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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, October 24, 2018**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Bryan May**



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

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• (1850)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.)):** Welcome everybody. We're going to get started.

I want to thank everybody for coming back to committee at this late hour this evening. We'll try to get things moving. I have a bit of a preamble, so you'll have to bear with me.

Welcome to today's meeting on Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada.

The objective of today's meeting is to continue the committee's thorough review of the bill. I would like to take a moment to remind both those participating in the proceedings, as well as those observing the proceedings in person and on video, that the committee adopted a motion on September 18 that included instructions for the clerk to explore options to allow for the full participation of all witnesses and members of the public on this study.

As a result, the committee has made arrangements to make all meetings in relation to the study of Bill C-81 as accessible as possible, in a variety of ways. This includes providing sign language interpretation and near real-time closed captioning in the room. Please note that both American sign language and Quebec sign language are being offered to our audience.

For those who would like to watch the American sign language interpretation, please sit in the benches to my left. For those who would like to watch the Quebec sign language interpretations, please sit in the benches to my right. In addition, please note that the first two rows of benches have been reserved for those who wish to avail themselves of these interpretation services.

Screens displaying the near real-time closed captioning have also been set up, with the English text to my left and the French text to my right. The sign language interpreters in the room are also being video recorded for the eventual broadcast of the meeting on ParlVu via the committee's website.

In light of these arrangements, the committee would ask that if you need to leave the room during the meeting, please do not walk in front of the sign language interpreters. Instead, please use the extremities of the room. In addition, we would ask that those in the room to remain seated as much as possible during the meeting, so

that everyone in the audience can clearly see the sign language interpretation.

Finally, if a member of the audience requires assistance at any time, please notify a member of the staff or the committee clerk.

I will also ask not just the witnesses who will be presenting today but also remind my colleagues, as a result of the interpretation and the unique translation with sign language, to keep our questions and answers at a pace that is not too fast. If I feel that you are going too fast, or if the folks wave to say that you're going too fast, I may interrupt you, so I apologize in advance. We want to make sure that everybody's messages, questions and answers today are being heard in their entirety.

That's the end of my preamble.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses here this evening.

Appearing as an individual, we have Marie Bountrogianni, who is dean of the Chang school at Ryerson University. From Barrier-Free Manitoba, we have Patrick Falconer, consultant to the steering committee. From the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, we have Neil Belanger, executive director. From La Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec, we have Monique Beaudoin, administrator, board of directors; and Camille Desforges, records manager. From the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance, we have Bill Adair, executive director; and Jane Arkell, project director.

Welcome to everyone. This is a big panel, so we're going to get started right away.

We're going to start with Marie.

The next seven minutes are all yours.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni (Dean, Chang School, Ryerson University, As an Individual):** Thank you.

Good evening. My name is Marie Bountrogianni, and I'm dean of the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University. I would like to thank the standing committee for inviting me here to comment on Bill C-81.

I would also like to congratulate Minister Qualtrough and the standing committee on the excellent progress made to date on the bill. I believe that most Canadians would agree that national accessibility legislation is a matter of equality and human rights.

It was my distinct pleasure to serve as cabinet minister in the legislature of Ontario from 2003 to 2007. The highlight of my tenure as minister came in June 2005, when the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or AODA, received royal assent and came into force. The bill was voted in unanimously in the Ontario legislature. That doesn't happen very often.

I have since had the opportunity to share my experiences developing the legislation and advising representatives from public and private organizations in Japan, Ukraine and New Zealand.

My team and I learned some very important lessons while we were writing the AODA. I'm pleased to share some of these lessons with the committee this evening in the hope that they may help inform Bill C-81.

When I first began university at the University of Waterloo in 1975, co-op placements at that university were limited for women because some of the engineering firms did not have female washrooms. When they were asked why, the answer was that it wasn't worth the expense. Can you imagine, now, our daughters being told anything like that?

This memory of a less equitable time helped inform our mantra towards an accessible Ontario. I thought to myself, "Imagine 30 years from now when people will say there was a time in Ontario only 30 years ago when people complained about the price of a ramp for wheelchairs, the cost of making a washroom accessible or having to hire people with disabilities".

Following meetings with disability community members and representatives from businesses, we found that they agreed that Ontario's businesses should be accessible; however, business owners were unaware of what a difference a few accommodations could have on their bottom line. During one of these meetings, one of the representatives from business said, "Minister, as a businessman, you are scaring me, but as a father of a daughter with a disability, you are not moving fast enough." This father's heartfelt sentiment helped inspire my determination to push forward. It also captured the challenge.

During the consultation phase, we studied Great Britain's Disability Discrimination Act and were taught three critical lessons. We would need a clear deadline for an accessible Ontario. There would need to be regulations established through which to enforce the law, and public education would be key for creating awareness about the bill. When we set the 2025 deadline for an accessible Ontario, many criticized that timeline was too long; however, it gave us time to ensure that we were getting it right.

The government is meant to set a positive example for its constituents. I, therefore, support the fact that Bill C-81 is focused on enforcing accessibility in areas that the federal government can regulate. I am hopeful that other Canadian businesses will follow suit. However, I would like to urge the government and the committee to consider setting a firm deadline for a barrier-free Canada.

It has been over 13 years since the AODA came into law, and Ontario still has a lot of work to do to reach its goal of becoming a fully accessible province. Just last week, the Ontario government partially lifted the freeze they imposed in June on the AODA

standards development committees. The employment standards development committee can now resume its work recommending revisions to the AODA's employment accessibility standard. Premier Doug Ford also appointed a minister for seniors and accessibility, which I think is a promising step towards promoting compliance with the legislation. I will be meeting with that minister soon.

• (1855)

As identified in Bill C-81, I believe that appointing an accessibility commissioner, a Canadian accessibility standards development organization, and a chief accessibility officer would be heading in an excellent direction for enforcing compliance.

I was recently honoured, as I have been twice before, to participate in the third review of the AODA. This year's review was led by the Honourable David C. Onley. Some of my feedback could be helpful here.

One of my most pressing recommendations for the AODA is for greater emphasis on web accessibility. At the Chang school, we believe that unlocking accessibility in online environments is an important step towards facilitating equal access and opportunities for people with disabilities. Through collaboration with the Government of Ontario's enabling change program, the Chang school is currently developing five accessibility courses to help professionals in Ontario—and anywhere, quite frankly—learn how to develop and design accessible websites and web content. These are MOOCs. In other words, they're free for anyone who wishes to take them. They have been very successful. Most free courses have a huge dropout rate. This one doesn't. These modules are very successful.

We're looking to unveil a new website next year, which will be fully accessible.

Our research also identifies a province-wide gap related to accessibility in the post-secondary education market. In order to reduce the 16% unemployment rate among Ontarians with disabilities, we believe that revisions to the AODA need to champion accessible technological innovation and advancement, as well as post-secondary educational offerings that promote accessible and inclusive environments. I believe this can be generalized across the country.

Last year, the Chang school partnered with Ryerson's digital media zone to launch the accessibility project. This project awarded up to \$25,000 and funded 17 projects for students to develop apps and other technological processes, like wearable technologies, to remove barriers faced by people with disabilities and aging populations. I'm proud to say that many of those who were awarded these grants had disabilities themselves. They are developing incredible products.

We were also recently pleased to collaborate with the CNIB to offer two courses in our certificate in entrepreneurship and small business to people living with visual impairment. We're still learning. Even though our courses are accessible, enrolment wasn't and neither were the books, so we had to scramble. Even though we thought we were the experts of the school, we still have a lot to learn. We similarly introduced a new leadership in accessibility and inclusion program this past September.

I believe that these examples help clearly demonstrate that partnership and collaboration are critical for realizing a barrier-free Canada. In technology in particular, we can close the unemployment gap between people with disabilities and people without. We can't really be employed without knowing technology today. It is a major barrier for many.

In closing, I would like to encourage the standing committee to advocate for an appropriate budget for public education on Bill C-81. I believe that awareness is crucial for ensuring compliance with the legislation. I still have people asking me, "What is the AODA?" There will most certainly be push-back, but I urge you to push forward.

Again, I thank the standing committee for having invited me here. It is an honour.

• (1900)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now, from Barrier-Free Manitoba, we have Patrick Falconer, consultant to their steering committee.

The next seven minutes are all yours.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer (Consultant, Steering Committee, Barrier-Free Manitoba):** Good evening and thank you, Mr. Chair, vice-chairs and members, for the invitation to present.

My name is Patrick Falconer. I am here to speak on behalf of Barrier-Free Manitoba and to express our strong support for the calls for significant amendments to Bill C-81 as outlined in briefs by the AODA Alliance, dated September 27, 2018, and by the ARCH Disability Law Centre, dated October 1, 2018.

