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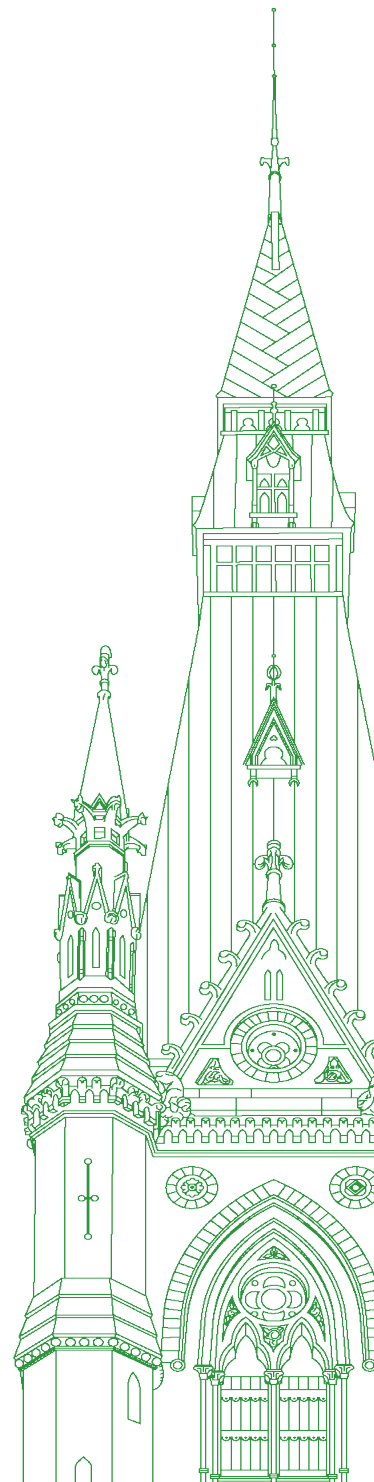
# Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 001**

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

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Chair: Mr. Sean Casey



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

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

• (1535)

[English]

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson):** Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can receive motions only for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions and cannot entertain points of order or participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I'm ready to receive motions for the chair.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Clerk, I would like to nominate my fellow Class of 2011 member, Sean Casey, to be chair.

**The Clerk:** Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Clerk:** I declare the motion carried and Mr. Casey duly elected chair of the committee.

I invite Mr. Casey to take the chair.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** Thank you very much, colleagues.

Thank you, Mr. Albas.

He really dispensed with the suspense by introducing me as a fellow member of the Class of 2011, because at the time I was elected, I was one-half of the Liberal Class of 2011, and now I'm it.

Having served in that capacity in the third party, I have an appreciation for where Ms. Gazan and Ms. Chabot and Mr. Manly sit. I will do my darndest to be fair and to keep the committee moving as well as it can.

Thank you, everyone.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** The next item on the agenda is the election of the vice-chairs.

Mr. Long.

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

Good afternoon to everybody.

I would like to nominate Stephanie Kusie to be first vice-chair.

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

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** I declare the motion carried and Stephanie Kusie first vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** I'd like to nominate Louise Chabot for second vice-chair.

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

Are there any other motions?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** I declare the motion carried and Louise Chabot duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

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

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

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

Congratulations to our chair and our vice-chairs.

I have some routine motions that I would like to bring forward to the committee, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you.

Regarding the analysts, I move:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the chair, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding a subcommittee on agenda and procedure, I move:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be established and be composed of five (5) members: the chair and one member from each party; and that the subcommittee work in the spirit of collaboration.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Before we deal with this, let me say that I made what is my first noticeable mistake by failing to invite the analysts to join us here in their chairs. Now that they're authorized to do so, let's do that.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** All right. You've heard the motion with respect to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I just want to say thank you to all the members for their service as well as the clerks and analysts. I look forward to a healthy session.

In regard to the specific subcommittee on agenda and procedure, I want to put it clearly on the record that I believe the subcommittees have been a tremendous waste of time, in my experience. The simple reason is that the subcommittee has to meet outside, and whatever they bring here has to be ratified by the committee.

