



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 001

PUBLIC PART ONLY - PARTIE PUBLIQUE SEULEMENT

Friday, April 8, 2022

Co-Chairs:
The Honourable Marc Garneau The Honourable Yonah Martin



Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying

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• (1300)

[English]

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Mireille Aubé): Honourable senators and members of Parliament, there is quorum.

As Senate joint clerk of your committee, it is my duty to preside over the election of the Senate joint chair.

I'm ready to receive a nomination to that effect.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Dalphond (Senator, Quebec (De Lorimier), PSG): Madam Joint Clerk, I'd like to nominate Senator Yonah Martin.

[English]

The Joint Clerk (Ms. Mireille Aubé): Are there other nominations?

It is moved by the Honourable Senator Dalphond that the Honourable Senator Martin do take the chair of this joint committee.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators and members of Parliament, to adopt this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Clerk (Ms. Mireille Aubé): I invite the Honourable Senator Martin to take the chair as the Senate co-chair.

[Translation]

The Joint Co-Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin (British Columbia, C)): Thank you, honourable colleagues.

Thank you, Ms. Aubé.

[English]

We will now proceed to the election of a Senate deputy chair.

I'm ready to receive a motion to that effect.

Hon. Stan Kutcher (Senator, Nova Scotia, ISG): I propose Senator Mégie as deputy chair.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Senator Kutcher.

Are there any other nominations?

Is it agreed to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Joint Co-Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I declare the motion carried and Senator Mégie duly elected vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

The Joint Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Members of the committee, we'll proceed now to the election of the joint chair representing the House of Commons.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): I would like to nominate the Honourable Marc Garneau.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Thank you, Ms. Fry.

It's moved by the Honourable Hedy Fry that the Honourable Marc Garneau be elected joint chair representing the House of Commons on this committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the nomination?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): The Honourable Marc Garneau is duly named joint chair of the committee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

Do we have a mover for motion one? It is as follows:

That the committee retain, as needed and at the discretion of the joint chairs, the services of one or more analysts from the Library of Parliament to assist it in its work.

Do I have a mover for this first motion?

• (1305)

Hon. Pamela Wallin (Senator, Saskatchewan, CSG): I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Senator Wallin.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.)): Madam Chair Senator Martin, I believe we still have to elect the vice-chairs of the House of Commons.

I believe the joint clerk is responsible for that.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

Let's go back to that, and then I'll come back to this first motion.

Thank you, Monsieur Garneau.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Thank you, Madam Chair.

The committee will now proceed to the election of vice-chairs representing the House of Commons.

I'm ready to receive a nomination for the position of first vice-chair.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Thank you very much.

I would be pleased to nominate Michael Barrett.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): It is moved by Mr. Cooper that Michael Barrett be the first vice-chair of the committee.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the nomination?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Mr. Barrett is duly named the first vice-chair of the committee.

I'm ready to receive a nomination for the position of second vice-chair.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): I'd like to nominate Luc Thériault.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Mr. Arseneault moves that Mr. Thériault be elected second vice-chair of the committee.

Is it the committee's pleasure to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): I declare the motion carried and Mr. Thériault duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[*English*]

I'm ready to receive nominations for the position of third vice-chair.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Clerk, I'd like to nominate Mr. Alistair MacGregor.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): It's moved by Mr. Barrett that Mr. MacGregor be the third vice-chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the nomination?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): Mr. MacGregor is duly elected as the third vice-chair.

Thank you, Madam Chair. It's much appreciated.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

As you can see, I was quite eager to jump right into our committee work.

Thank you to all those who are serving in the roles and for our colleagues to have the confidence in us to work on this committee together.

At this time, I'll go back to that first motion. Senator Wallin had moved the motion regarding the services of the analysts.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: I so move again.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Senator Wallin.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): If I may, I'd like to just quickly introduce our very capable analysts. The work we're about to do will continue, in a sense, from last session. For this session, it is very important.

I would like to first introduce Julia Nicol. She can turn on her screen so you may see her.

Ms. Julia Nicol (Committee Researcher): Hello. It's nice to see you all.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): She is a lawyer who works as an analyst in the justice and national security section. She has worked at the Library of Parliament since 2009. She works primarily in criminal law, human rights, gender and foreign affairs, and has written a number of publications about medical assistance in dying. She has supported a variety of House of Commons and Senate committees, including the 2016 Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, as well as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. She has also worked for Health Canada on medical assistance in dying.

