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Chair

Mr. David Tilson

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• (0850)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC)): Good morning. This is the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. The orders of the day are pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), a study of the immigration settlement and adaptation program.

Ms. Chow has given me notice she wishes to speak.

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Yes, during the last 15 minutes, at 10:30, I have a motion to submit for debate.

The Chair: Ms. Chow, we did discuss that, although it has been pointed out to me now that we have a problem. For each of the two sessions there will be a teleconference. The second teleconference simply won't come on the line until 9:45. There's no other way of doing it until then.

So we have a choice. We can either do it at, I don't know, 9:30, or we can do it at 10:30.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Ten-thirty is fine.

The Chair: So that will mean the second group won't have as long. Is that okay with you?

Just so everyone agrees, Ms. Chow has given us notice of motion; it is within 48 hours, and it is on the topic of immigration settlement and adaptation services, so I rule that it is in order. We will proceed with Ms. Chow's motion at 10:30.

For the first round we have a number of guests, a number of witnesses, before us today. There are three groups. One of them is from St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Association for New Canadians. They are here via teleconference. We have Bridget Foster, executive director, and Megan Morris, director of programs.

Are you there?

Ms. Bridget Foster (Executive Director, Association for New Canadians): Yes, we're here.

Ms. Megan Morris (Director of Programs, Association for New Canadians): We are.

The Chair: Okay. We can hear you. I'm going to ask you, Ms. Foster and Ms. Morris, when you speak, because there are two of you, because you are not here on the television—you're on the telephone—to identify yourselves. So each time you speak, would you please say who's speaking? Do you understand?

Ms. Bridget Foster: Yes.

Ms. Megan Morris: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Our other guests are the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Good morning to you. We have Debbie Douglas, who is the executive director, and Amy Casipullai, who is the coordinator of policy and public education. Good morning to you.

From the Afghan Association of Ontario, we have Jamal Kakar, executive director; Saber Fermand, vice-president; and Dost Yar, the treasurer. Good morning to all of you.

Each group will have up to seven minutes to speak, and then members of the committee will have questions for you.

We will start this morning with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

Ms. Douglas.

Ms. Debbie Douglas (Executive Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)): Good morning.

Since early December 2010, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, OCASI, has been working with its CIC-funded members and other funders on strategies to mitigate, as much as possible, the impact of the significant reduction in funds to the Ontario region.

The leadership of the council believes its priority in this situation has to be one of monetary impacts and being responsive to requests for support from members; providing accurate information to members, media, funders, and other stakeholders; and developing practical strategies to support the legal and other responsibilities of those members who find that they have been placed in this difficult situation.

We therefore thank you for this opportunity to present to you on the many issues facing the sector and to share with you some of the demands that, if accepted, will go a long way to minimizing the negative fallout from this unexpected situation.

This presentation by OCASI is informed by the experience of our member agencies over the past couple of months.

Funding for immigrant settlement services, including in Ontario, has remained stagnant for over a decade, during the period of 1993 through 2005. This chronic underfunding was particularly difficult for the Ontario sector, which experienced increasing service demands and a growing complexity of services needed. This unfair situation was acknowledged and remedied by the federal government through negotiation of the first Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, COIA.

The increase in overall funding for the national program and the significant increase in funding of \$920 million over the life of the agreement for Ontario acknowledged the importance of immigrant settlement and integration services, acknowledged that the immigrant- and refugee-serving sector had been starved for resources for more than a decade, recognized that labour market integration was an important part of the settlement process, and acknowledged the historical trend in underfunding, particularly in real program delivery costs in areas such as overhead, program costs, and workers' salaries.

It also recognized the need to ensure increased accountability through building sector capacity. A strong and stable sector would lead to better programming, better accountability, and better outputs and outcomes.

In late August 2010, the provincial ministers of immigration and OCASI, among others, were informed by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration that it had undertaken a strategic review. The review resulted in a 5% reduction to the settlement and integration funding envelope across Canada. We were also told that this worked out to \$53 million in 2011-12 and an additional \$6 million to be cut in 2012-13. As we now know, more than 80% of the cuts, representing \$43 million plus, came out of the Ontario allocation. At the same time, the decision was made to implement the new settlement allocation model, which is based on permanent resident landing numbers, with some acknowledgement of refugee numbers.

The leadership of OCASI discussed the potential impact of the cuts on the sector and communicated to CIC that every effort should be made to minimize the impact on direct services. CIC agreed with this approach. The council was operating under the following assumptions.

The Ontario allocation for 2010-11 was \$428 million. This comes from \$320 million allocated to the last year of the COIA agreement, plus \$108 million, representing the base Ontario allocation for settlement and integration. We assumed the cuts would be taken from this total, and given that Ontario region had underspent by a cumulative \$200 million or so, the council expected the impact of the cuts to be minimal.

However, Citizenship and Immigration Canada did not calculate the cuts on \$428 million but on \$388 million, which is \$40 million less. By applying the cuts to a smaller funding envelope, there has been a much larger impact on programs and agencies, particularly in the Toronto area. We realize that the department, like all other federal departments, was being asked to find efficiencies amounting to 5% as part of the government's deficit reduction plan. However, we believed that the government would honour the funding commitment of year five of COIA.

For Ontario's immigrant- and refugee-serving sector, the depth of the cuts was completely unexpected. We were not unaware of the impact of the recession on the national budget, on our economy and our communities. In fact, our member agencies were seeing it first-hand in the work they did, trying to help immigrants and refugees to deal with job loss, cutbacks in hours, and cuts in wages.

In March of last year, CIC issued its first CFP under the new modernization approach in Ontario. The sector, in partnership with

the department, had spent the previous three years consulting on the need for a new approach to better respond to the growing diversity and complexity of immigrant settlement and integration needs and greater accountability demands from government.

● (0855)

The CFP encouraged applicants to submit new and creative approaches to settlement programming. It was intended to do away with program silos, increase accountability, and adopt a holistic approach to programming. It recognized the scope and scale of effective settlement work through specific themes, including community connections and support services. The latter provided child-minding support, assistance for clients with disabilities, and more, which unfortunately were among the first areas to be lost as a result of the cuts.

The message from CIC at that time was that the department was responsive to the real experiences and challenges of settlement, and it signalled a willingness to work with agencies to arrive at the mutually desirable goal of building meaningful immigrant settlement outcomes.

We work together with CIC Ontario region to facilitate information sessions around the CFP where applications were able to ask and receive answers to questions about the modernized approach. Applicants heard that they should dream big; they should think outside the box.

In summary, potential applicants, including current agreement holders, went away with the assurance that immigrant settlement and integration remained an important priority for government, and they invested countless hours planning, coordinating with partners, writing and submitting proposals. There was a real sense of partnership with the department, a sense that we were all working together to build sector capacity, to strengthen accountability and program delivery.

I must say that we haven't lost hope that this will continue, despite recent events. There is absolutely no sense of impending funding cuts on the part of the sector and, we believe, on the part of departmental officials—

The Chair: Perhaps you could wind up, Ms. Douglas, please.

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Let me just jump to some of the impacts on clients.

Clients that benefit the most from one-on-one support, such as those from stigmatized populations, would be the most affected. Clients referred to the nearest agency may not receive service in their own language because different locations have different language and cultural capacity. Clients are losing some supports such as transportation to access classes, child minding, resources for classroom materials, and learning enhancement.

Clients, particularly women from low-income populations, will be the most affected. Individuals in racialized communities are typically overrepresented in these populations. Clients will not be able to benefit from some of the highly specialized services currently available in the sector. For example, at least one of the agencies that will not have a contribution agreement in 2011-12, which represents a 100% cut, provided settlement services primarily to live-in caregivers and to a highly stigmatized population of immigrants, including sexual minorities and immigrants with HIV/AIDS, and their families.

There will 150 clients that will be affected by the loss of this service, which is located in one of Toronto's low-income neighbourhoods—

• (0900)

The Chair: We're way over, Ms. Douglas.

I'm going to have to—

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Let me go to the conclusion.

We thank you for the opportunity, but we do want to end by letting you know what our demands are, which we believe will mitigate the cuts. We are asking for CIC to implement a review of the decisions and the decision-making process for local settlement allocations for 2011-12 and 2012-13 where decisions have been made.

We are asking that at a minimum, CIC delay the implementation of the settlement allocation model in Ontario in 2012-13, given the additional significant cuts that will result.

Finally, we're asking that where requested by an agency and where there are no concerns with program and accountability requirements, those agencies that are currently funded and that will not be funded next year be given a one-year extension of their current agreement, so that they and the affected individuals have more time to prepare for the transition of the organization—

The Chair: Sorry, Ms. Douglas, to rush you. We do have your presentation in writing, and I thank you for that, but we'll have to move on.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Is there a French copy?

The Chair: Mr. Kennedy, you've raised a good point. I have a copy, but it's strictly in English, so we'll have it translated and made available to members of the committee.

Thank you, Ms. Douglas.

We now have the Afghan Association of Ontario.

Mr. Kakar.

Mr. Jamal Kakar (Executive Director, Afghan Association of Ontario): Thank you.

First of all, on behalf of the board of directors and members of the Afghan Association of Ontario, I would like to thank you, the members of the committee, for providing this opportunity to express our concern and share our thoughts on the subject of CIC funding cuts.

The Afghan Association of Ontario was established in 1982 by a handful of volunteers, to serve and better integrate the ever-increasing number of new Afghan Canadians into the larger Canadian society. This association began its partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 1985. Since that time, it has provided CIC-sponsored settlement and integration services to thousands of new immigrants with services at a high level of quality and professionalism.

In addition to the provision of support services to newcomers, the Afghan Association of Ontario has been a sponsorship agreement holder since 1985. This has made immigration possible for thousands of Afghans who are seeking a home in Canada's peaceful nation.

