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Chair: The Honourable John McKay



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• (1640)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): Witnesses, I offer insincere apologies for our late start. This has been a curse of this committee and appears to be a continuing curse of this committee.

However, I think we'll extend the meeting at least to 6:30. I want to get this done.

First up is a motion received and promoted by Madame Damoff.

I would appreciate it if she could speak to that motion, and then we can dispose of it quickly.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you so much, Chair.

I filed a motion last week with the clerk, and it has been distributed. I'm hoping that we can deal with this quite quickly, because we need to turn to a very important private member's bill that's before us today on recidivism. I thank Conservative MP Bragdon for bringing that forward.

Last week, following the tabling of Bill C-21, our government's new firearms legislation, the National Firearms Association took to their show, *NFA Talk*, where extremely dangerous words were uttered. This video from the NFA now has close to 7,000 views.

My motion today seeks to have our committee condemn this behaviour.

During the broadcast, NFA president, Mr. Sheldon Clare, said the following, and it's in the motion: "...revisit our old woodworking and metal working skills and construct guillotines again. [Laughter followed.] That would really be the best kind of Committee of Public Safety to get re-established. If they want to make it about public safety that was the way.... [T]he sound of this [person's] voice was not one that is joking. He was not joking. I don't think they understand that this is not New Zealand, this is not the United Kingdom, this is not Australia. This is a country made up of people who've been here for thousands of years, [our] aboriginal people, immigrants from Europe who fled tyranny, who fought against tyranny and know tyranny when they see it. And this my friends is tyranny."

Mr. Chair, words matter. We saw in the United States, on January 6, what happens when inflammatory words provoke insurrection and violence. We've seen it here in Canada, with someone breaching the grounds of Rideau Hall and someone else following NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

It sent a chill down my spine to hear talk of building guillotines when referencing the Committee on Public Safety by the NFA and its leadership.

By no means are these the only statements that the NFA has made, and I want to read some of the other ones that have been made by NFA executive director Charles Zach on social media.

In June 2020, he posted this, along with a photo of four men holding large rifles: "Coming to a Canadian Main Street near you. If the police will not protect you during a violent riot, you will have to protect yourself and others who cannot defend themselves from dangerous and armed organized domestic terrorists."

On June 25, 2020, Mr. Zach posted an article about gun and ammunition sales soaring, with his heading saying, "Buy more guns and ammo. The police will not protect you."

In May 2020, Mr. Zach said, "Perhaps we would see organized demonstrations in front of the homes of these civil disarmamentists"—his term.

There is another one in which he posted a caricature of me and Minister Freeland that says, "But... but... think of the women!!", with another picture of two women holding firearms saying, "I think we'll be fine"—talking about our firearms policy.

Mr. Chair, I think I'll leave it there with the statements I'm going to read, but what I find extremely concerning is that when confronted with the concerns around their statement, the National Firearms Association has actually doubled down.

In a Global News story yesterday, Mr. Clare is quoted as saying "I've merely related comments from upset people who have a real big problem with tyranny. And I think the virtue-signalling woke liberal left has a problem with being called out as being tyrants."

Mr. Zach has called me "a rabid anti-gun civil disarmamentist", and remember he called for organized demonstrations in front of the homes of "civil disarmamentists"—his term—in May 2020.

Mr. Zach also told Global News, noting that his use of the metaphor is intentional, “We’re locked and loaded.... And I say that unapologetically and unabashedly.”

Today Mr. Zach posted, “If the Liberals feel offended for being called ‘tyrants’—then should stop acting like tyrants”, but still has not apologized for talking about the need to start constructing guillotines.

Mr. Chair, this kind of language is dangerous. Sharing these comments on their platform—which, as I mentioned, has had 7,000 views—can lead to violence, as we saw in the United States. The storming of the U.S. Capitol by an armed mob was spurred on by similar language.

These calls for violence against those who want a safer community are not tolerable, and it is incumbent on all of us to condemn them. I’m asking the members of the committee to support this motion and condemn the National Firearms Association and the statement made last week.

Mr. Chair, I ask that the motion be amended at the end to include “and the committee report this to the House”.

• (1645)

I’m hoping we can deal with this quickly and vote on this right away.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Is there any debate?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Chair, I’m sorry. When we do vote, could we have a recorded vote, please?

The Chair: That’s fine.

I saw Mrs. Stubbs first, and then Mr. Harris.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your coming to me, and I hope the committee will indulge me a little bit as I go through a couple of the issues that I see and develop this from my personal perspective.

I first want to say, Pam, that if there is a perception of a personal or public safety threat to either members of Parliament, specific to the public safety committee or in general or to you, then I need you to know that I take that, as do all Conservative members on this committee, extremely seriously.

We hope...and I would invite you to say, if you wish, whether or not that complaint has been made to police, as should be the case; perhaps the chair can confirm whether or not such a complaint has been made to the Sergeant-at-Arms, which should be the case if the comments constitute a threat to members of Parliament at large.

I would note—and I guess this is why we ought to get to the place of having this discussion in camera—that any matters related to MP security and safety are generally dealt with in camera, from what I understand of the procedure and House affairs committee. I understand that PROC just did a briefing on security risks for members of Parliament, and the entire thing was in camera, because of course it’s about the safety of MPs, and because that is the committee that deals with those issues.

I really need you to know how seriously I take this or take the concept of the safety and security of individual members of Parliament being threatened or feeling threatened. Since being elected in 2015, I have received personal and direct threats to my safety and security. On two separate occasions, I and the three female staff members in my constituency office in Two Hills have also faced direct and personal threats to our personal security and safety.

In one incident, the RCMP was called to our constituency office. The office was put on lockdown, and that individual was removed from the office property. He showed up at the office; he was screaming and swearing, and said he no longer identified as Canadian and was not subject to their laws, and there was no place in this world for elected officials or their staff. In the second incident, a man had begun on the phone by screaming at my 19-year-old female staffer. He was then transferred to her manager, another woman, whom he proceeded to swear at, and he told her he hoped that she would be raped and that she would die. We reported that incident to the Sergeant-at-Arms to be dealt with, and we do have a very close relationship with the RCMP detachment, which happens to be two blocks from my constituency office.

I’m also aware that another member of this committee—and I’ll let him speak for himself, if he wishes—a Conservative colleague of ours who sits with us here, has also faced personal threats. Those personal threats resulted in the laying of charges and the conviction of the individual who was making threats.

If this motion is prompted by a perception or an interpretation—and all of that is legitimate, because we are all thinking, considerate, rational people who all have the equal right to perceive and to debate and to interpret the way comments are made—then I do hope that those complaints have been made to the proper authorities. But I would also say that it would necessitate that this committee have this discussion in camera and that we must be extremely careful not to be seen to be politically influencing or interfering with what ought to be—by now, I hope, if this is the motivation—an actual current and ongoing legal investigation.

If, on the other hand, this is an attempt to have the public safety and national security committee function as a tool to be a judge and jury of individual Canadians or organizations, and to wield the special privilege, scope, status and power of members of Parliament and a parliamentary committee against individual Canadians or organizations about comments that may or may not be considered in their full context, then of course I have no desire to get into that.

• (1650)

Also, of course, in the motion we’re debating right now, there are key comments missing. That’s why the motion starts with an ellipsis. There’s also, right in the middle of the motion and the quoted comments, even a sentence that’s missing.

My view would be that I think Conservatives certainly don't believe that a parliamentary committee ought to be used as a judge and jury and a condemnation of comments made by individual Canadians or organizations, comments that may or may not be taken out of context and that may not be fully considered in context right here in the case of this motion, where perceptions and interpretations can legitimately differ and can legitimately be debated by fair-minded, honest, good-willed people. Personally, I believe that if the committee were to take such an action, there are real, important issues relating to fairness and serious power imbalances if this were to become a tactic of parliamentary committees as a matter of course, which I would find concerning.

Again, I must reiterate that if a member believes comments have been made that constitute a threat to personal and/or public safety, then those should be reported to authorities—in fact, I hope they have already been, if that is the interpretation—and committees should not influence that process.

Either way, I would move that we continue this conversation in camera, for all the reasons I've just outlined.

I, too, believe it is critical for us as a committee to move on with a very important initiative by our colleague Richard Bragdon on legislation to prevent recidivism of offenders, to protect the public safety of all Canadians and victims of crime and to reduce repeat offences, about which I know all members on this committee, across all parties, are seriously concerned.

The Chair: Just as a point of procedure, it was reported by Ms. Damoff and me to the appropriate authorities, so it is before them at this point, and it's their decision as to how, where and when it's dealt with.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thank you very much for that clarification, Chair.

I suppose my next question, then, would be, has either the Sergeant-at-Arms or the police, if the committee has been elevated with them, suggested this course of action insofar as the argument is being made that this may or may not constitute a threat to public or private safety? Obviously, we need to know that, if this committee has been advised in this way to undertake this discussion. If that hasn't been their advice, then I would suggest that very answer, especially if we also learn that a complaint has been made to the police, is very much the reason why this committee should continue that discussion in camera.

