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# Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

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**Tuesday, December 12, 2006**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Gary Goodyear**

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## Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Tuesday, December 12, 2006

• (1105)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC)):** Members of the committee, let us begin the meeting. I want to remind the members of the committee that this meeting is open to the public.

[English]

I also want to advise members that we have ordered lunch, and at Monsieur Guimond's request it is filet mignon again—disguised as sandwiches. Just kidding, of course.

Today we have extended the meeting and we have the room until midnight. We are going until 1:30 if we need to. We may not need that, but ultimately we're just being well prepared. Lunch is coming at noon. Like before, I don't think we'll break for lunch. We'll just ask members to be as quiet as they can be.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Chew with your mouth closed.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** That's a very good suggestion, Madame Jennings, thank you. Manners are in order.

We received some letters that were distributed to you from PIPS, and some others at members' request. If you do not have copies of those, we have extra copies.

There's an additional piece of information we just received this morning from Triage Emergency Services and Care Society. Unfortunately it's only in English, but I would certainly be happy to get copies to you. It deals with a similar issue, which is photo identification. We've heard this before, and I've read through the letter. It isn't anything new. There are concerns about personal ID of the homeless, which is something we have heard from a number of other witnesses.

I will pause for a moment and ask our witnesses at the end of the table to introduce themselves to the members around the table.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Chénier (Counsel, Legislation and House Planning, Privy Council Office):** I am Marc Chénier from the Privy Council Office.

[English]

**Ms. Natasha Kim (Senior Policy Advisor, Legislation and House Planning, Privy Council Office):** I'm Natasha Kim from the Privy Council Office.

**Mr. Dan McDougall (Director of Operations, Legislation and House Planning, Privy Council Office):** I'm Dan McDougall from the Privy Council Office.

**Mr. Raymond MacCallum (Counsel, Human Rights Law Section, Department of Justice):** I'm Ray MacCallum from the Department of Justice.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank everybody again for their cooperation and diligence in dealing with this bill. I think it's been a reasonably simple bill to deal with, since this committee basically drafted it. As of the deadline set yesterday, we had received 33 amendments that have been organized into packages, clause by clause, in front of you.

I would like to point out that there was lengthy discussion on one of the amendments, but ultimately I'm ruling all them in order. So we will proceed clause-by-clause in the usual fashion.

(On clause 1)

• (1110)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Chair, on a point of order, you mentioned that you received correspondence from PIPS. Was correspondence sent from the PSAC?

**The Chair:** Yes. We have extra copies, Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I just wanted to verify that all members got that.

**The Chair:** They did.

There have been two amendments submitted on clause 1. The Bloc submitted an amendment, and the government submitted an amendment. We will deal with the Bloc one first simply because it was received first, but it appears to me that BQ-1 is identical to the government's amendment, G-1. As well, BQ-1 can be applied to BQ-7 on page 15.

Monsieur Guimond, please speak to your amendment.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** I will be brief, Mr. Chair. I simply would like, in order to reinforce the only identifier, to strike the words “if any”. Accordingly, line 11 would read: “division and the identifier that is”. This amendment, amendment BQ-1, is identical to amendment G-1. We move concurrence.

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there further discussion?

(Amendment agreed to)

(Clause 1 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

There are no amendments in clauses 2 and 3. Would the committee consider dealing with these two clauses as a group?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to)

(On clause 4)

**The Chair:** We have two amendments to clause 4. Again, the Bloc put theirs in first.

BQ-2 and government amendment G-2 appear to be similar in intent. If the committee wishes, we can discuss the two of them, but I will ask Mr. Guimond to speak to his amendment first.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** This amendment is identical to what has already been concurred in. Amendment G-2 is identical to amendment BQ-2. I recommend concurrence.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Lukiwski, please.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We're suggesting—and we agree with the spirit of the Bloc amendment—that the wording we have is slightly different. It tightens it up a little bit where we say “The Register of Electors must also”; it's more definitive. That's why we worded it in such a fashion.

The overall intent, obviously, we agree with.

**The Chair:** Is the committee prepared to add the word “must”?

Is there further discussion? I see nods around the table.

Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I want to get an opinion on the difference between the two amendments from our panel, if there is any insight they could provide.

**The Chair:** Certainly.

Ms. Kim.

• (1115)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's mostly a drafting issue, to speak in the English in the imperative to say that “The Register of Electors must contain”, whereas in the French it speaks in the present, saying just “*contient*”. The English drafting in G-2 would be reflective of the common drafting convention, in that case.

**The Chair:** Mr. Guimond.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Ms. Kim, how is this drafted in French?

[English]

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** It's identical.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Could you read me the French?

**Mrs. Natasha Kim:** “(2.1) The Register of Electors also contains, for each elector, a unique, randomly”

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** That means it is the exact same wording as amendment BQ-2, but in the English version the word “must” is being added.

This is the two-for-one principle, like at the restaurant when you order the combination special of spareribs and chicken.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Redman, and then Madame Jennings—on this note, please.

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Thank you.

We may have the same point, because we were just talking. It's been my experience that rather than “must”, it's “shall.” I'm wondering why we chose “must” instead of “shall”. Usually, the nuance is “may” or “shall”.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** In terms of the drafting style, the opinion of the drafters is that it means exactly the same thing. In terms of speaking of an agent it's usually “shall”, whereas in speaking of something like the Register of Electors, it's “must”. It's just a drafting choice, but they have exactly the same legal meaning.

**The Chair:** Madame Jennings.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** On the same point, are you sure of that? When it comes to interpretation, particularly if we use the term “must” or the term “shall” in English, then normally one would see it in the French version. For instance,

[Translation]

“The Register of Electors must also contain...” and not simply “contains”, in order to render the imperative.

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** In the current version of the Elections Act, subsection 44(2) reads as follows: “The Register of Electors shall contain [...] his or her surname, given names, [...]”, and in the English version:

[English]

“The Register of Electors shall contain”.

[Translation]

As Natasha was saying, this is a drafting preference. Usually the word “shall” is used if there is an obligation and if failure to comply with a directive in the legislation results in an offence. In this case, the Register of Electors contains information, therefore no real offence is associated with it.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** You mean there would be no offence, even if the Chief Electoral Officer did not respect the legislation—

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** There are always—

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** —and produced a register of electors that did not contain all the information required by law?

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** The Chief Electoral Officer has to report to this committee. You can always bring him in line.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** Since you are saying that this is simply a matter of style, a drafting preference, if we used the expression “shall contain” and if, in French, we used the expression “doit contenir”, this would not make a difference, in your opinion, but it might reassure the members of Parliament somewhat.

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** The Bloc Québécois version currently does not include obligation, it only uses the word “contain”. It is a matter of preference. Does the committee prefer the word “must” or the word “shall”?

[English]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Monsieur Proulx.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** I have a quick question for you, Mr. Chénier. If the legislation uses the words “must contain” instead of the word “contains”, does it make a difference? Either you obey the law or you don't.

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** You are right, in fact, it is a question of—

Mr. Marcel Proulx: —semantics.

Mr. Marc Chénier: The French version uses “contains” and not “must contain”.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** It is quicker to understand in French than in English, is what that means. Thank you.

• (1120)

**The Chair:** Are there other comments?

[English]

Thank you, colleagues, for discussing both the proposed amendments. I think we have enough information now to put the question forward.

Do you want a little more conversation? That's fine.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Correct me if I'm wrong, but I was under the impression that we were taking the French portion of BQ-2 and the English version of G-2.

**The Chair:** I'm going to look around the table and see if that's the understanding of other members. Is that the understanding? I'm seeing everybody nodding. Fair enough.

I'm being advised that this is the question: shall we agree to drop BQ-2 and adopt G-2?

Monsieur Guimond.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I would like to read the French version of amendment G-2. Ms. Kim told me earlier that it was the same wording as amendment BQ-2. I do not know how this works. Do we have to sub-amend amendment G-2 by using the French version of amendment BQ-2? I don't want to get bogged down in procedure, but—

[English]

**The Chair:** Is everybody happy now? We'll use the French version of the Bloc motion.

I'm sorry, go ahead, Monsieur Guimond.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I withdraw amendment BQ-2.

[English]

**The Chair:** Shall amendment G-2 carry?

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 4 as amended agreed to)

(On clause 5)

**The Chair:** On clause 5, folks, we have a number of amendments before us. We'll start with BQ-3 on page seven of your outline. I would like to point out that there is a bit of a line conflict here. There are a number of amendments on exactly the same line, so we're really dealing with this in the order we received them, in this case.

I'll leave this up to Monsieur Guimond. There are three Bloc changes, all dealing with the same line.

Monsieur Guimond, would you please apprise the committee?

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** The purpose of the amendment is to introduce a concept that has existed in Quebec for a number of years already. Quebec also has privacy and access to information legislation, hence the need to identify the elector. I have often given the example of a person coming to us with all the required documents indicating he was born in 1908—making him 99 years old—when he looks 22 years old. I think adding date of birth to our lists will allow us to better identify the elector and, at the same time, reduce fraud. That is the purpose of every amendment involving date of birth.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Guimond.

Mr. Lukiwski.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Thank you, Chair.

We would oppose the Bloc amendment just because of the date of birth. I understand that in Quebec it is proper, but my understanding is—and I'd like to get the panel's assessment of this—that we would have a problem federally with privacy, with the Privacy Act. If that's the concern, then, although I personally like the date of birth of concept, I think we have a problem in being in contravention of the Privacy Act.

I'd like to get our panel to make a comment on that, if we could.

•(1125)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** If there were an express statutory authorization that could deal with the Privacy Act issue.... As the minister stated in his remarks when he appeared, it's more a concern about the distribution and the principles of privacy protection generally, and Canadians may be fairly sensitive about this information. If there is no significant policy objective behind it—and it's not clear that there is—in the same way as putting it on the revised list and the official list used at the polls would be, then there are privacy concerns as well.

**The Chair:** I have somebody else on my list, Monsieur Guimond. Is this on the same point? If it is, I'm happy to let you continue.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I just want to ask a question on this.

[Translation]

You say that Canadians are fairly sensitive about personal information, but what is worse than stating one's address at the voting station? Furthermore, if this works in a province like Quebec, why would it be a problem in a federal election?

[English]

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** I'm sorry, what was the first question?

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** The question was on providing one's address.

[English]

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** The revised and official list will have the date of birth on it, which is provided for in Bill C-31. It amends section 107 for that purpose, so that polling officials can identify and confirm someone's date of birth for the purposes of dealing with voter fraud. The address is something that almost must be used for that purpose. But the point of this amendment, and a number of these other amendments, would be to add that date of birth to lists that are distributed to candidates and parties and MPs as well.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** At the time of voting, the issue would be exactly the same: if there were privacy concerns with respect to both date of birth and address at the time of voting, they would apply equally. The issue here is that we were talking about the distribution of a list. That's one step removed from the time of voting. It's less clear that the intention is exclusively to prevent fraud at that particular time. The structure, as currently within Bill C-31, is to have the list with the date of birth available at the official register, so at the time of voting it could be used for verification. But for more general distribution prior to the actual voting, having that list distributed is potentially cause for concern.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Chair.