The Afghan Association of Ontario has been providing settlement services in Toronto since 1986. During that time, it has garnered a reputation for its quality in service provision, sound financial management, and strong leadership. The Afghan Association of Ontario has made a positive difference in the lives of Afghans and other immigrants and refugees by assisting them with their basic settlement needs.

For the record, since 1999-2000, the Afghan Association of Ontario has served more than 1,000 newcomers from Afghanistan. Most of them are well-established and contributing to the economy.

The Afghan community in Toronto is a growing community, which is still considered a new community in relation to other immigrant communities. The majority of newcomers have settled in the greater Toronto area within the past 10 years. The Afghan community in the GTA and surrounding areas has reached close to 80,000. In addition, based on CIC letters communicated to the Afghan Association of Ontario, Canada receives about 2,000 new Afghans each year, most of whom settle in Ontario, particularly in the greater Toronto area.

It's worth noting that the Afghan Association of Ontario has been instrumental in the settlement of newcomers who have gone on to become professionals and contributors to Canadian society. We have lawyers, medical doctors, university professors, teachers, police officers, and businessmen.

Since it's not possible to get commercial leases for recurring 12-month periods, the Afghan Association of Ontario has entered into a contractual agreement that extended beyond the funding period. Based on CIC's insistence, the Afghan Association of Ontario signed the lease agreement for five years starting in April 2008, where CIC paid its first and last two months deposit. As per contractual agreement, the Afghan Association of Ontario must continue paying the monthly rent until the end of the lease agreement, which will add up to over \$300,000. We feel that CIC is leaving us with a debt of over \$300,000, where we have no means or possibility to pay this back.

The Afghan Association of Ontario will lose all its staff members with immediate termination and deprive more than 4,000 Afghan clients from receiving timely settlement services. These include recently arrived Afghan immigrants from Kandahar, who are fast-tracked by the government through its special immigration measures to begin a new life in Canada in safety. We welcome this special immigration program for these 1,500 Afghans and their families, who have risked their lives and served alongside our soldiers in Kandahar. The Afghan Association of Ontario is playing, and will play, a critical role in their socio-cultural adjustment, integration, and settlement in Canada.

Therefore, there will be an immediate impact on their settlement and future well-being in Canada.

There are more than 120,000 Afghan Canadians living throughout Canada whose relatives would most probably choose Ontario as their permanent home or starting point for their future residency in Canada.

• (0905)

The news of cutting funds and the closure of the Afghan Association of Ontario has had an already negative impact and reaction in so many ways. We would like to see full reinstatement of the current funding for the Afghan Association of Ontario so that there is no loss of services to new immigrants in our Afghan community.

Second, there would be a requirement that CIC consult with the provincial government and the sector to ensure that changes of this magnitude incorporate all relevant factors and perspectives and have advanced planning and clear communications.

In closing, I would like to mention that in addition to our settlement services, as a larger Afghan Canadian diaspora organization we have always supported Canada's engagement in Afghanistan in its efforts to bring peace and stability to the Afghan people and to the region. We have promoted Canada's mission, not only in the Afghan community but also to the larger population here and abroad. Our community representatives have engaged with the Government of Canada, federal ministers, and other government officials, including members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Kakar, you were right on time. Thank you very much.

We will now move to St. John's, the Association for New Canadians. Ms. Foster or Ms. Morris, do you hear me?

Ms. Bridget Foster: Yes, I'm here.

The others have actually left the room. I don't know if you've seen *The King's Speech*, but I feel a bit as though I'm here with a microphone and I'm talking to all of you.

The Chair: I don't know who's speaking, but we don't have a speech.

Ms. Bridget Foster: I'm Bridget Foster.

The Chair: The movie *The King's Speech*?

Ms. Bridget Foster: Yes, I'm saying—

The Chair: Well, the chairman hasn't seen it yet, but I hear it's quite good.

Ms. Bridget Foster: It's very good. The poor king was left in the room—

The Chair: Are you saying I stutter? Is that why you're saying that?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Bridget Foster: I'm far enough away, you can't hurt me!

Thank you for this opportunity.

I'm Bridget Foster, and I am the executive director of the Association for New Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador. I've been doing the job for 30 years, so I think I'm just here for historical reasons. Thank God you can't see me.

We are the main settlement service providers for immigrants and refugees in the province. Our services range from the delivery of the resettlement assistance program and settlement and orientation services to support integration such as ESL, volunteer programs, and labour market support. Furthermore, the organization works extensively in the area of public education in order to promote the value of immigration, to increase cross-cultural awareness, and to combat barriers to access.

Like other settlement agencies across the country, we do our utmost to provide a comprehensive array of programs and services on limited budgets and to provide high levels of support for immigrants and refugees.

As the only federally funded settlement agency in the province, our situation is somewhat unique when compared to some other provinces in Canada. We have long worked under an integrated service delivery model. This, I believe, has proven to be quite effective and efficient, allowing us to ensure that maximum resources are dedicated to service delivery.

We like to believe we were ahead of CIC when it comes to modernized settlement programming, as we have long been delivering a continuum of integrated services. Of course, I'm wondering if our approach may have been born more out of a need for survival than a talent for ingenious planning.

The settlement service provider organizations have a crucial role to play in ensuring a positive settlement experience for newcomers. I believe it is critical for agencies to be able to maintain infrastructure and qualified staff despite fluctuations in numbers of newcomers coming to the area's provinces.

This leads me to address some of the challenges associated with the sector in general. In a nutshell, we are increasingly challenged by administrative caps, funding reductions, and funding uncertainty. As a result, it is becoming much more difficult for organizations to cover administrative and operational expenses. This affects the ability of organizations to meet growing accountability and reporting requirements. In addition, it becomes more difficult to recruit and retain qualified administrative staff and to produce solid plans for the future.

The bottom line is that agencies are spending a tremendous amount of time on reporting and other related paperwork. It is time for these funding processes to be streamlined, as was recommended by the report of the blue ribbon panel on grant and contribution programs.

Beyond concerns related to infrastructure and staff retention, there are other issues that I believe influence effective program delivery.

The settlement of immigrants and refugees can be a complex and lengthy process requiring extensive follow-up and support for many years. Some individuals adapt and integrate quite quickly, while others require more time than is allotted under the resettlement assistance program (RAP).

One option that needs to be given serious consideration is to increase the funding under the resettlement assistance program and to extend support beyond the initial period of four to six weeks. I believe this would result in more positive outcomes for government-assisted refugees. I believe that increased funding for the RAP program is long overdue.

In looking at the 2011-12 allocations, I think we have fared better than some provinces. Nonetheless, we too have had lean years. Last year, we had to reduce our budget by 15%. For a small agency like ours, this reduction has had a significant impact, resulting in the elimination of key positions and reductions in administrative and operational expenditures. The bottom line is that there is never enough funding, so we must draw on our creative talents and work in cooperation with our federal and provincial partners and funders to sustain key programming.

I think we have recognized the importance of working in partnership at all levels of government. This province, in 1998, established the Coordinating Committee on Newcomer Integration (CCNI), and this committee has taken a leadership role in engaging stakeholders to address immigration and inclusion, as well as integration policies, issues, and practices. Thirteen years into its mandate, the CCNI has established itself as a credible and influential working group of people. We believe it's really of great value.

● (0910)

Another key alliance is the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance, CISSA-ACSEI. This is a pan-Canadian organization that has worked to advance public policy and programs. In fact, in 2010, with support from CIC, we spearheaded a piece of research called "Reconfiguring Settlement and Integration: A Service Provider Strategy for Innovation and Results". This was done by the Meyer Burstein consulting group. It's actually a very interesting piece of work and I think a valuable first step.

Another valuable alliance is the SIJPPC. This is a working group. It's the Settlement and Integration Joint Policy and Program Council. This is a group that has representatives from both the federal and provincial organizations and governments. It's supported by CIC, and we do have the opportunity to have face-to-face meetings twice a year with the SIJPPC.

I believe these organizations, which have umbrella representatives, are of vital importance to development planning and innovation. Indeed, I think networking opportunities, such as those afforded by the national settlement conference—

● (0915)

The Chair: Ms. Foster, I wonder if you could wind up soon, please.

Ms. Bridget Foster: Absolutely.

The last national settlement conference was in 2003. I think it might be very useful to perhaps think of having another one.

The Newfoundland government now has an immigration strategy that is proving to be helpful.

On that note, thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Foster. We have some questions from the committee.

Mr. Oliphant.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to all of you for the work you do. It's work, I know, that is usually done on a shoestring budget with staff who work hard. Thank you for multiplying your dollars with volunteers as well.

In my experience, in going to agencies regularly, I see a wonderful interplay between the community of settled Canadians and newcomers. That's an additional advantage to the work you do. Not only do you help newcomers settle into Canada, but you also help those of us who have been here longer to understand what's going on in their lives. Thank you for that work.

Ms. Douglas, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. First, do you have a role in keeping statistics or data with respect to the agencies that are members of your organization?

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Yes, we do. On an annual basis, during the membership renewal process, agencies are asked a number of questions, such as number of clients served, number of staff, levels of funding, and sources of funding.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Do you perceive that the number of clients being served by your organizations is decreasing?

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Not at all. One of the areas I'm hoping this committee will probe is the connection, the direct line, that's being drawn between the number of clients and positive outcomes. I don't think that CIC itself has reported out that any of the agencies that have to report on a monthly basis have seen a decline in services.

I do think there has to be a recognition—and I believe Bridget mentioned it—that some clients integrate or settle faster than others do, but there are always needs. For us in Ontario, the fact that our landing numbers have decreased over the last five years does not necessarily correspond to there being a decrease for service.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: That's right. The statistics we get from CIC are based on absolute numbers of newcomers, not necessarily on the number of people who access services. So we need those numbers of people who access services, which may be on the increase, because not every newcomer to Canada accesses services. We send them, from my office, to agencies all the time. Some go and some don't go. I think that may be helpful. We may ask for some numbers from you on the actual numbers of people accessing services.

