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# **Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, March 1, 2018**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Anthony Housefather**



## Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

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• (1525)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.)):** It gives me great pleasure to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to order as we continue with our study of human trafficking in Canada. It is a great pleasure to welcome the distinguished members of our witness panel today. We are joined by former member of Parliament Joy Smith who is the founder and president of the Joy Smith Foundation. Welcome, Ms. Smith. We are joined by Diane Redsky who is the executive director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc., welcome. I think you're in Minnesota today.

**Ms. Diane Redsky (Executive Director, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.):** Yes I am I'm at an elders gathering so I appreciate the accommodation to make this work. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much for taking the time to be with us.

We also have Donald Bouchard and Mikhaela Gray, who is a graduate student in the faculty of education at York University.

Everyone has between eight and 10 minutes—closer to eight, if possible—and we'll go in the order that I read out on the agenda.

We will start with Ms. Smith. Ms. Smith, the floor is yours.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Founder and President, Joy Smith Foundation Inc.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's really nice to be back and to see the members around the table studying this very important topic.

As you know, I spent 11 years, four months, and 59 seconds in the House of Commons and passed the two bills, Bill C-268 involving mandatory minimums for traffickers of children 18 years and under, and Bill C-310, whereby the long arm of the Canadian law can reach into other countries when Canadian citizens or residents of Canada go abroad and exploit or traffic, and we can now bring them back to Canada to bring them to trial.

Going through the human trafficking issue in Parliament has been a process, because initially the good citizens of Canada often didn't know what human trafficking was, and that extended, Mr. Chair, right to parliamentarians. There has been a great change since the beginning of that time in people's understanding that there is human trafficking, so we've gone a long way in a very short time.

What brought me to Parliament then was working with the survivors of human trafficking, and I'm very pleased that Diane

Redsky is here today. She is the executive director of Ma Mawi and is like a sister to me. She has done amazing work.

I'm so pleased to have Donald Bouchard, who was a trafficker and who now is doing much to combat human trafficking. I am the total skeptic. I never believed he was really sincere, so I had to wait for a very, very long time—many, many years—and I saw the amazing work he was doing and the voice he had to dissuade traffickers from buying and selling kids.

I want to speak first of all to the fact that I read over the blues and I read over all of the other testimony. You had department heads in here, the RCMP and others, as well as the border patrols, talking about the progress we have made. I have to commend the members here for dealing with the issue of human trafficking.

I know that even Rob Nicholson—and I guess you're not Minister Nicholson, but MP Nicholson—at one time was skeptical. I'm writing a book called *I Just Didn't Know*, because when people find out, they want to do something, like MP Nicholson, like all of you around the table today, because human trafficking is basically the buying and selling of mostly underage girls, as well as some boys, and in some provinces the aboriginal community is highly overrepresented on this issue.

There are many definitions that people are confused about on human trafficking, and there are many I used. There is one I used when I was doing my bills, which was very well known, but I often say that if someone is being bought and sold, that's human trafficking. I think sometimes we get too caught up in the minutiae of definitions and things like that, but really what it's about is human beings.

Many girls have their power and their dignity and everything taken away from them because they are sold to somebody and forced to service men sexually. Girls are very highly represented, no matter what community they come from. The fact of the matter is that now parliamentarians in this House have to understand that we have to take very definitive steps to stop this from happening.

The national action plan reached its limit in March 2017. We need a national action plan to combat human trafficking, because it's not only the laws that are put in: we need safe houses and we need rehabilitation of the victims of human trafficking. We need to help them restore their lives.

We found that very critical. The foundation has put together an education program for grades 8 to 12, and I'm surprised at how many young girls—I've only had two boys, and the rest of them have all been girls—have come up and said, "I think my boyfriend is grooming me." In the school program they learn how the predators work and they learn how they gain their trust. It's just so insidious and hideous.

• (1530)

It's widely accepted. I think also it's very important that prostitution not be legalized in any way, because it puts more young girls at risk.

Parliamentarians can do specific things. The two that I've just mentioned, Mr. Chair, are extremely important. The national action plan to help rehabilitate the victims of human trafficking and make sure that they get the education and all the things they need to restart their lives is extremely important. As for the safe houses, I know there are places now all across this country where victims of human trafficking can go to be rehabilitated, but there aren't enough.

People call it prostitution, but I don't like to call it prostitution. I don't use that word. A young girl is lured; the trafficker gains her trust by giving her lots of praise and gifts and the vision that she'll get married some day, and then all of a sudden it all changes. They say they have to pay back all these gifts, and it becomes very hideous, very brutal. The kids are very scared. I could tell you a million stories, but I know in eight minutes I don't have time to do that. I'm trying to put a broad brush on the things that I see today in Parliament in 2018 that really need to be addressed.

How much time do I have?

**The Chair:** You are at 6:46, but take your time. I think we're all fascinated by what you're saying and I think you're giving us a lot of important information.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I think there are many Internet web crawlers that identify victims of human trafficking over the Internet just by looking at what's on the net. We live in a different world now. It's the world of the Internet. People say that it's all underground, and I can tell you that in a way it's because of the Internet. Today kids have cellphones and traffickers have cellphones. The control they have over these young people because of the Internet is just immeasurable. Backpage is where a lot of them are sold. You can find a lot of missing girls if you look at Backpage. I don't recommend it, because the police monitor Backpage, and you don't want to be one of the people looking at Backpage.

There are other things that people are missing, and I have two that I want to mention. One, in the aboriginal community it's my firm belief that... I don't like to hear on the news that these girls were in the sex trade and that they were sex trade workers. I think that's a lot of baloney. I think 90-some per cent of them were initially trafficked and lured into it, and then overnight they got into terrible situations. They don't even know what's going on, and then all of a sudden they become prostitutes or sex trade workers. I think we need to dig down deeper into that.

Another thing is that we have to pay huge attention to hotels. That's where it takes place. When you talk about the stroll, there's

very little stroll in this country anymore. If you look in hotels and houses, that's where the predators are taking their victims.

It's a very hideous crime. Mr. Chair, I've seen things I wish I'd never seen, because those visions never go away. We have to commend the front-line workers. We have to commend the police officers and the ICE units who work so hard and see things that most of us can't see, and also the leaders of NGOs, such as Diane Redsky and Megan Walker and people like that, who have worked in the field for so many years. I think that we have to have the capacity to make sure that those front-line workers have counselling and have someone to talk to. It's been 24 years this past Christmas that I've been trying to combat human trafficking, and I think that all of these things about front-line workers have not been addressed. They can't work effectively with their victims unless they too have some safeguards and are able to have the counselling they need.

We have a lot of work to do here in Canada. I don't want to take everybody's time, because we have some very insightful people at this committee today. I would hope that each parliamentarian would look very closely, because if you think it can't happen to your own families, you would be wrong. I've worked with families of parliamentarians, thank you very much. I have worked with mayors of cities whose children were trafficked. I have worked with a great panorama of people, and unless we stop human trafficking in Canada and make sure that there are consequences there for the traffickers... I have learned over time, too. You have before you Donald Bouchard, who was a trafficker. Back in the day when I knew him and what he was doing, I was dreaming about cement shoes, and that's not very nice, but the fact of the matter is that people do change too.

We have to all get together and combat human trafficking in a very meaningful way. I think that the testimony, and of course Mikhaela, who is studying it... I'm ready glad that she's here.

I think today we have a great opportunity, and I look forward to the questions coming forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Smith, for all of your work and advocacy on this issue.

We'll go to Ms. Redsky now.

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** Thank you. I'm going to do a quick time check so that I use my eight minutes wisely. I'm reading from notes that I sent in advance.

