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Chair

Mr. Mike Wallace

Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC)): We have quorum so I'm going to call this meeting to order. This is meeting number 60 of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Today, pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, November 24, 2014, we are dealing with Bill C-26, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, to enact the high risk child sex offender database act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Just so my colleagues and our guests know, there is a half-hour discussion and there will be a bell at 3:55. When that bell starts ringing, we will adjourn this first meeting. We have time to hear our witnesses and have maybe a really quick round of questions of a couple of minutes each from the three parties. The vote will take place at 4:25. We have another panel coming, so here's my recommendation. The vote should take about eight minutes, so we should be back here in our seats at about a quarter to five. Then we'll have their five-minute presentations and another quick round of discussions with the second panel.

With that, for our first panel, we have with us, from the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, Mr. Butt, their legal counsel. Mr. Gillespie has phoned in to say he cannot make it.

By video conference from Winnipeg, Manitoba, we have Monique St. Germain from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

Can you hear me okay?

Ms. Monique St. Germain (General Counsel, Canadian Centre for Child Protection): I can.

The Chair: Thank you.

Also by video conference, from Newmarket, Ontario, we have Ellen Campbell, the chief executive officer of the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness.

Can you hear me?

Ms. Ellen Campbell (Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness): Yes, I can. Thank you.

The Chair: We'll start with five-minute presentations.

Mr. Butt, from the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, we'll start with you.

Mr. David Butt (Legal Counsel, Kids' Internet Safety Alliance): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to address this committee.

I'm legal counsel to the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, which is a Canadian-based charity that operates globally to rescue children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. We recently expanded into the cyberbullying space as well. In my non-volunteer capacity, I am a former crown prosecutor who specialized in child exploitation cases for 13 years, and then I was in private practice for 13 years, as a criminal lawyer. My largest client groups are victims of sexual assault and police officers, so I have a bit of a 360-degree view of the justice system from the front lines.

I've reviewed the bill, and I'd like to take a couple of minutes to speak about a couple of things that flow from both my experience working with the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance and as a front-line prosecutor and victims advocate.

The first point I'd like to address is the issue of mandatory minimums and the proposed mandatory minimums in this bill. Obviously this is a return to mandatory minimums in this area, so we now have a body of experience with mandatory minimums since they were introduced. I'll say that from the perspective of a lawyer on the front lines, the sky has not fallen. Mandatory minimums were perhaps controversial when they were introduced; they certainly generated a lot of discussion. But as I said, the sky has not fallen, in the sense that we still have responsible sentences; we still have a realistic opportunity to present in a sentencing hearing where the appropriate sentence should fall in the range. This is not eviscerated judicial discretion; it has simply moved the floor.

We have to ask ourselves whether it is appropriate to move the floor. I would be the first one to say that in some crimes, it is not; it simply is not, and I'll give you a very easy example to make my point. Somebody who steals a loaf of bread because they're hungry should not face a mandatory minimum sentence. The reason for that—I'll unpack this a bit—is that there is a real moral debate about the culpability of that person. However, when we're talking about the intentional infliction of sexual violation on a child, there is no responsible moral debate about the culpability of the person who is proven to have done that. As long as that minimum appropriately reflects the minimum level of moral culpability, then the floor is not a problem.

I look at the numbers that are proposed in the table that's been released with the discussion of the bill, and I ask whether those numbers are so high that they overvalue the moral culpability of a child sex offender. I think the answer to the reasonable observer is, no, they don't. That floor, in my submission, is quite appropriate because it recognizes the inherent minimum level of moral opprobrium associated with sexually abusing a child.

It's the same thing with the maximums. Are they out of line with maximums that we see elsewhere? No, they're not. Are they consistent with our sentencing traditions? Yes, they are.

The second problem is that mandatory minimums can take away judicial discretion. I say they don't take it away; they simply adjust it. The judge is not left to be a trained monkey, rubber-stamping the minimum; the judges retain their entire panoply of discretionary judicial powers, but they start at a different place. It's appropriate that we value the sanctity and sexual integrity of children sufficiently that we say to judges, "You still have discretion; just start here instead of there."

The mandatory minimums as proposed don't go too far; they recognize an appropriate level of moral opprobrium for the offence and they preserve judicial discretion.

• (1535)

For all those reasons I'm a supporter, and as I said, there are other circumstances where I would not support mandatory minimums. I want to make that very clear.

I'll move—

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Mr. David Butt: Okay.

On the publicly available registry, complaints about release of private information, the way I read the bill—correct me if I'm reading it wrong—is information that the police, in the exercise of their discretion on the ground, have already decided is so important it needs to be released, so this is not making public. This is simply consolidating already public information in a helpful way.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir, for that presentation.

Our next presenter is from Winnipeg, from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

Ms. St. Germain, the floor is yours.

Ms. Monique St. Germain: Mr. Chairperson and distinguished members of this committee, thank you very much for giving our agency the opportunity to provide a presentation on Bill C-26.

My name is Monique St. Germain, and I am representing the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, a registered charity providing national programs and services related to the personal safety of all children.

I am here today to provide support for Bill C-26. My testimony today is based on our role in operating our many programs and services aimed at reducing the sexual exploitation of children.

Our agency was founded in 1985 as Child Find Manitoba, and for the last 30 years we have been actively engaged in efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. We operate Missing-

Kids.ca, a national missing children's program. We also have two important prevention programs: Kids in the Know, which is an interactive safety education program delivered in schools, and Commit to Kids, a program to help organizations prevent sexual abuse before it occurs.

We also operate Cybertip.ca, Canada's tip line for reporting online sexual exploitation of children. Since launching nationally in 2004, we have received over 125,000 reports from the public, the majority of which pertain to online images that depict children being sexually abused. In the 2013-14 fiscal year alone our child protection analysts assessed and categorized over 6,000 images of child pornography. Of the images so categorized, 69% depicted children under the age of 12.

Through the operation of our programs and services, we have daily interactions with child welfare workers, educators, and child-serving organizations. We also regularly consult with experts on child development and offender behaviour and we pay very close attention to media reports related to court cases involving the sexual abuse of children. As well, over the last few years we have been monitoring reported case law involving child pornography offences.

