



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER 183

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

## CONTENTS

(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

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Published by the Senate  
Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

## THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Paulette Senior:** Colleagues, I am beyond honoured in this moment to be speaking for the first time as a newly minted senator. As Black History Month draws to a close, I stand before you and join the chorus of senators who have paid tribute to the contributions and excellence of Black Canadians.

My appreciation to the Algonquin and Anishinaabe peoples, who have lived in and cared for this unceded, unsundered territory for millennia, such that I could have the opportunity to speak today.

I am also grateful to the Canadian Senators Group, which graciously offered me this time to make my statement.

We have all heard time and again of the excellent contributions of Black Canadians, several of whom have sat in this very chamber. Today, I am addressing the importance of why such recognition and tributes are critical to emblaze on the minds of all Canadians and build on the understanding of why this is important not only in February but throughout the year.

I take time to pay homage and remember those who came before me, who took up space as “firsts” and who continue to stand, be seen and pronounce that my presence, and that of others who look like me, absolutely belong in the highest houses of this land. It is because of them that I stand here today and, as a result, I owe it to those to come, to remain standing and to be seen.

Colleagues, I take this moment — also on the eve of International Women’s Day — to mention two women I saw taking a stand.

The legendary and honourable Jean Augustine is one such woman. I thank her especially for tilling and laying the ground in institutionalizing this celebratory month some three decades ago. Due to her brilliance and courage, Jean, as I lovingly call her, set the example for many to take on the challenge in spaces they occupy and to insist on the recognition of the contributions and visibility of Black Canadians. Due to her legacy, institutions across all sectors get in gear each year to honour the contributions of accomplished Black Canadians.

The late, great Rosemary Brown was a woman whose contributions have stood the test of time. The impact of her legacy continues to reverberate in the lives of many. She was the first Black woman to be elected as a member of a provincial legislature and the first woman to run for the leadership of a federal political party, among other accomplishments.

On a personal level, Rosemary Brown was one of eight brilliant women who founded the Canadian Women’s Foundation, an organization that I led for seven years. The spirit of her legacy — including the fact that she is Jamaican — continues to shine and inform my own leadership, particularly the passionate stance she took on issues of equality and social justice. This same passion led her to declare, “Until all of us have made it, none of us has made it.” Her words fuelled the kind of intersectional justice that leaves no one out — that spirit of *ubuntu* that says, “I am because we are.”

Today, we focus our collective efforts on appreciating the struggles and achievements of the past to build a future constructed on all of us making it, such that the future we yearn for will not be “a fleeting illusion” but, rather, one we can pursue and attain.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

#### WORLD JUNIOR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I am delighted to rise today to bring you chapter 9 of Team Plett’s curling journey. This chapter had Betty and me waking up enthusiastically at 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning for an entire week to watch the World Junior Curling Championships live from Lojha, Finland.

After qualifying at the World Junior-B Championships in December, Team Plett — consisting of Myla Plett, Alyssa Nedohin, Chloe Fediuk, Allie Iskiw, Kaylee Raniseth, and coaches Blair Lenton, David Nedohin and Lori Olson with Curling Canada — all arrived in Finland last week, excited but realistic. They were excited to have the honour of representing Canada as one of the 10 best junior women’s teams in the world. But they were realistic because they knew that the other teams were older and more experienced, and they would need to fight hard for every win — and fight hard, they did.

Five days and eight games later, Team Plett was tied for third in the round robin standings and had secured a playoff spot. But they had one more round robin game left against the team from Switzerland.

The Swiss were a force to be reckoned with. They ranked number 12 in the world in women’s senior curling, while Team Plett ranked number 120. The Swiss team was older and more experienced and had, so far, been undefeated at the championships. But Team Plett gave them a run for their money.

At the beginning of the eighth end, Team Plett was up 6 to 4, and tensions were running high. But the Swiss held the hammer and pulled ahead to win a close game.

Then, in their first playoff game, Team Plett unfortunately found themselves facing Switzerland again; and once again, the game went the full 10 ends, with the Swiss pulling off a narrow 5-to-4 win.

Team Plett's goal coming into the championships was to finish in the top six. In this way, Canada would be relegated directly to the Junior A's next year and not have to go through the route of competing in the B finals first, as the team had to do this year.

Team Plett achieved that goal and more, returning home as one of the four best junior women's curling teams in the world.

In their words, "This experience has lit a fire in us, and we definitely want another crack at this!"

Colleagues, I want to congratulate Team Plett and their coaches on their outstanding performance and great sportsmanship. You have made Canada proud, once again.

I also want to thank Curling Canada and World Curling for all they do to foster the great sport of curling and raise up the next generation of curlers.

Finally, colleagues, I welcome you to join me in congratulating Switzerland, which took home the gold medal — along with all the teams who participated in the 2024 World Junior Curling Championships.

Now it is off to the provincials next week to start all over again. Thank you.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

#### BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

**Hon. Gwen Boniface:** Honourable senators, I rise today to shine a light on a little-known part of Canada's history. The British Child Emigration Movement sent over 100,000 children to Canada between 1869 and 1948, including my home area of Simcoe County. Boys and girls, mostly between the ages of 7 and 14, but some as young as 2, made the difficult trek across the ocean, alone. Some were orphans. Many were sent by heartbroken parents who could no longer provide for them.

• (1410)

When the children arrived, they were placed in rural communities as domestics and farm labourers. They were promised wages, shelter and education. While some were fortunate enough to be placed with loving families, this was not the norm. Sadly, many of our Home Children experienced abuse and neglect. Despite the intentions of some sending and receiving organizations, the children's safety and well-being were not a priority. As many as two thirds of the Home Children are believed to have been mistreated.

They contributed to the development of our agriculture industry and, in most cases, became lifelong citizens who helped build this great country, especially in our rural communities. One example is Beatrice Grimm. She came to Ontario as a "Barnardo child," meaning she was a ward of the state and cared for by the homes run by Dr. Barnardo.

She was taken into care when her mother died giving birth to her little brother. She was separated from her two sisters and sent to Canada a year later. The year was 1914. She was 13 years old, and it was recorded in her care home records that she was the size of an 8-year-old, likely due to malnutrition. Her father was sent to fight in World War I.

That journey and her experience would never be spoken about. It would be over 50 years before she would meet her little brother again. She went on to create a family, farm with her husband and raise three children to be successful citizens in Canada.

Beatrice Grimm was my paternal grandmother.

Colleagues, there are 4 million descendants of British Home Children in Canada; that's 10% of our population. Yet, this important chapter in our history is not widely known. While it is difficult to measure the depth of their impact, it is important to recognize what they achieved, despite the difficulties they endured. Over 25,000 of our Home Children served in World War I and World War II. One of them designed the first prototype of our flag. Others milled the lumber used to rebuild the Parliament Buildings. Most simply endured and went on to lead meaningful lives. Colleagues, please join me as I honour these great Canadians.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Alicia Baxter King. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Honourable senators, I rise today to deliver a statement for Black History Month. I'm grateful to be able to do this on this unceded and unsundered Algonquin Anishinaabe territory.