Of course, we all know that as members of Parliament, or members of an extremely powerful parliamentary committee with extraordinary scope, we would never want to be seen to be attempting to influence, wag the dog, intervene, comment on, opine on or contribute to an ongoing official investigation in any way. I know that we would all be concerned about not wanting to give that appearance.

The Chair: I think there may be a conflation of several ideas there. I take your position to be that you would prefer to defer this discussion to another appropriate moment. I will treat it as a motion to be dealt with prior to Ms. Damoff's motion, but before that, I want to hear from Mr. Harris, and now I see that Ms. Damoff's hand is up.

I'll deal with Mr. Harris first and then Ms. Damoff. If there are no other intervenors, I'll call Mrs. Stubbs' motion, and depending on the outcome of that motion, we'll deal with the subsequent motion.

Jack, go ahead.

• (1655)

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I just note that my colleague Don Davies is here, and I have a call for me to appear on an interview on another computer. I think I'll leave the discussion to Mr. Davies, who has been briefed on what is taking place.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms. Damoff, go ahead.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair.

Perhaps we can double-check with the clerk, but I think my motion takes precedence over Mrs. Stubbs'.

As you said yourself, there are a number of things being conflated here. The entire video is available online if people want to watch it, but the statements made by the National Firearms Association specifically reference the committee of public safety and talk about constructing guillotines.

They laughed about it. They have refused to make any kind of statement subsequent to that. As I said previously, given what happened in the United States and what has happened in Canada when organizations make inflammatory comments like the National Firearms Association did last week, I think it is incumbent on this committee to condemn their statements. It's time to stop accepting this kind of rhetoric, and vague threats and suggestions to their membership that guillotines start to be constructed. It's time that we as a committee take a stand.

The Committee on Public Safety was mentioned by them. This has absolutely nothing to do with what the Parliamentary Protective Service is or is not doing. That is absolutely separate from this discussion.

I think we need to take a stand. We need to shut down this kind of language, this way of talking and thinking that it's okay to talk about building guillotines and laughing about those kinds of comments in a public forum. I think we as a committee need to condemn this kind of language, and that's the reason I brought this motion forward. I really hope that other members of the committee will support it.

The Chair: Unless the clerk contradicts me, I take the view that the motion to defer by Mrs. Stubbs does take precedence over the main motion.

I want to make sure. Am I on solid ground, Mr. Clerk?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Mark D'Amore): Yes, you are.

The Chair: With that, I'm going to treat it as a motion for deferral, for want of a better term.

Is it the will of the committee to defer this motion?

If we want to go on a voice vote, that's fine. If we want to have a roll call vote, that's up to members.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Can we have a roll call vote, please, Chair?

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, would you call the vote?

(Motion negatived: nays 6; yeas 5)

The Chair: We move to the main motion. Again, we will have a call on the main motion.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Chair, I also amended it at the end. Do we need to vote on that first?

The Chair: I think as the mover you can amend your own motion. I think I'm on good ground there. My very able clerk will correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe you can, in which case it's Madame Damoff's motion, moved as amended.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 7; nays 0)

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't need to ask for a separate motion to report it to the House, as that's contained in the main motion. That being the case, we will now return to the main business.

I apologize, Mr. Bragdon and witnesses, for the further delay. That being said, we will stick with what we talked about, which was a five-minute presentation by Mr. Bragdon, followed by five-minute presentations from the witnesses, and then we'll do a five-minute round of questions, and see where that leaves us. Let's start there.

Am I missing anything else procedurally, Mr. Clerk, before I call on Mr. Bragdon?

The Clerk: You might want to just read the order of reference.

The Chair: If I had the order of reference, I would read it. I'm at some disadvantage as I don't have all the documents.

The Clerk: You can just call the bill.

The Chair: Okay.

We're calling Mr. Bragdon's bill.

What's the number?

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): It's Bill C-228.

The Chair: We're calling Bill C-228. And there it is.

I apologize, colleagues. I am removed from my normal office and not able to print out things that I would normally like to print out so that I have some coherent presentation here. Others are far more advantaged than I am.

Let's proceed on that basis.

Mr. Bragdon, you have five minutes.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I consider it an honour to be able to speak with regard to this private member's bill. It's been a labour of passion, and I'm truly excited to hear from the witnesses tonight. I'll get out of the way as quickly as I can so that you can hear from those who are truly on the front lines of making a real difference and impact in reducing recidivism.

I know that all of you, or perhaps most of you, are aware that nearly 25% of those who have been released from federal prisons—and that statistic is much higher when they're coming out of provincial prisons—end up back in the federal prison system within two years. The rate amongst indigenous communities is nearly 40%. It is also a sad reality that the children of those incarcerated are seven times more likely to become incarcerated themselves. It is abundantly clear that we must stop this cycle. We must arrest this cycle.

This bill aims to address the ever-revolving door within our prison system and to break this perilous cycle that sees individuals consistently reoffend. This bill will make the Minister of Public Safety establish a task force and create a national framework to reduce recidivism. We'll do that in part by looking at some of the working models that have had some tremendous success internationally, as well as some that are having some good success here locally and within Canada.

I'm very excited to hear a little bit later.... Here this evening you'll hear from Ms. Naidoo, who's going to be sharing a model that's had tremendous success south of the border in the big state of Texas. It's called the Texas Offender Reentry Initiative. She'll speak about the statistics that relate to that. I'll just say this. She recently—I guess it was in 2016—received from then president Obama a champions of change award for the tremendous work that this initiative has done in reducing recidivism in her state. Now it's growing exponentially. You'll be hearing from her.

I'm also honoured to have Mr. Nicholas here. He has a tremendous background, obviously, in knowing the law, in being a former judge, in being a former lieutenant-governor and in being a person from the Wolastoqiyik first nation community. I'm so glad that Mr. Nicholas will be here to offer his perspective.

Of course, I see that Ms. Latimer is here from the John Howard Society. There's tremendous work that they do in helping people reintegrate back into communities.

Needless to say, there are some tremendous models and organizations that we can learn from, that are doing great work on the front lines, and hopefully we can import some of the best practices and contextualize them to the Canadian context. I feel that, as we look at that, we can find great hope.

I won't get down into the specifics of how some of these programs work, but I feel that what I would call the sweet spot of lasting societal change is oftentimes found at the interface where we break down the silos and get various sectors working together—whether they're governmental, non-profit, private sectors—bringing all their various gifts, talents, abilities and resources to the table to bring about that lasting change.

One thought that is really one of the centrepieces of this—I heard this one time and it stuck with me—is called the principle of three. When someone is serving time, if the work begins for that lasting change while the individual is on the inside, if within the first three minutes someone trusted is meeting them at the gate to make sure that the individual has someone to walk with in those initial steps upon being released, if within three hours living arrangements are being made and put in place for the individual, if within three days life skills development, employment and other programs are starting to come around the individual, if within three weeks there are education completion programs, etc., and if within three months the individual is making noticeable progress and transition is complete, then, within three years we are going to witness and see a lasting lifestyle change and that individual contributing back to society.

I'll close with this, Mr. Chair. I don't know how much longer I have, but I'll just say this in conclusion. I'll never forget the first time that I visited a prison. It was with my dear friend—Mr. Nicholas probably knows of him; he's passed on now—Mr. Monty Lewis, who started an organization called Bridges of Canada. He himself had served time in federal prison. He was from Cape Breton. He made some tough choices along the way. He didn't have an easy upbringing. He and his wife, upon release, felt a passion to start a ministry, an organization, a non-profit to help those who had found themselves in similar situations but wanted to successfully get back into the community.

• (1705)

Once we went to a prison. It was my first visit. It was Dorchester Penitentiary. He said—and you have to understand how he talked; he had kind of that rough accent—“Now, Richard, I want you to know something. You're going to a place where there's the highest concentration of the worst kinds of vile actions and feelings, anger and dysfunction that there could ever be. It's behind the walls of this prison that you're going to today. I want you to also know that you'll never visit a place where there's a higher concentration of the incredible power that the opportunity of a second chance, forgiveness and hope can bring. I've been a recipient of that in my own life, and if you start on this journey, you'll never be the same; you'll never regret it.”

I was very naive, and I must confess, when the doors were closing behind me to go in for my first visit, I felt a little bit of anxiety. However, I'm glad to say that several years later, I've seen many lives that have been changed, and for the better. They're back in community making a big difference for themselves and their families, and everybody comes out ahead.

I want to thank you for considering this bill. I'm excited. We can offer together the gift that transforms all lives, and that's the gift of hope. I look forward to hearing from these witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've taken too long. I'm all excited. Over to you.

The Chair: You have, Mr. Bragdon, taken too long, but it was quite inspirational. I do recall the first time I went to a prison as well. I think I only got one half of that message.

I understand that Mr. Nicholas—Your Honour or Your Excellency, I'm not quite sure which—has to leave at 5:30, so I'm going to call on him next for a five-minute presentation, in the expectation that he has to leave at 5:30.