Thank you, Julia, for bringing your expertise to our committee.

Next, I will ask Marlisa Tiedemann to say a quick hello.

Ms. Marlisa Tiedemann (Committee Researcher): Good afternoon.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Marlisa is a lawyer who has been an analyst and manager with the Library of Parliament since 2004.

She has worked primarily in health law and indigenous affairs. She has worked on end-of-life issues throughout her career, including supporting the 2016 Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying and writing various publications on the topic. As a manager, she has supervised the team that works on social development-related issues, including disability-related issues.

As you can see, colleagues, we have two very capable analysts working with us.

Thank you.

Now I will turn this over to the joint chair, Monsieur Garneau.

● (1310)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator Martin.

That takes us to the second routine motion on the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

Do I have a mover for the motion that the subcommittee on agenda and procedure be composed of the joint chairs and the vice-chairs, and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration?

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have a proposed amendment to the motion.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Please, go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: Thank you.

The proposed amendment—

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie (Senator, Quebec (Rougemont), ISG): Mr. Chair, I'd just like to ask a question. Is this when we nominate a committee member to the steering committee?

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): No, right now we're dealing with the subcommittee. It's not the same thing.

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The amended motion reads as follows:

That the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure be composed of the joint chairs, the deputy chairs, the vice-chairs, one additional member from the Senate and one additional member from the government; and that the subcommittee work in a spirit of collaboration.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

Do any members wish to speak to the proposed amendment?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Mr. Chair, earlier when Senator Mégie was asking about the steering, I had used the word “steering” but the subcommittee....

This is the discussion, Senator Mégie, so we will have a nomination of an additional senator to the subcommittee, which, in essence, will act like a steering committee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you for that clarification, Senator.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Does anybody wish to speak to Mr. Maloney's proposed change?

I see Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'd look to the mover, Mr. Maloney, for a rationale on the change. The composition of the committee in the pro forma seems consistent with past practices and that of other committees.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Go ahead, Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: Thanks.

The rationale is as follows. As a matter of interest to you, those of us who were on this committee last June will remember that we adopted this amendment as I proposed. The amendment is consistent with standard operating procedure at committees in the world we live in, because as you know, the chair of a committee is always accompanied by one other member from their party. For example, if a Liberal is the chair of a committee, there will be another member, because the chair is put in the position at the subcommittee of running the meeting, and it gives the other person the ability to be a spokesperson and not add that to the chair's responsibility.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion as amended?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Chair, I'd like to speak to this.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Go ahead, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the rationale provided by Mr. Maloney, but I would note that this committee is different from a regular committee of the House of Commons. It's a special joint committee and, as such, we have two chairs. One is from the Liberals and one is from the Conservatives.

Based on the rationale provided by Mr. Maloney, it would seem to me to be appropriate that, if there's one additional member from the Liberals, there should similarly be one additional member from the Conservatives.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Do any other members wish to speak?

Go ahead, Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Chair, I wanted to speak to this because I think it isn't the same thing. That would mean that there would be two Conservatives on the committee.

The chair's a neutral person on any committee, so the chair is not able to vote. That means, if we allowed for a Liberal to be on that committee, we would have every party having a vote in the House of Commons. That is what we are suggesting, so that we have equal votes.

If we have two Conservatives, it would be unequal in the committee votes.

• (1315)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Ms. Fry.

[*Translation*]

Senator Dalphond, you have the floor.

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I understand it, the proposal is to expand the membership of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure from six to eight. So we would have a subcommittee of eight people and a committee of 15. I was wondering if that was the flexibility that was intended.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator Dalphond.

[English]

Does anybody else wish to speak to the proposal from Mr. Maloney to amend the second routine motion?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will acknowledge Ms. Fry's submission, and I agree with her.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Go ahead, Senator Martin.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One note of clarification is that in the Senate committees, the chair has a vote and would be able to have a speaking role questioning witnesses. On the subcommittee, I wanted to clarify that Senator Mégie, as vice-chair, would have a vote and I, as the Senate joint chair, would have a vote. That is why we're proposing to add another senator to the subcommittee as well.

I wanted to add that clarification.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator.

Do the clerks have any comments to make with respect to the usual process?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): No we don't, sir. The committee is free to compose its subcommittee as it sees fit.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, clerk.

If I don't see any other hands, I'm going to ask—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Chair, may I speak?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Yes, Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Thank you.