We do all of this to help ensure that our public education, awareness, and prevention materials reflect current risks and trends, and also help us to better understand the criminal justice system as it relates to the protection of children.

Through our operations we have a unique lens into understanding the distinctiveness of child sexual abuse. We are acutely aware that the vast majority of victims do not disclose abuse and that abuse can go on for years without being detected. It is well established that children are most often sexually abused by those closest to them and that abuse occurs in secrecy.

Even if the abuse is disclosed by a child or uncovered by an adult, it may not be reported to police. We know that not all abuse that is reported results in charges, and that not all charges lead to prosecution, and a prosecution may not result in conviction.

For these reasons, we support Bill C-26. I would like to highlight and speak to some key components of the bill.

First, we believe that sentences need to reflect the seriousness of the offence and the severity of the conduct. They must be meaningful, not only to prevent the person from committing additional offences but also to address the risk that an offender poses to children, and to deter others from offending. We support sentences that more accurately reflect the trauma that is experienced by each individual child victim and that properly account for the culpability of the offender for each offence that has been committed.

A concurrent sentence tends to diminish the overall effect of the sentence, making it seem as though the experience of each victim is not relevant. Individualizing the sentencing analysis by victim and by offence will greatly increase the precedential value of individual cases since subsequent courts will more readily know what portion of the sentence applies to what offence.

Second, changes to the reporting requirements for sex offenders are targeted toward better protecting children in other countries from being exploited and abused by Canadians, an objective we support. We also believe that these provisions will strengthen the protection of Canadian children as they will assist in enabling authorities to more readily identify problematic travel and investigate breaches under the act.

Third, the creation of a publicly available high-risk sex offender database is an initiative that we support. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia already perform public notifications in high-risk cases. It is our view that providing such information to the public can be of great assistance to families and communities that wish to better protect children.

In conclusion, our agency supports the changes being brought forward through Bill C-26. The crimes addressed by this bill are extremely serious and are perpetrated against society's most vulnerable people, our children.

• (1540)

It is our view that this bill helps to rebalance the scorecard and sends a clear message about the seriousness of sexual offences against children.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that presentation.

Our next presenter, from Newmarket, is the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness.

Ms. Campbell, the floor is yours.

Ms. Ellen Campbell: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and distinguished members.

While I'm the founder of the CCAA, I'm also a victim of childhood sexual abuse. Like many survivors, I ended up in the psych ward and was suicidal, so I can speak not only as a victim but as someone who works with victims.

I founded the agency 22 years ago. We service over 200,000 men, women, and children a year. We work with the first nations seniors. We work with the police with human trafficking. We have anti-bullying awareness and education. So I feel like I can really speak to this as a victim and as someone who works closely with them.

We did a report back in November 2004. We received funding from the Office for Victims of Crime in Ontario. We did a report called "Martin's Hope", which I hold up here. I'm happy to provide it to the clerk for everyone.

There were 60 recommendations in that report. Thirty-nine of them are federal. We did round table discussions throughout Ontario with all the front-line workers: police, crown attorneys, Children's Aid, victims groups, and the public.

Actually the age of consent, which was passed a few years ago, is almost word for word from our report. We worked very closely with your policy advisers.

The two recommendations here for consecutive sentencing for crimes against children and the legislation around child pornography are totally in line with our report. As I say, these are the views of the public and of the front-line workers.

As has been said several times, crimes against children are going up more and more. They are becoming more violent. The children are younger. While I appreciate that this committee has to take time to go through this, I urge you that the sooner the better, because even as we're speaking, children are being abused. I'm glad you're treating this as a priority.

The other point I would like to make, and I've heard it mentioned several times and it's really important, is that these child advocacy centres are amazing. I understand there are 21 of them now in Canada, and they are very important, but I also would like to speak to the fact that there is very little available for adult victims.

I get calls, especially more and more from men now who have been victimized as children. There's very little help available for them so I would like to see more.

Every time I'm before this committee I bring it to your attention that we desperately need support for adult survivors.

I do workshops in prisons, and I know it was discussed that there's help for the pedophiles in prison or the perpetrators, which I think is important, but there's nothing for the victims.

Over 90% of the men in prison have been sexually abused as children, and in the women's prison they say it's over 85%. So there's quite a relationship between childhood sexual abuse and crime. As I say, I'm once again going to bat for the adults.

I think it's also critical for the victims who are watching this. They are so appreciative that the government is moving forward with tougher sentencing. They feel now they are being heard. I think it's very encouraging that once again we're going to increase the sentencing both for minimum and maximum.

I agree with David Butt that the judges now are not giving out the maximum sentences that we already have before them. Probably because we're moving it up higher, then maybe it will encourage the judge to perhaps go to a little tougher sentencing. While they may not go to the maximum, they at least will move it up a little bit.

The one last thing, which isn't in this report but it's in our recommendations and I hope one day we can consider it, is electronic monitoring. I also feel that's a wonderful way to help monitor the perpetrators when they are out of jail. I know it costs about \$150,000 a year, I believe, to keep someone in jail so I think there's a way we could justify the cost of electronic monitoring.

I think my time's up. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

• (1545)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Campbell, for that presentation.

We'll now go to rounds of questions. Based on what I think is going to happen if they are on time at the House, these rounds will be three minutes each, and we'll go until we're done.

Madam Pécelet, from the New Democratic Party, you're first. Please indicate who you would like to answer your question.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Yes, of course.

Thank you very much, everybody, for being here today. I'm so sorry we have to cut this short, but as you know, life on the Hill is always unpredictable.

[Translation]

My first question is for Mr. Butt.

One part of the bill deals with consecutive sentences. From now on, the court should consider directing consecutive sentences if the offences stem from different events. The bill amends subsection 718.3(4) of the Criminal Code and refers to consecutive sentences. In fact, the bill amends only the wording of that subsection. I'm asking you because you have a legal background.

The Criminal Code states that:

(4) The court ... may direct that the terms of imprisonment ... be served consecutively, when

(c) the accused is found guilty ... of more than one offence, ...