Sir, you have the next five minutes, please.

• (1710)

Mr. Graydon Nicholas (Endowed Chair in Native Studies, St. Thomas University, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Good afternoon, everyone.

[*English*]

Good afternoon, members of the House of Commons who are studying this private member's bill, Bill C-228. I am grateful for this opportunity to share some experiences I had during my days as a social work student, as a lawyer representing persons before the courts in New Brunswick, and as a provincial court judge.

I am a member of the Wolastoqiyik Nation from the Tobique First Nation. I worked with indigenous persons who are incarcerated at the Guelph Correctional Centre as a social work student during my studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in a field placement in January to April, 1973. Persons who were sentenced to two years less a day served their imprisonment there. It was an eye-opener for me, because I was already a lawyer before I went to study for my master's degree in social work. I defended indigenous and non-indigenous persons charged with summary and indictable offences under the Criminal Code of Canada.

When a client is found guilty or pleads guilty, information gathered by a probation officer is very crucial in making submissions to the sentencing judge on behalf of their client. As a probation officer, your duty is to make the best submission on their behalf to a judge for an appropriate sentence.

As a provincial court judge, you must listen to what is presented by the Crown prosecutor and the victim, read the victim impact statement, and listen to the submissions of the defence counsel and the accused, who may wish to speak. You must also read what is in the pre-sentence report and letters of support, and you must apply the principles of sentencing found in the Criminal Code. Whatever sentence you decide to give is not easy and is subject to appeal.

I have seen many persons who were repeat offenders. It could be because of their psychological state of mind, addictions or a deliberate refusal to abide by the conditions of a probation order or bail conditions, or because they didn't care. I call them “the walking wounded”.

There are no winners in the criminal justice system. The victims and the communities have legitimate fears that the offender will exact revenge unless fundamental changes are introduced into their lives. Programs must be made available for the rehabilitation of the offender. It depends on the length of the sentences in institutions or in the community, which need the resources to change the behaviour of the offender. Often, counselling may continue beyond the time served, and this can be put into the conditions of a probation order.

Indigenous persons have a high and a sad representation in penal institutions in our country. There are many factors that contribute to these statistics. Many are historical, many are because of poverty, and many are because the current justice system does not reflect the values of their communities. There have been many studies done to recommend fundamental changes in the criminal justice system, but not enough has been done to implement them.

I want to commend the initiative of the member of Parliament, Mr. Richard Bragdon, and your other members who have introduced this important legislative blueprint.

Thank you very much. *Woliwon*.

I can stay until about 5:45 your time.

The Chair: Thank you for that and for your brief presentation.

Before I call on Madame Naidoo, could the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party indicate to the clerk who the lead questioners will be, before we finish with the witnesses, please? Thank you.

Madame Naidoo, you have five minutes. Go ahead, please.

Ms. Tina Naidoo (Executive Director, Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative): Good afternoon, Chairman and Mr. Bragdon.

Thank you, members of the committee, for inviting us to be a part of this.

My name is Tina Naidoo, and I am the executive director of the Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative, also known as “T.O.R.I.” We have been in operation for 17 years and have had the opportunity to serve over 30,000 returning citizens throughout Texas.

Texas is widely considered the incarceration capital of the United States. In fact, 70,000 people return to Texas each year from prison. Despite paying their debt to society, these individuals will find themselves saddled with collateral consequences of a criminal record. They will face discrimination in employment, housing and education and will come home to a fractured support system. This will lead to their nearly inevitable recidivism.

We, too, began with a call from elected officials when our program’s founder, pastor and global thought leader Bishop T.D. Jakes founded the T.O.R.I. program in 2005.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, one in 32 Americans is under the control of the criminal justice system. I can say with clear certainty that by allowing the problem to continue, you will only build more prisons and broken families.

T.O.R.I. began with a federal challenge grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, meaning that every two dollars we spent on the program was matched by the government

with one dollar. This initiative was a five-city collaboration that targeted the cities in Texas considered the five hot spots for most releases—Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Fort Worth and Dallas. We served more than 400 returning citizens that initial year, with a staggering 13% recidivism rate, proving that the intervention was both replicable and effective.

In the coming years, T.O.R.I. was awarded funding through the Second Chance Act by the United States Department of Justice. These initiatives better equipped the returning citizens upon release and increased cross-sector partnerships.

This type of relationship, in which a federal framework filters to the states—or in this case, provinces—makes a real impact that is critical to lasting change. This position was further emphasized years later when T.O.R.I. worked in partnership with the Institute for Urban Policy Research at the University of Texas at Dallas. The evaluation confirmed that comprehensive re-entry services provided through community-based initiatives significantly impact this social issue when provided in partnership with government entities.

The program evaluation revealed that 18 case management sessions led to a rise in self-sufficiency outcomes. In this project, the success rate of the participants was over 90%. These individuals, who statistically had an income of around \$10,000 U.S. annually, emerged from this program making a living wage, effectively lifting their families out of poverty and propelling themselves into socio-economic mobility.

Following T.O.R.I.’s successes, the program was afforded the opportunity to become the first provider in the nation to partner with the Department of Housing and Urban Development—otherwise known as “HUD”—through its local housing authority. The partnership provided government-subsidized housing for returning citizens working toward self-sufficiency. This type of housing assistance was previously off limits to those with a criminal background. However, through this resource over 500 families were reunited. This equated to diminished post-incarceration homelessness, stronger families and safer communities.

As you likely know, Canada reports a recidivism rate of close to 35%, compared to 65% in the United States. This gives me hope for the incredible impact this bill will have on recidivism reduction in Canada.

At a recent T.O.R.I. client graduation ceremony, United States Senator Tim Scott provided the commencement address and applauded T.O.R.I.’s efforts, proclaiming the program a national model to reduce recidivism.

After studying the bill before you, I believe unequivocally that this would set you on the path to immeasurably improved outcomes. The answer is in the cross-sector collaboration this would foster. As we have seen, the interplay of these systems has the power to address the issues through all the sectors, leaving no cracks to fall through.

Finally, you may have concerns about the ability to implement such a program in the shadow of COVID-19. The common perception is that returning citizens have a technology gap in addition to a skills gap. Let me assure you that this perception is inaccurate.

● (1715)

At T.O.R.I., we were forced to adapt to a virtual service platform in a matter of days at the onset of the pandemic. We were able to serve more individuals in less time while eliminating transportation barriers. Clients were able to participate in rehabilitative services and counselling more effectively. In the heart of the pandemic, our client employment rate rose by over 30%. The outcomes were remarkable.

Those who will benefit don't always fit the stereotype. One young lady joined us, stripped of her licensure and unable to work, despite having two master's degrees. Today she is a practising registered nurse fighting on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. She is an example of the kind of restoration that is possible here.

Truly, this bill is one that will place Canada at the forefront of criminal justice reform and recidivism reduction. This is a true definition of government working for the people. Returning citizens of Canada must simply be given an opportunity without penalty, based on the merits of their rehabilitative efforts.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I know that Mr. Motz is the first questioner from the Conservatives, but I still don't know who the Liberal first questioner will be. If that could be communicated to the clerk, it would be helpful.

Madame Latimer, you have five minutes, please.

● (1720)

Ms. Catherine Latimer (Executive Director, John Howard Society of Canada): It's a great pleasure to be before the committee and to share John Howard's views about Bill C-228.

John Howard Society, as many of you know, is a charity that serves more than 60 communities across Canada. It's committed to just, effective and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime, but our roots are really in supporting the reintegration of prisoners and looking at prison reform.

We enthusiastically support Bill C-228. While there may be differing opinions about the appropriate quantum of sentences and the best way to discharge people's debt to society, I believe there is broad agreement that we want those leaving prisons and returning to communities to be law-abiding, contributing members. Not only does this help the individual rejoining the community, but it prevents further victimization, saves state resources and benefits us all.

The road back for former prisoners is a tough one. It's as tough in Canada, in many ways, as it is in Texas. Many face loneliness, stigma, grinding poverty, discrimination in employment and housing, barriers due to race, religion and gender, inadequate identification, gaps in the continuity of mental and physical health care, challenges reuniting with families, inadequate skills, serious marginalization and fear and hostility from community members. For some, drugs and alcohol are a temptation to blunt the discomfort they feel, and post-release drug overdoses are high. Suicide rates in the first year after release are significantly higher than they are for the average person.

Given the hardships they encounter, it is a testament to their enormous resilience and willpower that the majority of those released do not return to prison. However, far too many do return to prison. Much more can be done and should be done to facilitate a successful transition.

The Department of Public Safety gave the John Howard Society of Canada a small grant to do a series of podcasts involving peers and interviewing former prisoners about the challenges they faced reintegrating into the community, with a view to providing advice to others. For those interested, those podcasts are called *Voices Inside and Out* and can be found on your podcast providers.