I have concerns that were expressed already, but I have just a couple of key points, and I expressed these in committee.

I don't think Canadians are comfortable with their birthdates being attached to a list, particularly when we look at who might share this list. I just think of the issues around identity theft. What we're doing here by including birthdates as proposed is essentially giving more opportunities for identity theft.

On the question that was asked around the difference between providing birthdates and addresses, addresses are pretty public as it is. You can look in the phone book, or there are other ways of cross-tabulating one's address and one's name. It's fairly simple to do. But it is not the same for one's birthdate, and I think we have to be very careful—we're going into new territory here—that we don't overcompensate our concerns with voter fraud with...privacy.

As I mentioned before in this committee, I was hoping to hear from Ms. Stoddart, and I know we attempted to have her speak, but I think we need to err on the side of caution. I think concerns around privacy outweigh the concerns we have here about tightening up a process, particularly when we're providing things like a random ID and we have other parts of this bill that will deal with oversight. So I just can't support the amendment that includes this kind of information.

The last point—and we heard this in committee—is that for people who are fleeing war-torn countries, who have suffered from being on lists and having identification to the detail we're prescribing here, it would be a problem, and it would be a problem that I don't think anyone around this table would be able to identify with. But certainly when people are on lists and they've fled war-torn countries...and the detail to which your name, your address, your phone number, all of those things are included, I think adding a birthdate is very problematic.

The last point is simply that I've talked to a couple of seniors about this—this is not quantified at all; it's just anecdotal—and it's not something they're keen on having.

So just for those reasons, I don't see being able to support this. Thank you.

•(1130)

**The Chair:** Mr. Hill, and then Madam Jennings.

**Hon. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Well, I appreciate the concerns being expressed. I have a couple of questions for the panel.

One is an observation that I think most Canadians are comfortable with having their birthdate appear on official documents. We certainly have that with our driver's licence and things like that. It aids authorities in being able to ask you a question about whether it's actually your identification. Because if you don't know your birthdate, then obviously you're not that person.

I remember the discussion we had on this very point, and it was to aid poll clerks themselves, so that when an individual was in front of them, it would give them further assistance when looking at the person. Obviously, if the person's name was exactly the same.... Take the case of a father and son, if for some reason the son was going to cast a ballot for the father. If on the list the person's name is the same, but their birthdate shows that they're 60 years old, and the person in front of you is obviously not 60, you'd be able to catch that.

My question, then, is whether there's some way we could still have that aid, for lack of a better term, available to the polling clerks to be able to accurately identify the citizen who's in front of them without having it on a list, that list being the same list that's distributed, if that's the concern.

In other words, the list that's distributed to campaigns or candidates or anywhere other than specifically to Elections Canada polling clerks would not have the birthdates on it. Because I don't see any reason why, as a candidate running my campaign, I would need to have that information in addition to the identity of the citizen on the voters list.

Would that be possible in order to address this? If it's not, then obviously, for the same reasons that have been expressed by others, I'd probably err on the other side of caution and say we'd better just drop this idea of having that available to the poll clerks.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** Clause 18 of Bill C-31 does provide for that right now. It makes a distinction between the lists that are used at the polls—the advance polls and the regular polls—and the lists that are distributed.

So it makes that fine distinction, reflecting the committee's recommendation on that point.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are you comfortable with that?

**Hon. Jay Hill:** Well, there's no reason to have it here then if it's going to be available, in a different clause, to the poll clerks.

**The Chair:** Let's have a few more comments on it, and then we'll call the question.

Madame Jennings, Monsieur Guimond, and then Monsieur Proulx.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** It seems to me that Quebec's election law allows the list of electors to be distributed with the name, address and date of birth of the electors. We have recourse to the Privacy Act. Furthermore, there was a whole debate between Quebec and the Canadian government when it passed its own legislation on privacy and electronic documents. This never caused the slightest problem.

It also seems to me that the Canada Elections Act states quite clearly how the candidates and parties can use the lists of electors. Even if the date of birth of every elector is included on the list, the candidates and parties are subject to restrictions on the use of this personal information. Your arguments not to include date of birth on the lists distributed to the candidates and parties do not seem to hold water.

If you were able to support your argument with examples of real cases in Quebec where problems arose when lists of electors, including date of birth, were submitted to the candidates and parties, I might be more inclined to listen to your arguments. But I have heard nothing of the sort so far.

As I have already said, this bill describes the conditions under which personal information can be used. It is very strict, specific and regulated. I think the concerns of my colleagues about including this information on the lists submitted to the candidates and the parties are not justified.

• (1135)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Could we have a comment from the witnesses, please?

Mr. McDougall.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** I have a couple of comments.

First, the structure of the Canada Elections Act is in effect slightly different from the structure of the Quebec Election Act. There are explicit provisions for protection of personal privacy in the Quebec Election Act. The Canada Elections Act actually treats it in a slightly different way. I think the Canada Elections Act says that the information can't be used for a purpose other than what was intended. It doesn't actually address privacy issues per se. So the structure behind the two acts is very different.

A second issue that could come into play—perhaps I can ask my colleague from the Department of Justice to speak more on this—involves the charter issues with respect to personal information and privacy. To the extent that one is creating a diminution of the expectation of the right of privacy, it's important to have a link between the degree to which you're infringing on that and the objective for doing so. I guess it's our view that it's not clear that the objective can't be met in a more straightforward manner, as is currently provided by the bill, by having the information with the date of birth provided to the poll clerks as being sufficient to obtain the objective of guarding against fraud.

Ray, perhaps you could say a bit more on the charter issue.

**Mr. Raymond MacCallum:** If I may.

Section 8 of the charter is where we find generally the protection of privacy for Canadians. It precludes government from intruding into a reasonable expectation of privacy, except when it has a compelling reason to do so. To the extent that date of birth would be characterized as a type of information that people normally expect to keep private except for a good reason, the disclosure of date of birth by the government or government agent in this context to private parties would have to be accompanied with a solid policy justification. The court would undoubtedly look at that if it ever had an occasion to consider this scheme, and ask why it was important to disclose beyond the poll clerks to the candidates and the parties the date of birth of every registered elector.

**The Chair:** Madame Jennings, go ahead, please, to follow up.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** I'd like to address that.

Clause 19, which is amending subsection 110(3) of the act, is replaced by the following. It says:

A candidate who receives a copy of the preliminary lists of electors under section 94 or 104.1 or a copy of revised lists of electors or the official lists of electors under subsection 107(3), may use the lists for communicating with his or her electors during an election period, including using them for soliciting contributions and campaigning.

I'm assuming, because I don't have the actual Elections Act as it now exists before me, that subsections 110(1) and 110(2) also include the framework of how that personal information can be used. It's very clear how it can be used, and for what purposes, and it's only for those purposes. It also makes it very clear that it's during an election period.

You may have the actual legislation before you and be able to tell me that, no, subsection 110(1) and subsection 110(2) don't address this issue at all, in which case we've only got subsection 110(3). Regarding your arguments about the charter issue, you still have not responded on the provincial legislation. When I see the federal legislation, it actually stipulates under what condition any information on the preliminary lists or the lists of electors that are given to candidates may be used, when they may be used, for what period of time they can be used, and for what purposes they may be used.

I'm still having difficulty understanding why the inclusion of the date of birth would be so problematic and possibly anti-charter at the federal level, and yet this is not a problem in Quebec. You have seven million Quebecers of whom probably four million and some are electors, and for the last probably 25 years, our date of birth has been on the electoral list, which is distributed to hundreds of candidates in Quebec. It's never caused a problem, and no one has ever challenged it under the charter.

● (1140)

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** Indeed, that may be the point, that if no one ever brings a challenge against it, then there would be no reason for anyone to look at it, whether or not it is constitutionally consistent with the charter.

What we're doing here, however, is creating a new provision. As we're looking at these new provisions, I guess we look at them in light of the charter requirements and provide advice from that perspective, as a new provision.

We were looking at it in light of the potential—as we understood the committee's recommendation—for guarding against fraud. Yes, clause 110 does specify that the uses to which that list may be put—not all of those uses, as you indicated—are for the prevention of fraud. There are many uses to which those candidates put that registry information. Indeed, if the intention of the committee were to provide birthdate information in order for the candidates to be able to target youth or target the elderly, then that would be a different objective, and one would have to examine the charter argument against that, and whether it would be legitimate to do that.

With respect to fraud, however, I guess it was our conclusion that the objective of preventing fraud, with the minimum amount of invasion necessary, would be met by using this at the polling clerk

stage. If there were a different objective, such as using the information for a different purpose, then we would have to look at whether or not that was a reasonable infringement on the expectation of privacy in that context which is different from what we were looking at here. There is a slight nuance of difference between the two in how we were looking at it.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** So the desire was to be able to use birth dates to identify different age groups and send information; contact those particular electors with messages that would possibly interest, for instance, seniors, senior women who were single, on our party's platform that specifically addressed their issues, or ethnocultural communities within youth groups, designing.... It's obviously too late now, but I don't think the idea of having the date of birth was only on the basis of fraud.

The issue of fraud was when people actually turned up to vote. But for candidates to have access to lists that included dates of birth was completely different and had nothing to do with fraud. It had to do with being able to design messages, get them to people, and encourage groups that don't have high voting participation to actually vote.

● (1145)

**The Chair:** Monsieur Guimond.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I see that Mr. Chénier wants to say something. I will give him a chance to say a few words because he suggested to Ms. Kim that this information could even end up in the hands of members of Parliament.

We have a fine example. Mr. Lukiwski, who is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government, told us it would be a good idea to include date of birth on the lists, but the bureaucrats do not feel the same way. We were elected by the public in order to represent them and regardless of what these people might think, we are the ones who pass the legislation.

I do not want to start a war with the bureaucrats, but I am sorry, it is the representatives duly elected by the public who decide. If we think it makes sense to include date of birth and, Mr. Lukiwski, if you agree with us, vote with us. You are welcome to do so. You'll see, it doesn't hurt.

Mr. Chénier suggested that even members of Parliament could get this information. I hope he knows that even if we have a lot of identifiable personal information, we are bound by law not to use it unduly.

I am a member of the Quebec bar and there is an error in my name on the roll of the *ordre*. It is odd, but I receive offers to subscribe to magazines such as *L'actualité* and *Maclean's*. Am I to understand that the Barreau du Québec sold its list of members? Maybe I should look into that. We are bound to obey the law.



I will give you an example. Every month we receive a diskette from Citizenship and Immigration Canada containing the list of new arrivals, or new Canadians, in our riding. I use this list to send a letter welcoming each of them to my riding and congratulating them on joining Quebec society. I use this list, but I am not about to give it to the local furniture store and say these people just arrived in Canada, probably by boat—boat people—now go sell them some furniture. I have to obey the law. We have all kinds of identifiable personal information.

Do not make members of Parliament out to be worse than they are.