Acknowledging, through you, the response and rationale from Mr. Maloney and from Dr. Fry, I echo Mr. Cooper's comments and appreciate them. Not to deviate from the practice that was adopted last year, I would note that most recently, the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency agreed to not have a subcommittee.

If we adopt this motion, we will proceed with one, but I would observe that a committee that's of similar composition declined to proceed with the subcommittee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Your point is duly noted. Of course, subcommittees decide whether they want to meet or not. It's something that is available as a tool for this committee.

Are there any other points before I ask whether it is agreed to adopt the motion as amended by—

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Pardon me, Mr. Chair.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Go ahead, Mr. Thériault.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Unless I'm mistaken, it seems to me that the arguments presented by Mr. Maloney and Ms. Fry run counter to those of Ms. Martin. First, we're told that, because the chairs are neutral, it would be important to add people to the subcommittee for voting purposes. Then we're told that everyone can vote. Then what is the point of adding people?

I was in favour of adding people to the subcommittee, because I think it's good practice for chairs to remain neutral. It makes it easier to work together. In addition, the comments or interests of a party may be expressed by a voice other than that of the chairs, except when they have to decide.

It seems to me that the arguments were contradictory. Before I vote, I want to make sure I understand the two positions that have been presented.

• (1320)

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Thériault.

[English]

In House of Commons committees, when committees vote, the chair only votes if there needs to be a tie-breaker.

I'd like to turn to the clerks to find out what the practice is or what is permissible with respect to joint chairs voting in subcommittees. Is there a rule with respect to that? I'm not aware of whether there is a rule or an accepted practice.

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): As previously mentioned by others, in Senate committees, the Senate chair has a vote and votes first. The established practice with joint standing committees is that the Senate joint chair may vote as well.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Okay. For clarification, in the House of Commons, what is the practice with the chair in subcommittees?

The Joint Clerk (Mr. Leif-Erik Aune): The usual practice in House of Commons committees, including subcommittees, is that the chair only casts a tie-breaking vote, if required.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): We have a bit of a difference in the way things are done.

I'm going to continue the discussion.

Mr. Maloney, you have your hand up.

Mr. James Maloney: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I'm afraid we're getting bogged down in unnecessary discussion on procedure. I am of the view that this is fairly straightforward.

In response to Mr. Thériault's position, it's not just a voting position; it's an advocacy position. You want to avoid having to put a chair of a subcommittee in the situation where he or she is both an advocate and a voting member. It just makes it easier.

Let's not get too caught up in this, because remember that whatever happens at the subcommittee has to come back to this group as a whole. I don't think there's any risk in this amendment. I will remind everybody that it was adopted by this committee last June and was functioning quite well until the end of that session.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Maloney.

[*Translation*]

Senator Mégie, you have the floor.

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thought the question was simply whether the co-chairs were voting. Once we know whether they vote or not, we can decide what we're going to do afterwards and determine, for example, whether we're going to frame them with one more member on each side, that is, a member of the Senate and a member of the House of Commons.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Indeed, the discussion revolves around this issue.

This is just my interpretation, but I get the impression that the suggestion of adding two people is to ensure that the co-chairs do not vote, so that a certain impartiality is maintained. That is the purpose of the amendment.

Mr. Arseneault, you have the floor.

Mr. René Arseneault: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Earlier I heard the clerk's interpretation that things were going one way in the Senate and another way in the House of Commons.

Could our joint committee of senators and members of the House of Commons agree that, given the purpose of Mr. Maloney's proposal, the two co-chairs will not vote on the subcommittee? That would conclude the discussion and we could move on to the adoption of the other motions.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Arseneault.

Before we vote on this motion, I'll give the floor back to Senator Martin.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Chair.

Earlier when I added my clarification note, I should have said that I support the amendment moved to add two additional members.

I agree with what Dr. Fry said. The reason we're adding an additional Liberal member to the subcommittee is that the joint chair of the House does not vote. I wanted to explain again that I would vote and Senator Mégie as vice-chair would vote. That is why I would agree to adding another senator to the subcommittee.

My clarification should have ended with saying that I do support the motion moved.

● (1325)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator.

Given the discussion that we've had here, I am eager to move on if possible. Everybody's heard everything. You've understood the practice with respect to subcommittees and joint chairs from the House versus the Senate.

I would like to know if it's agreed to adopt the motion as amended by Mr. Maloney. Could I see a show of hands with respect to that, please?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you very much. The amendment is adopted.