I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to be here and for accommodating the video, as well as thank Joy Smith for helping me get on this important agenda.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Anishinaabe territory, both in Duluth and in Ottawa, that we all have the privilege of being on.

I have broken up my presentation into three areas. I'm going to talk fast, so I feel bad for the interpreters, but I have lots to say and I'm going to use my time wisely. Those three areas are national recommendations, promising practices, and how this committee can help the front lines. My speaking notes have been provided.

The focus of my presentation on human trafficking will be on the purposes of sexual exploitation, also known as sex trafficking. There are several intersections between labour and sex trafficking, but for the purposes of this presentation I'll only be focusing in on sex trafficking from a national, front-line, and indigenous perspective.

Please keep in mind that human trafficking is based on supply and demand. There will be always be a supply as long as there is a demand for human trafficking. Girls and women will continue to be bought and sold as long as the laws allow men to buy them. Sex trafficking is rooted in greed, misogyny, racism, classism, and sexism at its very worst. Sex trafficking is a 100% preventable crime.

Before I begin, it is important for all of us to acknowledge the survivors of sex trafficking, whether they are currently being victimized or on their lifelong healing journey. Their voice is often not heard, and I strongly encourage this committee, in a trauma-informed way, to seek their input, advice, guidance and, most importantly, their support and blessings of your recommendations.

My first point is on the national recommendations. In 2014, I was part of a national task force on sex trafficking of women and girls in Canada with the best experts and leaders in Canada. This remains the most relevant report and research on the issue and can be found on the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre website. The final task force report, entitled "No More", outlines 34 recommendations on how to end sex trafficking in Canada. There are seven recommendations that are specific to this committee, and they are about the laws.

Number one is to enforce the human trafficking and sexual exploitation laws that we currently have.

Number two is to give trafficked women and girls a reason to come forward. We need to change the Criminal Code to focus on the traffickers' actions and not the victims' beliefs, history, or behaviour. We need to increase the civil causes of action and civil forfeiture procedures to return the profits of traffickers to victims. We need to engage expert witnesses to support victim testimony and make testimonial aids available for trafficking victims.

Number three—this is important for women to rebuild their lives—is to vacate and purge records for non-violent crimes committed as a direct result of trafficking.

Number four is to increase police capacity to provide victim-centred services.

Number five, strengthen protections for migrant women and girls.

Number six, end the municipal regulatory patchwork of Canada's sex industry.

Number seven, decriminalize women and girls who sell or who have sold sex, and undercut the demand for trafficked women and girls by criminalizing those who buy sex. This is also known as the Swedish model.

The second area I'd like to focus on is promising practices. I would ask that this committee look to the Manitoba strategy, launched in 2002. It was the first strategy in Canada to address sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. The strategy is entitled Tracia's Trust, in memory of Tracia Owen. Manitoba was the only province in Canada up until 2006 to have a strategy. Now, 14 years

later, Ontario has a provincial strategy to address sexual exploitation and trafficking. I ask that you look particularly to Manitoba and the comprehensive strategy that exists, which includes a combination of services, laws, and public education and prevention, as a whole strategy .

This is comprehensive. I can't get into the whole strategy, but for the purposes of today, I want to highlight that Manitoba invests \$11 million in that provincial strategy to address sexual exploitation and trafficking. This is based on a population of 1.2 million. No other province even comes close to the amount of investment that Manitoba makes, and this is still not enough.

● (1540)

However, as a result of the provincial strategy, several unique resources have been developed. At Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, we opened up one of the first safe houses for girls 13 to 17, and we operate the only rural healing lodge in Canada for child victims of sex trafficking. That was opened in 2010. We also have specialized training programs for survivors.

Our great success in Manitoba has been because of local action led by grassroots community, by indigenous women leaders, and by an experiential advisory committee of survivors who are guiding and directing the development of service. Who best to answer the questions and give us the answers but experiential women, women with lived experience?

Manitoba also has a dedicated provincial human trafficking hotline. We also have a dedicated prosecution office that specializes in sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. Winnipeg has one of the rare policing agencies in Canada with a specialized counter-sexual exploitation unit with the best and brightest of our law enforcement officers, because we need that in order to address the demand and help women.

Most importantly, these services are developed, led, and operated by many indigenous organizations, along with survivors of sex trafficking, because of the overrepresentation of indigenous girls. I emphasize the word "girls". These are girls who are under the age of 18 who are targeted for sex trafficking. There's a huge market for indigenous women and girls to victimize.

We have the only provincial human trafficking act, which I encourage you to look at as well. There is also collaboration with our United States partners in North Dakota. Manitoba and North Dakota have a network of agencies and law enforcement that are working together, because sex trafficking doesn't care about borders.

What we hear from our girls at Hands of Mother Earth—our rural healing lodge that we've operated since 2010 and our safe house—and what we know about the victimization of indigenous girls 13 to 17 is that their sexual exploitation started young, as young as 9. They are groomed and lured both online and in person. Girls from northern first nation communities are at particular risk.

The control by the trafficker can take on many forms. He poses as a boyfriend, a drug dealer, an uncle, a father figure, a daddy, or an older man supplying them with drugs and a place to stay. They are coerced to perform sex acts as many as six to 10 times a day, seven days a week, and hand over their money or bring the equivalent of drugs back. Survivors describe this experience as multiple incidents of paid rape.

Meth is becoming a huge factor in controlling girls. A girl is more profitable to a trafficker than an adult woman. Trauma bonding with their trafficker makes it very difficult to intervene within that relationship, and we really need to understand that power dynamic. Most are trafficked because they are children in the care of Child and Family Services, and many of them have had multiple placements in their lives.

Who makes up the demand? There are many men. It's not just a few doing lots of bad things. There are lots of men doing bad things. The traffickers are just as diverse as the demand and the men who are sexually abusing and violating our girls. Unlike drugs, which you can only sell once, human trafficking is all about recruiting and luring women and girls because one woman or girl can be sold over and over again. We don't just have a few victims in Manitoba. We have hundreds of girls in Manitoba each day.

I also have to acknowledge the power of survivors. These girls have been let down by systems and adults their entire little life. Yet, under the right kind of supportive environment—trauma-informed; indigenous-led; survivors employed as helpers, which we refer to as heart medicine work—they thrive on their healing journey, and many have become survivor leaders. In fact, our rural healing lodge and safe house currently employs several young women who were once in the program and now work for the program to help other girls.

The third part—and I've almost finished—is that I have four recommendations to this committee on how this committee can help.

• (1545)

One, renew the national action plan, and when you renew it, emphasize this time the funding to front-line services.

Two, data collection is critically important, but don't let that hold you back. Do that in conjunction with other policy and funding programs. We just need a coordinated way and one definition. While some are looking to answer how many trafficking victims there are, there are front-line organizations like ours, and many others on the ground, who can't keep up with the volume of victims who are coming forward.

Three, we need a whole improvement of victim service strategy that is directly connected to lifelong healing and not contingent on being involved in the court system. We lose too many girls to suicide while they go through the court system. Women and girls need that support in order to rebuild their lives. Finally, but very importantly, to build on what Joy Smith was saying, do not repeal Bill C-36.

Please, please make sure with regard to Bill C-36, the protection of communities and exploited persons act. Advocates like me and many others across Canada have worked really hard to bring the voices of victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking into this conversation. Our experience has come from many years of working on the front lines with girls and women whose voices are often not heard.

Buying sex from women and girls is violence against women, period. The most harmful impacts are to indigenous women and girls. We need the laws to benefit us and not perpetuate racism and create further harm. We have to make the laws work for indigenous women and girls rather than make it easier for perpetrators to victimize. If Bill C-36 is repealed, it will completely immobilize our ability to protect women and girls from perpetrators. You will make traffickers entrepreneurs, and tie the hands of police to address the high demand. For example, Winnipeg police made 84 arrests in 2016, doubled that in 2017, and will continue to do so. We need those tools for police in order to address the demand.