As a matter of introduction, Barrier-Free Manitoba is the cross-disability, non-partisan community initiative that has worked over the last decade on provincial accessibility rights legislation in Manitoba. Our support for both the AODA Alliance's and the ARCH's briefs is firmly rooted in the experience we have gained through those 10 years.

Our story is one of both hope and disappointment: hope in the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, or what's called "the AMA", our provincial legislation that promised major progress would be made toward achieving full accessibility by 2023, which enacted and proclaimed in 2013, had set the stage for a decade of sure and steady progress; hope in that the AMA included language, deliverables and accountability measures that created clear obligations for government; hope in that the AMA was passed by a unanimous, all-party, all-member vote of our legislative assembly; and finally, hope in that each major political party recommitted themselves to the full and timely implementation of the AMA in the 2016 general provincial election.

However, that's pretty much where the hope ends and the disappointment begins.

We're now halfway through the promised decade of progress. Only one of five promised accessibility standards has been developed. There is still no compliance framework established. Government has only rarely met its own timelines for obligations under the act. As well, implementation efforts continue to be

substantially under-resourced and way behind any reasonable schedule. Getting even this far has taken incredible efforts on the part of our diverse and under-resourced disability communities.

We are gravely concerned that Bill C-81 not only replicates the AMA's weaknesses, but actually compounds them. The bill does not include a clear goal of a barrier-free Canada or a date by which to achieve this. The bill uses permissive language rather than prescriptive language. It enables; it does not require. The bill creates a likelihood of multiple accessibility requirements covering similar types of barriers. It also establishes a diffused and fragmented approach to standards development, compliance and adjudication. The bill lodges responsibility for real progress with the government of the day, not Parliament.

Finally, the bill is extremely convoluted. We believe Bill C-81 as it stands will create confusion for the public, obligated organizations, and Canadians with disabilities alike. It will result in more chasing of tails than forward progress.

While representing a commendable effort with honourable intentions, we are concerned the bill is deeply flawed. Based on our decade of experience and our careful review, BFM strongly supports the recommendations for significant amendments in the two briefs I mentioned by the AODA Alliance and the ARCH Disability Law Centre.

We would respectfully add a word of caution. You might be thinking political parties at the federal level are different from those at the provincial level, or that your party is a different one. Perhaps you're thinking the federal government is a different and more responsible order of government than our provinces. You might be thinking the types of amendments called for by the Alliance and ARCH are excessive. Our hard-won experience over the last decade suggests otherwise.

Bill C-81 presents a historic and long overdue opportunity, the opportunity of a generation. We beseech you not to squander it.

In the brief time I have remaining, I'll highlight two additional areas of concern.

First, it is shocking to us that Bill C-81 does not incorporate any special measures to act on the federal government's constitutional, fiduciary or special responsibilities in relation to indigenous people with disabilities. Disability rates among indigenous people are roughly two to three times higher than for the general population. Indigenous people are also among the Canadians who face the most severe barriers to accessibility. Both the higher rates and the severity of the barriers faced by indigenous people are the direct result of government policies that reflect a shameful past and that continue into the present.

•(1905)

Second, we are concerned that there is no clear reference to the national building code of Canada in Bill C-81. The national building code is not only applicable in areas of federal jurisdiction. It also plays a profound role in shaping the building codes that are developed and adopted by each Canadian province. At both the federal and provincial levels, the building codes and the current limited levels of accessibility that are provided for result in costly and preventable barriers being perpetuated and newly created, every day, in built environments across Canada.

It seems likely that the responsibility for developing strong and effective accessibility standards related to the building code is meant to fall under the purview of the proposed Canadian accessibility standards development organization, CASDO. However, this remains unclear and we believe that explicit reference needs to be added to Bill C-81 or to be clarified as part of the committee's review of this bill.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to our further discussion this evening.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, sir.

Now, from the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, we have Neil Belanger, executive director.

**Mr. Neil Belanger (Executive Director, British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society):** Thank you. Good evening.

Before I begin I'd like to acknowledge and thank the Algonquin people, on whose territories we are meeting today. I would also like to thank the committee for this invitation and opportunity to speak to Bill C-81.

My name is Neil Belanger and I am the executive director of the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, an indigenous organization providing disability-related services to indigenous individuals and families residing in both first nation and non-first nation communities.

Our organization is very pleased that the government has introduced Bill C-81 to ensure a barrier-free Canada. It has the great potential to make positive change in many lives. Over the past two years we have had the opportunity to engage first nation communities across Canada in relation to the accessibility legislation as well as to work with our partners at the Assembly of First Nations, the national Native Women's Association and the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance in relation to the bill and next steps.

From our work with our partners a number of recommendations have been developed, many of which have already been presented to the committee. I would like to reiterate a few of these priorities from our organization's perspective. Number one is recognition of ASL, LSQ and indigenous sign language as the official language of the deaf. We believe this is not only an important cultural recognition but also serves as a mechanism to promote accessibility across the nation.

Number two is to ensure that the CASDO board and all subsequent committees be composed at a minimum of at least two-thirds representation of persons living with a disability,

including indigenous peoples living with disabilities. This is necessary to ensure a broad level of insight and expertise is brought to the board and committees. I would refer to the example of the FALA working group, which is here today, which brought together a diverse range of individuals and groups within the disability sector and through our work together, not only have we collaboratively made recommendations in relation to Bill C-81, but it has provided us an opportunity to learn about each other and the barriers and priorities each of our groups deals with on a daily basis. This has strengthened us as a sector, and would do the same for the CASDO board and subsequent committees.

Number three is that timelines must be established. As with our partners, we are recommending a five-year timeline to implementation.

Finally, our last point is the absence of any reference under the legislation to Canada's 634 first nation communities. From previous testimony to the committee a lack of clarity has been noted as to how Bill C-81 will impact Canada's first nation communities. Indigenous peoples of Canada experience a rate of disability approximately twice that of the non-indigenous population. As well, persons living in poverty are more likely to become disabled than those who do not. Many first nations in Canada have a median income below the poverty line. Understanding this, as an organization we assume that a priority, if not the priority, under the new federal accessibility legislation will be addressing the barriers within Canada's first nation communities where people live, go to school, work, get married, have families and grow old, many of whom live with disabilities.

In December 2017 the Assembly of First Nations passed a resolution requesting the government to support the creation of a distinct first nations accessibility legislation. Since the passing of the AFN resolution, the government has stated its commitment to engaging in a nation-to-nation dialogue to determine how Bill C-81 will be applicable to Canada's first nation communities in its entirety, portions thereof, or not at all. It is our understanding that this nation-to-nation process has not yet commenced.

The position of our organization is clear: regardless of a distinct first nations legislation or the legislation as currently proposed under Bill C-81, the Government of Canada must ensure that substantial and adequate resources are committed and ongoing to ensure that all Canada's first nation communities have the resources necessary to address barriers facing their members living with a disability, as outlined in the principles of Bill C-81. Without this provision, a barrier-free Canada will never be achieved.

Thank you for this opportunity.

•(1910)

**The Chair:** Up next, from the Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec we have Monique Beaudoin, administrator, board of directors; and Camille Desforges, records manager.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Beaudoin (Administrator, Board of Directors, Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec):** Good evening. The presentation will be in French.

First, I want to thank the committee for inviting the Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec, or the COPHAN, to give a presentation on Bill C-81.

To bring you up to speed, I'll provide an explanation of the COPHAN. The COPHAN is a provincial organization that consists of about 50 members who have various types of disabilities, such as visual, auditory or motor disabilities, or who have autism or mental health issues or any other disabilities.

We have regional groups, and our members also include provincial associations and a few local organizations. The COPHAN is working on various matters related to the inclusion of individuals and their loved ones, with their families, to ensure social participation in Quebec. We're also working with the federal government on various matters. We're members of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, or the CCD.

I'll let my colleague, Ms. Desforges, talk about Bill C-81, which we worked on together as a group.

• (1915)

**Mrs. Camille Desforges (Records Manager, Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec):** I want to start my presentation by quoting a Quebec politician. Forty years ago, when an act for persons with disabilities was passed in Quebec, the politician stated the following:

Ideally, a fair and enlightened society shouldn't need an act to ensure that persons with disabilities ... have access to the same services as the general public. In an ideal society, this type of act would be unnecessary. However, the current situation for persons with disabilities requires us to take action.

Forty years later, we're still making the same observation.