I'm assuming, Senator Martin, that we're going to go back and forth on the routine motions, so it's over to you.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Motion number three is one of our standard routine motions. Do I have a mover for the following? It reads:

That the subcommittee be empowered to make decisions on behalf of the committee with respect to its agenda, to invite witnesses, and to schedule hearings, and that the subcommittee report its decisions to the committee.

Do I have a mover?

Hon. Hedy Fry: I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Dr. Fry.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you.

Routine motion number four deals with communications. It reads:

That the joint chairs be empowered to direct communications officer(s) assigned to the committee in the development of communications plans and products where appropriate and to request the services of the Senate Communications Directorate and of the House of Commons Social Media Team for the purposes of the promotion of the committee's work.

Do I have a mover for motion four?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. MacGregor.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): On motion number six, may I have a mover? It reads:

That the joint clerks of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages; and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

Is there a mover?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Chair, we've not dealt with motion five.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I'm doing motion six according to....

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): We skipped over five. We should do five.

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: We should do five.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I have a script that has all of the different motions colour coded, so to speak, between the House and the Senate.

I can do both five and six if that's okay. I'll do number five at this time.

I need a mover for the following motion, number five:

That witnesses appearing before the Committee be given five minutes to make their opening statement and that the order of questions for the first round of questioning shall be as follows: five minutes House of Commons Liberal, five minutes House of Commons Conservative, five minutes House of Commons Bloc Québécois (BQ), five minutes House of Commons New Democratic Party (NDP) and three minutes for each senator. Questioning during the second round shall be divided as follows: three minutes House of Commons Liberal, three minutes House of Commons Conservative, two minutes House of Commons BQ, two minutes House of Commons NDP.

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault: I so move.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Mr. Arseneault

[English]

There is a question before we conclude.

Senator Mégie.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: My question is about the number of minutes allocated to senators. I want to make sure I do the math right. It says that a senator's speaking time is three minutes, but do we multiply that by four or five? To get to 15 minutes, if there are five senators voting—

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): It's by five.

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Okay.

[Translation]

Perfect.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Are there any other questions or comments?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Chair, with respect to the order of questioning rounds, just looking to the practice in the House and at the most recently struck joint House and Senate committee, I would propose that the first questioning round go to the Conservatives as the official opposition and the second questioning round go to the Liberals, just as that's the practice, and then in the subsequent rounds where the Liberals would appear first, that's switched with

the Conservatives, based on the practice of the most recently struck joint committee.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I don't see any other hands. I don't see the room, so it's hard to know if there are any other individuals. Otherwise, this is an amendment moved by Michael Barrett to switch the order as per practice in the other joint committees.

Mr. Arseneault.

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault: Madam Chair, since I'm the mover of Motion No. 5, and I'm not opposed to our colleague's amendment, we can go ahead and adopt what he's proposing.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Are there any other comments from the floor or online.

I see none. Is it agreed to adopt the motion as amended?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We move to motion number six.

[Translation]

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Motion No. 6 deals with document distribution:

That the joint clerks of the committee be authorized to distribute to the members of the committee only documents that are available in both official languages; and that witnesses be advised accordingly.

Is someone prepared to move that motion?

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: I so move.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator Mégie.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We will move on to motion seven.

It reads:

That the joint clerks of the committee be authorized to make the necessary arrangements to provide snacks and beverages for the committee and its subcommittees.

It is moved by Senator Dalphond.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Motion No. 8 deals with committing and certifying accounts:

That either joint chair or, in accordance with the direction of the joint chairs, either joint clerk be authorized to approve payment of expenditures of the committee.

Is someone prepared to move Motion No. 8?

Mr. René Arseneault: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Arseneault.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We will move on to motion nine. It reads:

That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation, living or other witness expenses including child care and/or personal attendant care or the cost of an approved headset be reimbursed to witnesses upon application, not exceeding two representatives per organization; and that, in exceptional circumstances, payment for more representatives be made at the discretion of the joint chairs.

Do I have a mover?

Senator Mégie, do you move the motion or do you have a question?

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: I have a question to ask before I move the motion.

If the motion is put forward as is, it suggests that everyone has to travel to Ottawa. Is there any way to specify somewhere that committee members as well as guests can also participate in meetings virtually? Should the issue of the hybrid operation of the committee be the subject of a motion?

