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• (1140)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC)): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our guests here this morning.

When I call your name, I'd like you to raise your hand so we will know who you are.

First today is Barbara MacQuarrie. Welcome, and thank you for giving us your time today. The second speaker will be Jennifer Berdahl. Thank you for being here. And last but not least, we have Sandy Welsh.

Thank you all for taking time from your busy schedules to be with us today.

We will start with Barbara MacQuarrie. Each of you has 10 minutes to address us, and then we will turn to questions.

Ms. MacQuarrie, welcome. You can go ahead now.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie (Community Director, Faculty of Education, Western University, Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children): Thank you.

I'm the community director at the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children at Western University. My interest in this problem grew out of my work to support women who experienced serious and ongoing sexual harassment, and through my contact with the Vince family, who lost Theresa Vince to sexual harassment that escalated to murder.

I co-authored a 2004 report on workplace harassment with Dr. Sandy Welsh, whom you will hear from later, and Jacquie Carr, Theresa Vince's daughter.

In a recently released HBO documentary, Gloria Steinem reflects on the following: In the seventies there was no word for sexual harassment. There was no notion that you could name it in public and certainly not that it had a legal remedy.

In 1979, Constance Backhouse and Leah Cohen published the first book on sexual harassment in Canada, called *The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women*.

I'd like to use my time today to reflect upon the gains we have made since we first put a name to the problem and to briefly consider the work still ahead of us.

Backhouse and Cohen's book was an important step in building public awareness of workplace sexual harassment. They were joined in the effort of bringing the problem into public view by

governments, communications firms, institutes of higher learning, and employers. Sexual harassment became the subject of legislation, training, and research. Obviously, we have made progress on the public naming of the problem. Whether or not our increased public awareness helps women to report sexual harassment when they experience it in their workplaces is a question I will return to later in my presentation.

Accepting that naming a problem is the first step to resolving it, let me turn our attention to Gloria Steinem's next assertion that there is no legal sexual harassment. The Canadian Human Rights Act was amended in 1983 to make sexual harassment a form of sex discrimination. As an archived HRSDC document notes: Legal recognition of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination was an affirmation of how women's economic well-being was disparately undermined by sexual harassment.

In 1985, shortly after the amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act, provisions on sexual harassment were added to the federal labour standards legislation, shaping public policy and signalling a resolve from the federal government to combat the problem. It makes the issue of sexual harassment not only a human rights concern but also an industrial relations problem.

The federal human rights legislation was tested by Bonnie Robichaud, a lead-hand cleaner at the air defence command base in North Bay. In 1980 she filed a complaint of sexual harassment against her supervisor and her employer. When she faced serious reprisals and the situation was not resolved, she fought the sexual harassment through all means available to her, including a complaint of discrimination on the basis of sex, with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

The Supreme Court decision in *Robichaud v. Treasury Board* (1987) underscored the judicial recognition that employers are responsible for harassment in the workplace. The judgment stated:

At issue here is whether or not an employer is responsible for the unauthorized discriminatory acts of its employees in the course of their employment under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

Finding in favour of Ms. Robichaud, the court determined that employers are liable for harassment, whether they are aware of it or not, and that only an employer can remedy undesirable effects and only an employer can provide the most important remedy, a healthy workplace.

In this decision, Justice La Forest interpreted the legislation in a manner that was both remedial and preventative, promoting an approach that human rights “education begins in the workplace, in the micro-democracy of the work environment, rather than in society at large.”

Clearly, they have made significant advances in providing legal remedies for addressing sexual harassment, with the responsibilities of employers to provide safe workplaces well defined.

Despite our familiarity with the concept of workplace harassment, and the legal remedies available to workers in federally regulated workplaces, many barriers to reporting sexual harassment remain in place. Backhouse and Cohen documented the reprisals women feared and often suffered when they reported sexual harassment. They include demotion, transfer, poor work assignments, denial of job-related benefits and promotion, unsatisfactory job evaluations, sabotage of their work, and dismissal without or with only poor references.

In our 2004 study, some women did not report sexual harassment because they did not think it was worth it. Others did not report because race and/or language issues hindered their ability to report. Some women stated they did not report for both of these reasons.

Women who did report were often confronted with inadequate procedures or even non-existent procedures, supervisors who do not listen, and bureaucratic complications. Several women experienced an escalation of the harassment, or retaliation when they reported. Some women found that reporting did not make any difference. Women who filed complaints in multiple forums often experienced a legal runaround, being bounced from one forum to the next.

• (1145)

The problem of underreporting or not pursuing a complaint that is initially ignored may be rooted in our approach to providing remedies. As Constance Backhouse explains:

Our current legal system individualizes how we develop remedies for harassment. We pay out only for women who give voice to the abuse, who launch formal complaints and who pursue investigation and adjudication right through to the final remedy.

Bonnie Robichaud's case illustrates how difficult the reporting process can be. After reporting, she faced a \$30,000 lawsuit for slander, her employer drafted a petition against her, she was suspended without pay, and she was required to submit to a lie detector test and a psychiatric assessment. Most hurtful of all to her, she endured a hostile work environment where she was shunned by her co-workers.

Fortunately, Ms. Robichaud persisted in her complaint and, through the Supreme Court decision, strengthened legal responsibilities for employers to provide safe and healthy workplaces. Despite such a positive and promising outcome, workers continue to face many of the same barriers to reporting sexual harassment.

Failing to take a systemic approach to addressing workplace sexual harassment places an enormous burden upon the target. Anyone not having the support and the resources to pursue a lengthy, emotionally exhausting, and often financially draining reporting process is silenced.

Constance Backhouse asks:

Are there wider, more collective remedies that would cause employers and harassers to pay for the rehabilitation of more victims and that would act toward the prevention of future sexual harassment?

Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella, in her 1984 royal commission report *Equality in Employment*, put it this way:

Systemic discrimination requires systemic remedies. Rather than approaching discrimination from the perspective of the single perpetrator and the single victim, the systemic approach acknowledges that by and large the systems and practices we customarily and often unwittingly adopt may have an unjustifiably negative effect on certain groups in society.

