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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

A-12

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

A-12

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Thursday 13 April 2023

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Jeudi 13 avril 2023

Chair: Will Bouma
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Président : Will Bouma
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Thursday 13 April 2023

Jeudi 13 avril 2023

The committee met at 1000 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Government Agencies will now come to order. We are meeting to conduct a review of an intended appointee. We are 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. As always, all comments by members and witnesses should go through the Chair.

The first item of business will be the adoption of two subcommittee reports, which were distributed in advance.

We have subcommittee report dated March 30, 2023. Could I have a motion from Member Coe?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, March 30, 2023, on the order-in-council certificate dated March 24, 2023.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Is there any discussion? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? All those in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

We have the subcommittee report dated April 5, 2023. Could I please have the motion? Member Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Wednesday, April 5, 2023, on the order-in-council certificate dated March 31, 2023.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Is there any discussion on the report? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? All those in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. NASSER CHAHBAR

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Nasser Chahbar, intended appointee as member, Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): We will now conduct our review of the intended appointee. Our appointee today is Mr. Nasser Chahbar, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Mr. Chahbar, thank you for joining us today. You may make an initial statement at your discretion. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With that 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. You have the floor.

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. I'm pleased to join you all today. Before I begin, I also want to thank the committee for the opportunity to reschedule my appearance for today due to a family emergency that has since been addressed. I sincerely appreciate the committee's understanding. I've prepared an opening statement, but I've kept it brief to ensure that there is enough time for questioning.

I would like to take this time to speak about my professional qualifications and experiences. I'm a juris doctorate, having graduated from the University of Ottawa faculty of law, with a specialization in social justice. Prior to that, I graduated with distinction from Western University, Canada, with an honours double major in sociology and criminology. I am well trained in alternative dispute resolution and conflict management, with a focus in online dispute resolution, better known as ODR, which I will speak more about later. I am a full member and hold the qualified mediator designation with the ADR Institute of Canada, better known as ADRI. In the past, I have also served as the assistant editor of the Canadian Arbitration and Mediation Journal with ADRI as well. I'm currently the co-chair of the ADR Institute of Ontario's ODR section. Outside of my career, I have also put much effort into learning and becoming fluent in Arabic.

Throughout my professional training and experience, I've gained a unique skill set in managing and resolving conflict among diverse groups of people. I've applied these skills as an ADR practitioner, where I've provided dispute resolution, investigative and decision-making services. In this role, I have developed the ability to remain impartial, yet evaluative, in order to bridge gaps between conflicting parties, while applying effective listening and communication skills, both written and orally. More specifically, as member of the Condominium Authority Tribunal of Ontario, I am frequently tasked with understanding, interpreting and applying relevant legislation, case law and policies to ensure the fair, adequate and expeditious control and completion of a matter. Outside of

these experiences, I have also assisted individuals appearing before different tribunals.

At the same time, I've become a skilled legal writer, where I have drafted legal opinions, statements of claim, case submissions, legal memos, consent orders and various settlement agreements, while gaining valuable experience in fact-finding and decision-making throughout. These professional experiences combined have also sharpened my skills in analyzing, interpreting and applying relevant law and policy.

Another unique experience that stands out in my mind came while working for Pro Bono Ontario, where I helped self-represented individuals navigate the legal system, many of them being their first time. I mention this because in addition to many of the hard skills I have attained, I have equally learned and honed the necessary soft skills that one must develop in order to competently serve in these types of positions, and I believe strongly in upholding the dignity and honour that each person is owed.

Throughout my career, I have recognized what it means to serve as a neutral, unbiased professional while applying the principles of fairness and, needless to say, I am humbled by this opportunity, which inherently carries an important responsibility of civic and public service.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): We have 11 minutes and 42 seconds on the clock, starting with the government side. Member Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Welcome, Mr. Chahbar, to the committee. I appreciate that you kept your statement brief, because what I'd like you to do, for the benefit of the committee members, is to relate your background to the position that you're discussing with us today. How does it relate to the work that you would be doing at the Landlord and Tenant Board, should we confirm your appointment?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Specifically, as I mentioned in my opening statement, the ability to fact-find, gather facts, resolve conflicts and really pull out efficiently the specific facts of what's going on in a specific situation—I can reference my work at the CAT, the Condominium Authority Tribunal of Ontario, as member. As I said, this is frequently what I do on a daily basis, and I look forward to serving in a similar role at the LTB.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, sir, for that response.