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I see Ms. Fry's hand, so perhaps she's adding to or...

Hon. Hedy Fry: I'm agreeing with Senator Mégie. In the House right now we're allowed until June 23 to have hybrid sittings. That has been voted by the House of Commons unanimously, so we could do that, because there will still be some people who may not be able to come for various reasons. I am one, because I'm immunocompromised and I'm not coming into any crowded room.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): The question from Senator Mégie was whether we needed an added motion to that effect or whether we would amend or include it in this current motion. Do you think we need an additional motion after this?

Since I saw nodding heads regarding an additional motion, for now, I will....

There's a comment from Monsieur Arseneault.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Arseneault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

When I read the motion, I understand that this is done at the request of the witnesses. Perhaps they will also be invited to participate in the meeting virtually rather than in person.

Senator Mégie's intervention is extremely pertinent. We are indeed going to hear from a lot of witnesses. Do they have to appear in person? Would virtual appearances be preferable, for greater efficiency? Nothing in the motion seems to prevent the committee from asking witnesses to appear virtually. If this is indeed the case, then this motion is about witnesses who make such a request appearing in person.

We need to clarify whether we must ask witnesses to appear in person, or whether the clerk is at liberty, following our instructions, to ask them to appear virtually. After that has been determined, we can debate the motion.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Monsieur Arseneault.

I see three hands. There are several. Perhaps I can ask Dr. Fry if this is in response to what you heard Monsieur Arseneault say. Then I will move to the other speakers.

Dr. Fry, did you want to respond?

Hon. Hedy Fry: It's not necessarily for Mr. Arseneault. I wanted to respond to your question about whether or not we should do a separate motion or we should just include this in the current motion on the floor, the concept—

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you. Let me go to the other individuals first. I'll start with Senator Kutcher, followed by Senator Dalphond, followed by Mr. Garneau.

Hon. Stanley Kutcher: Thank you very much, Chair.

I think it makes a lot of sense that, if witnesses can be heard hybridly or electronically, we have that as a preferred method of hearing from them. If that's not possible, then they come to Ottawa. It has tremendous savings, number one. It has a climate impact. I think we should make coming to Ottawa the fallback, not the go-to.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

Senator Dalphond.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I was going to move to add, at the end of motion number 9, the words "it being understood that witnesses may participate virtually".

[*English*]

In this case, it would be understood that the witnesses may appear virtually.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Senator Dalphond.

I'm assuming that our clerks are listening to our conversation in regard to the wording. Maybe this is something we can adopt with the motion as amended. Even though we don't have the exact wording, we all seem to agree that while hybrid sittings are available, some of these witnesses will appear virtually rather than in person.

I'll go to Monsieur Garneau and Senator Mégie following him.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Madam Joint Chair.

I agree with Senator Dalphond's additional wording. I am a chair of one of the standing committees in the House of Commons. We receive a lot of hybrid witnesses. We cover their costs with respect to providing them with a headset—because of the very strict requirements so that the interpreters can do their job—and if they have expenses with respect to setting up their communications in order to be able to appear virtually. It really is an expense that we are already covering, I think, in most cases. If we can just clarify that this applies to somebody who appears virtually, I think that would solve it.

• (1340)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

I see your hand, Senator Mégie.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to propose something. This motion deals with witnesses, but could we also pass a motion with respect to the operation of the committee itself? A committee like ours is independent and can decide how it operates. Can we put forward a motion to say that the committee can operate in a hybrid way, if necessary? Even though we already have the ability to attend meetings in person or virtually, could we have a motion that grants us that permission?

What do you think?

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I think that is, as you say, a very different motion being put forward, but for now let me just go back to this motion number nine.

We've all agreed that, until the hybrid sittings are available, witnesses could have that option, or most likely, appear virtually.

I do see one more hand.

We will go to Monsieur Lauzon, and then Mr. Maloney.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

You have just touched on the point I wanted to make. If we add a clarification that hybrid operation is allowed, we will also have to mention the period during which this applies. Indeed, we may function in hybrid format until June.

Here is what we could do, simply, to avoid having to add even more points to the motion. In fact, the concern is related to travel, accommodation and living expenses. The text says: “That, if requested, reasonable travel, accommodation and living expenses ... be reimbursed to witnesses upon application ...”. We could remove the words “travel, accommodation and living expenses” in the second line. So the motion would cover the whole issue, whether the committee is in hybrid mode or not. We could then move on.