Employers comply with current legal provisions simply by circulating a policy outlining the kinds of individual conduct that are prohibited and the disciplinary measures that would entail should a violation occur. A systemic approach would require the transformation of a wide range of institutional practices and policies in order to prevent sexual harassment.

Clearly, we have made some important advances in our ability to speak out publicly about sexual harassment and in our provision of individualized legal remedies to address it. Equally clearly, we still have a long way to go before we reach equality in the workplace and before those who experience sexual harassment feel safe to report and confident that the situation will be appropriately addressed. The question becomes, how do we close the gap between policy and reality?

The archived HRSDC document identifies strategies for reducing institutional vulnerability to sexual harassment that remain very relevant today. First is ensuring that women in non-traditional jobs are not isolated in all-male work groups, and that there is a critical mass of women employed in areas once exclusively the domain of men. Second is addressing the isolation of women in traditionally female jobs, such as domestic work, and reforming legislative or policy provisions that accentuate their isolation. Third is confronting the connections between sexism, racism, and other types of inequality. Fourth is identifying how both male and female jobs are sexualized, and dismantling the stereotypes, sexual subordination, racism, and heterosexism of the phenomenon of sexualization. Fifth is implementing employment equity effectively to provide equal employment opportunities for women and other under-represented and socially disadvantaged groups. Sixth is developing more democratic workplaces that are not premised on abusive supervisory power, but rather on more egalitarian, co-operative, and team-based approaches to work.

I would like to conclude by revisiting Justice La Forest's assertion in *Robichaud v. Treasury Board* in 1987—

•(1150)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Excuse me. You have one minute left.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: Thank you.

He said that a human rights “education begins in the workplace, in the micro-democracy of the work environment, rather than in society at large”.

It is not enough to give workers a definition of sexual harassment and then tell them not to do it. We must develop a collective responsibility model that empowers bystanders to step in and speak up effectively and safely. Ervin Staub, professor of psychology emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, has written extensively about bystanders. He reminds us that:

Just as passive bystanders reinforce a sense that nothing is wrong in a situation, the active bystander can, in fact, get people to focus on a problem and motivate them to take action.

Indeed, people can exert positive influence on each other. We have to prepare employers, supervisors, and co-workers if we want them to be active bystanders who will draw awareness to potential harassment, and who will take action when harassment occurs. To do this we must challenge social norms, or the agreed-upon expectations and rules which govern our workplaces behaviour. The old, “It's just a joke,” “She must have deserved it,” and “It's none of my business” attitudes reinforce harassing behaviours.

Before we can develop effective training to empower bystanders to intervene in situations of potential or actual sexual harassment and before we can shift social norms to reflect an acceptance of collective responsibility for ensuring everyone is treated respectfully, we need to ask questions, collect data, and share findings on the experiences of sexual harassment in Canadian workplaces. We have to understand better why we have a gap between policy and reality, and we have to gather up our collective thinking on how we can bridge the gap.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you for your presentation. I will now call upon Jennifer Berdahl.

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl (Professor, University of Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you for inviting me here today. I'm Jennifer Berdahl. I've been a professor at the Rotman School of Management since 2001. I have been studying sexual harassment for over 20 years. I have several research papers on the topic, I have developed a theoretical framework for understanding it, and I have two review chapters in major volumes on organizational behaviour and industrial organizational psychology.

My training is in social, organizational, and industrial psychology from the University of Illinois, where I received my Ph.D. I have served as an expert witness on sexual harassment cases that focus on my particular—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Excuse me for a moment, Ms. Berdahl, we have to check with the translation.

Speak more slowly so they can translate, please.

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: I have also served as an expert witness on sexual harassment cases: one involving a man who was gender-

harassed, and another involving two female scientists who were victims of gender harassment.

I began studying sexual harassment in the early 1990s when it was still conceived largely as a problem of unwanted sexual behaviour and predation of men upon women in the workplace. This was on the heels of the Clarence Thomas Senate hearings and the Anita Hill controversy when sexual harassment was largely conceived in this way: being sexual in content, sexual in motive, and being something that men do to women.

I will go over my research that has given me an understanding of sexual harassment as largely a form of gender-based dominance and derogation in the workplace, what motivates sexual harassment, and how to prevent and address sexual harassment when it occurs.

My research began by studying sexual harassment against men in the workplace. At the time, in the early nineties, people started asking what about men? If sexual harassment is simply a method of making inappropriate comments sexually within the workplace, or propositioning people, then women can do this to men too, especially as they gain power within the workplace.

A popular movie in 1994 called *Disclosure* starred Michael Douglas and Demi Moore. It displayed sexual harassment against men in the form of a female boss coming on to him sexually, and there are also statistics coming out on sexual harassment against men that really, in my view and my colleagues' view, have overinflated its prevalence, because they simply gave men measures designed to study sexual harassment against women, what women found harassing, and asked them if they ever experienced it, such as lewd comments. Of course, men hear lewd comments in the workplace, but they don't necessarily find them harassing.

So we asked the question, do men experience harassment, and if so what kind do they experience in the workplace? With a few studies, we found that in general men do not experience what women experience as harassing in an harassing manner. So lewd comments, sexual attention, typically is not threatening to men—it is to women—but we did identify a form of harassment against men that previously had not been identified, and that was harassment against men for not being man enough in the workplace. This primarily came from other men, and it was experienced as the most threatening form of harassment to men, harassment that derogated them based on their status as men. So it involved masculinity teasing. One example is a man who took a two-week paternity leave after the birth of his second child and when he returned to work, he was teased so relentlessly about it that he feared for his status in the workplace.

I give you this background because it draws attention to the phenomenon of sexual harassment as being largely about a negotiation of gender within the workplace and a form of gender-based harassment, that is harassing people based on their gender performance, not necessarily their biological sex being male or female, but how well they performed their masculinity within the workplace, and potentially how well they performed their femininity in the workplace. So sexual harassment does not have to be sexual in content, does not have to come from someone of the other sex, to constitute sex discrimination. It can, and usually does, involve derogating someone based on their sex or their gender performance, and can be perpetuated by same-sex as well as other-sex others.

