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**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Committee business

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Travaux du comité

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 10 November 2020

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42^e législature

Mardi 10 novembre 2020

Chair: Goldie Ghamari
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Goldie Ghamari
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House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2
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Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Tuesday 10 November 2020

Mardi 10 novembre 2020

The committee met at 1300 in committee room 1 and by video conference.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you're all doing well and staying safe and healthy. I call this meeting to order. We are meeting today to consider the method of proceeding with respect to Bill 3, An Act providing for the development of a provincial framework on hospice palliative care.

We have the following member in the room: MPP Sheref Sabawy. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Bob Bailey, MPP Mike Harris, MPP Daryl Kramp, MPP Amarjot Sandhu, MPP Mike Schreiner, MPP Daisy Wai, MPP Sandy Shaw, MPP France Gélinas, and we also have MPP John Fraser, who is not on the committee but is also present.

Staff from Hansard, broadcast and recording, and legislative research join us remotely today.

To make sure that everyone can understand what is going on, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Since it could take a little time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning. As always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we begin? MPP Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: Madam Chair, I'm just curious to know how many non-voting members we have on the committee as it sits right now. I know that MPP Fraser, I believe, is just here to observe, but as far as the official opposition members go, who is actually eligible to vote?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Every member of the official opposition currently present is eligible to vote. MPP Shaw, MPP Gélinas and MPP Glover are all participating on the committee as voting members.

Mr. Mike Harris: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Are there any further questions before we begin? Seeing none, are there any motions? MPP Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: I move that the committee enter a closed session for the purpose of organizing committee business and that the broadcasting staff be permitted to remain in the closed session meeting for the purposes of operating electronic meeting technology.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): A motion has been moved by MPP Harris. Is there any debate? MPP Shaw?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Actually, MPP Gélinas had her hand up first. So if you want to acknowledge her first, that would be—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Of course. MPP Gélinas?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am not in favour of going into closed session, for a number of reasons. First, palliative care is something that is still not well understood within the Ontario population, but is something that a lot of Ontarians are interested in. For me, there is nothing in this bill—I have read it, I've toured with Sam with his bill and so has MPP Fraser. There is no privacy concern, there is no proprietary information to be protected. The bill is online. Everybody can see it. I think it would be better for us to be able to show transparency and make our decision as to what the committee process will be in an open manner.

Palliative care is a part of health care that can bring a lot of strong emotions in people, and to be able to see the discussion that we had, and where we landed, will help us, will help Ontarians in the long run. So I would ask that—it's not a very big bill. I don't think we will disagree on anything that we have to settle, whether it's the time for deputations or anything like this. I don't expect us to disagree on anything. But it would be important for the people of Ontario to be able to hear it, to be able to read it. It will come in handy when the polarization of palliative care comes into play.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I wanted to further what MPP Gélinas has said, and that is that this is a bill that—many Ontarians have been looking forward to hearing what the government will be doing to address the need for palliative care across Ontario. I myself have a bill called the Nancy Rose Act, which is calling for the government to devise or to formulate a provincial strategy for paediatric palliative care, because palliative care is an important issue, but it needs to be said that paediatrics needs to also be addressed and that it needs its own distinct approach, because it's very different than adult palliative care.

For that reason, I'm really mystified as to why the government would want to go into closed session. As MPP Gélinas has said, there is nothing in this bill that would call for a closed session. There are no privacy concerns. There is really nothing in there, unless the government wants to explain what their rationale is for why they would be

moving into a closed session. It just seems to me that on something that's of this much importance, which people have been waiting for such a long, they really deserve to know what the government is doing with this committee. They deserve to know the time that this government is prepared to commit to hearings on this committee.

There are organizations all across the province—Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, just to name one—that have been doing all of the heavy lifting on this file. They deserve to be able to come to speak to committee. They need to know what the government's thinking is on this after all of the work they've done.

I can even think about, in my own community, the Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice, which valiantly does all kinds of work in this committee without any substantial funding. They fundraise, they serve our community, and they have been waiting and waiting for this.

I'm surprised, shocked. I don't want to be cynical entirely, but this really speaks to the government's behaviour in the last—well, in the last couple of years, but especially in the last few months, where they just seem to want to go in camera, push things through committee and don't want to be held accountable.

I would ask that this not move into a closed session. It makes absolutely no sense. And I will just let you know ahead of time that I will be asking for a recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: Just to provide a little clarity to the members of committee, typically, we would have a subcommittee meeting, all of this would be discussed and we would move forward from that point. In the essence of actually trying to get this through committee faster—I think we can all agree that this is something that we want to see happen here in the province—typically, we wouldn't discuss committee logistics in an open session. That's all we're trying to do here, is figure out exactly how everything is going to work. It will be public knowledge once we, as a committee, decide how we're going to move forward on the actual logistics of this. Like I said, typically that does not happen in an open session. It would either happen at subcommittee or it would happen in camera, and that's what we're looking to achieve here today.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Gélinas.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would respectfully disagree with this. I've been here for a while, for 13 years, and we've had them both ways. On some bills, we decided as

to how many days of hearings, the deadline to appear—all of this is in Hansard; everybody can see it. We've had other instances, mainly lately, where all of this is done in camera. But I wouldn't say that this is the way the Legislative Assembly has worked for the 13 years that I've been here. I'm on record dozens of times sitting on committees deciding how many days of hearings, deadlines to appear, how long they will have to speak and all of this. There's nothing wrong with doing this in a public forum.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My last comment on this will be that, yes, this needs to be something that happens in the province of Ontario. People have been waiting too long for this. But I would also like to note that this bill has been on the government's agenda, has been business before the House, for two and a half years. I don't understand why two and a half years later we can't take the time to ensure that we include everyone in the province of Ontario to be able to weigh in on something that is so vitally important to the health and well-being of people.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Are the members ready to vote? MPP Shaw.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: A recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Shaw has requested a recorded vote.

MPP Glover, have you joined us by phone, or are you able to turn on your video?

Mr. Chris Glover: I'm on a phone, so I can join you by audio.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay, so the Clerk is going to do a roll call instead of raising hands. Please wait for the Clerk.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Now if the members are ready to vote: Shall the motion carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Harris, Kramp, Sabawy, Sandhu, Wai.

Nays

Gélinas, Glover, Schreiner, Shaw.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): The motion is accordingly carried. We will now move into closed session.

The committee continued in closed session at 1312.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

M^{me} France Gélinas (Nickel Belt ND)
Ms. Sandy Shaw (Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest–Ancaster–Dundas ND)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Mr. John Fraser (Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud L)

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. Isaiah Thorning

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Sandra Lopes, research officer,
Research Services