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# Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

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Joint Chairs:  
Mr. Angelo Iacono The Honourable Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia





## Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament

Monday, June 10, 2024

• (1210)

[English]

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia (Senator, Newfoundland and Labrador, ISG)):** Honourable colleagues, I see that we have quorum and I call this meeting to order.

Good morning. My name is Senator Ravalia, representing Newfoundland and Labrador. I have the pleasure of co-chairing this meeting with my colleague, Angelo Iacono.

Before we begin, I would like to ask all senators, MPs and other in-person participants to consult the cards on the table for guidance on how to prevent audio feedback incidents.

Please take note of the following preventative measures that are in place to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. If possible, ensure that you are seated in a manner that increases the distance between microphones. Only use a black, approved earpiece. The former grey earpieces must no longer be used. Keep your earpiece away from the microphones at all times. When you are not using your earpiece, place it face down on the sticker that has been placed on the table for this purpose.

Thank you all for your co-operation.

Today we are conducting a meeting of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

Should any technical challenges arise, particularly in relation to interpretation, please signal this to me or the clerks and we will work to resolve the issue.

Before we begin, I would like to take a few moments to allow the members of the committee to introduce themselves, beginning with the member immediately to my right, Senator Carignan.

[Translation]

**Hon. Claude Carignan (Senator, Quebec (Mille Isles), C):** Good afternoon.

My name is Claude Carignan. I'm a senator from Mille Isles, Quebec.

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** My name is Wayne Long. I'm the member of Parliament for the beautiful riding of Saint John—Rothesay.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** I'm Ken McDonald, member of Parliament for Avalon in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** I'm Colin Carrie, member of Parliament for Oshawa.

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** I'm Jake Stewart, member of Parliament, Miramichi—Grand Lake.

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** I'm Eric Duncan, member of Parliament, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

**Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC):** I'm Ron Liepert, representing Calgary Signal Hill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ):** My name is Louis Plamondon. I'm the member of Parliament for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

[English]

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** I'm Leah Gazan, member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Welcome.

We'll go to the members online, please, beginning with Ms. Koutrakis.

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** I'm Annie Koutrakis, member of Parliament for Vimy.

**Hon. Robert Black (Senator, Ontario, CSG):** I'm Rob Black, senator from Ontario.

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain (Senator, Quebec (De la Vallière), ISG):** I'm Raymonde Saint-Germain from Quebec.

I cannot connect with my camera on. I'm sorry about this.

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** I'm Terry Sheehan from the Soo.

**Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** I'm Shaun Chen, member of Parliament for Scarborough North.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Michèle, have you introduced yourself yet?

**Hon. Michèle Audette (Senator, Quebec (De Salaberry), PSG):** I'm Michèle Audette, senator.

There are some problems, so I'll listen carefully. Thank you.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Thank you. Welcome, all.

[Translation]

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, everyone.

On June 5 and 6, 2024, the House of Commons and the Senate each tabled a certificate of nomination for Christine Ivory.

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Long:** On a point of order, there's no translation.

[Translation]

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** The issue seems to have been resolved. I'll start again.

On June 5 and 6, 2024, the House of Commons and the Senate each tabled a certificate of nomination for Christine Ivory as parliamentary librarian. They referred the certificate of nomination to this committee.

Today, under this mandate, the committee will be hearing from Christine Ivory, the nominee for the position of parliamentary librarian.

Mrs. Ivory, on behalf of the committee members, I want to thank you for being here today.

I understand that you'll be delivering some opening remarks following your presentation.

The committee members will then have some questions for you.

Mrs. Ivory, you have the floor.

• (1215)

**Mrs. Christine Ivory (Nominee for the position of Parliamentary Librarian, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I wish to thank all members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you as you consider my nomination for the position of Parliamentary Librarian.

I am truly honoured to be nominated by the Prime Minister.

It would be for me the culmination of a nearly 25-year career dedicated to the advancement of parliamentary democracy.

[Translation]

Early in my career, I worked abroad to promote good governance and democratic reform. This experience gave me a unique perspective and an appreciation for the role of parliamentary librarian. I worked in countries where heritage and libraries had been completely destroyed. I also supported parliaments that lacked access to research and information. This helps me understand the privilege and responsibility of the position under consideration.