From this research, I went on to study this phenomenon in women. Is sexual harassment against women largely directed at women who also do not engage in prototypical feminine behaviour in the same way that it's directed at men? So again with three studies and a paper I published in 2007 entitled *The Sexual Harassment of Uppity Women*, I demonstrated that it's primarily women who engage in masculine styles of behaviour, being assertive and being outspoken, who get targeted for unwanted sexual attention, sexual comments, and even sexual coercion within the workplace. I also demonstrated that having a masculine personality did not make women more sensitive to this kind of behaviour; that's not why they were reporting it. They were disproportionately targeted for this kind of behaviour.

• (1155)

In five organizations, I found that women in male-dominated ones were the most likely to be sexually harassed. That had already been demonstrated, but it was particularly the women with those masculine styles of behaviour, the women who were outspoken and assertive, who were disproportionately targeted for sexual harassment.

The conclusion from these studies was that it's women who do not meet feminine ideals who are targeted for traditional forms of sexual harassment. In the same way, men who do not meet masculine ideals are targeted for male forms of sexual harassment.

It's not a matter of women in male-dominated occupations being surrounded by men who are sexually attracted to them and therefore giving them unwanted sexual attention—that might be part of the problem—but it's largely women who are encroaching upon male territory, either occupationally or in their behaviour, who get

targeted. Thus, sexual harassment serves to reinforce traditional gender roles and behaviour in both men and women by punishing those who veer outside the lines of gendered behaviour.

At the individual level, I theorize that sex-based harassment does not have to involve a conscious attempt necessarily to reinforce these roles and territories, but rather it is an attempt to protect or enhance one's personal status through gender. This is made possible because status is stratified by sex—being male is given more status than being female—and by gender, with masculinity being accorded higher status than femininity. Within gender there are privileged masculinities and privileged femininities, which give people the tools to put others down based upon these identities.

In the competitive world of work where people are vying for social status, which of course affects their professional status, this sex and gender stratification gives people the possibility to enhance their own status by putting others down based upon these identities.

I define sex-based harassment as behaviour that derogates, demeans, or humiliates an individual based on sex. Even behaviour that on the surface does not appear to be sex-based, that may not be sexual in content or nature, might constitute sexual harassment or sex-based harassment in this way if it's motivated by the desire to put someone down based upon that person's sex or their gender performance.

Recent research of mine shows that general mistreatment—ignoring somebody, putting down their work performance, which doesn't have anything to do with sexual content—is disproportionately targeted at gender deviance within the workplace. Women with masculine personalities are primarily targeted for mistreatment in general, not just sexual harassment, and men with feminine personalities, particularly in high-status masculine occupations, are disproportionately targeted for mistreatment in general.

This has led me to conduct research on other marginalized identities that make individuals deviate from gender ideals. For example, sexual deviants and sexual minorities are disproportionately targeted for sexual harassment. People who deviate from traditional family roles—for example, men who do a lot of caregiving in the home and women who do not have children—are disproportionately targeted for mistreatment in the workplace and sexual harassment.

I've also looked at racial deviance. Racial minorities are disproportionately targeted with sex-based harassment, and those who fail to conform to racial stereotypes are also targeted for more racial harassment in the same way that people who do not conform to gender stereotypes are disproportionately targeted for gender harassment.

This kind of behaviour in the workplace is a form of social control that keeps the status quo in place. Environments that trigger it are environments in which status is highly stratified by sex and gender, that is, male-dominated environments in which men outnumber women, but also when men have more power than women in that environment; and environments that reinforce distinctions between the sexes and the association between being male and having status; and also environments that motivate people to be in the "in group" or masculine club and to keep others out of it. Competitive environments are also much more prone to witnessing this type of harassing behaviour, where promotions are highly desired and difficult to obtain. People are going to use what they can to gain an advantage and will put others down based on sex and gender in order to do so.

• (1200)

Environments that trigger it also include leadership that does not explicitly call out and combat the problem, that is, leaders who are silent on the topic—neutrality tends to reinforce and side with the status quo—or ignore cases, or even reward and promote harassers and, obviously, leaders who engage in this behaviour themselves.

So what do we do? Prevention starts with leadership. Leadership sets the tone. Leaders have to acknowledge the inequality between groups within the workplace. Typically, when we're talking about sexual harassment, we're talking about men and women and the belief that this inequality is wrong. If the leader does not have "religion", if people do not think the leader truly believes this in his or her heart, it's not going to have much of an effect.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Excuse me. I'll have to ask you to wrap up, please.

• (1205)

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: So explicitly stating the belief that men and women are equal and should also have equal chances at promotion and holding people accountable... If not, it has been shown to be very effective to have 360° evaluation. Having subordinates evaluate leaders, not just superiors evaluating employees, is critical.

Also important is trying to foster more cooperative work environments that do not pit employees against each other, and especially de-emphasizing sex and gender differences through desegregation both horizontally and vertically within organizations, and being careful not to symbolically reinforce gender inequality with a variety of methods. I can go into those if you're interested.

I have some other comments on problem solving, but perhaps we can get to that in the question and answer period.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): I will now call on Sandy Welsh for ten minutes.

Dr. Sandy Welsh (Professor of Sociology, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education and Program Reviews, Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you for inviting me to speak today.

As a bit of background, my name is Sandy Welsh, and I'm a professor of sociology and I'm the vice-dean, graduate education and program reviews, in the faculty of arts and science at the University of Toronto. For over 20 years my academic research has focused on the study of sexual and workplace harassment. This work ranges from the analysis of the 1993 Statistics Canada "Violence Against Women Survey", analysis of confidential sexual harassment complaints to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the analysis of an interview- and focus-group-based study of Ontario women's experiences with workplace harassment and violence, especially in terms of their ability to seek some kind of legal recourse and remedy for their complaints.

I've also provided oral or written evidence at numerous Ontario and Canadian human rights commission tribunals, as well as in the 1997 coroner's inquest into the deaths of Theresa Vince and Russell Davis, where Ms. Vince was sexually harassed and then murdered by her boss, Mr. Davis.

With my time today I want to address four issues I believe are important to keep in mind when considering the issue of sexual workplace harassment in Canada. These issues are, first, what is the prevalence of harassment in Canada; what is sexual harassment and where is it likely to occur; third, why women do not report harassment; and finally, how may we best prevent harassment.

I think you'll start to hear some themes in my comments that you've heard from my colleagues here today.

