

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

A-43

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

A-43

**Standing Committee on  
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Tuesday 30 March 2021

**Comité permanent des  
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1<sup>re</sup> session  
42<sup>e</sup> législature

Mardi 30 mars 2021

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Chair: Gilles Bisson  
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Gilles Bisson  
Greffière : Julia Douglas

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 30 March 2021

Mardi 30 mars 2021

*The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by video conference.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order. We are meeting to conduct a review of the intended appointments.

We have the following members in the room: MPP Gates and MPP Nicholls. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Bouma, MPP Martin, MPP Bisson, MPP Smith and MPP Mitas.

MPP Kusendova just joined us. MPP Kusendova, can you confirm that you are the MPP and where you are?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Good morning, Chair. This is MPP Natalia Kusendova and I am in Ontario.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay, thank you.

We are also joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

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 by members and witnesses should go through the Chair.

### INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

#### TERENCE H. YOUNG

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Terence H. Young, intended appointee as member, Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority—board of directors.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Continuing from our meeting last week, Mr. Nicholls had moved concurrence in the intended appointment of Mr. Terence H. Young, nominated as a member of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority—board of directors. We will start today from where we left off. We are about to go to the vote, and a recorded vote was requested right before we adjourned. Are the members ready to vote? Okay.

#### Ayes

Bouma, Martin, Mitas, Nicholls, Dave Smith.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gates.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** I declare the motion carried.

MPP Gates, go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** On a point of privilege, can you guys wear your masks, please? I asked that last week.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Even when we are speaking?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Not when you're speaking, but I'd appreciate it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay, done. Thank you, MPP Gates.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

### MR. GORDON STENCELL

Review of intended appointment, selected by the government party: Gordon Stencell, intended appointee as member, Ontario Parole Board.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** We will now move to our review of intended appointments. First, we have Gordon Stencell, nominated as member of the Ontario Parole Board. As you may be aware, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With the questioning, we will start with the government, followed by the official opposition, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government.

Now, I will give the opportunity to Mr. Stencell to make an opening statement if he wishes to do so. Mr. Stencell?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do wish to do so.

Thank you, members. It has been my good fortune to live in Ontario, study in Ontario and work in Ontario. About five years ago, my appreciation about all Ontario does for me grew. I was a keynote speaker at the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, and a fellow keynote speaker showed the scope of services provided by the government to Ontarians and how it has steadily grown over the decades. He implored anyone in the audience to stay involved, if working with government, or get involved with the government of Ontario somehow. I decided that upon my family maturing, I would get engaged with my government. Doing so would be a reconnection

to the types of contributions I made to my school community, serving on the university senate and college council.

I have had the privilege of providing one-on-one career counselling, leveraging case management skills to assess needs and risks and evaluate whether a client's intended action plan is achievable and to support development of achievable action plans. I've done this with positive regard for all clients, with a commitment to inclusion and transparency, since 2006. I recognized alignment with how the parole board hearings function and was pleased to interview for the role.

In my work as a professor at St. Lawrence College and as a career counsellor, I have supported students and clients who had been sentenced to less than two years and paroled. They reflected that the process was empowering for them in a meaningful transition in their lives, and this also compelled me to apply. As a professor and as a career counsellor, I supported and guided diverse clientele—I still do, totalling about 10,000 people to date—to transition successfully to their goals. I also lend my strengths to identify when plans are not comprehensive enough.

I look forward to leveraging my case management experience at the Ontario Parole Board in the service of clients. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Now we will go to the government side for questioning. You have 13 minutes.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Good morning, Mr. Stencell. It's nice to have you here—well, virtually, anyway—with us this morning. It's interesting, your background in career counselling and keynote speaking—I did that for 25 years with my own company, prior to politics. Of course, I was also rather active in sports. I was a goalie. That's how I got into politics, I tell people. I took a couple of shots in the head, and that's the result. That's what motivated me.

But this isn't about me; this is about you. So I've got a quick question for you: What motivated you to apply for the position, and was this the only one that you applied to?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** No, I had previously applied to be a commissioner of St. Lawrence Parks. St. Lawrence Parks was a significant venue throughout eastern Ontario in my upbringing. My family had an annual pass. I thought, "Wow, wouldn't it be great to contribute there?" I actually had a wedding reception at Fort Henry. I applied to that. And I always loved the seaway, being from the Thousand Islands, and there was a seaway commission-type of role I believe I applied to. I was fortunate enough to get appointed to the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and that's been a rewarding experience. So that was how I followed up when I had capacity in my life to connect with the government.

I had a professional transition, unfortunately. After working at Morneau Shepell for 13 years, I went to another large company. I was not there long before the pandemic struck. There was a restructuring and my role was affected. So looking at what I was going to do next, I started a private practice again, and I looked at the PAS website; I went back to it. As I said in my introductory statement, I realized this alignment with how the parole board

functions and the mandate of the board and felt my skills were a reasonable fit to apply.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. I appreciate that detailed response, and now I'm going to turn it over to the member from Brantford—Brant, Mr. Bouma.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Bouma, please go ahead.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Chair, through you: Mr. Stencell, I very much appreciate having you before our committee this morning. I was just wondering: I was reading through your resumé, and you have a lot of experience working with people. I was wondering, from that experience—and you did touch on it in your opening statement—if you would be able to tell us a little bit more about what you believe it would take to be an effective member of the OPB.