The common thread in our brief is the need for the government to develop a concept that we've coined "handi-responsibility." It can be compared to the concept of social responsibility for sustainable development. In keeping with the "handi-responsibility" concept, the federal government should always include the disability issue in all its measures. We want to reiterate that respect for the autonomy of partners, provinces and territories and the private sector isn't applicable when it comes to the priority of respect for human rights. For example, the government could consider implementing social inclusion provisions. When the government runs a bidding process, companies that provide accessible goods and that also demonstrate that they have a high percentage of employees with functional limitations should be favoured. The government should transition from an economic approach to a social and inclusive approach.

The federal financial leverage is a major issue that the bill doesn't address. By leverage I mean the various federal programs and agreements that support both public and private stakeholders. In our opinion, to ensure sustainable social development, all these money transfers must be governed by the current bill, according to specific accessibility criteria. We could also extend this aspect to international relations and to all economic agreements. The scope of the legislation must also include all the money spent in the areas of activity chosen by the federal government, commonly referred to as the "spending power," and all intergovernmental transfers.

Since we don't know when the future legislation will be passed, let alone implemented, we believe that it would be appropriate to

require the imposition of the standards of the Canadian Standards Association, or the CSA, pending the creation and launch of the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization. The CSA's standards may not be perfect, but we think that they constitute a minimum threshold.

In addition, the updated standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, or the WCAG, should be adopted to reach level AA on internal and external sites and mobile applications. The organization will then develop its own standards and may adjust the standards already established by the CSA and WCAG.

According to the COPHAN, the Accessibility Commissioner should report to the House of Commons. Moreover, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development position seems to be a good point of comparison in terms of its non-renewable seven-year term. A very simple petition system is also managed by the commissioner and could be a suitable approach to accessibility.

In short, our brief may be a little awkward. We weren't able to describe all our ideas in detail. We also lack a clear understanding of the different agreements between the federal government and the provinces. However, the COPHAN is ready to work with the government.

The strong and non-negotiable point is the need to develop a "handi-responsibility" response.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now we will hear from the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance.

We're joined by Bill Adair, executive director; and Jane Arkell, project director.

The next seven minutes are all yours.

• (1920)

**Ms. Jane Arkell (Project Director, Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance):** Great. Thank you very much.

First, I, too, would like to recognize that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin.

My name is Jane Arkell. In addition to being project director of the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance, I'm also executive director of the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability. The alliance is a member organization of FALA.

I'm here with my colleague today, Bill Adair, who is executive director of Spinal Cord Injury Canada.

SCI Canada leads the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance. We are a partnership of 56 organizations that include not only disability-related organizations but other partners that represent people with disabilities in sectors such as the far north, first nations, research, employment, older adults, education, policy and youth.

We have joined together to help develop a strong and effective accessible Canada act. We have also been collaborating with other organizations doing similar work like my friend Neil, and recognize that there's a high degree of agreement on areas of improving Bill C-81.

Thank you so much for inviting us to share the recommendations that we have.

Canada is taking a bold step forward with this proposed legislation. We've waited for legislation like this for a very long time. Truthfully, this gives our community hope. We are finally able to say, my Canada includes me. FALA's position is clear. We want Bill C-81 to be strengthened by incorporating the recommendations we are providing. We want the proposed accessible Canada act to receive royal assent in this current Parliament no later than spring 2019.

I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Bill, who will go through highlights of our recommendations.

**Mr. Bill Adair (Executive Director, Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance):** Thank you, Jane.

Thank you for your attention, committee members, especially at this late hour.

I want to be clear that my comments are only highlights of the 12 detailed recommendations that can be found in the packages that have been distributed. I will walk through each of the 12 recommendations to provide a highlight of each one.

Number one, creating a culture of inclusion and equity is key to the success of the legislation. We recommend that all people employed by the federal public sector, including parliamentarians and their staff, must engage in an intensive awareness and education program. Why? This will ensure everyone understands and is able to demonstrate inclusive attitudes and equitable practices that promote access and inclusion.

Number two, change the terminology "Canadians with disabilities" to read "people in Canada with disabilities". Why? The legislation should include landed immigrants and others who do not hold Canadian citizenship.

Number three, funding will make or break this legislation, so make it available. People with disabilities and their organizations should be properly compensated. Why? Too often, people with disabilities and organizations are asked to contribute disability expertise with no financial compensation. No other experts are asked to work for free.

Number four, an effective complaints management system must be in place to respond to and resolve complaints. Why? The system must support complainants, prevent compliance disputes between regulated agencies and departments, and ensure that complaints are resolved quickly.

Number five, indigenous peoples are not explicitly in or out of Bill C-81. Give clarity regarding first nations communities and their requirement for compliance with the accessible Canada act or under first nations-specific accessibility legislation, as requested by the Assembly of First Nations. Why? Indigenous peoples with

disabilities need to know if this legislation will promote access and inclusion for them.

Number six, expand compliance with standards and regulations beyond the federal jurisdiction. The Government of Canada must promote compliance and, in some situations, require compliance from funding recipients. Why? It's a natural extension to expect entities that receive funding from the Government of Canada to comply with the accessible Canada act.

Number seven, support people with disabilities who experience multiple barriers and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization. Why? Access and inclusion requires reaching the most marginalized people in our communities and workplaces. If we don't reach the people who need this legislation the most, then we have failed.

Number eight, put people with disabilities in the fabric of the act. Ensure that the CASDO staff, board and committees include a minimum of two-thirds of people with disabilities. Why? People with disabilities need to be represented in all aspects of the legislation. This honours the principle "nothing about us without us" and provides employment opportunities.

Number nine, access to communication accommodations and supports is a cornerstone of inclusion, and it must be mandatory. Why? This change will enable people with communication disabilities and people who are deaf to fully participate in ways others take for granted.

Number 10, don't delay. All standards and regulations should be implemented within five years. Why? Setting target dates for performance will increase tangible changes in a shorter period of time.

Number 11, the six targeted barrier areas should be changed to seven. Add communication, as it is a significant barrier for many people across a broad range of disabilities. Why? This change will bring focus to barriers, accommodations and supports for people with communication disabilities and for people who are deaf, thereby opening doors to participation.

● (1925)

Number 12, ASL and LSQ are the official languages of the deaf community, so recognize this fact in the accessible Canada act. This recognition is of cultural significance to the deaf community, and it will increase full participation by people who are deaf.

In closing, our community is paying attention like we have never done so before. We are counting on you to make changes that will have a significant impact on our lives. This is a huge responsibility. We've opened up, we've advised and we've taken a lot of time to present the right recommendations. Listen to us. This is your opportunity to be the change.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thanks to all of you for your opening remarks.

We're going to get right into questions from members.

Mr. Barlow, you have six minutes.



**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I find it nice that you're thanking us for being here at this late hour, but honestly, thank you for taking time out of your schedules to be here and to help us get this bill through as quickly as possible. That is certainly a common theme.

The other common theme that I've heard from many stakeholders, including just about all of you here this evening, is the concern with the lack of timelines in the bill. We've talked a lot over the last few weeks on the fact that when this bill is passed through the House and given royal assent, nothing happens.

We've heard from stakeholders that it's imperative that there are some sort of timelines. There aren't even timelines for when the commissioner, compliance officer or even the CASDO board should be in place.

I know Mr. Falconer and Mr. Adair talked about that five years. Why five years? Is that something that you've experienced in Manitoba? Is there a reason for that number? Is that something that has been proven in the past?

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** In Manitoba, the act commits the government to making substantial progress toward full accessibility within 10 years. We're halfway through the five years, now. One would expect there would have been significant progress, or at least the foundation for that laid. The five years doesn't really come from me in terms of looking at it.

Our experience in Manitoba is that the government has dragged its feet, the past government, which was an NDP government. The current government is a PC government. We're not partisan. We're quite happy to be critical of any of the governments for responsibility. In most cases they have been quite defensive and obstinate in terms of trying to find a way to build it up and make more progress. Our experience doesn't provide us with great faith that government is the best stakeholder to hold Parliament to account for progress.

One of the things we've mentioned, and it's mentioned by the AODA Alliance brief, is the issue of vesting final control in Parliament, not in government. Our experience has been that both governments have not been particularly forthcoming.

I can't answer the five-year argument, but...

• (1930)

**Mr. John Barlow:** In that train of thought, holding Parliament to account but also holding those federally regulated businesses to account, that's another reason those timelines are imperative.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** Again, we found that quick progress is important. It is game changing legislation. The longer that games go on as usual, the less likely people take it seriously that there will be a major change put in place. We certainly do encourage quick action. Exactly what the timelines for that are has not been clarified.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Another concern that has been raised is the fact that there is a two-tiered system as part of the bill. Government departments can apply for numerous exemptions, whereas federally regulated companies cannot. There are no fines or accountability on the government's side, while there are in the private sector.