It makes sense to criminalize the demand. I am hopeful that since we looked to our Swedish friends for guidance on launching Canada's women's equality budget, we can also continue to keep the current Canadian version of the Swedish model in Bill C-36 that criminalizes the purchase of sex while ensuring that victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking are not criminalized.

*Meegwetch.* Thank you.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Redsky, for your very helpful testimony and the experience you bring to the committee.

Now we'll move to Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Donald Bouchard (As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the invite. I really appreciate it.

It's not easy for me to be here today. It's humiliating, but it's important because I was there and I know how these predators think.

The only reason I'm alive today and able to tell my story is that one day I went into a chapel where I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ, and I had people around me who helped me understand the gravity of my lifestyle. They taught me how to make things right so I was able to go back across the country to every place I had trafficked, face the victims, face every criminal act I had committed, and make amends. With all this, I was able to clean up my life and go to the roots of my problem. It is very important for people to change, whether they're a victim or a trafficker. We need to address the root. Once I eradicated this root, my life changed and I became a pastor.

Today, I hear a lot of testimony from victims, how they were lured into this trade, how they were abused, and how they kept it secret. One of the biggest things traffickers use is they take away your self-esteem, your dignity, and they try very hard to make you drug dependent.

I talk to victims, and I was interviewing one yesterday morning. She was in a teen challenge program that I put her in about a year ago, and now she's coming out with flying colours. She was telling me that when she was out there, one of the guys that she was with, the gang leader, was looking outside his window by a schoolyard. He asked if she saw those girls. He said they were walking ATMs. They want to lure girls from 9 to 14 because that's the demand nowadays.

Once they fall victim to this abuse, a lot of these girls lose their self-esteem and dignity, and they suffer from Stockholm syndrome. They develop empathy for the abuser. It's a high crime in our country and it needs to be punished to the extreme.

Had I been punished in the days years ago when I was in this trade, it would have discouraged me, but the law wasn't there to punish me and it was overlooked. I'm so glad today there are people fighting against it like Joy Smith. I joined her effort to change these laws.

The more a trafficker is discouraged, the more we're going to cut down on this situation. Today I do a jail ministry. I do a lot of street ministry. I've trained about 50 people to work the streets with me, trying to reach as many people as we can. Of course, the girls aren't on the streets as they used to be, but it gives us a lot of contacts.

Not that long ago as I was ministering in a prison, one of the girls was introduced to me and said she used to do what I did. Her mother trained her how to traffic. This modern-day slavery is a big problem. The girls are now being recruited because it's easier for a girl to recruit another girl, so it's extended; it's just beyond human measure. She was trafficking, I think, five or six girls and she was only 17 years old.

I think traffickers need to be punished to the maximum. Traffickers are heartless, they're ruthless, and all they want to do is abuse the person until there's nothing left. I remember when I went back on the streets two years after my conversion to make restitution, and some of these girls that I had been with were walking skeletons, completely destroyed. When you tell them there's a better life out there, they just don't know where to turn.

I'm so happy when I see facilities like Joy Smith's, places that are made available like you have over there. A lot of these girls don't

know where to go. I find a lot of resources are there for police officers to pursue drug dealers. They'll spend months tracking drug dealers, but those resources I don't think are available to track down predators like human traffickers. I think if that was to happen, we'd see a big difference; this enterprise would collapse within a short period of time. These traffickers are cowards, they're ruthless, and they don't care for human life.

I was with a partner back then who trained me. He even kidnapped girls, travelled with them, and forced them into the trade. They had no choice. The more you make them dependent...sometimes these girls have tracks all the way up their arms. All they want now is their next fix, just to kill the pain. That's how these predators take advantage of them until finally they just die of an overdose or a disease.

●(1555)

And then it's on to the next one. They don't care if they die. As you were saying, they're reusable. As soon as they're finished, there's nothing left for them. They're just left there on a scrap heap.

A lot of these people who buy sex have extreme fantasies about beating up the girls and abusing them sexually. These traffickers who promise protection are never there. While the girls are getting beaten up, these guys are in the bars and they're in these hotel rooms smoking crack. I find that with crystal meth, it's gotten worse now because it's affordable, so for a lot of the young girls who can't afford crack or heroin, it's much easier for them to get a \$5 or \$10 hit of crystal meth.

As one of the victims was telling me this week, once you're on crystal meth, it doesn't matter anymore what happens to your body, because that's all you want, and you lose your senses. This girl was living in abandoned buildings in Winnipeg, a beautiful girl. Her parents came to me and asked if I could help their daughter. Her senses were gone. I didn't think there was hope, but I'm so thankful that Teen Challenge took her and they gave her a life.

The support is so important for these girls, to get them back to thinking properly and to understanding that they don't have to identify themselves with the trauma they went through for the rest of their lives. They need support and they need care. I think we need more facilities. A lot of people I train on the streets, when they find a girl, ask where they can send her from there. There are a lot of drug addiction programs but very few for the girls who have been abused and trafficked.

I think if human trafficking or prostitution were legalized, that would give traffickers a green card and it would completely spiral out of control. I know that if I were to go back onto the streets today, which is inconceivable, that I could make \$5,000 a day from human trafficking and I would face very little resistance.

I really feel that it's very important for this issue to be addressed. A lot of these girls are controlled at gunpoint. I remember one of the girls who worked for me was in the hallway at the hotel and she told my partner, "I want to quit. I can't do this anymore. Every time I turn a trick I want to vomit." And he pulled a gun and he put it to her head. He said, "There's no quitting in here." Luckily someone opened their hotel room and she ran in there and rescued herself. It's just the way it is. From there on, she feared for her life because she was at risk of being caught for ratting him out.

It's very important for these girls to find a place of refuge as well, when they come out of human trafficking.

Everybody is someone's child. This is my motto, so when I go out on the street, my job is to really retrieve these children who have been lured into this. I can spot them from a mile away. To me bringing back a child to his parents is vital. There's nothing that can compare to that.

When I was a human trafficker, I remember a 14-year-old girl came to me. She had been promised such glamour and she wanted me to put her on the streets. I made sure she wouldn't go out there and got her back to her father. But today it's not like that. The younger they get them.... nine to 14 years old is what they want, that's the demand, because now it's gotten to be a lot sicker than it was back then. They really prey on the most vulnerable people, and that's why it's very vital for me to put my neck out. Today I'm the father of three children, and to me children are very valuable. Even now that I'm older and I'm a businessman, I'm putting my neck out because I want to save these children and these young girls from this tragedy.

Thank you very much.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for having the courage to share your story with us. I'm really glad that you've turned into somebody who is helping people now. That's wonderful. Thank you.

Now we'll move to Ms. Gray.

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray (Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, York University, As an Individual):** Thank you for inviting me to share with you today.

I would also like to thank the committee for launching an investigation on this important issue.

I'd also like to recognize and thank the women and girls who have shared their trafficking stories with me and the many people guiding and supporting me in this research.

I'm a master's student at York University and I'm completing my thesis on education and human trafficking.

My mother's best friend, Sarah, was sold into sex trafficking in Ontario when she was 11 years old. They reconnected a few years ago. After hearing her story, I became involved in an anti-trafficking task force that supports a potential safe house in York Region, Canada, and a home in Kolkata, India. I was shocked to learn that the trafficking of persons is a growing problem in Canada. Over 90% of people who are trafficked in Canada are born in Canada. Further investigation revealed that reintegration programs in India were

developed and well known to the public. However, such programs are less prevalent in Canada. I hypothesize that because human trafficking is prevalent and openly spoken about, both in the media and in the schools, developing resources that are equally and openly discussed and well known becomes possible.