**0910**

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Well, I have to say that Ontario post-secondary education has had a big impact on my life. That's where I prepared for my career, through my business administration training and my career and work counsellor training. The career and work counsellor training taught me about the importance of process. A good process is a control point through which good service can be delivered, and the commitment to that results in things that are important and of prominence in our society, and rightfully so, such as equity, diversity and inclusion.

Working for Morneau Shepell on the career counselling team and leading the career counselling team, I certainly got to talk to people all over the country, really reflective of the demographics of Canada. Many residents and Canadians are living in Ontario, of course, so I got to talk to people throughout Ontario in that job. While teaching at St. Lawrence College, I've gotten to really know the community and contribute locally, because I was working largely with clients coast to coast at Morneau Shepell. That's why I sought the opportunity to teach at St. Lawrence College and really get a feel for the community locally.

I, as I said, believe that my training and the support that I've had from my employers have been phenomenal, and I have a commitment to following that. So I'm happy to be selected by the parole board and I'm committed to following their processes so that we can protect the safety of society and the interests of clients—probably referred to as "offenders"—to ensure their release into the community, when it's in the public interest, for them to complete the serving of their sentence.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you—a very good answer. I appreciate that.

Mr. Chair, I'll turn it over to MPP Kusendova.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Kusendova, go ahead, please.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Good morning, Mr. Stencell. Thank you so much for being with us this morning. I'm also looking over your resumé. It's very, very impressive, and I'm glad that you mentioned the notions of equity, diversity and inclusion, because I think social justice and these issues are very important in the role that you are applying for.

With that, the parole board has to try to balance two imperatives that can come into conflict: On one hand, we want to reintegrate offenders back into the community, and on the other, we want to ensure the safety of our communities. What factors do you take into consideration when trying to balance these two notions out?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Well, it's my understanding that the hearings are generally held through a progressive approach—looking at past information, records, past behaviour, what the person intends for their plan to be—and taking an inquisitive approach, because it is their hearing, to hear their plan and then to evaluate if the plan would be successful for the safety of the community and their successful reintegration.

I have a lot of experience with the needs assessment part of the case management process, and as part of that you look at risk assessment: What are the risks? You use your interview skills to interview clients about the risks, to learn what could get in the way of them achieving that particular component of their goal, and then conditions could be added for release. The monitoring of those conditions is a separate function from the Ontario Parole Board, but those conditions are there to ensure someone is successful, and if they're not compliant, then they could end up in jail again.

I have not been fully trained in the Ontario Parole Board yet, but I will definitely be leveraging that model and the risk assessment training that they give me to make those prudent and important decisions in the interest of public safety and in the interest of the offenders.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Thank you very much. With that, I will pass it on to my colleague MPP Martin.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Martin, go ahead. You have five minutes.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you, Mr. Stencell. I just wanted to ask you a more general question about what your community engagement and volunteer work has involved. Maybe you could share a little bit of that with us.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Sure. I actually coached hockey for about five years. That was a wonderful experience that I was interested to do because I had the benefit of dedicated volunteer coaches growing up. It was definitely a highlight.

I was a very compliant coach and, as such, got asked to be a convenor and to make decisions that included proposing suspensions or reprimands to the hockey committee. It was a very insightful role. I am glad I did it. I don't have a punitive mindset, and I look at getting things to where they should be and can be constructively, that progressive approach. But as such, I did not seem to satisfy everybody, so I only did that for one year.

I spend quite a bit of time responding to former students and graduates reaching out for career advice. I consider that a volunteer activity in my community as well. That summarizes my activities over the last six or seven years.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you very much. I did some volunteer coaching myself—not hockey but soccer—and it is a very fulfilling activity.

I'm just going to ask MPP Mitás if she would like to ask a question now.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Mitás, go ahead please. MPP Mitás, can you unmute yourself, please?

**Miss Christina Maria Mitás:** Sorry; there we go. Sorry, I was just having a little bit of trouble unmuting there.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay, go ahead.

**Miss Christina Maria Mitás:** Thank you.

My question on the position you're applying for is, what do you think is most important when making deliberations when it comes to individuals in parole situations, as someone who would be in a position of authority, if granted this appointment?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Thank you for your question. I referenced procedure in an earlier answer. I did a lot of research on the parole board, right back to its inception in 1978, and I came across ATAGAA, the Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act—that's a tough one. There are three premises there that I felt comfortable with in my approach to fulfill that: being accountable, being transparent and being efficient.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Two minutes.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I'm committed to doing that. I believe that I have to honour the fact that it's the client's hearing to verify that they have had the process necessary to get to that point, to make them feel welcomed to contract expectations so that they are a true participant in what is about to happen, and to give them a voice and hear them. But then, going back to section 102 of the federal Corrections and Conditional Release Act, I have to make those decisions.

I also appreciate that there is quorum. There isn't just one person making those decisions; there are two parole board members. With those members taking the same proven approach since 1978, ideally effective decisions will get made in the interests of public safety and the client-offender.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** You have 30 seconds left.

0920

**Miss Christina Maria Mitás:** To follow up on that, my colleague spoke about your impressive resumé, and it is. How would this role be a natural progression for you? Taking into consideration your background and what you've done thus far, what does the role mean to you?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I grew up in Kingston. At that time, there were many people employed in institutions, so I had a lot of friends whose parents supported the reintegration of people into the community. I see this as an important role where my skill set gets into that continuum between a person being arrested and released. Of course, there's—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Thank you very much, Mr. Stencell. Unfortunately, the time is up.