This year's national theme for Black History Month is "Black Excellence: A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build," and Nova Scotia's African Heritage Month theme is "Our Smiles, Our Joy, Our Resilience as African Nova Scotians."

Heritage, future, resilience and joy: These themes are intertwined due to the heritage and the future of Black people in Canada being built upon a collective spirit of survival and resilience. Resilience that despite all the structural and systemic barriers we have faced, Black Canadians continue to live lives of excellence, continue to find joy and to make a mark on Canadian history. Our heritage of excellence exists in all spheres including the arts, music, education, politics and sports. As we look to the future, I am filled with joyful anticipation. I am excited when I

think about the possibilities for Black Canadians and excited about the important work possible here in this place to address systemic and institutional racism.

This Black History Month is a celebration of joy and the triumph of the human spirit. On that note, I would like to congratulate the community of North Preston on its two hundred and fortieth anniversary. North Preston is the largest historic Black community in Canada and one of the 48 Black communities still standing in Nova Scotia. North Preston is adjacent to my home community of East Preston. It has survived and thrived despite not being set up for success, since it was established on such undesirable land. This survival alone is cause for joy and celebration.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for your statements recognizing Black Canadian history. We can continue to work together to build a future that we can be joyous about and a future that we can be proud of. After all, Black history is Canadian history. It is “A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build.”

*Asante*, thank you.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Alicia and Alonzo Léger. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Hartling.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

#### MICHEL GOGUEN

**Hon. Nancy J. Hartling:** Honourable senators, as we begin this new year, many of us are looking for hope and courage in these difficult times. I rise today to share a story of hope, of someone from my community who is committed to change — my good friend Michel Goguen, a musician and songwriter from Dieppe, New Brunswick.

Michel is a very creative individual and is committed to environmental and animal rights. His journey began after Michel worked at an animal shelter which changed everything for him. It pushed him to work hard to find a venue for a voice for animals and the environment.

With this vision in mind, he began a Canada-wide school fundraising project called Music for Critters, where participating schools can donate to a non-profit of their choice that works to help animals or the environment.

Michel grew up reading about Dr. Jane Goodall, the legendary primatologist and anthropologist; she became his greatest inspiration. Her lessons and teachings had a major impact on his life. Dr. Goodall’s interests began when she was only 10 years

old, when her mother encouraged and supported her to become an explorer. Her deep passion continues even at her age of 90 years old.

Michel was thrilled to have the opportunity to meet Dr. Goodall a few years ago. As part of his volunteer work with the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada, he recently released a self-produced album called *Open Strum* and is donating 100% of the sales to the institute.

The album includes 36 songs, with contributions by many Canadian artists, featuring six languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese and Mi’kmaq. Even Dr. Goodall recorded some of the lyrics featured in the song “Be the Change.”

“All my relations” is an important phrase utilized by Indigenous peoples in North America to express their world view about the interconnectedness of all creation, from people to animals and insects to plants and non-living objects. This philosophy is reflected in the *Open Strum* project.

I would like to thank my former colleague Senator Sinclair as well as our colleague Senator Klyne for all their efforts in advancing the well-being of animals; this is truly “all my relations” put into practice.

Michel, likewise, is committed to making a positive change and promoting quality of life for all on our planet. My appreciation goes to people like him and Dr. Goodall for their commitment to the natural world. My guests today, Alicia and Alonzo Léger from Moncton, are also committed to environmental concerns in my community. My sincere appreciation to all who continue to work to protect our animals, humanity and our climate. It gives me hope to listen to Michel’s music, which is very inspiring and purposeful.

[*Translation*]

It is really important to protect our environment and everything that happens on our planet. Thank you.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

#### SIXTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED

**Hon. Diane Bellemare:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report (interim) of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament entitled *Summary of Evidence: Committee Structure and Mandates*, and I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

(On motion of Senator Bellemare, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

• (1420)

## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

PETITION TABLED

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table a petition from the residents of Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador expressing their support of Bill S-280, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

[English]

## QUESTION PERIOD

### FINANCE

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Government leader, Canadians continue to struggle to feed themselves under this Trudeau government. Just in the last few days, we have learned the following: A report from Second Harvest says that food charities expect 1 million more Canadians will need to rely on a food bank in 2024, an 18% increase. More than a third of non-profit food charities reported having to turn people away last year. They just didn't have enough food to meet the demand. As well, GoFundMe reported over 214,000 Canadians launched campaigns last year to raise money to cover everyday expenses, including 56,000 fundraisers just to help pay for food.

Leader, will your government consider reversing its inflationary taxes and spending so Canadians can afford to put food on the table?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question, senator. Many Canadians, many families, are still struggling with the cost of living and, especially, groceries is a matter of ongoing concern for all of us.

Yes. It is true that inflation has dropped below 3%, and it is true that our economy is in robust condition, but it is small comfort for those Canadians who have to make the painful choices between what to buy at the grocery store and other important necessities.

This government continues to support Canadians through practical, pragmatic, balanced and responsible policies, whether fiscal policies — and we await the results of the upcoming budgetary measures — but also with the aid and assistance that is being provided for Canadians.

**Senator Plett:** A year ago, I raised with you a news report that people in Vancouver were dumpster diving because they couldn't afford to buy groceries. On Monday, we learned that a group of people in Toronto searching dumpsters for food has 8,000 members. "ArriveScam," the "green slush fund," the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and on and on.

Why does the Trudeau government waste so much taxpayers' money while Canadians turn to dumpsters to feed themselves?

**Senator Gold:** Again, thank you for the question. I can only repeat that the government's measures to assist Canadians, whether it's on the housing front or the cost of food, have helped Canadians and continue to help Canadians go through what are tough times.

#### COST OF PHARMACARE PLAN

**Hon. Elizabeth Marshall:** My question is for Senator Gold. Last week, Senator Gold, the Liberal government and the NDP jointly announced the new pharmacare program, but details are scanty, as we say in Newfoundland. Can you tell us when the new program will be implemented? Also, will it be a stand-alone program or will it be integrated with other health care programs?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. It's my understanding that the bill that will implement this first phase of pharmacare will be introduced shortly in Parliament. Until that point, the details are not public, and I'm not in a position to comment on it.

This is a program that is a first step towards assisting those families across this country who don't have the advantages that we and many others have to access to more affordable medications.

**Senator Marshall:** My supplementary question is on money, of course. The government's fiscal projections haven't been reliable in the past and are constantly being revised. The increasing cost of servicing the government debt is a good example. Every time we get a new fiscal projection, the number has gone up.

I expect the cost of this program will be significant. Are you able to tell us the cost of the program? More importantly for me, I would like to know: Is the cost of this new pharmacare program included in the fiscal projections that were provided in the fiscal update in November and December?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. I don't know the answer to the last question because the final discussions and details of the program have been negotiated only within the last weeks, as you know. It will become clearer once we see the program itself and the magnitude of the investments that are being contemplated.

