



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

43rd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 002**

Tuesday, February 25, 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

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• (1535)  
[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone. I see a quorum, and it is 3:32.

Welcome to meeting number two of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Today we have committee business. There are a couple of preliminary matters that I would like to raise with you.

I understand that all of you have received by email, from the clerk of the committee, notification of order in council appointments. These order in council appointments have been made by the Governor in Council. They will be published in the Canada Gazette.

This committee has the option of reviewing those appointments. With each of the notifications you received, there was an indication of when the time expires for the conduct of any review that we might undertake. I bring that to your attention. We don't require a decision on it now. I bring it to your attention just in case there is a will to do that.

The second preliminary matter that I want to raise with you is in connection with the supplementary estimates. As you know, each committee may consider and report the votes on supplementary (B)s. The deadline for that is March 23. I expect that there may be some will to have an examination of those.

Do you have a question, Mr. Albas?

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** I just had a question about the order in council, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Quickly, so we don't distract from the schedule, we can make it known now that we want to have a particular order in council appointment person come in. Is it possible to do that through a notice of motion over the break week next week? I would greatly appreciate the flexibility. What's the mechanism you need to be able to work with the clerk on it?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Andrew Wilson):** I can speak to that.

Each of the order in council nominations that were sent to members has an expiry date. As long as they're invited before the committee before that date, then, yes, absolutely, we can receive notice of that next week.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Good. I just want to make sure I'm working productively with both the chair and the clerk.

Thank you.

**The Clerk:** You're welcome.

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

Now we're in committee business, so it's over to you, folks.

Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of our colleagues for being here today. This feels like the very first meeting of the committee.

I'd like to put a notice of motion on the table.

I'd like to move this motion. The motion is as follows:

That the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the challenges and systemic barriers facing Indigenous people and Indigenous housing providers in northern, urban and rural communities across Canada; that this study focus on urban, northern and rural providers and examine the roles government and non-governmental organizations play in existing housing services supports; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

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

The motion is in order.

Mr. Albas, please.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I certainly hope that we can work on this committee as productively as possible. I do recognize that MP Young is.... Hitting this right off the starting line is a good definition of productivity.

Mr. Chair, there have been a lot of different proposals here. Rather than voting a particular proposal down, I was hoping that perhaps we could have a discussion as to where different members are in order to see if there is some common ground on some particular issues, and then maybe we could choose one. We have many competing ones.

Unfortunately, by moving the motion, as has been done.... Again, I understand the intent is to get something on the table. It just may happen that someone may want to do your study and not one of the other ones first. In voting against this, perhaps they may not have that option.

We can adjourn debate on this particular motion and then have the member come forward with it later, if she wants to. Again, I respect the fact that the member has the right to do so, but I'd like to see if we could have some discussion as to some of the competing ideas that members may have for the committee.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Could we not have some discussion on this motion and get some feedback on it? I understand there may be some people who have some amendments to the motion, but I'd like to explain why I want to put this motion on the table, if that's possible.

It's quite clear that we all, as parliamentarians, need to address the issue of indigenous homelessness in our communities. I would expect it's a concern for all of us. I come from London, Ontario, which is a community of nearly 400,000 people in southwestern Ontario. We have three neighbouring indigenous communities. The city is challenged, like so many others, with the rapid increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. Of these, an even higher proportion identify as indigenous—29% of London's homeless population identify as indigenous. The city has been working with an indigenous-led community plan focused on solving indigenous homelessness through a culture-first, housing-first model. I believe that our government can learn from this model.

London is the 11th-largest designated community in Ontario, but it is home to the third-highest percentage of the population that identifies as indigenous. I think you can see why I find this to be such an important topic for my community and for this committee as well.

The UN special rapporteur examined the right to housing of indigenous peoples and recognized the right to adequate housing to be interdependent with and indivisible from the rights and legal principles set out in UNDRIP. Homelessness for indigenous people is unique from non-indigenous people, because available resources are often ill-suited to respond to their needs. As an example, sometimes housing is provided through charities tied to churches that were responsible for some of the trauma they experienced. We need to look at the problem of indigenous housing with its own lens, and that's what I'm asking for today.

The term “indigenous” refers to first nations, Métis and Inuit. They are distinct peoples, with their own cultures, rights and relationships with the Crown. Improving indigenous housing is a priority for the national housing strategy, but I think the national housing strategy is a part that we need to focus on as far as indigenous housing is concerned. That's why I think it's important for this committee to take a look specifically at this issue.

I think MP Gazan has something to suggest for my motion, if she'd like to present that.

Thank you.

• (1540)

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

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, we'll get to you next. Mr. Albas is on the list, and then you.

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

Again, I totally understand where MP Young is coming from. My request was more out of a spirit of working together. Rather than going head-deep into a very important issue to MP Young.... I have first nation communities in my riding as well. However, in the spirit of a minority government, the government cannot continue to act as if it has a majority. When someone says, “Perhaps we can discuss and hear different competing priorities so we can see if we have some consensus, and we might bypass this”.... While I know that the member is passionate about it, jumping into it head-deep really doesn't work. I was hoping to see if the member would consider...because the only thing we can do at this point is to either adjourn debate or modify it.

I'd like us to have a discussion about which subjects we might have some interest in, rather than jumping first into something where I have just a yes-or-no button.

I'll just ask the member again. Would she consider adjourning debate on this? She can bring it back at any time. Then maybe we can have a discussion not on her motion and its substance, but just on where the parties are at. I'd appreciate the courtesy.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you.

Thank you again for your grace. I'm still learning.

I did have some recommended amendments. I want to thank the honourable member across the way for proposing this in the first place, but I wanted to make some amendments, so it would state:

That, in recognition of the fact that nearly 80% of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in urban, rural and northern communities; pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), that the committee undertake a study to examine the gaps in the federal government's current policies in addressing the homelessness and precarious housing crisis facing Indigenous Peoples in urban, rural, and northern communities; that the committee seek the advice and expertise of Indigenous housing and homelessness service providers in urban, rural, and northern communities across Canada; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, that wasn't an amendment to a motion but rather an entirely new motion that you had given notice of before. We're going to deal with or adjourn debate on the current motion, and then you're free to bring that one forward.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.):** I think that is workable as an amendment that modifies this and adds to the depth of the work that's being proposed. I don't think it stands in contradiction to it. I would see it as "friendly", so I think we can wordsmith that into our—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, while I appreciate that we all will have an opinion on something, you've already ruled that it's out of order. If the member wants to put forward a motion to challenge the chair, I'm sure he can do it. Again, you've already said it substantially changes the motion.