Through conducting research in West Bengal, India, I examined the role of education and vocational training in reintegrating women who have been trafficked back into society. In November 2017, I conducted a one-month qualitative study where women and girls who have been trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation were invited to share their stories. In addition, I interviewed front-line workers, who support people who have been trafficked, and an in-depth literature review was undertaken. Trafficking exploits and undervalues women and girls across borders. Both developing and developed nations are affected.

You might be asking yourself, why India?

Human trafficking in India is growing exponentially. In response, there are many programs to support people who have been trafficked in India. The stories of women who have been exploited in India can help inform best practices to support women who have been trafficked in the Canadian context.

This research study shows that education is vitally important in combatting human trafficking. First, education is needed to fight trafficking, through changing mindsets and empowering women and girls. Second, education and vocational training are needed to rehabilitate people who have been trafficked.

The findings go beyond education to show that long-term reintegration strategies must include employment and housing, but that there is a lack of reliable data.

I will speak to each of these findings and propose recommendations. This is not to undermine existing efforts and initiatives Canada has put in place, but rather, it is to enrich them through proposing a strategy of empowerment that works directly with those who have lived through trafficking.

Education is a weapon against trafficking. It can help reduce the number of people who are trafficked.

Human trafficking is a gender inequality issue. As Statistics Canada indicated in their statement on February 27, the majority of perpetrators of sex trafficking in Canada are men and the majority of people who are trafficked for sex are women. These facts are also true in the global context.

Education can combat systemic injustices, like gender inequality, which is contributing to the growth of human trafficking.

First, gender-sensitive approaches to education in schools should be considered. Girls need to be empowered to understand their value and rights. As well, we need to educate boys about how to respect and understand the value of girls. As UNESCO states, "Gender sensitivity helps to generate respect for the individual regardless of sex."



Second, both boys and girls need to be taught about sex trafficking. We heard that girls, as young as nine years old, are being trafficked in Canada, so we need to reach the next generation, as early as grade 6.

Third, a national strategic approach to education and human trafficking should be considered to ensure that all young people are reached, as an integral preventative measure.

One of the five main risk factors that make an individual vulnerable to trafficking is a low level of education. Almost half of the people who have been trafficked have not completed high school. Poverty is also a barrier to girls completing and having access to powerful forms of education that inform them of their value and rights, thus making them vulnerable to trafficking. Due to their lack of education and financial needs, women and girls can also be re-trafficked, after they are rescued.

• (1605)

We need to ensure that women and girls have access to education particularly for communities identified as vulnerable. This includes creating further access to high school and especially post-secondary schooling in remote areas, for example. Funding and resources to increase access to higher education is needed.

The study reveals that education and vocational training empowered women and girls. As a result of education participants hope to contribute to society in a myriad of ways. Including helping other women who have also been trafficked. Education and training, although empowering, without a platform is limiting. Many women become re-trafficked.

One successful model of reintegration that I researched in India is freedom businesses. Freedom businesses provide dignified employment for women who have been trafficked. This concept is comparable to a social enterprise. These businesses provide the support and care needed to transition into society including a community of women with shared life experiences and counsellors. Shrishti, the Loyal Workshop and Freeset are three freedom businesses I visited in India.

Through a preliminary environmental scan, I have only been able to find one freedom business in Canada. A Canadian initiative by Huronia Transition Homes entitled Operation Grow was launched in January 2017. More freedom businesses in Canada may exist, but the point I would like to highlight is this. As a graduate student, I have an abundance of resources at my finger tips. If there are more freedom businesses and I am struggling to find them, how much more difficult would it be for someone who has been trafficked to know about them? This is a problem. There is a need for Canada to explore implementing freedom businesses across Canada, as well as to amplify existing efforts.

Housing for women who have been trafficked is an integral piece of reintegration. In India, I visited a place called Mahima Home, which has four different homes related to human trafficking. At two of the homes the women and girls receive medical care, food, clothes, counselling, life skills, legal support, education, vocational training and job placements through partnerships with freedom businesses. There are extensive reintegrations strategies. The participants in the study identified that the home empowered them

and helped them prepare for their futures. Many of the women expressed hope.

The SA Foundation is an example of a Canadian organization that is currently modelling a best practice for housing and reintegrating women who have been trafficked. In Canada, more housing tailored for women who have been trafficked that provides holistic care and facilitates reintegration is needed, including stage one emergency safe houses.

Second, sustainable funding for integrated supports and housing is needed.

In Canada, the most common age of trafficked women and girls is 13 or 14 years old. We need to consider who is vulnerable to trafficking in Canada and why? Whether because of religion, the legacy of colonialism and residential schools, access to higher education, gender or poverty. This is a history that we Canadians must learn to accept and work towards redressing.

My mother's best friend was sold into trafficking in Ontario. Forty years ago, young girls were sold for commercial sexual exploitation in Canada. Today, the issue is not only ongoing but growing.

In conclusion, education is needed on multiple fronts to combat human trafficking. But a massive concern is that there is lack of reliable data in Canada. We need to look at human trafficking from an interdisciplinary lens to address its complexities. The academic community could be mobilized to support research and create evidence informed approaches. We need to analyze existing efforts to determine gaps, program effectiveness and funding needs. Researchers, educators, data analysts and scholars need to work together to combat this issue and help end this injustice.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to any questions.

• (1610)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Gray for sharing your research with us. It is much appreciated. I'm glad that somebody like yourself went into this field and is giving us information to be useful for the committee.

Now we'll move to questions.

We will start with Mr. Nicholson.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Thank you very much to our witnesses here. This was very helpful. It's not easy to come here to give us all this information and this testimony. I can tell you that it's all very valuable.

I want to make one statement here concerning a great documentary that's been put out by the Joy Smith Foundation. It's called *Human Trafficking: Canada's Secret Shame*. It's about an hour and a half. I and the members of my staff who are here all watched it. I recommend it to the committee here. It was very moving to see the different people. Mr. Bouchard, you were there as a part of that. It was great.

Congratulations to you, Joy, and all those who put that together because that's like the legislation that you introduced to Parliament. These are lasting efforts in this particular area.

Joy, you said that the people who get into this business are looking for victims. They go on the computer to try to zero in on victims. Are there people, as well, who are trying to help to look for these victims on the computer to see if they can do anything to help?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I talked about the webcrawlers that police officers use and people like that. They try to intercept things, but there are too few resources in my opinion right now to intercept in a really effective way. Diane mentioned the Winnipeg Police Force, Peel Regional Police. They're getting very forward-thinking. Dominic Monchamp in Montreal has done a lot. He's worked over 2,000 files in Montreal.

The reason we started the education program is we wanted to prevent this from happening. As Mikhaela said, the more people know about it and, as Donald said, the more ramifications are out there for traffickers, the better, because it's going to take a nation to stop this. Everybody has his or her role.

It's surprising what families are touched by this. It doesn't matter. People like to talk about children at risk. If you're a girl, you're at risk. If you're a young boy now.... I was in Victoria and I was giving presentations of Victoria B.C. All the young boys came up. I didn't have one woman. It was all young boys. I think we have to make this known. There have to be ramifications to it. As Diane and Donald said, legalizing prostitution is not the way to do it.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** [*Inaudible*] made a very good point on the documentary, that one man who was saying, "I don't fit any stereotypes about people being exploited. I never would have guessed in my life that my daughter would get victimized.", but in fact, it shows that it can happen to anybody.