Since 2018, I've been an executive in the Library of Parliament. I'm currently an assistant deputy minister at Library and Archives Canada, or LAC, responsible for the collections sector.

At LAC, my team of about 700 employees preserves and makes accessible to Canadians one of the world's largest collections of published heritage and archival records.

During my 15 years at the Library of Parliament, I had the incredible opportunity to work in all areas of the organization and in a variety of roles to support parliamentarians. My background includes, for example, participating in programs for the public and

the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy; working as an analyst for the Liaison Committee and the Joint Interparliamentary Council during its five-year review; travelling with you as part of delegations; leading the team in charge of research and analysis for committees and associations; and managing the organization's information technology, or IT, and its collection.

I believe that the diversity and versatility of my experience give me a thorough understanding, an expertise and a network in Parliament that would serve me well at the helm of the organization.

I also had the honour of working under the leadership of three parliamentary librarians, learning from each of them and benefiting from their different approaches and visions. This wealth of experience will serve me well in my new role.

I also have a strong grasp of the environment in which the Library must operate, under the guidance of the two Speakers and with the support of this committee. I understand the mandate that we serve all parliamentarians in a partisan environment, and that our services must be neutral, non-partisan and consistently insightful. I also understand that your needs, as senators and members of Parliament, aren't always the same and that they require personalized services.

[English]

I believe strong democracies are built on equal access to knowledge and information. In this era of mounting disinformation and misinformation, the role and mandate of the library to provide impartial, relevant and trustworthy services to parliamentarians has never been more vital. My professional experience has prepared me well to lead the organization through these rapidly evolving times to meet your needs.

My vision for the library is to continue the strong work of Dr. Lank and her team to adapt to new challenges, such as the rise in complexity of policy issues, the changes in how society absorbs and digests information, and the rapidly evolving technological environment, including AI. This requires vision, innovation and a commitment to equip our employees with the tools and data they need to rapidly analyze and synthesize vast amounts of information into comprehensive yet succinct products for you.

[Translation]

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** One moment, Mrs. Ivory. Mr. Carignan wants to speak.

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** No. Everything's fine now.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Sorry for interrupting you, Mrs. Ivory. You can continue.

[English]

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** The library is a service organization at heart. Our primary focus must be to continually improve and customize our products to provide high-quality service to parliamentarians from all parties in both Houses.

Balancing the various roles of the library presents both challenges and opportunities. While maintaining its historical role as a memory institution, it must also transform both as a knowledge organization and a public-facing destination. The opening of the parliamentary welcome centre provides a unique opportunity for the library to work with you and parliamentary partners to usher in a new era of citizen programming at Parliament.

Given current public distrust in public institutions, the reopening of Centre Block offers the chance to rethink and alter the visitor experience into a visitor engagement experience, where the people of Canada and all visitors can learn about Parliament, but also participate, connect and be part of Canadian democracy. Achieving this will require extensive consultations with you, partners and diverse groups to implement a bold and long-term vision.

• (1220)

[Translation]

Representation and reconciliation would be two of my top priorities in this role. The library's greatest strength lies in its exceptional employees. I would work closely with the management team to attract and retain a diverse and representative workforce for Parliament and Canada.

We must also ensure that our collection, our products and all our programs more fully reflect the perspectives of indigenous peoples and all marginalized and equity-seeking communities.

[English]

The library has always been focused on client service, whether to you as parliamentarians or members of the public. To provide excellence, we must constantly consult, seek feedback and test assumptions to ensure that our services meet or exceed expectations.

In an era of fiscal constraint or restraint, I want to make sure that we are focused on the right priorities and assigning resources to services that are in demand and of high value to you as parliamentarians.

It is for this reason that, should I be appointed, I would welcome the opportunity to appear regularly before this joint committee to brief you on the plans, priorities and results of the organization and to consult with you on new initiatives to ensure that they meet the needs of both Houses.

I look forward to your questions.

[Translation]

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Thank you, Ms. Ivory.

We'll now open the floor to questions.

[English]

I'm going to ask members how they would like to proceed in questioning Ms. Ivory.

We'll go by name. Just lift up your hand, and we'll call on you.