## HEALTH

## CANNABIS REGULATIONS

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** My question is for Senator Gold. The legislative review of the Cannabis Act is well under way with the *What We Heard Report* published this past October. This report notes that while there was general agreement that the main objectives of the cannabis framework should be to continue to safeguard public health and safety:

In contrast, industry representatives suggested that elements of the precautionary approach impede their ability to compete with the illicit market . . .

It is clear that the cannabis industry will make efforts to limit and minimize the precautionary approach of the cannabis framework in favour of growing industry.

Can you confirm that the government will not liberalize the rules around the sale, production and marketing of cannabis, and, in so doing, ensure public health and safety?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. All of us who participated in the debate on the legalization of cannabis know that concern for public health was at the centre of our debates and deliberations. Indeed, as the sponsor pointed out eloquently throughout that debate, the initiative to legalize individual use of cannabis was primarily framed — and properly so — as a health issue. I think this chamber can rest assured that the concern for public safety and health will remain at the core of any further deliberations on cannabis legislation that may come down the road in the future. I'm not aware of any such initiatives or any such changes.

**Senator Moodie:** Thank you. I have a follow-up question, Senator Gold. The expert panel noted that their engagement with youth had been minimal, and they planned additional activities by the end of 2023. Can you confirm for us whether this panel has met with more young people and give a description of what these consultations looked like?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. I have confidence in the processes, but I do not know the details of the status of those. I will certainly raise this with the minister when I have an opportunity to do so.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

## MEDIA SUPPORT

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Senator Gold, considering the important role local, regional and ethnic papers play in our communities, does the government not agree that it would be beneficial to increase its advertising investments in print media? Last month, the government published its 2022-23 annual report on the Government of Canada's advertising activities, and we learned that the government spent over \$86 million on advertising. Of the \$67 million expenditures made by the Agency of Record, under \$1 million went to traditional print media.

• (1430)

As you know, Canada's press is in crisis, and we need to find immediate solutions to ensure its survival. Surely, everyone would agree that having a strong, independent and fair press is fundamental for any democracy.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. Yes, I hope that everyone agrees with your last point; the Government of Canada certainly does.

Colleagues, I cannot comment on what additional expenditures might be made by the government in its discretion or indeed within a budgetary framework that we anticipate in the weeks and months to come, but this government will continue to support local journalism and quality journalism in many different ways, as it has done, not only with the Online News Act, for example, but with a range of programs including the Canadian Periodical Fund and the recently boosted Canadian journalism labour tax credit.

[Translation]

**Senator Loffreda:** Thank you for your answer.

I understand why the government is prioritizing digital media over traditional media, but don't you think that a government ad-buying policy is a good idea?

Would you be open to giving businesses an additional tax credit for the money they spend with local media?

Last week, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux reminded us that Quebec's news media has lost 75% of its ad revenue over the past 10 years.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. I am not aware of any plan to create a tax credit. However, after a decade of reduced access to news for Canadians and the closure of over 500 newsrooms, this government has taken meaningful action to ensure the sustainability of our media ecosystem and will continue to do more.

[English]

## CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

## FRAMEWORK TO BUILD A GREEN PRAIRIE ECONOMY

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** My question is for Senator Gold. In December 2022, Parliament passed Bill C-235, sponsored by the late Jim Carr, which required the government to develop a framework for building a green Prairie economy in consultation with the Prairie provinces. The bill mandates, as Jim Carr, a great Prairie optimist phrased it, "collaboration and co-operation and relationship building."

The government recently tabled the framework, and it is disappointingly short on details. There is scant mention of consultations with the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba in creating the framework.

Senator Gold, can you provide clarification to this chamber on what, if any, official consultations the federal government undertook with provincial counterparts to develop this framework?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The initiative of the late Jim Carr was an important one, signalling, I think, the commitment within Western Provinces to do their part — as they have done and will continue to do — to help our country transition to a new, cleaner and more sustainable environment.

With regard to these specific conversations, consultations and collaborations between the government, I'm going to have to inquire further and inform myself further with the relevant minister before I'm in a position to answer the question.

**Senator Tannas:** Thank you for that undertaking, and I look forward to learning more. The bill requires a report on the implementation of The Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy to be tabled in the next two years. Based on the bare-bones framework we have right now, I'm concerned that the government isn't meeting the high expectations for renewed cooperative federalism that the bill originally envisioned. Will the government commit to greater detail and transparency when reporting to Parliament on its engagement with the Prairie provinces?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you. I think we all look forward to the report to which you referred. I hope that both the federal government and its provincial counterparts are engaging actively and in a collaborative manner so as to provide a robust framework within which the work that's already being done by many companies and supported by governments in many provinces can not only continue but flourish.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Hon. Judy A. White:** My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, and it pertains to the worsening effects of climate change on infrastructure that is disproportionately impacting Indigenous communities.

Earlier this month, First Nations leaders in both remote northern Manitoba and northern Ontario declared states of emergency due to the conditions of their winter roads. The warmer-than-average winter has had a devastating impact on these essential road networks, leaving many communities cut off from crucial deliveries of things like food, fuel and supplies. Ice road delays have been an issue for other communities as well.

Senator Gold, what is the federal government doing to respond to these serious threats to Indigenous communities?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you very much. Climate change is an existential threat to all of us, and the impact is felt very severely in Indigenous communities, especially on issues of resilience and the ability to adapt to it. Since 2020, the government has announced over \$2 billion in climate action funding targeted to Indigenous peoples throughout Canada through Canada's climate plan, which is called A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy.

In addition, there have been additional budget allocations in Budget 2021, Budget 2022 and Budget 2023, and these include, among others, investments such as \$290 million over a 12-year period to support greener and more resilient infrastructure, \$163.4 million over three years to improve food security in the North — including in Inuit communities — and an additional \$22.7 million over five years to support First Nations and Inuit as they cope with climate change.

**Senator White:** Thank you, Senator Gold. A thawing ice road delaying the arrival of fire trucks is suggested to be the contributing factor in the destruction of Eabametoong First Nation's only school in northern Ontario, which was devastated by fire last month. I'm certainly pleased that the Minister of Indigenous Services has committed funding for the temporary replacement school, but I'm wondering what plans there are to address the underlying infrastructure issues.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. Again, your question and my response also underscore the importance of infrastructure and resilience. There are processes — joint government-Indigenous community processes — to address a full range of issues pertaining to climate change as well as broader issues than climate change, and that's a subject that I'm convinced is on the table between Indigenous leadership and the Government of Canada.

## GLOBAL AFFAIRS

### SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Senator Gold, since 2018, commonsensical Conservatives have been calling on your government to do more to support Ukraine as they continue to defend their country from Russia's illegal invasion. Justin Trudeau has tried to divide and distract Canadians in his rhetoric on Ukraine, but has failed to deliver the military equipment that Ukraine needs.

Ukraine has asked the Government of Canada to provide them with 83,000 surplus CRV7 rockets currently stockpiled by the Canadian Armed Forces. Instead of making Canadians pay millions of dollars to decommission these weapons, why doesn't your government give these weapons to Ukraine? Even the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence agreed with the Conservative motion at committee to do just that.