I'm just putting it on notice right now that if the chair and the various vice-chairs find that it's useful and productive, then I don't think we'll have an issue. I do think, though, that it's important to state very early that whatever they do has to be ratified by us. Quite honestly, sometimes it's just easier to hammer out these details with everyone here. You can get a consensus, and if you need to, you can take two minutes away to just check the mood of your members.

Quite honestly, I think it would save a lot of time and effort, and also taxpayers' money, because we have all these people who have to be involved in recording those things. I'm just noting it for the record.

**The Chair:** Are there any other interventions? Are we ready for the question?

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I want to make one comment to ensure that I fully understand this issue. Do we want to eliminate subcommittees and keep carrying out our work in the committee? Is that the meaning of the proposal?

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas, do you want to respond?

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I misunderstood, and that's why I want some clarification.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Right now, the committee must address Mr. Long's motion. I want to share my—

**The Chair:** —concerns?

[English]

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Yes. I have some concerns. I just want to see the committee move smoothly.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions?

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** No. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Okay.

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

**The Chair:** We have not yet voted on this. All in favour of the subcommittee motion presented by Mr. Long...?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

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

Regarding reduced quorum, I move:

That the chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government, but when travelling outside the parliamentary precinct, that the meeting begin after fifteen (15) minutes, regardless of members present.

Thank you.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding the questioning of witnesses, I move:

That witnesses be given ten (10) minutes for their opening statement; that, at the discretion of the chair, during the questioning of witnesses, there be allocated six (6) minutes for the first questioner of each party as follows: Conservative Party; Liberal Party; Bloc Québécois; New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, the order and time for questioning be as follows: Conservative Party, five (5) minutes; Liberal Party, five (5) minutes; Conservative Party, five (5) minutes; Liberal Party, five (5) minutes; Bloc Québécois, two and a half (2.5) minutes; New Democratic Party, two and a half (2.5) minutes.

• (1545)

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding document distribution, I move:

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute documents to members of the committee only when the documents are available in both official languages and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding working meals, I move:

That the clerk of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide working meals for the committee and its subcommittees.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding witnesses' expenses, I move:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses be reimbursed to witnesses not exceeding two (2) representatives per organization; provided that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vis.

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** I think it's important, with all of the great technology installed in the parliamentary precinct, that our committee does its very best to use the electronic services available to us before spending copious amounts of money on witness travel. We already have the technology in place.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Just to follow up on my colleague's point, the first priority should be that if you're in an urban centre where it can be accommodated, where you can speak by teleconference call or by video conference, that's great. I also want to recognize that there are parts of this country that do not easily lend themselves to that. I really want to reiterate the importance of respecting taxpayers' dollars. I just would ask the chair to work with the clerks as judiciously as possible.

Perhaps we can have a comparison down the road, when budgets are brought to us, of how many people have been scheduled by teleconference call versus by travel. Breaking those things out keeps it top of mind for all of us and helps us do our job.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Chair, I would agree with both of the members opposite on their statements. I will say, certainly from my experience last time, that I think there were many examples of where an in-person witness was much more powerful and effective.

To your point, we should take each one on a case-by-case basis. If we can use technology, we should certainly do that to reduce costs.

**The Chair:** Okay. Are you ready for the question?

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding staff at in camera meetings, I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to have one staff member at an in camera meeting and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Regarding in camera meeting transcripts, I move:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept in the committee clerk's office for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff.

• (1550)

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** The next is regarding notices of motions. Before I read this, I'll add that this one is extremely important. I know we certainly had discussions about this in the last session.

I move:

That forty-eight (48) hours' notice, interpreted as two (2) nights, shall be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (1) the notice be filed with the clerk of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (2) the motion be distributed to members in both official languages by the clerk on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and that (3) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day and that when the committee is travelling on official business, no substantive motions may be moved.

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

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Being from British Columbia, I would hate to see me wanting to send things in at 6:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, just with the time delay. Can we please make sure it says that Eastern Standard Time 4:00 p.m. would be the cut-off time, just so we're all on the same playing ground?