That is the proposal I am making. Of course, the co-chairs will have the discretion to assess the appropriateness of the requests. The motion already specifies certain circumstances, such as when one needs a headset or other equipment to attend a meeting.

Quite simply, I propose that we remove the words “travel, accommodation and living expenses”.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): The only thing I would comment is that the hybrid will not be there forever.

We will be meeting in person at some point, so we could leave “reasonable travel, accommodation” and all the wording as is, but we will add to the motion that, given the virtual sittings that are going to happen until the end of June.... We'll mention that point. I don't have the exact wording, but we can trust that this will be amended.

If somebody has an amended motion, I can put that forward, or we can just say until the end of June.

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. James Maloney: Thank you.

Perhaps there's a chance we're overthinking this. We have rules in place for hybrid Parliament. I have complete confidence in our clerk that, when invitations are extended, we can say that we're operating in a hybrid Parliament so they're welcome to attend in person, but they can attend virtually and we'll give them a headset.

I don't think this needs to be that complicated.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Why don't I ask the clerks to have an amended motion for the next committee meeting and we can move on to the next item. For now, we are all in agreement that we are going to amend this motion.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion as amended and we'll receive the draft version at the next committee meeting?

May I have a mover for that?

Mr. Arseneault.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Arseneault: When you refer to the motion as amended, you are referring to Senator Dalphond's amendment, correct?

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): It's about the virtual, yes.

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

[*Translation*]

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Motion 10 deals with access to in camera meetings:

That, unless otherwise ordered, each committee member be allowed to be accompanied by one staff person at in camera meetings and that one additional person from each House officer's office be allowed to be present, and for the Senate, that the leader or facilitator of the government and each recognized party or parliamentary group be entitled to one additional staff member at these meetings.

Can someone move the motion?

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you very much, Madam Fry.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Do I have a mover for motion 11? It reads:

That one copy of the transcript of each in camera meeting be kept with the joint clerks for consultation by members of the committee or by their staff.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I so move, Madam Chair.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Do I have a mover for motion 12? It reads:

That the committee publish its proceedings in both official languages.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: I so move.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): May I have a mover for motion 13? It reads:

That 48 hours' notice be required for any substantive motion to be considered by the committee, unless the substantive motion relates directly to business then under consideration, provided that (a) the notice be filed with the joint clerks of the committee no later than 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday; that (b) the motion be distributed to members in both official languages by the joint clerks on the same day the said notice was transmitted if it was received no later than the deadline hour; and, that (c) notices received after the deadline hour or on non-business days be deemed to have been received during the next business day.

Thank you, Mr. Arseneault.

Is it agreed to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): We are on motion 14, which reads:

That, an interim budget of \$50,000 be adopted and sent the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons for approval.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Ms. Fry.

Is it agreed that we adopt motion 14?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Motion 15 reads as follows:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the Committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advises the Committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

Do I have a mover?

• (1350)

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: I so move.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Senator Dalphond.

Is it agreed that we adopt motion 15?

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Motion 16 deals with linguistic review:

That all documents submitted for committee business that do not come from a federal department, members' or Senator's offices, or that have not been translated by the Translation Bureau be sent for prior linguistic review by the Translation Bureau before being distributed to members.

Do I have a mover for the motion?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: I so move, Mr. Chair.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We have reached the end of the routine motions, everyone.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, I don't know if this is part of the housekeeping motions, but I sent a notice of motion to the clerks this morning and I wonder if the members of the committee would consent to it.

I have copies that include the English version. The text of the motion proposes that all evidence and documentation received by the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying in the course of its work on the subject during the second parliamentary session of the 43rd Parliament be considered by the committee during the present session, and that it be published on the committee's website so that members may readily consult it in conducting the current study.

You will remember that there was a session in which we received witnesses. I do not want us to lose what was done before the general election. In my view, it would save time for the committee to pass the motion today.

The clerks already have the text of the motion.

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: That makes a lot of sense.

The Acting Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Mr. Arseneault, you have the floor.

Mr. René Arseneault: Of course, I completely agree with regard to the testimony we have already heard. It will make us more efficient and save time.

That said, from a technical point of view, Mr. Thériault has not yet met the deadline for moving his motion. However, I think we can pass this motion today if there is unanimous consent. The clerks will be able to confirm if it is possible to do so.