Now, we will go to the opposition side, and you have 15 minutes. Who wants to go first? MPP Gates, go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** A couple of things before we start: I didn't realize that MPP Nicholls was a goalie. I did not know that. I am a goalie as well. But I never got hit in the head, because I was a little quicker than Mr. Nicholls, so I was able to move my head quicker, but I did allow a lot of goals.

As far as your volunteering, sir, I notice that you coached some hockey, and they talked you into being a convenor. Just for the record, everybody is talked into being a convenor, and most only last a year because it's a tough gig.

I'll get into the questions. Thank you for being here today to discuss your appointment to the Ontario Parole Board. Were you approached by anybody for this position, and if so, by who?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** No, I found the position through PAS, based on my familiarity in applying to the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. I was motivated to look there when I experienced job loss and was reconfiguring my outlook.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** What motivated you to seek the position, sir?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** My skills alignment in case management and how I felt it very much aligned with the responsibilities. While I want to be involved with government, I do want to do it accountably and make a meaningful contribution, so that is what I focused on.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Don't feel special for these questions, because I ask them to everybody and probably will do this as I do this job for the next year and a half: Have you ever run for the PC Party?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** No.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Have you ever donated to the PC Party?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Yes. I made two donations. I wish all Ontarians would donate to their MPPs, whatever parties they're with. I donated to Daryl Kramp because I just really appreciate the lengths that government and representatives are going to, regardless of their party. I had not done that before, but it was related to the pandemic.

I donated to the campaign of Mr. Rod Phillips. He was the CEO of Shepell-fgi when I worked there. He did a fantastic job. He demonstrated exceptional interest and commitment to mental health, particularly CAMH and of course Shepell-fgi, which is also a major provider to the Ontario public service, so I did donate \$99 to his campaign in hopes that he would get elected and bring that lens to governance.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Well, he did get elected. It was just \$99?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Yes.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** And anything to the federal party?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I went to a dinner where Caroline Mulroney presented, in Kingston. I think it might have been February, before the pandemic. I was interested to hear her speak on some legacy stories, so I went to that dinner, but I can't remember the amount that the dinner cost. That's the only politically branded dinner I've ever been to.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I can tell you, since I've been on the committee, that's probably the least that anybody who is applying for these positions has been involved with the PC Party. I just thought I'd let you know that usually they're either former candidates or have donated heavily to the PC Party, so that's why I ask those questions. I appreciate your honesty.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I will add, I supported Daniel Beals with some advice—a student of mine who was running for the NDP provincially at the time. So particularly if there's a connection—I wish more people would run, and I wish more people would have party memberships in Canada and become more part of having a voice in government, frankly. So I thank everyone for their service.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Mr. Stencell, just one second, please. MPP Bisson, do you have a point of order?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, I'm just trying to get on the list. I would like to ask a couple of questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay, sure.

Go ahead, Mr. Stencell. Finish your comment.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I have finished. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Gilles can do a couple and I'll go back and ask more.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Bisson, the turn is yours. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm kind of interested that, given your background, you applied for the parole board. Let me just ask you this—I'll make a statement, then we'll go to the question. Unfortunately, in every society, including in Ontario, a disproportionate amount of people who are in our prisons are people from poorer backgrounds or people of colour. In my case, where I live in northern Ontario, it's mostly First Nations.

I would like to have your thoughts on that. Do you think that that takes an adjustment on the part of the parole board when they're looking at releases, if the person should be released? The second question is what kind of supports to provide once they get to the community?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Thank you for your question. I did some research into this, because working in the career counselling field and being responsible for case management, we do have to prepare to work with vulnerable persons and have a positive regard for their needs as well, sir. That's why I was motivated to look into it.

I think a lot of that happens initially in the trial. I researched and learned of Gladue cases—I'm not sure if you're familiar with those—where there's a recognition particularly for Indigenous peoples that, due to some systemic subjugation, they may be moving through the justice system more often. I accept and agree that it's an established fact that there has been and is disproportionate incarceration of visible minorities. With great respect for that, there are processes—I think it's section 81 or 82—in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act where, particularly in Indigenous communities, they can facilitate the reintegration of a member.

I believe that we all need to be mindful of inclusion, to be on the lookout individually for unconscious bias, to have positive regard for all people. While I do care about that, I will be working within the limits of the role, particularly the safety and the plan and if it's in the interest of the person to be released into the community to finish their sentence in the community.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So just a statement—you don't have to answer—then I'll hand it back over to my colleague. I just warn you as you go into this job of parole officer—because the majority is the government, so I would assume you're going to get appointed—the problem that I see and I know, dealing with our jails here in northern Ontario, is that often the release is not accompanied with the proper amount of supports for the person who goes back to the community. In some cases, they're not released back to the community where they come from, First Nations or their own communities, for a host of different reasons. They end up in places like Timmins or North Bay or Sudbury or Iroquois Falls, wherever it might be.

