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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 8, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

• (1620)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** We shall begin. I want to thank everybody. I want to wish everybody a happy International Women's Day and I'm very glad that we can begin.

The business before us today is to consider motions. I think all of you received the motions that were sent out. There were quite a number of them. I'm going to start in the order that we received them, with a motion from Ms. Damoff. I don't know if you want me to read the motion or whether you have a copy of it. Does anybody want me to read the motion? You all have copies.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Everybody has copies of them. The only thing I need to amend on that, as the last line there, is that the committee report to the House.

**The Chair:** Okay, we have a motion to amend the motion, to require the committee to report to the House.

Any other amendments?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Actually it's not on that motion, but it's just the fact that my motion was passed around at the last meeting. Would that be considered one of the first ones?

**The Chair:** No, it's the ones that were submitted to the clerk in the order that they were submitted....

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Are we going to go through these motion by motion and vote yes or no? Is that the intent?

**The Chair:** That is the intent. This first motion that we're talking about is the one that there was the most agreement on at the last meeting. That's the reason that we're going to start with that one as well as the fact that it came in first. Then from there, the intent was that we would go around. I know that Ms. Vandenberg had one come in. There were five from Ms. Vecchio and five from Ms. Malcolmson. After we talk about this one, my thought was to have Ms. Vecchio prioritize and bring us her favourite, and then go to Ms. Malcolmson, who is the next one chronologically, and have her bring us her favourite, and then come to Ms. Vandenberg and have her speak to her motion.

Ms. Damoff, you have an amendment, then, that this motion to require us to report to the House. Are there any other amendments to the motion?

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Pardon me for being late. Which motion are we on?

**The Chair:** This is the one that Ms. Damoff has brought.

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

**The Chair:** Can I just say one thing about that motion?

In order to speed up the work of the committee, it would be good to identify the witnesses we would like to call to speak to this so that we can set that up. Our schedule is a little troubling because other than Thursday's meeting, where the first hour is estimates and the second hour we can continue talking about motions, we don't meet again until April 12 because of budget day, Easter weekend, and two break weeks in the middle.

I would ask as an action that you forward to the clerk anybody that you'd like to call as a witness to talk about this, and I would also ask the parliamentary analyst to make recommendations based on what's previously been done so that we can have the witness lists come back....

What timing did we agree on? It was by the end of business tomorrow to start putting your suggestions in. That's not the end of the road. You can always bring suggestions thereafter of witnesses we want. But we thought if we had some up front, then we could start to put them in the schedule and go from there.

All right, next would be—

Yes?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** How many witnesses are we looking for to go through this process? Are you looking for 50, 60? What are the numbers that you're looking for?

**The Chair:** I'm not going to limit it. I think there's a very broad scope to this. As we get into it and as we see the list of witnesses, I would suggest that we bring the list of witnesses back and have a discussion with this committee.

Ms. Ludwig.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** Madam Chair, do we have a number in mind as to how many we would like at each session?

**The Chair:** I would say it depends on the topic because sometimes it's a deeper topic. If you think about people who have done reports, it's different from somebody who's just giving a personal testimony.

There's an opportunity as well to put them on panels and have a number of them come all at the same time. That provides an opportunity to ask questions, and then if you don't get enough time with them, you could reinstate the ones that you want to see again.

There's an opportunity as well to decide on how many meetings we want to spend on this, because as we go around and we get other motions that we want to work on, we may decide we want to spend this many meetings talking about this one and we want to spend another couple of meetings talking about another one. That can be decided.

Ms. Harder.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Is the way this works at the committee level that we take on one study at a time? Will we study it all the way through, bring it to conclusion, report it to the House, and then move on to the next motion of study; or will we be taking on more than one at a time?

**The Chair:** It is up to the will of the committee. In many cases the committees will study up to three, which would be plenty. Four gets a little bit hairy with the number of witnesses, but it's up to the will of the committee. If the committee just wanted to focus on this one and didn't want to do anything else, that would be fine. If they wanted to choose to do other motions, we would continue.

To Ms. Vecchio then, would you like to let us know which one is your favourite?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** My number one, let's see....

Many of the motions I put forward are complementary to what Pam has put forward. I totally support a discussion of hypersexuality. I think it's very important. I also support a discussion of violence against women, of course. That's the umbrella of the entire study. I support all of that motion.

I'm trying to look for something somewhat different. One thing I find that is very important is housing for women in Canada, and domestic violence and shelter funding. The minister's mandate states:

...that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by growing and maintaining Canada's network of shelters and transition houses.

This is also in the 2015 report of the status of women's committee entitled "Promising Practices to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls".

I move:

That the committee undertake a study on housing for girls and women in Canada, including its relationship to domestic violence in the lives of women and girls, and the need for better shelter funding in order to provide for women and girls who are suffering from domestic violence; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

•(1625)

**The Chair:** Are there any amendments to the motion?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** It is not an amendment. I think this is an important issue for us to study but I think we need to prioritize. Sheila brought forward a similar motion on housing

I'm not sure about us doing three studies at once. I think we're going to start with violence in the lives of young women and girls. I think my preference would be to prioritize our work so that it's that study we start with. Perhaps we could pick a second one, but to get too many in here would just muddy the.... It's going to take a while. I'll leave it at that.