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** Mr. Chair, if I may, I would like to clarify that I added the words “members of Parliament” simply because under the legislation a list is sent to members of Parliament every year. This was only to make Ms. Kim's answer complete. The lists are sent to candidates, registered parties and members of Parliament. I was not insinuating that members of Parliament are dubious, or anything of the sort.

Nonetheless, in response to Mr. Guimond, Mr. Chair, if you will allow me, I would simply like to say that it is important for this committee, in deciding on this issue, to remember that the Election Act was passed in 1996, I believe, as far as the provisions on the register are concerned. As far as the provisions on the use of the list are concerned, they were drafted a certain way that reflects the fact that the information on the lists is somewhat ordinary: name, address; there is no personal characteristic whatsoever.

Ms. Jennings is right as well: the provisions in the legislation describe how the list can be used. However, when these provisions were adopted, if the committee would have had to deal with a list of electors containing personal information, perhaps it would have decided to ensure that there were more restrictions than simply mentioning that the list could not be used in the electoral context, as is currently the case in the Election Act.

Perhaps the committee would have decided to have rules on requiring anyone receiving a copy of the list to take an oath every time. Even though the legislation states that the list is sent to registered parties, candidates or to members of Parliament, there is still the concern that at some point, someone could lose track of the list and the information could be available to those who are not entitled to have access to it under the legislation. It is simply a factor this committee should take into account.

If you are adding information to what is distributed to those who receive the list, perhaps it would be appropriate to reconsider the provisions of the legislation dealing with how this list is used and the precautions that should be taken to ensure that the information, which Mr. Dewar described as very critical as far as identity theft is concerned, does not end up in the hands of people who are not entitled to it.

• (1150)

[English]

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

It's my impression that the object of the discussion is to convince members around the table to vote a certain way on a particular amendment versus the witnesses who have come before us. Or

perhaps you want to try to convince me how to vote in the event of a tie. I'd rather have the discussion focused on the debate about the amendment instead of trying to convince our witnesses one way or the other.

Monsieur Proulx.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Your informal comment is duly noted. I know it was directed at me. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Not necessarily, but *merci*.

It's going to be a long day. It's both past, present, and future.

Monsieur Proulx.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chénier, Ms. Kim, Mr. MacCallum or Mr. McDougall, do you know what the consequences are to a member of Parliament who uses the list of electors improperly, in other words, in contravention to the existing rules?

While Mr. Chénier is looking into this, perhaps I could ask Ms. Kim a question.

Ms. Kim, when talking about clause 19 we are told that the amendment stems from clause 17, in that it refers to the proposed clause 104.1 on authorizing candidates to use lists of electors. And it adds: “including using them for soliciting contributions and campaigning”.

Have you ever campaigned, Ms. Kim? Do you know what it's like? Targeting groups according to age, sex, ethnicity is what it takes to campaign.

If the intention is not to allow us to campaign, then that is a whole other matter. However, it seems the intention is to allow us to campaign. Accordingly, targeting groups according to age is part and parcel of campaigning.

[English]

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** You'll note that clause 19, which you referred to, is actually not substantively different from what exists in the act now. The purpose of changing that section was to add a reference to section 104.1, which is an updated list, the preliminary list that's distributed, just so that would be included in the reference for the authorized uses of those lists. But it exists as it does in the Canada Elections Act now in terms of—

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** If I may say to you, when we use the term “campaigning”, it also includes targeting groups, whether it be by age or whether it be by whatever common denominator a group might have.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** I suppose this eventually comes down to a policy choice. From what I understand from the minister's comments when he appeared—and this was certainly a motivating factor when the committee made the recommendation to exclude it from the list that's distributed to parties, candidates, and MPs, but to have it only on the list used at the polls—the concern was a privacy consideration, which the Privacy Commissioner did—

• (1155)

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** I'm obviously not going to convince you, so we're going to go to Mr. Chénier to see if he has found the answer to my question.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** The maximum sentence for using information from a list of electors is \$1,000 or three months in prison or both.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Do you think this is enough to deter a member of Parliament from using the list improperly?

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** Again, I believe it is important to remember that when we are talking about the list of electors, we are not necessarily talking about those who are authorized to use the list under the law, but those who could have access to it and use it in a way not intended under the law.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** However, if someone who has access to it uses it in a way not intended under the law, as you say, then that is because someone at the electoral officer's office, a member of Parliament or an MP's employee, leaked the information on the list. These people are subject to those penalties.

Do you not think that the penalty is enough to make an MP, an MP's employee or the chief electoral officer be careful with the list, whether the list includes date of birth or not, Sir?

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** It is not necessarily a matter of leaking information from the list. Unfortunately, it is a matter of leaving the list somewhere and making it is easier to access than it should be.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Then, perhaps we shouldn't give the list to MPs or to candidates because there is always the risk that some of the information will be—

**Mr. Marc Chénier:** I believe the government had good reason to send out these lists.

Nonetheless, the committee should consider this: the current provisions in the legislation, which only address a person knowingly using information contained in this list, were developed with consideration to the fact that the only information on the list would be name and address. Now we are talking about a personal characteristic.

Your example was about a person working at an MP's office who leaves the list lying around where someone could access it and use it in a manner that does not comply with the law. As far as the offence is concerned for knowingly using information from a list of electors, there would be no way to prosecute someone who works at an MP's office, at a candidate's office or at the office of a registered party.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. McDougall signalled that he had a short comment.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** As a point of clarification, Mr. Chair, we're not trying to delve into new policy areas here. We have been providing our advice in the context of the recommendations that were made by the committee and the response of the government to that report. It was the committee itself, in recommendation 2.7 of your report, that posed this question in the context of identification for purposes of preventing fraud. So it wasn't in anything other than that context that we were looking at it. We were not looking at it in the broader context of other uses to which the personal information may be put.

We were also responding to the recommendation of the committee where the majority of the committee, as indicated on page 15 of your report, in recommendation 2.7, requested that the information not be provided, that "The majority of the Committee believes that this information should not appear on the lists provided to candidates or parties under the Act." So we were actually responding to the committee's wishes on this rather than creating a new policy area.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. McDougall. I think and certainly hope that all members are aware of the report they agreed to.

We'll go to Mr. Lukiwski.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Yes, Mr. Hill has a brief comment first, then I'll go.

**Hon. Jay Hill:** Actually, the point I was going to make, sort of reflecting on your thoughts, Mr. Chair, is that we should be trying to convince each other as we work through these amendments rather than our witnesses. Actually, the point I was going to make has just been made by Mr. McDougall.

I thought the intent, certainly, as we've gone through some months now of deliberations over how to best prevent voter fraud, was to provide polling clerks with the assistance, the tools—better tools—to do the job of preventing voter fraud. That was the intent.

The intent wasn't to make our lives easier as candidates or as campaign teams, and in that context, clause 18, as we discussed earlier in this round of questioning about this amendment, accomplishes what the committee itself was going to set out to accomplish, which was to assist the polling clerks, not to assist us in campaigning or sending out targeted mailings based on knowledge of the age of our constituents.

So that's just the point I wanted to make.

• (1200)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Basically, ditto.

We as a committee agreed not to allow the age of the elector to go on any other list but we would give the polling clerk the ability to know the age of the participant to prevent fraud. And the amendment we have suggested—and that's why we're opposing the Bloc—reflects that.

I would love to have the personal information such as that for campaign purposes, but the purpose of this committee was to prevent fraud.

**Hon. Jay Hill:** And the bill.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** And the bill.

Let's vote.

**The Chair:** I did have one more—

**Hon. Karen Redman:** I was going to ask that question.

**The Chair:** All right. How kind of you to be so consistent with each other's opinions.

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

**The Chair:** Now, I think that because BQ-3 has carried, we do not need to deal with BQ-4 and BQ-5, Monsieur Guimond.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Yes, I think so.

**The Chair:** Can we have your permission to withdraw those motions? They're off the table. We don't need them.

I'm seeing a hand go up. This is unusual, Ms. Kim, but I will let you make a comment right now.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** Excuse me, Mr. Chair, it's just that BQ-3 addresses the identifier with the "if any", which in carrying G-2 before would consequentially... I think BQ-5 reflects that consequential amendment to make the identifier mandatory. So just in terms of drafting—

**The Chair:** Ms. Kim, could you repeat that?

Order.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** On a point of order, if I could.

**The Chair:** All right. I'll allow that, Mr. Reid.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I think what has happened is that because we were busy discussing other aspects of the amendment, we failed to notice the fact that BQ-3 and BQ-5 deal with this slightly differently. BQ-5 assumes that there's an identifier. BQ-3, which we've just adopted, indicates that there may not yet be an identifier, which is in contradiction to something we've already dealt with.

I have no idea procedurally how to get out of that, but I suspect you'd find that a majority of the committee would actually prefer the content of BQ-5 to that of BQ-3.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Scott is right. To get out of this, we could withdraw amendments BQ-3, BQ-4 and vote on amendment BQ-5. Our preference out of amendments BQ-3, BQ-4 and BQ-5, is to adopt amendment BQ-5. They are presented in order.

Unless you want to have a fresh debate on amendment BQ-5. If you want, we can vote again or apply the vote already held to amendment BQ-5, which means we would end up withdrawing amendments BQ-3 and BQ-4.

My preference is to adopt amendment BQ-5.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** You're withdrawing BQ-3 and BQ-4.

For the record, BQ-3 and BQ-4 have been withdrawn.

I'll call the question on BQ-5, just for the record.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Amendment G-3 is not on the table. Just so members know, G-3 is identical to BQ-4, which we've already dealt with.

(Clause 5 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, although we're getting some momentum going here, and I don't want to disrupt it, as we have such a good team here—and we seem to have done this before and done it successfully—lunch is here, and I invite anyone in the room to help themselves to lunch as quietly as you possibly can, and we will continue.

Colleagues, there are no amendments in clauses 6, 7, or 8. Would the committee agree to consider them as a group? I see everyone nodding yes.

(Clauses 6 to 8 inclusive agreed to)

(On clause 9)

**The Chair:** On clause 9 we have a motion by the NDP. On your sheet, NDP-1 is on page 12, colleagues.

I will invite Mr. Dewar to introduce that amendment.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I would like to introduce the amendment on page 12, noted as NDP-1. Simply stated, Chair, it is that Bill C-31 be amended in clause 9 by replacing line 41 on page 3 with the following:

Subsections 55(1) and (2) of the Act are

This is a bit like a puzzle, Chair. To explain to members why I want to make this amendment in the way it is being done, it's important to explain how the bill is written and what it does to the act.

If you look at the bottom of the page as we have it in the bill, it says:

Subsections 55(1) to (3) of the Act are replaced by the following:

Then it scopes out subsections 55(1) and 55(2). What it does is eliminate subsection 55(3) of the Elections Act. I think that's important to note, because upon first glance one might look at it and say, this is fine; they're just making some changes to that particular section. What in fact it does is delete a subsection of the act, and that's what I want to bring to members' attention.