My opinions are based on my own research, interviews with women experiencing harassment, my experiences as an expert in various legal cases, and my understanding of the larger research in the area.

First, what do we know about the prevalence of sexual harassment in Canada? Based on my own analysis of the 1993 violence against women survey, and another Canadian national survey that was done at the time, these studies estimate that for the lifetime sexual harassment prevalence rate, or the chances that a woman would experience harassment over her lifetime—and they were focused just on women—the range was within 23% to 51%. Why this range? Some of that has to do with survey construction and how questions were asked, but I think it gives you a sense of the fact that a quarter to a half of women will experience harassment in their lifetime. Twenty years later, these are still the only national statistics we have. In my opinion, it's time for another survey for us to understand what's happening at the national level, and to include men in this survey.

Second, what is sexual harassment and where is it most likely to occur? I'm not going to go through a lengthy list of behaviours. Rather, I want to mention what I believe is at the core of almost all harassment behaviours. Sexual and workplace harassment is first and foremost an organizational issue, not an interpersonal problem. Whether the behaviours are sexualized, gender based, or generalized forms of abuse, at their core these behaviours are meant to be hostile and demeaning. As my colleague Dr. Berdahl just spoke to, and as others' work suggests, these behaviours often signal an individual or group is not welcome or is a competitive threat. In the case of sexual harassment, this is why we see women in male-dominated organizations or occupations more likely to be targets of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is also more likely to occur in certain contexts such as job insecurity. This includes workers in temporary positions, workers on probation or in some kind of trial period for a position, and also young workers who are new to the workplace. Sexual harassment is more likely where there are gender, racialized, or other workplace power differences. Here it is important to note that other types of harassment may co-occur with sexual harassment. For example, in my analysis of the sexual harassment complaints to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, approximately 10% of the complaints also involved physical abuse such as being spit upon, hit, or kicked.

Third, I'm often asked, "Why didn't she just report it?", when testifying in sexual harassment tribunals.

- (1210)

Study after study documents that only a small number of women experiencing harassment file formal complaints. Why? Women do not report for fear of losing their job, fear of retaliation, fear of not being believed, a lack of family support for going forward with a complaint, and lack of information about the options for reporting.

In our study of women in Ontario, women's willingness to report was also affected by their citizenship or newcomer status. As a recent immigrant to Canada in our study said, she did not report because she did not think her experience was serious enough to be considered a complaint in the Canadian legal context.

Most women do not report until one of two things happens. First, the harassment escalates and becomes so severe they feel they can no longer handle it on their own, or second, they lose their job or some other severe outcome happens.

Just because someone does not make a formal report, it is important to remember this person may have signalled in numerous ways that there is a problem. Again the research literature is clear: women cope with harassment by avoiding the harasser, by taking days off, or using other strategies to get through the day.

During the inquest into the death of Theresa Vince, I testified to the multiple ways Ms. Vince signalled there was a harassment problem. This long-time employee in her late 50s decided to take early retirement to get away from her boss who was harassing her. She moved her desk to another part of the office and would have her colleagues intervene on her behalf when her boss phoned her line.

And while reporting is an important part of reducing harassment, it must be emphasized there is a cost to reporting for women in terms

of time, money, and health. As my own work reports and as reported by others, we also know reporting is not straightforward.

Women in our Ontario study discussed what we call the legal runaround. Depending on the workplace, whether there's a union, and whether the workplace is federally or provincially regulated, women may be told to file a grievance through the union, through a workplace complaint procedure, or go to the Human Rights Commission, and they find themselves bouncing around from place to place trying to find the best place to start. Clearly more attention needs to be paid to women's and men's access to legal recourse when they would like to have it.

And finally, how may we best prevent harassment and violence? Three options are discussed in the research I'll mention here. Some of these Barb and Jennifer have touched on. I think other witnesses at this committee have also discussed this.

First is the need for supportive and cooperative workplace cultures where organizational leadership visibly supports anti-harassment cultures and policies, where gender, racialized, and other inequities across workgroups are reduced, and where interpersonal competition and job insecurity are reduced or at least recognized by management. These may be helpful in reducing harassment.

Second, proactive policies and procedures encourage reporting, and, hence, may help reduce harassment. It's important to note that reporting and filing of complaints are not necessarily a sign of a problematic workplace. I often hear managers say one complaint is too many. At the same time one complaint means someone believes she can complain and that her complaint will be taken seriously. So complaints are not the best measures of whether or not a workplace has a harassment problem. Rather complaints may mean an organization has a culture and policies and procedures that are doing what we want them to do, enabling workers to come forward when something problematic happens.

Third, training that encourages bystander interventions may make a difference. Programs where workers are trained not to ignore the harassment and violence, including developing strategies to push back early, may help. In practice these range from interventions on the spot such as calling out inappropriate practices or behaviours of colleagues to confidential complaint hotlines, especially for more serious offences or for larger workplaces.

•(1215)

In conclusion, what is central to our ability to reduce harassment at work? Policies and procedures are only a first step. We need to ensure that employers and managers understand that they have a role and a responsibility, that we work to ensure that our Canadian workplaces develop supportive organizational cultures where organizational leaders visibly signal that harassment is a serious issue, and that we encourage the role of bystander or co-worker intervention where appropriate. We also need to ensure that those who choose to complain can easily find where they should go, and that they are supported and have access to remedies that help them move their lives forward.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you for your presentation.

I will now begin the first round of questioning.

I'll go first to Mrs. Truppe.

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank you all for coming today. Your presentations were great.

I would like to point out that Barbara is from London, Ontario. Barbara, you do a great job researching violence against women and children. Thank you for that.

Barbara, this one is for you. On February 25 of this year, Stats Canada released a report, "Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends". It indicated that following an incident of violence, Canadian women are statistically more likely than men to disclose their victimization to family and friends—80% versus 56%. I think one of you mentioned that as well, that women report it more than men.

In your 2004 "Workplace Harassment and Violence Report", you noted that women cope with harassment, and sexual harassment in particular, through externally focused behavioural strategies such as avoidance or seeking support, and also internally focused psychological strategies such as denial, detachment, and self-blame.