The bill states that:

(4) The court that sentences an accused shall consider directing:

(a) that the term of imprisonment that it imposes be served consecutively to a sentence of imprisonment to which the accused is subject ...

In the context of your practice, have you seen problems related to the wording of the current Criminal Code section? Did it need to be changed? What is the difference between these two wordings? What justifies the amendment to the Criminal Code if the court can already consider directing consecutive sentences? Why is it necessary to

change this section? What are the problems? Perhaps you have heard your colleagues discussing it already.

• (1550)

[English]

Mr. David Butt: I will say this about the consecutive versus concurrent dilemma. For example, when we're talking about multiple child victims, I think it's appropriate for Parliament to send a strong message that there should be consecutive sentences, because it sends a strong message that every child matters and that one child's victimization is going to add to the punishment just as much as another child's victimization.

When I read the draft bill, I did look at this very carefully, because as lawyers, we always have to be concerned about the totality principle. If you go out on a joyride, take a baseball bat, drive past 200 mailboxes in a rural community, and whack down every one of them, you've committed 200 separate offences. If you have a minimum sentence of six months for each one, you have a 100-year sentence for one night of mischief. This is the problem that the totality principle presents.

I support preserving the totality principle in the legislation, and as I read it, it is, but short of that, I do support the language that I see encouraging the judges to be more vigilant to impose consecutives because every child matters.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that question and answer.

The next questioner is Mr. Dechert, from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Thank you to each of our guests for joining us today.

Mr. Butt, I'd like to start with you. Through you, I'd like to thank the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance for the tremendous work they do. You should know that you have a great advocate in the city of Mississauga by the name of Michael Ras, who is one of the supporters of the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance. He's told me a lot about what KINSA does.

In particular, I know that you're very involved with international cases of child assault and child pornography and that you do work with Interpol. As you know, this bill contains provisions dealing with the notification by registered sex offenders of their intention to go abroad. I'd like to hear your general views on that portion of the bill. Also, can you tell us how your organization works with Interpol and whether or not you think these amendments would have implications with respect to Canada's responsibilities to cooperate with international organizations such as Interpol?

Mr. David Butt: Yes. Thank you very much for your kind comments.

To get directly to the answers, in terms of the travel tightening, KINSA supports it.

In addition to work with KINSA, I spent five years on the board of ECPAT, which is based out of Thailand and is the largest NGO dealing with the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Child sex tourism—CST is the acronym we used—is a very serious problem.

As we tighten our laws here and as we become increasingly vigilant here, those who are predisposed to abuse children will look for other places to go. The corollary of us tightening up at home is that we create greater risks from our travellers abroad, and these restrictions on travel, the information requirements on travel, are actually a necessary corollary so that we don't actually just clean up our backyard by dumping our problems somewhere else. That's why I support it.

Yes, it will enhance our ability to work productively with Interpol and other international and national law enforcement agencies in other countries, because information about movement—and I know there are people here on the committee with police experience—gives us information. That's intelligence, and it can productively assist us in preventing and apprehending. Those are crucial pieces of the puzzle as well.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Do—

• (1555)

The Chair: That's it, my friend. Thank you very much.

Our next questioner is Mr. Casey, from the Liberal Party.

If the bells haven't rung, your slot is next.

I'll come back to you, okay, Bob?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Casey.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Thanks to the witnesses.

I'm going to ask one question and if we have time, get each of you to respond.

Three years ago, the government introduced some increased penalties for child sexual offences and other sexual offences. In this bill, they are increasing those penalties again. In the intervening period, there was apparently an increase in the incidence of these types of crimes.

Albert Einstein said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Can any of you indicate to me why we should expect that there will be fewer victims as a result of harsher penalties when these penalties are simply an increase that we saw three years ago...?

The Chair: Who would you like to start that conversation?

Mr. Sean Casey: Perhaps we can start with Ms. St. Germain, since Mr. Butt has had a few answers here.

The Chair: We'll hear from Ms. St. Germain, then Ms. Campbell, and then Mr. Butt.

Ms. St. Germain, you have the floor.

Ms. Monique St. Germain: Thank you.

In terms of that, there's a couple of things I'd like to note. For one thing, in terms of the statistics showing increased offences against children, I think it's important to keep in mind that this is an increase in reported crimes against children, so these are the ones that get reported to police.

There could be a number of reasons for that increased reporting. It might be that there's increased reporting by victims because they feel better supported. It might be because there is an increased ability of adults to recognize and report abuse. It might reflect increasing policing efforts. As well, it might be an enhanced understanding of what child development is and what a disclosure looks like.

I don't necessarily think that the increased sexual offences are tied in one way or another to the increase in the sentence that is being imposed. I think they're two parts of the same thing.

The Chair: Ms. Campbell.

Ms. Ellen Campbell: I guess my feeling is that we don't know how many children were saved, because we just don't know... There's such an increase now in the problem that proportionately it might even be less had that law not been in place. I am not convinced that it didn't work; I just think it's a proportionate thing. Also, that just encourages me more: because I know this is getting worse and worse, we have to get tougher. Maybe it's not tough enough.

The Chair: Mr. Butt.

Mr. David Butt: I think I have very little to add to those two previous answers. I endorse the notion that the increase in the statistics may be an increase in detection of a pre-existing problem. The logic of increasing may be as was suggested by Mr. Casey, but it may equally also be that the first increases weren't enough to have the desired deterrent effect and we need to actually redouble our efforts.

The Chair: Thank you for those questions and answers.

The bells are ringing, ladies and gentlemen, so we are going to suspend this meeting to go vote, and we'll try to be back here for 4:45 to start the second panel.

To our guests today, I'm sorry it was short, but we appreciate your taking the time to talk to us about this bill and your perspectives. We'll be studying it today and on Monday, and we'll be doing clause-by-clause study on this bill the week after next. We are away next week. It should be back in the House by the end of February.

Thank you very much for your time.

The meeting is suspended.

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_____ (Pause) _____

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• (1650)

The Chair: Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to call the meeting back to order.

