin, because he really has an understanding of this file.

Ms. Julie Despaties: Absolutely.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes. Thank you.

Finally, I read one of the letters from someone who said they were opposed to the bill because maternity benefits were never meant to acknowledge parenthood but existed to deal with the trauma of the physical process of childbirth. Am I missing something? Is there a contradiction or a conflict between maternity and parental benefits for this that we should be addressing, or is this...?

Ms. Julie Despaties: No, this is a parity. I think you can find more information and a better understanding through the reports of Western University, but this is not a comparison. We are not taking anything from birth families. It is just providing more attachment because we have not had that attachment time.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Excellent. Thank you so much for this.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Morel, do you want to comment briefly?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: I'd just like to add that this is why adoptive mothers in Quebec do not receive maternity leave, but rather welcome and support leave. They are different benefits that meet different needs. They last for the same amount of time, in the interest of equity for all families. If the situation had been evaluated on the basis of needs, more leave would have been required for adopted children in certain instances, but no one wanted to create a new inequity as a consequence of correcting an existing one. That's why it's the same for everyone.

The different wording came about in response to that line of argument.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Ms. Ferreri, you have five minutes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today to chat about Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code (adoptive and intended parents). It was put forth by my colleague MP Falk, and it's very important legislation.

Ms. Despaties, do you have any data on how long it takes older children to bond or attach to their adoptive parents? Do you have that data?

Ms. Julie Despaties: I don't have scientific data, but what I know and what I was told earlier on is that when a child comes into your home, it takes double the time of the child's age. When my children came into our home, to be solidly attached.... Our children were eight, 11 and 13. For some of them, it was very difficult at the beginning to truly attach. I don't think we needed the 13 years for our 13-year-old. She's 24 and she's solidly attached, and so are all of our children. However, it does take time, because we have to repair the loss of attachment that they've been robbed off. They have lost a lot of people in their lives, so it does take a significant amount of time.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I actually find the science of this discussion fascinating in terms of the prefrontal cortex of developing children and what happens in those formative years. I think it's a very important discussion, when we look at how important this legislation is, because there is a very scientific aspect to this that turns out a social end as well.

With regard to that point, I'm wondering this: Do you have any data on the trajectory of kids in foster care who don't get placed with permanent adoptive parents? I know they are more at risk. Isn't that right? They have a lot more...higher acuity issues. Do you have anything around that?

Ms. Julie Despaties: I don't have all the data here. I think you'll have a speaker soon who is more able to speak to this.

However, you are right. The trajectory of children aging out of care is more challenging. Their ability to complete university, to create solid attachments as they grow.... It's just difficult because they have been failed by a system that is just not there to support them. We don't want our Canadian children to age out of care without having an adult to be attached to.

• (1245)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: And to trust.

The reason I ask you that, I guess, is with regard to my next point. How do you think this bill will incentivize somebody who is considering adoption but who financially may not be able to do it or may not be able to take that time off work? They're fearful. They do know it takes time to attach and to bond. Do you think this legislation will incentivize parents who are considering adopting to adopt?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Absolutely.

I was referring to stats that stated that 21% of interviewed parents doing the study said that the current 35 weeks prevented them from adopting a child with complex needs. Well, a lot of our children who are waiting for permanency do have complex needs and are experiencing loss and trauma, which require so much more time.

I fundamentally believe, especially with older children.... When I grew my family, people thought, "Oh, you can sleep at night." Well, no, excuse me. It doesn't mean that it was rosy and easy at home just because my children were eight, 11 and 13. There was so much sadness and grief. It was not easy.

I truly think that our older children especially need more time from us so that they can really know that we are there for good, that we're there.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: That was very well said.

The complexities of needs.... It's sort of a chicken-and-egg situation. They have complexities of needs because they don't have that bond, because they don't have that attachment. It's a very chicken-and-egg thing.

I think you are 100% right. As a mom, I can tell you that the complexities of what our children need as they age definitely change.

If I could add...