What is your government waiting for? Why don't we get this badly needed military equipment to Ukraine so that the people of Ukraine can fight off this Russian invasion?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.



**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The support of this government for Ukraine and its defence against Russia's illegal invasion has been strong and unwavering. The government has committed over \$2.4 billion in military aid from tanks to armoured vehicles to ammunition and, indeed, has announced an additional \$3 billion in military support for Ukraine.

When it comes to delivering on our commitments, the government remains in close contact with the Ukrainian government and our allies to continue to help Ukraine meet its needs during this time of war.

• (1440)

**Senator Housakos:** Senator Gold, recently, a Ukrainian news story headline said that Justin Trudeau was a "great talker." That's the reality. Now we need to go from talk to action. There are 31,000 Ukrainians who have lost their lives in this invasion, so we have to take action. The Ukrainian government has even offered to come and take this equipment to make sure they can get it to the front line.

Your government seems to be very good at allowing thousands of stolen vehicles to leave quickly out of the ports in this country. Why can't you, in an effective and efficient way, get this military aid to Ukraine ASAP?

**Senator Gold:** Canada is delivering aid to Ukraine in a tangible, concrete and real way, and it will continue to do so to help Ukrainians defend themselves against Russian aggression. It will do everything it can, both in terms of aid and other measures of support, to also support the Ukrainian people as they struggle this winter with the war that has devastated their country.

## JUSTICE

### REPEAT OFFENDERS

**Hon. Salma Atallahjan:** Senator Gold, on Monday, the Deputy Chief of Police with the Toronto Police Service told a House committee the following:

Whether it is a carjacking, or a break and enter, or a home invasion, criminals are getting far too brazen in their methods to steal vehicles, and causing residents across Toronto an incredible amount of fear and anxiety.

Deputy Chief Robert Johnson said that since the beginning of this year — and we're nearing the end of February, so that's two months — there have been 17 home invasions and over 32 carjackings in Toronto — double the amount there were at this time last year.

Leader, the deputy chief also said that 50% of those involved who are apprehended are repeat offenders. Will this government use some common sense and ensure that repeat violent car thieves stay in jail?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The Government of Canada is doing its part with regard to auto thefts. I've outlined

the measures it has taken, working in collaboration with the RCMP, border security and, of course, the provinces — who have responsibility for policing in their provinces — and the municipalities, like that of Toronto, that have a municipal police force.

The areas of jurisdiction over home invasions really fall beyond the federal jurisdiction but pertain to the administration of justice, which is also under provincial jurisdiction.

With regard to what I think was implicit in your question, senator, which is whether amendments to the Criminal Code might be contemplated, there are no such amendments being contemplated to add mandatory penalties or the like nor — may I add — for politicians to get involved in judicial decisions about sentencing or parole decisions, for that matter.

**Senator Atallahjan:** Senator Gold, it's not just a problem in Toronto. The Deputy Chief of Police for Peel Regional Police told the committee that over the last two years, there were 185 carjackings in Peel. He also raised the case of an international student who was killed in a violent carjacking in Peel.

Why is the Trudeau government abandoning law-abiding and hard-working Ontarians by refusing to ensure that repeat offenders get jail and not bail?

**Senator Gold:** Senator, it is tragic that people are killed, and it is horrible that people lose their property. But we have a judicial system and a Constitution that provide for judicial assessment of bail and also judicial discretion in the application of criminal law. That's how it should be in a democracy such as Canada.

## INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### NET-ZERO INDUSTRIAL POLICY

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Senator Gold, the Centre for Net-Zero Industrial Policy recently released a cautionary study that states that the old geopolitical order was based on oil. Canada prospered under this order, but there's a risk that Canada will lose its position in the new energy world. The report indicates that for Canada to be a global power in the energy transition, we need a strategic push. A recent International Monetary Fund, or IMF, study predicts that Canada's trade balance could decline by between 2% and 3% of GDP as the world shifts to lower-carbon energy.

Senator Gold, is Canada planning to develop an ambitious net-zero industrial strategy, as suggested by the centre, to harness our national resources for maximum benefit and to identify where our comparative advantage lies by following the smart money with government support?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. Canada must absolutely keep innovating to meet our long-range goal of strengthening and building on the existing measures to fight climate change and support our emerging sectors of cleaner and more sustainable

economic development. To that end, the Government of Canada has launched the \$8-billion Net Zero Accelerator fund to help large emitters reduce their emissions.

For example, Algoma Steel is receiving up to \$420 million from this fund to retrofit its operations and phase out coal from steel-making processes at its facility in Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario. This will create 500 jobs and reduce emissions by 3 million tonnes per year by 2090.

Another initiative is Canada's hydrogen strategy, which looks to power Canada's low-carbon energy future.

**Senator Coyle:** I wanted to hear a little more about the export side of things. Senator Gold, in order for Canada to maintain a strong position in the new geopolitical order — as recommended by the Centre for Net-Zero Industrial Policy — what will Canada do to cultivate advance production and innovation capabilities — the brains in the processing of materials for net-zero supply chains — and align procurement, diplomacy, trade and public policy across ministries and programs?

**Senator Gold:** There's so much that needs to be said in 15 or 30 seconds — whatever my time is. I can do very little but simply point us, for example, to the Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy, which has a number of different pillars. Each of these pillars relies not only on technological changes but on the support of those to innovate and to continue to do so. Through various measures — supporting universities, research and foreign students — the government will do its part to make this happen.

## GLOBAL AFFAIRS

### NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** I read with interest that the government has committed another \$3 billion over 10 years to Ukraine, including security guarantees. I also know that Canada has committed to fulfill its North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, high-readiness commitment, which is usually executed through the Canadian Armed Forces. This is to shore up security to NATO should Russia's imperialistic ambitions continue to move forward.

In order to meet these NATO high-readiness commitments and to counter the threats, we need to understand where we are in defence in meeting these high-readiness commitments. In the absence of a defence policy update, we have no idea.

My question to you is this: Can we meet our NATO high-readiness commitments? Where are we on actually meeting these commitments on a timeline? Because Russia will not wait.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for that important question.

[ Senator Gold ]

I'm not in a position to answer where we are on that. I know the Government of Canada has been continuing to invest increasing amounts in our defence. The Prime Minister recently announced that more needs to be done to meet the 2% level that NATO has set. As I've mentioned in this chamber before, we rank seventh in those supporters of NATO out of the 31 allies and continue to be a reliable and strong partner.

There is no question that our Armed Forces and resources need continuing investment. There are areas that we all know still need to be improved, and the government is doing what it can within its fiscal capacity to do it so that our security is protected.

**Senator Patterson:** Thank you.

I also think that we don't have any transparency on this. This defence policy update is going to be absolutely critical as the baseline for us to understand where we're committing within defence within our capabilities — because about an hour ago, a very interesting report just came out. The 2% level is a floor, not a ceiling. The \$3 billion is very important to Ukrainians, but not much of that is going to count toward our 2%. Therefore, Senator Gold, can you please give us some idea when we're actually going to see this defence policy update? How is the government going to fund this?