I want to thank our guests for their patience.

This is the second panel for our orders of the day, pursuant to order of reference of Monday, November 24, 2014, Bill C-26, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, to enact the high risk child sex offender database act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

We have, appearing as individuals, Mr. Gilhooly, who has been here before, and Mr. Steve Sullivan, who is a former federal ombudsman for victims of crime. From Circles of Support and Accountability, we have Susan Love and James Foord.

Thank you for joining us.

You each have five minutes to do a presentation. We'll go in the order on the agenda.

Mr. Gilhooly, the floor is yours.

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly (As an Individual): First of all, thanks very much for having me. It is good to be back and good to address the group here on this piece of legislation.

I commend the government and this group for moving forward on legislation of this type, though in my view, it's not necessarily what this specific piece of legislation does so much as what it stands for. As a victim of child sexual assault, I sit here and put a smile on my face any time I see the government working to improve the lot of those who have been assaulted, to improve society's take on this, and to help edify society with respect to the need to focus on deterring child sexual assault on a go-forward basis.

The unfortunate reality is that no amount of drafting of legislation at this time can make the problem go away, nor can it make the problem go away in the legal-result setting, not the justice-system setting, because we don't have a justice system in the setting of legal results.

Here's a bit about me. I was abused by Graham James for over three years. The story is familiar to the group. I watched the system play out as the Criminal Code was then drafted. When I look at this draft legislation, I guess I am left saying that I love the fact that the government is taking steps. I applaud the government for taking steps to move forward in this area. I have so much sympathy for the government taking steps, because any time the government moves, it is with great difficulty in terms of being seen as being tough on crime. At the end of the day, I'm left looking at the legislation and seeing very little functionally improving that would have functionally improved my lot in life. But again, Rome wasn't built in a day, and you have to take these small steps to get to where you want to end up.

I say this from experience. Increasing the penalties is a wonderful approach, but as long as the principle of totality exists in the Criminal Code, as applied by judges who apply the law, nothing is really going to change. At the end of the day, you do a simple mathematical calculation, and you have a judge who sits back and looks at the other provisions with respect to sentencing in section 718, and you're left with the unfortunate reality of a judge who looks down at paragraph 718.2(c), which says, "where consecutive sentences are imposed, the combined sentence should not be unduly long or harsh".

As a victim of sexual assault—hundreds of incidents of sexual assault—"unduly long or harsh" is a phrase that makes me want to throw up. When I saw what the judges in Manitoba did, first at the lower court level and then in the Court of Appeal, it quite seriously made me want to throw up, and it made me want to do much more than that. We don't have to get into the impact the failure of the justice system has on victims in any detail at this time. Suffice it to

say that whatever is put forward in this draft legislation wouldn't have changed anything with respect to what Graham James ended up with in his sentencing.

The starting point for sentencing on child sexual assault is four to five years. That phrase shows up in the decision and in the Court of Appeal decision. It makes you want to shake your head. It makes you want to get up and say, "No, something has to change here". For the government to keep implementing mandatory minimums of one year... I have an interesting take on mandatory minimums: I think you need them only when you don't need them. You have a bigger problem going on, and you're playing at the margin on the downside. So if you're dealing with a judge who doesn't see fit to convict to a year, you're probably dealing with a very special case in which a judge should be exercising his or her discretion. We're not dealing with mandatory minimums here, but this bill could have revisited the issue.

Increasing the penalties is wonderful, but nothing was done to totality. I could go through with other comments and the nitty-gritty of this, but as a victim, I cannot tell you how important a positive step forward is to us, how much it means to us, and how much we appreciate the effort, as small as it may be.

● (1655)

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Gilhooly.

Our next presenter is Mr. Sullivan. The floor is yours for five minutes.

Mr. Steve Sullivan (Former Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've worked in victim services, victim advocacy, for 20 years, but I'm here as an individual today representing my own views. I have only five minutes, so I'm just going to touch really quickly on a couple of elements of the bill, and then I hope we can have a few rounds of questions.

With respect to sentencing, I certainly respect Greg's journey and everything he's been through, his experiences, and his own opinion on the matter, but I would say not all victims feel the same about the notion of tougher sentencing. Most of those who abuse children are people known to the victim. It might be dad; it might be stepdad; it might be a whole range of people they know and, quite frankly, they love. So there's not always that perception that victims want to see offenders locked up for longer periods of time. It is the perception or feeling of many, and understandably so, but I wouldn't say that's universal.

Even adult victims whom we talk to, not all of them are concerned about what happens to the offender. They're more concerned, frankly, about what services exist for them. Most of the child sexual abuse victims and adult sexual assault victims don't report to police; the overwhelming majority don't. So the justice system has a response for a very small number of individuals, and there are various reasons for that.

There is some emerging research in the U.S. that stronger mandatory minimum penalties, stronger and tougher penalties, may actually discourage victims from reporting because they don't want to see that option happen in their case.

With respect to raising maximum sentences—I think other witnesses might have touched on this—I'm not sure that accomplishes a whole lot. It certainly sounds good, and it feels good, but if judges aren't giving the maximums now, then I'm not sure there's going to be much of a change in that.

Regarding mandatory minimum penalties, there's not a lot of evidence to suggest they have any kind of deterrent effect. In some cases you're going from six months to a year. I'm not sure that someone who's on the verge of abusing a child is going to really be deterred by any of that. Most of them don't expect to get caught, because frankly, most of them won't get caught. So I don't think there's much of a deterrence role.

With respect to the website, I think people have a perception out there that this is going to be something revolutionary; however, as Mr. Butt pointed out, this is really information that individual police services have released about individual particularly high-risk offenders. I would hope that the government, before creating a whole new website and the bureaucracy around that, has looked at the experience of Alberta and Manitoba. Has it reduced anything? Has it had any impact on registration rates for the sex offender registry? Those are questions that I would hope the federal government would have asked before embarking on this.

I'll just say quickly, I was going to talk a little bit about CoSA, but people who know a lot more about it than I do are here. As a victim advocate, as someone who's worked with victims for many years—child victims of sexual abuse, adult victims of sexual abuse—we support CoSA's mandate. We support the incredible work they do, and we would ask the government to reconsider its funding for CoSA.