**The Chair:** Does the committee find it acceptable if we take your favourite, Ms. Malcolmson's favourite, and Ms. Vandenberg's favourite, and then look at those three together to figure out which ones other than that first one we do, or which ones out of the four we do?

Is that acceptable?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Can I get some clarification on what you're...?

**The Chair:** Okay. We would have four studies. Then the committee would agree on how many studies we want to do. Then we would prioritize from those first four to see where we go next.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** We were just discussing the fact that some of these studies overlap quite a lot, so the motions overlap quite a lot. Just taking one from each party might mean studying the same thing three times. It depends on what the subject is. I think we have to take it motion by motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Thank you.

First of all, I think housing and transition shelters is something this committee should and will deal with. I'm a little nervous as well about prioritizing and overlapping.

I think perhaps a good way to deal with it is to ensure that the first motion on violence against women incorporates a housing perspective. I think it might achieve the same end, but in a more efficient way so we're not spending time on multiple studies. Correct me if I'm wrong; I don't mean to speak for you.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I totally agree with Sean. I'm looking at the study, and as I said, Pam, you have put through a fantastic motion.

I think what's really important, though, is that it's such a large motion, and has so many subsections and then sub-subsections.

I think that when we're looking at it, we have to prioritize your motion and how we're going to deal with it, because it's not one specific motion. It's an umbrella of different motions set together. If we want to look at your motion, let's prioritize what's important in those ones, because the housing absolutely does fit into that. If we're looking at women and violence, the transitional housing is a huge piece of that.

When we're looking at the motion, I'm in favour of it, but we need to break down that motion for study purposes, because it is an umbrella motion. Sheila may have comments on that as well since she has read into that.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** The Damoff motion is passed. Is that right?

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

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** The committee is now committed to this.

As I understand, the committee having committed to it, there would be a scoping exercise and some terms of reference suggested. Given the time we have today, I don't think we should do anything other than say, yes, this is something the committee is committed to.

When we get to the other motions, if they look like they overlap, the committee might decide to vote them down based on the duplication. I do feel fairly strongly that, having invited motions from the members, we look at all of them, even if it's not at this meeting, to say yes or no, we like this idea or we don't. We have four years to do the work. Of course, in time, we may well say, "This isn't as important as it was a year ago, now that we've gotten to it."

I think that our stakeholders and constituents would want to see our ambitious agenda, even if we do modify it as time goes on. I am a little uncomfortable about saying that we are going to vote only on one motion from each party, unless the ones that remain would be saved over to a future meeting when we could give them other consideration.

•(1630)

**The Chair:** For your information, with unanimous consent, we can amend a motion that has already passed. If we decide to add Ms. Vecchio's shelters to the scope of what we already agreed, we could do it with unanimous consent.

Do we have unanimous consent for that?

Yes...?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** My comment would be that housing deserves its own study. I think there is enough involved with it that at some point we should look at housing, transitional housing, and that whole piece. Violence against young women and girls is a small part of it. I really think that if we are going to look at housing, it deserves its own study. Sean spoke very well to it at another meeting. I know he is quite passionate about it as well.

I think today we should be.... We have one study to get going on. I think maybe we could pick a second one that we could have in the wings. After that, as a committee, we could look at what we want to do after those. There is enough work even with two studies to keep us going for quite some time.

I think that will be part of the discussion anyway, but I do think that housing deserves its own separate study, focusing on it and not on everything else.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Totally.

**The Chair:** There is an amendment that was on the table, unless Mr. Fraser wants to withdraw the amendment.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Sorry, what was my amendment? I did not intend to move an amendment.

**The Chair:** Okay. If you did not intend to move an amendment, I'll pretend it didn't happen.

We don't have unanimous consent to do only two. Ms. Malcolmson would like us to at least hear all of the motions. I think we should just go through and decide if it is something the committee would support working on. Then I would suggest that the

steering committee get together, take a look at the things, and bring back proposals of what we would work on in a prioritized fashion. If that is not to your liking, there are other methods I could recommend.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I don't mean to complicate things further, but I just need to know for my own understanding.

Given that the motion that is on the table is quite exhaustive, which I believe is a good thing, I wonder if we could study this one topic. We could start with this and then, when we are nearing its completion, have this conversation where we bring our motions back up, discuss them, and decide whether or not they are relevant at that time, whether those are still our passions as a committee. Then we vote on the next one that we are going to put on the table, but for now just focus on the one.

One of the reasons why I would suggest this is that every single person on this committee is brand new. We are all learning this as we go. I just wonder if doing two or three studies at a time is perhaps a little too much and actually distracts or takes away from the point of this study.

**The Chair:** We are going to do the study that we voted the motion on. That motion went through and we will do that. The parliamentary analyst will prepare a work plan once she sees the list of witnesses that will suggest how we will go forward. That we will do for sure.