Would you say that there is a need for access to social and personal support networks alongside the reporting and mediation of an incident of sexual harassment in the workplace? The reason I'm asking is that the federal service employees have access to an employee assistance program, which provides e-counselling and referrals to local counsellors to assist public service employees in dealing with personal or workplace-related issues. This has only been raised once since we've been listening to it, so I'm just curious to hear your opinion on it.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: First, thank you very much for the question—it's a really important question.

In fact, the support system is critical, vital, to anybody who's even thinking about reporting harassment. I actually wouldn't recommend that anybody without supports try to start a complaint procedure. I think it can be draining. You can expect resistance, often. The support piece needs to be in place. I think EAP is an obvious source

of potential support, but then we need to ensure that EAP providers are appropriately prepared to deal with men or women who experience workplace sexual harassment or gendered harassment. In fact, just through some personal experiences of trying to support women, I know that this is not always the case. We can't just assume that because there's an EAP in place they're going to understand all the dynamics of workplace harassment. That's what I think about that.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

You also mentioned that most of the women who wished they reported wished they'd had more support. What type of support are you referencing? What are some support systems for them?

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: I meant personal supports, definitely, and that's maybe something we don't have a lot of control over—family, friends. We have very little in the way of organized support in the community for people who are experiencing workplace sexual harassment.

In Ontario we have a whole network of sexual assault centres. Through our research we found that most women didn't turn to sexual assault centres for support. They didn't see themselves as fitting the mandate. Sometimes sexual assault centres weren't prepared to provide the support that was needed there, and there was simply no other place to go.

You can go to a generic counselling agency, and they may or may not have any particular understanding of the dynamics of workplace harassment, workplace sexual harassment, or gendered harassment. This is something we have brought up in the past. We have a real need for a network of community supports that have people in place who really understand harassment and are able to offer appropriate support, appropriate advice sometimes, for moving forward with a complaint.

•(1220)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

What would you say are the benefits of offering access to supports, such as counselling services, to the individuals engaged in reporting? How can that help them?

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: I think one of the benefits is that they'll be more likely to be able to stay in their work. We know from our study, and I know from a lot of anecdotal evidence as well, that most women who experience sexual harassment and then go on to report it end up without a job. I think there are a lot of reasons for that. If they're experiencing reprisals, there's a toll that it takes on their performance. And there's just the time it takes to pursue sometimes multiple avenues of complaint. So it's emotionally exhausting. It can be financially draining. Even though we're supposed to have forums that don't require legal representation, women tend to get better outcomes if they have legal representation.

If we are able to offer them support throughout this, I think it helps them to stay focused on what they need to do next. It prevents them from going in a whole lot of different directions that aren't going to be helpful to them. It just makes them feel less alone. It makes them feel they're not crazy. It makes them feel like they don't deserve this. Those are all really critical things to having a woman being able to carry on and continue in her job and continue to perform well while she's in the challenging situation of having to carry forth with a complaint.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

Sandy, you mentioned in your report the three options that you were discussing. You noted supportive and cooperative workplace cultures, and how proactive policies and procedures encourage reporting and might help reduce harassment. How important is it to have the policies and procedures in place, and what would be one of the best policies and procedures that you've seen?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: It's very important to have the policies and procedures in place, and in many ways that's the first step. I think in this day and age most companies, especially our large companies, have good policies and procedures in place. Do they work all the time? No, but there's the fact that companies in some ways are able to handle the complaints within their workplaces, and we do have companies with large policies.

What are some of the best policies that I've seen? I think we have a number of our large Canadian companies that have very good policies. I'm hesitant to say this is a really good policy because I don't know if there's exactly the perfect policy.

What I will say is that both the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Canadian Human Rights Commission have good guidelines and recommendations for what should go into policies. I have not recently looked at the Canadian Human Rights Commission website but I know that over the years, most importantly, they've had guidelines for small and medium-sized businesses. In some ways I'm less concerned about our large corporations because I think many of those have had to deal with this and already have very strong, detailed, and lengthy policies in place.

But where there are concerns are within our smaller businesses and medium businesses where they don't have HR departments, where they can't hire lawyers. Those are some of the places where we also need to focus our attention on the kinds of policies that are appropriate for those. It's not necessarily a case of one-size-fits-all with policies. But I think—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you.

Ms. Ashton.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you very much to all three of our presenters. Your testimony was very interesting, and while you touched on themes that have come out through this study, you've used an academic and perhaps a broader lens to really enhance some of the things that we've learned in this committee. We truly appreciate that.

I want to pay particular attention to the repeated reference to systemic discrimination requiring systemic responses and also the work, Professor Berdahl, that you've been involved with around gender-based discrimination, which actually hasn't been a theme that

we've dealt with. I don't think we've heard about it as such throughout our study. So you've given us a lot to work with here.

As the status of women committee, our interest is in giving recommendations to Status of Women Canada, to the minister, and to the government with regard to sexual harassment in the federal workplace.

With that starting point of Status of Women Canada, I would like to put my question to all three of you. Perhaps we can do it in the order in which you spoke, so beginning with Professor MacQuarrie, can you tell us what you believe the role of Status of Women Canada could be in providing leadership in this area?

• (1225)

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: Thank you. Simply to clarify, I'm actually the community director of a research centre, but not a professor.

I think our very first need is to revisit the data that we have. We need a new survey. We need to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. We need to hear the stories and we need to understand the numbers. We haven't done that in a very long time. We don't have any large-scale surveys that have included men.

What I see, and I think what my colleagues are saying as well, is that what we have on the books with legislation is good. We should not be having the situations we're having, given the legislation that's there and the intent behind the legislation. But we know that we do. So we need to understand what's happening there.

I think that before we go into making detailed recommendations about specific responses, we really need to get that overview or picture of what's happening, and the best way to do that is through a large-scale research project.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

Professor Berdahl.

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: I would echo that we're long overdue some national statistics on this.

In addition, Status of Women Canada can offer guidelines and definitions of the problem and the nature of it, by defining sexual harassment broadly in the way that I tried to communicate to the committee, pointing out that the very overt sexual forms that we can all recognize are only the tip of the iceberg and that this is a systemic problem that affects both women and men in the workplace.

Where you see men being teased about their masculinity, you can be sure it's going to be a hostile place for women. Men are going to have to start reporting and stepping up to this as well, if the problem is going to be solved.