• (1545)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** We'll take the conversation—

**The Chair:** I think what I'm hearing and where we're going with this is that maybe one is going to be withdrawn in favour of another. I'd like to hear Mr. Vaughan out, and then we'll deal with it.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I see a way of fitting them together as a joint motion that achieves the purpose of it. I think we can wordsmith that to make it compatible, perhaps with the help of the clerk.

What I'd like to do is address Mr. Albas's concern about the other priorities, which have also been tabled. I hear the concern, and I think there's a way of handling this.

Perhaps what we can do is table all of them together and then, as a committee, set some priorities here today. We can have a discussion and the people who have moved those motions can make their point and advocate for why they see their motion as a priority. Then, as a committee, today, we can make a decision on first, second and third sets of priorities. Then, perhaps, the subcommittee, which sets the agenda, can get to work with proposing a way of getting through the work plan currently in front of us.

We also know that with the budget coming and with other legislation that is likely to be tabled at any given moment, other things will come from the House that will disrupt this process. I don't think we need to set in order all of the priorities and all of the motions that are being tabled here today, but I think we do need to get to work as a committee and set a couple of priorities here today.

I would say, let's have the members speak to their proposals and let the committee ask questions as to where the priorities are, but at the end of the day, let's set a priority for job number one, at least, and then send the other motions that aren't part of that to the subcommittee for ordering, and it can bring those back to the full committee.

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

Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

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

I want to point out that I share your view that the NDP member's amendment does not seem to be an amendment.

I believe that the subject matter touches on indigenous housing. However, based on the wording, it seems instead to be a new motion that we will have to discuss, rather than an amendment.

As I am sitting on a committee for the first time, I am wondering how we proceed because the committee has already received several motions.

I agree that we can consider all the motions. However, we could quickly decide amongst ourselves what will be the committee's priorities, unless you indicate that the committee will sit every day of the week.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

I think we're moving in your direction, Mr. Albas. Go ahead.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I was just hoping we could have exactly this kind of discussion.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** We've all sent a number of notices of motion to the clerk, and the clerk has sent them to everyone, but we haven't actually had a discussion as to perhaps the Liberals, the Bloc or the NDP having motions that others would like. Or maybe we have one that, with a slight modification, could be a good one to start with.

I will just point out that I've put forward one on medical assistance in dying, which is a very timely topic. It's very key to my shadow ministry side. On the disability inclusion, there are a lot of concerns. I think we could give voice to some of those things.

Unfortunately, right now we're debating outside of the motion that's been put. I really do think we should probably clear that back and perhaps then have a discussion on where joint priorities might be set, because we haven't had the benefit of hearing from one another. We've just been sending emails to one another.

**The Chair:** All right, I think we're moving towards a consensus here on what Mr. Albas has suggested. At least that's what I'm hearing from Mr. Vaughan. We do have a motion on the floor, but I think we do have consensus that a discussion around priorities would be in order.

Am I reading the room correctly?

Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My understanding of my colleague Mr. Vaughan's point is that we should table all the motions, especially the motions that we were served notice of, and go through them one by one. Some may get the support of the committee. Some may not. We don't know. Once we have cleared that table, then we can look at what's left and figure out our priorities from that bunch. That's just my understanding of what Mr. Vaughan was saying.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** I think we've all put priorities forward in terms of what motions.... We worked hard as a group on this side to put forward motions that we thought were priorities. I'm sure all parties did the same. I feel like the debate should be around specific motions that have been put forward—I think everybody's worked hard on those—rather than sort of delay, potentially, and get stuck in long debates about reaching some consensus before we actually put those motions on the table.

I really do support my colleague Adam Vaughan's sentiment, and I think we should table the motions.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** First of all, maybe you, Mr. Chair, or the clerk can actually say whether or not.... My understanding is that all of the motions that we have received from the clerk are eligible for discussion.

We all did work hard, which is why I would like to see us consider the different views, rather than charge down one direction. Again, I commend the MP because I do not want to diminish the role of any individual member to plead his or her case as to why we need to do that. I just think that having the context of everyone....

Maybe if the member withdraws the motion, although technically she can't because it's now in front of us and you found it in order.... However, even if she just adjourns debate on the motion, then we can have the conversation. Then we're working within the structure of the committee and can talk about the different priorities to see if we can find some commonalities.

I don't view this as being something that would take very long. I think it would be pretty quick. If no one intonates that they're going to support having discussion on medical assistance in dying for people with disabilities and the concern, particularly from the disability community, I'd like to hear it so that I can just say okay and put that aside, even though I think it's an important issue that each one of us would hear from our constituents that they'd like to hear about.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** I'll pass, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right, we have a motion in front of us. We have a suggestion from Mr. Albas that debate be adjourned to allow for an examination of all the other options. I am in your hands.

Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I want to clarify whether this is standard practice in committees and how they operate. I've only been on one committee so far that's met numerous times. This is not how things operated on that committee, so I'm wondering whether this is a standard practice.

**The Chair:** It isn't out of line. Neither is out of line. Once a motion is presented, the normal course of things is that it's debated and voted upon. However, there are other committees that adopt the route that Mr. Albas has put forward. I can tell you that, in this Parliament, the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs took all of the

motions that were put on notice and punted them to a subcommittee on planning and procedure. The subcommittee identified priorities and brought them back to the full committee. From that, the batting order and the amount of time spent on each of them was agreed upon.

The approach that we started with is one that is clearly permitted under the rules. The approach that Mr. Albas is suggesting is one that is being used in this Parliament and has been used. Neither is wrong.

Is that fair?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Absolutely.

If you don't mind, Mr. Chair, let me add that I find this issue to be very important as well, but again, many different priorities have been expressed. I think we kind of jump the gun by.... Basically, you can't make everything a priority, or else nothing is a priority. Perhaps just having a discussion about which will be number one, number two, number three...so that I don't have to vote against MP Young's motion to express that I want to support something else going first. I don't want to be put in that position.

Plus, we're all new in this committee together. It's kind of nice to know where people are at in their headspace. I'm a Rotarian: Building goodwill and better friendships is always a good thing.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Thank you for that. I do understand that we want to be collegial and understand where everybody is coming from. I certainly want to do that.

I guess I'm thinking that I'm not setting a priority. I was the first one to put my hand up and I was able to get this motion on the table. It doesn't mean that this is the first motion we're going to deal with as a committee. If we can move forward and substantially say that this is something we want to study, then we can move on to the next one.

**The Chair:** Mr. Housefather.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to echo what Ms. Young just said. To me, the most expeditious way to deal with these motions would be to go through the motions and vote on the motions. The committee could adopt three, six, or seven motions on what the committee agrees to study and then do what Mr. Albas is suggesting—that is, prioritize the motions that were adopted in the order in which the committee wishes to prioritize them.