The other motions that are here are all motions that have been brought to the committee. The choice is that we can withdraw them, amend them, or vote on them.

The intent was that we have to move. I must share my frustration as your chair that we make an agreement about how we are going to proceed and then we change it at the next meeting. That certainly is not good. I want to do the will of the committee, but I think that, having put work into all of these things, we at least need to hear what people say and find out if the committee likes the idea or not. Then I certainly think there needs to be a prioritization exercise.

Ms. Sahota, go ahead.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Just to follow up on that point, I think there should be a couple. From my experience on the other committees, at times witnesses aren't available, and I would hate to see us say, "Let's not have a meeting on Thursday or Tuesday" because a certain witness wasn't available for that study. But we can simultaneously work on a couple of things and make sure we're constantly busy and active on this committee.

I'm not saying that we should have a whole bunch, but a couple would be good so that we can get going.

•(1635)

**The Chair:** Mr. Fraser is first.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** No, I'll withdraw. That was my exact comment.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I just want to say that if we have to vote on 12 of these, it may not be that I don't support these. I just don't think it's the right time to be doing it. I'd almost prefer that we just start with the one study and perhaps send these others to the procedure and agenda subcommittee, although people may want to speak to them today.

I feel a little bit like there are so many good ideas that have come forward here that I don't want to be put in the position of saying that I don't want to do that study, and six months or a year from now it could be that someone else has done a study, or legislation has come in, and the world has changed. I think everybody agrees that we need to get started on something. We've agreed on the first study, so I think we should just get moving on that.

On what we do next, I know our preference is to move on the gender-based analysis as a second study, but that doesn't mean that there are not a lot of other really good ideas here.

**The Chair:** Here is how this works. When we vote on all the motions, there are six of you and you can decide to vote for gender-based analysis. I'm not going to try to tell you what to do, but I'm just saying that, in terms of outcomes, it is one possibility.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** A process proposal.... I'll put this in the form of a motion. I move that this committee now call the question on the motion on gender-based analysis, and that the remaining nine motions be considered at a future meeting of the committee.

**The Chair:** All right, there is a motion on the table. Is there discussion of the motion?

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I'm the one who put that notice of motion and I understood that I would have to move it. If you move it, you can't amend it.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I was just calling for debate on that one motion.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I will move the motion that the committee undertake the GBA, the one I submitted. I will move that motion.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I think my motion is still on the floor.

**The Chair:** No, actually, your motion is out of order because you're not allowed to call the motion that she submitted. That's according to the House, but I just learned that, too.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** But can we come back to me on waiting for the other nine?

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** I've moved it.

**The Chair:** She's moved it. You could amend it.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have an amendment to propose that I have discussed with the mover, and I hope that you have copies.

The motion would read that the committee study ways in which the government could—and this is the new wording—more fully implement gender-based analysis. Then the more detailed text is

scratched out, and it would then read “to advance gender equality, including:” and then the three bullets remain from the original motion.

At the very end we would include a sentence that covers housekeeping and it would read that the committee report its findings to the House, and that the committee request a government response to its report.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Madam Chair, I consider that a friendly amendment.

**The Chair:** A friendly amendment, all right, so the motion is so amended.

Are there any further amendments?

(Motion as amended agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I move that the committee reserve consideration of the remaining nine motions for a future meeting of the status of women committee.

**The Chair:** All right, there is a motion on the table. Are there any amendments to that motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We are in clear agreement. We will review those at a future meeting.

Being that it is approaching 4:45, then, I would just remind you to submit your witness requests to our clerk and also remind you that we will be looking at the main estimates and the supplementary estimates on Thursday. We have the department officials coming to do that. You received the report on planning and priorities.

Ms. Vecchio.

● (1640)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I have just a comment.

Now that we're going into the study of violence, will we break that down into specifics, and focus, or will we just go broad? With the campuses, for instance, I have met in my office with a variety of different organizations because of the universities and colleges in our area. Will we focus on one piece at a time or just receive everybody in a general sense and carry on that way?

We can do it either way, but I wasn't sure if we were going to break this down and be more specific on it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thanks very much.

I think that's a great suggestion. I would suggest that the appropriate place to deal with it is the subcommittee on agenda and procedure in terms of outlining a work plan as to which meetings will deal with which issues. We can try to arrange to have all the witnesses on the same sub-issue here on the same day, if that makes sense to the rest of the committee.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I think that would work very well. That way we can focus on one specific thing. Witnesses may bring variable opinions or solutions, and I think that's a great way to keep it a very focused discussion as well.

**The Chair:** The parliamentary analyst will bring the work plan to the subcommittee. Is that the suggestion?

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Yes, that is the suggestion.

Of course, it would ultimately have to come back to the committee as a whole—

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** —but for efficiency, I think it's the best place to deal with it.

**The Chair:** All right. Very good.

Considering everything, thanks so much.

Do you have one final comment, Ms. Damoff?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Happy International Women's Day to all the amazing people in the room.

**Voices:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** I declare this meeting adjourned.

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