While there were many individual differences in the challenges faced, there were many key elements that were similar, including housing, employment and health care. Many felt that correctional authorities had not adequately prepared them for release, not even provided acceptable identification, and with only a two-week supply of prescription medication.

Solutions to the challenges were often creative. Those who had help valued it enormously, and the help came from peers, organizations active in criminal justice, family, good Samaritans and others, who assisted them in navigating a slew of municipal, provincial and federal requirements and resources.

The framework proposed in Bill C-228 would be enormously helpful in ensuring that the key elements for successful transition are identified through a collaborative effort, which I hope would involve those with lived experience as well as those from organizations that provide reintegration services, and representatives from municipal, provincial and federal governments and communities, including indigenous, Black and faith communities.

The provisions of the bill that would require the Minister of Public Safety to report back on progress on the implementation of the framework would be an important impetus to having the framework as something more than words on paper. We could actually see progress being made.

Collaboration here is key. We identified an absence of housing post-custody as a serious impediment to successful reintegration, and received funding from CMHC for solution labs to tackle complex housing as a complex problem: post-custody homelessness. We've been partnering with Public Safety, Correctional Services, Employment and Social Development Canada, the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice, former prisoners with lived experience, a number of John Howard societies, Lansdowne Consulting, community organizations and housing experts on this project. What was emphasized to us is that it's not just the housing. We need the whole supportive community pulling together to aid the successful reintegration of these prisoners.

In conclusion, I would urge you to support the passage of Bill C-228. The tragic death of Kimberly Squirrel, who died on the street exposed to freezing temperatures just three days after being released from a provincial prison in Saskatchewan, should be a wake-up call to us all that we must do better. The framework is a tool to make progress towards reducing crime and making our communities safer.

• (1725)

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, and thank you for respecting the time.

Ms. Catherine Latimer: I hear my buzzer going off. I apologize for that.

The Chair: You were within two seconds. That's pretty impressive.

Mr. Motz is up for five minutes.

I will remind members that Mr. Nicholas has to leave by a quarter to, so he has basically 20 minutes before the committee.

Mr. Motz, you have five minutes.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Bragdon, for bringing forward this private member's bill.

I had the pleasure of being in your riding and seeing first-hand the benefits this has for your community, for the not-for-profits there and for the people who are actually benefiting after coming out of prison. It's fantastic.

We all know that there has been a bit of a pattern in Canada where government tries to do everything itself rather than bringing groups and communities together. That's been a pattern for decades. Your bill is intended to break down silos and to have governments and non-government groups work together.

Am I understanding that correctly, Richard?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Absolutely, Mr. Motz. It certainly is about effective partnerships and bringing together federal, provin-

cial and indigenous leaders, as well as the non-profit sector and also the private sector. In terms of the role the private sector can play, whether that be farms or businesses, giving employment opportunities is such a huge part of this in making sure that all of us are working together to get the outcome that I know we all share, which is reducing recidivism.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you for that.

I'm going to turn to Mr. Nicholas or Ms. Latimer, and maybe even to Ms. Naidoo, for an American perspective.

In your experience, how do charities and not-for-profits work with parole boards and correctional services to help? I'm going to add one more level to that. They do a great job of helping, but from your experience, how do they compare to government-run programs, which sometimes have less of a success rate? Can you comment on that for me, please?

Go ahead, Mr. Nicholas.

Mr. Graydon Nicholas: Thank you very much, Mr. Motz.

My experience was with the ones who come back to the courts, I guess. When I was a provincial court judge, recidivism was high as well, but I found that if an individual actually had an option of going to a particular residence where, for example, like Mr. Lewis, as Mr. Bragdon mentioned, and then other bodies here.... They're more receptive, because they're treated with greater respect. They're accepted as a person, even though they maybe have tripped in their lives. For their psychological needs, they can get the counselling they need, and they can get camaraderie as well, from other individuals who are in the same particular area. That helps them in their self-confidence and self-esteem as well. I found that very productive.

Mind you, some of these agencies do get government monies, but I think they can run better programs than what is in the institutions.

Mr. Glen Motz: Ms. Latimer, do you have anything further to add in your experience?

Ms. Catherine Latimer: No, I agree with that. I think that many times the enforcement/oversight role of corrections can lead to some measure of distrust or lack of confidence from the prisoners and former prisoners. It is very important to have that human connection, where someone actually believes they can do it and is supporting them along the way.

I think you get that more from people who are not doing it because it's part of their employment or because they're making a profit from it. I think prisoners feel the kind of genuine human connection that a lot of charities and others can provide for them, and it goes a long way, that human connection.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you.

Ms. Naidoo, do you have a similar experience in the U.S.?

Ms. Tina Naidoo: Sure. I think what we have found over the years is that the collaboration between law enforcement and social services is where we find a common thread. Both of us have a motivation to reduce recidivism, but we have different approaches, so we find that common thread between both organizations and we jog alongside each other.

Part of what our non-profit would do is to help the client stay compliant with all their probation requirements, all their parole requirements without.... As you know, a lot of times, parole and probation don't have the opportunity or the time to provide those resources, and a lot of times that creates those technicals that in turn create the parole revocations that send them back to prison. That's how we jog alongside each other.

• (1730)

Mr. Glen Motz: I have one last quick question. From your experiences, are you aware of any studies that outline the return on investment for transition programs such as the one we're talking about to reduce recidivism for offenders?

The Chair: He has roughly 15 seconds.

Mr. Nicholas, can you answer that?

Is that who you're directing it to, Glen?

Mr. Glen Motz: Whoever has knowledge on whether there have been any studies done or can support.... It makes sense. We can anecdotally say it, but is there any study that can be pointed to that reflects this?

Richard?

The Chair: Answer very quickly, please.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Ms. Naidoo has the exact cost per day for their model.

If you want to reference that in comparison, Tina....

Ms. Tina Naidoo: Yes. We did do a study here in Dallas with a research institution. We found that it took 18 case management sessions before we saw a trend up. That's a trend toward retention in employment, housing stability and self-sufficiency. We can share those documents with you if that would be helpful.

Mr. Glen Motz: Great. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz.

I don't know who the Liberal questioner is for the next five minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think Angelo is going to start.

The Chair: Okay.

Angelo, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Good afternoon. I'd also like to thank you for being with us.

My question is for Ms. Naidoo.

You talked about the T.O.R.I. program, or the Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative. In an ideal world, we'd like to promote the reintegration of offenders to increase their presence in society, but we know quite well that human beings will always be human beings and that there is always a lot of uncertainty and vulnerability.

How will it be possible to control and manage this in the community and with organizations that will be needed in order to have a functional system?

[*English*]

Ms. Tina Naidoo: I believe that the cross-sector relationship is what's important. I think that in order for us to get our arms around these issues, it doesn't just take social workers; it takes the different departments that make up the criminal justice system. I believe that you have to take into account that parole and probation come from an authoritative background. Their relationship with the returning citizen is very different from that of a counsellor or a social worker. That level of trust between the community and the returning citizen has to be garnered in order for this to be productive, in order for this to be successful.

For the success of our relationships cross-sector, there has to be trust between us and the other high-level professionals who are involved in this. Also, there has to be trust between the ex-offender and the criminal justice appointees.

Did that answer the question?

Mr. Angelo Iacono: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I'll be offering the rest of my time to Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Bragdon, I can't thank you enough for bringing this bill forward. You mentioned having visited prison. I actually think that all MPs should be required to go to prison in order to do their jobs—

The Chair: Oh, oh! You don't quite mean it that way.

Ms. Pam Damoff: —to visit a prison—

The Chair: Okay, okay. I'm just getting clarification here.

Ms. Pam Damoff: —because you do get a different perspective.

I've visited quite a few. When I went to Buffalo Sage Wellness House, one of the women there talked about how it was the first time in her life she was able to heal and not just survive. We know that recidivism rates are lower for those coming out of healing lodges. We know that indigenous people are the fastest-growing prison population. Indigenous women, in particular, are up 70% to 80% out in the Prairies.

How important is bringing that indigenous perspective to the healing process when we're talking about people who are getting out of prison?

Ms. Latimer, you could start on that. If I have time, Mr. Bragdon, I'd love to hear from you on that as well.

• (1735)

Ms. Catherine Latimer: It's very important that whatever intervention is being provided resonates well with the individual who is receiving it. If culturally relevant healing approaches work, there should be more of them. We should be testing this to see what works for people.

There are some clear indications where there's a disjuncture between the preparation for reintegration and a certain group's recidivism rates. For example, Black prisoners' trajectory into lower levels of custody is slower, and their release on parole is slower, but frankly, their recidivism rates are better than those of other groups, so there's something wrong with the risk calculation tools associated with certain groups.

We need to be very mindful of that, and we really need to treat everybody's potential for overcoming their past as an individual pursuit and make available to them whatever tools and paths would be helpful.

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon, Ms. Damoff has run out of time, but since you're the mover and a colleague, do you have anything else to add? The question was for you as well.

We seem to have lost Mr. Bragdon.