If we just spend all of our time talking about how we're going to get somewhere, we're never going to get anywhere at all.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Again, MP Vaughan mentioned earlier that perhaps it's one way for us to move forward, supported by MP Dong as well. What I'm trying to say is that right now, all I can do is have that binary vote for or against. Quite honestly, it would be very helpful to all of us if a member were just to say that they were taking this off-line, or if someone other than me were to say that debate now be adjourned on this and just clear the air. Perhaps the people who have presented motions, without presenting at the formal table, can state their case as to why it should go first. Then we'll know what is on each other's mind.

Again, I'm one person on the committee. I do recognize that committee business is very busy. We want to get things done. The other thing is that we also want to do it right. This is a minority Parliament. I don't think it's a healthy sign to have the government side immediately pushing forward with an agenda, even though I might agree with parts of it. Part of being on committee in a minority means listening to other views.

I would just hope that perhaps we could put tools down for a moment and have a discussion. There might even be some consensus motions where four of us say, yes, MP Young's might be second or third, but maybe one of the other ones might be first. I would go back to the one about medical assistance in dying. That one is very timely and relevant, and it will not be a week or two or three from now.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I'm sorry, Chair, I just want to know where we're at on Leah's amended motion.

**The Chair:** [Technical difficulty—Editor]

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Madame Chabot.

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I am more or less in agreement that we look at the motions one by one, discuss them and vote on them.

It was also not clear to me that, because Ms. Young was the first to move a motion on February 19, there was an order of priority being followed.

All committee members—Conservatives, New Democrats and Liberals—put forward motions. We can discuss them and make a decision about them, and we can say what we would like to do about this.

Correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that we could submit certain issues to subcommittees and then discuss them in committee, while others could be studied here. I'm not quite sure.

I believe that it is important to prioritize the work for the next few meetings. However, I am personally prepared to agree to go through members' proposed motions one by one, without considering that we are giving priority to one over the other.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

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

I have a few thoughts. Did we not discuss, last meeting, that administrative matters would go in camera? That's just something I'd like you to consider because I think we are talking about administrative matters.

Second, it is a new Parliament. We are a minority government—I recognize that—but we do serve motions 48 hours in advance for everybody to see, for everybody to ponder, for everybody to talk to colleagues about and so on.

I would also throw out there that, obviously, as a team on this side, we want to move forward with this study on indigenous housing and the challenges that first nations communities face. Maybe we can move forward and move this one as the first order of business. Then, maybe we can discuss the other motions after that. I'll throw that out to you for consideration.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Chair, in the spirit that Mr. Albas was talking about, I would be interested in discussing Ms. Leah Gazan's motion. She seems to have a very strong interest in this as well. I think it would be a really generous move from the government to perhaps accept the motion of another individual, a minority party individual, for evaluation. I think that would be in a great spirit of goodwill that the government could take.

As many individuals have pointed out, it is in the spirit of what Ms. Young's motion is trying to achieve. As Conservatives, we are always willing to support goodwill and collaboration with others. It's something that we want to demonstrate.

I would suggest to Ms. Young that perhaps she wants to withdraw this motion and allow Ms. Gazan to put her motion forward for us to vote on in the spirit of a minority government and a new start here in the House of Commons—a new start, unified.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to present that to the committee.

**The Chair:** Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Chair, I was just wondering if the committee would consider hearing what Mr. Vaughan is working on. It looks like an amendment to Ms. Young's motion that would adopt the spirit of Ms. Gazan's motion or amendment.

My understanding, when I heard it, was that it was a little longer than a normal amendment but that it was an amendment. It was not presented in the formal way of a motion. It came out during the discussion on the current motion moved by Ms. Young.

I would ask the committee to listen to Mr. Vaughan's proposed amendment.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I'll read it, but it's subject to getting consent from the opposite member. I think I've blended the two into one motion that uses almost all of the language of our colleague on the other side and stays true to the motion that was tabled by our member for London West:

That, in recognition of the fact that nearly 80% of Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in urban, rural and northern communities; be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the challenges and systemic barriers facing Indigenous People and indigenous housing providers in northern, urban and rural communities across Canada; that this study focus on urban, northern and rural providers and identify the gaps in the federal government's current policies in addressing homelessness and the precarious housing crisis facing Indigenous Peoples in urban, rural and northern communities across Canada; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I've included all the language and woven it through with the language that was tabled by Ms. Young.

If you'd like to recess for the NDP to review that, just to make sure they're happy with that, I'm more than happy to get it to them quickly.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Let's suspend for five minutes, please.

• (1600) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1610)

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

I am advised by the clerk that one option in terms of how to proceed—and I will, of course, be guided by the committee, but let me convey to you the procedural advice I've received—is that Mr. Vaughan could propose that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after “that” and replacing them with his motion. That is one option, but I would be more interested in whether you reached a consensus during the suspension, rather than relying on that.

Ms. Gazan, please.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Mr. Chair, again I apologize and I thank you all for your patience while I'm learning. I'd like to move that my amendments to the motion be accepted.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but are you moving that all the words in the motion after the word “that” be deleted and replaced with the words that Mr. Vaughan read before the suspension?

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay. We now have an amendment before us. The floor is open for debate on the amendment.

Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Ms. Gazan, would these amendments replace your motion?

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** I want us to work together as a committee, understanding that it is my motion but I'm willing to make that concession because I feel this is a very important study that I'd like to see advanced. I suppose that would be a yes.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I'm sorry. It might be the lack of capacity up here; the hamster took the day off and the wheel is by itself. Could you please let me know, is it MP Young's proposal with Mr. Vaughan's amendment or Ms. Gazan's amendment or her motion? Some of us can't compute.

**The Chair:** We are now debating an amendment put forward by Ms. Gazan to the motion of Ms. Young.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Can someone read it out again?

**The Chair:** That all of the words after the word “That” be replaced with the following:

That, in recognition of the fact that nearly 80% of Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in urban, rural and northern communities; be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the challenges and systemic barriers facing Indigenous People and indigenous housing providers in northern, urban and rural communities across Canada; that this study focus on urban, northern and rural providers and identify the gaps in the federal government's current policies in addressing homelessness and the precarious housing crisis facing Indigenous Peoples in urban, rural and northern communities across Canada; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

That's the amendment that is before the committee.

Mr. Vaughan.

• (1615)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I'm happy to work with the member opposite to make sure that her wording drives this agenda. I think that's an important thing to recognize. Her language is in fact driving the operative clauses in this motion.

I would like to add two points. One, the UN rapporteur on housing has asked for this country to respond to a clear need in this area. I think that this motion addresses the call to action from the UN rapporteur on housing. As well, we had a gathering of urban indigenous housing providers in Ottawa just two weeks ago, who also put forth this call for the government to address what is clearly a gap in the national housing strategy, and in fact in indigenous housing policy that is historic in this country.