Chair, through you to MPP Dave Smith from Peterborough—Kawartha, please. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Smith, go ahead.

Mr. Dave Smith: When we look at your credentials, they're absolutely impeccable. I don't think that anyone would suggest that you don't have the experience or the formal knowledge for a role like this.

But on your application, you listed that you are the owner of an income property. I'm curious: How is that property going to be managed if you're on the LTB? And do you believe that that creates an inappropriate conflict of interest for yourself?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Yes, I do co-own a small home that is rented out. This investment property would not necessarily give rise to a conflict. However, should there

be situations in the future where a potential conflict may arise, I will immediately contact my associate chair to disclose this and adhere to any and all of their directions given.

If there is a dispute in the future with a future tenant, I would retain independent counsel to appear on my behalf before the LTB.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you. I appreciate that.

I'm going to defer to my colleague, MPP Deepak Anand.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Anand, go ahead.

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, thank you, Mr. Chahbar, for coming and applying. Can you please share with the committee what engagement you have in your community, whether it's volunteer work etc.? And what have you learned from it, and how will it impact and inform your work on the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: With regard to my involvement in the community, I have served in different roles that have allowed me to really immerse myself in a diverse community, whether it has been volunteering at a local mosque or Islamic centre. I've just come into contact with many different personnel, and this has allowed me to really, as I said earlier, hone the soft skills in taking each person as they come, with their different backgrounds, and to also really do my best to understand and to remain neutral and unbiased, which I believe will help complement this type of role.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you so much.

Chair, over to MPP Sandhu.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Sandhu.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Chahbar, for your presentation. We know the Landlord and Tenant Board has high caseload volumes. Can you tell us about your experience managing heavy caseloads? And how will you ensure that you stay on top of the workload and deliver your decisions within the targeted processing times?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Well, this is a skill that I've had to develop and balance a long time ago, starting in my education and throughout my career. As of this point, through running my practice in the past while also being a member of the CAT, I've been tasked with a very busy schedule and, as I mentioned, while also remaining somewhat of a student in learning Arabic and becoming fluent in Arabic at the same time. So a busy schedule is nothing new to me, and I have developed very efficient organization skills, planning skills to remain on top of my agenda. I have done that with great success thus far.

1010

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Sabawy.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you very much for the very impressive presentation about the skills you have. Which of those skills can you put as the number one skill that can help you to be effectively serving as a member of the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Yes, thank you. I would definitely say my ability to remain impartial, to remove myself from the personal or intimate details of a situation and,

rather, stick to the facts, pull out the facts, apply the law, apply the legislation and put out a just result in that sense.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: Good to see you this morning. Thank you for the presentation and for putting your name forward. As you may know, COVID presents some significant challenges for operating the LTB, particularly with in-person hearings. How do you think the Landlord and Tenant Board can adapt, and do you have concerns about not being able to conduct in-person hearings?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: With regard to how the Landlord and Tenant Board should adapt, honestly, I haven't been there yet, so I can't comment.

But with regard to my background and my experience in running, as I said, online dispute resolution, I am well equipped to run online hearings. This is my bread and butter. As I've said, I'm the co-chair of the online dispute resolution section of ADRIO, the ADR Institute of Ontario. The ability to manage online is actually where I feel at home most.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you very much for your answer. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Back to Member Anand.

Mr. Deepak Anand: How much time do we have, first of all?

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Five minutes.

Mr. Deepak Anand: We have still five minutes? Perfect.

Thank you so much again. This question is something which I've always asked: Appointments like this take a lot of time, courage, effort and a lot of experience, as well. So, Mr. Chahbar, can you explain what motivated you to apply for this position? And another thing, if possible: Was it the only position you applied for or did you apply for another position as well?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I will answer the latter first. I did apply for other positions, but Tribunals Ontario specifically drew my interest as, obviously, a social justice tribunal. As I mentioned before, that goes back to my education and work experience, having graduated from the faculty of law with a specialization in social justice. I believe that the work that is being done is an essential service to Ontarians, and I look forward to immersing myself in such a position to serve in that way.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Chair, MPP Pang wants to ask a question.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: I have one follow-up question for you: Can you please share with the committee what engagement you have in your community—say, volunteer work, or something like that—and what you have learned from it and how it will inform you for your work at the LTB?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: In the past, as I said, I had a volunteer commitment in my community. I'll give a different one this time. In volunteering at a—basically it's a youth centre that brought in youth from different socio-economic statuses for after-school programs.