I think I have only a minute or so left, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Perhaps we could get your advice as somebody who went through this. I know it is impossible to describe it, but how valuable was it for you to adopt those three children?

Ms. Julie Despaties: It was life-changing. It was difficult. There was never an easy moment. There was a lot of joy, but it was sprinkled across the spectrum of the years. Truly, my life would not be the same without them.

Even in the hardest moment.... I was asking one of my children, "What would you like me to say to people?" It was difficult. We were struggling together significantly. My child said, "Well, tell them that on your dying bed, you will know that it was all worth it."

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Ferreri and Madame Despaties.

Mr. Long, go ahead for five minutes, please.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Ms. Despaties and Ms. Morel. Thank you for your testimony this afternoon on this important private member's bill.

I'm thrilled about what's happening, obviously, with MP Falk's Bill C-318, and I am thrilled to see this in the FES, the fall economic statement. I know through social media.... I believe you had a meeting with Minister Boissonault. Ms. Morel, I believe you also had a meeting with the minister.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: No, we did not have a meeting at the federal level, because our efforts were concentrated on the Quebec side of things.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Long: Okay.

Ms. Despaties, you had a meeting. Can you share your thoughts with us about that meeting and about seeing it in the FES?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Meeting with any minister is always an honour and a privilege, because we know that the work we're doing to bring forward change is important and requires a lot of time. We had a good meeting. We were surprised and extremely happy to know there is more commitment and support to see this bill come through.

At the end of the day, our only focus is on seeing children and youth benefit from more time to attach with their families, period.

We were delighted. We're hopeful that, at every level, this government will be putting this bill through.

● (1250)

Mr. Wayne Long: Ms. Morel, can you speak to our committee about how important and meaningful it was to see this included in the fall economic statement?

[Translation]

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: Even though it's now a done deal for Quebec parents, we definitely feel solidarity with all adoptive families. We were in the same situation, and so we know what that represents. We think that all children in Canada, and all families, deserve to have a measure of that kind introduced. We were accordingly very pleased to hear about this. We are here today to support Adopt4Life and all other adoptive families in Canada. By adopting this measure, you will really be changing their lives.

[English]

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

Ms. Despaties, can you speak about how important it is to access the benefits we're including in the FES before the arrival of the child?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Again, I believe Mr. Angus was asking about the time we get the call.

Sometimes, for example, we have to commute back and forth. We were based in Toronto, and our children were in the London area. Every weekend, we commuted back and forth. This was for a period of two or three months before they moved in.

Technically, that could be helpful, obviously. It could be helpful for international adoptions and for families adopting privately.

Yes, it is important, but I also believe it is available in the parental leave.

Mr. Wayne Long: How long have you been advocating these changes?

Ms. Julie Despaties: A year after we grew our family through adoption, I started Adopt4Life. That was the first mandate the community we spoke to asked us for. We officially began publicly advocating in 2018. We have met with several parties and have received the endorsement of everyone, and employers as well. Everybody is in support of this.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

I will ask you one final question.

Can you speak, in 30 seconds or so, about how important and meaningful this will be to adoptive parents and how it will change how they go forward?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Having enough time to attach to your child and giving your child enough time to bond with you.... It's the most important time.

Truly, for me, as an adoptive mom, I spent—I don't know—six months teaching phonetics to my son. I was the Frenchie mom to an English kid. He didn't think I could teach him, but I did. He said to me, "How come you're the one who taught me this?" I said, "Because you needed the commitment and time of one parent who could do this for you."

This is what giving enough time to family means.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair, and I don't want to interrupt Ms. Chabot mid-questioning.

I want to bring up the point you made earlier regarding routine motions. I want to bring to your attention and to the committee's attention that routine motions passed by the committee on December 13, 2021, guarantee each party "time for questioning".

A member has the right to move a motion whenever they have the floor, which triggers a debate on the motion. As debate on the motion is not spent questioning the witnesses. It cannot be counted against questions, which are guaranteed to each party. Therefore, the chair must uphold the member's right to ask questions for the allotted time to their party during routine motions.