Thank you.

• (1450)

**Senator Gold:** Thank you. I'll certainly bring your question to the attention of the minister, but you highlighted an important point: Not everything is about Canada spending in order to defend its allies and its interests around the world; the war in Ukraine is also about defending liberal democracy against authoritarian aggression. Not everything counts in the formula, but that doesn't mean Canada isn't doing its part, on all fronts, in order to protect our interests around the world.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the government leader regarding a terrifying incident that took place last week in my home province of B.C.

Early last Thursday morning, in the city of White Rock, shooters used what appeared to be machine guns to open fire on a vehicle at a home in a residential neighbourhood. Four people were sent to hospital with serious injuries.

Machine guns have been banned in Canada since the 1970s, but that didn't prevent this incident from occurring. The Trudeau government is going after trained, tested and law-abiding gun owners instead of illegal gun smugglers. How does that do anything to stop such crimes?

**An Hon. Senator:** Nothing.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The Senate and Parliament passed Bill C-21 recently. We had a full debate on it, and it was the will of this chamber to support the government's initiatives to strengthen gun control in this country, and to ban handguns and other categories. There's no question, colleagues — and no one in this government denies or could deny — that there remains a problem with illegal guns and gangs, and at the borders.

The government has put into place significant resources over the last number of years that strengthen our border control measures. Over a thousand new members at the Canada Border Services Agency have been hired since this government came to power, and it will continue to do what it can. Local law enforcement, of course, will continue to do what it can to protect our citizens from harm.

**Senator Martin:** I voted against Bill C-21, which punishes law-abiding gun owners.

Leader, closed-circuit television footage of this shooting has been posted online. It shows that more than 100 bullets were sprayed in just a matter of seconds by what looked to be machine guns. No one has been arrested, and the community is rightfully afraid.

Instead of wasting money on "ArriveScam" at the Canada Border Services Agency, why wasn't that money used at the border to prevent gangs from smuggling illegal weapons into our country?

**An Hon. Senator:** Absolutely.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question.

More resources have been spent at the border, first of all. Second, the money that is spent to police and administer our law enforcement — in cities such as White Rock, in provinces such as yours, or across the country — is a matter that is within provincial jurisdiction. The government is doing what it can at the border. It has done what it can via Bill C-21 to remove the illegal trafficking of automatic weapons. And it will continue to do its part with its partners to keep Canadians safe.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: Motion No. 157, followed by third reading of Bill C-62, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

## CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2023

MOTION TO PLACE BILL ON ORDERS OF THE DAY FOR THIRD READING ON FEBRUARY 29, 2024, SHOULD IT BE REPORTED ON THAT DAY WITHOUT AMENDMENT—DEBATE

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of February 26, 2024, moved:

That, notwithstanding rule 5-5(b), if the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade reports on Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, without amendment on Thursday, February 29, 2024, the bill be placed on Orders of the Day for third reading later that day, provided that if the committee reports the bill without amendment on that day after the point where the Senate would normally have dealt with the bill at third reading, it either be taken into consideration at third reading forthwith or, if the report is presented while another item is under consideration, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading after the end of proceedings for the day on the item under consideration at the time of presentation; and

That the committee's report on the bill may be presented after the end of Routine Proceedings that day without leave being required.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Gold, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, that, notwithstanding rule 5-5(b) — may I dispense?

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Gold, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That, notwithstanding rule 5-5(b), if the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade reports on Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, without amendment on Thursday, February 29, 2024, the bill be placed on Orders of the Day for third reading later that day, provided that if the committee reports the bill without amendment on that day after the point where the Senate would normally have dealt with the bill at third reading, it either be taken into consideration at third reading forthwith or, if the report is presented while another item is under consideration, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading after the end of proceedings for the day on the item under consideration at the time of presentation; and

That the committee's report on the bill may be presented after the end of Routine Proceedings that day without leave being required.

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I'm not quite sure why this amendment is necessary. Things could progress quite well, given the way they

were going. Clearly, I thought that Bill C-62 was the most important item on the agenda here, and now the government leader has chosen to bring other legislation ahead of one of the most important bills that is — or has been — in front of us this year; I'm not sure why.

Nevertheless, honourable senators, I would like to offer a small amendment to this motion by improving the motion at least a little bit.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by deleting the words “, notwithstanding rule 5-5(b),”; and
2. by replacing all words after the words “the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day” by the words “for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.”.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, in amendment, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Plett, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by deleting the words “, notwithstanding rule 5-5(b),”; and
2. by replacing all words after the words “the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day” by the words “for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.”.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

**CRIMINAL CODE**

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, for the third reading of Bill C-62, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), No. 2.

**Hon. Denise Batters:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on Bill C-62 — a bill to delay access to assisted suicide for Canadians with mental illness until 2027.

This bill passed the House of Commons decisively by a vote of 272 to 32, and while I'm supportive of this move to delay access now, I submit that the Trudeau government needs to not just

delay expanding assisted suicide to people with mental illness, but it also needs to back down completely. Ideologically driven, the Trudeau government seems allergic to admitting that they made a grievous error in ever accepting medical assistance in dying, or MAID, for mental illness in 2021. Canadians don't want this expansion. Our health care system is not ready for it.

The Trudeau government has recognized this and punted the issue to 2027, beyond the date of the next election, to try to ensure they don't have to face the electorate on this question. Liberal Health Minister Mark Holland has confirmed that even with the delay on Bill C-62, this expansion for mental illness will not be a matter of “if,” but “when.” However, vulnerable Canadians living with mental illness will ultimately be the ones who pay the price — with their lives — for this pro-expansionist Liberal ideology.

There are two significant reasons why mental illness should not qualify as the sole ground for accessing assisted suicide. First, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the irremediability of mental illness. Second, it is challenging for clinicians to distinguish whether the request for assisted suicide by someone with mental illness is motivated by suicidality, which can change from one day to the next and may be helped with treatment.

• (1500)

Throughout my eight years on the Senate Legal Committee, as we examined this very issue, we heard from many expert witnesses who relayed stories of their seemingly treatment-resistant patients who were able to recover from their mental illness, and improve with the right treatment and resources.

Mental illness is not irremediable. It is not terminal. MAID for mental illness is not — as Senator Kutcher, Senator Mégie and Senator Wallin described it in their dissenting report — end-of-life care. MAID for mental illness is access to the 100% lethal means of death delivered straight into the hands of someone with mental illness.

I can tell you from personal experience — as a caregiver to my late husband, Dave Batters, who struggled with mental illness — that there are huge gaps in the mental health care system in this country. There are waiting lists of months, sometimes years, to even get in to see a psychiatrist. The answer to gaps in the mental health care system is to fix the system — not to confirm a mentally ill patient's feelings of hopelessness, and offer them the lethal means to suicide. The answer is certainly not to end their lives for them.

It is also difficult to predict with certainty whether a patient's wish to die is the result of transient suicidality, which may be a symptom of their mental illness, or whether it is a deliberate plan to end one's life. Not all suicide is impulsive. People with mental illness can also map out a detailed plan for their suicide, and many do.