What we're doing by this amendment is in effect not adding, but preserving. That's very important to understand. What we're doing here is making sure that where it says that subsections 55(1) to 55(3) are replaced, we actually preserve 55(3).

If you don't have the act in front of you, it's important to note, particularly after the discussion we just had, that the act says, under subsection 55(3):

A body to whom information is given under an agreement mentioned in subsection (1) may use the information only for the purpose of establishing lists of electors for an election or a referendum held under a provincial law.

What it does is retain conditions on how information is shared. I think what we need to do, if we're concerned about how information is shared, is preserve this piece.

That's what this amendment does. It is to make sure that subsection 55(3) is preserved and not jettisoned. The reason is to make sure that we're not allowing, as is proposed under the bill, information to be handed over without conditions. The more conditions around how information is shared the better, in my opinion. So that's what this does; it retains what is already in the bill. It doesn't delete it; it keeps it in place.

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

Monsieur Proulx, and then Mr. Reid.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** I have a quick question for the panel. My understanding is that clause 9 is redrafting the entire subsections 55(1), 55(2), and 55(3) into subsections 55(1) and 55(2). Could you tell me if I'm right or if I'm wrong again.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** That's definitely correct.

What this provision was meant to do is implement the committee's recommendation at 2.19, and the purpose of that was to address the drafting in the current act at subsection 55(3), which both the committee and the Chief Electoral Officer recommended be clarified. As it's worded now, in saying that information the provinces use from the list of electors can only be used for the purpose of a provincial election or referendum, it could be interpreted very strictly so it could lead to results like the province not being able to share back with the federal government in terms of updating the federal list of electors. Basically, it's a clarification, and what proposed subsection 55(2) in the bill provides is that any such agreement would need to have conditions that would protect personal information that's shared under that agreement. That's how it was addressed.

•(1210)

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** From listening to Mr. Dewar, I have a suspicion that he's alleging that we are removing powers in the preparation of the list. Are we losing anything? Are we removing anything, or are we making it easier and more solid?

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** To an extent we're clarifying and, in that sense, making it easier for the federal electoral body and the provincial electoral bodies to share information so that their electoral lists are updated.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** I'm for anything that will help the list be more complete.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Reid, please.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The original wording of the bill, which Mr. Dewar proposes to amend, was adopted with the intention of reflecting the recommendation made by this committee. However, that recommendation was made by this committee in the context of, among other things, people's ages being made available.

I'll just ask our witnesses this. Now that we've made this change and we are giving the list to the parties under the amendment that was just done, does this affect what is going to be turned over to the provincial electoral authorities or is it still the same list?

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** This provision actually deals with the information that's derived from the national register, which already includes the date of birth in it, so provincial electoral authorities also use the date of birth in terms of matching proper electors to ensure that they're updating the right information. The amendment that was adopted won't—

**Mr. Scott Reid:** So it has no impact?

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** No is the short answer.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Are there other comments?

[*English*]

Mr. Dewar, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Chair.

I have a couple more points that I think are worthy of comment. First, notwithstanding Mr. Proulx's points, this was based on the amendment, and the need to keep this part of the act was based on testimony we heard from witnesses, particularly Mary-Martha Hale, who was talking about how information is shared and the purposes of sharing information. If you look at what we've done here, according to the bill—and this is new—we've said:

The Chief Electoral Officer shall include in the agreement conditions regarding the use and protection of personal information given under the agreement.

So I ask the panel, are we relying on the Chief Electoral Officer to make arrangements and to be the one to, if you will, referee or decide how the information is going to be used by those we're sharing the information with? We're relying upon the Chief Electoral Officer to do that, in the bill?

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** The Chief Electoral Officer would still be subject to the federal statutes that protect privacy information, as would provincial electoral authorities be subject to their own provincial statutes.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** My question is, we're relying on the Chief Electoral Officer to do that. I'm not saying you're creating new powers here, but simply saying we're vesting that responsibility; it continues to be vested with the Chief Electoral Officer.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** But not exclusively through this statute.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** No, I'm not saying that.

Let's look at particularly proposed subsection 55(1), the underlined portion:

the giving of information referred to in subsection 44(2) or (2.1) that the Chief Electoral Officer intends to include in the Register of Electors,

—and then it goes on to say what was already present—

if that information is needed for establishing such a list.

My concern here, as was brought forward to this committee, is around the defining of that. I appreciate trying to help the CEO—and by design, helping us—share information to have more accurate lists. But as I had mentioned before about enumeration, there are other ways of doing that. We'll get to some of those amendments later.

So I guess my concern here, Chair, is that we've opened up the process to a free flow of information between different bodies, to make it easier, without defining the use. What we're jettisoning is exact language: “only for the purpose of establishing lists of electors for an election or a referendum”. Well, what other uses *would* they have for this information?

• (1215)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** Their use would effectively be subject to their own provincial laws on privacy protection. The CEO himself would be restricted by the federal Privacy Act. So we use that statutorily.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** But that's my concern, Chair. We have loosened up, if you will, the accountability of how we share information. That's notwithstanding the reason; I'm with the panel and with the committee on what the intent is here.

We've said here that we'll loosen up the flow of information, but we won't define how it's used. In my interpretation, we've taken that out in terms of what I see in the bill. We've taken out “only for the purpose of establishing lists of electors for an election or a referendum”, which is exact, which is prescriptive, and which is currently in the Elections Act.

We're taking that out. We're taking that out and giving it to all provinces, if you will, assuming they're going to do it within their own election acts and laws. That's fine, but I suspect—and others have given testimony on this—that there will be a lot of concerns around this. It's not prescriptive enough.

Why not say “only for the purpose”? What other use could it have? I don't see how that relates to what we're trying to do here. If it's for other purposes, that's not what this bill is about. This bill is about elections. What other reason do we have for elections lists than elections and referendums?

So again, the jettisoning of this particular piece concerns me deeply, and it concerns others. That's why I bring this forward.

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

Madam Jennings, please.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** I'm a little confused by Mr. Dewar's preoccupation with this. As I read proposed subsection 55(1), pertaining to both the English and French versions, it clearly states:

The Chief Electoral Officer may enter into an agreement with any body responsible under provincial law for establishing a list of electors, governing the giving of information contained in the Register of Electors,

—and then we can skip to the end—

if that information is needed for establishing such a list.

So it's referring to a provincial body that has legal authority for establishing their provincial list of electors. The Chief Electoral Officer, at the Canadian level, may provide them with information that is contained in the national registry “if” that information is necessary for establishing the provincial list.

I think it's pretty clear.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I do have a final point on that, Chair.

Notwithstanding Ms. Jennings' point, I would go back to my question, which I was very deliberate in asking initially: what is the role here, and who are we giving this power to? It remains with the Chief Electoral Officer. What we're doing is we're taking away the prescriptive nature of what exists in the act now. That's my point.

You're quite right to say it “may”, but we're giving that power to one person. Albeit this person is accountable to Parliament, we've taken away the prescriptive nature of how that person shares the information. I understand what the words say. That's not the point. It's about what we're taking out.

Again, if we're sharing information to this degree, we have to be very careful how it's shared, the rules around it and the boundaries around it. As I see it, what we're doing here is we're loosening that up. I don't believe the argument for doing that has been made sufficiently here.

• (1220)

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

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 9 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Just for the record, the amendment to clause 9 was defeated 10 to 1.

I will remind members that we're doing a great job on being quiet while we eat, but I noticed that our witnesses are not indulging. Please feel free to do so. Trust me, the members around the table will ask you a question even if you have a full mouth, so there's no worry from my end.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

(On clause 10)

**The Chair:** There is an amendment to clause 10.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Guimond, you are very cooperative.

May I ask the government to speak to the amendment, please. This is government amendment number 4, which you'll find in your package on page 13.

Are we calling the question right away?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** I believe we can, Chair.

**The Chair:** All right.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 10 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** There are no amendments to clauses 11 and 12, and I ask the committee if they would consider agreeing to vote on them as a group.

(Clauses 11 and 12 agreed to)

(On clause 13)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we are dealing with three amendments to clause 13. The first amendment is BQ-6 on page 14 of your package.

I'm being advised that technically to some degree, BQ-6 also deals with the date of birth issue, which we dealt with earlier in our discussions, and perhaps we should apply that vote to this clause.

Monsieur Guimond, would you like to speak to it?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** That is what I wanted to suggest. I did not want to make more arguments. Furthermore, the committee voted on this earlier with the majority in favour. Nonetheless, we can vote again, if you like.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Agreed. Let's call the question, then.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** I believe we carried BQ-7 as a result of BQ-1. Are we agreed with that?

Monsieur Guimond.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Amendment BQ-7 is identical to amendment G-5. Did you notice that?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, I did. We could take a separate vote on them. I think that's the right thing to do, but I'm open to what the committee wants to do.

We are treating both BQ-7 and G-5 as the same.

Monsieur Guimond.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** The question.

**The Chair:** Call the question?

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Yes.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** There's no need to deal with G-5.

(Clause 13 as amended agreed to)

(On clause 14)

**The Chair:** On clause 14, we are dealing with an NDP amendment, NDP-2 on page 18 of your package.

I'll ask Mr. Dewar to speak to this amendment.

• (1225)

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Chair.

I move the amendment.

**What we're trying to do here is in terms of allowing people to change information. If you look at the additions:** the fact that proof of an elector's identity and residence will be required before the elector is allowed to vote; and

Can you hold on just one second here? There are a couple of notes I want to follow up on.

I was just confirming something with staff.

Essentially, what this does is allow electors to engage in the process by allowing them to change information. Presently the case is that you have this being done essentially through income tax forms, or through cross-tabulation of data with drivers' records. What this would do is simply allow electors to change information once they've moved into a new residence.

So it allows them to get engaged. Presently we have what I call a passive system. We talked a little bit about this at committee. This is simply to allow electors themselves to do it. It's simply allowing people to help out in the process—a little citizen engagement, if you will—and the addition of paragraphs (e) and (f) would add to that. It's simple, just a matter of allowing citizens to help out and to improve the accuracy of the list as a result.

**The Chair:** I have a question, Mr. Dewar, if you could indulge me. I don't see the paragraph (e) on the French side. Am I missing that?

I'm being told it's in the bill. That's great.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Yes, there's a reference. Thank you.

**The Chair:** That's fine. I'm happy with that.

Are there any comments? Madam Redman, please.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** I read this with some interest, and I appreciate the spirit of trying to have citizen engagement, but I'm wondering, regarding “with proof of identity as prescribed in the regulations”, how we'd do that over the phone and by e-mail. I guess I'm trying to jump into the 21st century with you here, wondering how you would do this remotely and not by presenting your ID in person.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** There are a couple of issues around that, Chair, that I won't get into in any great detail, but my understanding, having talked to people who work within our public service and people who work in banking, is that this is done on a regular basis in verification of data: being able to simply verify, because the information is held by, in many cases, banks and governments.