Ms. Bountrogianni, have you been through this? Can you comment on how important the message should be that everyone be treated equally? For Canadians with disabilities, if we're going to enact this—you've all said how historic this could be if we do it right—how important is that message that everybody be treated equally?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I would agree that it is very important.

If I may for a second, we gave the longer timeline because business wanted that timeline. They said that as a business they reinvent themselves anyway every few years; otherwise, they won't stay in business. But it's difficult, particularly during recessions, etc., and we don't want to lay people off. They gave us some good arguments.

We did have standards to be developed every five years or less, and we had timelines for standards development.

A very important part of the bill was compliance and enforcement, but because we did not—and I was part of that government so I will take the blame as well—do a good enough job on publicly educating people, it would be unfair to fine someone if they don't know what they're supposed to be doing. That is why I emphasized that a public education budget and support for those processes are very important. Learn from our challenges and mistakes.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Yes, for sure.

What would be an ideal timeline to have the commissioner in place, the officer in place and the CASDO board in place, at the very least?

Anybody can comment on that. I think that would be a first start, which isn't included in the bill, either.

Mr. Adair, you threw out that five-year timeline. Maybe you could comment on that.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Thank you.

On the five-year timeline, just to mention that before I move to your next question, there is a sense of impatience and there is a sense of urgency for changes to be made. Five years for creating the standards and regulations, and maybe another 18 months for full implementation, is part of the detail in the recommendations that we have put forward.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Thank you very much.

MP Hogg, you have six minutes, please.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you, again, to the witnesses. The witnesses this evening and the witnesses who have come before us have talked about a sense of excitement, a sense of opportunity, a sense of urgency and a sense of caution, so we have covered pretty much all of the emotions and the frames that exist there.

Following up on MP Barlow's comments, I think there are three things we've heard consistently. One is on the issue of timelines for implementation, what those should be and how they would be handled. There are the issues of enforcement, transitions, exemptions, accountability, and the reporting process—whether it should be a singular reporting process or whether CASDO should be a singular or if rather we should we have CTA and others involved in that to try to cut down on the amount of confusion that might exist. As well as whether it should ultimately be reporting to the House of Commons and, therefore, be an executive, or a member of the House who reports to the House.

Those, I think, are the three issues that we have continued to hear.

● (1935)

Just with respect to being able to learn, I understand that all cultures are slightly different, but there are some commonalities that exist within the context of government.

You talked about the education process. It seems to me that it's a culture we're trying to change. Ultimately, with our set of values, we're trying to have reflected within the preamble, within the goals and expectations, and I don't think the values are explicit but they're inherent within that. Perhaps they should be more explicit. I'm not sure about that.

In terms of your experience with the education process, you talked a little bit about that, but I'm wondering more about the didactic, specific part of that. How do you interpret that into a cultural change rather than a cognitive change?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I think a cultural change and a cognitive change go hand in hand. It's very hard to sit in a classroom, for example, and teach these things abstractly. You have to live them.

For example, for the project I referenced on creating programs and technology for people with disabilities by people with disabilities, we hired a gentleman with a visual impairment to run that program. He was actually legally blind. We've also hired people with mental health issues in our school. Quite frankly, the biggest obstacle sometimes is HR departments or unions with their rules. As much as they want to support who they represent, sometimes they don't want others to get the job without going through the proper process. There are a lot of barriers.

Culturally, I think we're almost there. I think Canadians are really good people. I've travelled the world talking about this, and we are ahead of many cultures. Not all, but we are ahead of many cultures. We have to do it in a way that doesn't threaten the bottom line of a business. People with disabilities don't want businesses to close. They just want access to those businesses. There has to be dialogue at the table of standards development.

Mr. Adair and I were in Ontario together. We had people with disabilities, people from the government and people from businesses at each one of these tables. At least until a few months ago, that's the way development was. Where we are lacking in Ontario is a greater public education strategy. We have isolated parts of excellence—for example, the Pan Am Games, the Invictus Games and some of the hiring practices within the public sector in particular.

We're beginning to see a change. I see the change even in my children, who are millennials, when they are talking about their friends with mental health illnesses and talking about the medication as if it's taking an Aspirin: "Oh, he forgot his clonazepam and we had to go back and get it before we went to the party." These are things my generation would never admit to doing, or even knowing people like that.

We've come a long way, but government can certainly do more. I was disappointed that we didn't do more. I remember in 2011 there were a few commercials on TV and on the radio, and that was basically it. There were communications right to the organizations, but not as much to the general public.

I think we each have a responsibility. It's not just up to government. That is why we're trying to walk the talk at Ryerson University. We have a very strong equity, diversity and inclusion department that we've grown in the last few years. However, we have also not hired an indigenous professor in the last three years. We haven't, even though it's in our plan to do so. Even well-intentioned—

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** The only reason I'm interrupting you is because they tell me I only have 30 seconds, and I want to go over to my new buddy Patrick here, quickly.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I'm sorry, sir.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** About the notion of a no-compliance framework and the issues of a framework around that.... We've talked about the principles of progressive realization. With deadlines.... Clearly the experience is that we're not able to meet some of those deadlines. How do we put deadlines in, and then allow for compliance around that and the notion of progressive realization, which is that, as we have changes happening technologically and in terms of realization in the culture, we're able to modify and change, so we don't have to go back and do the legislation again. It can be evolving.

The minister said she wanted things to happen quickly. She said we have to start now and make that principle.... Put the stake in the ground and then build from there. How do you see that happening?

● (1940)

**The Chair:** Please give a very brief answer. We're over time.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I'm not sure I can answer the question. Perhaps I can try to rephrase some of it.

The issue of education becomes vitally important. Our view is that most people—and the vast majority of businesses—want to do what's right. In most cases, they don't know about disabilities. It's something they're not familiar with. They don't know how to do things.

The standards provide clarity as to how rights that have already been enshrined in the charter and the human rights codes can be actively put in place. Knowing about that.... Back to the Manitoba example, there's a compliance deadline for the customer service standard, which is the first one they did in Ontario, in the educational standard. How do you provide dignified quality of service to persons with disabilities? What a great idea. It's a great starting point. Recognizing that—

I'll just finish in 30 seconds, at most.

**The Chair:** We'll have to come back, I'm afraid. Sorry.

We have to—

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** Ten seconds...?

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds. Go.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** In Manitoba, the deadline for 35,000 organizations was November 1, 2018. That's a month from now. Our province starting promoting it, awareness and tools, in September, two months ago.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** That's not the way to build compliance.

**The Chair:** MP Hardcastle, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Thank you very much.

It is true that we have recurring themes, so I'm going to try to use my time to talk about things that are a bit different and intriguing.

First, I just want to see if there's a quick comment about what my colleague mentioned: progressive realization. That's a legal term used in UN treaties for coming into effect. We can very well put timelines in and understand that they are progressive. I just wanted to clarify that, because I think sometimes the term is being used colloquially here, and we do have legal examples of how this is done in treaty language.

Having said that, what I'd like to hear, now that all of us have heard each other's comments, is more with regard to how we can be maximizing or leveraging existing regulatory frameworks. I think it was Ms. Desforges who mentioned using the Canada Standards Association. We also heard very briefly from the Public Service Alliance about components of the Employment Equity Act. I wonder if anyone else, from their experience now, can see opportunities where we should be using some clarity so that we can be leveraging existing regulatory frameworks.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** One of the beauties of where we are in Canada now is that this is not a national development. This is an international development, so there are frameworks we can learn from. The European Union has been doing a lot of work on accessibility. I think we can pick the best and the ones that are most suitable for Canada. I think there are extensive frameworks available. Finding ones that are most applicable to Canada that are leading edge requires research, but I think we're not starting from ground zero. We're looking at building on success and challenges elsewhere.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Just to add to that, the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance created two sets of recommendations, one for

Bill C-81 and one for the implementation of the act once it becomes law.

One of our recommendations deals with this very issue around digital and website access. There is, cited in that European Union standard around website design, something to look at. Our thinking is that there are standards that can be looked at even before CASDO is created, and if the standards are deemed to be acceptable, let's start implementing them right away. We don't necessarily need to wait. We definitely want to move on setting up a system that will monitor and manage everything, but if there are some easy and quick wins that we could undertake right away, wouldn't that be delightful?

One of our partners from Barrier-Free Canada, from the national level of that organization, works with the CRA and provided very clear recommendations on access to websites, information technology and so on.

● (1945)

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Thank you.