I'll quit there.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

Our next presenter is from the Circles of Support and Accountability. Mr. Foord, do you want to start?

Mr. James Foord (Board Member, Circles of Support and Accountability): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

First off, I'm a board member with CoSA, Circles of Support and Accountability. I'm also a lawyer. I want to talk just a little bit about what my friend has spoken about, the significance of longer sentences, minimum sentences.

In our system of justice we try to protect the public in a free and democratic society. Those things aren't mutually exclusive. We try to do both. They work together. If we change sentences for mandatory minimums, longer maximums, presumably we do so because there's a need; it's necessary. That necessity is evidentially based. For example, an increase in crime would justify perhaps looking at things differently. We do it because we can achieve the result we want to achieve, which is the reduction of crime and the protection of the public.

We don't do things that don't work, because it costs money, and if it doesn't achieve the result, it's not effective. Otherwise, we risk the potential for restricting an individual's liberty for nothing, and potentially, if they're incarcerated longer and we don't do anything else, we risk the possibility of increasing their risk to the public, if

they don't get counselling and rehabilitation and other measures to protect the public.

I put those out there as concerns to think about. I know they're perhaps on the other side of the agenda.

Mr. Sullivan mentioned CoSA, our organization. I sit on the board. In addition to punitive measures and whatever controls that parole, when it's applicable, has, individuals are often.... As you might know, they're gated. They complete their entire sentence, especially those who commit very serious sexual offences. There's a gap there in the community. There's a gap in seeing them connected to the community in a positive way, connected with services they need, counselling they need, to the stability that they need. An unstable former sex offender is not a safe thing for the community.

Rather than invest money in longer sentences, for the very reason that Mr. Sullivan said, to increase the sentence by six months or a year, and think that you're really going to achieve greater protection for the public, the money could be better spent—my money—or real consideration should be given to, supporting programs like CoSA.

I'm going to ask Susan to say a couple of brief words about what we do specifically.

• (1700)

Ms. Susan Love (Program Coordinator, Circles of Support and Accountability): Thank you, James, and thank you, committee members, for inviting us.

Research on Circles of Support and Accountability demonstrates that those involved in CoSA have a reduction of sexual recidivism of 70% to 80% compared to those who are not. CoSA is also very cost-effective. Our annual budget, at least here in Ottawa, CoSA Ottawa—and we work with about eight to twelve, as we call them, core members a year—is less than the cost to incarcerate one male in the federal system for a year.

I'm not sure if you're aware, but the funding from Correctional Service of Canada to most CoSA programs in Canada—and I do have a list, if you're interested in that list, of all the sites across Canada, including ours in Ottawa, which has operated since 2002, with only one reconviction for a sexual offence—will come to an end at the end of March. This will mean that many CoSA sites in Canada will be forced to close down. This could have dire consequences to public safety.

CoSA provides support and accountability to released sex offenders. It's a unique program in that it works with this population. Our staff and volunteers really do hold our core members accountable for their behaviour, choices, and decisions. Imagine being in a room with four strangers when you first come out of prison—these people, who are volunteers, are strangers—and being expected to share your innermost thoughts and demons. I would suggest that this is tough on crime.

The accountability aspect of CoSA really does speak to the increasing emphasis on offenders to take responsibility. As Steve mentioned, people working with victim service providers and CoSA both have the same goal of no more victims. We have to deal with the fact that about 90% of people do come out of prison, so isn't it better to have support for these people than to just leave them adrift to potentially revert to their old ways?

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that presentation.

We'll go to our rounds of questions now.

Our first questioner is Madam Boivin, from the New Democratic Party.

We have about half an hour, so we'll get two NDP rounds, two Conservatives, and one Liberal.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Thank you, witnesses.
[*Translation*]

Things are a bit jumbled, but your participation is most appreciated.

One aspect of Bill C-26 is the creation of a high-risk sex offender database, but I didn't hear you talk about it. Under clause 11, the Governor-in-Council may make regulations establishing the criteria for determining whether a person who is found guilty of a sexual offence against a child poses a high risk of committing a crime of a sexual nature.

How would you define this exactly? Does this database reassure you? Does knowing that it will be created and will be different from the existing National Sex Offender Registry make you feel safer?

I suggest we go by order of your presentations. We can start with you, Mr. Gilhooly.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: My first question would be: is there a current problem out there? I'm not well versed in the day-to-day operation. I don't know if there's a gap that needs to be filled.

My knee-jerk reaction is to say that I'm leery of things that are to be made public. Having spoken to this committee on issues where we ask and expect and tolerate our police forces to deal with information, and we trust them to deal with information on an increased basis in a changed world, we now seem to be talking out of the other side of our mouth if we implement a system where we're saying no, the public should actually have the information, we're not going to simply leave it and trust our police services to disseminate that information to the public. That said, that's a bit of a logical issue that I have with it.

That said, if the police forces are coming forward and saying what they need is cooperation from the public, and this would help in their policing of the state with respect to these dangerous people, I think an argument like that should and would carry the day.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Sullivan?

Mr. Steve Sullivan: It's called a database in the legislation, but I call it a website, because frankly, I think that's what it will be. It will just be a compilation. Manitoba already has a website of high-risk offenders, and Alberta has a....

These are cases where the police have deemed someone to be of such high risk that they feel obligated to notify the public that so-and-so will be coming out of prison.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: How is it defined, though? It's a bit grey; when I read the legislation, I'm not so sure, because it's the Governor in Council who will determine the criteria. That's all very vague, in my mind.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: As I read the legislation, it actually says that the database only contains information that a police service has already released. So if the Ottawa Police Service released information about so-and-so, then that person would be eligible to go on the federal database or website. If the local police didn't do that, then he or she would not be on the database.

It's really only information that a police service has already made public. There is nothing new or revolutionary about this. You're really just taking a couple of different websites or a couple of different situations and bringing them all together. Will that enhance anyone's public safety? I don't know how it would.