When we change residences or change businesses, etc., that change and verification is not hard to do, because there are many ways of verifying, through the data that is kept by government or kept by a bank to establish that the person on the other end of the line is, if you will, that person. So it's a matter of already having access. That would be vis-à-vis telephone.

Vis-à-vis e-mail, again that's verification starting with an e-mail being sent in, a verification by phone or by other media, mailing someone a hard copy to verify that it in fact is the case, and having them sign off. It's simply to bring people into the process. There are many ways of doing it. It's done on a daily basis in banking and in government.

**The Chair:** Madam Redman.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would ask the panel this. It would seem to me that financial institutions, which is the example being named, have a vast amount of personal information at their disposal that Elections Canada by definition wouldn't. As we all know, there are silos in the government, so they're not going to go to another department of the government to get this additional information.

I'd like to hear from the panel. It seems to me this would be unwieldy, costly, and not particularly reliable.

• (1230)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** This provision deems to raise two technical issues. One, which was raised earlier, was that on the proof of identity as prescribed in regulations, there are currently no regulations under the Canada Elections Act and no regulation-making authority. The second operational issue is that at the point at which the notice of confirmation of registration or the voter information cards are sent out, the election period has already begun, and so the updating that needs to be done is generally in relation to the list of electors rather than the register, which is what the CEO is in charge of. So the updates to the lists of electors happens at the local level with the returning officers.

If an elector needed to update their information at that stage, generally it would be the RO they would need to contact, rather than the CEO, and the voter information card, under the act, already has a phone number that needs to be prescribed on it.

So those are some considerations.

**The Chair:** I did see Madame Jennings' hand, but I think you're passing.

Are there any other comments on this issue?

Then I will call the question on amendment NDP-2, with respect to clause 14.

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** On clause 14, I'm just going to get a show of hands here, because that's routine, if you don't mind. We need the exercise anyway.

(Clauses 14 and 15 agreed to)

(On clause 16)

**The Chair:** On clause 16, we have a government amendment before us, amendment G-6, which you will find on page 19.

I will draw to the attention of members that amendment G-6 and amendment NDP-3 have some similarity, appear to be alternative propositions. If the committee wishes, we could debate those and deal with both of them here.

I'll ask the government to perhaps speak to their motion, and I'm looking forward to Mr. Dewar's comment, if he's willing to deal with this one here. I'd like just a yes or a no as to whether you're comfortable with that.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Chair, I have a question, if I may, before I do that, because I might go further than that,

**The Chair:** Sure. We can deal with them separately. So by all means, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I just want to know from the panel, before I close the topic, the differences between the two, if there were any major differences in terms of how they're written and how they therefore will be interpreted.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** The main difference is where a person would be registered. Amendment G-6 specifies that it would occur when someone is being registered at their home, whereas amendment NDP-3 doesn't. So that could happen at a returning office or somewhere else.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dewar, I just want to know if you're willing. We can deal with this separately. I don't want to push you or cause you to make a decision you might regret. We can deal with this separately, or we can deal with them both right now. But amendment G-6 was first, so I want to go to that right now.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Go ahead.

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

Mr. Reid, please.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Thank you.

This amendment takes into account a recommendation made by the Chief Electoral Officer in his report on the 38th general election, which was the basis on which we had prepared our report to the government.

As things stand, under subsection 101(1) of the Canada Elections Act you can be added to the preliminary list of electors in a variety of different ways. One way, of course, is if enumerating agents come to your door, or revising agents come to the door of your home. When they're there, you answer the door, and they ask to see some sort of demonstration that you are who you say you are. And then, having been provided with that information, they put you on the voters list.

It's a fairly frequent occurrence that someone will be at their home without ID, and certainly without full identification for all persons resident in that home. An easy example to imagine would be in a subdivision, such as the ones that are being built in the town I live in, where the people were not there at the time of the last election and a targeted enumeration takes place in a neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Smith are a family in which Mr. Smith goes off to work and Mrs. Smith stays home and takes care of the baby, or the reverse as the case may be. But at any rate, one of them is at home and one of them is not at home. Let's work with Mr. Smith going off to work. Off he goes and he takes with him his driver's licence, which is his photo ID. It's very difficult for Mrs. Smith to register Mr. Smith and get him on the preliminary list of voters in the absence of the ID that he has taken with him in order to go to work.

The Chief Electoral Officer pointed to this problem, and he pointed out that it's inherently implausible that people will be at home waiting for the revising agents to show up in order to register a whole bunch of people who don't actually live at that address in order to commit voter fraud. This is by way of contrast with somebody going down to the office of the returning officer and engaging in registration at that point for themselves or other people without full identification.

If you're looking for a difference between G-6 and NDP-3, that's the fundamental difference. Under NDP-3 you can register yourself or someone else who you say lives at the same residence by means of a written affirmation. Under the NDP motion, you can do it at the returning officer's office. Under our amendment you must do it at home. It seems unlikely people are going to wait passively there in order for someone to show up so they can mark down people who don't actually exist, or who aren't citizens, or who aren't yet old enough to vote.

I think that what the government is proposing will actually eliminate a large number of people being left off the list who otherwise will be left off the list, and it will not in any serious way challenge the overall objective of this piece of legislation, which is to of course reduce and eliminate electoral fraud as much as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

•(1235)

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

Mr. Dewar, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Yes, Mr. Chair. I had asked the panel about this because the intent of this amendment from the NDP was to do what Mr. Reid just said. It wasn't the intent to allow people to do this vouching for someone.

That being duly noted, I will be withdrawing the NDP amendment in favour of the government amendment and obviously speak in favour of it, because it was something we wanted to see. Further to that, I think it was clear from Mr. Kingsley that he had asked for this in the last Parliament, I believe—or it might have been the one before—to help with enumeration, which we all agree is not up to where it should be.

One of the roadblocks was this component. Just to help with more accurate lists and obviously more success when they do the targeted enumerations, this really needs to happen. Therefore I will be supporting this amendment and withdrawing NDP-3.

Thank you.

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

Madame Redman, please.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** I am happy to have the question called. For my comfort level, the fact that there is a prescribed registration form and the oath, I think it has the same backstop as we're demanding when they register to vote. I think this is absolutely in order.

**The Chair:** Okay, I'll call the question on amendment G-6.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 16 as amended agreed to)

(Clause 17 agreed to)

**Mr. Scott Reid:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I think I might have expressed myself a little poorly on the last one. It was not my intention to suggest that the NDP amendment was motivated by anything other than the best intentions. I think I might have left that impression.

**An. hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Mr. Scott Reid:** In that case, I said it poorly, and that was not my intention. I just wanted to make that clear.

•(1240)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

(On clause 18)

**The Chair:** We're on clause 18. Have we dealt with this?

My apologies, colleagues. I was speaking before I read this. Ultimately, in regard to amendment BQ-8, on page 22 in your packages, I believe we have dealt with this issue in amendment BQ-3.

Would you agree with that, Mr. Guimond?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Yes, it deals with date of birth.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Order, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Amendment BQ-8 deals with date of birth.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** That's correct.

Shall we apply the vote?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 18 as amended agreed to)

(Clauses 19 and 20 agreed to)

(On clause 21)

**The Chair:** On clause 21, colleagues, there are a number of amendments proposed by a number of parties. In the order in which they appear in the bill, you will find on page 23 amendment G-7.

Do we have a mover?

I see Mr. Lukiwski's hand up. Would you care to speak to the amendment?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.



It's fairly self-explanatory. We want to make sure, again, with the discussion we heard on this issue, with the underlying theme that we're trying to prevent voter fraud, that we're trying to get proper identification. So we had discussed, as this motion contemplates, that two pieces of identification are required, which are authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer, both of which must have the elector's name, but only one requires the address.

As we talked about before, someone can have a driver's licence and then, as a second piece of corroborating documentation, a utility bill that has the person's name and address. It's just to try to tighten up the process to ensure that the people registering to vote are who they say they are.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Does anyone have any other comments?

Mr. Guimond.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Perhaps Mr. Lukiwski could talk about this, but I have some reservations. Do you remember in the last election that people presented as proof of address a postage label from their copies of *Chatelaine*, *L'actualité* or *Time Magazine*? I fear this is opening the door to this type of situation. There is nothing to say these magazines weren't stolen from a mailbox or taken from the entrance of a building.

The goal is commendable. The purpose of Mr. Lukiwski's presentation is to control fraud. We talk about minimizing it, even eliminating it, but how will this wording ensure that postage labels will not be used as proof of address?

[English]

**The Chair:** I saw Mr. Reid's hand up first, but if you want to respond and Mr. Reid's comfortable with that, I'm happy to let you do it.

Thank you, Mr. Reid, and then we'll come back to you.

Mr. Lukiwski.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** The key point here is the identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer. I'm not sure *Maclean's* magazine would be a piece of information authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer. Utility bills, on the other hand, and other documentation of similar nature would be.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Reid, please.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I think Monsieur Guimond has a good point. One has to be very careful about these things.

The approach I would take on it is, first of all, to reiterate what Mr. Lukiwski said, but in a bit more detail. The Chief Electoral Officer has submitted a list of possible items to us. He said he'll come back to this committee and has even given us a timeline by which he'll come back to this committee for our approval, and he won't approve any document unless this committee approves it.

Obviously there is a fairly long list of things that we would all like to keep off that list of approved items, and I'm inclined to think that

renewal notices for magazines would be one of the things I would be unenthusiastic about adding to the list. I think we can control that.

That's one thing. The second thing, though, is the rationale for putting this in, and the rationale is this. I asked some of the witnesses who were here a week ago a question. I remember the student representative, for example; I asked, what about your student ID, if you had that? It has your photo; it's issued by a quasi-governmental authority, a university or a community college; it's designed to prevent fraud—likewise a bus pass. These are things that most students have—probably both. They certainly would have one.

It doesn't have your address on it, but it does have your photo, and it's a pretty secure document. These are documents designed to prevent person A from taking an exam on behalf of person B, or person A getting on a bus instead of person B. So they are inherently anti-fraud-based pieces of identification.

If we included that, I asked, would it eliminate the concerns you have about students being excluded from voting by our ID requirements? He said yes, and at that point I promised to raise the matter with the Chief Electoral Officer.

When I raised it with Mr. Kingsley, he said he didn't interpret the list of identification to include those kinds of pieces of ID as acceptable ID. He went on and actually listed that passports wouldn't count, or military identification cards, and so on.

This is meant to ensure that Mr. Kingsley will now be including this kind of identification as identification for the second of the two provisions in clause 21. So it would be "two pieces of identification establishing the elector's name and address", authorized by him. Now his list will be able to include, for that purpose, pieces of identification such as the photo student card, photo bus ID, passports, and so on.

**The Chair:** Madam Redman.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess I'm looking for clarification. It involves concerns around the amendment I entered on behalf of my party. If we deal with this one—mine is after line 24 on page 8—I'm just wondering whether we can deal with mine in the same spirit, as being inclusive rather than exclusive. This is something our members of the Far North, who have large aboriginal populations, feel very strongly they'd like to have dealt with.