Often, mental illness produces tunnel vision or a lack of perspective about one's own life and its worth. It creates a complex environment in which to make a life-or-death decision like assisted suicide. Further, some psychiatric medications also have the side effect of increasing the frequency of suicidal thoughts.

Suicide is arranging one's own death, as is MAID. But with MAID, you also involve the state. One of the reasons Canada outlawed capital punishment decades ago is that we decided a person's life is too high a cost if the state makes a mistake.

In a recent article, Senator Kutcher was quoted as taking issue with the argument that MAID and suicide are similar. The article states:

We can't equate someone who chooses to end their life due to mental illness to a kamikaze pilot or a suicide bomber, [Kutcher] explains. "They're not the same thing [at] all, but people have deliberately obfuscated with MAiD because it's an emotional appeal."

I think the emotional appeal and obfuscation here is conflating suicide with kamikaze pilots and suicide bombers. I am taken aback that an experienced psychiatrist would do that. How many kamikaze pilots and suicide bombers are among the 4,500 Canadians who die by suicide each year? This is certainly not an argument based in any kind of evidence or data, and it is indicative of the kind of extreme rhetoric that the small group of pro-expansionist advocates employ on this issue.

Even expert psychiatrists cannot necessarily tell the difference between suicidality and a qualified request for MAID. Further, the MAID curriculum developed by the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers doesn't teach assessors how to distinguish suicidality from MAID requests for mental illness, but instead falsely assures providers that they can. This is very dangerous. Of the people who attempt suicide in Canada, 23% of them will make another attempt, and 7% will complete suicide. That means at least 70% of people who attempt suicide only try once. But with MAID, that one attempt has a 100% certainty of being lethal. There are no second chances.

There have been horror stories reported in the media about disabled Canadians being offered MAID as an alternative to treatment or resources. Several cases were also reported of military veterans being counselled about MAID by Veterans Affairs Canada when seeking help. Such occurrences are only likely to increase if the Trudeau government expands assisted suicide yet again to mentally ill Canadians.

It can be predicted that expanding assisted suicide will disproportionately affect women. In the first 21 months since assisted suicide was widened to include non-end-of-life cases, 686 disabled Canadians were provided with MAID. In 2022, a full 60% of that cohort was female. Given research in Europe that

shows women comprise 70% to 80% of psychiatric euthanasia cases, and given that women attempt suicide at a rate of two to three times that of men, we might expect this gender gap to widen again once psychiatric MAID is enshrined in law.

The government's Gender-based Analysis Plus, or GBA Plus, for Bill C-62 was not publicly released until after I asked about it during the Committee of the Whole in the Senate. This GBA Plus was radically different from that of Bill C-39 — the bill that delayed MAID for mental illness the first time. Last year's Bill C-39 GBA Plus was devastating and accurate. It recognized the gender gap in women with psychiatric conditions being more likely to request MAID than men in Benelux countries. It said:

... should MAID be made available in Canada for individuals whose sole underlying condition is mental illness, we would see an increase in women seeking MAID for psychiatric suffering, and at younger ages.

But the GBA Plus for the delay in Bill C-62 is very different. All of a sudden, there seems to be no evidence for anything: little data on how MAID will impact people who are mentally ill, no data on race, no data on income and no data on how either of those things impacts MAID. There is evidence lacking from Switzerland, with too few cases to draw any possible conclusions about why women comprise the bulk of psychiatric MAID cases, and even though women are 60% of Bill C-7 cases, we can't find any possible reason for that. It's ridiculous, honestly. The Justice Department should have just signed a blank paper that said, "GBA Plus, Bill C-62: The dog ate my homework."

Minister Holland has tried to muddy the waters around the process for psychiatric MAID by saying:

This is about deciding, as a society, to empower people living with a disease like cancer or who are at the end of life, giving them the opportunity to make a choice for themselves. . . .

When it comes to incurable diseases, that's the debate we need to have today. We need to make sure that the choice is really limited to cases where a patient has examined all options and where there are no other alternatives to improve their health, after having suffered a great deal.

The minister's description is not accurate, as MAID for mental illness is not about terminal illness. There is no stipulation in Bill C-7, which was passed by Parliament, that MAID must be a last resort for these patients, or that they have exhausted other medications or treatments over months or years before applying. This makes Canada an outlier from other countries that allow some form of assisted suicide for psychiatric illness.

Now we are at the point where, as Dr. Sonu Gaind stated at the joint committee:

This expansion is not so much a slippery slope as a runaway train . . . . The government has plenty of signs we should not be proceeding. You can choose to go ahead, but you can't pretend you weren't warned.

Canada is not ready to proceed with the expansion of assisted suicide for mental illness — certainly not now, and maybe not ever. But the provinces and territories — under not only the Conservative, but also the Liberal and NDP governments — have told the federal government that they are not ready to expand assisted dying to mentally ill people.

Canadians have indicated their rejection of expanding the MAID regime on psychiatric grounds alone. An Angus Reid poll last year indicated only 31% of Canadians agreed with this expansion. In the fall, another national poll found that 82% of Canadians said expansion of MAID to the mentally ill should not be considered before access to mental health care is improved. Even the psychiatric practitioners tasked with facilitating access to MAID for their mentally ill patients have not embraced this expansion. The joint committee found that a scant 2% of Canadian psychiatrists are even signed up for the Canadian MAID curriculum. A recent letter from the Society of Canadian Psychiatry states:

[E]very survey of psychiatrists since the introduction of the sunset clause has consistently shown that psychiatrists across Canada do not support expansion of MAID for sole mental illness . . . . These surveys consistently show that by a 2:1 to 3:1 margin, psychiatrists do not support expanding MAID for sole mental illness, despite most not being conscientious objectors to MAID overall, and even higher rates (by a 4:1 margin) of psychiatrists citing lack of readiness for MAID for mental illness expansion for March 2024.

Undoubtedly, some of these psychiatrists don't want this expansion to happen because of the duty of care they have for their patients. I'm sure most of them never intended to be involved with the process of ending their patients' lives in a discipline based on trust between doctor and patient, and modelled on preventing suicide and preserving life.

Senator Kutcher has pointed out that consensus is not required for many medical treatments — physical or otherwise. But assisted suicide is not a treatment; it is death. In the absence of conclusive evidence about the irremediability and suicidality of mental illness, consensus in the medical community must be required.

Providing access for mentally ill people to assisted suicide is not equality. What is actually discriminatory to people with mental illness is confirming their despair and offering them premature death through MAID rather than treatment and support. Mental illness should not be a death sentence.

[ Senator Batters ]

• (1510)

Over the last eight years, I've heard from so many people who have struggled with mental illness. They want hope, help and support — not an easier path to death.

Some proponents of expanding MAID for mental illness claim that this has been mandated by Canada's courts. As a lawyer, I am telling you that is not true. The expansion of assisted suicide for mental illness was a political decision of an activist Trudeau government — nothing more, nothing less. It is not constitutionally required. In fact, both Justice Minister Virani and previous justice minister David Lametti reluctantly admitted to me here that Canadian courts have not mandated the extension of MAID to people with mental illness.