There's not the type of support needed to support those people when they go back in the community, which makes them fail again. So I would just warn you, when you get to the board, should you be appointed, it's something that there needs to be a lot of work done on, because how it's affecting our communities and how it's affecting those individuals is quite negative.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I would like to address that just for a moment. I'm hoping my case management experience will be of benefit, because when you're supporting a client with a need on a goal, if they do require other supports, you have a responsibility to make a referral to those supports. I appreciate what you're saying in terms of the number of supports available. That issue also needs to be taken into consideration in pandemic conditions as well. There has to be some appreciation for that. Maybe not all supports are as accessible as they were.

I thank you for highlighting that point. I'll keep it at the top of my mind, going forward, to serve people well.

0930

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Gates.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you very much, and thanks for responding to Gilles's—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Five and a half minutes.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you.

As I'm sure you're aware of, we have seen numerous studies in Ontario that show that there is a significant overrepresentation of BIPOC people incarcerated in the province. I was hoping you might be able to discuss this concerning reality and what can be done to combat this overrepresentation.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Well, I feel that that's largely a social programming and legislative matter. I'm not sure how appropriate it is for me to brainstorm social policy and legislation, given the impartiality that I am to maintain on the tribunal. I know that members of different parties will have different policies and outlooks on that.

I do certainly hope that greater equality will be achieved in our society of Ontario in access to supports,

and that people can build and lead constructive lives in Ontario, and that we move forward, as a society, with tremendous empathy around barriers: visible, invisible, systemic and mental health. I will leave that in your hands and focus within the constraints of the parole board.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. Could you discuss some things you would do to challenge the systemic racism that is built into the present system in the province?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I think that would be out of my scope within the parole board. I think the parole board will largely inform my experience and result in maybe me moving into some advocacy based on what I learn, where I feel I can make a difference, if I can make a difference, at the end of my term.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I know we've seen a pretty drastic decrease in parole rates since the early 1990s. Could you discuss why you believe that has happened in Ontario?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** That would depend on a number of things. It could be due to the ratio of repeat offenders getting sentenced to less than two years. If that ratio has gone up—and I can't speak to the statistics—it might make that individual a greater risk. That would be a concern of the Legislature, I think, if there's a percentage of Ontarians reoffending or having conditions affecting their behaviours and communities. I cannot give a more specific answer than that.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I appreciate that, but the reality is—I think Gilles talked on this earlier—there are just not enough support systems in our community. What we're seeing, particularly in our jails down in my area, is that there are a lot more young people that are ending up in our jails. They feel safer inside than they do outside, and that's because there aren't enough supports out there. So it's a big concern around supports in our communities.

Do you believe that the conditional release—

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** If I could address that—

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Sure.

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Your concern about supports is my concern about supports, because I'll have the responsibility of, as conditions, referring people to supports. So I encourage all of the MPPs to lobby for funding that they see as necessary, and to try to have it allocated where they see it will make a difference in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. Do you believe that conditional release for incarceration is a more effective process by promoting successful integration into our community?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** Yes.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** That's it? Just “yes”?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I believe in promoting successful integration into our communities where it meets the condition of safety and it's in the interest of the offender to reintegrate into the community to fulfill the term of the sentence conditionally.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** What contribution do you feel that you hope to make to this board?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I hope to make accountable and transparent decisions. There are going to be offenders who

are self-representing. When decisions are written, they should not only see what the decision is but why the decision is there, so that if they do wish to apply again, it can guide them to a more successful application.

I want to do strong case management work, be an example of that for my colleagues, collaborate with my colleagues and make prudent decisions in the interests of the safety of both the community and the offender-client.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** What did you do at St. Lawrence College?

**Mr. Gordon Stencell:** I teach a lot of career-related courses, career strategies, professional—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Thank you very much, Mr. Stencell, for your presentation. That concludes the time allocated for this debate. I appreciate your presence here.

#### MS. STEPHANIE ZWICKER SLAVENS

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Stephanie Zwicker Slavens, intended appointee as vice-chair, Social Benefits Tribunal.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** We move next to Stephanie Zwicker Slavens, nominated as vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal.

Ms. Slavens, you may come forward. As you may be aware, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With that questioning, we will start with the official opposition, followed by the government, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Go ahead, Ms. Slavens.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Good morning, Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. My name is Stephanie Zwicker Slavens and I'm honoured to be here today to discuss my credentials and my experience as intended appointee as vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal.

I want to share a bit of my background so you can understand why it is a privilege for me to be here before you today and to serve our great province. My mother was born in Bergen-Belsen, shortly after it was converted into a displaced persons camp, to two Holocaust survivors. After quite a struggle, she came to Toronto with her parents. None of them spoke English. My mother and her family were true survivors. They found jobs as custodians and began to build a wonderful life in Canada.

I am the eldest of my first generation of Canadians. My strong work ethic is in my genes. I have worked as long as I can remember. My first job was at the age of 14 at Canada's Wonderland. I worked for the Toronto Blue Jays when they won their second World Series, and I even was a waitress.

I was the first in my family to attend university. I went to York University and graduated with an honours degree in environmental studies. I then went on to law school at the University of Western Ontario. While in my first year of law school, I received the Morris Kroll Memorial Award, which is awarded to students engaged in a project concerning the administration of law in London. Specifically, I received this award for my involvement in the community legal services. It was during this time that I was exposed to people living with disabilities and those who were supported by the government. That experience in my first year of law school resonated with me and is one of the many reasons I am here before you today, 23 years later.