That's where I would think the government would look to Alberta and Manitoba and ask a few questions: "You guys have had your websites for a couple of years. What has the impact been? Has there been a reduction in these types of offenders reoffending? What's the impact on these types of people registering with the national sex offender registry?"

Those would be the questions I would want to ask before saying that it will be good or bad.

The Chair: Did you understand the question, Ms. Love?

Ms. Susan Love: I didn't. I apologize.

The Chair: No, I know there was an issue with the....

Without taking any of your time, Madam Boivin, do you want to ask the question again?

Mr. James Foord: I think I could answer that.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: You got the gist of it? Excellent.

Mr. James Foord: My French isn't perfect, but I got enough.

I agree with some of the things Mr. Sullivan had to say in that we should really take heed of the lessons learned in Alberta and elsewhere where they've had this program. I did see the line in there that indicates it's only what has already been made public; I'm not quite sure exactly what that means. The concern I would have, and I'm not sure this legislation proposes that, is whether there's any way in which this information would directly earmark where people are or would locate them in the community. I don't think that's the purpose, as I understand it.

Of course, the Supreme Court of Canada, in another decision, would have had a problem with that, had the conclusion been that the giving of the first three digits of the postal code, the name, or photograph would have identified the location, it would have been a problem. The obvious problem would be that this would lead to a situation where the offender might not want to comply—through shame, humiliation, fear, and all these things—which could be counterproductive to a stable individual and therefore a higher risk to the public.

Those are just concerns I raise. I don't know if they'll be animated by this legislation, but I'd want to see what specifically they mean by this information being already disclosed.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: There's also the impact of the fact that the vast majority of sexual cases—it's a pretty well-known statistic—are within either the family or are...as you yourselves said. Would that create some type of problem for the victims in terms of perhaps seeing the names on the registry?

I'm trying to see how that registry could work and if we're not creating a monster that would create an adverse effect on what's intended.

• (1710)

The Chair: Mr. Sullivan, you look anxious to answer that.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: I don't pretend to be an expert on all sex offender research, but I've read a fair bit. What we know is that those who abuse within the family tend to have a lower risk for recidivism, whereas for the category of sex offenders who have a sexual orientation towards young children, usually of the same sex, those people have a higher risk. Those within the family probably wouldn't be on anybody's notification list. The Ottawa police aren't going to notify about Uncle Jim coming out, unless Uncle Jim has some other types of things.

Those familial offenders, incest offenders within the family, probably aren't the people who will be on the list. Those aren't the people who Susan is going to work with. You're looking mainly at the Graham James-type people who have this higher risk of reoffending.

If there was a publication ban for some reason—for example, it would identify the victim if you identified the offender—then I suspect the police service wouldn't make that notification.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Our next questioner is from the Conservative Party.

Go ahead, Monsieur Goguen.

Mr. Robert Goguen (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, CPC): Thank you to all the witnesses for your participation. It's going to be a little bit shortened here because of the antics on the Hill, of course, but one never knows what each day brings.

Mr. Gilhooly, you've been here a few times. I noted your concern about the totality principle, and I have a couple of questions on that. I know that advocates such as Sharon Rosenfeldt feel that basically people are being released too early because of the totality principle.

Earlier this week we heard from Justice officials. They were saying that the courts are taking note when there are multiple

convictions for different offences that they would have imposed a lengthier sentence for one particular offence, but they're reducing it by a year or two in light of the totality principle.

Do you have any comments on the length of sentences as it relates to the totality principle and as it relates to child sexual offences?

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: The tough cases always make for the best points and the worst points at the same time.

I'll speak directly to the Graham James situation. Graham was convicted in the mid-1990s for hundreds of sexual assaults on Sheldon Kennedy and another unnamed person.

Three of us then came forward 15 years later. There were hundreds more offences. Graham was out on bail and decided to play around as long as he could, and was in a position where he agreed to some things and not others. We're talking about hundreds of sexual assaults.

This is difficult for me to speak to. I printed off the Court of Appeal decision. I actually cried when I read it again today in the airport. You have the Court of Appeal of Manitoba saying that the starting point for a major sexual assault perpetrated on a young person by one in a position of trust is four to five years.

I have thought very long and very hard about what I want to say to the Manitoba Court of Appeal, and I'm going to offend everyone in this room, so close your ears right now: "Fuck you, Manitoba Court of Appeal."

That's the problem we have. We have justices out here. We as a society don't understand the pain that lingers with those who have been subjected to child sexual assault.

God bless my friends on this panel who talk about coming out of prison and the difficulty reintegrating into society. Until this government has funded an organization and an operation like Sheldon Kennedy and his group have set up in Calgary in every metropolitan area in this country, that group should not get a single dollar.

Those people have more therapy funded for them in prison than I've ever received. Graham was deemed to have been rehabilitated because he didn't reoffend between the time he was let out after the Sheldon Kennedy conviction and jail time and our time. Well, it took me 30 years to come forward.

We speak out of two mouths here. We say that most sexual assaults aren't reported, and then we're given statistics where all of a sudden the recidivism has gone down because such and such hasn't happened.

We have no idea what real statistics are in place when it comes to those who commit sexual assault. I applaud the government for taking steps to try to improve moving forward, but this doesn't get better until we, as a society, better understand the prison that victims live in coming out of child sexual assault. Help these prisoners who are among us first.

Mr. Robert Goguen: In essence, the Court of Appeal valued what took place to you as a victim with a four and a half year sentence. The tradeoff is that in fact, through no fault of your own, you have sustained a life sentence, and the tradeoff just doesn't seem right.

•(1715)

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: It's actually worse than that.

What happened was that Graham decided to plead guilty to two charges but not three, to keep the convictions limited to a set piece of time. He pleaded guilty to the charges against Theo and Todd, and not me.

The reason the crown in Manitoba took that was that they didn't want to compel other witnesses, who we know are out there, and it wouldn't have been worth a trial. Even if they got a conviction on my charges, he wouldn't have had any more time in jail. That's exactly what totality is when you carve back the sentencing.