Twenty-eight law professors signed a letter to the Trudeau government, urging the following line of reasoning: The Supreme Court's 2015 *Carter* ruling did not involve patients with mental illness; in fact, it explicitly excluded people with mental illness from the judgment, stating:

. . . . "euthanasia for minors or persons with psychiatric disorders or minor medical conditions" would "not fall within the parameters suggested in these reasons."

Nor did the lower court Quebec judge in the *Truchon* case pronounce on the constitutionality of extending MAID for mental illness as the plaintiffs in that case were not applying based on mental illness. Any comments made about psychiatric illness by the judge in that ruling were outside the scope of the case and also can't be relied on for precedent.

The 28 law professors summed up their letter this way:

In the absence of binding precedent, it is premature to argue that the Charter requires access to MAID for persons whose sole underlying medical condition is mental illness. It is in our view also reckless to suggest that a constitutional right to MAID should and would be recognized by our Supreme Court when there has been no meaningful review of the evidence . . . .

Former justice minister Lametti was an activist for the wide expansion of MAID. He chose not to appeal the lower court judge's *Truchon* ruling because, frankly, he got an answer that he liked. To not appeal such a ruling by one judge is highly unusual for the federal government.

The Trudeau government has expanded assisted suicide too far and too fast. Last year, my Conservative MP colleague Ed Fast, introduced Private Member's Bill C-314 to exclude mental illness from the assisted suicide regime. Sadly, the vast majority of Liberal MPs voted against it. In fact, they voted it down at second reading so the bill would not even be studied at committee.

Only a Conservative government led by a prime minister Pierre Poilievre will repeal this mental illness expansion on assisted suicide. We have committed to this when we become government. For the country's sake, I hope that's soon. But I can assure you of this: That will be a matter of not if, but when.

Honourable senators, this issue is as clear as day. Either you are on the side of people living with mental illness or you are not. Assisted suicide should never be extended to Canadians on the sole basis of mental illness. We need to put the brakes on this runaway train before it's too late. The Canadian public is not ready, medical practitioners are not ready, the provinces and territories aren't ready. Please join me and vote to pass Bill C-62 to help protect the lives of vulnerable Canadians living with mental illness.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Andrew Cardozo:** Honourable senators, I want to take a few minutes to give voice to a few Canadians who have written to us on Bill C-62 from various perspectives.

I will start with a letter from Jane in Ontario. She writes a personal and pointed letter:

I am a 75-year-old woman, and I have suffered for decades with a new psychiatric diagnosis called "Complex PTSD". This diagnosis usually stems from childhood traumas, never acknowledged or resolved, followed by a series of traumas throughout life which layer and layer, and become interlocked by triggers (an instantaneous negative psychological and physical repulsion).

. . . my condition is irremediable and my MAID application, with 50 years of psychiatric records (1500+ pages) of no trauma treatment until 2020, would be approved by trained, MAID Psychiatric Assessors. I suffer flashbacks, nightmares, triggers and sobbing every waking minute; medications dull the avalanche of past horrors for half an hour.

I have received excellent trauma treatment since 2020 . . . I have unburied layers of traumas.

Those who have served at the parliamentary committee level have heard from experts that Canada is ready for this change in law, and from a handful of people like me who live with

treatment-resistant, intolerable mental pain and suffering. Now the government is proposing a 3-year delay; how many Parliamentarians spoke to someone with lived experience like me before making this decision? I don't know of one.

I do not want to plan a suicide. I simply have a desire to end my tragic life, Which has never been and never will be meaningful, productive or joyful-with dignity. I want the choice to have a peaceful death with my loved ones by my side. Please allow me this last personal freedom.

Next, a letter from multiple constituents addressing their views that mental illness is no less real than physical illness:

Dear Andrew Cardozo,

I write to you today, as a constituent and as an advocate for end-of-life choice, to renounce Bill C-62 . . .

Suffering caused by a mental disorder is no less "real" than suffering caused by a physical illness, injury, or disability. In many cases, symptoms of a mental disorder are indistinguishable from those caused by a non-psychiatric medical condition. It is wrong — and unconstitutional — to continue to exclude individuals with mental disorders from equal access to the law. People across Canada who have been suffering from a treatment-resistant mental disorder should have the same right to autonomy and choice as individuals with grievous and irremediable physical conditions. They do not need to be told what's best for them — they want the right to make their own choices.

Depriving someone of their legal and constitutional rights is a serious matter and has gone on for long enough. I support MAID for individuals whose sole underlying condition is a mental disorder and do not support the passage of Bill C-62.

Next, I'll briefly read a letter from Matthew:

I'm severely mentally ill from treatment-resistant depression. I can't work because of it. Suicide is a terrible thing to go through both as the victim and everyone else around who are involved. Including emergency personnel. I've struggled with depression for many years personally and have had friends who have as well, one in particular who was my best friend died by suicide a few years ago with no warning.

One major thing to consider is the manner in which non-medical suicide is conducted. . . .

I'm here to advocate for a dignified death. I don't think anyone should have to die alone and be put through the pain and unpredictability of any non medical way of ending their life.

Next, I want to read from a letter from Val, who is in favour of Bill C-62:

I am so happy and relieved that the Joint Committee studying MAiD for Mental Illness was willing to hear what Canadians were saying and concluded that we cannot in good conscience expand assisted suicide to those with mental illness.

I understand that there is now a Bill C-62: to Delay Expansion of MAiD to the Mentally Ill.

I respectfully ask you to pass legislation in response to Bill C-62.

This is a very personal issue for me.

Please do all you can to delay MAiD, or completely eliminate MAiD for those with Mental Illness.

Last, I want to read briefly from a letter that we have all received, signed by 127 physicians and nurses who say:

We are writing to you as physicians and nurse practitioners to express our concerns about Bill C-62 which will result in the continued exclusion of patients with mental disorders as their sole underlying condition from applying for MAiD.

When Bill C-7 came into force, mental disorders were excluded for two years to give governments and MAiD assessors and providers the time to put in place the processes to assess MD SUMC requests. That exclusion was to expire in March 2023, but was extended an additional year with a set of metrics to measure readiness. All metrics have been met, as was demonstrated before the Special Joint Committee of the House and Senate on Medical Assistance in Dying (AMAD). The Committee itself did not dispute this.

• (1520)

In closing, colleagues, I want to say that my approach to this issue is that there is no right or wrong answer, or right or wrong position to take, but I also completely respect those who believe there is a right or a wrong on either side of this debate.

Colleagues, thank you for listening. A special and sincere thanks to all Canadians who have written to us. This is one of the most difficult issues we have had to address as Canadians and as legislators. Thank you.

**Hon. Peter Harder:** Honourable senators, I rise on behalf of our colleague Frances Lankin, who is not able to be here, and I will say a few words that she has asked me to express on her behalf. I would like to add a few comments after that with respect to my own views and experience.