Can I just get clarification that after we dispose of the government motion, we will indeed still be able to deal with mine?

**The Chair:** I intend to do exactly that, yes.

Are there any further comments on government amendment G-7? Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** We're on G-7. Clause 21 refers to section 143, and if we go in that clause to proposed subsection 143(7), it specifies that:

The Chief Electoral Officer shall publish each year, and within three days after the issue of a writ, in a manner that he or she considers appropriate, a notice setting out the types of identification

How does that connect with the fact in G-7 that “the Chief Electoral Officer may authorize as a piece of identification for the purposes of”...and adding (b)? We already have in proposed subsection 143(7) that he's going to tell us what is acceptable, so we don't need it in this particular amendment, then.

**The Chair:** Mr. Reid, please.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Actually, I asked him. You may remember that in his testimony last Thursday he listed off items he said he didn't think would qualify. Passports were one of them. It doesn't have your address on it so I can't count it under proposed paragraph (b), one of the two pieces of identification, but it also can't be counted under proposed paragraph (a) because it doesn't have your address either. So this was meant to allow that kind of identification, which is pretty secure, along with something that has your address.

To answer Karen's question, she said like a utility bill, and the answer to that would be that if the Chief Electoral Officer, with the concurrence of this committee, agrees that a utility bill counts, it does; and if he doesn't and we don't, then it wouldn't count.

• (1250)

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** So the gist of this amendment is not to look at what's authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer, but rather to say that at least one has to carry the address, instead of both. That's the gist of this.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Yes. You see, he was going to interpret it to say that he would not ever look at these pieces of ID, that they would never make it to his list.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Are there other comments?

[English]

We'll call the question then, please.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Let's move to NDP-4. I will note, members, that you will find this amendment on page 25 of your package. It does have several consequential amendments to follow. But I will open the floor for Mr. Dewar, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Chair, I would like to move the amendment NDP-4.

We heard from witnesses not only what the practice is presently but also concerns about what the barriers might be to some of our most vulnerable citizens with the bill as it was written.

What this does is take a look at other jurisdictions' practices and simply look at best practices and employ them here. So all we're doing here is allowing a statutory declaration to be made by an elector so that he might exercise his franchise. I was very careful to ask all of the witnesses who provided statements around the concerns they had with students, those who are low income, those who are new Canadians, etc., if in fact they thought this would be a good thing, something to help those populations they deal with on a daily basis; and to a person, they said yes, this would help.

I think it's incumbent upon us to make sure.... And I provided the committee with a copy of what is presently in place in other jurisdictions.

It is also noted that this is an oath, and obviously something that could be held to account simply because it's asking someone to take an oath. It's a statement of claim. It's a declaration, and it is something that is going to be declared before someone else. So it's not something that is without accountability. It's not without a manner in which we can trace things.

So I think it's for all of those reasons. It's because of the fact that we had concerns from witnesses that, the way the bill is written presently, there was a gap and it would disenfranchise people. So it was simply to say, if this is the case, what's the solution? The solution, in my opinion, is this amendment, and that's why I would ask for support from this committee on this amendment.

Thank you, Chair.

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

Mr. Lukiwski, please.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Thank you, Chair.

Very simply, I would remind the committee that the committee recommendations, as well as the CEO recommendations, were to replace statutory declarations with a form of ID, so if we were to vote in favour of Mr. Dewar's amendment we'd actually be voting against the committee recommendation that we all worked so very hard on.

So I have to respectfully oppose his amendment.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Jennings, did you still wish to comment?

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** Everything he just said.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Further comment, please, Mr. Dewar?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I would like to respond to that, Chair.

What troubles me is the fact that notwithstanding the issue...and I was very careful to ask the Chief Electoral Officer about this whole issue, and he testified, not only before us but previously, to the degree and scope of what the problem is that we're addressing here. He certainly didn't identify this as a problem of a statutory declaration. I asked him to provide evidence of how many people had been charged under the act for violating the act, and he wasn't able to give me specific instances. In fact he said they are still ongoing investigations, but to date no one has been charged.

I'm sad to say that if this doesn't pass, what we're doing in effect is telling certain people that their franchise will not be...because we heard this from witnesses. This isn't me speaking; this is what witnesses told us—people who work day in and day out with the people who are the most vulnerable. The net effect of what we're doing is taking away their franchise.

Why? Because—and we'll get to vouching later, it will be interesting to see that discussion—what we're saying is that we're going to people who obviously have access to identification with photo saying, you're okay; you get to vote. If you don't have access to that, we're taking away what I think is a very commonsense approach, and that is an oath and a declaration that can be traced. We're taking that away from them. I don't know how else to describe it but disenfranchisement.

I would point to the fact that this was an issue in other jurisdictions in the 1950s and 1960s—very different in terms of how that was done, but similar in outcome in that—

**An hon. member:** Very different.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** No, of course, but I'm not the first to say this. In fact people who read this bill said it long before I did.

The unintended consequences of what we're doing here is that we're taking away the franchise of certain citizens to vote, because we're saying that this tool that they would have, a statutory declaration, will be taken away. I don't know how else to describe this but to say that we're taking away their access to vote. Particularly, when you look later on at vouching, we're proposing that we take away the ability of more than one person to vouch for another person.

So I think in the end, Chair, I would plead with those who are on the side of making our voting system more egalitarian, and not less, to support this amendment.

Thank you, Chair.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any further comments?

I will call the question, but I want to remind members that there are several consequential amendments to this. I believe our vote on this amendment will also apply to NDP-9 on page 31, NDP-10 on page 32, NDP-12 on page 34, and NDP-13 on page 36.

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** This amendment is defeated, as are all the other amendments I mentioned earlier.

Colleagues, we will now deal with the Liberal amendment on the same clause, which you'll find in your handouts on page 26.

Madam Redman, I want to make the point that given that we have already carried G-7, I believe the numerical part of your amendment would be changed to (2.2) as a result. I'll point that out to you right up front and ask you to please take the floor.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am happy to speak to this. This came out of the needs that were expressed, I think, by some witnesses, but certainly by our members, as I mentioned earlier, who have large rural or remote constituencies with many aboriginal constituents. They asked that this be put in with an acknowledgement to ongoing consultation with the government to make sure that status cards are appropriate. So if they need to change them as we go forward, they would like to

continue those conversations with the Chief Electoral Officer. But they ask that this be in for the purposes of documentation issued by the government, so that somebody registered as an Indian under the Indian Act would constitute the proof. I would ask for the committee's support on this.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments?

Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Chair.

I understand the intent of the amendment. I'm wondering and would like to establish with the panel whether this is presently the case or not.

Is this something that is new in terms of what is acceptable ID?

• (1300)

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** We think this could be one of the items indicated in the previous motion that was discussed, with respect to the proposed subsection 143(2.1) that was within it. This would be one of those pieces of ID that would qualify.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** In essence, we're being prescriptive, to say that this “should” be and not “might” be up to the CEO. We're directing, if you will, to say this “shall be”, as opposed to....

Thank you.

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

My apologies to Mr. Reid. I did not see your hand up before Mr. Dewar's. My apologies; I will give you the floor now.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I'm not 100% sure whether it was the intention of Ms. Redman to do one of two things I could see this as meaning, so I'm going to ask, and maybe she can clarify it for us.

The way the amendment is written, it leaves the impression with me that a document issued by the Government of Canada that certifies that a person is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act is sufficient to be the one piece of identification; that you don't need a second one with your address.

I say that because the last part says “constitutes proof of that person's identity”, which suggests that it is all that is required. I'm not sure that was the intention; that's how I read it.

That's very different to me from saying that a document issued by the Government of Canada constitutes an authorized piece of identification, in which case it is one of the two pieces you're using under proposed paragraph 143(2)(b).

I'm just wondering which of the two meanings Mrs. Redman had in mind.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Having done many amendments, you know that you sort of do the gist of it for the drafter, and this is what the drafter brings back.

It is my understanding that it is the Canadian government proof of identification and would not therefore be the only proof. It's proof of that person's identity, but there's still the other piece, as we talked about earlier. Where they reside would still be required.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Right.

In that case, may I ask... I'm not sure what the appropriate method is for proposing subamendments. What I would suggest is something like this:

for the purposes of paragraph (2)(b)

—thereby putting that little “(b)” after the “(2)” —  
a document issued by the Government of Canada

etc., exactly the way you have it worded, until it gets to “constitutes”, and then after that:

constitutes an authorized piece of identification

**Hon. Karen Redman:** I would turn to the panel to ask what that means to them.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** We think it would be essentially a “for greater certainty” clause. As I mentioned, we think this piece of ID is already one of the pieces that are authorized by the bill. This, with the amendment proposed, would make it clear—for greater certainty, in effect—that this is indeed one of those pieces. Technically it already is included; it is a government piece of ID. So we think it is already part of the scheme, but this would provide greater clarity on that point.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** I would be open to discussion. I would see that as a friendly amendment if it clarifies the intent of this. I think it captures the intent of why this is before us.

**The Chair:** I will ask that the discussion stay at the subamendment level.

Mr. Lukiwski, you were next on my list, but not for the subamendment. Do you wish to speak to the subamendment?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Very briefly. I think we are all on the same page. We're just trying to get clarification to make sure it's consistent with what we've been trying to do here in terms of getting the two pieces of identification, one of which can be approved. One is identity, of course; one is proof of address. If the subamendment clarifies that, I don't have a problem with it.

**The Chair:** Monsieur Proulx.

Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. McDougall has a further comment. Then we will go to Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** This is just a point of clarification. I think the language proposed on the subamendment should read “for the purposes of paragraph (2)(b)” rather than “subsection (2)(b)”. The subsection is (2), and the further delineation would be the paragraph.

•(1305)

**The Chair:** Mr. McDougall, would you kindly repeat that so we could copy it down, please?

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** It would read, “For the purposes of paragraph 2(b)” rather than “subsection”.

**The Chair:** All right. The only addition on the amendment, as I understand it, is that we are replacing the words following “Indian Act constitutes” with “an authorized piece of identification”.

Go ahead, Monsieur Proulx, please.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** As a point of clarification, am I correct in understanding that proof of identification means one of the two?

**The Chair:** That's the reason for the addition of the words “piece of identification”, which certainly clarifies that it's one piece of the two that are required.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** I'm curious, because when witnesses were here, it was mentioned that they had very limited access to pieces of identification, so if we limit this to mean it is one of the two required, what could the second one be?

**A voice:** It could be a utility bill.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** This would be the proof of identity, and then they have a utility bill or something else that shows an address.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Okay. Regardless of the comment by Mr. McDougall that this is already understood to be part of the bill, I think we'd be safer to have suspenders and belt so that Mr. Kingsley doesn't decide that the pants should be on the ground.

**The Chair:** I totally don't understand that comment.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Karen Redman:** It's just as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Redman; I appreciate the protection.

I have one question. I think the answer's fairly clear, but if in fact the Indian card has a photo ID on it—and it is my understanding from the minister that at some point in the near future cards will be issued—the card could end up being the one and only piece of identification required, because it would have photo ID on it. Am I mistaken in that? Could I address the panel to clarify that?