As I said, in these types of settings, one encounters many individuals from different diverse backgrounds, whether it's race, religion or linguistically, even, as well. Just to really see each person for who they are and what they come with has allowed me to further my empathy and ability to understand and place myself in other folks' shoes. Allowing my work to complement that while remaining impartial, and to really balance those two things, I believe will be very important in a role like this.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Two and a half minutes. Back to Member Anand.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Chahbar, something that reminds me every time I have a conversation, something which former mayor Hazel McCallion always talked about, is "Do your homework." So I'm just curious to know: Before appearing or even applying for this position, what homework have you done in order to apply and subsequently to come to this interview as well?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: With regard to applying, again, like everyone else, I looked up what the main issues are dealt with at the LTB. Obviously, like everyone else who reads the news, I understand it's a high-volume, high-caseload tribunal, so that, I'm very excited for.

With regard to today, I did speak with folks who have appeared before the standing committee before and also just to hear their experience and what would I expect—and it has been enjoyable so far.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'm guessing you're ready for the challenge. You already have seen it, and you know that—and especially now, post-COVID, there are a lot of people who have been in a position where they're taking time for the LTB.

During this tough time, what is something that you can bring to the table which you believe will help the residents of Ontario?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I'll refer back clearly to my ability and my skills in managing online hearings, as I understand Tribunals Ontario is still operating in that way.

As I said, I have cleared the decks to commit to this appointment. It's very important to me. It's a new chapter, and I'm fully ready to immerse myself in the lengthy and rigorous onboarding training, which I understand to be almost two months. I'm looking forward to the challenge and the experience.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I appreciate it. Thank you so much.

Chair, how much time do we have?

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): You have 20 seconds.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I just want to say thank you for coming, and best wishes.

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): We will now turn to the opposition. You have 15 minutes for questions. Member Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Good morning, Mr. Chahbar. Thank you very much for your presentation and for coming here. I know that you've been part of the Condominium Authority Tribunal as well, so I'll start with that.

I also appreciate you coming here because, for this set of appointments, we actually had a whole list of appointees we had requested, so it's good to have someone who actually comes in and shows the effort and the interest, and it really goes to show the ability for us as a committee to actually talk to someone who is taking on an important role. I think one of the failures we had of this committee has been the lack of hearings for appointments. So I do appreciate you being here and for us to have the opportunity to do this.

My first question would be, as someone who has been an experienced mediator for the Condominium Authority Tribunal of Ontario, do you feel equipped to remain neutral in your decision-making process for this tribunal?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Absolutely. And before I begin, thank you for your comments. I'm really glad to be here.

Yes, it is part of my role at the CAT to mediate and adjudicate cases. It's a very unique set-up there, so I'll explain a little bit, and then I'll go into it more specifically and address your question.

There are three stages at the CAT. First, the parties negotiate amongst themselves to see if they can resolve their dispute. If they're unsuccessful, they then move to stage 2, where they get set up with a member to mediate their case. If that is still unsuccessful, the member would then issue what is called a summary and order, which sends the parties to stage 3, where a different member would adjudicate the case, or sometimes you can do what is called a med-arb, a mediation-arbitration agreement, where the same member would adjudicate the case at that point.

Again, the ability to remain impartial and to remain non-biased speaks exactly to the essence of the work I do, that I've been doing for a long time. The CAT has just been the icing on the cake for me to hone those skills, and especially since it's a virtual and online tribunal. Since its inception, it has really allowed me to further my skills in managing online hearings, which—I believe there are a lot of benefits. I know it's rather new to be online for Tribunals Ontario, and that has been a product of COVID, but I do believe there are many benefits in that sense—to having this ODR model.

1020

Ms. Doly Begum: Just to follow up on that, we know that during the period of COVID, we did move to online. However, that has become a huge problem for a lot of people who do not have access to technology, who don't have access to someone who understands the judicial system. When we're talking about a lot of marginalized community members—elders, for example—mainly tenants have been at a disadvantage point when it comes to the whole process. Do you feel that you'd be able to have in-person hearings, which I'm hoping that we will have soon, for this tribunal?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Absolutely. I'm completely flexible as to which direction this tribunal takes. Of course, the access to justice point is something that's very dear to me. Whatever venue we are in, that is at the forefront, whether it be for tenants or landlords or different demographics who aren't used to using technology. That is something that I believe is part of our responsibility, to be

proactive in delivering this justice to different folks as they come.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much, Mr. Chahbar. My next question is a little bit uncomfortable, but I hope you don't mind, because we just want to make sure that we're getting to the weeds of it. Do you own any rental properties, or have you rented yourself before?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Yes, I have been a tenant before, for many years. As I said before, I also co-own a small home that is rented out.