Outlining best practices and policies, providing that kind of information for companies if it's not already done, would be most helpful, such as on the importance of bystander intervention. We know a lot about how effective that is against bullying in schools. Why not do that in organizations? We need bystanders not simply being given the choice of intervening, but actually being told that it is their responsibility as citizens to intervene and stand up.

We need to provide victims multiple channels of reporting, starting with informal ombudspeople, instead of their having to go directly to a formal complaint, which we know is extremely rare and that people hesitate to do for good reason.

I thought Sandy's comment about filing complaints and telling organizations was not a bad sign but a good sign. That would be another example of best practices and policies, as well as emphasizing the importance and the responsibility of leadership in this problem.

I'm wondering about some kind of external organizational support system, because naturally if there's a sexual harassment problem within the organization, the leadership typically is somehow condoning it, which is why victims are not reporting it and are hesitant to say anything. So having some kind of organizational support that can give victims legal information and options and best practices for how to handle the situation, in addition to social support, connecting victims from other organizations, is really important, so that they know they are not alone and that other people experience this too. People are divided within their own organization, so people typically don't go to each other within them when there's a problem. So connecting people in that kind of a social support network would be really important.

• (1230)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you.

Professor Welsh.

Dr. Sandy Welsh: Thank you.

I will echo many of the comments that you've just heard. In terms of data, there was a time when Status of Women Canada was more involved in data, research, and reports. At one point I participated in writing a chapter for a report for Status of Women Canada on the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

I would encourage involvement in some of those issues where they are relevant, particularly in terms of surveys or qualitative data collection. The federal government, I know, does collect some of their own data, but it's important to either open up that data to researchers such as Jennifer and me in universities or to allow us to participate in collecting national data so we can have a baseline to understand where things are, if we are improving, and if new things are popping up.

Second, I would agree with the comments around Status of Women Canada's role in terms of defining the question and opening up the question, opening up the concept of what we consider harassment. It's not just about women; it is about men. There's a variety of different types of behaviours, as Jennifer has spoken to.

Also we need to deal head-on with the issue of what is referred to as intersectionality: how citizenship status, racialized status, religion, and family status all come and intersect and create different forms of gender-based harassment that people are experiencing and how these connect, not just in the experience.

I think this would be my third point, in terms of the reporting of harassment. I know recently the Canadian Human Rights Commission has taken some steps to provide some guidelines on how to deal with intersectionality around gender-based issues. But it's important

that some of the women we talked to in our Ontario study said, "Well, I'm a black woman so it's not really sexual harassment for me, but it's not really racial harassment. Maybe I shouldn't report it." But I think it's for us to understand as researchers, as employers—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you.

Moving on to Ms. James.

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all of our guests for being here through conference.

My first question is directed to Ms. MacQuarrie.

In your opening remarks you mentioned that one of the keys to dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace is prevention of future sexual harassment. I wonder whether you could speak directly to the benefits of early intervention when dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace, specifically how it ties into the leadership of any particular company. I know that other witnesses here today as well as in past meetings have spoken directly to the significance of good leadership, management, and supervisors. If you could speak to the benefit of early intervention, I would appreciate it.

Thank you.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: Thanks for the question.

Early intervention is really key; it's really critical. I think it's unrealistic to expect that we'll never have inappropriate behaviours in a workplace. What we have to do is have that first line of defence, which is early intervention.

Early intervention sends a signal that this is not a place where we can act like that. It sends a signal that this is a place where we value everyone. It has to come first from leadership, but it has to move beyond leadership. It has to involve everybody in the workplace. Everybody in the workplace has to have that same sense that our workplace culture says, that our workplace culture absolutely requires, that everyone here is respected, that everyone feels safe, that everyone can contribute and reach their full potential as a worker in this environment. Early intervention sends all of those messages.

It also means that it's going to minimize the kind of disciplinary issues you're going to have. If you intervene early before things become serious, it's much easier to deal with the perpetrator. You don't have to implement really serious consequences. You can explain that this is inappropriate. You can give a warning. You can make it clear that the behaviour shouldn't be repeated. If you have the culture that supports all of that, you're not likely to see a repeat of the behaviour.

•(1235)

Ms. Roxanne James: We had before us another witness from the Canada School of Public Service, where they actually do mandatory training for supervisors and those in management positions. I wonder whether you have any opinion on what type of mandatory training you think works best. You hear things about doing it online, doing it person, that it has to be on an annual basis. I wonder whether you have any suggestions as to what you believe works best with regards to training supervisors and management leaders—I don't want to say upper management—in the workplace.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: Was that question to me as well?

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes, it was. Thank you.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: Thank you.

I really believe that you have to have some part of the training face to face. You have to start with the face-to-face training. That's definitely the most effective. You can have follow-up modules that are online, but if you don't get that face-to-face interaction, I don't think you can explore these relational issues.

Another training tool that works very well is the use of scenarios, whether they're videotaped scenarios or the use of theatre to mount real situations. Case studies are another effective tool. But having at least the introduction to the training be in person is critically important. You can't deal with relational issues in an electronic, online context effectively.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

I'm glad you actually mentioned scenarios. I still recall the commercials that ran across our TVs with regard to elder abuse, and being able to spot what is considered to be abuse of our senior citizens and so forth. Sometimes you'd be watching those commercials and you'd think, yes, that is abuse, but it doesn't really dawn on you until you actually see it and it's described to you. So I thank you for mentioning scenarios and giving actual examples of what would be deemed inappropriate and what is okay. So I thank you for that.

I'm going to ask Professor Welsh the next question.

In your remarks you talked about three different ways of preventing harassment, and you mentioned about easy access, where to go, a key point person, and so forth. We've actually heard from many witnesses prior to this talking about harassment advisers or go-to or point people in an organization, where you can go to that one individual. It's easy to know where to go, easy to access, and so on.

Do you think it's a good idea to have something like that in place?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: I think it is, and this is where universities in Canada are good examples. The University of Toronto, like other universities, has a sexual harassment officer who reports directly to the president. She does not report to a manager somewhere in the middle level of the managerial food chain, so to speak. It means that we have someone who is clearly identified for faculty, staff, students, who you go to. She's not going to feel somehow beholden to a manager who's sitting ahead of her. Having someone who maybe sits, in terms of their harassment responsibilities, a bit outside the normal chain of command is useful.