This is a great motion. I think it sets us in a position to start building on some of the success of the national housing strategy, but clearly it allows us to address what is a long-standing need in this country and a long-standing gap in housing provisions. I think that making this a priority sends a clear signal that this Parliament is serious about solving this crisis.

I will note that in Ontario, the number is 87% of indigenous people who live in urban and rural areas, including in the north of Ontario. In every single major city, we're seeing a significant overrepresentation of indigenous peoples in the point-in-time homeless counts, whether on the street, sleeping rough or in shelters or precarious housing.



Finally, I think the other issue which has to be mentioned is that the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women clearly lays this challenge at the feet of the federal government to resolve. I don't think we would have had the astonishingly awful numbers and the tragedy, which this country has to wear with shame, if we had had a stronger housing policy in this area. It's an area of clear federal responsibility. Other parts of the housing file may be disputed between different jurisdictional governments, but this one is clearly a federal responsibility, and the Supreme Court Mikisew case has also identified it as such.

I think this is an incredibly important motion. I'm thankful that the member for Winnipeg Centre has contributed to making it an even better motion, and I look forward to getting the study under way as quickly as possible.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I want to thank you, Mr. Chair, for clarifying this. I wanted to make sure that I know exactly what I'm going to be voting on.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are we ready for the question?

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

**The Chair:** It's unanimous.

Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** That's wonderful. I think that's a real spirit of collaboration, one that is much needed here. Thank you to both individuals for working on that.

Also in the spirit of collaboration, I would like to put forward again a notice of motion brought forward, which I could move today in agreement with a fellow member of Parliament here in regard to the national housing strategy. I think Parliamentary Secretary Vaughan has spoken today of the steps that have been made relative to the national housing strategy. I commend them for heeding the first recommendation of CMHC's three recommendations of moving forward on further evaluation of first nations housing.

Considering that spirit of wanting to provide effective programming and ensuring that the programming follows its intention, which was to be beneficial to the many Canadians in need whom it was supposed to serve, I can't think of a better way to do that than to support the motion of Mr. Long:

That the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of distributing funds through the National Housing Strategy, and any barriers which may be preventing the distribution of funds to developers.

• (1620)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I certainly have seen, in my short time as the shadow minister for families, children and social development, that the problem is largely a supply problem. As I said to Parliamentary Secretary Vaughan, certainly my knowledge of the housing sector and needs is nowhere near as great as his, but in the short time I have been in this position, I recognize that there is a supply problem—or this is what I am told—in addition to the necessity for more private partnerships. The reference to developers here certainly speaks to that.

In that same spirit of co-operation and evaluation, I would like to.... Chair, frankly, I am not sure if I am putting forward Mr. Long's motion or if I am putting forward my own motion, which would be identical to Mr. Long's motion, at this time.

Dan, please don't cry. I have only so much kleenex.

The motion is:

That the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of distributing funds through the National Housing Strategy, and any barriers which may be preventing the distribution of funds to developers.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Kusie.

Mr. Housefather.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you.

I appreciate the spirit of Mrs. Kusie's kind motion.

I just want to go back to the previous motion, Chair. I just want to make sure we all understood that we adopted an amendment, but we never came back to the principal motion. Did you rule that the amendment had simply replaced the principal motion and, as a result, we didn't need to have a vote on the principal motion?

I think that, before Mrs. Kusie's motion goes forward, we should make sure that we did adopt the previous motion.

**The Chair:** I think he's right and I am wrong.

We adopted the amendment, so I think we now need to vote on the main motion, which looks an awful lot like the amendment.

Is there any further discussion on the main motion?

Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Would this be a time that I could suggest a small amendment?

**The Chair:** Of course, yes.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** I just have a small recommendation, that the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of the programs in the National Housing Strategy—

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, we're turning into knots a little bit here. We have now reverted to the motion that you amended.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Oh, sorry.

**The Chair:** I made the mistake of calling a vote on the amendment but not completing the main motion, so that's where we are now.

I'm hoping this will move quickly.

Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** If I can just try to clarify, I'd like to thank the committee for accepting my notice of motion with the amendments. I'm so glad that we were able to work with the NDP to make sure that the motion is fulsome and does what I think we all want, in the spirit of collaboration. I'm glad, in a minority Parliament, to be able to work across party lines to get the best wording for the motion. I'm very happy with the motion as it stands now with the amendments. I hope that we'll be able to approve that motion.

**The Chair:** Are we ready to vote on the main motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We now have a motion before us presented by Mrs. Kusie.

We have Mr. Albas on that motion.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I wanted to simply say that MP Kusie should not sell herself short. I'm sure Mr. Vaughan is quite capable, as is she.

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

• (1625)

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

Thank you to MP Kusie for also recognizing that the motion is important. One of the reasons I wanted to bring that motion forward was that I certainly have a lot of developers or proponents in my riding who are frustrated, because, especially through the co-investment fund, there are monies available there through CMHC but they're having trouble grabbing those monies, pulling those monies down. I have individual proponents who have had a long application process, had to spend money. From a federal government perspective, I think it's prudent for us to look at how we can streamline that, how we can make that program available to developers who need it. I think CMHC is also looking for areas where they can improve that.

I thank you for bringing that forward.

**The Chair:** Madame Chabot.

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I would support Mr. Long's motion. When we talk about housing, especially social housing or indigenous housing, as we just did, we know that there are problems and needs. The study will make it possible for us to determine what they are.

I represent the Bloc Québécois, and therefore you will not be surprised that we are interested in this issue. With respect to a national housing strategy, we may not have the same concerns or positions on these issues because of provincial differences. However, I would agree to the motion because the idea is to conduct a study. As for the solutions, we shall see.

Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Sorry, Chair. I'm a bit confused here. Which motion are we discussing right now? Are we still on Mrs. Kusie's motion?

**The Chair:** It's Mrs. Kusie's motion, to undertake a study on the effectiveness of distributing funds through the national housing strategy and any barriers.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Can I have a copy? Is it identical to Mr. Long's motion? Okay.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Sorry, Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Sorry, I'm just a little confused.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Can I recommend an amendment to this motion?

**The Chair:** Of course.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** I'm so sorry, everybody. I'm really learning. I know I'm stumbling, and I apologize.

It's just a small recommendation:

That the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of the programs in the National Housing Strategy, the distributing of funds through the National Housing Strategy to communities, and any barriers which may be preventing the distribution of funds to developers.

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

The amendment appears to be in order. Now we have debate on the amendment.

Mr. Long.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Could you read that again?

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan, go ahead.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** It says:

That the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of the programs in the National Housing Strategy, the distributing of funds through the National Housing Strategy to communities, and any barriers which may be preventing the distribution of funds to developers.