I guess we're on to royal assent, then.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have five minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's a little annoying because I had some questions for Mr. Bragdon. I'm going to hear from the other witnesses anyway.

I see that Mr. Bragdon is back.

First of all, I wanted to thank him for introducing his bill. Recent cases, such as that of Eustachio Gallese and Marylène Lévesque, show that there are cases of recidivism in society and that the mechanisms that already exist fail to protect the population. It is therefore important to stop there. Moreover, the report that we were able to study with the Correctional Investigator of Canada also shows that there are clearly flaws in the way the federal government manages the reintegration of inmates into society.

Before we get to the heart of the matter, since the bill raises some questions, I'd like to hear from Mr. Bragdon and the other witnesses about mandatory minimum sentences.

Mr. Bragdon, I'm reading what you pointed out in the preamble of the bill:

Whereas nearly one in four people who have been incarcerated reoffend within two years of their release;

Some people think that imprisonment only makes behaviours worse for some individuals who would be at risk of recidivism. So I'd like to know what you think about mandatory minimum sentences.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you very much for your kind words, Ms. Michaud.

[*English*]

In regard to sentencing and on the front end, obviously anything we can do to create an environment that prevents disadvantaged young people at risk—youth and others—from making choices that will lead in the direction that could eventually lead to incarceration, that is always a worthwhile investment of time and resources and supports. Those supports can't be overstated. It's critical.

This bill in particular addresses the period post time served. It's the plan for when someone has completed serving their time and for how we can best make sure they don't go back into the system upon having served time. There obviously can and should be some great work done on the front end, and I commend efforts to make sure we are preventing people from going into the system, but this is to address that revolving door on the back end.

The primary emphasis is, what are the best working models out there that we can look at and try to emulate here? Which ones are doing great work here in Canada that we can partner with and maybe contextualize across the board to keep bringing those rates of recidivism down so that revolving door stops? That's really the approach we're emphasizing. This bill is really about the period post time served.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Nicholas, would you like to add anything?

[*English*]

Mr. Graydon Nicholas: Yes, I think you ask a very good question, because there's always a concern in a community about what happens when somebody is out on the street and within another month they're in violation of another condition.

I think what's absent in our system is indigenous spirituality. I think that is very important for our people, because for them to be a complete person, they have to be in tune with their own spiritual values. Often, institutions have prohibited them from having a pipe or a smudging ceremony because fire regulations say something may burn down.

For our people, spirituality is extremely important, and it involves the role of the elders, both male and female. I think the institutions have to be welcoming of these people so they can follow up with them upon their release. To me, that is the key ingredient that has been missing in the criminal justice system.

Ms. Tina Naidoo: If I can add one more thing, in Texas it costs \$65 a day to incarcerate. It costs the T.O.R.I. program less than \$4 a day to rehabilitate. As I mentioned earlier, one in 32 Americans is involved in the criminal justice system, so granted that Canada has a 35% recidivism rate, we have a 65% recidivism rate. You can fast-forward to see that if you don't get your arms around the issue, it can drastically increase over time.

To Mr. Bragdon's point, I know this is for aftercare, returning citizens, but there are studies with the Aspen Institute that have talked about how they are able to measure how many prisons to build by third graders' test scores. We have initiatives around stopping the pipeline to prison. If you're talking about prevention work, there are some really excellent studies out there for prevention, but in this recidivism reduction bill I think that looking at the best practices now points to our getting our arms around it before it gets worse.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

[English]

Mr. Davies, welcome to the committee. You have five minutes.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Naidoo, just to clarify, when you quote the 35% recidivism rate, is that a federal figure for Canada or is that a comprehensive figure? As you know, it's those with sentences of more than two years who go into the federal system, and those with less than two years go into the provincial system. Do you know which you're referring to when you say 35%?

Ms. Tina Naidoo: I believe when we looked it up it was federal.

Mr. Bragdon, could you...?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Yes, I'd be glad to.

Mr. Davies, in our research we found the recidivism rate was 25% for those who will return to the federal prison system within two years. That was the metric.

The provincial recidivism rates are much higher, so I think the collaboration between the provincial and the federal would bump that number up to 35% and higher. You can see where the 35% number would definitely come in, because provincially those recidivism rates are even higher.

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you.

Ms. Latimer, on a scale of one to 10—one being terrible, 10 being fantastic—how would you describe the state of programs now that support inmates when they leave prison?

Ms. Catherine Latimer: Some prisoners get lucky and they get into good halfway houses and they have some needed supports, but a large chunk of them do not. They're coming out of statutory release without necessarily having preparatory programs in the pris-

ons and without necessarily having a very good reintegration strategy. Too many of them are released into homeless shelters, which is very bad, just in terms of being so different from prison culture and so conducive to their getting in trouble with drugs and a variety of other things.

A ton of work is left to be done. I don't want to undermine my very good co-workers at John Howard, who do great work, but overall we're probably at about five. There's lots of scope for improving.

• (1745)

Mr. Don Davies: Thank you. By the way, let me congratulate you. I've been a long-time fan of the Elizabeth Fry and John Howard societies. Thank you for the courageous work you do.

A little over 10 years ago, I had the privilege of being public safety critic when we undertook a study at this committee about the addictions and mental health problems in Canada's federal corrections system. If my memory serves me correctly, we found that about 70% of every inmate in the federal corrections system has a mental health or addictions issue. To you and to Mr. Bragdon, I'm wondering how important you think it is for us to recognize that fact, both while people are serving at Her Majesty's pleasure, as they say, and after they leave, and to attack that?

A corollary question would be what you think about conditions that are attached to these people—usually to stay away from alcohol or drugs; if they have an underlying health addiction, that makes it very difficult for them to do so—as a contributor to recidivism.

Ms. Catherine Latimer: It also very much compromises certain indigenous people who may be going back to communities that are rife with substance issues. It's very difficult for them to keep away from it, because it's in the same household they've been paroled to. It's a huge problem, and it's one that we really need to tackle, particularly the continuity of care.

John Howard's position is that there should be a provincial health care system that provides support for the prisoners so there's no gap between their release from prison and coming back into the communities.

It's particularly challenging for people with mental health issues. They're released with two weeks of prescription medication, and it takes much longer to get lined up with a psychiatrist who can continue to fill those prescriptions. We're sending people out into very difficult circumstances without appropriate continuity for mental health care, and it's a challenge.

Similarly, with addictions, far too many people are coming out of prisons and ending up overdosing, because the realities of the demons they fight are not being appropriately addressed. They're not getting the kind of counselling and support they need to successfully and safely come back into the community and deal with some of these issues in a constructive way.

The Chair: Mr. Bragdon, do you want to add to that?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Sure. Ms. Latimer gave a solid, comprehensive answer. Thank you.

That again speaks to the absolute importance of effective partnerships in the after-time-served aspect. That's what this bill is endeavouring to address. It's not a one-size-fits-all. It's going to sometimes take a contextualized approach, making sure we're working effectively with various sectors, including job opportunity placements.

With so many, when they come out, they have a criminal record. They have such a hard time being able to crack into the workforce. However, if you have those organizations and others that work with them, or potential employers who will say they want to be part of this person's journey, there are some real bright spots out there.

We're hearing some great news stories. We need to accentuate that, build around that. Some of the organizations doing this great work, like John Howard and others across the country, and, of course, with what we've seen so effectively done through the Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative...inspiring models that we could perhaps contextualize to the Canadian context, to say that this is how we can make sure people have an effective bridge back to the community.

It's not just one particular sector; it's multiple sectors working together. It can be done. We're seeing the models work. The stats are there. The effectiveness in reducing recidivism is incredible, plus the pathway to wholeness. We're addressing the needs of the whole individual, not just one aspect. I think that the comprehensive approach is the best.

The Chair: Okay, we're going to have to leave it there.

Thank you, Mr. Bragdon.

Mr. Graydon Nicholas: I have to apologize, Mr. Chair. I have to leave for another one.

I want to wish all of you well.

The Chair: Well, we're all Zoomed out.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Mr. Nicholas.

The Chair: Yes, thank you.

Colleagues, I'm in your hands. It is now 10 minutes to six, 20 minutes past the usual adjournment time of this committee. We have to deal with amendments. I'm open to having another round of questions, or we can go directly to the bill itself and the amendments that might be proposed.

Can I see some sort of consensus as to how we should proceed?

Jack, go ahead.

Mr. Jack Harris: Yes, Chair.

I'm happy to move to amendments, except I would like to raise something. I don't know whether it has been raised, because I was busy talking to other people on Skype—some of those present colleagues—on another matter.

The issue I have an amendment to is related to what happens in the prison and accessibility to programs in prison.

• (1750)

The Chair: Well, before you do that, I have to get, if you will, the permission of other colleagues to allow you to ask a question before we move to amendments.

Is it acceptable to let Mr. Harris proceed to ask his question?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Sure, Chair. Then, are we going to go straight to clause-by-clause? Is that the plan?

The Chair: That would be the idea.