Senator Lankin first asks me to thank colleagues for including some thoughts from her on the record at third reading of Bill C-62:

I can't be in the chamber but have been following Senate debates all week. Thank you to all colleagues for what has been a very thoughtful and important discussion.

Most of the issues I would like to speak to if I could be there in person have been explored from many perspectives by others. I won't repeat those things. I want to add my voice in support of this bill from my own personal and professional perspective as a former provincial Minister of Health and as a member of this chamber of our bicameral Parliament.

While the various expert opinions — which, in this case, are split — provide evidence-based advice to the development of public policy, the final decision on what public policy will be proposed, how and when that policy is implemented and the other considerations that must be taken into account falls in the end to ministers, governments, legislatures and Parliament.

The final step is and should be an exercise in democratic governance, which includes the requirement to respect collaborative federalism and federal-provincial-territorial, or FPT, jurisdictional realities. I support the FPT assessment that a three-year extension before the provision of MAiD comes into effect is in the best overall interests of Canadians and responsible law-making. I understand from first-hand government and legislative experience the considerations that are before ministers.

The second perspective I bring to this is as a member of this institution and a structured consideration of the scope of my role as a senator. Whatever our individual preference regarding the proposed bill is, we must always consider the role of the Senate in our parliamentary system. A bill that passes the democratically elected and accountable chamber — in a minority government to boot — must be treated with considered respect and appropriate deference. For many reasons, I support this bill, and I urge colleagues to do the same.

That is Senator Frances Lankin.

Colleagues, I enter this debate somewhat reluctantly, frankly because of my recent personal experience, but I also do so in some respects because so many senators missed the debate eight years ago. For those of us who were here eight years ago, it has to be the most important public policy debate I have been a party to in this chamber, and if you read the record, the one in which I believe the Senate rose to insightful debate. We learned from each other and reached amendments to the bill that was before us, which we sent to the other chamber.



The other chamber considered and accepted some amendments, but not all. I want to read to you the words of the then-government representative when the message came from the other place:

Honourable senators, I do not propose to speak long because we have, over the course of the last two and a half weeks, debated extensively the matters before us, and we all understand the situation that we now face with a message from the House of Commons. I think it is important for me to say a few words with respect to where we are with the message and the motion that I have tabled.

I believe that the Senate has done its work. We have, through the exercise of debate and the work of the Senate, engaged Canadians on the issues involving Bill C-14.

We have, through our amendments, perfected the bill to a great degree and provoked, in the other chamber, yet another debate of reflection, and in the broader public, a debate with respect to the amendments that we made.

This is the role of the Senate, to provoke, to inquire, to make recommendations for improvement, to urge the government to consider our reflections.

The role of the House of Commons and the government is to consider the recommendations that we have made, to take seriously the amendments and the views of the Senate, and I believe they have done that. They have done that in a respectful fashion, by seeking to accommodate and engage the other chamber with respect to the amendments that have been brought forward.

That is their role. They are the representatives of the people, and the government will be held accountable for the implementation of the bill that, hopefully, this chamber will conclude later today is worthy of Royal Assent.

I reference this because this is not a debate that has come to us only in the last few weeks. It is, in a sense, a conversation this chamber has had with the other chamber for the last eight years. In the last iteration, we made recommendations to the other chamber, which they accepted, and now, on reflection, are saying, after consultations that we envisaged they would engage in, that the system is not ready.

I think it's important for us institutionally to understand our role and the restraint with which we should exercise our judgment. I want to quote not from the previous Government Representative but from our former colleague Ian Shugart. It was his first and last speech, but it is worthy of reflection where he spoke of restraint. This is from June 20, 2023:

. . . we have the seeds of constitutional crisis. An essential ingredient in avoiding or resolving such a crisis will be the practice of restraint. Our Constitution is black-letter law and convention — practices developed over decades and centuries, in which the instinct to exercise raw power is restrained for the common good. Absent restraint, the convention that the Senate's duty is to scrutinize, amend and pass legislation — balanced against deference to the chamber that most directly reflects the will of the people — is incomplete.

In other words, colleagues, I believe that the bill before us and its passage, which I endorse, would be an appropriate exercise of the Senate's role that is deliberative and respectful, but is ultimately one of restraint. I would encourage you to adopt this bill.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

#### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

*(At 3:28 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)*

# CONTENTS

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

	PAGE	PAGE
<b>SENATORS' STATEMENTS</b>		
<b>Black History Month</b>		
Hon. Paulette Senior . . . . .	5665	
<b>World Junior Curling Championships</b>		
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	5665	
<b>British Home Children</b>		
Hon. Gwen Boniface . . . . .	5666	
<b>Visitor in the Gallery</b>		
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	5666	
<b>Black History Month</b>		
Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard . . . . .	5666	
<b>Visitors in the Gallery</b>		
The Hon. the Speaker . . . . .	5667	
<b>Michel Goguen</b>		
Hon. Nancy J. Hartling . . . . .	5667	
<hr/>		
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		
<b>Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament</b>		
Sixth Report of Committee Tabled		
Hon. Diane Bellemare . . . . .	5667	
<b>National Framework on Sickle Cell Disease Bill (Bill S-280)</b>		
Petition Tabled		
Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie . . . . .	5668	
<hr/>		
<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
Government Spending		
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	5668	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5668	
Cost of Pharmacare Plan		
Hon. Elizabeth Marshall . . . . .	5668	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5668	
<b>Health</b>		
Cannabis Regulations		
Hon. Rosemary Moodie . . . . .	5669	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5669	
<b>Canadian Heritage</b>		
Media Support		
Hon. Tony Loffreda . . . . .	5669	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5669	
<b>Crown-Indigenous Relations</b>		
Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy		
Hon. Scott Tannas . . . . .	5669	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5670	
<b>Environment and Climate Change</b>		
Impact of Climate Change		
Hon. Judy A. White . . . . .	5670	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5670	
<b>Global Affairs</b>		
Support for Ukraine		
Hon. Leo Housakos . . . . .	5670	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5671	
<b>Justice</b>		
Repeat Offenders		
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan . . . . .	5671	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5671	
<b>Innovation, Science and Economic Development</b>		
Net-Zero Industrial Policy		
Hon. Mary Coyle . . . . .	5671	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5671	
<hr/>		
<b>Global Affairs</b>		
North Atlantic Treaty Organization		
Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	5672	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5672	
<b>Public Safety</b>		
Firearms Control		
Hon. Yonah Martin . . . . .	5672	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5673	
<hr/>		
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		
<b>Business of the Senate</b>		
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	5673	
<b>Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement Implementation Bill, 2023 (Bill C-57)</b>		
Motion to Place Bill on Orders of the Day for Third Reading on February 29, 2024, Should it be Reported on that Day without Amendment—Debate		
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	5673	
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	5673	
Motion in Amendment—Debate Adjourned		
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	5674	
<b>Criminal Code (Bill C-62)</b>		
Bill to Amend—Third Reading—Debate Continued		
Hon. Denise Batters . . . . .	5674	
Hon. Andrew Cardozo . . . . .	5677	
Hon. Peter Harder . . . . .	5678	
<b>Business of the Senate</b>		
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	5679	