**The Chair:** Mr. Long, go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Although I certainly understand what MP Gazan is undertaking here, the only concern I would have with that amendment would be... We all know that through the bilateral agreements, all that housing money goes out through the province, or the co-investment fund is a direct way, through CMHC, to circumvent the bilats.

I'll throw it out for debate, but my concern would be that we're opening up a whole...delving into provincial jurisdiction that I think complicates what I was trying to get at with that study.

**The Chair:** Mr. Housefather.

• (1630)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to ask Ms. Gazan to explain from her perspective how the wording changes the motion, because I guess I don't understand what the amendment is actually trying to achieve.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** The focus of this motion is on developers, and I think it leaves out community. Talking about developers in the absence of community, and decision-makers as stakeholders in it... That was the purpose of the change.

Thank you.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Ms. Chabot, you have the floor.

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** I would like some clarification so that I can understand the motion before I vote.

First, with respect to the effectiveness of the programs, what exactly are we talking about? Second, could you please clarify why you are adding the words "to communities"?

Thank you.

[English]

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you very much for your question.

One of the first amendments is also the study of the effectiveness of the programs in the national housing strategy. I think that's one of the critical amendments. Also, it's about how the funds are actually being distributed through the national housing strategy itself.

In my riding, the third-poorest riding, I've had no money distributed for housing. It's of interest to me to find out how decisions are being made and if they're being made effectively in terms of how monies are being distributed.

I said, "the distributing of funds through the National Housing Strategy to communities". How is the distributing of funds through the national housing strategy to communities happening? How are decisions being made? I think that's an important research question.

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

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I'll be supporting this motion. When the province has direction and isn't spending in the poorest jurisdiction in Manitoba, we need to find out why that government is making that decision. We have a national housing program that is made up of different programs. It's not a single program, but a combination of programs around fighting homelessness and around community investments with housing providers and developers. We usually say "providers" rather than "developers" because they share jurisdiction and capacity across non-profits and private sector developers.

We also have the Canada housing benefit, which is the cost-shared program that Ontario is rolling out. Quebec is a province that hasn't signed on to receive federal funding to subsidize low-income tenants in that province. We'd really like to see additional dollars be spent in Quebec. Maybe we can find out why Quebec has refused to receive federal dollars to subsidize low-income folks.

I'm very open to having that conversation. We know that in Alberta they want to rip up the agreement and not spend any money on new housing. I think having an examination of where the barriers are in the program design and which jurisdictions.... B.C. is embracing it and has made a dozen or so housing announcements. It would look at why some governments are embracing it, housing people, subsidizing low-income folks and getting the numbers of homeless people down, while other communities have decided to withdraw services in that area.

I think getting an environmental scan of the whole national housing strategy would be fascinating. We can then understand why perhaps we need to bypass provinces occasionally to help people when they have housing needs, and why sometimes working with other provinces works really well. Maybe there are lessons that can be learned across jurisdictions.

We can also understand some of the challenges that smaller provinces are having in realizing the capital requirements to participate in the program.

I have no problem supporting it as amended. I think we can probably vote on it and get on to the next one.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I was going to ask for some more details on what we meant by "communities", but I think I have a very good picture now. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** I can support the amendment. It's important, though, that we recognize that we want to investigate ways that we as a federal government can make more money for housing available.

To MP Vaughan's point, you can go province to province. You can say the government in New Brunswick isn't spending enough money on affordable housing, but maybe the government in New Brunswick ran on a platform of more austerity.

I'm good with the amendment. I certainly will support it. I thank MP Kusie for bringing the whole thing forward. I caution, though, that we don't want to go down a rabbit hole of going province by province and looking at each government. Every government has a different platform and a different strategy on housing, which, obviously, we may not agree with.

Anyway, I will just throw that out there.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Are we ready for the question?

We're on the amendment proposed by Ms. Gazan. The motion as amended would read as follows:

That the committee undertake a study of the effectiveness of the programs in the National Housing Strategy, the distributing of funds through the National Housing Strategy to communities, and any barriers which may be preventing the distribution of funds to developers.

We are voting on the amendment.

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

**The Chair:** Is there any debate on the main motion?

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I would like to move another motion, if possible.

The motion reads:

That the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the issue of supportive housing for seniors with an emphasis on how the National Housing Strategy can better incorporate measures to address a wide range of seniors' housing needs as they relate to the National Housing Strategy; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Turnbull. The motion is in order.

Is there any debate?

Mr. Vis.

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** I have a question for the member opposite, through the chair.

Given that we just passed a motion unanimously on the national housing strategy, is it pertinent to commence an additional study on one subsection of the overall national housing strategy?

**The Chair:** Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Obviously, I think it is pertinent, and I will give some reasons as to why, but I understand the question, and I appreciate it.

I think seniors are identified as a vulnerable group within the national housing strategy already. I think there are several indications within the national housing strategy that to date there has been limited data to fully address the housing issues.

Coming from Whitby and representing the people of Whitby, I hosted a consultation during the last break week. There are quite a lot of individuals in my community who are seniors, who are saying that there really is a gap between the folks who are living at home aging in place and the other end of the spectrum, which I think involves those in long-term care.

I think there really is an opportunity to improve on the great work that has already been done on the national housing strategy. I think a study on this matter deserves some focus.

**The Chair:** Ms. Gazan.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Turnbull, for your motion.

I want to suggest a couple of small amendments. The motion would then be as follows:

That the committee undertake a study to investigate and make recommendations on the issue of supportive housing for Seniors with an emphasis on how the National Housing Strategy can better incorporate measures to address a wide range of seniors' housing needs, including affordable, accessible social housing and coop housing as they relate to the National Housing Strategy; and that the committee report its findings to the House with recommendations on how the National Housing Strategy needs to be revised.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** All right, the amendment is in order.

Is there any debate on the amendment?

Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Earlier, a member asked why a previous motion was adopted when we have this one before us. I read the motion and I am leaning towards supporting it, whether it is amended or not. The amendment does not change the substance of the motion.

From the outset, we decided to tackle the issue of social housing or housing in general. Earlier we focused on indigenous people. We then discussed the issue of social housing in general. Now we are discussing seniors.

If we are going to study the effectiveness of our programs, why not look at all aspects of this issue? We might find different solutions. That said, I am in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Are we ready for the question on the amendment?

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

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

Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I'll just say that as the official opposition, the Conservative Party of Canada supports seniors. We were the first government to have a minister of seniors. I think we would like to see the people who built this nation, and who are truly the most vulnerable, taken care of. In fact, I'm very concerned for the future in terms of the organizational structure of OAS and CPP. I think demographics and personal investment history are not on our side, so this is probably the least we can do for them.