I, for one, agree with Mr. Thériault. I think his proposal is self-evident. If it is not technically possible for us to vote on the motion today, but there is unanimous consent to do so, I suggest that we deal with the motion today.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Are there any other comments or interventions?

Monsieur Garneau, please go ahead.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Thank you, Senator Martin.

Are we currently doing committee business? If we are, then the 48 hours doesn't apply, in which case the motion can be put forward. Am I misunderstanding something?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We concluded our routine motions. We had not discussed whether today's committee meeting would conclude with the completion of the motions. Monsieur Thériault has brought forward an additional motion for consideration.

We could continue this meeting, as we're doing; we could decide to go in camera; or we could put this for consideration at the next meeting and conclude today's meeting. I'm not sure what the will of the committee is, at this point, but for this first meeting, we have concluded the business that it was called for.

Go ahead, Dr. Fry, followed by Senator Dalphond.

Hon. Hedy Fry: In a spirit of co-operation, and given that we have only a short time to finish this report, I suggest we consider the motion and vote on it very quickly. It's a good motion.

• (1355)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Go ahead, Senator Dalphond.

Hon. Pierre Dalphond: I agree totally. It's not a substantive motion. It's procedural. It doesn't need 48 hours' notice.

I think there's consensus around the table and on the screen.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Given that we've come to the end, there seems to be agreement that this is an additional motion we will consider today.

Is it your pleasure to adopt this motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): At this time we have concluded, so would members be okay with concluding this meeting today, with the promise of—

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Chair...?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Yes, Mr. Barrett, go ahead, and then Senator Wallin.

Mr. Michael Barrett: I apologize for interrupting. I just didn't want an adjournment to get ahead of me because of the hybrid format of the meeting.

I understand that there are ongoing discussions between the whips' offices on the House side with respect to scheduling. We do have two weeks of planned constituency time for members on the House side, and I know we have two statutory holidays, namely Good Friday and Easter Monday, along with a number of other religious observances, over the course of the next two-week period. Keeping in mind that those discussions have started and that we've now had this first meeting, I would suggest, respectfully, to our joint chairs that those discussions, in collaboration with the Senate side, proceed. Perhaps over the early days of next week, a tentative calendar can be set, because I also understand that we don't even have a set time for meetings.

As one other thing, if I may, Madam Chair, I would just offer that this issue is supremely important, but due to the nature of hybrid meetings and the situation we find ourselves in as a result of these meetings drawing resources from the House, every hour we sit during sitting weeks takes time away from standing committees. I understand that forms part of that discussion, but I think that it could be detrimental to our collective work as parliamentarians if we moved forward in a direction that undermined our colleagues in both places and displaced other committees and their ability to do their work, their commitments to witnesses and their ability to carry out their studies. Many of them are in the final stages before giving drafting instructions to their analysts and getting reports to the House before the end of June.

Time is very sensitive for all of us, but I would just hope that those discussions can happen at the whip and Senate level. We could then convene once we have a better picture of what that looks like, and proceed with the amount of time we're able to take with the resources that are available.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Mr. Barrett.

I too am aware that we don't yet have an exact time slot for this joint committee. That is being worked out through the whips' offices as we speak. As you said, there are a lot of schedules already created in the next two weeks, and it's a very busy time for parliamentary work.

Let me go to Senator Wallin and then Dr. Fry, and then we can try to conclude for today with a certain understanding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, I too would like to speak to this issue.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I will add you to the list, Mr. Thériault.

Go ahead, Senator Wallin.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Thank you. I want to voice some concerns about our timing as well.

The Senate has been reduced to one committee meeting a week for our committees, so it's crucial that we not miss those. We're all in the same position of cramming before the end of June. What days are even under consideration? With the Senate schedule, I'm thinking that Tuesdays and Wednesdays are almost impossible at this point.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I know that Monday evenings and potentially Tuesday evenings are what I have heard, but as you said, Tuesdays are very busy for Senators also. Perhaps it comes down to Mondays, but it's not yet set and the whips are discussing it.

We'll go to Dr. Fry, followed by Mr. Thériault.

● (1400)

Hon. Hedy Fry: I just wanted to say that the whips are discussing it so that, by the end of the two-week break, we will have something to work with. It is my understanding, however, that because of the resources at the House of Commons level, we will not be infringing on any standing committee time. Those are set, and they have resources.