Ms. Redsky, you said we have to make sure we criminalize those who commit these crimes. On the documentary it talked about John schools, that apparently people can get charged in this, the men who are involved in this can get charged with this. They go to John school and everything is kept quite, it's not publicised, and they don't get a criminal record. Do you think that's effective in dealing with this problem or do you think that's part of the problem?

•(1615)

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** [*Technical difficulty*] to address the demand. When you take a look at changing any behaviour, like quitting smoking, drinking and driving, and all of those, why did those work? They worked because you had laws in place that criminalized the negative behaviour and you had public education and awareness.

Specifically with the john schools, we have to remember that the charge that they're getting is a summary offence, so it's actually a public nuisance charge with a summary offence that propels them into john school. We really need to be as a society and as Canadians saying that violence against women is serious enough that it should be an indictable offence.

However, that being said, for police officers to be able to intervene in that moment when they need to separate a trafficker from a victim they need all the tools in order to make that possible. The prostitution legislation that propels them into john school is one of

those ways. If that's what it takes, that's certainly something I support.

What we have done in Winnipeg is doubled the numbers of charges related to communication and the prostitution in Bill C-36. Those resources typically are used for going into helping women and girls. There is now a larger pot of money because they're arresting more of the demand. There's a larger pot of money that now community organizations can do something with to support victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Let me ask you how well we're doing on that. You said in your testimony that there are hundreds every day being victimized, and you said the number of charges has doubled to 184. What do you think the problems are? Do these things end up as convictions in your analysis of this or are they getting off or pleading to lesser charges?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** It's a combination of a number of things. We have to remember that this is volume. There are hundreds of girls because there are hundreds of men who are driving the demand for the supply to happen.

Manitoba is the most progressive province in the country when it comes to addressing sex trafficking, and we can't even keep up. The sexual exploitation and sexualization of women and girls as a commodity is so normalized in our society, and it is going to take a big education. It's going to take our government, which is on the right stream in terms of women's equality and the work that it's doing in that area. When you empower women and girls, you automatically change a family, a community, and a nation. That's where I'd like to see a lot of emphasis put.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Your testimony, and the testimony of your colleagues here today, are all a big help in that particular area.

Monsieur Bouchard, let me ask about one very moving incident that you talked about, the girl who was being trafficked and someone discovered that her trafficker had a gun to her head. I think to this day she said she's scared of being ratted out.

Did this guy ever get convicted? Can you tell us what happened on that end of it?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** The strange thing is that I was in my hotel room when that happened. He did this right outside my hotel room. The hotel was surrounded by about 20 cop cars. They called me from the lobby and said, "This is the Calgary Police. Come out of your room, hands behind your head." When I came out of my room, there were shotguns at every end of the hall. They threw me to the ground and handcuffed me. The chief of police of Calgary knew what I was doing, so he was asking where my partner was at and I just lied my way through it. Finally, he couldn't arrest me for anything because there was no real law at that time to find any guilt.

The cops back then made my life a living hell. They looked for him. I took Delroy with the kidnapped girl to Regina, and he said, "We're going to move out of this town." I got mad at him and said, "You brought so much heat in the hotel..". We used to run that whole monarch towers with the prostitution and crack.

We went to Regina, and that's where we faced the most opposition, because it was an RCMP training town. He hid for months and months, and he was finally caught. I think he served a very low sentence for that. I don't know is it was two years or 18 months, and then he was forced to get a job on probation, which means he did that and continued in prostitution and human trafficking.

• (1620)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** He got back into the business then once he —?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** They never...these guys are ashamed of work. To them, having a job is the most shameful thing. There are nightclubs packed with these players who are there doing that, and there's so little done about it.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Going back to that hotel, were they aware that this was taking place?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** The whole hotel was basically consecrated for human trafficking and crack.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Did that get into the local newspapers, or were papers very careful about not identifying the—

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** When I was in Calgary, and this was over 20 years ago, there were just as many men being trafficked as girls. In Montreal, it's the same thing. When you get the race cars out there, the Indy races, whenever there are towns with great events.... Regina was a convention town, so there became a very great demand for human trafficking, but Calgary especially, because of the stampede and then the oil at that time. There was a lot of money there, so all the traffickers would go to that area.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** The hotel owners would be aware of this? They'd understand that this was taking place within their confines?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** They're all in it together.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Oh, I see, okay.

Do you think, Joy, that more could be done, you know what I mean, in terms of identifying where these crimes take place, or is everybody careful about not...?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** There are definitely things that can be done.

I had a case in Toronto where a 12-year-old was held in a room for a whole week. Suspicions were all around that particular room because men kept going into it. I asked the cleaning lady whether there was something going on there, and she said she didn't want to have anything to do with it. Something was going on.

Eventually that particular girl jumped out of a window. She wasn't really hurt and we got her to safety, but she wouldn't speak against her perpetrators. She did tell me that there were many kids taken to that hotel.

I think there has to be definitive direction to hoteliers about.... They should be advertising their hotels as clean hotels.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Is that hotel still in the business of assisting in the trafficking of young girls?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I suspect it is.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Would you like to tell us who it was?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** You need [*Inaudible*] the consequences.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

We'll move to Ms. Khalid.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Firstly, thank you to all the witnesses for your very compelling testimony.

To continue the line of questioning of Mr. Nicholson, something that is becoming more and more prevalent now, as I was reading a news article, is the use of Airbnbs as a place to traffic young women and boys. That makes it even more difficult to track and to find where these acts are happening.

Mr. Bouchard, you spoke about the hotels kind of being in it together with the perpetrators and then the traffickers themselves. How does it work? Is it kind of like a small business, in which you, an individual, get a few young women or boys to traffic, or is there a network or more of an organized crime type of community in this specific industry?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** Years ago it was dedicated to organized crime. I know because my father-in-law was a hit man for the mafia. In that day it was more in organized crime. Today I find it's just any guy who decides to make money. He hears from someone else that it's so easy to traffic, so you'll get one guy getting one or two girls. They have these strolls of hotels, especially in Montreal, I find. There's a specific street there, Saint-Jacques, where cheap motels at the time were \$25 to \$50. The girls rent that room for the night. The hotel clerk knows all about it, but he's getting 75% to 80% of his business from this trafficking, so he will never, ever report it. Of course, he'd be afraid to.

When I was in Regina, I got kicked out of every hotel. It wasn't because they reported me, because they were so afraid; it was because the "moralities" that were taking care of this human trafficking at the time would visit the hotels and go through the book in the lobby and they would track down the names, and then they would ask, "Where do you think this guy is? This is the guy we're looking for." So they would take the key from the clerk and come and open our doors and bust us, right? But, again, they couldn't arrest us. They would just move us from one hotel to the other. So eventually what happened is, in Regina, I had absolutely nowhere to go, and I thought that was a great way to get rid of predators. But then they'd just move on to another place, where it becomes easy, like big cities. It's very, very hard to control because the income from these hotels comes primarily from human trafficking; that's how big the demand is. In the Monarch Towers, for example, almost every room was used for that.

• (1625)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Wow.

Ms. Smith, I firstly want to thank you for spending a lifetime on this very important issue.

Now I'll ask you this, and also Ms. Redsky. In terms of the victims you deal with, is there any kind of central body that you report data to, in terms of how many victims you are helping to serve, what kind of measures are being taken, the age or the gender of these victims, etc.? Is there a central data collection that even organizations working in collaboration perhaps are working to build?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** No. I've worked over 2,332 files. I have them in my foundation. However, that's over many years, and anything that I know about I report immediately to the police authorities in the province where it occurs. The fact of the matter is that we need to have formal data-gathering of these cases, and we need to have partnerships between police forces and NGOs.