Ms. Debbie Douglas: I actually would submit that we should get those numbers from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which has a more accurate picture.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Okay. We'll ask for that.

The second area is that I was pushing the CIC officials on Tuesday regarding interprovincial traffic of newcomers to Canada, landing in one area but within a certain number of years moving to another area. They did say that there was a general east to west migration.

However, since Tuesday, when I researched it—because I didn't know this—I have found out that that's based on tax filers. The only data they're using is from people who file income tax returns. It's not on people and where they're living and paying rent or living with friends and not paying rent.

I'm now trying to get some subjective understanding of this. Do you perceive that there's been a migration from the east to the west because the economy in Alberta has boomed? Of course, all Canadians and newcomers have moved. Newcomers, in my perception, sometimes have landed in one area but have then resettled where there's a significant Afghan community or a significant number of their compatriots so that they can actually have other resources. Is that your experience?

I'm going to go first to you, and then to Mr. Kakar after that.

• (0920)

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Yes, that is our experience, in terms of the secondary migration research that you are speaking to. It's a research report that was commissioned by Citizenship and Immigration. It's an internal report to the department. What we do know from that report is that in Ontario we have over 90% retention of immigrants who come to Ontario. There is some slight movement. Unfortunately, what it doesn't capture, and this is particularly to Toronto, is interprovincial movement.

You're right, the research was done based on tax filings, nothing else.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Your tax filings between 2000 and 2006. That's what the officials didn't explain to me on Tuesday, so I'm a little concerned that they gave some information that wasn't really germane to this issue.

The Chair: Mr. Oliphant, I'm going to allow another question. I'm going to have each caucus for five minutes to allow time for this motion. You have time for one more question.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Kakar, is that your experience too, about interprovincial migration?

Mr. Jamal Kakar: Absolutely. It's not only interprovincial, honourable member, but also from other parts of the country. We do receive, let's say, a secondary migration from Quebec, a secondary

migration from British Columbia, from Alberta. So we receive all of these Afghans because they have a relationship in Toronto or in Ontario, particularly in—

Mr. Robert Oliphant: In my riding particularly, which I'm very pleased to have.

Mr. Jamal Kakar: Absolutely, yes. So that is the experience that we have being seeing for the past several years.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur St-Cyr, you have up to five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I understand that this issue presents a number of distinct problems. The first being that, overall, cuts are made to a budget and then, in addition to that cut, the amounts are redistributed, which means that certain cities that were used to having more funding receive less, while other cities receive more. That's what I would like your opinion on. Even Mr. Oliphant clearly stressed that the numbers used by the department might not be representative of where the needs are, because an immigrant may arrive somewhere and then move elsewhere. There may also be categories of immigrants who have greater needs than others. But, in general, I think that we can still figure that needs may shift geographically in Canada over time and that we'll need to adjust the situation.

What astonishes me about the method put forward by the government is the fairly brutal nature of these changes. When the public servants appeared in Ottawa, I asked them quite simply if they could carry out so brutal a transition within the public service. Could they say, "We no longer need 55 people in Toronto, so we are going to move them to Alberta or elsewhere"? They didn't really answer me, but we understand that it's absolutely impossible. I have the impression that we are treating groups like yours a little like labour that is easy to get rid of when we no longer need them, and we just decide to send them somewhere else. That isn't the reality. It takes time to train the people in your organizations, make them efficient so they can provide services and, of course, once the cuts happen, all those people are left with almost nothing. This doesn't mean that they are going to want to move to another city in Ontario or Alberta to continue working.

Often in the public service, attrition is used or funding for new projects in one place is withdrawn to devote new energies elsewhere. Do you think that this might be a more appropriate way of moving people to meet this new demand of immigrants somewhere other than in Toronto, for example? We could say that we are going to continue what's been done already, that we are not going to increase the rate and offers of service, but that we are going to at least maintain it and that new service offerings will go in the new places. So we could try to reconcile the need to move the offer of services while anticipating that we will need to provide some transition.

[English]

Ms. Debbie Douglas: I'm trying to decide what to start with to answer your questions because you've raised a number of points.

Let me start with your last question. As I said at the top of my presentation, we know that because of the huge change that happened in 2005-06, there was a delay in the rollout of the COIA. There was a need to build capacity both within the department and within the sector, and hence the slippage of dollars.

Even with the 5% strategic review, we believe that cut could have been absorbed without the drastic cuts we have seen in the province. Certainly, not only will clients be impacted in terms of services, but also agencies are employers. They have the same legal responsibility in terms of employees that the federal government has as the employer of the public service, or as our private sector has. That's one of the concerns: that because of the relationship that non-profits have with government—and particularly with the federal government, where we have contribution agreements as opposed to grants—they often do not have the room to develop contingency plans over many years.

When you hear the Afghan Association speak about liabilities, that is a very real cost. It is something we are working on with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, to figure out a way that they can help support the agencies through those kinds of transitions as it has to do with their legal liabilities around issues of severance, working notices, lease agreements, and those kinds of things.

We are certainly looking at one of your suggestions, and we are paying particular attention to the 2012-13 fiscal year when the settlement allocation model is supposed to be rolled out. If we're using 2009 landing numbers for Ontario in 2010, we're looking at 118, 120, taking into account roughly the number of refugees plus permanent residents landing, and we're looking at an additional \$20 million cut. There is just absolutely no way the province can afford to absorb another \$20 million in 2012-13, particularly before we know the real impacts of the \$43 million cut we'll have had.

● (0925)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Douglas.

Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Ms. Douglas, you have a few more pages you were about to talk about. I'm wondering whether you can briefly describe what else you had prepared and didn't have time to talk about, and some of the recommendations. Can you explain a little bit more about how to continue in terms of the transition?

I will just ask a bunch of questions. To the Afghan Association, you heard of the cuts just before Christmas. I assume people wouldn't start working until January. That's about 28 working days. Has the department come to you and said this is how they can assist you in helping all the clients you have been serving—over 1,000—how they will then continue to get service? Have they done that? Have they offered some kind of mitigation in terms of your \$300,000 debt? You don't even need to answer. You're shaking your head.

There are 35 more working days before the end of March, before the funding is gone, not a lot of time. What are you planning to do?

Maybe Ms. Douglas first, and then to the Afghan Association.

Ms. Debbie Douglas: One of the things I wanted to impress on the committee was the whole sense of partnership that's been building over the last five years in Ontario, not only between the federal government and the provincial government, but also the funding stakeholders like the City of Toronto, which has a memorandum of understanding as part of COIA, as well as our community foundations like the United Way of Greater Toronto. All these agencies and the private foundations have often come together to leverage CIC funding so that agencies are able to provide a holistic program within a case management framework.

The fact that \$43 million has been taken out of the system just undermines the whole partnership that has been developed. It forces the funders to take a look at what they can do if the integrity of the infrastructure of some of our agencies has been compromised. That is also something we are urging CIC to pay attention to and to engage those other funders as it thinks through how best to deal with this new financial reality we have in Ontario.

I think it's very important that we pay attention to what further cuts within the next fiscal year will mean to Ontario. We think a delay of the settlement allocation model is doable. The same way Quebec has had its very special agreement, which we don't begrudge, we wish Ontario could have a similar agreement. We absolutely understand the need for a settlement allocation model. We do believe that money should follow immigrants. But we also know we cannot evaluate programs and we cannot look at outcomes only by numbers. We also have to look at quality and effectiveness of services. Those are also positive outcomes.

● (0930)

Mr. Dost Yar (Treasurer, Afghan Association of Ontario): As Jamal mentioned in his opening statement, the immediate impact is on our lease.

The lease was signed for five years based on CIC's insistence. We were working from a different location before 2008. We were told to move from that location and they would find a better place, better furniture, and so on and so forth. Fine, we don't care: if you pay for it, we'll do it; otherwise, we'll not move.

The new location requirement was that we had to sign the lease for five years. We contacted the CIC about the lease issue. They said it was no problem, to go ahead and sign the lease; they'd pay the first month and the last two months of the five-year lease. And they did that.

Then, after we were told that there would be no more funding beginning April 1 of this year, we didn't know what to do. There were still two years left on the lease. In fact, last week we informed the landlord that the last two months of the lease...we can use that deposit. The landlord told us, no, we can't; we signed the lease and we have a legal obligation.

On the one hand, we didn't know what to do. We sent an e-mail to CIC asking them what do we do now: you advised us to sign the lease with the landlord, you paid the deposit of the last two months, and you agreed, you gave the approval. But now they will not respond to us.

On the other hand, the landlord keeps asking us...and we're scared. The board is thinking that if the landlord comes tomorrow and locks the door, our office people won't....

We don't know what's going to happen next Monday. The day before yesterday, the landlord dropped off another letter for us saying that we have until February 14 to pay the rent for this month. We have not paid it yet.

Ms. Olivia Chow: What about your clients? What are they going to do? And then there's your staff.

Mr. Dost Yar: Well, we are still servicing the clients. We informed some of them. We have a TV program, where we tell about the services and so forth. They're not happy, basically. We're mouth to mouth in the programs and other services, so they're affected, of course.

The volunteers are affected emotionally; we have so many volunteers who come in—

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Shory is next.

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

Mr. Chair, being a first-generation new Canadian, I highly appreciate the value of settlement funding and the services provided by these agencies. As a matter of fact, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank both Canada and the service provider agencies.

I have several questions, so I would highly appreciate it if everyone could give straight answers and short answers.

First, to Ms. Douglas, how long, maximum, can someone stay with the program?

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Citizenship and Immigration program eligibility criteria are based on status. However, the department has an unwritten policy that the funding should be focused on initial settlement, so between one and three years. But to be eligible, one must be a permanent resident as opposed to a citizen or a non-permanent resident.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Are you aware of anyone who continued the program after they started working?