**Mr. Dan McDougall:** It would also have to have the address of the person on it.

**The Chair:** Correct, and then it could be just one. All right.

Is there any further discussion on that? I'll call the question, then, colleagues, on the subamendment. Shall we try to read it one more time?

We'll read the subamendment and then we'll call the question.

**Ms. Joann Garbig (Procedural Clerk):** With the subamendment incorporated, then?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Joann Garbig:** It reads: That Bill C-31, in clause 21, be amended by adding after line 24 on page 8 the following:

(2.2) For the purposes of paragraph 2(b), a document issued by the Government of Canada that certifies that a person is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act constitutes an authorized piece of identification.

That's it?

**The Chair:** That's it.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Do you have the French version, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Did it not come through on the interpretation?

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** What comes through on the interpretation and what's being put in the bill are two different things.

**The Chair:** I'm going to accept that. Can we have this read in French?

I'm being told that we're going to have it professionally translated appropriately by a legislative translator afterwards. I'm not 100% comfortable that solves your problem, Mr. Proulx.

• (1310)

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** No, it doesn't.

**The Chair:** I'm going to take a moment here to consult and see how we can solve this problem for you.

Colleagues, thank you very much for your indulgence.

I would remind members that ultimately the amendment is carried in one language, but I'm comfortable doing this. We'll ask our assistant to read it in French now.

[Translation]

**Ms. Joann Garbig:** Thank you.

That Bill C-31, in clause 21, be amended by adding after line 24 on page 8 the following:

(2.2) For the purposes of paragraph 2(b), a document issued by the Government of Canada that certifies that a person is registered as an Indian under the Indian Act constitutes an authorized piece of identification.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Thank you, Ms. Garbig.

[English]

**The Chair:** Everybody is happy. Thank you very much.

Madam Redman, are you comfortable accepting the friendly amendment to your amendment?

Hon. Karen Redman: Yes, I am.

The Chair: Order, *s'il vous plaît*.

I'll ask the question on this amendment as amended.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Colleagues, the next amendment with respect to clause 21 is NDP-5. You will find that on page 27 of your package. I will invite Mr. Dewar to move the motion and speak to it.

Please go ahead, Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Simply put, NDP-5 deals with the issue we heard from people who deal with the homeless around how they operate presently. It is an arrangement that allows a person who is a client of an agency—that is, someone whose only residence, if you will, is a shelter—to have someone to establish that fact and those criteria. For those of us who are fortunate enough to have a home or an apartment, it's not hard to establish residence. However, it is a challenge for those who are most vulnerable.

We have a present practice, a fairly recent one, of having people who work in these agencies vouching not for the purposes of getting on a list, but for the fact that they are staying at this place and that it can be established as their residence. It simply puts into place in this bill a process and a practice presently being used, since witnesses mentioned other concerns about what would happen if we didn't have this process. The net effect is that we would be discounting

many people because they wouldn't be able to establish a residence. This is simply a way of avoiding that, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** I have a question on this particular amendment, and members of the panel can help us on this, as can Mr. Dewar.

I forget the name of the lady who was here to testify last week or the week before, but my understanding was that the Chief Electoral Officer or the regional officer was making arrangements with representatives of these different agencies or residences for them to have somebody on site to help identify these individuals. If the Chief Electoral Officer or the DRO is already making arrangements, I don't think we need to put this into the text as such. This is part of the discretionary that exists for the Chief Electoral Officer, is it not?

• (1315)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** Under the act as it exists now, there's no requirement to have ID or to swear an oath or to have someone vouch for you in order to vote. Perhaps what the Chief Electoral Officer was referring to was the registration stage. At that stage you need to take a oath and have a voucher if you don't have identification. At that stage perhaps those preparations could be made to address that. He'll have the discretion to signify two pieces of identification that could be used.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Do you mean that would take care of the problem addressed by this amendment at the source, instead of at the voting stations?

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** It would be a different approach.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Then we don't need this if it's done properly originally.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments?

Go ahead, Mr. Dewar, and then we'll go to Mr. Preston.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** With respect, we still need to respond, Mr. Chair. One thing that was clear is that the people involved in our shelters and drop-in programs are actually picking up the slack for the fact that we just didn't have a process for people who didn't have an address, essentially.

This is very new. What we're doing is simply establishing that practice here because, au contraire, we would have a problem. The whole problem was that people weren't able to provide.... If I go as someone who is without an address, I have to have to some sort of proof that I am staying at Centre 454 or the Ottawa Mission, etc. We don't have anything in place presently to do that, except what we heard from witnesses the Chief Electoral Officer has accommodated and worked with. What we're doing here is making sure we have that practice of the vouching process acknowledged, particularly when we go down further in the bill. You need to establish some credentials, because they often won't have electricity bills or bills of any sort to say they are staying at this homeless shelter or this drop-in centre.

A process has been put together by people who are working with the Chief Electoral Officer to do that. My concern is that the bill, as presently in front of us, would require someone to vouch that I'm staying at a certain place; if I don't have any paper on that, it's difficult, and we heard that from witnesses.

Simply put, we're putting that practice into place. It allows for an oath for a client of an agency that is approved by the CEO and who is vouched for by a representative. It gives some credence to the process and procedure that is presently happening, and that's why I think it's so very important. If we don't do this, I think we're putting a lot of people in jeopardy. Effectively, I'm not seeing in the bill how we could do this without having something like this in place.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

Mr. Preston is next, and then Madam Jennings.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** I have two quick little points. One is that we're asking the CEO to come back to us with the identification he will be allowing for this bill, and yet we're giving him discretion as to his approval of agencies through which this could happen. I would expect that if this was going to go this way, we would at least need to know the agencies. This is really leaving approval of the agency up to the Chief Electoral Officer.

I'll also mention that our witnesses have said that although this may provide for identification on address, it still doesn't meet the citizenship requirement. The people working in these agencies where the people may be staying do not know whether these people are Canadian citizens or not, and that doesn't meet the requirement.

I have trouble on two heads of this: how we pick the agencies, and whether the information being given by the people who work for those agencies is enough to prove an elector.

● (1320)

**The Chair:** Madam Jennings has no comment. Thank you very much.

Colleagues, I'll call the question—

Please go ahead, Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Chair, I just want to address Mr. Preston's point.

We're not establishing the other criteria here. They are later in the bill, and there's a vouching procedure in place. What we are establishing is that someone can say this person's residence is in fact this place, notwithstanding that it's often a difficult situation in terms of establishing the residence you and I are fortunate to have. The reason I can do it is that I am here; I'm someone who is employed on a full-time basis, sometimes as a volunteer, at this place—in this church, in this drop-in centre. It's simply to say that I know this person and that this person's address is this place. That's what we're establishing here. We're not establishing the other criteria.

I just wanted to clarify that. We're not saying that we're vouching for the other piece; that's later in the bill. This simply establishes the fact that it's their residence. There's no other way of determining that for people who are in this situation. I just don't know how we deal with this unless we have a procedure like this in place.

**The Chair:** Thank you, colleagues.

Seeing no further debate on the amendment, I will call the question.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we are running a little short of time. I'd like to deal with this next amendment, and then we will suspend the meeting until after question period.

You will find amendment NDP-6 on page 28 of your package.

Mr. Dewar, would you please present the amendment and speak to it? Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This amendment deals with the concerns I've already alluded to on vouching for more than one person. If we are to follow the bill as presented, witnesses provided testimony—and I might add they weren't just city dwellers, but also first nations aboriginal people—that there would be a dilemma in terms of one person vouching for one person. This would allow for vouching for more than one person. Again, I go back to the idea that if the bill goes ahead without this amendment and some of the other concerns I've had prior to this amendment, we are in effect putting up barriers to people who are trying to exercise their franchise. In my opinion we need to deal with that, and one of the ways of dealing with it is this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Lukiwski, please.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Chair, with all due respect to Mr. Dewar, if we voted in favour of this amendment, it would be in complete opposition to the committee report that we spent a lot of time on. I have to oppose this amendment.

**The Chair:** We'll call the vote, as there are no more comments on the issue.

(Amendment negatived [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

● (1325)

**The Chair:** I would like to remind colleagues that amendment NDP-6, which we just voted on, does in fact have consequential implications. As such, it will be applied to amendments NDP-11 on page 33, NDP-14 on page 37, and NDP-15 on page 38.

I wanted to make sure everybody was aware of that. That was my mistake. Does anybody have a comment? Seeing none, I will call the question on the clause.

(Clause 21 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** As a favour to the committee, I did promise that we would break at 1:30 and then resume after question period. We could probably carry on for 15 more minutes. I don't think that's going to solve the problem, but I present that information.

Go ahead, Mr. Guimond.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Chair, waiting until after question period poses a problem for at least four committee members.

At 3:30 p.m., we have the House Leader and Whip Committee, in which I sit with my colleagues Mr. Hill, Ms. Redman and Mr. Lukiwski.

**An hon. member:** And Ms. Jennings.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** And Ms. Jennings, whom I forgot, as well as Scott. In any case, this affects the majority of the committee.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Let's keep going and see how we do.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I can tell you right now that we are actually through the tough part of this bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Yes, but I would just like to know when you want to continue. I would suggest 4:30 p.m., because 3:30 p.m. is problematic.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** It's not possible at 3:30. How about four o'clock? Going once, going twice, sold; it will be at 4:30.

We are now going to resume this meeting. The room will be secured, and we can leave our stuff here. Would you like to continue for 10 or 20 more minutes?

I would like to have unanimous consent. I think it's only fair. Would we like to continue for 20 minutes?

Colleagues, I'm not seeing unanimous consent. In fairness, I did say we would stop at 1:30. I will now officially suspend the meeting. We will resume the meeting at 4:30.

Thank you.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- (1630)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, let's begin our meeting again.

Thank you very much for your diligence today. We are in our final week. I know things are extremely busy, and I just want to express yet again my appreciation for your commitment in coming back.

Colleagues, we finished clause 21, which carried, so we can go straight to business with clause 22.

(On clause 22)

**The Chair:** We have an amendment to clause 22. It is NDP-7, which you will find on page 29 of your package.

Mr. Dewar, I invite you to introduce the amendment and speak to it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If we read the proposed language here, we see:

suggest that it is intended to refer to that person, the person shall not be allowed to vote unless he or she takes the prescribed oath.

We are just taking that language and...the proposal here is:

person, the person shall be allowed to vote if he or she takes the prescribed oath.

It's simply changing the way in which this is declared. If you will, it takes negative attributes out of the clause and puts a more positive light onto it. It's saying that when the person takes the oath, the person shall be allowed to vote.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Is there any comment?

Madam Jennings, go ahead, please.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** I would first like to hear from our expert witnesses that in fact this change makes no substantive change.

Second, I believe there's a flaw in the French version of the English amendment. The English amendment clearly states "prescribed oath". When one looks at the actual bill, it says "*le serment prescrit*", whereas in Mr. Dewar's amendment it simply says "*le serment*". I think a word has been dropped.