[Translation]

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** We raise our hands if we want to ask a question. You then give the floor to the person who wants to ask the questions. That seems simple enough.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Okay.

We'll start with Mr. Saint-Germain. Sorry, I should say Ms. Saint-Germain.

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain:** I believe that it's Ms.

Good afternoon, fellow parliamentarians. Good afternoon, Ms. Ivory.

Ms. Ivory, you answered my first question, which concerned the relationship that you plan to maintain with this joint committee of the two Houses. The committee has come together only once since its inception, for an organizational meeting. I'm glad that you feel you need to consult us.

You spoke about impartiality. You serve both Houses, and you say that you'll work in an impartial environment.

However, some groups are partisan. Do you think that these groups and caucuses, such as senators or non-partisans, should still be able to receive complete and comprehensive information and, in some cases, to analyze the various options that may be preferred by either side?

How do you approach impartiality? Does it limit the depth of your analyses?

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Thank you for your question, senator.

Obviously, the Library's values must be neutral and impartial. However, an analysis involves taking a position and accessing the available information. An impartial approach to our analyses often means being able to show both sides of the story and provide a balanced analysis. To that end, the Library of Parliament can give the various parties and groups, including all the groups in the Senate, an in-depth analysis that truly covers all the aspects involved. Where necessary, this analysis also includes recommendations.

We must be able to provide a balanced analysis. This is where our strength lies when it comes to neutrality and impartiality.

• (1225)

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain:** Thank you.

I'll give my colleagues a chance to ask questions.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Thank you, Ms. Ivory.

We'll now give the floor to Senator Carignan.

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My comments tie in with Senator Saint-Germain's remarks. The library has about 450 employees and a \$55 million budget. This committee has held the fewest meetings in the history of committees.

It seems that you have a greater vision for accountability than this committee. You touched on this topic in your introduction. I would like you to elaborate on the role of this committee and the need for more regular meetings. This seems to have been a weakness of our committee in the past.

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Thank you, senator.

The committee's mandate under the legislation is to help the Speakers manage and oversee the Library of Parliament. Over the years, the Library's officials have always been readily available and open to the idea of appearing more often before the committee. If I'm the nominee, I'll also do my utmost to appear before the committee.

Regular appearances before this committee would help ensure accountability, a key part of the committee's mandate. This includes coming to share our plans and priorities or to meet with you, for example, before we publish our annual report.

That said, I could see another benefit. The Library's sole responsibility is to support both Houses. Appearing before a joint committee, meaning a committee made up of senators and members of Parliament, gives us the opportunity to receive input from both Houses and to consult you on certain initiatives. This would be good for accountability. It would also give us the opportunity to work with you on setting our priorities and to consult you on initiatives.

Moreover, we must do a better job of consulting parliamentarians in general. I think that we could come to this committee and look together at the best approach. Past Library surveys have generated very little response to this type of initiative or consultation. Of course, people are busy.

We could come to you to discuss the best approach and the topics that require consultation and feedback.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Thank you.

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Can I ask a brief follow-up question?

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Yes, you have the floor, Senator Carignan.

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** How do you view the dual role of the Library, which must divide its resources between the Senate and the House of Commons?

I'm thinking of the Visitor Welcome Centre, for example. Last I heard, it doesn't have any documents promoting the Senate. The Senate doesn't seem to exist.

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Thank you for the question.

We make every effort to distribute resources fairly. Our analysts and librarians prepare documents to support the work of senators and members of Parliament in equal measure. The same applies to committees and associations.

To answer your question about our public mandate, I would say that we usually make every effort to publish documents about Par-

liament in an equal manner, meaning for both the House and the Senate. Once I'm in office, I would need to see the situation regarding publications. In the past, we've certainly prepared content on both Houses. We always work closely with the Senate and the House before publishing documents.

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Thank you.

**The Joint Chair (Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia):** Thank you, Mrs. Ivory.

I would like to let the committee members know that we have about fifteen minutes before we go in camera. I want to encourage them to ask shorter questions.

[English]

MP Long, it's your turn.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Good afternoon to my colleagues.

Good afternoon, Ms. Ivory, and thank you for coming.

During your presentation, you touched on the phenomenon, if you will, of misinformation versus disinformation. Misinformation, obviously, is when you just got it wrong or somebody gave you wrong information. Disinformation is deliberate in its attempt, technically, to do harm.