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Absolutely—and not only after they started working, but sometimes after years. We know that immigrant women in particular often come to settlement at a later date because of

family obligations. We also know that new immigrants, regardless of education, often take survival jobs and are unable to access services—

Mr. Devinder Shory: I'm sorry to cut you off, but I have questions for other witnesses also. The chair has given us only five minutes.

Finally, Ms. Douglas, do people who are enrolled in the program after they start work pay for the program, or do they still keep on utilizing the program while also getting paid from their regular work?

• (0935)

Ms. Debbie Douglas: Government-funded programs are free to clients. If agencies are charging, then they should not be doing so under the federal program.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Thank you.

To Ms. Foster and Ms. Morris from the Association for New Canadians, are you aware that permanent resident landings in Newfoundland are up about 40% since 2003, and that landings in Ontario have been decreased substantially over the same period?

First, do you think it is reasonable that we have increased funding to Newfoundland and decreased funding to Ontario; and two—short and sweet—should the funding follow the immigrants, or should the funding stay in one place and immigrants chase the funding?

Ms. Bridget Foster: That's a very difficult question.

In reality, our funding has increased very modestly, but then so have the number of people coming here. I think what's even more telling is that more and more people are staying in this province.

Mr. Devinder Shory: In your opinion, do the immigrants in one province have less value than the immigrants in another province?

Ms. Megan Morris: No, of course, that's not the case.

We need to ensure that we sustain important infrastructure, so that has to be taken into consideration when there are cuts.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Would you like to comment on this? In Ontario immigrant funding was on track to be \$1,000, and this was more than for immigrant funding in other provinces like Newfoundland. What do you feel about the request by agencies from Ontario to maintain and expand their special treatment? Do you think that some provinces should have special treatment?

Ms. Megan Morris: I'm not certain that we would really want to comment on that. It's very difficult. The situation is so very different in Ontario than it is in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Devinder Shory: It's interesting that lately—

The Chair: This is your final question, Mr. Shory. I'm sorry.

Go ahead.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Lately, we were accused of decisions being made for political reasons. I don't know if you are aware of any Conservative MP in Newfoundland?

Ms. Bridget Foster: I'm sorry, we couldn't quite understand you. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Devinder Shory: Yes. We are accused of making decisions for political reasons. Are you aware of any Conservative MP in Newfoundland?

Ms. Bridget Foster: No. But I would have to say that I selectively wear a blue jacket and a red jacket. To the best of my knowledge, we have not been affected.

Mr. Devinder Shory: Do I have more time?

The Chair: I don't think you can top that, Mr. Shory. We're going to have to conclude our session.

I'd like to thank all of our guests for your presentations, from St. John's to here in Ottawa. Your comments have been very helpful. Thank you very much.

We will now suspend.

• (0935) _____ (Pause) _____

• (0940)

The Chair: I'm going to call the meeting to order.

We do have a bit of a technical problem. We're going to start with some of the guests who are available. The group from Vancouver, who is on teleconference, and the group from Calgary may not come on for a few minutes, so we'll just start with two, and the others, hopefully, will join us.

We have a total of four witnesses. This session is going to go for three-quarters of an hour.

We have the Asian Community AIDS Services, who are here in Ottawa. We have with us Andre Goh, the board chair—good morning to you—and Riz Quiaoit, coordinator of the settlement program—good morning to you, sir. And we have Ms. Jamila Aman—good morning to you—who is with Northwood Neighbourhood Services. I believe they're from Toronto and they are here in Ottawa with us.

The other two groups aren't quite on the air yet, so we will proceed with the two groups.

We will start with Mr. Goh.

You're making a presentation. You have up to seven minutes, sir.

Mr. Andre Goh (Board Chair, Asian Community AIDS Services): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Chair and members.

I wanted to speak a little bit about the challenges we face in our community, in particular the East and Southeast Asian LGBT communities.

Historically, our organization was born because of a need, because there was none that existed at the time, and through the challenges we have faced over the years we have been able to build up an organization. In the past there were two other sister organizations, in Vancouver and Montreal. These have since ceased to exist. We continue to exist. Officially, we've been around for 15 years, historically for over 27 years.

Some of the groups that we currently service include those from Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Burma, Laos, and of course from

East Asia, Japan, China, and Korea. Our groups are multilingual, multicultural, and unique in their needs. The challenges for us have always been and continue to be that we don't offer services in one language or in one format. Having said that, what we have received from the CIC is funding for one program worker, and we've actually been able to function successfully with those.

Our primary challenges are the ongoing issues around community outreach and community integration. Our goals, intentionally, have always been to welcome the newcomers, who don't find services within the mainstream, whether it is mainstream Canadian organizations and agencies or mainstream LGBT communities and agencies. That's our fundamental goal. We serve a niche within this larger Canadian context.

When we actually fill that niche, our goal, ultimately, as with all organizations, is to integrate the individuals, to provide them with enough resources to become productive Canadians. The challenge for us as well, as I said, is multicultural, multilingual, and issues around homophobia, racism...and the list goes on.

One of the things that we've fundamentally tried to address through the CIC funding was to bridge that gap between the resources newcomers need in order to become fully participating Canadians.

I'd like our caseworker to give you a little bit of context about what I'm talking about.

• (0945)

Mr. Riz Quiaoit (Coordinator, Settlement Program, Asian Community AIDS Services): I am the lone worker at ACAS, and as an agency, we're relatively small compared with other settlement agencies. We are mandated to provide HIV prevention, education, and support services to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The settlement program is three years old, and we have made positive impacts not only on the community but also for our clients. Many of our clients have expressed that they feel welcome at our agency and that there's a strong sense of community.

We are located in downtown Toronto and have built strong ties with our community partners—community health centres, hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, and churches. We connect our clients to people, places, and community events that are LGBT-positive.

ACAS has also reached out to other groups. There are a growing number of clients, particularly temporary workers, such as those who came to Canada under the live-in caregiver program, who have fulfilled their residency obligation and have determined that they want to settle in Canada. When my program is closed they will no longer be able to build these services. Similarly, there are international students who have graduated from university or college and are eligible to apply for permanent residence under the Canadian experience, and they will—

The Chair: Sir, could you wind up, please?

Mr. Riz Quiaoit: As Andre said, we have filled in these gaps and reached out to other communities that need services.

Mr. Andre Goh: Mr. Chair, if I may, we have two suggestions that we think would be helpful. If there could be more transparency to funding assessment processes, individual agencies such as ours could have a better understanding of how funding is allocated or how to utilize the funding. Also, should funding cease, if there could be more significant lead time so that agencies could make appropriate settlement issues and contingencies, ideally six to twelve months is more realistic than usually three to four months.

Thank you.

• (0950)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Aman, do you have a presentation to give us?

Ms. Jamila Aman (Executive Director, Northwood Neighbourhood Services): Good morning, everyone.

I'll just tell you briefly about Northwood Neighbourhood Services, and then I will talk about five areas: the impact to the agency, the impact to the community, the impact of the cuts to our clients, the cost to the country, and some research-based statistics.

Northwood Neighbourhood Services is a multi-service neighbourhood centre. Of course, the program that was affected by the CIC cut is the settlement services. We have eight settlement counsellors who speak over 28 languages, and they serve, of course, those clients. Last year we served 1,800 clients, people who came for the first time or for subsequent visits.

We have two child-parent programs in the neighbourhood in Toronto, one in Wards 7 and 8 and one in Wards 9 and 10. These are for parents and children from ages zero to six. We have seniors' programs. We serve seven ethnic groups—individually, of course. A lot of seniors have language barriers, so we cannot mix them up, except for one program, because we run it in a seniors' building. We serve the Albanian seniors, Latin American seniors, and the one I mentioned, the multicultural seniors program, because it is in a seniors' building at Arleta and Sheppard Avenue. We serve Sudanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and South Asian seniors. These programs are one day a week.

We have two violence against women programs—we call them “cook and talk”. We have a green program, educating the public; we do workshops and seminars and one-on-one counselling to go green. We are also sponsorship agreement holders. We have a financial literacy program that's also funded by another department, HRSDC. We have employment and self-employment programs, volunteer training and placement. We take a lot of volunteers from the neighbourhood, a lot from Ontario Works, and also from the colleges and universities. And we have English conversation classes. There are a lot of ESL classes, but some people cannot fall into these categories, so we have English conversation circles based on groups, and we have five groups currently.

I'll tell you about the impact to the agency when we got the letter on December 10. There is a liability to the organization because we have a five-year lease and we are in year three. We also have staff members who have worked with Northwood, at the least for four years, and I have a couple of them who have worked for 10 years with the organization.

On the impact to the community, for an organization that has served and was funded by CIC since 1986, what can we tell our clients—don't come anymore, our doors are closed?

For a lot of these people...little things that we take for granted, whether they're newcomers or Canadians.... Some of the people, you cannot imagine, they come in, and when we offer them a cup of tea and we say good morning, they are so happy. At times they tell us we are the guardian angels because there is nobody to talk to them, nobody to guide them and to show them where to go and where to find services, to refer them to the available mainstream services. So that is the impact to our community.

The other thing I want to talk about is the impact to partnerships. We have private sector partnerships. We have other NGOs that we partner with. Just the cuts of CIC incapacitated the organization. It represented 30% of our budget, which is \$400,000. Not only will the settlement services be eliminated, but also, CIC funded our core infrastructure, which allowed us to partner with colleges and universities, with other non-profit organizations, for services that have nothing to do with newcomers, such as the Learning Disabilities Association, the Margaret Frazer House. Part of the CIC application for this year was to partner with CIC to look into the mental health issues of women.

The one thing that I would like to mention is some research that was done by the Canadian Policy Research Networks in 2002 called *Mapping the Non-profit Sector—Human Resources in the Non-profit Sector*. The non-profit sector contributes \$102 billion to the Canadian economy. It's the second largest in the world. The non-profit sector employs two million employees in Canada, and out of the two million, one million are in Ontario. So what is going to happen to the sector? I just worry about the third sector, the non-profit. I feel that the recognition for this sector is absent when CIC just randomly sends us a letter, after we've been funded since 1986, to say they're no longer going to fund us.