Is that fine?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes.

The Chair: Jack, you're the only thing that stands....

Oh, we have Shannon.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Thanks, Chair.

Given that the proponent of this important legislation, which we all agree is so crucial, had to wait through the discussion that started off the meeting, including a witness who is still here with us, I think we should do another round of questioning. I think we owe that to the witness and to the proponent, if they're willing, given the importance of this legislation and the fact that an entire meeting that was supposed to be allotted to them was not.

The Chair: Okay, so are we reversing ourselves here?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I don't know how everybody else feels.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Chair, in the past you've done a shortened round. I think that would be appropriate in the circumstances, but I agree with Mrs. Stubbs. Certainly we have tremendous people around the table here who have a lot to offer, and I think it is incumbent upon us to give them the opportunity to share.

The Chair: So if I do five, five, two and a half, and two and a half, would that be acceptable? Does everyone agree? That would be 15 more minutes of questions.

Mr. Bragdon, you're fine with that, and I assume your witnesses are fine with that. This is making it up on the fly, I have to say.

I think Mr. Van Popta is up next, and perhaps we could have some indication as to who the next Liberal might be.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: You have five minutes.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Thank you, Mr. Bragdon, for bringing this very important bill forward.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here and sharing your wisdom with us.

Mr. Bragdon talked about an effective framework being multi-faceted, with many organizations coming together, bringing effectiveness to programs that way.

The first question is for Ms. Naidoo. Are there any programs that have proven to be better than others that Canada could emulate? I listened with great interest to your testimony about your organization and its working together with the HUD—housing and urban development—program. Perhaps you could flesh that out a little bit more. Is that something that is adaptable to the Canadian scenario?

Ms. Tina Naidoo: Thank you, Mr. Van Popta.

What I can add to that conversation, to help with some insight, is that we are a faith-based organization, or we started as a faith-based organization. To then step into government entities and collaborate, 17 years ago, was new to us. There is separation between church and state. As we're jogging alongside, we're finding common threads, and one common thread was the housing issue that returning citizens were facing. Our local housing authority had specifically written in its policies that persons who had a criminal background were not allowed to apply for any type of government-subsidized housing.

We had a brilliant CEO on the local level, who looked at the definition of special needs and expanded it to include returning citizens. Once that was accomplished, it took my clients to the top of the list, and the list had 14,000 people waiting for subsidized government funding.

We've been doing this now for about 13 or 14 years, working with landlords at a grassroots level. Landlords, even if they have a paying tenant, believe it or not, still don't want them. We had to convince them and have these conversations.

The relationship that we had as the intermediary—which is what I consider us to be—was with the government entity but also with the private sector, the landlords and the people on the local level, to garner trust. Lots of times I explain to my clients that it's kind of like co-signing for credit. I have good credit; you have bad credit, and you need me to co-sign.

This is how we did that job on a local level with housing. I hope that answers your question.

• (1755)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: It does, in many ways, but I have just one follow-up question.

You're saying there is a 65% recidivism rate in the U.S.A., and 35% in Canada. What is your organization's history with recidivism?

Ms. Tina Naidoo: We have a very small recidivism rate, 11%, which is—

Mr. Tako Van Popta: I'm just going to cross-examine you. Is that because you get the easier cases or because you're so good?

Ms. Tina Naidoo: Actually, the U.S. Department of Justice pushed us right out there in 2006. We had just started in 2005, and the buzzword was “Let's go after non-violent offenders.”

This is only from my experience, but what we have found is that non-violent offenders are involved in drug addiction offences that are running through our county jails cyclically, and violent offenders are typically those involved in crimes of passion that are not cyclical in nature. When we were pushed out there for the anti-gang initiative that our U.S. Attorney General was piloting in six U.S. cities, we were able to get into not just non-violent offenders but also violent offenders. We see the whole gamut, and there's a whole spectrum.

We don't cherry-pick. We don't get the cream of the crop. We have to take it case by case. It's very much as Mr. Bragdon said—this is not a one-size-fits-all. If you can see it case by case, some of the universal issues are housing, education, employment, family reunification and health care. Those are things that you guys are already outlining as common issues.

The Chair: You have about 30 seconds.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: That's okay. I'll cede my time. Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Madame Khera, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Bragdon, for your tremendous work on this bill.

My question is for Ms. Latimer. First, allow me to thank you for the tremendous work that the John Howard Society does.

Ms. Latimer, in 2015 you published an article declaring that it was time to move beyond this “tough on crime” rhetoric. You noted that while “electoral success” can be gained by this narrative, it is inconsistent with the facts. You also noted that improving “community-based corrections” and “prisoner rehabilitation” will “protect society against recidivism” by ensuring that fewer prisoners will leave custody “angrier” and that they will be better equipped with perhaps more social and mental health supports.

I'm hoping that you can speak a bit more on your thoughts here on the harms associated with this “tough on crime” rhetoric we hear and on how we can actually make systemic change. Perhaps you can talk a bit about how we can address the overrepresentation of indigenous and Black Canadians in prisons and why it's so important for the government to partner with not-for-profits like yours, like the John Howard Society, to address this.

Ms. Catherine Latimer: I'd be happy to talk about that. I think it takes us away from the focus of this bill a bit, which is really focusing on what I would call rehabilitation and reintegration. The quantum of the penalty and how that debt to society should appropriately be discharged is probably not the focus of this bill, but this bill will go a long way in terms of reducing crime by preventing recidivism.

I think the Texan experience is similar to ours. Where you see heavy recidivism is in people who are addicted and committing lower-level property crime, where they're feeding the habit by committing crimes. You really need to get a handle on those addiction issues.

What you see coming out of federal prisons is that about two-thirds of the people in federal prisons are there for violent crimes. Violent crimes scare people, but unnecessarily so if you actually look at the recidivism rates. Those who are serving life sentences probably have the lowest recidivism rates of anybody when they get into the communities. You just need a slightly different approach for people who have exhibited violence.

It's quite a significant challenge to deal with those who are the cyclical property offenders. That's a real challenge in terms of breaking that cycle, but we need to figure out the appropriate supports to put in place depending on the individual's criminogenic factors and what would lead them back into crime. Certainly, some of the basics—being poor, not having a place to live, not having your mental health issues addressed—are all problems, and this bill really stands a good chance of building a framework to support an effective re-entry of people into the community. I think it's really good.

I'd be happy to talk to you at length about whether “tough on crime” approaches generally work well, but this reintegration support really does.

• (1800)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Thank you.

How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have a minute and a half.

Ms. Kamal Khera: I'll give that to my colleague Ms. Damoff.

The Chair: Go ahead, Pam.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

Ms. Latimer, we know that a lot of women end up back in prison for breach of parole, where they've been told they can't drink or they can't associate with certain people, and because, as you were mentioning, addictions, mental health supports when they get out and go down the wrong path.... We only have a minute, but do you have any specific recommendations you could give us now on some of the things that you'd like to see to improve the rates of recidivism?

Ms. Catherine Latimer: I think you have to work with each individual. I agree that some people who have experienced a lot of trauma in their past need more supports. Re-entering society takes a lot of courage and a lot of strength. If you've been hurt a lot in the past, you may not have the strongest foundation from which to take the right steps. We need to really marshal certain types of resources around those who have experienced a lot of trauma and a lot of pain. Otherwise, we're not going to get very far. I do think we need—

Ms. Pam Damoff: What are your thoughts on transitional housing? It's not a halfway house, but something that's between a halfway house and actually being out in the community, where you can still be supported.

Ms. Catherine Latimer: I think it's extremely important. I think having adequate housing, and particularly supportive housing, for people coming out of prison is absolutely key. Ex-prisoners don't always understand that they have housing issues. If they feel they have a couch to sleep on in somebody's house, they may not feel they're insecurely housed or have a problem. But those couches in people's houses create power dynamics and an inability to really assert themselves and choose a path that's different from what the household represents.

Having adequate housing is so important to support people.

The Chair: We'll have to leave it there.

Thank you, Madame Damoff.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have two and a half minutes.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question will be for Mr. Bragdon this time. It's a slightly more focused question on the bill, which is intended to develop or implement a federal framework for this issue. When a federal framework is put in place, the question of respect for Quebec's and the provinces' areas of jurisdiction always comes up. This framework must set up pilot projects and collaborative projects with the provinces and the various groups.

Mr. Bragdon, how do you see this framework and how can we ensure that we don't encroach on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, Ms. Michaud, for your very good question.

[*English*]

I definitely want to emphasize the importance of this respecting provincial jurisdiction. Obviously, we know that those who are closest to the ground and closest to the situation within their provinces, the provincial governments and the provincial departments of public safety, know far better their area of jurisdiction than those of us at a federal level. I think our role is to put out a national framework of ideas, a collaboration of thoughts and best practices, and then enable and empower those provinces to contextualize the program to their region.