**The Chair:** I consider that to be a friendly amendment.

Do you agree?

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Yes, for sure.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** It should actually be the other way around. It would come in earlier.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** We'll stick with Eastern time.

**The Chair:** For the sake of good form, is there any discussion on the amendment?

Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Thank you, and congratulations, Mr. Chair.

I want to just make an amendment to the motion that any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes: (a) to discuss administrative matters of the committee, (b) a draft report, (c) briefings concerning national security, and furthermore, minutes of in camera meetings should reflect on the results of all votes taken by the committee while in camera, including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, I'm not sure that's an amendment to the motion on the floor. Once we're finished dealing with this one, it would be appropriate for you to introduce that as a motion afresh.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Sorry, I'm a newbie.

**The Chair:** No, it's fine.

What we have before the committee now is a motion to amend the motion, to add a reference to Eastern Standard Time.

Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Mr. Housefather.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Sorry, Mr. Chair, but I would just say that it should read “Eastern Time” not “Eastern Standard Time”, because we operate on Daylight Time too, just so it is not confused.

**The Chair:** You are absolutely right again.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** I hadn't said anything before, but thank you.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on the motion as amended?

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

**The Chair:** Now, Ms. Gazan, I recognize you for the next order of business.

• (1555)

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to move the following motion:

That any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes:

- (a) to discuss administrative matters of the committee
- (b) a draft report
- (c) briefings concerning national security;

And furthermore, minutes of in camera meetings should reflect on the the results of all votes taken by the committee while in camera, including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on the motion?

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Chair, are we able to see a copy of that?

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Yes, I have copies here.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I'd just like to look it over.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I'm just wondering if we can have a chance to read through it and consider it.

**The Chair:** Let's suspend for five minutes and give people a chance to huddle on this.

• (1555)

(Pause)

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you. We're back in session.

We have a motion presented by Ms. Gazan.

Ms. Gazan, would you like to speak to the motion, or are there any interventions on the motion?

Ms. Gazan, go ahead.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** The purpose of the motion is just to make what we're discussing in the meetings more transparent to our voters and the public, which is why I'm putting forth this motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

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

Thanks for that motion. I think that, by and large, certainly, we do agree. I would like to propose a couple of amendments, though.

I'll just start right at the start here. The amended motion would read, “That any motion to go in camera should be debatable and amendable, and that the committee may only meet in camera for the following purposes: (a) to discuss administrative matters of the committee/witness selection, (b) a draft report, (c) briefings concerning national security, and (d) potential personal confidential information; And furthermore, minutes of in camera meetings should reflect on the results of all votes taken by the committee while in camera, including how each member voted when a recorded vote is requested.”

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

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm not sure we need to have.... For administrative matters of the committee, such as selecting someone as a witness, I would think that it would fall underneath it. Please don't take this as any kind of criticism of you, Mr. Long, but I don't think it needs to be there. I think that's clearly administrative, just helping the clerks to be able to move forward with it. I'm not going to fight this one, though.

On potential personal information, we could just say, “issues that may respect privacy” or those kinds of things. I would hope that as parliamentarians we would automatically seek to be on the up and up when it comes to the privacy of individuals.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Perhaps we could amend it to “matters that fall under FIPPA legislation”. It would be more specific. I think “personal” matters is a bit vague. I think it's probably better if we have a clearer definition of that.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Mr. Albas, can you repeat what you said?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I would just say, “respect the privacy of individuals pertaining to the committee's business”. That would give you enough wiggle room. If it's the committee's business and there's a privacy concern, then that can be brought in camera.

• (1605)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Mr. Albas, we would take that suggestion. “Respect the privacy of individuals”, is that what you said?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Of an individual in regard to committee business....