The resources will be decided with a time that the whips will decide on, so I just think that we should follow through and wait until we get the whips telling us what we should do. Let's just kind of wait until then. Now if somebody wanted to meet next week, I hear Wednesday is a good day just to quickly get together to formulate a schedule or something, but if not, I think we should just let the whips do their work because they understand the resources, they understand time and they understand what the good days are.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Dr. Fry.

Mr. Thériault.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before arriving at today's meeting, I was told that the whips had discussed things and agreed that there would be a three-hour meeting next Wednesday. That's the first thing.

Also, I went through the exercise of figuring out what time slots we had left between now and June 23 to fulfil our mandate, which is considerable. I'm trying to look realistically at the work plan that we can put in place based on the timetable. Next week we will have a three-hour meeting. Actually, I'm not going to look at the number of hours, but rather focus on the number of weeks we have ahead of us. If I count the next two weeks of parliamentary recess, I see that we have seven weeks before we have to start drafting the report. Indeed, it is not too much to think that we will have to spend two weeks drafting the report and then another two weeks studying the report. That already brings us to June 23.

In essence, if we count the next two weeks of parliamentary recess, we have seven weeks left to complete our mandate, which, according to the motion, is to examine the issue of mature minors, the issue of advance directives, the issue of mental illness, the status of palliative care in Canada, and the issue of protecting Canadians with disabilities.

We have agreed to table the report on June 23. However, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that in Quebec, it took 74 appearances, 39 working sessions and 46 steering committee meetings to review the Act Respecting End-of-Life Care. We did a serious job, which we can, of course, draw on. However, if we really want to deal with these issues before June 23 and prepare a solid report, it seems to me that we must meet quickly. I thought that today, after adopting the housekeeping motions, under motion 3 we could convene the subcommittee to establish the work plan. I don't want to lecture anyone, but it would be the responsible approach.

I repeat that we are sitting next Wednesday. So the steering committee could meet today or Monday. We still need to call the witnesses, and we shouldn't do that at the last minute.

As far as the work plan is concerned, I humbly think that we should follow the wording of the motion. It would be interesting to deal with the issue of mature minors next Wednesday during the three-hour meeting. If we agree to do that, witnesses could be called right away for next Wednesday.

There are other suggestions I would like to make, but I will stop here, to facilitate the understanding of the proposal and the debate. I also don't want to take up all of the committee's time.

● (1405)

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you.

Senator Kutcher—

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: You will understand that I am making this a motion. I move that we meet as a subcommittee to discuss the work plan right away, with the aim of being able to have a three-hour session next Wednesday.

This is the motion I submit to your attention.

[English]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Okay.

As I understand it, Monsieur Thériault has put forward a motion at this time, so I'm sorry, Senator Kutcher. I will need to address this motion.

Am I correct, Mr. Thériault, that your motion is asking for us to meet today as a subcommittee, following today's full committee meeting?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Yes. This is in order to be able to hold a three-hour meeting next Wednesday from 2:30 to 5:30, as the whips have agreed to do.

[*English*]

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Okay. I'm not sure whether, at this time, in terms of timing for this committee and what will happen....

We have concluded our main motion, so this is what I'm wondering. Before voting on or continuing to discuss Monsieur Thériault's motion, could we conclude this meeting and go in camera to maybe continue our discussion that way? Is that agreeable to everyone, that we conclude this meeting and go in camera?

I see one thumbs-up.

Seeing no other objections, as joint chair I will officially conclude today's meeting and we will go in camera. We'll need about one minute to do that.

Thank you, colleagues—

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Just before we go, Madam Joint Chair, do we have the link for the in camera session?

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I think that's why we'll need one minute. It's so that we can go to an in camera meeting.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Yes, but somebody has to provide us the link for it.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): I'm assuming that will be forthcoming.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Marc Garneau): Me too, hopefully.

Thank you.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Can our clerks confirm that we will receive a new link, or do we continue at this link?

The Joint Clerk (Ms. Mireille Aubé): No, Senator Martin, we will need to suspend momentarily. A new link will be sent to all members in the next few minutes.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): Thank you, Mireille.

We will suspend and receive a new link.

Dr. Fry, did you want to say something?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Yes. It's just a question of clarification.

When we come back in camera, will that be the subcommittee or the full committee? I don't know for sure what we're doing.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): It will be the full committee to discuss Monsieur Thériault's motion and what he has proposed to us.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Okay. Good.

The Joint Chair (Hon. Yonah Martin): We will suspend and receive a new link.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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