I'd like to also hear a little more opinion, maybe, Ms. Beaudoin or Ms. Desforges, about whether you think it is good for us to find ways to articulate in the legislation more than just how the board is comprised—two-thirds persons with disabilities. Mr. Adair mentioned stipulating staff and other supporting roles surrounding the board.

What do you think of that?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Camille Desforges:** We talked about it in our brief. I simply didn't have the time to mention it in my presentation.

With regard to the CASDO, the majority or at least 51% of the board of directors and executive board must be composed of persons with disabilities. We spoke earlier about more than two thirds. This will need to be determined, but there should be a majority of persons with functional limitations.

Of course, everyone also wants to contribute, but there should be protected positions for the representation of Quebec and a real commitment to ensuring that all functional limitations are represented.

As is the case this evening, there should be a principle of transparency. All meetings should be filmed and the documents should be available to the public, so that people can really get their hands on the CASDO's work and that everyone, ultimately, has access to the work.

I don't know whether this answers your question.

**Mrs. Monique Beaudoin:** I want to add something.

I attended a meeting with the Canadian Transportation Agency in early October. The CSA was discussed. A number of persons with disabilities indicated that they wanted to be involved and consulted during the establishment of the new standards.

In the COPHAN's brief and in other briefs, we stated that we want to be part of committees and commissions. We spoke earlier about the majority, or 51%. However, as a board member, I much prefer the idea that two thirds of the members be persons with disabilities, in order to include them and give them the chance to participate. I think that it's important. In my view, the more persons with disabilities work and get involved as members of the board of directors, the more the right to accessibility will have credibility in projects across the country.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Morrissey.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair. My questions are to Madam Dean.

Given your experience with the Ontario government, you referenced that you did seek out or look at legislation in various countries. You referenced a number of countries. It may not be a fair question. From your recollection, how does this legislation, as it's currently drafted, compare to initiatives taken in jurisdictions that you examined?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** When I studied those jurisdictions, they were not as evolved as they are today. If you compare those jurisdictions today, they may actually be an improvement on this legislation.

When I was studying them, it was from their challenges. I don't want to use the word "mistakes" because they were pioneers. They were Great Britain, Australia and the United States. They told me, "Have a timeline, definitely have timelines."

In the United States, I basically modelled what we did with the Environmental Protection Agency. The Americans were developing their standards with a long timeline, about every five years or less. We used a different area to model our legislation. Actually, this legislation, when enforced, would also include businesses, albeit only federally regulated businesses. It is an improvement on many jurisdictions around the world. Ontario is trying to enforce this for all businesses not just regulated by the provincial government, which is part of the challenge. We're trying to do more than what this bill is doing in Ontario.

It depends on which jurisdiction you're looking at, and what year you're looking at. Compared with back in 2005, this bill is ahead, but now I know some of those jurisdiction have improved.

• (1950)

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Thank you. I want members of the panel here to comment.

The legislation takes an access approach in its legislative intent, more so than a discriminatory approach. Do you feel that's the right approach or emphasis as the bill goes forward? The focus should be primarily on providing access, would you agree?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I'm sorry, I don't understand the question. As opposed to...?

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Access—the bill will be tested on ensuring access for people with disabilities, rather than an emphasis

on... Some legislation under the charter is on rights. There's a focus on rights versus access.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** From my experience, focusing on access is more concrete, and therefore has implementability. We have a lot of human rights. I have one right here. I was going to cite the UN convention on human rights, yet we're so lacking internationally to follow those human rights.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Is it the right approach to begin with?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** This is the right approach. Again, I'm an educational psychologist by training, and sometimes you have to be specific, concrete with deadlines and expectations.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** I'd like to hear from Mr. Falconer.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I'm sorry, I'm a former politician, so I talk too much.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** That's fine.

Then I'll hear probably from Madame Desforges.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I concur with Marie. The right is to equitable access. That's really what the right is. In Manitoba, 41% of all complaints to the human rights commission are related to disability discrimination. All of them have their roots in a lack of equitable access.

I think access is, then, the issue. It can be phrased as a human right, but it's concrete, it's real, it's what the issue is. I think, therefore, that the focus on access is entirely proper and effective.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Madame Desforges.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Camille Desforges:** I won't comment on that, but I want to point out that Quebec has legislation that specifically concerns persons with disabilities. We remain very cautious, since the legislation will really address the barriers. We don't really know what differences this will create between the two pieces of legislation. In any event, we remain very cautious, since we can't establish comparisons with Quebec legislation.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Mr. Chair, are we getting a second round?

**The Chair:** You more than likely will, yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Then if I only have one minute.... I thank you for your candidness and your in some cases blunt description of where the bill is inadequate. That's what the committee is here for.

I don't believe that any of your groups has had the opportunity to appear before a parliamentary committee in the past to discuss a bill such as this. Would I be correct in that? We've heard a bit about there being no deadline to make Canada fully accessible. Should the goal be to always strive to achieve a more accessible Canada or to achieve a static accessibility goal?

I'll put this probably to Mr. Falconer and Mr. Adair.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** We dealt with the issue. There's a view that the understanding of disability and accessibility evolves through time. You will never be at 100%, never.

Instrumentally and aspirationally, does it help to have a goal to which you get 95% of the way? I am firmly convinced that it does. One has to be careful that one does not drink the Kool-Aid and say, "This is 100%, and don't worry. There'll be no problems." The reality of having a goal you can get nearly to, however, and of having a timeline attached to it would, I think, strongly reinforce the bill's effectiveness.

• (1955)

**The Chair:** I am afraid I'm going to have to cut in. One of your colleagues may share some time here.

We'll have Mr. Ruimy, please.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Oh, I don't share well.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Maybe I will. I'll see.

Thank you all very much for coming in and making your presentations.

I want to start with Marie. I'm not sure I heard you correctly in your presentation. Did you say that the Ontario government put a freeze on the AODA?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** When Premier Ford was first elected, basically there was a freeze on many things, and there was a freeze on the meetings for the standards development. These standards development committees had been meeting since the AODA became law in 2005. Now, however, they have unfrozen, so they are beginning to work on one of the standards.

His office did reach out and did want to talk to me, so I'm very hopeful.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** You're hopeful that...?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I'm hopeful that the standards development will continue as planned and perhaps become even better, because Minister Cho is also the minister for seniors, and if we're lucky enough to get old, we'll all have a disability. I think putting this together with disabilities was a good move on Premier Ford's....

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** I'm just finding it interesting that the provincial government froze, that they had the ability to say they were going to stop all that right now. I find that a little disconcerting.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** You have to consider that they did that for everything. Everything was frozen. Actually, the standards development committees have been re-enacted now and many other things are still frozen, so I'm feeling pretty optimistic that this is a priority for this government.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Falconer, you were very strong in your words about this having been a failure. Could you give us a bit more of the timeline for when this all started and tell us whether anything has been accomplished, or is it because it's a failure...? Sometimes, when we

put a timeline on something and we don't hit that timeline, it's a failure. That's the way some people look at it.

Have we made progress? Can you take us through that?

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I don't think I used the word "failure". I'll look through my notes. I think I said "disappointment" and disappointment is perhaps a subtle, nuanced difference from "failure". I don't think it's a failure. I think a lot of good things have happened.

Expectations were real. The commitments made by all parties... I don't say that this was done as a feel-good exercise. Everyone wanted to get stuff done. The reality today is that disabilities have not been among the top government priorities for a long time. The reason for that, among others, is that the disability community is not well resourced. It's not like labour. It's not like business. It doesn't have champions and advocates. It doesn't have lobbyists. It doesn't have that kind of power, so there's a natural tendency for people to say, "Let's do what's right," and then, once the pressure is off, "Maybe we could find a way to act on other priorities before we act on this priority that we made commitments to."

I don't think the word is "failure". I think we have had clear and unequivocal commitments made. Those commitments have not been met. There is movement towards them. Every time that happens, we provide commendation and support but the reality is that it's moving much slower than was contemplated when the act was passed in 2013.

Part of that is back to the issue of enabling language—a lot of "cans" and very few "shalls". How can a government choose to move back when it is setting up committees? There's no requirement that they do this. It's "they can do this". When you have that kind of latitude, when it's not a high priority, sometimes you don't follow through on what you have promised to do and what you know is the right thing to do.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** You said that there was a 10-year timeline implemented.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** This was not our suggestion, but yes there was.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** You have a 10-year timeline. You're at the halfway point.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** We're at the halfway point of that.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** If you were to gauge where you are in relation to achieving your 10-year targets, where would you say you are?