I think we all understand across all parties that it is a threat to our democracy. I just wanted to get what you think the repercussions of this phenomenon are and what you can do at the Library of Parliament to prevent that from happening.

Thank you.

• (1230)

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Thank you for your question.

I was looking back on presentations I've made about the services of the library over the years, and this wasn't a topic five years ago. There's been such an evolution in the challenge with disinformation and deepfakes, and it's something that we all have to contend with.

For the Library of Parliament, I think Google can be our biggest competition. Your employees, your staff, can easily look up information, and that's where the complexity and the dangers can be. I think the value added of the Library of Parliament is the work that our analysts do to really vet information. It's a challenge to go through all of that information, but we have people who are highly trained to look at information and find trustworthy sources. I think that's where we can make a difference to your work.

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Senator Black, you have the floor.

**Hon. Robert Black:** Thanks very much.

You've talked a bit about challenges, and you mentioned a couple of them: misinformation, disinformation and the public's view on government.

Are there any other great challenges that you see facing the Library of Parliament in the coming year or two?

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** I think every organization faces challenges, and I think the library is very well equipped to address challenges. We saw it during the pandemic.

Some of the challenges we face are similar to the ones that may be facing the House and Senate in terms of staff turnover, specifically in some areas such as finance and HR, where across all public institutions there's a lot of competition to attract talent.

Luckily, the Library of Parliament is a top employer in the region, so I'm confident that the challenge can be met.

We talked about disinformation, but the complexity of information and the need for data is also a challenge. We rely on public sources for analysis. We have to constantly evolve our collection to have access to the latest data, and that creates challenges to be on top of that to have the resources to do this and to equip our analysts and our librarians and researchers to do that work.

The other challenge that I think I mentioned is gearing up for the reopening of Centre Block. The mandate for this Parliamentary Librarian will lead up to the opening of Centre Block, and there are a lot of expectations and a need for new programming, particularly in the parliamentary welcome centre. I think that will be a big challenge and the greatest opportunity as part of this mandate.

**Hon. Robert Black:** Thank you.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Go ahead, MP Chen.

**Mr. Shaun Chen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Ivory, for being here today.

In your testimony, you stated that you worked in countries where libraries have been dismantled and destroyed. What lessons have you learned from these experiences, and how will you apply them to your work as Parliamentary Librarian?

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Libraries, whether they are the Library of Parliament or libraries across the world, have a unique role to play in democracy, because they are fundamental to the access to knowledge and information. When heritage or historical documents are destroyed, we lose that opportunity to learn from the past, to improve and to be better.

For the Library of Parliament as a memory institution, part of the mandate is, of course, to retain that history and to make it available not only to you as parliamentarians but to Canadians to be able to learn how Canada has developed as a country and where we are going. We can't progress without having that historical knowledge.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Thank you, Mrs. Ivory.

Ms. Gazan, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Thank you, Chair.

It's nice to have you here in committee today.

You spoke a little bit about disinformation, which is certainly something that I'm very concerned about.

You also spoke about political impartiality, and I'm wondering where political impartiality might conflict with intellectual integrity, especially with the rise of alternative media sources that often report disinformation or even research things like residential school denialism.

What kind of peer-review process do you have at the Library of Parliament to ensure protection of research and fact in the Library of Parliament?

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** For the Library of Parliament, the basis of our services to you is to have trust, transparency and impartiality, so the value of peer review and quality assurance is integral to everything we do. Whether that's a short email response to documents for committees and associations or the reports and publications that we do, there is quality assurance and a review that is done.

When it comes to reports and publications, there's an extensive peer review done internally and then by the management. For publications, we have an editorial board that will vet proposals for publications before we even get to writing and issuing a publication that, at times, can be on very technical issues.

The more we go into the complexity of issues, we seek out peer review from external research organizations or scholars as required.

[*Translation*]

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Thank you, Mrs. Ivory.

Mr. Plamondon, you now have the floor.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mrs. Ivory, congratulations on your appointment. Given your wealth of knowledge, I have no doubt that you'll make an excellent parliamentary librarian.