After graduating law school, I articulated for an insurance defence law firm. Upon my call to the bar in 2002, I practised law representing insurers and other institutional clients for almost 12 years. During that time, I got married and had two beautiful daughters. In 2013, I made the decision to become an advocate for accident victims who had been seriously injured. Up until December 2020, I helped hundreds of individuals with their physical and mental recoveries.

As an advocate for injured individuals and also for institutional clients, I've appeared before court at all levels in Ontario, from the Small Claims Court to the Court of Appeal. I became very familiar with tribunals in Ontario very early in my career, with appearances before FSCO, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario; the Licence Appeal Tribunal; and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. I have the knowledge and experience of the context in which Tribunals Ontario operates, including rules and procedures. I have participated in hundreds of mediations and alternative dispute resolutions.

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My practice for the past 20 years has required that I become extremely familiar with many statutes in legislation. I regularly interpreted and applied the evidence of my clients to the legislation in case law. As an advocate, I had to acknowledge and comprehend both sides of a legal argument so that I was more than prepared for my various court and tribunal appearances.

I possess superior writing skills to effectively communicate, review and comment on complex decisions. I have managed, trained and mentored numerous junior lawyers, articling students, summer students, and staff. I have the leadership skills and the judgment to guide, mentor and support others.

While maintaining a busy law practice and raising two daughters, I found time to volunteer with Toronto Lawyers Feed the Hungry and to assist with my husband's many charitable fundraisers, which include fundraisers for breast cancer research and food bank drives, even this past year.

I have spent the last 20 years working on, litigating and handling claims involving injured persons and those with disabilities—Ontarians. My practice includes regular, if not daily, review of medical records and reports regarding the seriousness and permanence of an individual's impairments. My experience on both sides of the table dealing

specifically with disability and impairment will enable me to be an objective and a fair adjudicator.

I have the qualifications, the experience, the personality and the work ethic to serve as vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal, and it would be my pleasure to serve the province. I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Thank you, Ms. Slavens. Now we go to the opposition side. You have 15 minutes. Who wants to go first? MPP Gates.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** By the looks of it, yes. Thank you.

Thanks very much, and thanks for being here today to discuss your appointment to the Social Benefits Tribunal. Were you approached to apply for this position?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** No, I was not.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Did you and any elected PC member or PC political staff have any communication about your application to this position, either before or after?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** No.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Vice-chairs at the Social Benefits Tribunal manage teams or members in a region. How will you have the credibility to manage experienced SBT adjudicators when you and the associate chair, appointed last year, both do not have adjudicative or subject-matter experience, particularly with the ODSP appeals that form the vast majority of the caseload?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Sorry; could you just repeat the end of that question?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Particularly with the ODSP appeals that form the vast majority of the caseload.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you for your question. I have 20 years of experience advocating for both sides of the table. I acted for injured parties, as well as institutional insurance companies. Through that time, I reviewed and applied many legislations, including dealing with Ontario Works and ODSP.

I am familiar with this area of law. In fact, the type of law I practise, which was injury law, dealt with persons who were injured and impaired. I have the experience as a senior member of my firm. I was responsible for a team of lawyers and students, as well as staff. I regularly delegated and oversaw their work, as well as reviewed the work. I believe I possess the experience to fulfill the role and exceed in the role as vice-chair at the SBT.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. Ontario's Auditor General has twice reported that the ministry decisions regarding eligibility for ODSP benefits are frequently overturned at the tribunal. Are you aware of the Auditor General's findings, and can you comment, please?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I'm not a current member, as you know, of the Social Benefits Tribunal, so I don't think I can comment on any of those findings. My role will be as an impartial adjudicator. I intend to work hard to read, interpret and apply the legislation. My participation, I hope, will advance the effectiveness, the efficiency, the fairness and the timeliness of the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Anti-poverty groups and legal clinics reported significant delays at the tribunal. Are you aware of this issue, and can you comment?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Once again, I am not a current member of the tribunal. I understand that there are going to be challenges faced at the tribunal; I welcome those challenges. In my 20-year career, when I switched over from acting for the insurance companies and the institutional clients to acting for individuals, it was a big challenge, which I rose to. I was able to fulfill that challenge and succeed, and I intend to do so as vice-chair at the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'll ask the question again: Are you aware of the delays at the tribunal?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I'm not aware specifically of delays because, again, I'm not at the tribunal presently.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Did you do any research before you applied to see exactly what the challenges are going to be, so you would have an idea of what you're going into?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I have read the newspaper; I've gone online. I understand that there are challenges at the tribunal, I understand there are challenges in our province in general at this point and I look forward to meeting those challenges as they come.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I guess I'll take that as no, you're not really aware of what's going on.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** That wasn't my answer. My answer was that I am not a part of the Social Benefits Tribunal as of yet, so it's not fair for me to comment on what the challenges are. Once I'm on the tribunal, I could better answer that question.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I appreciate that; thank you.

In response to the current pandemic, the tribunal is postponing and rescheduling all in-person hearings and is moving forward with alternative options such as written and telephone hearings. In addition, adjudicators are now working. Do you think that's a good idea or a bad idea?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Again, I'm not a current member of the Social Benefits Tribunal, so I don't know exactly what is happening in terms of the hearings. I understand that there are virtual hearings throughout Tribunals Ontario and perhaps telephone hearings as well. I think that COVID has made not only Tribunals Ontario but the province—perhaps the world—change their outlook and how they deal with the legal process.