• (2000)

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** If I had to give a number, I'd say 20%.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** I guess it comes to this: Are you seeing momentum? Once you start to get that cultural change, which Marie was talking about, then things start to pick up. When we look at our federally regulated agencies, such as airports, what we heard from a lot of those agencies is that they're way ahead of the ball game in relation to certain standards because they've taken it upon themselves.

I'm trying to understand why there's a difference. Is it a financial thing? Is it the mindset that because there was a 10-year time limit, people think we have time to get there?

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I say this advisedly. Again, I didn't use the word "failure". I think champions are really important and I hope that all of you will be champions of this bill as it goes to third reading.

Marie was the champion in Ontario. We had a champion in the minister who introduced the bill. There were leadership difficulties within the NDP. She left cabinet and the leadership from the government of the time, the NDP government, was lost. I don't think we have a champion in our current government who is pushing this. The idea of having a real champion....

The other issue is that we've had a change in administration from the Liberal Party of 20 years to another party, 15 years, that might be less ideologically disposed towards regulation. Similarly, in Manitoba we went from an NDP government to a PC government, so the issue of having legislation that is durable, impactful and strong across governments becomes critical. That's the issue of having prescriptive—not enabling—language and timelines that last beyond current governments.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

MP Falk, please.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Thank you all for being here today.

I want to follow up on MP Ruimy's statement about the recent situation in Ontario, having things frozen and that type of thing. Were the standards frozen?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** The committees that were developing standards were told not to meet yet. It wasn't for very long. The freeze wasn't for very long.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** My question is how long these standards have been in development.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** It's been 15 years.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Fifteen years...?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** Well, it's 13 years.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** That seems like a long time.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** There are quite a few standards. It does take a long time and there are a lot of people around the table. Yes, there is some frustration about how long it's taking, absolutely, but they are being developed.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Okay. Thank you.

My next question is for you, Neil. I want to pick your brain a bit. Was your organization consulted prior to this bill being drafted?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** Yes. For the last two years we've worked in contacting first nations across Canada. We were part of many meetings with the ministers who've held the portfolio. We've given our recommendations quite a bit and have worked with the Assembly of First Nations, as I said. We have been involved.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** I can't remember if it was you or Mr. Adair who talked about having indigenous peoples mentioned in the bill.

You both did? Okay.

They are not mentioned, from what I understand. How would you like to see this put in the bill?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** We would like to make sure that first nations are covered under the bill or under the distinct first nations legislation that the AFN has requested from the government. We don't have any indication from the government on how this will be. Through our meetings with them, as I indicated, they said they were going to engage in a nation-to-nation consultation process to see at what level the legislation would be applicable, if at all. Our fear, of course, is that it will not be applicable and things will not change.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Were you given a timeline of when these discussions would happen?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** Tentative—but they change. I spoke to the AFN today as well, and there has been no movement yet. The AFN is willing to work with government and is looking forward to the process. I understand there are different levels of bureaucracy that the government has to go through, but we're getting pretty late in the process now. The future is not clear, and I think that clarity is needed.

● (2005)

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Mr. Adair, did you have anything to add to that? No. Okay.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** He's my teacher.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Perfect.

I've heard a lot about public education. I'm just wondering what would be sufficient, or what would look like a good head start. I know this is a different topic, but even with the legalization of marijuana, I expected there would be more public education before it happened and was rolled out, and there wasn't.

What would be sufficient for this bill in regard to public education?

**Mr. Bill Adair:** I can start.

Public education is an area of recommendation that the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance put forward as well. This is representing 56 organizations across the country. One of the things we're calling for is a change in attitudes. How do you change attitudes? There's a body of knowledge around what works and what does not work, and this body of knowledge needs to be applied in terms of the public education as well as the education of employers and the people who are responsible for implementing standards and regulations.

One of the best ways to change attitudes is to provide an opportunity where people work together, either voluntarily or on a work assignment, in an employment situation. A disabled person and a non-disabled person get to know each other and the barriers disappear. They just become people. That is one of the foundations for why we're arguing for two-thirds representation in the staff, in the committees and on the boards. Rubbing shoulders actually translates into changing attitudes.

As to how we do that with the general public, it's a challenge, but it can be achieved. It's a matter of having smart people work on it.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I can speak from the post-secondary education point of view about having people with disabilities be the professors teaching these topics—teaching any topic, quite frankly, but particularly teaching these topics. That's what we are doing, and it's incredibly enlightening for the adult students.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** There are always learning opportunities.

When the first AMA was being passed in Manitoba, there was a standing committee like this. It was an earlier bill. We knew many people were coming who were going to require accommodation supports or communication accommodations. I spoke to the clerk at the legislative assembly and asked if these things were being arranged. The person said, without missing a beat that they didn't have those fancy things there.

That was a moment for me to be able to say that participation in the democratic process is a right of citizenship, and this is not a fancy thing. That person will never say that again. It wasn't a rebuke. I was just saying that they had to think this through differently. I think those learning opportunities become really important.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go back to MP Ruimy, please.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Mr. Falconer, when we're trying to understand where we've been trying to go.... I'll correct the record, you didn't say "failure". I understood something differently, but you said there was great disappointment with the 10-year timeline. You mentioned that you felt part of the reason was that there wasn't a champion for that. Governments will come and go. Maybe you get one champion, but then when the next government comes along, you don't have a champion.

Would you say that creating a framework with CASDO...? Would you see them as the champion because they're the ones creating that framework, putting things in place?

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I think they can be a more effective champion if they report to Parliament than to the government. That would be one area regarding some independence.

I would have dismissed some of the discussions regarding having timelines and having language that required action. Ten years ago I would have said we didn't need those kinds of things, but the reality is that we are now much more able to advocate for government to fulfill its obligations, when we have real obligations for them to fulfill, than when it's a matter of being permissive and saying we're doing the best we can and we're making progress. It's better now than it was five years ago. To have hard deliverables gives us the opportunity as a community to be able to say this is what was promised, this is what's required and they need us to be making stronger efforts.

I also think allowing the community to be a champion is important, and part of that is by having requirements and timelines.

• (2010)

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Coming to timelines, listening to some of the testimony.... When we're talking federally built infrastructure, and we look at a lot of the banks and the federally regulated infrastructure, a lot of them are already up to date with ramps and so on.

We heard from the banking system. Royal Bank already has the technology where you can go to a machine and it will talk to you, but then we started hearing about a whole different range. When we're talking about disability, we're no longer just talking about somebody in a wheelchair or somebody who is physically disabled, but who has speech, hearing and vision impairments. Technology is changing so rapidly, the fear is that putting something on a hard timeline will take away from innovation.

Again, looking at some of the federally regulated departments, a lot of them are on the cutting edge, such as airports. For example, at Vancouver International Airport, I was coming back from a trip and I saw about 20 people in wheelchairs wandering around. I asked them what they were doing and I found out they were employees. They were going through their training, which is fantastic, but you're not mandating that. Somebody said they needed to figure out this part. They needed to be able to think like their customers who are coming in and how they are accessing services there. That wasn't mandated. That wasn't legislated. That is going beyond.

How do we capture that, but not put that in the legislation? Because you'll never get that in legislation, I don't think.

Marie.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I can talk about the AODA. The standards are reviewed and updated every few years. It's not just the customers who are coming in; it's also employees, as you mentioned. Through lack of education, some people may not know the real cost of accommodating an employee, but the average cost is only \$500. It's not very expensive to have an accommodation for someone with a disability to work anywhere. Of course, some are more and some are less, but a \$500 average isn't very much. What that does to the education and the culture of the rest of the office, or wherever they're working, is an incredible gain.

The employment standard review is now unfrozen, so we'll get on with it, but it's a 2011 standard. If there are innovations, and there certainly have been innovations every day in technology, they can be addressed through the reviews.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** I agree. It's a matter of what those timelines are based on.

I'm going to share the rest of my time with Mr. Harvey.

**The Chair:** That's less than a minute. It's very generous of you.

We will likely have time for an additional mini-round, so Mr. Harvey, do you have a brief question or maybe Bobby has a follow-up one?

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Yes. I'd like Mr. Adair to speak about what we got cut off on earlier.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Remind me.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** If you've slipped a bit....

**Mr. Bill Adair:** I think it was about—

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** It was about accessibility versus rights, but I'll leave that because—

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Yes, I can speak to that.

**The Chair:** Be very brief.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Be brief, because I have two questions.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Access and inclusion are really vital. That's where it's at, so I would add inclusion to the work that's under way with the act. The access and the inclusion open all kinds of possibilities.

• (2015)

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Okay.

