

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGES**



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES LANGUES  
OFFICIELLES**

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Honourable Anita Anand  
Minister of Public Service and Procurement  
11 Laurier Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0S5

Dear Minister,

As you know the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages has just heard from witnesses concerning the chronic shortage of interpreters and the increase in the incidence of injuries interpreters are suffering since the pandemic has forced all of their work into Distance Interpreting mode. We undertook this study in recognition that interpretation services are essential to the functioning of the Parliament of Canada in both official languages as required by the Constitution Act and the Official Languages Act.

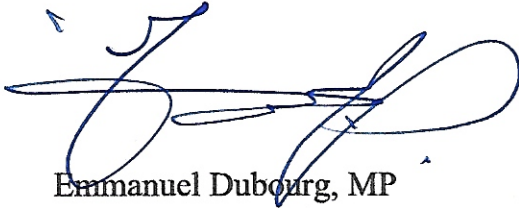
In due course, the Committee will publish a report based on what was heard, with recommendations. However, we are writing to you today because we understand that your department is in the process of finalizing the next procurement contract for freelance interpreters with a deadline of mid-February.

We heard testimony that the draft contract provisions will expose freelance interpreters to the same hazards that are making Translation Bureau staff interpreters sick. In addition, we heard testimony that there is only a very small pool of freelance interpreters to recruit as reinforcements.

We are therefore writing to urge you to pause the freelance interpreter contract process in order to incorporate ways and means of safeguarding freelance interpreters and encouraging them to work in Parliament, given that there are only about 80 freelancers in all of Canada who are qualified for this essential duty.

Yours sincerely,

The Standing Committee on Official Languages

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Emmanuel Dubourg', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Emmanuel Dubourg, MP  
Chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages