



Inquiry into hate in the pandemic: Hearing transcript

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Roundtable attendees: Andrea MacBride, Christine Maclin, Deb Tveit, Gavin McGarrigle, Jennifer Moreau, Margaret Olal, Paul Nagra

BCOHRC¹ attendees: Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender, Sarah Khan, Meghan Toal

Please note that third-party personal information has been removed from this transcript.

[Introductory comments by Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender not included in transcript.]

Gavin McGarrigle: It would be me. Can you hear me? Hi, everyone, um, sorry. It's Gavin McGarrigle here. I'm Unifor's Western Regional Director. That is one of the top six elected leadership positions in Unifor. I have responsibility for all four Western provinces and in particular, also I live here in BC. I'm a resident of Surrey, and I spend a lot of time here. I'm coming to you today from a banquet hall in Surrey, and I'm used to giving the acknowledgement from where I live, so I haven't had a chance to figure out, but I know I'm in the area of the Coast Salish Peoples, and certainly grateful to do that. I'm at a banquet hall today because I've got four or 500 people downstairs right now, because we're ratifying a collective agreement for all of the workers of Coast Mountain Bus Company. So Balbir and Leanne were supposed to present, I'm going to try to drag them up early. I have to run, but I've brought our crack-team here, including Christine Maclin, our Director of Human Rights, and she's based out of Toronto. Andrea McBride, who is our BC and Alberta Area Director, and she's based here. We're bringing you different stories. You'll see from Jennifer Moreau about the media sector. She's from Local 2000. Paul Nagra is with the container truckers local, VCTA, and he'll talk about— [audio briefly cuts out] -- some of the challenges in transportation. And we also got Margaret Olal, who comes from hospitality and can talk about all of that. I have to step out, but just to give you your quick graphic, Unifor in British

¹ BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

Columbia represents about 30,000 members in many different industries, transit being one of them, hospitality, gaming. We represent a lot of hotel workers up in Whistler area. Also transit workers out there too. Forestry-- we have thousands of members in forestry and in manufacturing. We actually represent 22 different sectors of the economy. So, unfortunately, we have seen incidents of hate which my team will go into. But, you know, I really appreciate the broader definition as well, because when people think of hate, they think about something you see on the video camera in the store-- and not the systemic ongoing discrimination and lack of focus on how, uh, in-built this really is a form of hate, when it talks about taking food out of people's mouths. When it talks about taking a job away from people. When it talks about, you know, having access to health and welfare. As part of my role after a couple of years, I've sat on the BC Government's COVID-19 Industry Engagement Committee and, um, been involved in that, and I've also had a chance to serve with the Minister of Tourism on the Tourism Task Force that was called in the Fall of 2020, and myself, along with the other members of the Task Force, did a province-wide consultation in the Fall of 2020, which resulted in money from \$50,000,000 going to \$100,000,000 to offset the sector. And what I will say is that there is a very serious, uh, bias, in-built bias built within government against the powerless and against those without voice. And you saw it in the failure of the Government to do anything to protect the recall rights of thousands of hotel workers who were not protected because a once-in-a-100-year pandemic came along and even though the government acted to shovel money out the door to business groups and to put rent relief bars and all of that, they did not intervene to protect those workers. Most of those workers, the vast majority were women. Most of them were workers of colour, and most of them were also older workers as well, in some cases with 20- and 30-years seniority. They went out the door, they lost recall rights in many cases. In many cases they've had to go on strike for that. We saw many workers lose their benefits again through these kinds of layoffs that we saw predominantly hit those categories I've mentioned. And on and on again, every time, you know, you can be— [audio briefly cuts out] -- sure that we're raising voices. We have 50 people on the COVID-19 Industry Engagement Committee, two of 15 people on the BC Tourism Council Task Force, raising our voices, and absolutely nothing being done. So, you know, there's a lot of talk about sort of the incidents that you see, you know, and you'll hear about in the workplaces, and certainly Leanne and Balbir, I know they're not here, but the assaults on transit operators are ongoing. They're getting scarier, I'm hearing it right down the hall here. And people are really, really feeling the economic pinch, but also the way that this COVID-19 epidemic has hit those most vulnerable. And so, I'll just have to leave it at that. I have to pop out downstairs and leave it to my team, and I'll try and pop in back closer to the end. But if not, you can always reach out to us and we're happy to do follow-up at any time. And I just want to thank you for being the first commissioner. We fought long and hard to push for a commissioner and we're happy to see it, and we're happy to engage with you. So, I'll leave my Zoom on, I'll turn my camera off, and if I'm able to pop back up, I will. But I know you're in good hands and I think the first person on our list to speak is Jennifer Moreau, who was a reporter and is a media worker. And I'll let Jennifer speak to her experiences. So, thanks very much, really appreciate it.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you for taking the time out of what sounds like a very busy day, Gavin. I appreciate that.

Jennifer Moreau: Hi, everyone. Thank you for having me. So, my name is Jennifer Moreau and as Gavin mentioned, I'm a community news reporter, and I am secretary treasurer of Unifor Local



2000. So, we represent hundreds of media workers here in British Columbia, mostly in the newspaper sector. I'm also chair of Unifor's National Media Council. So, we represent roughly 11,000 media workers across the country, and because of that, I also sit on the National Executive Board, and you probably know already that Unifor is the country's largest private sector union. And then on top of that, I also sit on the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Journalists, and that is the world's largest journalism organization, and we represent more than 600,000 media workers worldwide. And the reason I'm sharing all of this is all of these bodies are very interested in this question, or this problem about hate against journalists. I'm currently in New Westminster, and that is seated on the unceded and unsundered territory of the Hul'q'umi'num' speaking nations and it's also home of the Qayqayt First Nation. And I wanted to talk about this issue, it's very close to my heart, and it's very close to the heart of many of our media workers. It's something that's been coming up for a long time now for several years. But in the most recent period, it's become more and more front of mind for media workers. So, hate against journalists is actually on the rise. Ipsos created a survey of more than 1,000 media workers very recently, and I can provide the link for this after. 72% of the respondents reported online harassment was a problem. And 73 of those respondents, 73%, believe that the frequency is increasing over the past two years. And some of the factors that lead to this, because COVID was something that, you know, that this investigation is looking into, 55% of these reasons why people were being targeted had to do with COVID. So COVID is a flashpoint when you're covering the pandemic. It's a flashpoint for online harassment, and it's a flashpoint for covering live events like anti-vaxxing protests, for example. So that's part of why media workers are targeted. But when they're actually harassed, we know that the harassment is sexist and racist in nature, and those are protected grounds under the BC Human Rights Act. These findings from the Ipsos survey are consistent with what we're seeing with our own membership, and we're also in the middle of conducting our own survey. It's still open, but from some of the preliminary results, I can tell you it's very similar and in line with what Ipsos is reporting. So again, COVID is a hot button issue. Covering protests is not safe anymore. For example, CTV workers in Edmonton had to actually take the decals off their vehicles so that they're not targeted. One of the things you wanted to focus on is why is this happening? So, one thing I was actually surprised to learn but makes sense is that it's often spurred on by state actors. So, in Canada, we saw Maxime Bernier call on his alt-right supporters on Twitter to play dirty with reporters, and he actually spurred on a wave of harassment targeting journalists, including some of our members. This is kind of consistent with what we see globally. Anecdotally speaking, I think it's safe to say that Trump really opened the door for hostility against media workers. So that is a contributing factor, for sure. And the advent of social media is another major factor because through social media, journalists are more exposed to the public, and we're more available. People can direct message us, they can comment on our stories, and not-- those are some of the venues that we see, you know, harassers are using to leave hateful messages. The other major problem is the attackers are often anonymous. Sometimes they will use, like, Proton e-mail servers that are end-to-end encryption. We don't know who they are. That's a huge problem. So, it's very difficult to hold these people accountable. So, for me, one thing I think about when I think about the BC Human Rights Act is I'm constantly, you know, reminding employers, you have a legal responsibility to keep your work safe, free of harassment and violence, and that includes in the world of work out in that public sphere. So, I want to be able to use the Human Rights Act as a tool if they are unable to, or they fail, to keep that workplace safe. They're being pushed out into the public sphere on social media, and these are some of the spaces where these attacks are happening.



And if there's no way to hold the people-- the attackers accountable because they're anonymous, it's a huge problem. So there needs to be some way to expose the attackers because there can't really be any accountability if they're anonymous. So those are my comments and thank you for listening.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Margaret, you're on mute still.

Margaret Olal: Hello, my name is Margaret Olal. I'm from Local 3000 and on the Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Workers of Colour, and the Racial Justice Liaison for BC Regional Council. The onset of COVID-19 pandemic saw a high rate in unemployment in BC, including a mass layoff in the hospitality sectors, where the majority of the workers were women of colour. A lot of workers in hospitality sectors lost their jobs as there were no recall rights. This is especially difficult, as many of these women have worked in the hospitality sector for over 30 years. And it's also difficult for us as hospitality workers to report hate crimes within the hotel itself. Some of the hotel guests when they're told to wear a mask, they become a little bit violent when you tell them you have to wear a mask inside the hotel. And with that, you can't actually report it to the Human Rights. You can only report it to the managers, which usually ends up in nothing being done. During COVID-19 pandemic, display of hate, both verbal and physical, towards people of Asian descent increased significantly. COVID-19 was the trigger, but the underlying issue of discrimination towards Indigenous, Black, and people of colour in general had been building up for decades. My co-workers, who are Asians and South Asian descent, told me that they were afraid to go outside in the evenings. And then elderly parents were also afraid to go and do grocery shopping because of fear of being either spat on or called names. Unfortunately, the rise in hate crimes only add to a growing list of ways in which ethnic minority groups have disproportionately suffered and continue to do so during the pandemic. Isolation, loss of income, and fear are triggering mental health conditions or existing ones in the community of BIPOC. As a result, many people in the communities may also be facing increased level of alcohol and drug use. Most immigrants of African descent are usually reluctant to report incident of hate to the police, due to the fear of being questioned about the authenticity of their lived experiences. Hate during COVID-19 pandemic has shown both the weaknesses in BC and the strength. The Unifor Racial Justice Liaison have created toolkits which include questions for our members to facilitate the collection of data that can then be used to further analyze the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on workers in different sectors. My ask for the Human Rights is to start to collect race-based data, to help better public health decision for BIPOC communities. Thank you.

Paul Nagra: Good afternoon. My name is Paul Nagra. I'm the president of Unifor Local VCTA. VCTA stands for Vancouver Container Truck Association. Our local represents, uh, majority of our members are truck owner operators, and we also represent company drivers. I work for companies-- driving company trucks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our members faced a lot of challenges.

[Clears throat]

Something as simple—I'll get to the hate thing a little bit later, but something as simple as buying a cup of coffee. During the pandemic when, um, the Delta variant hit, and everything got locked down. Even the Tim Horton locations, like, all locations were doing drive-throughs only. So, I just want to bring to your attention, you know, our trucks, they don't get through the drive-through.



So, some of our members are not even able to walk in to grab a cup of coffee or a sandwich. So, they go all day without having any kind of coffee or, you know, they have to make their own provisions to start their day. That was overlooked, and I just wanted to point that out. Some of the other challenges we face is the basic lack of washrooms. Most of our port locations that we service in the Vancouver area, they don't-- basically, the washroom facilities are just portable toilets. They don't have handwashing facilities. And so, we were able to talk to the Port of Vancouver and they brought in temporary handwashing stations and upgraded the washrooms on a temporary basis. So, during the pandemic, our members faced a lot of verbal assaults and swearing. This happens from time to time where the driver gets to the customer. Sometimes they're late due to not, you know, situation out of their control, you know, there could be traffic delays, et cetera, or it could be, you know, line ups at the port. And so, the rate of abuse went up during the pandemic. I mean, we get, you know, driver abuse once in a while, but during the pandemic, it was, like, amplified a lot more, and we know that all types of abuse was up during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether it was, you know, spousal abuse, household abuse. All types of abuses up, and so our members face a lot of abuse during the pandemic. We represent-- our members are-- about 90% of our membership is made up of workers of colour, primarily from the South Asian community. And majority of our members have families that depend on a single income in this sector. So those are the type of challenges we face. And in closing, I would like to say that our drivers were taken for granted and I appreciate all the COVID heroes that we had who were out there with health care workers, first responders. Every kind of profession was recognized except ours. Second, I just want to remind everybody that every time you go to the grocery store, or you go to a department store, everything you buy, we moved it. So basically, our members are delivering all the goods to keep the supply chain moving and without much appreciation. We have a saying that if you bought it, we brought it. And also, the stuff that we transported that nobody ever thinks of was all the PPE equipment that all the hospitals and the doctors needed that they were in short supply of. Vaccines and also all the medications. So, I know there's somebody out there thinking, "Well, we didn't go to the department store, I bought it from Amazon." I just want to remind you that we deliver to Amazon too before they deliver it to you. And I'll leave it there. Thank you.

Andrea MacBride: Christine, do you want me to-- okay. I see Mike on there, but I'm going to start, Mike, and maybe you can fill in anything that you want to after that. As Gavin mentioned at the beginning, our transit workers, in particular in Local 111 and Local 2200 which is Coast Mountain, are in a ratification meeting. So, I'm going to try and do my best to put-- fill in some of the spots around hate in our transit workers. But I know Mike will have more to add because he's got the intimate details. But let me just tell you a few things. Unifor represents over 7,000 transit workers across this province. They are in the main-- lower mainland, they're in the interior, and they are on the island. And in fact, we have some of our transit workers that are on the Squamish Whistler area that are on strike right now. And so, they are part of our group. And, you know, I just want to mention this, too, because our transit workers have been considered frontline workers. And as Paul talked, you know, at the beginning of the pandemic in particular, frontline workers were, you know, given the big, huge hurrahs over all of the work that they did, and have done. Our transit workers, as I want to speak about right now, they have gone above and beyond. And even though our ridership is down in some cases, you know, somewhere in the range of between 40 and 50% prior to the pandemic, our members have continued to provide the vital transit that people need to get to work, especially those frontline workers who needed to get



to the hospitals and the grocery stores, and all of those other wonderful things that we require. And our members are out there doing their work, and yet they are, um, being verbally attacked. They are being abused, they are being physically attacked and assaulted, and they are being sexually attacked and sexually assaulted. And although this is not new to our transit workers, the increase during the pandemic has been noticeable to our members. And it, you know, it would seem that it really doesn't fall this hate that is coming towards transit workers really doesn't seem to fall under those protected rights, but that would simply not be accurate. Many of our transit workers are people of colour. They are women. They are part of the LGBTQ2S committee-- community, pardon me. And yet they are all being-- the hate that is poured on them. And, you know, you've asked, you know, "What have we tried doing?" Well, there have been partitions, and some of them are-- one of my co-workers talked about them as shower curtains, plastic shower curtains. Now some are a plexiglass or some type of material, but lots of them are simply a shower curtain, and we all know what type of protection that provides on you as people are being spat at, as people are being groped, and as people-- our members are being assaulted physically. And so, it's quite significant. I know that Mike can talk probably more about what we've tried to do to provide them with protection. We have done some of that. But it is still hate that is constantly at our transit workers, and the fact that, you know, what's happened. We do see increased, you know, leaves. Sick leaves, short-term disability leaves, workers compensation claims. All due to this hate that is put on our members. And so, I just want to leave it at that. Mike, I'd like to, if it's okay with everybody, allow Mike to introduce himself and talk about what he has.

Mike Bocking: Well, good afternoon, everybody. Yeah, we are right in the middle of our ratification vote, but we've stepped out a few minutes here just so we can have a little bit of a presentation. Everything that Andrea has said is very accurate. What I find within our transit community is not only the hate that we're getting from everybody outside, and there that-- remember, these stressors are worldwide stressors. I don't want to put any blame on anybody in particular, but it is also leading down into our own brothers and sisters with the amount of stressors that they deal with. We fight weekly for PPE; we fight weekly for barriers. You referenced a soft COVID barrier just so that people wouldn't be talking on everybody. The amount of individuals that want to get on without masks, and it creates confrontation, but then it creates confrontation in the back of the coach. Then it also creates confrontation amongst the drivers themselves. So, there's nowhere to go and they love to say, "Oh, you're a frontline worker. These are things that you have to deal with." No, these aren't things that we have to deal with. You should be getting us some help out there. We've tried to-- actually, we have asked for our mental health advocates to try to get them at least 15 hours a week instead of ten. I mean, I would love 30 to be honest with you. There are so many people out there that need to just vent and they're phoning our table officers, they're phoning our reps, and all they want to do is just let it go. And I'm telling you right now, from anywhere in the-- they're breaking down to no extent. And somehow, we have to find a way to stop what is happening. I don't know what that is, folks, but to quote frontline workers, "We are taking the brunt of it," and they're expected to do that, and they're going home, and they're taking the brunt from it home, and they're taking it everywhere else. So where does it stop for us? I don't know where that is, and I know I could speak about it for about an hour, but Andrea did a great job. Thank you so much for supporting us with the ratification. If there's anything that you would like me to add, I have no problem with that at all, but that's just a quick little insight that we are dealing with on the day-to-day basis.



Christine Maclin: Thanks so much, Mike. So, I'm going to wrap up, I know we got our five-minute warning. So, I'm Christine Maclin, I'm the Human Rights Director for the whole country. I'm a department of one from coast to coast. I love coming there. I'm actually joining you from Peterborough, Ontario, which is Treaty 20, a community, I love to say, translated at the foot of the Basin and what is so beautiful about that is that we all gather, and we all can make change, and we come together as one. So, Peterborough, Ontario just drives me. But I know some of you may be wondering, "Why did we give you the stories that we did?" We could all give our stories about racism and discrimination. We really could. I know as a woman of colour, I could give you stories, and I know you're hearing them from everybody else. But these are the things that we need to talk about, the systemic grounded issues that are grounded in the prohibited grounds. 90% of workplace harassment is never officially reported. I deal with all the harassment in our workplaces. We've dealt with training harassment investigators, we do mediation, we do all the things that the Commission offers internally within the workplace, so that we can remedy the concerns that are being risen. But the problem is, people are not coming forward and telling you exactly what it is. If we went through all of these workplaces, women, LGBTQ members, workers of colour, Indigenous members, people with disabilities. We could go national and ethnic place of origin in BC when we talk about language. I've been in workplaces where employers have posted discriminatory policies about you must speak English in the workplace, including at lunch breaks, which in itself is discriminatory. I'm going to say that one of the things that we are asking for as a union is that we start to expand and really create an expediated process to address these concerns. We can work well with the commissions and the labour bodies to move policies and practices. But the reality is, they're lengthy, they're drawn out, they're confusing. And if 90% of workers already don't want to report their complaints, they are actually living in very traumatic situations. Our health-- our media workers, I heard on our Media Council, women that have been in the industry for 30 years saying, "I am, for the first time in my life, scared." Hospitality workers that I've seen with my own eyes where we have these protesters-- truck rallies and convoys staying at our hotels, screaming at workers behind the desk and slamming things and telling them, specifically targeting women and racialized people. Our transport workers, make no mistake, that they are being denied access, because if they were white truck drivers, there would have been no question about washrooms and accessibility to food and resources that are the basic principles of human rights around accommodations and goods and services. Those things have been denied to our workers. And yet, we are a union that is very progressive. We've bargained racial justice advocates to combat racial discrimination within our workplaces to work with employers and the Union. We've got our mental health equity reps that are advocating. We mandate that all of our elected officials take 40-hour human rights training so they understand their responsibilities, and how we can engage in these processes. We do equity training; we work with employers and we're at the grassroot level of trying to find real tangible solutions. And what I would ask from the Human Rights Commission and when we look at what do we need, what we need is actually an expediated process. It's not a punitive, people don't want money. But they're walking through their workplaces into society, taking it home to their families, and they're living in trauma because they're expected to just deal with it. And because of the lengthy processes, it's denying them access to be really truly who they are authentically being. So, I'm going to say that as a union, I would ask that we need to have processes for anonymous complaints. We need to have processes for hate speech, and what the impact of hate speech is. People hanging a noose off of somebody's workstation is hateful. And even though you don't know who did it, it doesn't



take away the pain from the people that it does impact. And then last but not least, I'd like to find ways to implement when we do workplace culture investigation where we don't actually have a complainant. How do we address those issues when we can clearly point out that the culture of the workplace is toxic, discriminatory, and vile? And so, you know, as a union, we want to work with you. We'd love to keep having these consultations. You've heard from all of the people on here, and we just want to thank you for taking this opportunity, and we can bring you those statements. We're doing tracking mechanisms, we were the only union that was selected by the Federal grant for anti-racism, and we are going to be tracking harassment complaints within our workplaces both by union stewards and anonymous by workers, so that we can get to the root cause issue. So, I can tell you everything that also we're doing, but we got a long list, so at this time, I know you would like to ask us some questions.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you so much to each of you. It is an incredible breadth of experience that you bring to us today, so I'm really grateful for that. We have a number of questions; we'll do our best to get through them. And I'm not sure if you're, uh, open to doing written submissions, but we may have some follow-up questions if you are. And Christine, I appreciate your offer to continue the conversation. Christine, just on your last point there, when you talk about expedited processes, do you have something specific in mind in terms of-- are you talking about human rights complaints or is it broader than that?

Christine Maclin: I think it's the human rights complaint since we were speaking about human rights, because what I hear in BC is our members are saying that they're really stuck between two profiles. You've got the work safe protocol through discrimination and harassment within a workplace and the human rights processes. And they're actually turning to the work safe processes and finding that they're not getting any resolve, but it's just because of the fear of the length of the process that they feel that they have to go through to the Human Rights Commission. And I know that you offer mediation and as a mediator, I know that when we deal with human rights related matters, very seldomly do we actually get to mediate those types of concerns, because both parties have to want to come to the process. But I'm just curious if there's other ideas and solutions that we can brainstorm on to really get to what people need at the immediate level.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you, Christine. Just for the sake of clarity, the tribunal process, which is the complaint process, is entirely separate from our office. So, we really appreciate the recommendation which stands to no matter what. I just wanted to clarify that I can't answer that question because we're not in charge of the complaint process. Jennifer, I wonder if I can go back to the beginning and just ask you a question in your-- with the expertise that you laid out at the beginning of your comments, and you talked about your involvement in the international community supporting media workers. Do you have a sense from that perspective how BC or Canada kind of places in that international context? Are we worse, better, somewhere in the middle, non-comparable?

Jennifer Moreau: I do, I can tell you a little bit. So, the International Federation of Journalists, I also sit on the Gender Council. So, it's all women talking. Online harassment is the number one issue, because it's very gendered. So, it is a global problem, absolutely. And any time we talk about any press freedom issue with the International Federation of Journalists, Canada often will



look tame in comparison. But you're talking about countries that are, in some cases, led by dictators with extremely repressive working conditions. So, it's kind of hard to compare on that sense. So, I often, you know, go on thinking, "Oh, Canada, it's so not bad here," but it really is a problem here as well. So, I don't want to give the impression like, you know, it's safe in Canada, we don't have these issues, it's not as bad as other countries, because it is. And we're seeing the exact same kind of complaints where women are harassed online. It's sexist, it's vulgar, there's, you know, threats of sexual assault, threats of rape. Sometimes even, like, in Mexico, for example, which is one of the most dangerous countries, they'll talk about, you know, coming after the journalist-- the female journalist's family and threats of harm against their children. So, it can be quite extreme. However, in Canada, I think it's always been on the back burner. But it's getting worse, and the Maxime Bernier thing really was a flashpoint. And that is consistent with global trends where state actors are spurring this on. So, yeah. I don't know if that helps or not, but.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Yes, thank you. Thanks for that.

Andrea MacBride: If you don't mind, I just want to jump in because I am a media worker as well as being the BC and Alberta Area Director, and I also represent a bunch of media workers. And just recently in Alberta, we had one of our female journalists, who was in a vehicle that was marked and branded, followed home. And, you know, the company very quickly ensured that it was the wrapping was taken off the vehicle. But I'm, you know, with luck, and I hate to say that she wasn't injured or hurt. But she was verbally attacked on that. And it's a bit too late because they now know where she lives. And so, yes, I would agree with Jennifer wholeheartedly that, you know, the situations are not as bad as some of the countries like Mexico. But we just had this, um, in Canada, so.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Mm-hmm. Thank you, Andrea. Thank you, Jennifer. Margaret, I wondered if, on your speaking notes, and thank you for what you said. When you spoke, you talked about race-based data as being necessary, and I wondered if you could give us a little bit more detail about what kind of race-based data you're thinking there, if you have something specific in mind. Oh, you're muted.

Margaret Olal: Because of COVID, you do not know how many-- let's say Black or Indigenous or people of colour that were affected by COVID. So, we need to know that. And also, it would be good for us to actually know it in order for next time in case there's another epidemic. How do we deal with it, or how do we treat people? Because if we, for example, some of us have extended family. If you have extended family, okay, and you all live in one house. Okay, so the Government would be able to know how we can account for everybody in that household.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you for that. Paul, you spoke about the rate of the abuse has gone up over the pandemic, or rate of abuse of truck drivers has gone up over the pandemic. Is that something that you can provide any sources for that data? Or is that the kind of more anecdotal evidence of the union?

Paul Nagra: Just more anecdotal evidence of the union because we just deal with complaints as they come along. So, we don't keep, like, actual data on it, but just the number of complaints. I got a complaint tomorrow where, you know, dispatch is harassing a driver, but he's putting it onto



the driver and the driver's dispatching-- harassing on dispatcher and then. It's just that, you know, we do have a conflict here and there. Most of our member are men, but we do see, you know, receive, like, complaints, and there's the odd conflict here and there. But over the pandemic, it's, like, more than tripled. But actual numbers, no, I can't provide you actual numbers. Because a lot of the times, you don't even hear about it. It's only the cases I can relate to, the ones that come to my attention. A lot of things are hidden. I don't even know that it even took place, so I can't really give you those figures and It's very hard to come up for it, because a lot of drivers can just say, "Okay, you know, the guy was just, you know, mad or something," or, you know, and then just let it go. But these are the actual ones that get investigated, and that I have, you know, so that's what I'm pertaining to.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you, Paul. Similarly, and this may be our last question, but I'm wondering, Andrea, I had a similar question for you. You talked about the increase during the pandemic of verbal, physical, and sexual assault of transit workers. Do you have any data you can point us to? And not to, um, discredit in any way the anecdotal evidence. I'm just wondering if you have any of the quantitative evidence as well.

Andrea MacBride: No, I don't. Again, you know, I've talked to the locals, and it will be similar to what Paul said, it will be anecdotal. There probably are some statistics that we talked specifically to Coast Mountain Bus or BC Transit to get statistics on the increase in either AWCB cases or general disability cases. But I'm not sure that that would necessarily equate to it all. as most of those cases aren't reported. Most of those cases are not put forward in any other way, other than, you know, again, you know, "I finished my workday, and I only got spat on three times today. Good day for me."

Christine Maclin: Can I give just a quick example? So, we bargained Racial Justice Advocates in our workplaces, and I could say it's the same with all of the equity. When I met with the employer, and that this one was actually a media local, they actually said to me-- I asked them, "How many harassment complaints have you as-- racial discrimination complaints have you, as an employer, received?" They told me one for the year of 2021, which we know that was the largest global civil rights movement. There was lots of discussion, stuff was coming in our workplace. I brought two Black members into the discussion. Two out of the big group, and one said, "I experienced eight incidents of racial discrimination that people label as microaggressions." The other person said, "I experienced one incident of racial discrimination a day." That is nine accounts for two people every single day. And so, this is where, when I look at the statistics of 90% of workplace harassment is not reported, this is what we're doing as a union is finding ways that we can allow people to make complaints because we've been taught that we should keep quiet and just appreciate that we have our jobs. And I think that that's the underlying issue. That people are scared that there's no remedy. They're scared there's no accountability, and ultimately, they're like, "Why should I bring it forward because, especially if I'm an equity deserving person, I need to keep my job because so many of my family members have lost it." And that is key right now with COVID. So, I think when we're looking at that, that's one ask. How can we make this more accessible for everybody?

Commissioner Kasari Govender: [clears throat]



Excuse me, thank you for that. We are out of time. Sarah, did you have anything really urgent that you wanted to add to them in terms of questions?

Sarah Khan: No, you covered just about everything. Thank you.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thanks, Sarah. Thank you so much to each of you. It was really incredible, as I say, an incredible breadth of subject matters that we were able to cover today. And it will be very useful to us as we go forward in this process. Meghan, I'll pass it over to you for a final word on next steps.

Meghan Toal: Sure, thanks so much. Sorry, I'm just echoing that.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: [coughs]

Meghan Toal: Thank you so much. That was a super-rich past hour-ish that we've been able to hear from you and for bringing so many folks to the table today to share what you know and what your experiences have been with your membership. Next steps, it was mentioned earlier on that we are accepting written submissions. So, anything that you feel wasn't captured or just to add to the submission today, please do feel free to submit written and recorded submissions. That deadline is March 31st, so we still have a few weeks to be able to do so. We will-- if folks let us know that they want to review the recording from today, you can contact us. And once it's ready, we can allow folks to review the recording. And other than that, I think that's everything for today. Thank you all so much for being here. We so appreciate your time, and we look forward to potentially hearing from you more if you're able to submit other written submissions as well.

Christine Maclin: Thank you to all of you as well for your time and energy, and merely making, you know, giving Unifor the opportunity. So, we want to thank you so much. So, well, let's make the changes that are needed, so. Be safe, everybody.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you, take care of yourselves.

Meghan Toal: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Christine Maclin: Bye-bye.

Commissioner Kasari Govender: Thank you.

Meghan Toal: Bye.