I wanted to bring that forth, Mr. Chair, for your consideration moving forward on motions coming forward, because that wasn't how we followed the process for today.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Gray.

I will take that under consideration and report back to the House.

[Translation]

Go ahead, Ms. Chabot.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Morel, can you talk to us about your own and your group's background in terms of arguments to promote the cause of adoptive parents in Quebec?

What pitfalls did you encounter and what factors eventually helped to win the battle?

● (1255)

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: Gladly.

The line of argument that was blocking any progress was really the fear of possible legal action from biological parents who had not understood that it was important for adoptive families to have an equivalent form of leave. Nothing like that ever happened. On the contrary, the many petitions launched in Quebec were supported by thousands of Quebecers. People understood perfectly well that adoption was a complex situation with its own specific challenges. Indeed, children put up for adoption had experienced neglect, violence, and malnutrition, even while still in the womb. They were children who were not always wanted and who still may have had anything but optimal living conditions. People are well aware of that.

From our standpoint, we acknowledged that it was important to protect maternity leave for women and paternity leave for fathers. However, there was really another measure required to respond to other needs. Nothing was taken away from others. We simply added what was needed to ensure that all children in Quebec had the same rights, including being able to have a parent at home for a year.

Ms. Louise Chabot: You yourself are a member of an adoptive family and you represent a lot of parents. Can you tell us about your support work with parents?

Ms. Anne-Marie Morel: We are there to help even before adoption takes place to ensure that people properly understand what attachment is. These days, fortunately, adoptive parents no longer do things blindly. They have access to documentation. There's no guidebook explaining exactly how to become a parent, but we do provide a lot of information. They can also meet other adoptive parents. It has been scientifically demonstrated that it's helpful for adoptive parents to know they aren't alone and that others have gone through what they are about to experience, which can be the best possible form of support.

We prepare parents upstream. Adoptive parents may have to wait a long time, but the child can arrive at a moment's notice. We also coach them after the child has arrived.

As I mentioned earlier, since 2021, I have received almost no calls from distressed parents who, although they feel that their child is not ready, regrettably need to be sent to child care because they are unable to return to work. For us, these 18 weeks of leave, the counterpart of the 15 weeks you are requesting here, were a game-changer.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

We'll go to Mr. Angus to conclude. You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our speakers.

In my previous round of testimony, I felt it necessary to put on the record the dark side of how adoption was used as a policy that still impacts our region, the indigenous communities in Treaty 9, because those policies were adopted at committees like this. When we put policy in place, I think we always have to have that frame of what the unintended consequences are. However, in saying that, I also feel I'm hearing a very heroic story of people stepping up with love, and this is a beautiful story, and so we need to make sure that our policies reflect that.

I certainly know many young people—in fact, some very close family members—who were raised through adoption and who've become extraordinary, loving and caring, but they need those role models, and your story and Madam Morel's stories are really moving.

I would like to ask you in my final few minutes, Madame Despaties, in terms of the support that you can give to other would-be parents, is that what your organization does? If someone decides they're going to take on a child with special needs, someone with multiple issues who's 10 or 12 years old and in and out of the foster care system, what kind of support is there, not just for the child but for the adult?

Ms. Julie Despaties: Absolutely. Adopt4Life's purpose is truly to break isolation, to make sure that from the moment you embark on your journey to grow your family through adoption to the moment you're presented a profile, and then you're parenting, we're there all along the way.

We help provide peer support. We break down isolation. We help identify resources. We advocate. We raise awareness in the school and in the communities. We just walk alongside because we believe that together we're stronger, and that we can uplift, celebrate the greats, and provide support when we're in distress.

Parenting is unique and challenging, but parenting through adoption and permanency is something that is quite different, and many people just don't understand, so we shed a light on that. Among us, we are able to really understand. We say it takes a village; I actually think it takes a country to come together in supporting families through permanency.

• (1300)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Thank you especially to the two witnesses, who appeared and spoke from your personal perspective, and truly from your heart, and gave very compelling testimony to the committee.

Thank you so much.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>