Ms. Doly Begum: Do you manage rental properties at this moment?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Partly, yes, that one that I mentioned.

Ms. Doly Begum: Do you feel that that will act as a conflict when you take on this role?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I do not feel that it will act as a conflict, as I stated. I'm glad that you asked that. I have also been a tenant for many years, so I have been on that side as well. It's very humbling to be on both sides, and it also allows me to be more informed. But as I said, it's a small home that's co-owned and rented out, and the responsibilities are shared.

Like I said, if there are any conflicts in the future, I will immediately raise it to my associate chair and follow all of their directions given. I've never had a dispute with any tenant before, but should that be the case in the future for any reason, I will definitely hire independent counsel to appear on my behalf, as well.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much. One of the reasons why we're very critical when it comes to this tribunal specifically is because of the lacking—now we're looking at 8,000, I believe, backlogs—

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It's 33,000.

Ms. Doly Begum: Sorry, 33,000. The last time we were sitting in committee, I think it was 8,000. The Landlord and Tenant Board has been criticized publicly for prioritizing eviction, as well, especially for above-guideline increases. You have seen both sides; as a landlord yourself, do you feel that right now the LTB has its priorities set, in terms of helping both sides equally, in an equitable manner?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Honestly speaking, at this point, I do not know, because I haven't been there yet. I can't really speak to that. But, of course, I have seen what's in the news like everyone else. There's a huge volume of cases, and it's a high-volume tribunal. It's a high-demand tribunal in general.

But at this point, I can't really speak to that, because I haven't been there yet. But I am happy to refer back to more of my qualifications and—

Ms. Doly Begum: That's completely okay. Don't worry about it. I know once you get to it, you will do that work and learn about it.

I do have a question that you'd be able to answer, which is: What sort of solutions can you bring to address that backlog?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Again, I plan to bring high energy, high focus. I've cleared the decks to commit to this appointment. I am someone who is known to deliver in

that respect, so I do look forward to immersing myself again in this position. It's a very important one to me. It's also very timely, coming in at this point in my career. I hope to further it in that sense.

Ms. Doly Begum: Now I just have some quick, very uncomfortable questions. I'm going to be the bad guy, and I have to ask these questions.

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: That's okay.

Ms. Doly Begum: Mr. Chahbar, have you been a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, provincially or federally?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I have not, no.

Ms. Doly Begum: Have you donated to the Progressive Conservative Party in the previous election or in the past?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I have not, no.

Ms. Doly Begum: Have you donated to any political parties in the past?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: I have not, no.

Ms. Doly Begum: Those are all of my questions. I will pass it off to my colleague MPP Wong-Tam. Thank you very much, Mr. Chahbar.

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Just to do a time check, how much time is on the clock?

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Six and a half minutes.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chahbar, thank you very much for appearing before the committee. It's nice to see you. I wish we were doing this in person. I really love the fact that you're bringing so much energy and professional demeanour to the task at hand.

My questions are largely sculpted around just trying to understand your strengths as they could be transferred to the Landlord and Tenant Board. Specifically, right now, the Condominium Authority Tribunal, I understand, meets exclusively online. Is that correct?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: That's correct.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Given the time of practice that you've had as a lawyer who specializes in alternative dispute and mediation, how many times, if you can proportionately estimate, have you provided in-person counsel and attended in-person hearings?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Sorry; I just want to clarify if I can: I am not a lawyer, just to clarify to you. I think you said that.

But with regard to my legal services that I provided in the past, before COVID, I did all my placements in person. I did all of my placements, like I said, before COVID, and I've sat in on mediations before that as well.

So there is—I'll be honest with you, even though my résumé speaks to my online experience, I still do prefer the in-person venue. I believe sitting with parties, feeling their energy, being exposed to body language, that that is the more natural form of human communication. And I'll speak further back to my degree in sociology: That is something that we focused on a lot, on the role of technology and how it's changing society and how it's changing our institutions.