[*Translation*]

For La Belle Province, Quebec,

[*English*]

it would be important for them to be able to contextualize it to the needs of Quebecers, of the Québécois. It's the same thing for the province that I come from, New Brunswick. We're a unique, small maritime province, which I say is an advantage when it comes to pilot programs. We're nimble and small enough to be able to roll out a pilot and be able to measure outcomes perhaps quite quickly. Again, the situation and how it may apply to Alberta would be different from how it would apply to New Brunswick or Quebec.

Definitely, respecting provincial jurisdiction is absolutely a key part of this as well. By no means is it a one-size-fits-all approach or some grand program that will work in every province. No, this is about fostering an environment where individual provinces can roll out projects and potentially pilots that would aim at reducing recidivism in their jurisdiction.

• (1805)

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Michaud.

Mr. Harris, you have the last question, for two and a half minutes, please.

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Bragdon. Congratulations on putting forth a very fine and important bill.

The one question I have—

The Chair: Mr. Harris, you just cut off your own video.

Mr. Jack Harris: Sorry about that.

The Chair: Okay. There you are.

Mr. Jack Harris: I disappeared myself.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: You disappeared yourself. There might be some who are cheering for that.

Mr. Jack Harris: Ms. Latimer, I wonder if you could help us. We all know, of course, about the long-standing and awful overrepresentation of indigenous, Black and other people of colour in the prison system. You're probably familiar with the report of Tom Cardoso of *The Globe and Mail* last fall talking about risk assessments. He says they get the worst possible scores because there are biased risk assessments against Black and indigenous people. That results in higher security classifications, less access to programs, longer sentences and less access to parole.

Clearly, they're worse off in terms of being able to be reintegrated into society. From a recidivism point of view, you have a candidate who comes out of prison without any help in being able to be more successful. Is that something you recognize as being a serious problem that has to be fixed? And how do we go about doing that?

Ms. Catherine Latimer: It's a terribly serious problem. I have been on a journey to try to learn more about it. There are many who know way more about indigenous issues than I do, but I've been speaking to many Black prisoners about the experiences they've had.

One in particular, when he was 19 or 20, received a life 10 sentence for gang-related violence in an urban centre. He's been in there 30 years and hasn't seen a parole eligibility date. He's trying to figure out why. First of all, he firmly believes that he would... He has a family to return to; he has a lot of support in the community. He's made up his mind. He's given up "the life", which is what they call it. This is a very key thing for dealing with this type of Black offenders, who will no longer be participating in the street crime that led them to problems in the first place.

He said, "The correctional programs were designed to assess my ability to reintegrate into a white middle-class neighbourhood.

That's not where I'm from, and that's not where I'm going." They just completely miss the cues and the supports, and what he really has that would make him successful in the community.

The Chair: Unfortunately, we're going to have to leave it there.

Ms. Catherine Latimer: Sorry, it was too long an answer.

The Chair: No, Mr. Harris is famous for too long questions.

We're going to bring the questions to an end here. It's 6:08.

I've asked the legislative clerk to be available to us. All of the proposed amendments are in order. Normally, I would be in a situation where I could simply proceed with a kind of schedule, which I don't have in front of me, so I'm going to lean very heavily on our clerk to keep us going in some sort of order.

Before we start that process, I want to thank our witnesses. They may or may not wish to stay around. Bismarck once said that there are two things that you shouldn't see in life. One is the making of sausages, and the second is the making of legislation. We are in the process of making legislation here today.

Mr. Bragdon, I'm sure, will want to stay around.

With that, I'll turn to the clerk and ask him to call the first item, since I don't have a thing in front of me that would say what's the first item I'm supposed to call on this bill.

• (1810)

The Clerk: I'll turn it over to the legislative clerk for that, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Jacques Maziade (Legislative Clerk): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

According to the standing order, the committee should postpone clause 1, which is the short title, and the preamble. The chair should call clause 2, amendment LIB-1.

The Chair: On clause 2, LIB-1, Ms. Damoff, please go ahead.

(On clause 2)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you, Chair.

I know that Mr. Bragdon is in support of this amendment. It basically changes the word "collaboration" to "consultation". It would say, "in consultation with representatives of the provinces, with a variety of Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous organizations", and the rest would stay the same.

It's just clarifying some wording here, and I believe Mr. Bragdon is supportive of the change.

The Chair: I can indicate that Mr. Bragdon is in support of the change. Is there any debate?

All those in favour of the amendment as read by Ms. Damoff?

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

The Chair: I'll turn it over to our very competent legislative clerk.

Mr. Maziade, what's the next thing to be moved?

The Legislative Clerk: Mr. Chair, the next item is LIB-2.

The Chair: This would be LIB-2, on clause 2, as already amended.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, that is correct.

The Chair: On LIB-2, Ms. Damoff, please go ahead.

Ms. Pam Damoff: This is also on clause 2.

The Chair: Yes. LIB-1 has passed. You're on LIB-2.

Ms. Pam Damoff: With respect, though, Mr. Chair.... We voted to accept the amendment. Now we have to vote on the clause, do we not, Mr. Clerk, before we move on?

The Legislative Clerk: No, we don't, because LIB-2 is also on clause 2.

We will vote on clause 2 at the end.

The Chair: That's why I tried to clarify.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. I'm sorry.

This one is with regard to paragraph 2(2)(a). It just replaces the line "and evidenced-based programs to reduce recidivism;" with "and evidence-based programs aimed at reducing recidivism;".

Again, I know that Mr. Bragdon is aware of the change and is supportive of it. It just clarifies wording.

The Chair: I can confirm that with Mr. Bragdon.

Is there any debate?

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

The Chair: Are we still on clause 2, Mr. Clerk?

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, we are still on clause 2.

The next item is LIB-3.

The Chair: So, again, on clause 2 as amended, we have LIB-3.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'll be quick.

It just changes the words "by ensuring that they have access to adequate and ongoing resources" to "through access to adequate and ongoing resources".

Again, Mr. Bragdon is aware and has indicated his support for this.

The Chair: Again, I confirm that with Mr. Bragdon.

Is there any debate?

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

The Chair: Are those all the amendments with respect to clause 2, Mr. Clerk?

The Legislative Clerk: No, Mr. Chair, there is another one. It's NDP-1b. I just want to make sure that it's...because the sponsor of this amendment sent another version around three o'clock. We circulated it to the members. If you look at the top right of the amendment, it's written NDP-1b as in "bravo".

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Harris, do you wish to move your NDP-1b?

Mr. Jack Harris: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

NDP-1b is an amendment to subclause 2(2) that adds after paragraph 2(2)(d) a paragraph 2(2)(e). It's an addition, one that is related to my question. It would be:

(e) evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures to address racial and cultural biases and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism.

I discussed this with Mr. Bragdon last week. I believe that you will find him to be in agreement with it.

It's related to the question that I asked Ms. Latimer, and it's, you know, to make sure that the access to programs is not inhibited by the risk assessments, which have already been demonstrated to be seriously inadequate and, in fact, racially biased by at least the study by Mr. Cardoso, which is very compelling. I believe that this would make a big difference to the opportunities for those incarcerated to be more successful in achieving a lower rate of recidivism and a better life, obviously.

• (1815)

The Chair: Okay.

The amendment, I assume, Mr. Clerk, is in order.

I want to confirm with Mr. Bragdon that this is agreeable to him.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, the amendment is in order.

The Chair: It is within the scope of the bill.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, it is.

The Chair: Okay.

With that, I will ask for debate.

Seeing none, all those in favour?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Chair, MP Michaud wants to speak.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry. I missed that.

Kristina, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Mrs. Stubbs and Mr. Chair.

It's good to want to address racial and cultural bias, but I think that's very limiting. Indeed, there are many other things we could address, for example, sexual orientation, and many others could be added. So either we add a long list and include a little bit of everything, or we just take it out.

I'd like to know what you think about it. I think we could remove some text and still address racial and cultural bias.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are you moving that as an amendment to the amendment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. Can you frame it so we can table it on the committee floor?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Yes.

It would read as follows: “evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to programs specifically aimed at reducing recidivism”.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Now I'll call for debate, and it will be debate on the amendment to the amendment, starting with Mrs. Stubbs.

Mr. Damien Kurek: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Chair, could she just repeat that again? I missed it.

The Chair: Okay, where am I? Whose point of order was it?

Mr. Damien Kurek: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Could we get the entirety of the amendment with the subamendment read out before we move into debate, just so we're all clear on what we're discussing?

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Jack Harris: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jack Harris: Yes, I just—

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: I was acknowledged first.

The Chair: Yes, okay.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: All I wanted to say is that I'm just hoping the proponent will be able to speak to the amendment, that we'll allow Richard Bragdon to address these issues.

The Chair: Sure, that's no problem.

Is yours a point of order, Mr. Harris?

Mr. Jack Harris: It is indeed, Chair; that's what I raised.

I believe Madame Michaud is actually reading from the earlier amendment, NDP-1, which was delivered in a different way from how it was assembled, but we didn't notice it. NDP-1b is back to the way it was. The last several words that she read out refer to “specifically designed to reduce recidivism”. She has to go to NDP-1b, in other words. The last words are “have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism”, as opposed to being specifically designed for that purpose.