In the Court of Appeal, they got to eight years and cut it back to five years because the sentence would have been unduly harsh on poor Mr. James. If my charges had been in there, it would have been four plus four plus four years is twelve years, carved back to five years because a sentence longer than five would have been unduly harsh on Mr. James. Fuck the Manitoba Court of Appeal.

Mr. Robert Goguen: You're a victim of the totality principle.

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Robert Goguen: One of the previous witnesses, Mr. Butt, was talking about the importance of the transmission of information about high-risk sexual offenders: CBSA being informed, informing the sexual offenders registry of their travel, and all that. He was saying that we're obviously clamping down on sexual offenders here in Canada; those who can't be cured are going to have a tendency to travel elsewhere.

Do you agree with that? Do you see any benefit to basically giving the data, flagging the dates of departure, where and every place they are going to?

I'll leave that open to whomever wants to answer it.

Mr. Gilhooly, you can start.

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: Absolutely.

Graham was found in Guadalajara. There are places to go and communities that support these people. There's a network of lifelines open to these people that goes beyond government money reintegrating them into society.

Don't get me wrong. We want to help people when they come out of jail. We're already doing a lot while they are in jail, and we're doing a lot more than we are for the victims.

We have a problem that we have to solve; that's tracking them when they get out, and doing whatever we can. Just because they leave our borders and go about their way doesn't mean they are inflicting any less ill on society. It's our responsibility.

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: I think if convicted sex offenders are travelling to Thailand, certainly that's the information you want to be able to share and to access.

I think the bigger problem about child sexual tourism, Mr. Butt, is with those who don't have convictions for anything and who are travelling.

Mr. Robert Goguen: They're not on the radar.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: They're not on the radar. In some jurisdictions it's encouraged because it's good for their economy and those kinds of things. It's a complex issue.

But I think on sharing information about someone who has a conviction for a child sexual offence and who's travelling to one of those locations, absolutely.

The Chair: Ms. Love, Mr. Foord, do you have any comment on that last item?

Voices: No.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you for those questions and answers.

Our next questioner is Mr. Casey from the Liberal Party.

Mr. Sean Casey: Thank you, witnesses.

I'm certain everyone here shares the goal you expressed, Mr. Foord, that we want fewer victims. We may differ on what's going to work.

In my previous careers, if you couldn't measure it, you couldn't manage it. Sometimes we seem to be shadowboxing, as Mr. Gilhooly pointed out, in that the statistics and evidence out there aren't reliable, or not worth a damn. How do we determine what's effective?

I'd like to start with the folks from CoSA. You started out with a statistic that Mr. Gilhooly didn't put much stock in. If I heard you correctly, the rate of recidivism for those who go through your program is 80% less than that of the general population.

You also said that federal funding for your program has been cut. Do you know why? Is it because there is evidence that counters that 80% number? Is it because they need to balance the budget? Is it because a longer sentence is a better solution?

Ms. Susan Love: I would say it's a budget issue primarily. We have received funding from Correctional Services, the chaplaincy branch. I know their section has been severely cut. You've probably read about it. That's primarily it.

Another aspect, we understand, is that we work with people who have been released at the end of their sentence. Some from CSC have suggested that is beyond their mandate.

Clearly, we both have the same mandate of public safety. It's very difficult to secure funding for CoSA, not fitting into funding priorities from, let's say, the United Way or whatever.

We don't propose that we receive 100% of our funding from CSC. We realize it should come from the province, the city, or from other private foundations, but we believe there should be some core funding from CSC. This would help us leverage other potential funding and show support from the government, etc.

I don't know if that answers your question.

•(1720)

Mr. Sean Casey: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Sullivan, I remember your testifying here on the victims bill of rights. There's a recurring theme here, that there should be a greater emphasis on resources and less on drafting. I think that's essentially what I heard you say today.

In that vein, my thought on the goal of there being fewer victims is that instead of looking after the offence, we should be looking farther upstream, in education, mental health, poverty reduction, those sorts of things.

I'd like your thoughts on what's most effective in there being fewer victims, in what we see with these amendments to the Criminal Code and the lengthening of sentences as opposed to other programs you think would be more effective in creating fewer victims.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: Yes, how much time do we have? I mean, we know in general that crime prevention programs can stem this in the very beginning. We're talking about a variety of different types of offences, so it might be people involved in gangs, certainly people who were abused children. If we can educate, prevent all those things in the beginning, we can stop a cycle.

One of the things that Theo Fleury recently talked about on an Ottawa sports radio station was how he's not as focused on the justice system anymore; he's more focused on healing. He talked about the Ray Rice situation in the U.S., which we're all familiar with. He didn't defend it, thought it was abhorrent behaviour, but he said it was a learned behaviour. If you can stop that as soon as possible, at whatever level you can, then Ray Rice isn't going to pass it on down to his own children, or his daughter, who's just going to get into an abusive relationship.

We know a lot of this crime in general stems from the experience people have as young people. The research in Canada shows that the impact of child abuse is \$15 billion a year. Children who are abused sexually or physically tend to maybe have more problems in school, drop out quicker, may get involved in more promiscuous sex. Teenage pregnancy is higher, as is drug abuse, all those things that lead people down certain paths. If you can stop that in the beginning, have those programs available for people when they need them and where they need them, so that we, as governments, don't set up these programs that we think people need, but then they're not going to access them, which is what often happens now....

Prevention is the key, but prevention can take place in different places. In prison, for example, when a guy walks into a federal prison, he's probably got a fairly long history of doing some really bad things. The odds are against even the best correctional program in the world to change that person's behaviour. The best protection you're going to have when he comes out is if you can change his behaviour. He has to make that decision, but if we can give him some tools, like CoSA, which is a voluntary program, which helps people who are the highest-risk offenders.... These are the guys who are deemed to have 100% chance to reoffend. You can question the statistics, but certainly it's difficult to question the impact on many of those guys. So it's prevention, but at different phases, and trying to catch people.

I'm a practical guy. I want to see fewer people be re-victimized, and victimized in the first place. If there was evidence that locking people up longer prevented crime or deterred people, I'd be all in.

• (1725)

The Chair: Thank you very much for those questions and answers.

Our next questioner is Mr. Seeback from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC): I want to talk to you, Mr. Gilhooly, just for a moment.

You were talking about the proportionality principle. One of the things I see when I look at some of the changes is that not only are there minimums, but there are increased maximums as well. For example, sexual interference on indictment goes from 10 years to 14 years, and I could go down the list.

Do you think that by moving the goalposts on both ends you will be adjusting that principle? If you don't think so, then what do you think the solution is?

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: Unfortunately, I don't think so, and a specific example comes right back to me again. Four plus four plus four is twelve, reduced to five. Four plus four plus four plus four, or ten plus ten plus ten, or whatever, comes back to five because the fundamental analysis as the Criminal Code is drafted looks to what is fair and reasonable and not unduly harsh to the perpetrator.

The additional problem is that you have the jurisprudence out there that sits in the common law setting that we have, and that's another set of goalposts that just do not move. You have the added problem that not only does the code itself bring you back on totality, but you have the jurisprudence that sits there as guidance as to what the goalposts really should be. So I have between four and ten, and I have between four and fifteen, and I have between four and life. You'd like to think you were moving a mindset for that tough case when you do identify the monster, but the reality is that all the defence lawyer does is revert to the Stuckless case or the Graham James case where they had the monster and here is what the monster got and all of these provisions in terms of how we sentence people apply. So you're back to the jurisprudence.

Greg's perfect bill would actually be a reference to the Supreme Court where the Supreme Court opined on a moved set of goalposts. That's not going to happen.

I would have dearly loved to be part of a process that was appealed to the Supreme Court where this issue could be addressed. Unfortunately, I think until the jurisprudence moves, there is no way out.

An interesting aspect would be the possibility of creating a new type of offender, the dangerous sexual offender, as actually a defined term and which was a new offence that would give courts the possibility of maybe thinking their way out. But that would only involve a creative judge who looked past the earlier jurisprudence, and you don't get a creative judge who looks past the jurisprudence until you get the societal education and understanding of the impact on the victim.

Again, I hearken back to the start of my presentation. To the extent that legislation like this is there, though it accomplishes nothing that would have helped in my case, it's provoking a discussion and focusing people on the issue of child sexual assault, the impact on victims, and it's a step forward. It may be in our lifetimes, who knows?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: I'll share the rest of my time with Mr. Wilks.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you.

Susan or James, I wonder if you could pick up on this.

An individual is sentenced to federal penitentiary time and enters the federal penitentiary knowing that there are programs available to them, but they're not required to take them in a federal penitentiary setting. Under a provincial jail they are required to, if they're mandated.

How do you think it would look if it was mandated for those people to take those, for lack of a better word, courses in federal penitentiaries? Right now I could rattle off a lot of names of those, probably including Mr. James, who were offered but don't have to take them. So how do we make them mandatory?

Mr. James Foord: You're right. I don't think the existing legislation requires offenders in the federal context to necessarily comply. If they don't comply, they'll often be gated. That's true.

Picking up on Mr. Sullivan's point, just to add some colour to this, the context of jails, and penitentiaries in particular, is not particularly amenable to meaningful rehabilitation for the way in which someone is going to act in the community. We really need those resources in the community.

In addition to what I say our program offers as a necessity to reducing victims, ensuring more individuals take courses within the penitentiary setting is a good idea. I couldn't object to it. It would be unreasonable to object to it, but I don't think it's going to solve the whole problem.

• (1730)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Who would like the NDP's two minutes?

Madam Péclet.

Ms. Ève Péclet: Thank you very much to all the witnesses.

It's funny, because one of my colleagues asked a question in the House of Commons right before the Christmas break and she mentioned that a program.... I'm going to continue in French because the question was asked in French.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, cuts to the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness have affected the intensive supervision program for offenders. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but it's for offenders who are considered dangerous or high-risk. By the way, it seems that we don't know what the definition is.

Furthermore, you know that the Criminal Code already provides for a National Sex offender Registry. I would like to know how

creating a new registry can actually be useful to the police or to people who are responsible for ensuring the safety of victims and the community as a whole. How will they be able to operate if, unfortunately, the government continues to cut back or, as someone put it, pulls the rug out from under them?

Sharing information and cooperating with the police is good, but we know that they can't even update the screening and criminal records check programs, which has led to certain problems. What will they be able to do?

I would simply like to know what you think about these cuts. What kind of program would you recommend?

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll give everyone a chance to answer, and then that will be the meeting.

Mr. Gilhooly, do you want to answer first?

Mr. Gregory Gilhooly: Again, I guess if there's a problem, it should be addressed, but I truly defer.... I don't mean to be dismissive of the question—I think it's a very good question—but to me it begs for only a theoretical answer because I don't know the issues at play.

I would truly look to the police force to see what they require in order to provide a safe outcome. My gut obviously says the more resources that are thrown at tracking dangerous people, the better, to the extent that the proposal is additive to what the police need.

Mr. Steve Sullivan: Yes, I'm not familiar with the program, so I'm not sure how it interacts with police. My guess is that if it's part of public safety, maybe it's with corrections and parole programs, so it's for guys who are on conditional release. For those people, I think the more resources you have to surveil or to ensure that someone is following the conditions, if they have conditions—we're talking about sex offenders—not to go to parks or schools and those kinds of things, I think the more information you have about that, the better.

I don't really know that I can say a lot about it, because I'm not familiar with the program and I'm not sure how police use it. But from a policing perspective—there are officers here—I think the more information the police have, the happier they are.

The Chair: Is there anything from CoSA?

Mr. James Foord: I can't comment on that other than to finish by saying that I think everybody here agrees that funding is important both for victims and for making sure there are no more victims in the communities by addressing and connecting with people who might be potential offenders.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you to our guests today.

That is the meeting. We will be having another couple of panels on Monday, not next week but the week after, and then we'll be going to clause-by-clause study. By the end of February, I believe, the bill will be back in the House of Commons.

Thank you for your input on this bill.

With that, we are adjourned until next Monday.

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