So for me, I was always, funnily enough, more of a proponent of in-person. But then—as life happens, right—we're forced to adapt. I've been able to see the benefits of being online in, as I said before, such as access to justice: not making folks drive, when I was in Ottawa, from the outskirts, from an hour away, to in-person, to have to go downtown and find parking and pay for parking and to come up to an intimidating office building, and they're coming from different backgrounds. So, in that sense, for me, I've seen the benefits of both for them. Even to mention having the ability to meet in the comfort of their own homes and not necessarily even having to show their video.

So, I've been humbled to be—I won't say forced, but—introduced to that online world, and I've seen the benefits of it. So, going forward, I guess, for me, it's just about staying open, staying flexible, staying adaptive and making the best of whatever situation we're put in.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for that answer. Would it surprise you that most tenants, or the majority of people who are vulnerable, are living without adequate technology devices, without access to stable, reliable Internet or WiFi, perhaps who are English-as-a-second-language speakers or perhaps living with a communications disability or any other type of disadvantage do not prefer online meetings and that they find the online environment to be extremely intimidating and also not efficient for their form of communication? Would it surprise you to learn that?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Sorry; I didn't understand the question. What has surprised me?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Would it surprise you to learn that people with vulnerabilities would find online hearings to be a disadvantage to them, based on where they are at?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: In general, I would say it would not surprise me, because, as I said, we live in a very diverse society, both socially and economically. So just generally speaking, it would not be a surprise. But I do feel, as I mentioned earlier, that it is upon the institutions to meet the needs of the participants, and I'm open and flexible to staying adaptive in any way we could accomplish that goal.

1030

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Would it surprise you that there are over 33,000 backlog cases at the Landlord and Tenant Board, and that—to the best of my knowledge; I think this is still accurate—there have only been one or two in-person hearings over the last three years during COVID?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: To be honest, as I said, I don't know much about that. As I mentioned, I have read the news like everyone else. I understand there's a high volume of cases and there's a large demand currently. For me, I look forward to getting there, immersing myself in this role, in the onboarding and training, to really put my head down and do what I can, do my part in this role to help serve Ontarians.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Mr. Chahbar. As you were speaking, your video froze. It continues to be

frozen and pixelated. It sort of highlights the challenges of online meetings, just as we're speaking, as an example.

Can I ask about your current practice? You said you're planning to clear the deck or make yourself available. Are you confirming to the committee today that you're actually putting your private practice on hold and you're going to dedicate your time exclusively to the LTB as an adjudicator?

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Yes. As of right now, I am currently putting my practice on hold and I've cleared the deck, as I said, in that sense. This is a very important appointment to me. I have no current time commitment in this role, but I will forthrightly say that I am keeping up my website for marketing purposes should I decide to take work in the later future, and that's just something I've made a decision to have as continuity with my practice.

Should anything change in the future, I will definitely raise that with my associate chair and seek their direction. And should I take any work, it will absolutely not involve any issues or work regarding anything that could be adjudicated before any Tribunals Ontario tribunal.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Mr. Chahbar. Thank you for putting that level of professionalism and full-time dedication into it.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): That concludes the time available.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Thank you, Mr. Chahbar, for joining us today. Unfortunately, that concludes the time that we have available. Thank you very much for your presentation. You can stay on the line and watch, or you're free to get back to the rest of your daily activities and enjoy the weather outside.

Mr. Nasser Chahbar: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): We will now consider the intended appointment of Nasser Chahbar, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board. A motion from Member Coe?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Nasser Chahbar, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, are members ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? Carried.

Committee members, the deadline to review the intended appointments of Michael Ras, Madeleine Bodenstein and Lisa Del Vecchio, selected from the March 10, 2023, certificate, is April 16, 2023. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointments to May 16, 2023? Discussion?

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Member Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Before we vote, I just want to ask for the committee's—I don't even know how to express this, because this is an ongoing process every single time. I just want to put it on the record, as well.

We just heard from Mr. Chahbar, and it was an excellent hearing. I got to learn a lot about him, his experience, the way he would contribute and how much he wants to bring in. The fact of how important he feels this appointment will be—he's putting his own practice on hold just

for this—shows the level of integrity and professionalism that someone brings in.