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

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to move:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the social and economic impacts and overall well-being of Canadian grandparents who become guardians of their grandchildren; that the study comprise no fewer than four meetings; that the committee report its findings, with recommendations, to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the Government provide a comprehensive response.

I think—especially in my past line of work—that we're seeing more and more children who are being taken care of by grandparents. I think it is imperative for us to study to see why that is, if there are supports, or what can be done differently to help alleviate that stress.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Ms. Falk, the motion is in order.

Mr. Long.

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

I think that is a good motion. It's something we deal with weekly in our constituency office, grandparents coming in as full-time guardians of their grandchildren and the lack of recognition and lack of support they get. I certainly will be supporting the motion.

**The Chair:** Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I just wanted to relay a bit of a personal note. I'm fully in support of this. I think it's a fantastic motion, and I appreciate Ms. Falk's putting it forward. My nephew had both his parents pass away, and my wife's mother and father are now taking care and have become the legal guardians of little Ryan, so I have heartfelt support for this.

Thank you very much for putting it forward. I'll be supporting it.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Further to Mr. Turnbull's touching story, I think there are many segments of our broken society that touch upon this motion. I feel that an examination of this situation, which many are put into unexpectedly and often unknowingly, is necessary. If we can attempt to do an evaluation of the supports that are necessary or required to assist those, I think we'll actually see improvements in other segments of society as well.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I have two concerns with this motion. One is "Canadian grandparents". We know of complicated families. I won't even get into my grandmother with her five husbands and her complicated life in Australia. It's a long story. I'm named after one of her boyfriends.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Han Dong:** We have time.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** It gets worse on my father's side.

It's not just grandparents; it's also aunts and uncles who quite often are called in, or older relatives. I think what the motion aims to get at are seniors who may be outside of being able to earn EI because they're on pensions. I would strike out "Canadian grandparents" and put as an amendment "older relatives, in particular seniors, who become guardians". I would just change that one phrase to make sure we capture the real dynamic of the complexity of Canadian families.

The second one is that none of the other motions sets the number of meetings. I think it's pre-emptive and a little early to start carving out certain weeks and certain meetings. I would just strike "the study comprise no fewer than 4 meetings", that phrase between the semi-colons. Once we have set which motions we've accepted, then we can set a calendar that marries itself with the parliamentary timetable, the committee timetable and the number of sitting days we have. We may find that if we start allotting days now, we have no days for the priorities we set later.

We'll come back to it in good faith once we have all the components of the agenda on the table, and then we can apportion the calendar as we move forward.

**The Chair:** The amendment is in order, and now we have debate on the amendment.

Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** What I understood from the interpretation is that you want to broaden this to include all family members.

I would agree with including grandparents. There are some lovely stories about grandparents. First, there is the issue of well-being. There are also situations where grandparents freely agree, but other situations that are created by deplorable events. I have reservations about broadening this to include other family members who could find themselves in this situation.

I agree that grandparents may find themselves with the obligations and responsibilities of providing support. There are also legal and social issues. You will have to convince me of the merits of your amendment, which would broaden the scope of this motion to include other family members.

• (1650)

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

[*English*]

Ms. Gazan, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do support Adam's amendment. It takes into consideration cultural diversity in terms of different definitions of family. I'll give you an example. In indigenous communities, there are no aunts. Everybody is a mother. What that does is take into consideration diverse understandings of family.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd just like to respond to the amendment.

I think that's fair. I just want to make mention of the four meetings. In the past, with this committee, that is definitely how motions were structured, and I just want to make sure this is something that doesn't get overlooked or maybe receive less attention than what it deserves.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I appreciate that, and I said that we would come back in good faith to set the timetables and make sure that the appropriate days are set aside. I have no problem with it. Four is not an overreach by any stretch, but we haven't even looked at the full calendar in front of us—

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** We'll do the math later, but I appreciate the point you're raising.

**The Chair:** Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I just wanted to ask.... If the amendment changes "Canadian grandparents" to "older relatives...who become guardians", then it can't be "of their grandchildren", so we're taking out the word "grandchildren" as well. I just wanted to make sure that we have the wording right.

I wasn't sure, Adam, if you included that. If it's "older relatives" and if we're including anyone other than their parents, then we can't use the word "grandchildren".

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Good catch. It's a friendly amendment.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I propose a friendly amendment—

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** First we have to vote.

**The Chair:** No, we have to vote on the subamendment and then the amendment and then the motion as amended. That's what's coming.

Go ahead, Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** I would like to propose a friendly amendment that we take out the word “grandchildren”. I'm not certain that it needs to have a replacement. Am I right? Could it just be “children?”

**An hon. member:** Could it be “related children?”

**Ms. Kate Young:** I look for direction on that.

**The Chair:** How about deleting the three words after “guardians”?

**Ms. Kate Young:** Right. That would be a good way to handle that. Thank you.

**The Chair:** All right, I'll go to Mrs. Falk, and then Madame Chabot.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Then we don't even have reference to children at all.

**The Chair:** Okay, that doesn't work.

**An hon. member:** You could just say, “under their care”.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Let's just leave it the way it is and not have any amendments.

**The Chair:** Madame Chabot.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** We were talking about a specific situation and now we have broadened that to include the entire family.

At what age do we become older people? If we want to include a definition, we have to know what that means. Could it be a 45-year-old aunt, for example?

We are discussing a specific motion, and I imagine that there were also specific problems with respect to grandparents. I understand the cultural nuance.

Should we now study all family members who are more or less older and who might become a guardian of the children? Some people volunteer to become guardians in sad cases of domestic violence that result in the children becoming orphans. There are yet other situations where the family takes care of the children.

Is that what we want to study? This Conservative Party motion would study a very specific situation. It is important to have clarification. Otherwise, we would be studying a fairly broad phenomenon and I am not sure that this is the objective of our efforts.

Thank you.

• (1655)

[*English*]

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

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I think you need to have the word “children” in there. I think we should probably say “of minor children”, if we're not leaving it the way it is.

[*Translation*]

In general, I agree with Ms. Chabot.

[*English*]

If we're not leaving it the way it is, we need to have “of minor children”. Otherwise, you could become a guardian of an adult who's under curatorship. You could become a guardian of a parent with Alzheimer's. This is not the point of the motion. At the very least, if we're not sticking with grandparents and grandchildren, we should say “of minor children”. That's for sure.

I would like to hear from Mrs. Falk if there was a reason why she originally mentioned grandparents. I think there's a specific context to grandparents in our society becoming custodians of minor children, as opposed to any other relatives who might take over.

I'm happy either way, but for sure we need to reference “minor children”.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Absolutely. I think this conversation proves that this isn't black and white but very grey. Even on MP Vaughan's point about seniors, some people are becoming grandparents at a very young age. They're not necessarily seniors.