Right now what's happening is that a lot of not-for-profit charities deal with trafficking victims, and a lot of the trafficking victims don't like them to call the police. It makes it very difficult for the police. I think the laws coming in have helped victims speak out, the very brave ones. It's like parents. It's very hard to get a parent to speak out after their child has been trafficked, because they're embarrassed about it. I don't know why. It's not their fault; it's the predator's fault.

I think we have to be very forward-thinking in getting this data gathered. When Diane was on the Women's Foundation, they did a marvellous job of gathering data about the number of victims of human trafficking. Their number was thousands ahead of the RCMP number, and my own son is RCMP. I'm very pro-police—I'm the most pro-police person—but they're usually about four years behind because they're so busy fighting multiple crimes, including huge drug and human-trafficking crimes, that I really think it takes government and parliamentarians to help put in a data collection mechanism.

People say they're going to. In the budget I just heard about a national phone line that could be called in to, but you need more than that. You need data gathering that's on the minute, right now.

Before I came to Parliament, I had a master's degree in education in mathematics and science. When we studied statistics, we learned that there are different ways of taking statistics. When I came to Parliament, I would see one group gathering statistics this way, and NGOs gathering statistics in another way. Someone should wake up to the fact that when non-governmental organizations are finding that they're dealing with thousands of human traffickers, and then we see what police forces have, and they're going by just the actual convictions they get. They're doing better and better in their statistics now, but they need to be current, because what happened two years ago is much different from what is happening now.

When I first came to Parliament, nobody knew about human trafficking. Don't blame them, because there was nothing on paper. In Parliament, if you put a bill down, you have to prove everything you do, and it's really difficult. You know something is going on, but you have to prove it, so you have to get multiple victims to talk, and that data gathering to this day is not very accurate.

I strongly recommend that this needs to be looked at, but it's not from just one source. It has to be from non-governmental organizations, from the aboriginal community, from police forces,

from border patrols, from all these different organizations. We need to work together. Our tag line for the foundation is "working together to end human trafficking", and I don't see that togetherness coming out in a real-world way so that the end product is such that you know exactly what's going on.

I hope that has answered your question.

● (1630)

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Thanks very much.

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

Mr. Rankin is next.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Thank you.

I'd like to say to all of the witnesses just how moving and important your presentations were.

I'd like to start, if I could, with Ms. Redsky. I'm focused on the disproportionate number of indigenous girls and women who are involved, and I'm wondering if there are certain systemic failures that make indigenous girls more susceptible to human trafficking, whether it's foster care, police attitudes, racism, or simply poverty. Have you given thought to that? What would you suggest we do about it?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** Well, actually as an indigenous woman myself, we live it every day, in fact. The systems continue to perpetuate creating vulnerability for indigenous women and girls, and we have countless examples just in this year alone, of how systems have failed us and continue to fail us.

The Native Women's Association of Canada did a report, with which I agree, and concluded that we're over-policed and under-protected. There are a number of factors that play into that, and colonization is the biggest culprit that created poverty, that created the racism. And there is a market for indigenous women and girls. We actually created and allowed Canada to create disposable women, and those disposable women—who cares what happens to them—are indigenous women.

Both traffickers and the men, because they're separate.... In the supply and the demand there are the traffickers and then you have the consumers and they're oftentimes separate. They are targeting indigenous women and girls because it's easier, for one. And it's easier because women and girls continue to be vulnerable to being recruited and lured, plus they can make more money because indigenous women and girls are experiencing way more violence, being trafficking victims, in comparison to non-indigenous victims. Again, it's because they can be.

In the late 1990s we had an aboriginal justice inquiry on the death of Helen Betty Osborne and that concluded that, as a society, we have marginalized indigenous women so much that these men who killed Helen Betty Osborne saw women as promiscuous and really of no human value. You can do what you want, and you can get away with it. That is the sad reality of indigenous women in Canada today.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Building on that very compelling answer, how can we begin to address the abuse at the hands of men that seems to be essentially socially sanctioned, if I can call it that? How do we make society understand that it's absolutely unacceptable for men to buy girls?

For example, we talked about the importance of Bill C-36. Maybe we have to provide better name and shame type of arrangements so the perpetrators are publicized. That is one way.

In general, have you given thought to how we might make it more socially unacceptable for this to occur?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** I think we're on a good path in looking at gender equality and that whole conversation in Canada, but the answers are within the indigenous communities themselves, and the leadership is there. Given the right kind of opportunity, the right kind of proper resource development, those voices can be heard and can start shifting the consciousness of Canadians. The role and the gift and the capacity and the proper leadership of indigenous women is... We can do that, but it must be led by the indigenous communities in partnership. We have to get rid of the inequality of indigenous women.

In fact, we can even lock this in and get into the conversation about the Indian Act. The Indian Act is there because we're considered less than human. We need extra laws—not just the laws everybody else has, but more rules than everybody else, because we're considered less than human. Not until we as a society start looking at working together and using the resources and the leadership that already exist in the indigenous community can we start shifting the conversation.

I don't like overusing “reconciliation”, but that's a really important part, and it does require equality.

• (1635)

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** I have so many questions and I know I have so little time.

Have I got time for another one?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** You said specifically, if I can remember your exact words, that we need to give women and girls the incentives to come forward. How?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** Currently, in the current court system, there's no incentive for women to come forward. In fact, you end up as a victim. You're the one who ends up on trial. It takes two to five years for a conviction that maybe is one year or two years. The whole time you are re-victimized and re-traumatized. There's really no incentive at all for women to come forward and be part of the court process.

We're recommending that we need to clean that up so that we can have more convictions, and we can have more people being criminalized and accountable for their bad behaviour and their violence against women.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Well, it's funny, because I thought I heard you talk about—perhaps it was another witness—the importance of keeping the law. You certainly said that about Bill C-36. Among your recommendations at the end was the plea that we keep it, but I understand from material available to us, a report that Public Safety

Canada did a couple of years ago on the national action plan to combat human trafficking, that between 2012 and 2016, there were 307 trafficking charges, cases brought, and only 45 convictions, so that law doesn't appear to be working all that well. So rather than simply keeping these laws, maybe reform is required within those laws. I just put that to you.

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** That definitely is a broader picture around all violence against women. Sex trafficking and human trafficking is an example of many examples of how our judicial system is not working to address violence against women. When you get into sexual assault and into other violence towards women, the convictions are low across the board.

We need to do a lot of work when it comes to improving our judicial system so that there are proper outcomes and positive outcomes to address all violence against women.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Thank you, Ms. Redsky.

I hate to dominate, this because I have so many other questions.

I'll address this to Ms. Gray.

I was intrigued with your recommendation—and I certainly think it intuitively works as well—that teaching girls as early as grade 6 to deal with this issue, to be aware of it... I understand that. We have people in this country who think sex education is a problem. Imagine how they're going to feel if you're talking about sex trafficking at that age.

Have you given any thought about how we can get the attention of girls as young as grade 6 and mobilize them in this area?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** I have given it some thought, and one area I think it could be implemented in is the D.A.R.E. program that already exists. When things like drugs and alcohol are being discussed with the students, it could be something that's taking shape in those conversations. Also, I think that points to the bigger societal issue that we don't want to disclose to children and youth. We don't think they can understand or be taught things at a certain age, but if, in fact, nine-year-olds are being trafficked, then I think we need to fight through any push-back we might receive in educating them in this way, because if they're not educated about the risks and the vulnerabilities ahead of them, how do we prevent them from being trafficked? I would think that is one avenue.

In addition, we can think of other ways to address it. We talked about the value of women and empowering them, so those conversations... UNESCO has gender sensitivity education, and I think that's a way of talking about and shaping the minds of boys and girls to better understand how to respect one another and the importance of each individual.

• (1640)

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Rankin.