I would like to have this opportunity for the other members that we're calling, Chair, because these appointments are very important. We're talking about the police service. We're talking about the tribunal where people are getting evicted. These are very important appointments. We should and we must have the opportunity to have these people who are taking on such an important role—we must have an opportunity to come and question them on the reasoning for why they're asking for these appointments, why they qualify, what skills and experience they bring in and should there be any problems, if there are problems, we should be able to point them out in this committee, Chair. And I'm finding it extremely difficult, as a member of this committee—to not have the ability to do that, to not have that just because of a unanimous consent vote. And I understand the government side has a lot more members; I understand that you have a majority government, so you have the ability to do that.

I'm going to fight my losing battle here, but it's important to be said. It is very important to point that out because the request that we made for these specific appointments, Chair—with respect to all my colleagues on the other side, didn't you like coming in this morning and having this opportunity to meet Mr. Chahbar? Why don't we do the same thing for the other members? What is so wrong with having the unanimous consent so that we can go forward and have these appointees, these certificates come forward and we could actually go through the question period and find out why they want to take on this role and how qualified they are? And if they're not, then we can point this out and put it on record, because we're talking about representing the people of this province who will be served by these tribunals.

So I just ask for the government members to think again before they vote, and I really hope that this unanimous consent motion will be granted, because it's very important that we have an opportunity to question each and every single person that we believe are people of interest to be questioned.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Further discussion? Member Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: I take to heart what MPP Begum has said. However, I'll refer back to the report from the subcommittee on Wednesday, April 5: Official opposition party, no selection. They had an opportunity to do it; they chose not to. They have opportunities throughout to do these and they choose not to.

It's not that we're not prepared to do it, it's not that we're not willing to do it—they have to put forward the suggestion for who they would like to see and they chose not to.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Further discussion? Member Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: I just want to make sure that the member opposite understands that we're asking specifically for selections that we have made, that members of this committee have made. If there were no selections, this debate would not be happening.

Just to make sure that we're very clear, we have selections. Hence, we're asking for unanimous consent to go forward so that these appointees can come forward and we can have the whole hearing process take place.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Further discussion? Member Wong-Tam.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I do recognize, with the committee's indulgence, that I'm a visiting member today. I think that what I would offer for all of us to consider is our duty to the people of Ontario. These appointments are very important. They provide service to members of the public. They're out to largely execute and deliver the service that is required based on the different tribunals or different government agencies, wherever the appointments are going. And we also know that they're political appointees, so they will be politically chosen by the government members. So this process that's before us right now allows us, everybody—and it's not just the opposition members, but everybody who has a stake in the way the tribunals work and operate efficiently, the way police service boards operate efficiently, the way any other committee that's related to the health and safety and well-being of Ontarians operates efficiently.

We're here to deliver an act for the good people of Ontario, but it will be very difficult to do so, Chair, if we aren't able to do that job. And so when members are called upon and asked to bring forward the speakers, then at the very minimum, this committee should allow it.

Now, in my business career, I have managed about 150 people or thereabouts, and anyone who doesn't show up tells me they're not interested in the job. But if I'm interested in having them work for me, I certainly want to interview them. I certainly want to check their qualifications. I want to be able to verify their credentials. I want to be able to verify their references. And this committee doesn't have

the ability to do all of that if they're not brought before us. It's a very friendly process. There's nothing combative about this experience, as far as I can tell. But it certainly would, I think, give the public confidence that government and opposition are working to ensure that the very best highly qualified people are appointed to these roles.

And, Chair, I just note that in a Toronto Star article as of yesterday, there was a recision—an appointment that was revoked by the Solicitor General—for the chair of the Peel Police Service Board. He was a political appointee here, so that means this committee would have made that decision to appoint that person to be the chair, and now, quietly, his appointment has been revoked. We don't know why, but there's a great example right there of—I don't know if this person was called to the committee, I'm not sure what process—not serving the people of Ontario well when we don't do our due diligence.

I'm sure there will be more examples that will appear in the media or perhaps quietly in the backrooms if we don't do our job as well. I think that it is important for all of us to hold back and to remember that as stewards of the law, as stewards of practice and service and program delivery in Ontario, we've got to do the very best for our residents and all the different stakeholders. Not calling in the potential appointees doesn't give Ontarians necessarily any confidence, but it also means we are not doing our job, and we're here anyway, so let's just do our jobs.

The Chair (Mr. Will Bouma): Further discussion? Seeing none, do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointments to May 16, 2023? I heard a no.

That concludes our business for today. This committee now stands adjourned. Thank you, everyone.

The committee adjourned at 1042.

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