**The Chair:** MP Diotte, please.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC):** This is to Mr. Belanger. You said that Bill C-81 will impact first nations substantially, so substantial resources must be allotted to the first nations. Can you give me any idea of what that looks like? Do you have a dollar figure?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** I don't but it will be significant, I would imagine.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** What is significant? What does it look like, then? What kinds of resources, at least?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** I would say that the majority of the resources that will be necessary are to the built environment, the physical environment when it comes to roads, housing, accessible buildings and that type of thing, and then a review of the policies. It will be millions upon millions of dollars to look at all communities in Canada.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Are you especially concerned about northern communities, isolated communities?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** All communities.... Some communities will be very accessible, and some will not, but a review of all communities would be necessary. Northern communities, isolated communities, will certainly have some of the higher rates of inaccessible buildings, infrastructure, housing, roads and that type of thing, but we've worked in urban communities where accessibility is a huge problem as well. It takes a committed effort from the government to actually work with these communities individually and to look at their issues. It's going to be a significant amount of money to be successful in Canada.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Do you think any of this should go forward before we can review what's needed?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** Absolutely, the legislation should go forward, but there has to be the first nations component as well, and the government needs to work with the AFN and first nation communities to ensure that their voices are heard, and not only the leadership but those individuals living with disabilities in those communities. They have to bring their voices to the table as well. As I said, we would have hoped this would have been farther along, but as long as it's going to progress, that's the key thing.

If for some reason first nations were now exempt from the legislation or had a distinct first nation legislation, in the opinion of our organization, that would be a huge mistake.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Okay. Thank you.

This is to Ms. Desforges.

You talked about needing a clause on social integration—I'm just reading my handwriting here—and companies need to be awarded or rewarded for inclusion. What does that look like in your mind?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Camille Desforges:** I gave the example of the creation of provisions on social inclusion. It should benefit companies that provide accessible goods and services. However, it should also go even further by benefiting companies that employ persons with disabilities.

Our brief emphasized the fact that the government should develop a sense of responsibility toward persons with disabilities. We believe that, in all its initiatives, the government should fulfill this responsibility. This is one of many examples, but let's say that, when it comes to any federal, public, private or provincial funding, the responsibility should be implemented. That's what I was talking about.

I don't know whether I'm answering your question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Partially.... Are you saying, for instance, that there should be a mandated number of disabled people hired at these companies?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Camille Desforges:** I'm referring more to a situation where a bidding process involves two equivalent companies. In this case, the company that employs persons with disabilities should be favoured. That's what I was talking about.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Mr. Falconer, I just jotted down some words: “convoluted” bill, “more chasing of tails”, “the bill is deeply flawed”. You used words such as “shocking”.

What do we have to do?

• (2020)

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** We strongly support the AODA Alliance and ARCH recommendations. There are 97 recommendations made by the AODA Alliance in their draft. The AODA Alliance and ARCH are really skilled assessors of legislation and what they have to offer is tremendously important.



Of those recommendations, if I had to give you seven that are really important, among them would be the issue of looking at timelines and a grand goal, the idea of ensuring that the government has a duty to enact and it is not permissive language, and the idea of consolidating power in one structure rather than distributed between the CRTC and the CTA and trying to have a maze. I think of Occam's razor, the issue of making things simple rather than complex. It's a 103-page bill, probably the greatest definition of an inaccessible bill that I've seen for a long time.

The idea of making sure that there is oversight independent of government is probably very important, and also the idea of speeding up requirements for reviews. There is a review that will happen five years after the first regulation, but it should be five years after it's enacted so that you have that type of regulation.

The idea of looking at addressing the needs and rights of indigenous peoples is critical. In terms of how that happens and with what timelines, it can't be an afterthought. It has to be a forethought.

Also important is the idea of ensuring that it's clear that the strongest accessibility law prevails. It doesn't say that in the bill right now.

The idea of requiring that no public money be used, and the fact that this will perpetuate, exacerbate or create new barriers, is very important as well.

If I were to look at the ones among the 97 recommendations made by the alliance that I think are critically important, I would probably highlight those.

**Mr. Kerry Diotte:** Thanks very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll have MP Hardcastle, please, for three minutes.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Thank you. This is really intriguing.

I'd like to hear all of you comment a little more. We're going to be going through clause-by-clause and doing amendments, and I don't know if everyone on our committee grasps these. Just picture how you're helping us advocate for certain amendments.

Moving from language that is permissive or enabling to language that is prescriptive is something that I'm concerned about. Right now, there is in the accessibility act the need or the requirement that everybody have an implementation plan, but there's no requirement that you implement your implementation plan.

That's an example. Just as Mr. Falconer has given us some low-hanging fruit, I wonder if any of you have some observations in relation to that.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I would just simply agree that compliance and enforcement have to be important aspects of the bill.

I do know that tomorrow morning you'll be hearing from David Lepofsky, who was a major force in the AODA development. I saw some of his notes and I think his brief will guide you even more specifically.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Does anybody else wish to comment?

One of the other things mentioned in terms of implementation and enforcement is this idea of fragmentation. You know right now we

are going to have an accessibility commissioner who is mandated to oversee all of the accessibility plan requirements, but we also have the Canadian Transportation Agency and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission that will be in charge of themselves.

Do any of you see that as problematic? Should we make the accessibility commissioner solely responsible, or do you think this is a good way to go? Could I get some observations, please.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I'd be happy to speak on that.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** If we can let Ms. Beaudoin....

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Monique Beaudoin:** In the bill, many things are inconsistent and act as barriers to the submission of complaints. For example, we would need to go through agencies. One recommendation was that the complaints be filed directly with the Accessibility Commissioner, since standards may vary from agency to agency. In addition, the submission of a complaint can be a long process. The goal is to simplify the process, and I fully agree with this goal.

Regarding accessibility plans, Quebec has the Office des personnes handicapées. This agency strongly encourages action plans developed by departments or by municipalities with a population of over 15,000. However, these plans aren't going anywhere. They don't have teeth and there are few follow-ups. The agency monitors the implementation of the legislation, but that's all. It hardly ever works with the associations anymore.

I'm very concerned about these accessibility plans. Who will be affected? Who will be responsible for developing them? I think that it's a bad idea. Maybe something else should be considered.

I want to take this opportunity to say that initiatives are being launched in the communities and that we should take about these initiatives. I say that persons with disabilities should be consulted. Let's work with persons with disabilities, the users.

The federal government has invested billions of dollars into housing infrastructure, for example. However, could it also promote accessible housing in all the provinces? The population is aging, and more and more people are looking for housing. When I talk about accessible housing, I'm also talking about the cost of the housing. That's another aspect that must be addressed.

In other infrastructure bills, let's immediately consider accessibility.

Thank you.

● (2025)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

That takes us to the end of two rounds. We have enough remaining time that we can do a bit of a mini-round, maybe five minutes per member, if everyone is okay with that.

Who would like to go?

Go ahead, Mr. Barlow.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to everybody for hanging in.

Mr. Belanger, this is not a question that I was planning on asking, but it came up from your testimony.

You were consulted for two years on this bill. You've addressed that there are significant issues that will impact first nations, in perhaps millions of dollars, yet those issues are not even mentioned anywhere in this bill. What are your thoughts on the consultation with first nations and how it's included in Bill C-81?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** With regard to the consultation process, the government contracted with the Assembly of First Nations. They contracted with us, with the national Native Women's Association of Canada. Consultations were done.

**Mr. John Barlow:** There's nothing included in the bill.

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** They're not there—and when I say millions, I'm talking many hundreds of millions, not just millions in the tens.

How do I feel about that? I think that if the government is going to be true to their commitment to do a nation-to-nation consultation, then that's going to be a good thing.

On how that unfolds and how committees are participating, there are 634 communities. How the government is going to engage them is going to be an indicator of how legitimate the government's priority for first nations in Canada is when it comes to this legislation. We have to see how it goes from here.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you.

There's another question that hasn't come up today, and I appreciate everybody's comments on the fact that timelines.... The minister said that the reason they don't have timelines in there on standards is that the standards are going to change as we go.

I love the fact that you've said, absolutely, that's the case, but if you don't have somewhere to start, you can't get any accountability there.

The other one was that the minister mentioned that any of the fines or anything from those would be going into general revenue. Our feeling is that there should be an amendment in there that those fines would go to some sort of fund for accessibility programs. Is that something that you would support?

I would like a quick answer maybe from everyone.

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I'd like to say yes, but I've been in politics and we don't want that to be it. In other words, "You have this fund, now go away; this is enough." Things happen in politics, as you all probably know better than I do now. I would say it's not a bad idea, but let's be careful that doesn't end up being the only fund.

• (2030)

**Mr. John Barlow:** I'll split my time with Ms. Falk.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Do you have something? Do you want to follow up?