When I was in private practice last year during the pandemic, I was able to pivot quite quickly. I had a number of mediations, pretrials and examinations for discovery scheduled in my calendar. I was able, within days, to pivot and do things virtually, and very effectively, I would add.

So I believe there are going to be significant challenges because of COVID that government and Tribunals Ontario are already dealing with. I look forward to those challenges. I know from private practice that they can be overcome.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Bisson, do you want to ask a question? Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** For Mr. Gates—I'll leave it to him to decide when I come in. I'm just letting you know that I would like to ask a question, a follow-up to—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay, MPP Gates?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** He can go ahead. I'll just—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Go ahead, MPP Bisson.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You fascinate me with that answer because, for somebody who has advocated on behalf of injured victims of accidents, you would know—because all of us as MPPs advocate on behalf of people on ODSP and with LTD and with various issues where they feel as if they got the short end of the straw. Often, people are not prepared because they don't understand the system—that's why they come to people like us—but the other thing is sometimes they're not capable of mounting their own defence.

Don't you think it's a little bit difficult, especially with people with disabilities—somebody is developmentally delayed or something—to be able to represent themselves by letter versus having an actual hearing, either on Zoom or one-on-one at a hearing?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you for that question. Again, I'm not on the tribunal, so I'm not certain exactly how they're conducting hearings. I can assume what's going on, based on what I've read or what I dealt with in my own private practice. I think access to justice is very important, as—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On that point, do you think for some people, it prejudices them to a certain degree if you're asking them to do a written presentation as to why they feel that the decision should be overturned in approving an ODSP benefit?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I understand your question. I don't know, because I am not on the tribunal as of yet, what type of accommodations they make for different individuals. I understand there are a lot of self-represented parties. I have a lot of experience dealing with—all my clients were self-represented before they met me, so I understand the vulnerability and I understand those issues. But again, until I'm on the tribunal, I really can't properly address that question.

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**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm just trying to feel you out for what your mindset is when it comes to that, because as vice-chair you're obviously going to be involved in making some decisions about who gets a real hearing versus a written hearing. For somebody who has advocated for accident victims, I think you would understand, as do all of us as MPPs who do kind of the same thing, that that, quite frankly, doesn't serve them well. I just want to know what your view is. I don't care what the tribunal's position is now. I want to know what your position is.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** So, again, my role isn't to have a position on how that's delegated at this point. Once I'm a member of the tribunal and that's put before me, I imagine I'll make the appropriate, well-reasoned, fair, transparent decision, but I can't answer that

because I'm not certain what exactly is happening within the tribunal.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** All right, Mr. Gates. She has answered my question.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Gilles. I appreciate it.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Gates, go ahead.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

We have heard directly from anti-poverty groups and legal clinics of significant delays currently with the tribunal. We have also heard from residents in our constituency offices about personal delays that they have had with the tribunal. These delays have real-life consequences for people. We know that both an inappropriate level of funding and delays related to COVID are making the problem worse. Do you believe that the government needs to act on this issue, and what can be done?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** So, again, my—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Five minutes.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Sorry? What was the last—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Five minutes left.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Okay.

Again, my role is not to make policy; my role is to take the legislation and the individual case before me and make a well-reasoned, fair, transparent decision based on that evidence. I believe that my aptitude for impartiality, the fact that I've been involved in so much alternative dispute resolution and mediation, the fact that I've worked on both sides of the table—I'm a hard worker—will serve me well as vice-chair at the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. I'll try again: Data from Tribunals Ontario's annual report noted that the amount of decisions rendered had decreased year over year from 2016 to 2020, while at the same time appeals received have stayed roughly the same. With 93% of appeals concerning ODSP, how do you think that affects people in the province with disabilities?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Again, I'm not currently on the Social Benefits Tribunal, so I can't speak to those studies and delays that you're referring to. I just don't have the knowledge as of yet. But I imagine that I will be faced with challenges. Tribunals Ontario, the Social Benefits Tribunal—and I will gladly embrace those challenges and work with them head-on. I'm a hard worker, I have the experience, and I look forward to serving the province.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** How much time do we have left, Chair?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Three minutes.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Okay. What contribution do you feel you will make to the board?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** As I said in the opening, I have 20 years of experience in injury, impairment, disability—dealing with that in my legal career. I believe that my strong work ethic, my ability to read, interpret and apply legislation, my ability to lead and

manage a team of individuals—my participation will advance the effectiveness, efficiency, fairness and timeliness of the Social Benefits Tribunal. I'm excited to be a part of the decision-making process, the decision-making side, and to serve our province.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I appreciate that response.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Two minutes left.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that too.

Do you believe that your previous donations to the Minister of Health and the York Centre riding association assisted you in getting this appointment?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** No.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** So you have donated to the PC Party provincially?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I have in the past.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Do you know how much?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I'm not sure the exact amount.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Can you guess?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I don't want to guess. I'm not exactly sure.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Have you ever donated to the federal party?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I believe I have.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** And have you ever—

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Wait, which party are you referring to?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** The PC Party. I thought it was pretty clear in my—

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Sorry. The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party: The answer is yes, I have. And the federal Conservative Party—is that who you're referring to?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Yes.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I have.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Have you ever knocked on doors for any candidate?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** No.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Have you ever campaigned at all for any candidate?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** No.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I have no further questions. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** You have one minute left.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm good. I don't—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** You're good? MPP Bisson, go ahead.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Just a comment: You've said it repeatedly, that if you're on the board, it's not your job to develop policy. I understand what you're saying on a technical level, but hearings officers and vice-chairs do have a certain amount of latitude—especially the vice-chair—when it comes to how places run in regard to making sure we get hearings done in a timely way, in a fair manner, but also making decisions around, “Should it be a written submission? Should it be an actual hearing?” To

rely on the answer of, “I don't know; I don't know what the board policy is,” I find a little bit lacking, because we all have an opinion. All of us Ontarians have opinions—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Thank you very much, MPP Bisson. The time is up.