• (0955)

Is three months enough? Were we prepared? Was the sector prepared? And what is the cost to Canada? What will happen to these clients?

Well, I don't have to tell you what Canada preaches around the world and what we appear to be. Are we walking the talk?

The Chair: Could you please wind up soon?

Ms. Jamila Aman: Sure.

Reversing the CIC decision will be great, because otherwise all these things that I mentioned will be missing and organizations like Northwood and others will be incapacitated, but more importantly, what's going to happen to the clients?

We need to have, as was mentioned earlier, three or six months to wind up. We didn't even get a phone call from CIC. When we got the letter on December 10, I placed a phone call, wrote a letter and an e-mail. I just got a call this Monday saying, "You requested a meeting. We'd like to sit down and talk with you." I think this is a complete lack of respect because of the work these organizations have done. This is not acceptable to me and to you.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Aman.

Mr. Tam from British Columbia, are you there? It appears he is not.

Mr. Sindhu. Hello, sir.

Mr. Salim Sindhu (Executive Director, Calgary Immigrant Educational Society): Good morning. Can you hear me?

The Chair: I can, sir.

Mr. Sindhu, you're the executive director of the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, and you have someone with you.

Mr. Salim Sindhu: Yes, Nouredine. He's one of my senior managers.

The Chair: You're going to make a brief presentation to us?

Mr. Salim Sindhu: Yes, sir.

The Chair: You may proceed, sir. Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Salim Sindhu: Thank you very much.

Good morning, honourable members. My name is Salim Sindhu. I'm executive director of the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society. I'm also accompanied by my senior manager, Nouredine.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to talk about the immigration settlement and adaptation program.

The announcement by Honourable Jason Kenney, the immigration minister, about changes in funding to the immigration settlement program was long overdue, since Alberta has a number of secondary immigrants coming from Ontario. Also, as new immigrant statistics show, more new immigrants go directly to Alberta rather than to Ontario.

These changes have a great impact on the delivery of settlement services. They will enable us to improve or add more settlement services in the southeast area of the city of Calgary.

The Calgary Immigrant Educational Society started a LINC program in 1990. The LINC program was independent; it was not part of the settlement services until 2008, when the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced that LINC would be part of settlement services.

An increase in LINC funding was announced by the honourable minister, and our society is providing the LINC program with 30 full-time and part-time classes. In 2010, under settlement services, we added an after LINC program, called employment skills training, to help immigrants complete the LINC program and learn job-searching techniques. This program has become very successful and it is in very high demand. When I finish, I will invite the EST program manager to briefly present some details to everyone.

We could not become so-called settlement services over the past 20 years, as these services are restricted to a few selected organizations in the city of Calgary. The settlement services that are provided are located in different parts of the city. The majority of the organizations are located in the downtown area.

However, when it comes to evaluating the settlement program applications, geographic criteria do not seem to be considered. The Calgary Immigrant Educational Society is located in the southeast of Calgary, where a lot of new immigrants reside because of the affordability of housing. But settlement counselling service is not available in this area; they have to travel all the way downtown to access the counselling service.

In addition, under the LINC program, about 450 clients receive service from our organization on a daily basis. We have to deal with all kinds of different issues almost every day. Some clients request counselling and they have to be referred to other organizations. This has created a lot of difficulty for our clients. We have to face the same questions every day. Our clients constantly ask us questions as to why we cannot help them: "I'm already here. Why are you referring me to another place that is far away?"

We believe the changes in funding will have a positive impact on our organization. We hope additional funding will be allocated to Alberta in the near future and that our organization's request to add settlement counselling services will be favourably considered by CIC. Thanks to the increased funding support from CIC, our LINC program has increased the number of clients by 64% and child minding by 70%, compared to 2007 and 2008. This could only happen because of the additional funding for the program.

With the change in funding, we are very optimistic that immigrants' needs will be better met. As Honourable Kenney said, the changes do not represent significant cuts to funding but rather a redistribution of money to where it's needed most. Those funds are being reallocated to other areas that have evidence of greater need.

● (1000)

We believe there is obvious evidence of a great need for our organization to offer settlement counselling services to new immigrants, especially in the southeast area of Calgary. We look forward to witnessing the reallocation of funding to where it is needed in the city of Calgary as well as in Canada.

Thank you.

Now I defer to Nouredine.

Mr. Nouredine Bouissoukrane (Senior Manager, Employment Services, Calgary Immigrant Educational Society): Good morning, honourable members. My name is Nouredine Bouissoukrane. I am the manager of employment services at the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society.

Today I am very pleased to talk about the employment skills training, EST, program. Since April 2010 our organization has offered the EST program, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This successful program assists unemployed newcomers with the skills to secure employment in Canada. The curriculum includes training in computers, business communication, and job search techniques. It's three months in-class training plus one month practical.

The EST program consists of four components. The first part is computer training skills. We teach our students Microsoft Office 2007, computer hardware and software, Internet knowledge, and online job search.

The second part is Canadian business communication. We teach our citizens business terminology, how to build confidence, report and business writing, verbal presentations, and public speaking.

The third section is job search skills, by itself. It covers resum  and cover letter preparation, job interview skills, career planning, job search strategies, and job fairs.

The fourth and most important component is seminars. We invite guest speakers from the industry and from the corporate sector.

The Chair: Sir, I wonder if you could wind up, please.

Mr. Noureddine Bouissoukrane: With the present changes in funding to Alberta, we should be able to offer more settlement programs.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Thomas Tam (Chief Executive Officer, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.): Hello.

The Chair: Hello. Is this Mr. Tam?

Mr. Thomas Tam: Yes, Thomas Tam from SUCCESS in Vancouver.

The Chair: I was worried you weren't going to come and speak to us, sir. It's 7 o'clock out there. Did you just get up?

Mr. Thomas Tam: No, I've been here listening to all the conversations.

The Chair: That's good.

Mr. Tam, you're with SUCCESS.

Mr. Thomas Tam: Yes.

The Chair: And you're the chief executive officer.

Mr. Thomas Tam: That's right. Should I start my presentation?

•(1005)

The Chair: Welcome to Ottawa. If you could give a brief presentation, we would appreciate it.

Mr. Thomas Tam: Good morning, committee members. My name is Thomas Tam, and I am the CEO of SUCCESS, a multicultural social services organization that has been serving new Canadians since 1974. Our mission is to build bridges, harvest diversity, and foster integration.

Last year we served over 200,000 clients of diverse cultural backgrounds who spoke more than 20 different languages, including Chinese, Punjabi, Korean, Vietnamese, Farsi, and others.

Over half of our clients are new immigrants.

We have 26 service locations in metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and northern B.C., and we have overseas offices in Korea, Taiwan, and China.

It's my pleasure today to share with the committee what's happening in British Columbia in regard to the committee's concern about the social impacts of the recent CIC funding cuts.

The funding model in British Columbia is a little bit different from other provinces. Under the Canada-B.C. agreement, CIC has downloaded most of the settlement and adaptation services to the B.C. government through the transfer payment. In other words, the B.C. government is the direct funder for most of the services provided in British Columbia.

Although most of the services are delivered by the B.C. government, CIC still maintains some direct funding projects in British Columbia, mostly nationwide or interprovincial programs. SUCCESS, our organization, as an example, has two very unique projects funded directly by CIC. The first one is the AEIP project—the active engagement and integration project—which is an overseas project in Korea and in Taiwan that serves prospective immigrants coming to Canada.

The other project is our airport reception project at the Vancouver International Airport. We receive and provide orientation for over 40,000 newcomers who arrive at the airport. Half of them will go to other provinces, mostly the western provinces.

These two projects are directly funded by CIC. At this moment, we haven't received any funding cut signals or a funding reduction message from CIC, so we believe that CIC will also look at these two very unique and innovative projects. We are very optimistic that CIC will continue to support these two projects.

To conclude my presentation, as a service provider in British Columbia, we haven't seen any signal about drastic funding cuts recently because of the unique funding model between Canada and the B.C. government.

I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tam, for your presentation. The committee will have questions for all of the witnesses.

Mr. Kennedy, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Thank you. I might address my questions to the first people who spoke.

Have you seen any sign of a contingency plan? Is Citizenship and Immigration on the ground? Are they working to show where else people can be served, if they're trying to close down the programs they're de-funding? Have you had any indication there?

Mr. Andre Goh: From where we sit, no, there isn't. The uniqueness of the community we serve is that people who arrive anywhere across the country tend to migrate to Toronto, in part because this is where the LGBT community is most prominent.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: All right. We're 45 days away from losing funding and there are no replacement services in sight. Is that correct?

Mr. Riz Quiaoit: Yes.

Ms. Jamila Aman: That's true. There is no contingency plan. They are not even talking to us.

As I said earlier, they only called us this Monday to say that they would like to come to talk to us about why they eliminated our funding. It's not even about a contingency plan.

I don't think this was thought through. As I was saying earlier, this is a complete lack of respect for the work the non-profit sector is doing. We're not treated as equal partners. We're treated as if we're given a handout. We gave it to you and we'll take it away from you. It is that kind of thing. There has not been a talk.

If this was the direction of CIC, I think there should have been more conversation with us to tell us that this is what we are doing, so let's prepare, let's talk, and let's do what needs to be done.

• (1010)

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: We've been collecting figures from agencies—we've talked to 70 so far—and there are some 78,000 people who are going to have less or no services.

Do you think those people can be absorbed by your colleagues who haven't been cut as much? I just want to know your opinion.

Where do you think those people will end up? What will happen when those people start to knock on the doors of other agencies? I appreciate the point that has already been made about uniqueness, but even if they try to get services, what's going to happen at the other places?

Ms. Jamila Aman: Can I go first on this one?

We are told there are some services and agencies, and people can access those services.