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** The drafting in the bill was actually fairly deliberate. It's put in the negative because these sections, sections 146 to 148, deal with various eventualities or issues that may occur when you're on the list—for example, your name corresponds with another very closely, and that needs to be resolved. It was put in the negative form of "shall not be allowed to vote" so that they have to satisfy those conditions; then they follow the normal process set out in section 143.

Otherwise, if it's put in the positive form of "shall be allowed to vote", there's the implication that it could mean they are immediately entitled to vote without satisfying other requirements, such as the voter ID requirements in section 143.

That's the reason for it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madam Jennings, does that satisfy you?

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I might point out to the committee as well that the word that is apparently missing is actually in there. It's line 40. Am I correct on that? Yes, the word is there, Madam Jennings; it's line 40.

Are there any other comments on this amendment? Seeing none, I will call the question.

(Amendment negated [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 22 agreed to)

(On clause 23)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we have one amendment on clause 23. It is NDP-8, which you will find on page 30 in your package.

I will call on Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I think you'll find.... I'm just making sure these aren't consequential from the previous amendments.

**The Chair:** I don't believe this one is, Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** It's not the statutory....

**The Chair:** No, that comes later; it's amendment NDP-9, I believe.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thank you, Chair. I'm just making sure this isn't consequential to the previous statutory attempt.

What we're dealing with here, Chair, is an addition:

(1.1) Section 149 of the Act is amended by adding the following after paragraph (a):

(a.1) the elector gives the deputy returning officer a statutory declaration under the Canada Evidence Act that specifies the elector's name and address;

In essence, what we're trying to do here is use a verification process, through a statutory declaration, simply to allow a person who is initially not allowed to vote to substantiate who they are and to provide that through the statutory declaration that was mentioned previously, but for a different purpose.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any other comments? Mr. Lukiwski.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Once again, very briefly, I have to respectfully oppose, only because this again, if we passed it, would be in opposition to and contravention of the committee report and CEO recommendations.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments, colleagues?

I'll pose the question.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** In terms of a comment, I'm interested to inquire about something, Mr. Lukiwski. In terms of your mention of the CEO stating that this was something they didn't.... Was that something we had in the written report, or was that upon questioning?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** If my memory serves me well, it was in questioning, but it certainly was in the written report from the committee as well.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** That's why I'm questioning, because it's my understanding—and I'm talking about in committee, not in the written report—that it wasn't an issue when I brought it up. But thank you. It's not that it will change the outcome of the vote; it's just clarifying the background.

(Amendment negated)

(Clause 23 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, there are no amendments to clauses 24 and 25. Would the committee be willing to consider them as a group?

Madam Jennings.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings:** If I'm not mistaken, on clause 26, NDP-9 and NDP-10 were defeated or negated, as was NDP-11, in which case you may wish to seek consent to treat clauses 24 through 27 as a group.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madam Jennings. That's most efficient.

Is the committee in agreement to grouping them?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Are you including all of clause 26? Is that what's being proposed here?

**The Chair:** Clause 26, yes. All of those were negated.

While I'm offering Mr. Dewar a moment there, Monsieur Guimond, did you have a comment?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I have a comment to make about clause 24. I recommend it be carried on division. The Bloc does not agree with this clause as worded. I am not asking for a vote, but simply that clause 24 be carried on division.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** On clause 24, is that agreeable to the committee?

(Clause 24 agreed to on division)

(Clauses 25 to 27 inclusive agreed to)

(On clause 28)

**The Chair:** Moving on to clause 28, there is an amendment by the Bloc, amendment BQ-9, which you will find on page 35 in your packages.

Monsieur Guimond, would you like to introduce it?

Mr. Reid, please.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I'm assuming, Mr. Chairman, that amendment NDP-12 was also negated?

**The Chair:** Yes, it was. That's correct. Just for the record, amendment NDP-12 was negated. Thank you.

Monsieur Guimond, would you please introduce your amendment.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Chair, we have had the opportunity to introduce it a number of times. The committee has even agreed to meet with Mr. Blanchet, the chief electoral officer of Quebec. The purpose of this amendment is to implement what we refer to as bingo cards.

As you can see, we are asking in clause 28 that this responsibility be given to the clerk, who has enough time while the deputy returning officer gives the ballot to the elector, who goes to the ballot box behind them. No one else can be in front of them. Accordingly, the flow of the vote is guaranteed. The clerk simply checks off the elector's number in the voting section on an NCR form, a no carbon required form, available to all parties authorized by the chief electoral officer.

To further clarify the concept of "on request", to avoid having a party look for this information every two minutes, I have specified the interval to be at least 30 minutes.

When I talk about identity—so that the people from the Privy Council do not think that information on identity could be forwarded to the general public and broadcast on the news—I am talking about a number. For example, elector number 122, whose name is Michel Guimond, voted between 9:30 and 10 o'clock. That is the information that would be provided.



I will close with a very important argument that I was saving for the end. For your information, during the recent by-election in Repentigny, this form was tested, on agreement with the returning officer for that electoral district. Representatives from the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the NDP, and the Bloc Québécois, of course, since we were the ones who implemented this form, were pleased. This worked quite well.

By the way, contrary to what Mr. Kingsely thinks, this will not entail the addition of an electoral official to the tune of \$10.6 million across Canada, because the clerk is already being paid to do this.

I am sure every member of the committee will vote in favour of this amendment.

• (1645)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any other comments? Mr. Lukiwski.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Just for the benefit of Monsieur Guimond, because I know he likes to make sure he wins votes when the Conservatives oppose, I say that we will be opposing this.

**An hon. member:** You will be opposing?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** We will be opposing.

**An hon. member:** You're kidding.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** But Monsieur Guimond has assured me that you will win this vote, and I know he enjoys it more when he wins the vote when we have opposed, rather than unanimously.

**The Chair:** Order, please. Thank you.

Are there any other comments on this amendment?

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 28 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, on your sheets, it may indicate that there are other amendments; however, they've been negated.

I can therefore ask the committee if they'd like to deal with clauses 29 through 41 as a group. There are no amendments to these clauses now.

Mr. Dewar, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I have a question for the panel, because we have, as you said, negated amendments around vouching and statutory declaration.

We did hear a witness statement about the concerns of citizens being able to vote if they don't have identification and someone then has to vouch for them. I'd turn to the example that we had from those who are working in our shelters, wherein there is a problem, and quite frankly, with people who are from first nations. There were some concerns about having proper identification, vouching, and people being on the list.

I just want to make sure I'm understanding what we have in front of us. What we have presently is that if someone doesn't have photo ID and needs to have someone vouch for them, the only way that can

happen is if one person hasn't already vouched for someone else, and that one person has to be on the voters list.

What we're effectively saying is that people, citizens, can't be sworn in and can't get on the voters list to vote if they do not have someone from that riding who is on the voters list to vouch for them. That's the predicament. If that were to happen, then they wouldn't be eligible to vote. Is that correct?

• (1650)

**Ms. Natasha Kim:** In effect, that's true, but that's assuming there is no ID, including the two pieces that could be authorized by the CEO.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Of course, but that's when we get to the vouching process, right? That's the safety net, if you will.

After hearing witness statements and after going through the amendment process, I can't believe that's the intent of this committee. We are basically saying to people who don't have someone on the voters list to vouch for them—and we heard clearly from witnesses that this is the case, and as the advertisement went in the election, I'm not making this up—that this is a reality.

By way of omitting these amendments, Chair and committee, what we're saying is that this is just fine. I'll have to tell you, it's going to be very hard for anyone in my party to support that. So I'm just making sure that we're clear on what this is doing by way of not passing this amendment or having these vouching amendments. We're saying that is just okay.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** On a point of order, I want to remind the committee that we have discussed this at length. We have had witnesses in here explaining to us how homeless people can vote, how they can make sure they have the right to vote, how they can identify themselves with the help of people from their different shelters and different organizations. I don't think that we need a sermon on what we have done and what we have not done. We have taken care of making sure that every Canadian who has the right to vote can vote.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any further comments?

Do we have agreement to deal with clauses 29 through 41 as a group? I am seeing agreement, so I will pose the question.

(Clauses 29 to 41 inclusive agreed to)

(On clause 42—*Coming into force*)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we are now on to clause 42. There is a government amendment to clause 42. It is amendment G-8, and it's on page 40 of your package.

I would ask Mr. Reid to please move the amendment and speak to it. Thank you.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** I move the amendment.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow the coming into force of the bill to happen as soon as is realistically possible. As worded in the initial draft of the bill, it says that the act “comes into force six months after the day on which it is assented to”. If you look at that language, you'll see that there is a provision in the Elections Act that says basically all amendments to the Elections Act come into force within six months unless the Chief Electoral Officer publishes a notice in the *Canada Gazette* to indicate that necessary preparations have taken place.

When the Chief Electoral Officer was here as a witness, he indicated that the six-month deadline would be difficult to achieve with regard to the voters list provisions, but for other provisions of the bill it would be no challenge to achieve these changes. I think we can understand how some of the provisions really take no preliminary effort on his part at all and are simply areas to carry through on.

I specifically asked him at that time about the identity considerations. I raised the issue of the length of time required before an election takes place, and I inquired about whether there would be any problems with his coming back with a list. He indicated to us at that time that he could come back to meet with this committee and go through the process he proposes: his list of suggested identification and then getting our approval immediately upon the coming into force of the act.

All of this allows for all the parts of the act, other than those that relate to the electors list, to occur more quickly. That's effectively what happens under the proposed amendment to clause 42.

• (1655)

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

Are there any comments on that? Are you ready for the question?

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

(Clause 42 as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Colleagues, we've done our clauses. I'm going to carry on with the other parts of business.

Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the bill as amended carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Chair:** Shall I report the bill as amended to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Shall the committee order a reprint of the bill as a working copy for the House at report stage?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Colleagues, that ends the discussion on Bill C-31. I do thank you very much for your diligence and efforts.

Is there any other business? No?

Merry Christmas to everybody, and thank you very much. Have a great and safe holiday season.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Mr. Chairman, I think there was something relating to subcommittee business and a letter. Did the clerk get that circulated?

**The Chair:** Did we have future business? Do we need to go in camera?

**The Clerk of the Committee:** Members of the subcommittee—Ms. Jennings, Madame Picard, Mr. Dewar, and Mr. Reid—all received copies of two letters this morning. We need to check and see if they agree with those letters.

[*Translation*]

If everyone agrees with those letters, Mr. Reid will sign them and they will be sent to Mr. Shapiro and to the whips.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Reid:** One more thing, Madam Clerk. Is it my responsibility to give them to the whips, or is that the responsibility of each of the respective...?

**The Clerk:** I will send you the letters to sign tomorrow, and then the letters will be sent to the whips by my office, and to Dr. Shapiro.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Is there any further business?

There will be no meeting on Thursday.

Have a great holiday, be safe, and Merry Christmas.

The meeting is adjourned.







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