**The Chair:** We now have a subamendment to the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Perhaps my question relates more to our housekeeping rules.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Based on what we just passed regarding motions, a 48-hour notice is required. We've added the clarification of Eastern time. Right now, we've received a motion that we're debating. However, is now the time to debate the motion or should we postpone the debate? My question also concerns the future. Since we've adopted a 48-hour notice rule, how can we move a motion on the spot and pass it? That's the first point.

I mean, as far as the second point is concerned, I don't have any objection. However, I thought, perhaps mistakenly, that we should be holding public meetings as much as possible. I also thought that, as committee members, we had the prerogative to request an in camera session, depending on the situation. Unless I'm persuaded to do so, I don't see any point in passing this motion.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Chabot.

Concerning your first question regarding the requirement to give notice, I want to specify that we're now addressing committee business. In this context, notice isn't required. We can move a motion without notice. Even when the motion concerns the topic addressed by the committee, notice isn't required. The motion is in order and in proper form.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I was just going to echo what you said, Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay.

You're putting me to the test here, folks. We have a subamendment. The subamendment proposed by Mr. Albas is to amend the amendment such that part (d) references "the privacy of individuals as it relates to committee business".

Is there any further discussion on the subamendment?

**A voice:** It's "respect" the privacy, I think, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** It sounds like we've arrived in hopefully a good spot. I'm happy to hear that. I also want to place notice that it's my expectation that we won't be utilizing in camera meetings unless they specifically pertain to those things, and that it's the obligation of any member who believes that a motion is made to go in camera that does not honour these things to vote against it. I think there's a good check and balance here.

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion on the subamendment?

(Subamendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now, on the amendment as amended, this is the motion as presented and circulated by Ms. Gazan with the addition under part (a) of "witness selection" and part (d) that you've just voted to add. That's just so we're clear on what we're voting on.

Is there any discussion on the amendment to the motion? I see none.

(Amendment as amended agreed to)

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

• (1610)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I have one more motion regarding independent members during clause-by-clause. I move:

That, in relation to Orders of Reference from the House respecting Bills, (a) the clerk of the committee shall, upon the committee receiving such an Order of Reference, write to each member who is not a member of a caucus represented on the committee to invite those members to file with the clerk of the committee, in both official languages, any amendments to the Bill, which is the subject of the said order, which they would suggest that the committee consider; (b) suggested amendments filed, pursuant to paragraph (a), at least 48 hours prior to the start of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill to which the amendments relate shall be deemed to be proposed during the said consideration, provided that the committee may, by motion, vary this deadline in respect of a given Bill; and (c) during the clause-by-clause consideration of a Bill, the chair shall allow a member who filed suggested amendments, pursuant to paragraph (a), an opportunity to make brief representations in support of them.

**The Chair:** You've heard the motion. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** This includes Eastern Time, I presume.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** We take it as including Eastern Time. I take it that we're okay with that. We have a consensus on that. Are there any further interventions?

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you, everybody.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I think that's the end of the routine motions. Is there any further business to come before the meeting?

Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Mr. Chair, I wanted to make one more motion.

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** It's like a dry run of a newbie. I'm sorry. Here's the motion:

That the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive and publish evidence when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four (4) members are present, including two (2) members from the opposition and two (2) members from the government; and that in the case of previously scheduled meetings taking place outside of the Parliamentary Precinct, the Committee members in attendance be required to wait for 15 minutes following the designated start of the meeting before they may proceed to hear witnesses and receive evidence, regardless of whether opposition or government members are present.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, I'm going to need a minute to consult with the procedural clerks on this, because a motion on this very subject was presented and adopted during routine motions. Give me a minute, please.

Thank you, colleagues, for your indulgence. My advice on this is that, given that earlier in the meeting a motion was passed with respect to proceeding with a meeting without a quorum, in order to be able to entertain Ms. Gazan's motion, unanimous consent would be required to withdraw the first motion so as to consider hers. Do we have unanimous consent to withdraw the previous motion with respect to meeting without a quorum?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Your motion is in order, Ms. Gazan. Is there any discussion on the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Is there any further business to come before the meeting?

Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion for adjournment.

• (1615)

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I move to adjourn, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are adjourned to the call of the chair.

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