The other thing is that, even just leaving the motion as it is, we could have a study and recommendations that come out of this. If there are future studies that need to happen or whatnot, it can also be looked into at that point.

**The Chair:** Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I was thinking of some additional wording that we could consider around “who become guardians of related and non-related children”, just in case we want to include people who are not relatives in the study as well. Or you could just consider “of related children”.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Let's just leave it the way it is. It would be a lot simpler.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Oh, no. This is revision at its best.

**The Chair:** We have Mr. Albas, and then Mr. Long.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Again, we don't need to have everything perfect. Let's not let the perfect become the enemy of the good.

What I would simply suggest is that, as Mr. Vaughan has pointed out, if we need to change some language around grandparents so that we recognize there are other arrangements, we could say, “the well-being of Canadian grandparents”, or whatever term, “such as who become guardians of their grandchildren”. It doesn't include every single opportunity. What it says is the primary: “such as those who are looking after their grandchildren”. This way, it has the spirit of it.

Really, I'm going to submit "grandparents", because I have two cases in my riding. In one case, the mother was killed by her husband and the grandparents have had to take over two completely shell-shocked children. Those are the kinds of people I'm going to be suggesting. This doesn't mean that other members can't invite someone else, but I would just ask us all to work within the intention of it. Again, let's not let the perfect become the enemy of the good.

**The Chair:** Mr. Long.

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

I was just trying to wordsmith that a bit. I thought that maybe it could be "economic impacts and overall well-being of Canadian families who have, other than their parents, guardians of grandchildren". Is that too...? I tried.

**The Chair:** Ms. Young.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Well, I've changed a number of times, but I think I'm back to the original. I think MP Falk has given us an understanding of what she's trying to get at here. I do appreciate what MP Albas was saying. Let's not change it too much, because then we get away from the original idea here.

The only thing that concerns me is putting in the number of meetings. If that were taken out, I would certainly be in favour of the motion, keeping in mind what MP Gazan said about the differences in families, which are just a matter of fact at this time.

• (1700)

**The Chair:** Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I want to thank MP Falk for bringing this forward.

When I first saw this motion, it completely resonated with me. Having been in politics for many years, I look to my parents to look after my kids. They are 10 and 12. It's great support. That allows my wife and me to do the things we want to do.

Then, when I started reading the words, I understood that there is perhaps a more narrow scope that you're looking at. You're looking at grandparents becoming legal guardians—in the absence of their parents—to look after the children.

I wondered—and maybe MP Falk can clarify this for me—why we wouldn't look at the social and economic impact and overall well-being of all grandparents who are providing this invaluable support to their families in looking after their grandchildren. Or are we speaking specifically to guardians?

**The Chair:** Mr. Housefather.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Thank you, again, Mr. Chair.

My presumption is that we should stick with the original wording from Ms. Falk.

If we're not going to do that—since 30 different versions were thrown out—I think the right version, if you want to go broader, is "well-being of Canadian grandparents or other relatives who became guardians of minor children". I think that would be the right way to express it, because then it would encompass all relatives who became guardians of minor children.

Again, I'm perfectly happy sticking with the original wording.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you, Chair.

I think if we go much broader, then we would need more meetings.

My background is social work, and I've dealt with and been a part of a lot of cases and sad situations. If we're just looking at legal guardians in highlighting this.... I think this gets underlined a lot. We are usually only hearing about mothers, fathers and children.

I think it can get very messy. What I would propose is that we leave the motion the same, but I'm willing to move a motion to remove the "four meetings". I would leave all the wording and remove "that the study comprise no fewer than 4 meetings".

**The Chair:** Okay, folks, here's where I think we are. There have been several subamendments put forward, none of which have been moved. There have been a bunch of suggestions on subamendments. There is an amendment that has been moved.

What I propose to do is take it that there have been no subamendments. I'm going to read to you what I understand to be the amendment, and if we're ready for the question on that, great.

If a subamendment to that needs to be moved.... I don't think that a subamendment has been moved, but an amendment certainly has been moved.

Mr. Vaughan, go ahead.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Can you split it into two, because there are two amendments, right? If we split it so that.... I mean, I could withdraw the first part, which is to acquiesce to—

We can just vote on taking out that one phrase about the four meetings and we're good.

**The Chair:** What is before the committee, then, is the following: to amend the motion to delete the words after "grandchildren;"—"that the study comprise no fewer than four meetings".

That's the question. Is there any further debate on that amendment?

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

**The Chair:** Now, is there any discussion on the motion as amended?

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

**The Chair:** Mrs. Falk, if I may briefly remove my hat as chair and speak as the member of Parliament for Charlottetown, this is a very significant issue on Prince Edward Island. If I had to vote, I would have been right there with you. Thank you for bringing forward that motion.

• (1705)

**Mr. Brad Vis:** I'd like to move another motion, Mr. Chair.

That, this committee undertake a study to review the first Spring 2019 report of the Auditor General of Canada on Call Centres and hear testimony from Employment and Social Development Canada officials on the action taken to provide Canadians with accessible and timely call centre services for Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, and Old Age Security; and that the committee report its findings, with recommendations, to the House and request that the government provide a comprehensive response.

I can add the reasoning behind this, Mr. Chair. I think all of us in this room have had constituents come forward to us and demand that the Government of Canada do a better job with the telephone services that are operated on their behalf. I think we had an Auditor General report, and it's timely for us as committee members to respond to any changes that might have taken place in this major government department.

I'm thinking of the seniors in my riding who might not be good on the Internet and who have so much difficulty reaching a federal agent and of some of the remote and rural communities where accessible Internet is not an option yet, and they require these phone services to get the services they need. That's the basis behind doing this, sir, to improve accountability for Canadians with this department.

Thank you.

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

The motion is in order.

Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm new to Ottawa, but going back to my Queen's Park days, the AG's reports usually go to the public accounts committee. They're the ones who would review the report. I don't know what the custom is here.

**The Chair:** Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** In my days of being a parliamentary secretary, I served on the public accounts committee. In the last Parliament, when I sat on industry as a regular backbencher, we supported a motion to have the Auditor General come to the industry committee to specifically speak about rural broadband. It was highly educational. Oftentimes public accounts will look at a particular area in terms of dollars and cents.

I think this issue is so tied into how people are respected and whether or not they can access services that it affects all our constituents. I was contacted last week exactly on this particular note.

I would really hope that we study this, because the Auditor General does fantastic work, and this gives us some parameters to work around. I'm sure each one of us would also be able to call forward some witnesses and be able to derive some benefit that perhaps the public accounts committee may not have looked into in their own report.

Again, going back to my days in public accounts, the previous Auditor General would say that he would encourage all parliamentarians to take advantage of their material, not just the public accounts, because there's a lot that both the AG and the environmental commissioner do. Unfortunately, there are just so many reports that they don't get the proper scrutiny and public display.