Jennifer spoke to multiple avenues of complaint. That's very important because who does the manager complain to when their manager is harassing them?

So I think it's about having point people who are appropriate to the organization, and having someone do that, yes.

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you.

This question is for Professor Welsh as well. When you speak about multiple or different avenues, do you think it's important to be able to speak directly to a person, or perhaps be able to log a complaint or file something electronically, or perhaps pick up the telephone and be able to report it that way? Do you believe that there should be different avenues of how to report a particular problem or complaint?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: There need to be different avenues, because sometimes someone is not ready. If you put it in an e-mail, you do it electronically, and there's a record. What we heard in our study and what I hear in a lot of complaints I'm involved with is that women just want the harassment to stop. Sometimes what they would rather do is to talk to someone, get some advice on some strategies they can use, know that they have support, and then they can, either with their manager involved or on their own, try to move this forward, especially if it's low-level types of harassment.

But I think it's important that there be a way that someone can talk to someone, to say, "I think I have a problem. Could you help me define it?" or "I think I have a problem. Do you think I need to file a formal complaint?", as well as someone who wants to do it electronically.

•(1240)

Ms. Roxanne James: Thank you very much.

I figure that my time has mostly gone. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you.

Now we'll move on to Ms. Sgro.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Good morning to all of our witnesses. Thank you so very much for the work you've done on this issue. Clearly, it's something that you're very well versed in and very much aware of.

Before I go on with my questions, Madam Chair, I just wanted to bring to the attention of our committee members the fact that if you check your inbox, you'll see that I have sent out an e-mail this morning. I'm holding a round table in Ottawa with some of the witnesses who weren't allowed to come to the committee and who have had first-hand experience in the RCMP on this issue of harassment. I'm having that on April 22, and certainly everybody in the committee is welcome to come. I plan to submit the testimony from that hearing to the clerk following the event.

My apologies to our witnesses. I had forgotten to mention that earlier. I wanted to make sure that everyone knew about it.

The issues of the RCMP, the rationale for starting this particular study, and many of the things that you have said today, all three of you, are some of the answers that the RCMP should have been responding to much earlier. They would not have found themselves in the situation that they are today with the kind of damage that has been done to their reputation, but most importantly, to the many women who have been subjected to this.

In particular, you mentioned the issue about having an outside organization to go to, with people who are experienced in regard to that kind of harassment. In a hierarchy like you have in the RCMP, all they had was to go to the next manager or to human rights or whatever. As something for the federal government to have, how would you see this outside organization, other than as just one of our normal community organizations that they could go to, an organization that the government would have confidence in to try to deal with those problems? Whoever would like to respond to that, please go ahead.

Ms. Barbara MacQuarrie: I can start. We explored a model here in London, which would have been at a municipal level, not a federal level, but I think the model could work. We were asking if a number of workplaces could come together, a number of federal workplaces, to actually provide funding for an office and staff. These people would be well versed in labour law and human rights law and would understand the dynamics of sexual harassment. They would be independent, but funded perhaps by the group of workplaces that would need to use them.

There would have to be a reporting structure, something that's maybe similar to what Sandy was talking about in the university, so there's not a reporting to middle managers, but rather reporting directly. That could be to the Prime Minister. This is a very serious issue, and if we want to show how seriously we're taking it, we need to set up those kinds of structures.

That's an idea I have, and I think that if you were to set up something like that, you could certainly look to experts in the field for advice, for input, and for direction. I know that many people would be happy to sit down and think about how to structure something like that in a way that would really make the most sense.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Professor Welsh?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: I would agree with Barb in terms of having a structure. One way to do it would be to work with people who have the legal expertise and the social support expertise, such as social workers, as well as others who have experience in going through these kinds of complaint procedures. That structure could somehow sit outside the RCMP or the federal government and work independently.

In some ways, it's almost like an ombudsperson kind of position, but it might be an ombudsperson who also has access to those kinds of resources, both legally and on the social support side. Given the complexity of identifying and naming the issue of harassment—it can be presented in so many ways—that might be one way to do that: to either piggyback onto an existing ombudsperson kind of position or to develop one that is more focused on harassment, respect in the workplace, and related issues.

• (1245)

Hon. Judy Sgro: Professor Berdahl?

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: I would echo what has already been said, but I would add that having it funded by the companies using it might be problematic. It would be nice and ideal if there could be some government funding for this, so that there is not any conflict of interest involved in the advice being given. It would also serve as a resource not just for victims, but also for leaders and managers who might be struggling with this issue in their organizations and may not know how best to address or handle it. It would be a sort of safe haven for both sides of the conflict to go to for good advice.

Hon. Judy Sgro: Professor Berdahl, your description of the individuals who tend to be the victims of harassment, whether male or female, describes very well, I think, members of the RCMP in particular. You talked about individuals who are outspoken and assertive. That's very much, I would suggest, what we've seen among women who are showing leadership in those areas, by joining the RCMP and advancing their own careers and being harassed by many of their fellow managers and so on. Yours was a perfect description of what we have heard in the case of the RCMP.

You mentioned the lack of leadership as well and said that it's a case of setting the tone to change the culture.

That's very difficult for an organization to do. Do you have anything else to recommend, over and above the comments you have made, that would deal with this kind of institution, which is male-dominated and highly respected by all of us, and which is struggling to make the changes? Have you had a chance to review any of the information they have put forward as to the kind of changes they plan to make within the organization?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Please keep your answer short, because we just have a few seconds.

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: I'm aware that they're trying to address it. They have now made it such that people have to report relationships, etc., and sexual interactions within the organization. But I am not familiar with everything they have tried to do.

There are some very good examples of leaders—military leaders, even the dean of the Harvard Business School, which has historically faced some of the same issues—coming out and explicitly addressing the problem and making it top on their agenda. And the change is almost immediate. Of course, you still have some bad apples, but the barrel is not as rotten, and they're not going to thrive.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you.

We'll now move to our second round of questioning, beginning with Ms. Ambler, for five minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to our guests today for three very interesting presentations.