Now, we will go to the government side. You have 10 minutes. MPP Nicholls, do you want to go first?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I shall.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Go ahead, MPP Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice-Chair. Good morning, Ms. Zwicker Slavens. It's nice to have you here today. Thank you so much.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Good morning. Are you live in the box? I'm trying to find your box to speak to.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm in the bigger picture in the room. I'm the arctic blond guy.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** It's very hard to see you; you're very small.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Just listening to your responses, I get the impression that you're very much a bottom-line, cut-to-the-chase individual. That comes with you practising law. Of course, you practised law or at least went to law school down in my neck of the woods. I'm Chatham; you're Western, London. So that's kind of great.

But I was really touched when you talked about the Blue Jays. Were you there in the 1993 series when they yelled out, “Touch 'em all, Joe”?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I was there. I graduated high school early, actually, back then. I did four and half years, and then I worked for a few months in the Blue Jays front office. My brother was the ball boy for the Blue Jays that year, and he was actually in the pileup, so it was very exciting. I was at the SkyDome, as it was then, for that.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, I'm kind of a sports guy. But getting back on to your reason for being with us this morning: Very quickly, what motivated you to apply for the position with the Social Benefits Tribunal?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** As I explained in my opening, for the past 20 years, I've advocated for both institutions as well as individuals. As an advocate, I would regularly interpret, apply the law, attend and participate in hearings before Tribunals Ontario and at court. I really enjoy being an advocate on both sides. I became more interested in adjudication, and I decided that it was the perfect next step in my career, to become an adjudicator. With my experience managing a team of people, delegating work, peer review, I believe that the vice-chair position is a perfect fit for me.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I've always been a firm believer in that every job that you may have or position you may have should be preparing yourself for the next one. Obviously, that's the case.

I'd now like to turn it over to our member from Brantford—Brant, Mr. Bouma.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Bouma, go ahead.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you, Chair. Through you: Ms. Zwicker Slavens, thank you so much for joining us today. It's obvious from looking through your resumé that, as you have said, so many things in your life have prepared you for this role. You touched on it a little bit, but I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about what sort of other community work, volunteering etc. you have done and how that has rolled into preparing you and would inform your work that you would be doing on the SBT.

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**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you for that question. When I was a young child, my father was involved with the Toronto Blue Jays. He would bring groups of underprivileged youth to games, as groups, so I would go and see that, as a young girl. Then my brother and I would go with my father to Bloorview, the children's centre, to play wheelchair floor hockey with the kids.

I was lucky enough—my husband wouldn't like me to say this, but I married a wonderful man who ended up doing a lot of charity work in our community. Through him, I've done countless food drives. Even this past year, we did two different food drives during COVID to help Toronto and the people who needed that help. I believe that my core values, how I was raised, who raised me, the fact that they were—I was raised in a family of Holocaust survivors who understood injustice. I'm aware and am mindful of those values of equality, fairness, integrity and giving back to our community.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Right on—a great answer. I completely agree. I think our society will be judged by how well we take care of those who are most vulnerable in our society, so I appreciate that very much.

But I will turn it over to MPP Kusendova.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Kusendova?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Yes, hi. Good morning. Thank you so much, Ms. Zwicker Slavens, for being with us today.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I have to say that you have a very impressive resumé. I think it's important that women do step up and apply [*inaudible*] positions in our community. You mentioned that you have two daughters, that they look up to you, and you're a great role model for them. So thank you for stepping up to the plate, for applying for this public service position, because, like I said, I think it's so important for the future generation of women to see other women reflected in all different leadership positions, whether it's in government, as lawyers, doctors, etc. So thank you. Your resumé is truly impressive.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you. I really do appreciate that.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** You're welcome.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Five minutes left.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Thank you, Chair.

So, with COVID, we have had to adapt [*inaudible*] on Zoom, right? It's being conducted online so that [*inaudible*] change the way we interact with each other,

and societal norms have shifted as a whole. With these hearings now being conducted online, the SBT hearings, what do you see as some of the challenges? What strategies would you use and how will you approach these online hearings differently than in-person hearings?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** As I said earlier in my testimony—again, I'm not a member yet of the tribunal. I understand generally the challenges that online hearings may pose. Again, in my experience this past year during COVID in private practice, I was able to transition very easily and quickly to online services. I had a number of pretrials that were conducted online; I had mediations and examinations for discovery, settlement meetings and meetings with my staff. As long as you have good WiFi, everything works very smoothly and effectively. I look forward to those challenges and helping to guide the tribunal to meet them head-on.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Thank you so much. I will pass it on to my colleague MPP Mitas.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Mitas, go ahead.