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I was just going to concur. Were there enough fines this year to be able to enable something that is adequate?

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Sure.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** It doesn't seem to be the test of adequacy.

I think the idea of it being used for special purposes, assuming that there are enough resources in the absence of that, is a very good idea.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** I want to touch on indigenous peoples again. I know you mentioned in your opening remarks advocating for two-thirds representation on CASDO but also having indigenous people represented. Is there a specific number that you or your organization would like to see represented on the board?

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** We haven't gotten into that detail. I think there are 11 positions on the board. Is that correct?

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Could be.

**Mr. Neil Belanger:** I believe it is 11. We would expect that one of those positions, at least one, would be designated for an indigenous person living with a disability, and then that they'd have representation on the committees as well. How many that would be, and from the committees, I'm not sure.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** I have one quick question. In the past couple of days, I've heard a lot about plain language for people with intellectual disabilities. If you can quickly make remarks, is that reflected in legislation that's already out there provincially? Is plain language reflected in that?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I would say no, it's not.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Okay.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** There's the summary that's a bit helpful, but I don't think it meets the test of plain language.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** What about in Quebec? No...?

**Mr. Bill Adair:** If I could just add to that, plain language is a form of access and a way of including people.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Right.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** It's something that is required. Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance did work with one of our partners, People First of Canada, and wrote a plain language version interpretation or explanation of Bill C-81. It was tested with consumers who would read it for reliability, and that's the kind of work that needs to be done in promoting awareness of the act as well as in educating people about the rights they have, people with disabilities, the rights that they have once the act becomes law.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

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

**The Chair:** MP Morrissey, please, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Thank you, Chair.

I believe I'm sharing my time with my colleague.

There's been a lot of focus on the cost of implementing the bill. If those investments are made, what is the economic gain to people with disabilities? Could you just answer quickly?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** That was one of the factors that allowed the AODA in Ontario to be passed unanimously, because the official opposition, the Conservatives, were concerned about price. We showed them the research from jurisdictions that have much more accessibility, the United States being one. The tax revenues increased by the billions in the United States simply by making hotels and restaurants accessible to people. Just those two things, just those two types of accessibility, brought billions in extra revenues.

Yes, it is a cost. The businesses, big and small, told me that they have to update, anyway, every five or 10 years to keep their businesses viable. As long as they had time, they were able to absorb the costs.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** What's the economic gain to the disabled person?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** That's a very good question, because we don't know. As I stated earlier, the unemployment rate is so high amongst people with disabilities that just the fact that they will be, with the employment standards in Ontario, for example, more employed and more employable, simply because people will see their value, will add to the tax base.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Okay.

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** The Rotman school in Toronto did a really wonderful job looking at the economic benefits of accessibility. I think it's called "Unleashing...." I can't remember, but it was done back about 10 years ago, and it looked at the economic benefits that come from increased accessibility.

It was, I think, a really well-done methodology, and I think it was very clear. The other thing is, what's the cost of the barriers now? The costs are extraordinary in terms decreased productivity, reliance on social assistance and things of that sort. The costs are tremendous now. I think the economic benefits are really quite important.

• (2035)

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** I have one quick last question.

Should the focus be on establishing targets to start versus deadlines to finish? There have been two of you who spoke briefly about 20 years and only a little happened, or 15 years and only a little happened. Should there be a stronger emphasis on establishing targets to start?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I can only speak for Ontario. Because of the standards being developed, five years or less, we felt we addressed that in the bill. That is how we addressed that in the bill. In fact, it was our colleagues in Great Britain, as well as in the United States, who recommended we do that. They were ahead of us—they were ahead of Canada and Ontario—and they found that, especially in Great Britain, the day before the deadline everyone was saying,

what are we supposed to do? That's when they said, have standards developed and enforced along the way.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Mr. Ruimy, you have a minute and 40 seconds.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** What goes around comes around.

I want to jump to Mr. Adair.

You mentioned—and you're not the only person who mentioned it—communications as a pillar. When we're talking timelines, it's not that anybody's opposed to timelines. It's trying to understand what they'd be referring to. Is it a deadline? Is it a timeline? Is it a benchmark? I want to bring it back to the communications, because you mentioned that there are so many things in communications, how would you even apply a timeline to communications? There's a lot that you mentioned there. If you can maybe just talk about that, it would be great.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** The general theme of what we're talking about is that it's important to have some quick wins and to have some long-haul objectives and to recognize that we'll never really arrive at a fully accessible Canada. When we get there, there are going to be more challenges.

In terms of communication, this is not an area where I'm an expert. We do have partners among our 56 partner organizations who are experts in this area. Barbara Collier was a witness here earlier and would be a person who could give you details on that.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** She was the other person who mentioned communication as a pillar.

**Mr. Bill Adair:** Exactly, and she, along with others, would be the right person to work on answering a question like that and putting timelines in. It's very complicated, and some will be easier and accomplished more quickly, and some will take longer.

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Therein lies the biggest challenge, because when we are talking about this, what we constantly heard was that it's an evolution. It's not a destination. It's constantly evolving. With new technology that speaks to a better capability for communications, it's constantly evolving. So when I talk about innovation, that's why I don't want to stifle it.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We go to MP Hardcastle for the final five minutes.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Thank you.

I think I'll expand on my colleague's line of thinking, or questioning; I don't want to say what he's thinking. My understanding, and what we know about CASDO, is that it's going to be on an ongoing basis providing standards. Once a standard has been decided, we need a deadline or a time frame, if you want to call it that, a coming to provision time when the federal government enacts it or doesn't and provides a reason. Maybe all of you can expand on that and maybe slide in a little more about how responsibilities are fragmented right now after enactment does take place.

I know that Mr. Adair and Mr. Falconer...

**Mr. Patrick Falconer:** I'll speak mostly to the fragmentation issue. I think you have a patchwork of regulatory authorities that makes it unclear whether they will actually have consistent regulation. It's unclear who to complain to. It's possible that they'll have conflicting standards. I think it creates duplication and confusion and will cost money, and that's where the chasing of tails will happen. There will be lots of people doing the same thing without proper coordination and proper accountability to one source, which in this case would be the commissioner. I think that's the issue.

Around timelines, again, I think the grand timeline's an important one. I think the idea of saying within their first, we say, five years that the first standards will have been created... I think the five-year timeline for the review of the act is critical, because if things aren't working in the first five years, let's figure that out and let's make the changes. Let's not wait for the first regulation and then five years. Let's have...I would say four years. In the Manitoba act, four years after the act was proclaimed and enacted, there was a beginning of a review. I think we need that. This is new. We need to learn from it and correct the course as we go.

• (2040)

**Mr. Bill Adair:** I have a comment on the fragmentation. Our organizations are largely grassroots. Organizations of people with disabilities don't necessarily have the legal expertise to answer the question around whether it should be one or two. What we're calling for is a systematic approach that supports complainants, that gives them the support they need if they're going to complain, a system where we avoid altercations or disagreements between different authorities—and maybe it's one single source, or maybe it's not—and complaints are resolved quickly.

Most importantly, we're calling for a systematic way of supporting and reinforcing people whose rights have been violated in relation to the act. I don't have the answer, but those are the principles that the folks we've talked to are looking for.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** In terms of the fragmentation then, it brings us to the matter of exemptions. Not only are we dealing with

different entities that are going to be responsible for the same thing, but some entities, some organizations under federal jurisdiction, would be exempt.

There is also a concern that there won't be a requirement for a rationale to be provided, or an appeal process for a person living with a disability, or someone who is civically engaged. If we're going to keep these exemptions in, that's a glaring oversight in terms of that kind of accountability. Could we have some feedback on that?

**Ms. Marie Bountrogianni:** I don't know enough about the exemptions and why they're there. Perhaps there are good reasons, I don't know, but I do know from Ontario's experience that being firm with organizations on having to comply is important. I'm not talking specifically about exemptions. I'm just talking about our experience in Ontario. We need to be firm; otherwise, we will not get compliance. I don't know enough about the exemptions to know why they're there. I don't understand the rationale behind them.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Do I have time for anybody else to comment on that?

**The Chair:** Very quickly....

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Very quickly if I could, Mr. Chair, just to get this on the record, when I was giving my explanation of how I thought timelines would fit in with CASDO, I got a thumbs-up from Mr. Adair that he was agreeing with that summary.

With that then, I guess we'll leave it for the next bit of questioning from my colleagues.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you very much everybody. We really do appreciate it. On behalf of the committee, thank you for accommodating our evening schedule here.

We will be continuing this. Just for my committee colleagues, the next meeting will be first thing tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. in this space.

Thank you very much. This meeting is adjourned.







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