Professor Welsh, I'd like to continue where my colleague Ms. James left off, with regard to reporting. We understand that in order to properly address an issue it's necessary to have the participation of both parties, and we respect the right of the respondent also to be involved in the process.

Is there an effective way to balance a desire for confidential reporting and on the other side to directly address the issue effectively? For example, does the severity of the incident affect whether a confidential report would be effective? In short, what are the benefits and drawbacks of providing a confidential reporting system?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: I think the issue of confidentiality sometimes can work in early stages, but the reality is that if someone is going forward with a formal complaint against someone and entering either an official quasi-legal process, such as a grievance procedure, or a legal process, then there has to be respect for the respondent wherein the respondent is aware there's a complaint and what the complaint is about, so that the respondent is able to speak to it.

Where confidentiality is an issue—and this is part of what happened in the situation with the death of Theresa Vince.... She initially wanted to be confidential with her managers and say: “I have a problem. My boss is engaging in inappropriate behaviour, and I would like to get some advice. But I also want you to take seriously that it's a complaint.” It's a case of allowing employees to be able to explore, to ask questions, and to have some of this early information-gathering on the part of a complainant be confidential. But I have seen, in the case of our sexual harassment officer here at U of T, and I have talked with others in other places, that there reaches a point at which you have to say to a complainant: “If you're going to take this further, it will not be confidential, because we have a right and a responsibility to allow the respondent to know this information.”

• (1250)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: In other words, at the early stages, it can be very helpful because it can make the difference between someone making a complaint and not making a complaint.

Dr. Sandy Welsh: It can make a difference in this early intervention, in terms of someone saying, “What are some things that we can do before I file a formal complaint?” It may mean somebody going and talking to the boss and saying that they've got an issue with this person, that they're doing all these inappropriate things and that maybe they should say something in your workplace that they're not going to condone these behaviours before it escalates to a point where someone feels they have no choice but to file a formal complaint.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: As for a potential drawback, one of those could be that perhaps a confidential complaint simply isn't taken seriously enough. Would there be any others?

Dr. Sandy Welsh: That's the risk and that's one of the black boxes of complaint procedures. You need the people receiving the complaint take it seriously, to listen to the person, and to not immediately dismiss it. If it's confidential, it doesn't necessarily mean that there's no record taken. If it's confidential, it doesn't necessarily mean that the person who is charged with taking these complaints doesn't write down on a particular day that something was said about this person.

What may happen is that after one, two, three, or five years, all of a sudden, the person taking the complaint realizes they're receiving a lot of comments about this one person. It puts them in a position where they may be more able to recommend either to their boss or to the complainants coming forward that maybe they should start thinking about formal complaints.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: When you ended your presentation, you wanted to talk about problem solving. I wanted to give you an opportunity to finish what you were going to say about that.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): You have 15 seconds left.

Dr. Sandy Welsh: I have to go back to where I was.

In terms of problem solving for complainants, I think my point was about ensuring that they have the supports in place and are able to get the things they need to move forward with their lives. I may be forgetting what you were referring to, so I apologize.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Madame Day, for our last question of the day.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Good afternoon.

I want to thank the professors and all these amazing women for taking part in our study today.

My first question is for Ms. Welsh.

You started to answer Ms. Ashton's question about how Status of Women Canada could play a role in all this. Could you please elaborate on that?

[*English*]

Dr. Sandy Welsh: Status of Women has a leadership role in Canada, not just for the federal workplace but for all workplaces. What Status of Women Canada is able to do in terms of setting a research agenda, whether it is their own agenda or contracting out to researchers like me and Professor Berdahl, is to drive the kinds of questions that we're asking and the kinds of information that we think we need to get in dealing with workplace harassment and violence.

I also think the guidelines that you put out and put in place for what employers need to think about in terms of the leadership needed, the training that may be needed, and information on the role of bystander intervention and such, is essential for those of us who work in the field and the employers that are looking for guidance, not just from the Human Rights Commission or from lawyers but also from a more holistic perspective.

Status of Women Canada could start to contribute to and really enhance and broaden the agenda in terms of what we expect our employers to do. The benefits of the recommendations that you're going to put in place for the federal government, for the RCMP in particular, will be very helpful for municipal fire departments and police departments, as well as companies in general, because these have the potential to come from a broader perspective than some of the materials we see coming out from a purely research and purely HR perspectives.

•(1255)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Ms. Berdahl, in a 2008 article, you examined the study of sexual harassment in the workplace over recent decades. You indicated that sexual harassment was no longer seen as just a women's issue. Could you tell us what the ratio of women versus men is? Is it 10 to 1? Who is most subject to harassment?

[*English*]

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: That's a good question.

We do not have enough systematic evidence on that. We can look at complaints, and men's complaints amount to perhaps one-third of complaints that women make—at least at the federal level. For example, in the U.S. in systematic surveys we find that about half of men report experiencing these kinds of behaviours, but only a fraction of those are found to be harassing or threatening. So I would put theirs on the order of 10%, if that of women being harassed is around 50%. So it's a fraction, but it is a significant fraction and proportion of men.

One thing I'd like to point out is the training of people. I teach MBA students—they're mostly men—and when I talk about the harassment of men, they get it, they understand it. Everybody has experienced these gender-based put-downs as men, and that helps train them to see it much more clearly from the woman's perspective.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: We heard from representatives of the Department of National Defence and police forces with a majority of male members. Do you think the situation is different or that the

problems are more blatant in organizations like the RCMP and the Canadian Forces? They told us that they received only one to three complaints about sexual harassment.

[*English*]

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: Are you asking me?

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Yes.

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: Did you say one to three complaints of sexual harassment against women or men? Could you rephrase the question?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: No, the witnesses said they didn't receive very many sexual harassment complaints at all, only very rarely, even though the environments in question were male-dominated. They claimed that there were around one, two or three complaints, not really any more than that. And I find that extremely hard to believe given that those workplaces are clearly male-dominated.

[*English*]

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl: We know that the number of complaints is very, very small compared to the number of incidents typically, and often the fewer the complaints doesn't necessarily mean the lesser the harassment going on, as Professor Welsh pointed out. There might be more intimidation and fear of complaining going on.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon): Thank you.

I want to thank all of the presenters we had here today for a great job. Well done, and now I'll now close the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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