I look at this committee and I think, "What a great group." Why wouldn't we want to study this?

**The Chair:** The ever-helpful analysts have pointed out to me that in the last Parliament, Mr. Long was in this committee at the time. On May 28, 2019, the committee invited the Auditor General along with officials from ESDC in relation to report 1, "Call Centres".

Just so you know, this happened in the last Parliament. I offer you that because it was pointed out to me by the analysts. I'm not sure that it precludes us from doing it again, just so you know.

Mr. Turnbull.

• (1710)

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** We've had time to review most of the other motions. While I have nothing against the one that was put forward in the moment, I'd like to ask for a five-minute recess to confer with my colleagues so we can discuss it, if that would be amenable to the group.

**The Chair:** Let's exhaust the speakers list and then suspend. I do think it's a good idea, but there are some other people who may want to make contributions that will form part of your deliberations during the suspension.

Mr. Vis.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** I will flag that the Auditor General already appeared at this committee on this item.

I'm not looking for a long and exhaustive study on this subject matter, but the point of Auditor General reports is to provide parliamentarians with information on how to improve certain services or programs offered by the federal government, and ultimately improve accountability for the people we all represent.

This is a significant issue for a lot of people, so what I'm really asking for is that we follow up. It was over a year ago, now, that this report was issued, I believe. It's a good opportunity for us to see what actions have been taken from the recommendations put forward by the Auditor General.

That's what I'm seeking, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With Mr. Long, I was also on the HUMA committee in the last Parliament.

I was going to say what Mr. Vis said. It would be great to see the improvements that have been made. Sometimes people are calling Service Canada, and it's not necessarily fun, so it's just about making sure Canadians, who are our constituents, are receiving the best service possible. I think we owe that, at a minimum, to our constituents.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.



**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I move that we defer the consideration to the next meeting and ask the clerk and the staff to distribute the report from the previous one and consider the motion at that time, based on what we see. We may be able to fine-tune what we're asking for and looking at.

As parliamentary secretary, I was part of that committee, as well, although not a voting or speaking member. I was very happy to hear about some of the improvements but also some of the challenges that were there, quite frankly.

I suggest we defer consideration of this motion, ask the clerk to distribute the report that was done from the previous Parliament and then, with that in hand, make a decision.

**The Chair:** I would like to suspend for five minutes, please, and then we'll circle back on what's been discussed.

• (1710) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1715)

**The Chair:** All right. We're back in session.

There are a couple of things. It was pointed out to me that, in the previous Parliament, when the AG came before this committee on this topic, it was a single meeting and there wasn't a report. Therefore, to the extent that you would receive a report, it would simply be witness testimony. Also, that appearance by the AG before this committee wasn't the only time it happened. That is by way of background.

Procedurally, Mr. Vaughan, if we're going to defer this, the appropriate way to do so would be to adjourn debate on it and to bring it back, unless we have a consensus otherwise.

Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

We were just having a discussion. Is Thursday set aside, as well, for committee business, so we can continue the discussion of priorities and motions? Obviously, we recognize the time government requires to make that evaluation. Our NDP colleague also indicated that she would like more time to consider and review it.

We want to allow for these times, but what we don't want to happen is that it be tabled indefinitely so that it never ever returns. We just want to verify that we are, in fact, having committee business again on Thursday, please.

**The Chair:** Well, I am your humble servant, and what we do on Thursday will be your decision, which I will carry out. I think that we have at least a couple of options. One is to continue with committee business and another is to have a briefing from officials, but I am entirely in your hands on that.

I take it that your preference would be to continue with the work that we've started today.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I'm sensing that. Certainly even one more meeting would be great to finish committee business. As well, we've determined priorities that are important for the committee, but I think that now we need to start to think about the weight of the priorities in terms of the amount of time we want to allocate to each of these studies. I don't think we need more than one more

meeting, but I think having one more meeting would be our preference, Chair.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I would just move adjournment and ask the clerk to distribute the testimony that was delivered on this subject, and to make it the first item of new business that we consider at the next meeting so that we can move forward with recommendations as they relate to the subject matter.

**The Chair:** We have a motion to adjourn debate on this motion, which is not debatable.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The debate on this motion is adjourned.

Ms. Gazan, you have the floor.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to move a motion that as a first study we use the motion proposed by Kate Young today with my amendments.

**The Chair:** That's the one on indigenous housing.

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** The motion is in order, that the business of the committee commence with the motion presented by Ms. Young and amended by Ms. Gazan.

Mrs. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Perhaps you could just clarify something for me, Mr. Chair. I don't know if I missed it, but I thought the purpose of today was to discuss motions and then have the subcommittee decide the priority of those motions. Did I misunderstand that?

**The Chair:** That was certainly raised, and that could be the way that we proceed. I know it was raised. I don't know that it was decided upon. I'm happy to entertain a motion or a consensus to that effect.

Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I also understood that that would be the procedure we would take for the time being, until we found that it wasn't working or wasn't serving the needs of the committee. I think enthusiasm is always wonderful. No one has ever accused me of not being enthusiastic. It's true, despite my monotone lecture here.

I support Mrs. Falk's comment. We'll have more time to discuss it if there are four of us there having the discussion than there would be if we had it at the committee. I'm interested in trying this process.

**The Chair:** Mr. Vaughan.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** I'll be supporting MP Gazan's motion, and I think the urgency of the issue is front and centre to us. I think we need to set that as a number one priority and let the scheduling committee come back with timetables and consideration of the other motions that we have also put on the table. I think we need to be prioritizing the issue, and I think it's an important one to get under way as quickly as possible.

**The Chair:** The motion before you is that the urban indigenous housing strategy be the first order of business.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Mrs. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Thank you.

Again, we support this in solidarity with the committee.

I want to present another motion, please, Mr. Chair:

That pursuant to the order of reference of Tuesday, February 18, 2020, the committee invite the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Labour, and departmental officials to appear on Supplementary Estimates (B), 2019-20, before the reporting deadline set out in Standing Order 81(5) and that these meetings be televised.

**The Chair:** The motion is in order.

Mr. Albas.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I'll just quickly say that we prioritized one. We also do need to give direct authority to the chair and the clerk to start inviting the ministers. I would ask all members that we support this so that the clerk has adequate planning time, because the ministers' schedule and other priorities do require a lot of balancing.

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

(Motion agreed to)

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

Mr. Dong.

● (1725)

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Chair, I have more motions to move, but looking at the time, I see it's close to 5:30 and—

**The Chair:** It sounds to me as if you might be making a motion to adjourn.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'd be happy to move a motion to adjourn.

**The Chair:** Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you. We're adjourned.

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