It seems to me that nine years old is actually younger than grade six. They're grade four.

Anyways, it's a scary, scary prospect.

Mr. Boissonnault.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses today.

I'm going to try to do this quickly, because I have five or six questions.

The math doesn't add up. Stats Canada came in the other day and said we have 350 reported cases for the whole country that get to the police, and we've heard you all say that's not possible. Ms. Redsky mentioned hundreds in Winnipeg; Ms. Smith, 2,300 cases; Mr. Bouchard, hundreds; and Ms. Gray, hundreds or thousands.

The India model would lead us to believe that 1% of their population is trafficked. Is it possible that we have 350,000 Canadians trafficked in Canada, because that would be the same percentage that's in India? Is that happening here in Canada, to your best estimation?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** I can answer this in terms of the work the national task force did in an online survey back in 2012. We asked 500 women's organizations—not shelters, but women's organizations—how many sexually exploited and trafficked women they served within their NGOs, their non-profit organizations, in 2012. Almost 300 of those organizations replied to the online survey. We did the math, added it all up, and there were more than 22,000. In comparison to that time, only 100, I believe, or a small number like that, were actually going through the court system.

There are lots of reasons for women not coming forward and why there are problems with data collection, but we can absolutely be doing better. We need to. The numbers are there. It is a hidden crime and not as obvious. Working on the front lines, at the grassroots level, we are overwhelmed. We are overwhelmed with what's going on and the normalization of how our children are being sexualized and targeted for the purposes of abuse and earning a profit.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** I have a request for all of you after. But, I want Ms. Smith to just comment on the magnitude.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I totally agree with what Diane says. One of the reasons that I think we have to be aware of is it is very hard for families and for victims to come forward. The way stats are taken, you really need—just what I said earlier—work together to get those stats really clear.

When you talk to front-line organizations, like Diane was referring to, and when I see the calls that come into my foundation, my gosh, we have lost some of them, we haven't recorded all of them. But that has to be married with the police reports, as well. There has to be more collaboration and co-operation working together. You would get a stronger number.

I totally agree with what Diane is saying. We are overrun. You listen to Donald, and he has told you he was a trafficker. It is huge. I bet you didn't know there was a whole hotel given over to human trafficking. Why? Because you're gentlemen and very concerned about family and everything, and that wasn't your world. There's a lot of people whose world it becomes, when you're underage, and it changes lives forever.

Maybe you say the math doesn't add up, but what doesn't add up to me is the lack of co-ordination between the non-government organizations, and the women's groups, people who are in the know.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Understand that when I'm saying the math doesn't add up, I'm saying we have to do better as government

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Yes; we all do.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:**—to use creative ways to go and get the data. We share the same issue when it comes to getting LGBTQ statistics. We don't have the right questions in the census. You can ask a family, “How many people are out?”, but what if two of your four kids are in the closet? You don't get those stats. You don't know where people are unless they self-identify.

Mr. Bouchard, it sounds like you know Calgary well, and you know Edmonton and Regina well. At any give time, in a city that we can relate to—pick your city of choice—how many traffickers are there and how many people are being trafficked?

• (1645)

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** Well, I remember going to a players ball, where all the traffickers meet with their girls, and there were hundreds of people there.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** How many traffickers?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** Seventy-five, 100.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** How many women were being trafficked?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** The girls who get to go are the “high” call girls. You might get one girl—they want to bring their trophy with them—but then there could be three other girls who are on the streets and in so-called massage parlours.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Literally hundreds of women are being trafficked.

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** What is the ratio of women and girls versus men and boys, in your experience? Is it 90:10, or 95:5, or 80:20? What's the ratio?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** For men, from what it used to be to what it is now, it's probably tripled. I do drug counselling now with boys, and almost all of them were raped at a young age. They're very vulnerable to that.

I don't know anything about stats. I'm a front-line guy on the streets. For me, all these numbers are—

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** So about two-thirds are women and one third are men?

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** It's so hard to say right now. I've been out of this for so many years. Right now I just deal with individuals, with groups, and I do a lot of public speaking. The feedback I get is that we're probably heading to close to half and half, but it's a lot harder to discover the guys.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Sure.

My request is—and it's probably way off base, but before we get to the end of our study—if you could help us get a sense of the magnitude of this issue, from the community. This isn't going to be scientific. It's not going to be scientifically valid, but if you could send the clerks your experience of the number of traffickers you know in given cities, the number of people you know trafficked, and your estimation of the number of men using these services, that would at least give us a composite based in the community, which we could use to drive some political will, because without it we're going to be stuck with the Stats Can report of 350 reported cases. That is a high watermark. We're talking about a total of 500 cases reported in the last 10 years. So you're right: the stats collection is getting better, but it's not telling an accurate story.

What are the links that any of your organizations make to LGBTQ2 support organizations once we're reintegrating, because we know there's an overlay. We know there's an intersectionality, so how do we do outreach into two-spirited communities, lesbian, and LGBTQ groups to help people, after they've been traumatized, to reintegrate into society. Do you have any of those links? If not, our secretariat can certainly help.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Diane, do you want to speak?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** That is extremely important. There is a unique vulnerability for the LGBTQ population in regard to sex trafficking. Both our safe house and our rural healing lodge are for girls and transgender. This is an under-resourced, under-everything population, and there are limited organizations—even in Winnipeg—to partner with; but for those that do exist, it is essential that they do partner. There's a number of survivors from the LGBTQ community who are very outspoken about what needs to happen, and I encourage you...and I'd be happy to link you up with some of them to educate the committee on their unique needs.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** I'd be happy to have an offline conversation about that.

Before the chair calls time, last night I saw the commercial that's on from the Ontario government, #WhoWillYouHelp, which is all about violence against women. It's targeted at men and boys to ask, who will you help when you see sexual aggression or violence against women taking or about to take place.

Can the trafficking world be changed with targeted social media campaigns or media campaigns, like #YouCanStopThis? Does that kind of intervention from governments and civil society help and what's your recommendation on that?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I highly recommend it. Any awareness like that, whether it be the LGBTQ community or whether it be girls or boys, making the public aware of what is happening is extremely important. It's very powerful. Using media to do that is huge.

I think it has an impact on potential people who glamourize it and think it's wonderful. If you have a profound kind of advertisement, which the foundation is thinking of putting out itself...to have it a nationwide thing from government is very helpful.

•(1650)

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** I'd like to add to that if I could.

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** Buying sex is not a sport.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Buying sex is not a sport?

**Ms. Diane Redsky:** Yes, that's a Manitoba campaign. It's actually a national one. It's been in multiple provinces to address the trafficking during large sporting events.

**The Chair:** Sorry.

Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Donald Bouchard:** When I look back in the '80s and '90s, I remember it was so cool to smoke and it was promoted. We've managed to cure this problem, and it's really turned around completely now because of the advertising that was done against it.

Also, as you were saying before about the guys who buy sex, Mr. Rankin, if they were exposed, that would drop substantially. That was one thing on the streets back then: guys were afraid of getting caught. The traffickers were not afraid, but the guys buying sex were terrified of being caught because they didn't want it to get back to their families. Let's say in a city like Winnipeg, where I'm from, if 10 of these guys who bought sex were exposed publicly right now, we would see a substantial drop, overnight.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Thank you.

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

Just to give the committee members a timeline, we have only about eight minutes left because then we have to adopt our budget, which should take about a minute.

We'll go to short snappers, short questions, and I'd ask the panel to answer in brief on these questions.

Go ahead, Mr. Reid.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** All right. Maybe I'll restructure the questions I was going to ask and direct them entirely them to Ms. Gray.

I do want to say hi to my former colleague, Joy Smith, but unfortunately these are all statistical questions, so I'm now going to focus on Ms. Gray, if I could.