First, a lot of people who are accessing our services are low-income people. They can't afford TTC, and TTC prices have been going up. Those people don't even have the money to travel and access services. Even if there are places, they don't know about it. We provide unique outreach services door to door, where clients know about us. If clients don't know where to go, how will they know where to go? This is the million dollar question.

Even if there are services in the city, it will be impossible for clients to access them. I'm not saying this because we were cut; this is a reality. I can tell you, last year, CIC cut funding, for whatever reason they had, to the centre for Spanish-speaking people. This was way before all these major cuts. In York West, in the immediate neighbourhood, in the Jane-Finch West and Mount Dennis

neighbourhood, we are the only organization that has been absorbing.... When the centre for Spanish people closed—

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: So there's no—

Ms. Jamila Aman: No, there is no service in the immediate area. Actually, Northwood was going to Jane and Finch, sending a counsellor, because we provide a lot of itinerant services. A lot of these services would be missing from this neighbourhood. Where we were going and where the clients were, the services will be missing.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Ms. Aman, I just want to tell you that we're going to release figures today that show that in fact big parts of Ontario are actually severely underfunded. The very places that are being cut have been receiving less money than other parts of the country all along.

I hate to tell the person from Alberta, who's rightfully saying we got a little bit more money.... What happened in a number of parts of Ontario is the money was promised before the last election, and now it's being taken away from a lot of those new services that are being folded up, unfortunately. I wanted to make that point really strongly.

They're saying this should be based on landings. Now I know there's a big problem with just using landings, but if you try to find a correlation between the landings across the country and the cuts that are taking place, it doesn't exist. So I just want you to be assured that this kind of deception, frankly, on the part of the government, or this kind of effort to try to get around the facts is not going to survive. There is going to be a public airing of these numbers, the very things that the government has tried to hang its hook on. They're basically saying that there is an excess capacity in Ontario and therefore we can take money out.

They're trying to set up a fight with other parts of the country for dollars that are being cut: \$53 million is leaving for good, for every \$1 that's being redistributed. So this isn't about rebalancing; it's a lot of money leaving the system.

It's really important, I think, because I know you must really feel that you are in a difficult position. You're forced to justify yourself after years of serving—you see the people every day—but I want you to know that there's a political thing at work here, a political allocation.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The discussion on monitoring needs and the allocation of resources based on needs is fairly interesting. I think that, generally, most people are going to agree on the fact that the money must match the needs. Now, how do you establish those needs? Also, how are we going to adapt to those changes with time? We cannot instantaneously make draconian changes to meet these needs.

Mr. Kennedy just spoke about aspects like the location where immigrants initially settle. It's a fairly approximate way of determining where the needs are geographically across Canada. I would like to know this. If you had to help the committee and suggest to us a way to establish where the long-term needs are and where we should invest, how would you do that? What would you base your calculation on?

[English]

Mr. Andre Goh: Thank you very much.

If I may, one of the things that we found with regard to allocation of money.... As we know, statistics can be used in multiple ways, and the challenge is that landings don't give an accurate picture. Ideally what you should be doing is where the immigrants are. Generally, what we found is that somebody who lands may not seek services immediately. It's going to take them a while to get used to the environment, wherever they are, to then understand the country and the distribution of services and needs. What we found is that some of the people we service have been here five, eight, ten years, and haven't actually understood that they are entitled to some services, that they can access some services, in part because there are barriers in place. Many people have already spoken about that.

What we've always said is that if you follow the landings it will give you an inaccurate reading and you're going to give funding based on something that evolves almost on a quarterly basis.

•(1015)

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: But what do we replace it with? Do we quite simply replace it with statistics that define where the immigrants are physically?

[English]

Mr. Andre Goh: With regard to immigrants and where immigrants settle, it's quite easy to find those statistics, they exist already. We know not only that the CIC keeps track of that, but Statistics Canada also has that kind of information.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: I'm going to come back to you, Ms. Aman.

To follow up on these questions, do you think that the needs of immigrants are the same regardless of where they come from? For example, is a new worker who comes from a European country likely to need as much, more or less aid than an Afghan refugee?

[English]

Mr. Andre Goh: Thank you for that. That point is actually pertinent to this discussion, in part because one of the things you've heard already is the complexity of servicing multiple needs with, in our case, one worker. The challenge around that is that we have to adapt. When we have workers we are able to access the resources already available. But if you ask the individual to do that, it's going

to be a challenge, it's going to take them time, and most likely, as we've seen, individuals fall through the cracks.

[Translation]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: Ms. Aman?

[English]

Ms. Jamila Aman: What I wanted to say is that the landing numbers, as indicated by my colleague, are inaccurate because a lot of clients, when they come to Canada, go where their relatives are. In Ontario there seem to be a lot of immigrants settling. It's easier to adapt. The multicultural component in Ontario, especially in Toronto, is huge, and a lot of people are attracted. So even though you send them to Alberta or smaller cities, they end up in Toronto.

To respond to your second question on the needs of European immigrants compared to those of Afghan immigrants, there are so many factors in immigration. First of all is the language issue. If a European refugee or immigrant comes to Toronto, they don't have the language barrier. Still, they have all the other barriers—being new in the country, where to go for services, knowing what services are available, and all that.

The other piece is that there's a difference between the foreign-trained professional and the person who is illiterate who comes from a refugee camp. There is a huge gap. The person who has foreign credentials and speaks the language might need simple guidance on where to go for services, while the person who has language barriers, who has trauma from being in a refugee camp, and who does not have a profession might be a case study where we carry the file for two or three years, compared to the person who is a foreign-trained professional.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Chow, I believe, has some questions.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Thank you.

This committee heard a number of witnesses. Last year we did a study on best practices on settlement services for immigrants. We made a recommendation. The recommendations were mostly agreed to by the CIC. It talked about how smaller agencies should obtain more support from CIC, and that there are services like mental health services. Numbers aren't the only thing. There are also different types of needs, so it needs a holistic, comprehensive approach. We did that study.

During that time there was no inkling that there were going to be any cuts. There was no discussion of what would happen if the pot shrank. So this came as a big surprise.

Are you aware of any discussion between the federal CIC and provincial and municipal counterparts? I know a lot of these agencies are also supported by the provincial, municipal...and the United Way of Greater Toronto, for example. They seem to have been caught off guard completely.

Are you aware of any internal discussion, or was the first time anybody heard of it in that letter just before Christmas?

• (1020)

Mr. Andre Goh: If I may, Ms. Chow, we approached the City of Toronto as well as the Ontario government to find out if we could access some funding to continue this, and then also to find out if there were perhaps some discussions. From our understanding, no: no for funding and no discussions. So there is no stopgap and there is no continuation.

Ms. Olivia Chow: That's also your experience, right?

Ms. Jamila Aman: Yes. I believe when we called the provincial ministry of citizenship, they were completely caught off guard and they were not completely aware. There has not been any discussion regarding this funding cut, as far as I know.

The one thing I would like to ask is this. CIC did a complete revamp and they called it the Welcoming Communities, and they told us last year, be creative—

Ms. Olivia Chow: With the five pillars and all that.

Ms. Jamila Aman: The five pillars and all that. They had a conference and they brought over 50 of their staff to be trained at the OCASI conference. We put a lot of time and energy into being creative and putting in our proposal. Why did they waste all their time and money in training their staff if they were going to cut?

Ms. Olivia Chow: We also said when we were studying the best practices, having partnerships with different organizations working together is a very good model. It eliminates duplication, it helps the clients by having one-stop shopping rather than going to different agencies. It was a lot of work putting it together and having the agencies trying to work with each other. I know that was happening, but again there was no inkling that this was going to come down. So a lot of agencies, I suppose, ended up wasting a lot of time and a lot of energy imagining what's possible and then they got a rude shock. Is that what actually happened?

Mr. Andre Goh: Yes. For us, certainly, the indication was that OCASI— Certainly ACAS has and continues to be engaged with OCASI, the Ontario network, in trying to make sure there's no duplication of services. What we try to do is, if individuals we find do not fit our criteria of niche needs, we can refer them and vice versa. That's been our experience. We try to maintain that, because these are public funds, there's no need to waste the funds. We try to use them as effectively and efficiently as we can.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Thank you.

Can I just ask a question of Mr. Tam who is in Vancouver? Are you aware of any funding cuts in different organizations in Vancouver?

Mr. Thomas Tam: Not at this moment. Again, as I mentioned, the Canada-B.C. agreement is a multi-year agreement. Our current contract with the B.C. government ends in September this year, and there will be another round of requests for proposals for the next

couple of years' service delivery. At this moment, we have not received any funding cuts from the provincial government. We know the transfer payments will be made according to the Canada-B.C. agreement, which I think was signed last year. So as service providers, we haven't been told anything about funding reductions or cuts.

The Chair: Dr. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Tam, for talking to us so early in the morning. It's really great to welcome you here.

I really appreciate everything you and SUCCESS have been doing in the community, not only for the Chinese community, but for other communities as well.

Can you give us a bit more detail about the programs you are delivering under the transfer payments? Then, also, how do you go through the process to receive government funding?

• (1025)

Mr. Thomas Tam: First of all, the funding is under ISAP, the immigration settlement and adaptation program. This framework is agreed on by CIC and the B.C. government, in consultation with the service providers.

At this moment, we have three streams of service. Stream one is a general information and orientation service for newcomers. Stream two is about the integration programs, such as the host program, the mentoring program, and labour market integration. And stream three is ELSA, which is the language training. In Ontario or in other parts of Canada, it is called LINC, but in British Columbia we call it ELSA. It also receives indirect funding from CIC.

In the last round, we went through a big public consultation in British Columbia. The provincial government decided to integrate streams one and two. So in the next round of requests for proposals, it won't be information, orientation, or mentoring. Agencies have to look at an integrated and comprehensive model, serving immigrant individuals and families. This is a good move. It is consistent with the CIC policy that under modernization we are moving to a more integrated and comprehensive approach to serving new immigrant families.