My colleague, Mr. Carignan, spoke earlier about the work of our committee. Personally, I understand that your role isn't to tell us what to do. Our role is to ask you, from time to time, to help us with our work.

I would like to provide some historical background. On September 4, I will have been a member of Parliament for 40 years. I've been a member of the committee for a number of years. In some years, for example, we held international conferences with officials from the Parliament library in London, the Library of Congress in the United States and the Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale in France. We wanted to know how they worked with members of Parliament. At the time, the focus was on implementing information technology.

We hear a great deal about misinformation these days. We could consult these people to find out how they deal with misinformation. We could then ask our librarian and her team to implement some of the rules learned there and, of course, to suggest other rules.

From time to time, we've held other meetings of this nature by video conference. It was relatively inexpensive and quite practical. We held meetings, sometimes once a week, for a month or two.

I hope that the librarian will support the committee's decisions on what steps to take. I think that the committee must decide what topics to cover and how to do so.

I think that this is how you see your role, Mrs. Ivory.

Right?

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Thank you, Mr. Plamondon.

Mrs. Ivory, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Yes. That's exactly how I see it.

My vision for the Library is to work closely with other partners at home and abroad. As you said, we aren't alone in having to adapt to new challenges, such as disinformation and artificial intelligence. We have a great deal to learn from our colleagues in other countries. The Library already works extensively with the United Kingdom, France and many parliaments.

We would certainly be ready to support the committee if it wanted to invite colleagues to take part in this type of conference. We would also make every effort to collaborate further. After all, we're always stronger when we support each other and learn together.

• (1240)

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Thank you.

Mr. Long, you have the floor.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Long:** Thank you, Chair.

When Heather Lank was interviewed here in June 2018, she reiterated how important it was for the library services to obviously meet parliamentarians' needs.

I'm going to read her words:

I have always made consultations with parliamentarians central to my work, for example, by getting regular input from committee chairs and deputy chairs on how to improve services, and by reaching out to new parliamentarians to identify their needs and provide the information, training, and tools they require to be effective in their roles. If I'm confirmed as the parliamentary librarian, I would look forward to working with you and both Speakers to ensure that the needs of all parliamentarians are well understood and met.

My question to you, Ms. Ivory, is this: How, if at all, are you looking to enhance user feedback on library services?

Thank you.

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** Luckily, I've been working with Dr. Lank for a number of years under her leadership. She has done extensive work at the library on client experience. I was one of the lead executives working on developing a client experience strategy for that exact purpose. If I were to be appointed, I would be curious to see in the last year how much has evolved in that field for the library.

I think there's been some great advances in how we consult. We have an ambassador program that used to run only at a new Parliament, which is now sustained and available to all new parliamentarians and their staff. There's also been recognition that, if your employees don't know about us, that is critical, so the ambassador program is also an orientation and a consultation process with employees. I think that's critical.

We work closely with the House and Senate, obviously, to consult with the chairs of committees and associations. In my role I would ensure that I do that regularly, but also engage more with the offices of the whips, given their important role especially when it comes to, for instance, the support we give to delegations and inter-parliamentary affairs. Obviously, we are working very closely with the Speakers and looking to professionalize and have a more regular way of surveying parliamentarians. The U.K. and Australia do annual surveys. That could be one of the things we could explore.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** You had mentioned a few times previously the opening of Parliament. When do you anticipate that to be?

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** That's probably the multi-million dollar question. I've been away from the LTVP program for a year now, so I don't know if that deadline has changed. I would have to defer to my colleagues who are working on that at PSPC.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** We thought you had some inner news.

**Mrs. Christine Ivory:** No, unfortunately I have no insider knowledge.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** The Centre Block will be ready in 2032. It will open in 2033.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Thank you.



**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** I'm a member of the working group on the long-term vision and plan and the Centre Block rehabilitation.

**The Joint Chair (Mr. Angelo Iacono):** Oh! We finally have a definite answer. We can now get ready for the grand opening.

[*English*]

Are there any further questions, MPs or senators?

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mrs. Ivory, for being here and for giving our members of Parliament and senators the opportunity to ask you a few questions.

Colleagues, the second item on today's agenda concerns future business. I suggest that the committee continue in camera.

If there aren't any objections to continuing in camera, we'll suspend the meeting for two minutes while we prepare the room.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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