**Miss Christina Maria Mitas:** Great. Thank you, MPP Kusendova.

The SBT has high case volumes. I was just wondering how you would personally ensure that you stay on top of the very considerable workload and that you deliver decisions within the targeted processing times.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you for the question. For the past 20 years, as I indicated before, and even more recently, I have had very, very busy legal practices. I have become extremely efficient and effective in my work. I am very used to working with tight deadlines and meeting those deadlines. I believe that it's important to make sure deadlines are met and decisions are timely, well-reasoned and fair, and I look forward to serving the tribunal and the province.

**Miss Christina Maria Mitas:** Great. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Smith, go ahead.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Ms. Zwicker Slavens, I know it was said by MPP Kusendova, but you have an extremely impressive resumé. The vast amount of experience that you have is absolutely unbelievable. I can't thank you enough for stepping forward to serve the people of Ontario this way.

I know that you talked a fair bit about it when you were being questioned by the opposition and you mentioned a lot of things during your opening statement on it. With the amount of experience that you have—and I don't want to sound like I'm downplaying it whatsoever, but if you could highlight something from that experience that would demonstrate how—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Two minutes.

**Mr. Dave Smith:**—you would be the perfect candidate for this, what would you highlight from your own experiences to say, "This is why I can do this"?

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** I think the first thing would be that I've worked for both sides, that I've been on both sides of the table, that I've sat there and gone to a

hospital room when someone's just had their leg amputated—from day one to the end of dealing with their case. I've dealt with insurance companies, large corporations, institutional companies. I've had to review, apply and interpret the law from both sides of the table. So I have the knowledge and the ability to look at things from both sides. I believe I have the ability to be impartial.

I'm a very hard worker. I have a very strong work ethic. As I've said, I've been working since I was 14 years old.

I also come from a background where I have empathy and I understand that the people before me need to be heard. I believe because of my background doing plaintiff-side personal injury law, I have the ability to deal with vulnerable self-represented parties. I will be able to speak in clear, plain language. I will make sure that hearings are efficient and effective, and I would be honoured to serve as the vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you so much for that. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague MPP Martin.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** MPP Martin?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I have also had experience as a lawyer, practising downtown. I've dealt with unrepresented litigants, and my understanding is that the Social Benefits Tribunal—people appearing there don't always have legal representation. I'm just wondering how you think you could ensure that they get a fair hearing nonetheless, even if they might not follow all the procedural elements.

**Ms. Stephanie Zwicker Slavens:** Thank you for that question—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Unfortunately, our time is up. That's all that we have for the government side. Thank you very much, Ms. Zwicker Slavens, for coming and sharing your point of view with us. That concludes the time allocated.

We will move now to the concurrences, where we'll now consider the intended appointment of Mr. Gordon Stencell, nominated as member of the Ontario Parole Board.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Gordon Stencell, nominated as member of the Ontario Parole Board.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Recorded vote, please.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by MPP Nicholls. A recorded vote is requested. Any debate? Any discussion on the concurrence? No? Okay, we will move ahead with the vote. Are the members ready to vote?

#### Ayes

Bisson, Bouma, Gates, Kusendova, Martin, Mitas, Nicholls, Dave Smith.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** The concurrence is carried.

Now we will move to consider the intended appointment of Stephanie Zwicker Slavens, nominated as vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal. Who will move the concurrence? MPP Nicholls, go ahead.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Stephanie Zwicker Slavens, nominated as the vice-chair of the Social Benefits Tribunal.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay. MPP Nicholls moved concurrence in the appointment of Stephanie Zwicker Slavens. Any discussion?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Recorded vote, please.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** A recorded vote is requested. Other discussions? No? Okay. Are the members ready to vote? Yes? Okay.

#### Ayes

Bouma, Kusendova, Martin, Mitas, Nicholls, Dave Smith.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gates.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** The concurrence is carried.

We now have one extension. The deadline to review the intended appointment of Chantal Desloges, selected from the March 25, 2021, certificate, is April 4, 2021. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Chantal Desloges to May 4, 2021? I hear a no.

MPP Bisson, go ahead. Do you have a question or do you have a point to raise?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, I'd like to make a point. It's not a point of order, and I understand that, but it's unfortunate that we don't extend, because we get so few abilities to be able to review members. For the government to not give UC, I think, just makes it look a little bit political on their side.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian):** Okay. Any further discussion? No? I just wanted to make it clear: We didn't have unanimous agreement for an extension, so the extension was not granted.

Any further business for the committee to consider for today's session? I see none. Okay. I declare the committee session ended. Thank you.

*The committee adjourned at 1013.*

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

### **Chair / Président**

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins ND)

### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Président**

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

Mr. Aris Babikian (Scarborough–Agincourt PC)

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins ND)

Mr. Will Bouma (Brantford–Brant PC)

Mr. Lorne Coe (Whitby PC)

Mr. Wayne Gates (Niagara Falls ND)

Mrs. Robin Martin (Eglinton–Lawrence PC)

Mr. Norman Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka PC)

Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)

Mr. Billy Pang (Markham–Unionville PC)

M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell L)

Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)

### **Substitutions / Membres remplaçants**

Ms. Natalia Kusendova (Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre PC)

Miss Christina Maria Mitas (Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre PC)

Mr. Dave Smith (Peterborough–Kawartha PC)

### **Clerk / Greffière**

Ms. Julia Douglas

### **Staff / Personnel**

Ms. Lauren Warner, research officer,  
Research Services