In British Columbia, at least in the metro Vancouver area, we work as a consortium or as a big partnership when we deliver programs. For example, in metro Vancouver—which is composed of Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster—three major organizations form a consortium to get the service contracts. We will work with each other to complement each string and capacity so that we divide—

The Chair: I think Ms. Grewal has a question, sir.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Tam, I would also like to thank you for all your work for SUCCESS. I know it's quite early in the morning in B.C.

I've had the pleasure of working with SUCCESS before, and I know all the great things your organization does for immigrant communities in B.C. Your organization has consistently delivered value for taxpayers' money.

Can you talk about the importance of vetting the service provider organizations to make sure they are delivering value for the taxpayers' money?

Mr. Thomas Tam: Sorry, can you repeat the last part of the question?

Mrs. Nina Grewal: I made a couple of announcements at your organization and it is doing a great job. All we want to know is how well you are using the money that was delivered to your organization.

Mr. Thomas Tam: First of all, we were already a large partnership structure in our community. We were in partnership with other service providers as well as various government departments and NGOs. And we also use a lot of volunteers. We always tell the B.C. government that they give us \$1 and we produce \$3 or \$4 in value of service by leveraging community participation, volunteer participation, and working with other organizations.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm sorry, we're going to deal with this motion. Mr. Shory, I apologize, but there is no more time for questions.

Witnesses, thank you for coming. You've stimulated a lot of questions from the committee. I thank Asian Community Aids Services, SUCCESS, Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, and the Northwood Neighbourhood Services for participating this morning and for making your contribution to the committee.

Ms. Chow, you have a motion that you'd like to make. Could you make that motion?

• (1030)

Ms. Olivia Chow: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move:

That the Committee recommend that the Minister and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration immediately reverse the \$53 million in funding cuts to immigrant settlement and adaptation services, set to take effect March 30, 2011, and that this motion be reported to the House.

Mr. Chair, I'm a bit stunned about these cuts. There seems to be no analysis of the impact. If there is, it wasn't shared with us. We don't know how many people will be hurt, how many newcomers will be hurt, and we don't know how many staff will be eliminated. We just know there's a big number.

There seems to be no overall plan as to how to assist these agencies in their transitional period and how to make sure these newcomers will continue to get services. There seems to have been a set-up that elevated the hope of many of these agencies, only to dash them. I'm fearful of what's going to happen, not only to these newcomers but to the staff who would see their jobs eliminated, and in some ways, it impacts on the economy of the greater Toronto area. Having this large number of people lose their jobs and lose their services all in one shot, with no transition plan, is, in my mind, bad management practice.

I urge the committee to support this motion to reverse the funding cuts, and the urge is to both the minister and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Wrzesnewskij, sir.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): I'd like to second this motion.

Chair, we do have an extra unscheduled day of committee work for Tuesday. I'd like to suggest that we've heard some important information from the witnesses of what the consequences are of these particular unexpected cuts, and we also need to have additional clarity. The department has advised us that they will provide us with the formulas, on how they went about doing these cuts. We still don't have that exact formula to have an idea of, perhaps, how they went about it. That would provide us with greater clarity to understand whether or not there is a real rationale or whether the allegations of a political reason for these cuts, in fact, are correct.

So I'd like to suggest that we have the opportunity to hear more witnesses on Tuesday when the committee resumes our work.

The Chair: Sir, that's fine. I'm at the wish of the committee. I had scheduled work-time witnesses for Tuesday morning. We can cancel those if there's a general consensus that you want to continue on with more witnesses. There are scads of witnesses on the list and we've only heard a few of them.

You still have the floor, but is there any consensus as to what we're going to do on Tuesday?

Sorry, we're interrupting your motion, but I think this is relevant.

Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): We have three heads of mission who are coming in, who are actually here on Tuesday from countries that we are studying wait times on. It's extremely convenient that they're actually here on Tuesday. If we were not to go ahead with wait times, then we would lose the opportunity to interview these folks who are actually here now for other reasons. So it was extremely convenient that we had scheduled Tuesday for wait times. We'd actually have these folks here. We've been trying to do this wait time thing for a long time. We have some experts who we were actually going to go fly to and speak to, at great expense. We're not doing that now; they're actually here.

So I'm not going to agree that we use Tuesday for more of these hearings. I'm suggesting for Tuesday we do what we said we were going to do and study wait times on Tuesday.

•(1035)

The Chair: Not to take sides, and I'm trying not to, but for clarification, the three witnesses would be from New Delhi, Beijing, and Manila. However, if the committee wants to deal with settlement services on Tuesday, we would not proceed. But this means that we would probably be hearing from those witnesses at a later time.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: No.

The Chair: Mr. Dykstra, please let me finish. Maybe I'm wrong, but we would probably hear from those witnesses another time, and that would have to be via teleconference from their countries.

Mr. Wrzesnewskij, you still have the floor.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij: I would think that we'd want to work in a reasonable and consensual way on this committee, considering that there will be the opportunity to speak with these experts at a later time and with the understanding that once the committee returns from the break.... This has been an ongoing study for a long period of time; it will take a lot more work.

This, on the other hand, is of special urgency. It's a matter of weeks before these groups will be suffering from those cuts. As was mentioned, there are tens of thousands of individuals who are affected. We're terribly worried about what will happen in a matter of weeks. I think it's appropriate that we do this in a consensual way. There are witnesses, as you said, in the roster, who've submitted, and only a small proportion...and of course our Conservative colleagues have witnesses as well. So it would be a proper mix of witnesses who would represent the points of view of everyone on the committee.

The Chair: Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Thank you, Chair.

I want to speak in support of the motion. I think there are serious issues with what has happened with the ministry. We have documentation from dozens of agencies that have been, frankly, mistreated in terms of not being able to protect their clients. There is no one from the government side to offer what is going to happen to thousands of clients on March 31.

We are going to release data today that will show that big parts of where the cuts are taken from are actually underfunded on a per person basis. While everyone should be happy for anyone who got more dollars, it looks like a shuffling around for political purposes.

Certainly, the intent that was there from the last government to try to close the gap that we heard about today, to make up for a shortfall, looks to have been abused. It's very serious that those cuts not go forward until full information is put forward.

If there is a response from the government's side, I think it would be very incumbent on this committee. I would like to invite the government members to support this motion, because without it there will be an incredible cloud hanging over the actions of this government. Not from any source yet has there been objective information to say that these cuts are not harming people, first of all. So thousands of people stuck in the middle of getting assistance are going to have that help removed. And this is self-help, this is a hand up, this is self reliance, and they're going to be deprived of it by the actions of this government.

It's really important, and I think it would be great if there was consensus from this committee that would send a strong statement to the government to stop this, to hold up, to provide the rationalization. If the government members are confident that there is a rationalization, that they really believe this can be justified, then there should be no reason to do this in haste.

I think you have to show respect to the people you've heard from. To do the opposite is to say, your 25 years...you've been here since 1986; those Afghan interpreters don't matter. On the one hand, you've contracted to protect Afghan interpreters and bring them to Canada, and yet the one agency that can do that in a major centre, which is a resource for all across the country, you're effectively shutting down. Can't you take a pause? Can't you say, wait a minute, there might be something wrong with this? It's not committing anybody to do anything else, except to say that we actually want to run the government well. We're not going to manipulate it for political purposes. And even the appearance of that is going to make us stop and do something better.

If the Afghan association goes out of business, where are those interpreters going to be? Where are their families going to be? No one in CIC has provided answers to that. We've talked to the regional head; we've talked to the national head. There are no contingency plans to serve people. Why would you want people on welfare? Why are you shoving them down on municipalities?

Toronto, we're going to show, has less funding per capita than almost any other part of the country for new immigrants. That city council is going to be asked to pick up the slack. Is that what this government is saying, that they want Toronto and other places to pick it up? Now the Province of B.C. is picking up \$8 million. Otherwise people in B.C. would be hurt right now. I say to the members from there that's not something the government should be proud of. I don't think B.C. has a surplus.

This is really important. I think it's important for this committee. I think it's important for this Parliament to say it's time to re-examine this. That's what this says. We're not taking away the executive power. It's simply saying to them that there's sufficient reason here to rethink this. We don't know whether this is officialdom. It looks like a political thing, but if it's not and it can be explained, we need to bring the officials forward and find out what's happening, because you cannot justify this on the grounds the minister has been speaking about. It does not line up with numbers, and very soon that's going to be public information.

I hope the committee will see its way to getting ahead of that and helping this be dealt with in a way that doesn't hurt people, because that's what's going to happen. At least 78,000 people in Ontario will be harmed in 45 days if this committee doesn't act the way that Ms. Chow suggested.

• (1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Uppal has the floor.

Mr. Tim Uppal (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): Just to go back, we're obviously dealing with two things here: one is the motion and one is the suggestion.

The Chair: One thing, Mr. Uppal; we're dealing with the motion.

Mr. Tim Uppal: The motion, but there was a suggestion to—

The Chair: There was a suggestion, but the topic that's on the floor is the motion of Ms. Chow.

Mr. Tim Uppal: We did entertain it before.

Okay, then, that's fine. I'll leave it at that. I had a concern about Tuesday's meeting.

The Chair: The chair takes the position that unless the committee directs me—and at this point it would have to be by way of a motion—we will be proceeding with wait times on Tuesday. If the committee directs me otherwise, we will do what the committee wishes.

Are you finished, sir?

Monsieur St-Cyr.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thierry St-Cyr: As for the motion before us, my mind is made up. I am going to support it. The question remains, quite simply, whether we need to deal with it now. I don't think that it is relevant to hear more witnesses on this issue. I sincerely do not think that there is a witness who could change the mind of one of the 12 committee members. It is important to meet with official presently in Canada next Tuesday.