I believe you were reading from the wrong version of NDP-1. It should be NDP-1b, and maybe you don't have it in front of you.

The Chair: Now you're addressing your remarks to Madame Michaud. Is that correct?

• (1820)

Mr. Jack Harris: I don't believe she did, because she was reading from something else.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Harris is right. I was reading the first version of his amendment. We should instead at the end read “to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism” in my subamendment.

It doesn't change what I propose removing from the amendment.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

As I see it, Madame Michaud's motion is to be debated first, and then voted on, and then we'll move to Mr. Harris's motion, and debate it, and then we would proceed.

First of all, I want to clarify with Mr. Bragdon before I call for debate. Is Madame Michaud's motion, as read into the record, acceptable to you?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: My understanding is that hers is reducing it back closer to the original text. I understand it is advocating for the removal of Mr. Harris's amendment, unless it was very expansive in nature or much more comprehensive. Mr. Chair, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I want to make sure I'm clear on this. Madame Michaud's motion is to basically restore it to the original text.

I am totally fine with Mr. Harris's motion that he brought in, the NDP motion. We did discuss his intent earlier this week, and I think he updated the wording a bit here for this evening. I am totally fine with that. At the same time, if that doesn't receive the consent of the committee, I guess it reverts to the original documentation, and I can live with either one.

I don't know if that helps, Mr. Chair, but I'm good with Mr. Harris's motion as is.

The Chair: This is where it's a huge disadvantage for the chair not to have the documents in front of him, but I don't have a printer.

Anyway, let me confirm with the clerk that we understand each other so we're talking about the same thing.

Is Mr. Bragdon's interpretation of what's before the committee correct?

The Legislative Clerk: Yes. For greater clarity, Mr. Chair, would you like me to read it in English and in French?

Ms. Pam Damoff: I can't hear him, Chair.

The Chair: Can you try that again, Mr. Clerk?

The Legislative Clerk: Sure.

The Chair: There we are. That's much better.

The Legislative Clerk: I'm sorry about that.

For greater clarity, would you like me to read Mr. Harris's amendment, including Madame Michaud's subamendment? I can read it in both English and French and the committee will have the whole of the information.

The Chair: I think that would be helpful, but on the other hand, we do have to debate it in the reverse order, which is Michaud first and Harris second.

The Legislative Clerk: Exactly.

Including Madame Michaud's amendment, it would read in English, "evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures, and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism".

The Chair: Okay. That's the Michaud amendment.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, exactly.

The Chair: Okay. Is everybody clear on that?

We should debate the Michaud amendment first.

I see that Ms. Lambropoulos has her hand up, as does Mr. Harris.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): In listening to Ms. Latimer's testimony earlier in response to Mr. Harris's question, I think it was pretty clear that there isn't enough programming out there for Black Canadians, for example, or for people of different cultural backgrounds, so I think this amendment is actually an important one that we should keep.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Harris is the only other commenter on this Michaud amendment.

Mr. Jack Harris: Yes. Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate Madame Michaud's expansive change to this, but I want to say that the amendment was specifically designed to address what has been identified as a serious problem with the risk assessment tools as they exist now, in that they need to be fixed in order to give access to programs to people who are indigenous or people of colour who are not served by the system.

I suppose you could say that "racial and cultural biases" could be the expansive part by talking about "cultural", so it may be including some of the categories that you're interested in, but I think I'd rather keep this motion because it does exist, what has been identified as systemic racism, frankly, within the prison, as it affects indigenous people and people of colour.

I'd like to keep mine, thank you, and perhaps if you wanted to add one of your own, that would be great.

• (1825)

The Chair: Okay. Well, what we're debating is the existence of Madame Michaud's motion on the floor.

Mr. Bragdon, do you have your hand up?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will just say that I know this has come up in testimony, and several of the service providers and researchers certainly point out that there is a disproportionate level as it relates to the incarceration rates of indigenous and Black populations. I concur with what Ms.

Latimer said in regard to that. I have no problem at all with Mr. Harris's amendment.

Ms. Michaud, I can appreciate your input as well. Either way, if we can make it work, I'm happy to work with both, and if we can thread the needle, it would be great if we can get there.

The Chair: We have Madame Michaud.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: I'd like to thank those who have spoken.

I was proposing this subamendment in the spirit of greater inclusiveness but, as Mr. Harris said, the amendment was meant to represent the fact that we had talked about racial bias against indigenous people and minorities, for instance. Also, the word "cultural" is very broad and can include something else.

I'm in favour of the spirit of this motion as it stands, without any problem. We could still vote on my subamendment, if you like, but I'm in favour of the spirit of the motion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Not seeing any other will to debate, Madame Michaud....

Oh, there's Mr. Harris. What do you want?

Mr. Jack Harris: This is not really debate as such, but I think it may be some comfort to members of the committee to read the existing amendment as being inclusive, because it says, "improve risk assessment instruments and procedures to address racial and cultural biases and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism."

I think you could read it in such a way, as being as inclusive as you had hoped it would be with your amendment. I just offer that for your consideration.

The Chair: Unless there is further debate, I'm going to ask for a vote on the Michaud amendment, for want of a better term.

Does everybody understand the Michaud amendment, or do you need it read out to you again?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Could we have it read out once more, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Mr. Clerk, could you do that for us, please?

The Legislative Clerk: It would read as follows: "evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures, and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism."

It would read like this if Madame Michaud's subamendment is adopted.

The Chair: Are we ready to vote?

Mr. Jack Harris: I have a point of order, Chair.

Isn't Madame Michaud's amendment to remove the words "to address racial and cultural biases"?

The Chair: I'm hard-pressed to answer that.

Mr. Jack Harris: Is that the amendment? The effect of it would be a new thing altogether, but the amendment is actually to remove the words "to address racial and cultural biases".

• (1830)

The Legislative Clerk: Mr. Chair, do you want me to answer this question?

The Chair: I would be delighted if you would answer this question.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, Madame Michaud's subamendment is to remove the words "to address racial and cultural biases".

The Chair: Jack, your hand is still up.

Mr. Jack Harris: Oh, no, only accidentally.

The Chair: Okay, are we clear on what we're voting on?

Go ahead, Emmanuella.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: I thought that Madame Michaud was now okay with Mr. Harris's motion.

I'm confused as to why we're voting.

The Chair: I didn't hear her withdrawing her amendment. If she's withdrawing it, that's fine, but as far as I know, it's still an amendment. It's on the floor. It's in precedence to Mr. Harris's amendment. If it's passed, then we'll move to Mr. Harris's amendment.

I'm assuming that we are voting on the Michaud amendment.

Am I correct?

The Legislative Clerk: Yes.

The Chair: Those in favour of the amendment as read by the clerk?

(Subamendment negated [*See Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: The amendment is defeated.

We're making progress, I think.

Mr. Harris's amendment is now the amendment that is on the floor.

I will ask the clerk to read the amendment, please.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Harris's amendment is this:

(e) evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures to address racial and cultural biases and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism.

The Chair: I just want to confirm with Mr. Bragdon that he is fine with that.

Is there any debate?

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

The Chair: Mr. Harris's amendment passes.

Now, Mr. Clerk, march me through any other votes that need to be asked for. I think we have to vote on the overall clause 2 as amended.

The Legislative Clerk: Yes, Mr. Chair. The next question is on clause 2 as amended.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 as amended carry?

(Clause 2 as amended agreed to)

(Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the short title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Let's call it the Bragdon bill.

Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the long title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the bill as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Shall the chair report the bill as amended to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1835)

The Chair: Shall the committee order a reprint of the bill as amended for the use of the House at report stage?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: What co-operation. I'm amazed.

There are no more questions.

Before I gavel this committee to an end, I thank you for your co-operation. We're at 6:35, which is an hour past where we're supposed to be.

Just take note that there are apparently four votes on Wednesday, which may make a real mess of our intentions on February 24. We have had several witnesses confirm. We may end up having to extend the hours, so stay tuned.

Mr. Jack Harris: I have a commitment at 7:30 Newfoundland time.

The Chair: I think you'd better find a sub, then.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Chair, I don't think there are four. There are actually six votes, from my records, so it's even worse than anticipated.

The Chair: It's even worse. Well, let's just play it by ear.

Anyway, Richard, I want to thank you for your initiative here. It's really good to see private members' work going forward. As you can see, you've had a lot of support right across the political spectrum. It's nice to see. Well done.

Mr. Jack Harris: I have to leave, Chair. I have another meeting that's already started: Canada-China.

The Chair: Oh no. Jack has to leave. We have to close the meeting down.

I'd like to say we'll miss you, Jack, but I can't.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Thank you, everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

Thank you, Ms. Naidoo, for staying and watching this sausage-making.

Ms. Tina Naidoo: This was incredible. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay, take care.

Goodbye, folks.

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