You mentioned in your presentation that age 13 is the average. May I assume you mean the average age of entry into this, as opposed to the average age when you take the oldest and youngest person?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** Yes, the average age of women and girls who are trafficked in Canada, being forced into trafficking, is 13 or 14.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Right. You didn't mention, I don't think, how long the average lifespan of a person.... I don't mean until actual mortality, but for the period during which they are in the trade—the word “industry” was used, but I feel a bit uncomfortable with that—do you have an estimate on that?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** I don't have a specific statistic, but from anecdotal conversations and what folks have told me—particularly in the context of India, where I was working with women—women in their mid-20s often become indisposed to trafficking and can be recruited to become recruiters, as folks mentioned, because they don't have other options available for them in terms of employment or reintegration.

Other folks might have a better understanding.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** This suggests that it would only be some of the women and, I assume, only the ones who have a higher degree of life skills. Those who are not really fully numerate.... You have to understand how to open a bank account and do a bunch of things in order to run what is, from a purely mechanical point of view, a kind of business. I'm assuming that not every woman has that escape hatch, if that's the right term. Some of them, at the end of when they're useful in the trade, have nowhere to go at all, right?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** Yes, and based on the research I conducted, what would happen to those women if they didn't have a place to go was that they would be recruited as women who would assist with the trafficking.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Okay.

I have one last thing to ask you, if I could, and it's simply this.... I'm not sure, actually, if this is directed to Ms. Gray per se, but clearly this is not a lifestyle choice anybody makes because they have a wide variety of options in front of them. I made a list here of potential things that would cause a young girl—a very young girl, in this case—or a young boy, as the case may be, to get into the sex trade.

I've written down as possibilities that they're effectively homeless or quasi-homeless and couch-surfing. Attached to that, they've had to leave the community they're in because it's not safe there, and they go to a place where they have no support network. I'm guessing at possibilities here. It could be the case that there's a lack of life skills, that they just haven't learned what their rights are and where they can go to get help. I also have written down here as well the possibility that there's a pre-existing use of drugs or alcohol and, linked to that, the possibility of some mental health issue.

I realize that's a lot to throw out. I'm just wondering if there's one thing you can point at as the thing that tends to unify their background stories: what would it be?

• (1655)

**The Chair:** Joy Smith has her hand up. We can only have one, so Ms. Smith, go ahead.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Here's what I've seen. Imagine a cute guy who a young girl is really interested in. This is in River Heights, Winnipeg, which is upper middle class, where the girls are going to a sports event at the community centre in the summer. The parents give them cellphones. They take care of them. They're good parents.

The cute guys come, but really they're traffickers. The girls don't know this. They get the girls' trust, they start taking them to parties, they give them just a little bit of drugs—not a lot, but just enough to keep them going—and then they want payback for all these gifts. That's one way, and a very common way, that individual entrepreneurs, I'll call them, get together to make a lot of money

off young girls. That particular girl I'm speaking about ended up jumping off a bridge in the middle of December. Fortunately, she did not die; she took a year to recover. That is organized crime: gangs and things like that. They recruit all the time. It's just part of what they do.

In all my years, the experience that I found the most common was that someone was specifically targeting that kid. Also, I found that kids who were sexually abused are more vulnerable to being trafficked. It's like it's expected of them—

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Can I just ask Ms. Redsky, because for the indigenous point of view I suspect maybe someone—

**The Chair:** Mr. Reid, I'm sorry. We only have three minutes left now because you've taken five of the eight.

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Okay.

**The Chair:** I'm going to go to Mr. McKinnon and Ms. Khalid, who both have questions.

Ms. Khalid, do you have a short question?

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** I'll let Mr. McKinnon go first because he hasn't had a chance.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Thanks, Chair.

This is a quick question for Ms. Gray. You spoke of freedom businesses as a useful tool to help women transition away from that life into a more normal life. Could you describe what a freedom business is? How does one recognize one, how does one find one, and how does one set one up?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** Thank you for the question. An example of one of the freedom businesses I've visited is Freeset, which employs 250 women who were trafficked. They're taught a variety of skills, such as learning how to put textile printing on clothing, and sewing. There are other freedom businesses that are cafés and restaurants, where the women are service providers in the sense of customer service and waitressing and that type of thing.

In the States there are also freedom businesses that we could look to as a North American model. In terms of someone setting one up, from my understanding, there's nothing in place for that particular activity to exist in Canada. However—

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** What makes it a freedom business?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** It's an opportunity for women who are trafficked to receive an income and to have a community of women with lived experience who can relate to them. As well, it offers freedom through counselling and also gives them life skills training.

One of the freedom businesses I visited, for example, taught women how to use ATMs. They can give women the opportunity to find an apartment when the time comes. They really walk alongside these women to help them reintegrate into society, which is therefore freedom for them.

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Right. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Khalid.



**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** Ms. Gray, you spoke about the importance of including academia in the conversation with respect to research and data collection, and I really appreciate that because I think that is lacking.

The task force recently ended. Ms. Smith, I think you may have more experience or more knowledge about this. To what extent was data collection a big priority in that?

Ms. Gray, how can data collection be improved in terms of collecting it from across the region?

**Ms. Mikhaela Gray:** I'll speak to the second part of the question, how it can be improved.

A point I tried to make is that we need to look at this issue through an interdisciplinary lens. So we're talking a lot about reporting statistics, which is important to understand the magnitude of the issue, but what are we doing in psychology? What are we doing in social work? The front line workers, how are we assessing the effectiveness of the programming that they're providing? From education, what needs to be embedded in curriculum as an awareness campaign? How do we reach youth on social media?

I think that data collection really needs to look at mobilizing, and I mentioned the academic community because that's where you can find folks doing work that intersects with these areas. I know folks who are doing great work in youth homelessness at York, for example, and they could provide information on trafficking. So just finding mechanisms and avenues for folks who are doing research in those areas related to trafficking would be helpful.

● (1700)

**The Chair:** Who's taking the first part of the question?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I'm sorry; would you give me the first question? I was just listening to Mikhaela.

**Ms. Iqra Khalid:** How effective was the national task force on human trafficking, and in what ways could it be improved with respect to data collection specifically?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** I think data collection has to be a big part of it. The strength of the national action plan was in providing programs for victims of human trafficking—education, things like that. It

wasn't centred so much on data collection as it was on that aspect of it. I think we haven't arrived at a really good data collection program because the focus hasn't been there.

Human trafficking is an extremely complex issue and permeates all of our Canadian society. To have improvements made, as I said earlier, we need to go to the NGOs that take care of the victims every day, go to the police forces and others, and collaboratively put this data collection together.

The national action plan was a very good beginning. I think we need to grow on that foundation and be sure that we put in more elements to help us. We're improving from 20 years ago. At least Canada is talking about it now. When we first started way back then—I'm sounding old—nobody felt there was any human trafficking in Canada. Our understanding is very much different now.

I'm very confident that by working together and being very specific, we can do a much better job of data gathering, but we have to focus on it, and it has to be one big topic that we all talk about and contribute to, to make it successful.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much to our panel. You've all been incredibly helpful.

Ms. Redsky, Ms. Smith, Mr. Bouchard, and Ms. Gray, we really appreciate your advocacy on this issue and your assistance to the committee.

Members of the committee, you have a budget before you for the 34 witnesses we are going to be hearing while we are in Ottawa. Twenty-four of them are coming here and 10 are by video conference.

Mr. Nicholson, would you move the budget?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** I would be glad to. I so move.

**The Chair:** Is everybody okay with the budget?

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

**The Chair:** It is unanimously approved.

The meeting is adjourned.





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