I also had a concern from pharmacists about medication. I had suggested this at the start, and perhaps we could come back to it on Tuesday. There are still some problems. I understand that CIC still hasn't had the opportunity to meet with the pharmacists association, so that is perhaps not going as quickly as we would have hoped. The pharmacists are having difficulty getting information on coverage from Medavie if they have not made an individual agreement, which was not the purpose of the agreement.

Let's leave a little time, let's adopt this motion today, and let's proceed on Tuesday with officials posted abroad. I will then have the opportunity on Thursday to ask the minister more questions if the situation still hasn't moved forward. I think that would be reasonable.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Dykstra has the floor.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Thank you, Chair.

I, too, certainly have a concern. It's obvious we spent a couple of days listening to what folks had to say about those who were impacted by the changes that are being made. But I think it's important not to position this from some sort of convenient truth perspective or, quite frankly, a political perspective. I can appreciate at times where Mr. Kennedy is coming from, but he's asking the government to side with him on a particular issue or to side with Ms. Chow's motion, while at the same time he spent the entire exercise, at least when he was asking questions, confirming in his mind that these were political decisions. I don't know how you reach out to your colleagues across the aisle when the statements that you make are....

I'm going to get to that, because your facts aren't actually true. You want to trump up some 78,000 number based on some research you've done. Go ahead and do your press conferences and we'll see where those go. As you know, Gerard, you can go ahead and do your press conferences and try to drive a message, but it's simply political. You're not dealing with the actual individuals here who are being impacted by it, and you're also not dealing with the overall decisions that have to be made across this country with respect to immigration.

It's fairly simple, Mr. Chair. There's certainly a very clear chart that shows that in 2005 and 2006 there were 140,000 permanent residents—not individuals who landed, but permanent residents—in the province of Ontario. The receipt of funds was \$111 million. We travel through the process and we see in 2006 and 2007 a decline in permanent residents—

• (1045)

The Chair: The chair doesn't have that chart, Mr. Dykstra.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: I'm happy to give it to him afterwards.

In 2007 and 2008 there was a decline to 111,000. In 2008 and 2009 there a decline to 110,000. In 2009 and 2010 there was a decline to 106,000.

The Chair: Stop the clock.

A point of order.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: A point of order.

If Mr. Dykstra is speaking in an official capacity, it's a disadvantage for the committee. I will submit the figures and research that we've done to the committee, through you, Mr. Chair. I would invite him—either through your device or through Mr. Dykstra's agreement—if he believes in his figures, to submit them and make them available to everyone on the committee.

I also want to mention that, on the other discussion, there are people here who drove all morning from Toronto—

The Chair: Wait a minute. This is a point of order, not a debate.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Well, I just want to offer—

The Chair: When I bang that gavel, that means I have to speak, okay?

Mr. Dykstra has indicated, Mr. Kennedy, that he will provide the chair, and the chair will provide the other members of the committee with that chart.

Mr. Dykstra, you have the floor.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Sure, that's no problem.

If Mr. Kennedy is doing the kind of detailed research he suggests he's doing, he would simply have gone to the website of the ministry, because that's where this actually exists and where I'm speaking from.

The Chair: Try not to aggravate people, Mr. Dykstra. Just proceed.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Well, it's not always easy when somebody's....

Also, when you look at where we have gone, in terms of funding—if I could just conclude this aspect, Mr. Chair—we have moved from \$111 million in 2005-06 in Ontario to well over \$400 million. So to suggest that there is not concern or focus on delivering service to the folks who come to this country and become permanent residents in the province of Ontario is not only unfounded, it's actually absurd and untrue.

When you look at the efforts that have been put forward—and I'm speaking now not just to the issue of immigration, but across government—we have a responsibility, as a government, to make sure that we have solid programs, that we have financial accountability, that we have measured outcomes, that we're able to be responsive to the local needs of communities that these organizations are serving, and that their performance, on an ongoing basis, is one that meets those criteria. Those criteria were set out or determined 10 years ago, when the Auditor General came in and did a review.

We have a responsibility, I think, to respond to the recommendations of the Auditor General—which this government has done—but, to a greater extent, we have a responsibility to the taxpayers of this country, in particular in the province of Ontario, because obviously that's what these hearings are focused on, to actually make sure that every dollar spent is a dollar well spent, not just to help immigrants and refugees who come to this country, but to ensure, from an overall perspective, that Canadian residents, Canadian citizens, are seeing their tax dollars spent in a wise and fruitful way.

And the point's been made here, Mr. Chair, about Toronto. Toronto is going to receive approximately 92% of its funding. There's been an 8% reduction in funding in the City of Toronto. York Region—which the last time I checked is in Ontario, right next door to Toronto—is getting an increase of 30%. Why is that? It's not because immigrants are landing in York Region, but because they are settling in York Region. This is true for the city of London. This is true for Alberta, for Manitoba, for Saskatchewan, for Newfoundland, for P.E.I., for New Brunswick, and for Quebec. What we are seeing is a change whereby our immigrants, who are potential Canadians, permanent residents, are coming and they're staying.

We have provinces across this country, Mr. Chair, that have had increased, on a per capita basis, their share of the provincial nominees for which it is their decision to make. If you look at where those numbers were in 2004-05 and you look at where they are in 2009-10, I can tell you the distribution is on a much fairer basis than it was previously.

Now does that mean we've established that we're not going to fund the province of Ontario? I think if you look over the past five years, you can see very clearly that this government has implemented a strategy in which some of these organizations in the province of Ontario have seen their funding doubled, tripled, or quadrupled in the last five years. Why? Because they are delivering outstanding service, because they are serving a higher clientele base, and because there was a lack of funding or a lack of delivery of service prior to 2005-06.

• (1050)

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Dykstra.

A point of order, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Mr. Dykstra doesn't mention that this money was from an agreement that predates his government. It came from the previous Liberal government. I just wonder if he's planning to table documents to show otherwise.

The Chair: Mr. Kennedy, you've been around this process long enough. That's not a point of order.

Mr. Dykstra, you still have the floor.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Sure. Thanks.

Well, it's a bit of a—

The Chair: No, Mr. Dykstra, don't do anymore.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Actually, you're right, Mr. Chair, there's no need to respond to that.

At the end of the day, these decisions are not easy decisions. They're decisions that are made based on ensuring that we are delivering a top line service, and that our agencies are delivering it on behalf of this government and on behalf of Canadians in a way that makes sense.

I understand, for political reasons, that the opposition wants to support this motion. If this committee wants to work through this further, I'm prepared to listen as to how we might do that. But by simply saying that we should just be putting back what is going to be reduced, that doesn't answer the question of all of the things that I pointed out, of all of the things that the minister has responsibility for, and of all of the things the ministry has responsibility for in terms of delivering service and making sure it meets the objectives and standards it's supposed to.

Just to simply put a motion forward states the obvious; it states that this is a political decision. It speaks nothing to what the future is of these organizations or what they need to deliver in terms of service over the next number of years.

The Chair: Okay. We have a problem, or maybe we don't have a problem. We're already 10 minutes over the time allowed. The only person of the next committee I see here is the clerk. So I'm prepared to go a little further, unless there's no further debate. If there is further debate, we may have to push this over until Tuesday.

Mr. Oliphant, very briefly, or we're going to have to adjourn.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I think I just heard the possibility of some openness there from the parliamentary secretary to engage in some more conversation about this. I haven't had a chance to connect with my colleagues on this. I just thought I heard that there's an opening there for some conversation on this, which means we can try to work out some more stuff on this and then vote on this motion after we've heard some more witnesses.

I think I heard that in your phrasing, that we're not there yet, but I may have misinterpreted you.

Mr. Rick Dykstra: Yes. I wasn't speaking in regard to witnesses. I was speaking in regard to the detail that you guys have asked for in terms of the criteria in the decision-making process. That's going to be delivered by the ministry here. I just think it's a little early to be making these kinds of decisions on motions.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: I will be bringing a motion to the committee tomorrow regarding information I would also like to get based on my question of privilege the other day. I've been able to do some research with the legislative folks and I've found out that, yes, I can, indeed ask for some of the back-up to what the parliamentary secretary gave the other day.

I'm going to move that motion tomorrow to get there for Tuesday, so I think we're going to have to deal with this a little bit further.

The Chair: I don't plan to be here tomorrow.

Ms. Chow.

Ms. Olivia Chow: Mr. Chair, you know that I've tried individually and at committee, both at the subcommittee and at the committee level, to extend the hearings for next Tuesday. I didn't get consensus on that.

Yes, I'd prefer to have some more hearings, some more studies. I approached you directly to see whether...because we haven't received the information from CIC and you persuaded me...because we have a mission coming and we should do wait times. As a result, my motion is in front of this committee.

In some ways I think it's timely that if we can send a message out through this motion that you can't just cut off funding like this without even a transition plan.... If everything that Mr. Dykstra has said is correct and the immigrant numbers in the three-year average in Ontario did drop by 4%, okay. But you have to have some kind of transition plan. Even if you're going to yank funding, you can't just leave people high and dry like that.

I didn't agree with the approach, but my worry is that if we don't deal with the motion today and then we continue with wait times on Tuesday, we haven't really made a decision. So unless there's a motion—

• (1055)

The Chair: My problem, Ms. Chow, is that we're well over time. I see a couple of members of Parliament—

Ms. Olivia Chow: I think we should just call for a vote on the motion, given that we're going to continue, unless there is a motion to do Tuesday—

The Chair: The chair's position is, assuming no one kicks us out of here, that we're going to vote on this motion. If no one directs me otherwise, it seems there is no consensus to change the plan for Tuesday. We would have to vote on that.

We're going to, first of all, deal with your motion and we're going to do that right now.

We're not going to do that right now.

Do you have something else to say on debate? Mr. Wrzesnewskyj, do you wish to speak to this motion?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Yes, Chair.

The Chair: Not on what we're going to do Tuesday, on this motion?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Correct.

The Chair: Mr. Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Since there's no one else on the list, I'd like to call the question.

The Chair: I was going to do that anyway.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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