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PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Speech by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: I speak from the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota, and the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the heart of the Métis Nation Homeland.

Honourable senators, as you know, we have been here before with this visual artist laureate bill. It passed this chamber and went to the House of Commons in 2019, where it died with the election call that year. The outcry across the country, in many media, when it died on the Order Paper in the other place those several years ago, was significant. It, of course, died again in this chamber with prorogation. May we be successful this time.

The visual artist laureate bill is important. As you all know, I have spoken on the goals, implementation and impacts of this bill a number of times in this chamber. I will not restate my prior speeches today, save to say it brings parliamentarians and artists together in their social responsibilities. It underlines the importance of contemporary democracy and civics by portraying

the issues and work of the Senate and the House of Commons, and the values, perspectives and principles of Canadians. This way of connecting with Canadians and residents of Canada of all ages through the international language of multiple visual media is truly meaningful.

Many artists have told me how important this position is and that it would be a key vote of moral support for Canada's artists in these dark times.

I thank artist Peter Gough who brought the idea forward years ago. I am only sorry that he passed away earlier this year. I spoke to him a few days before he died, and he did know it was again before this chamber.

I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their indulgence in moving this along quickly last month. I thank Senator Atallahjan, the critic, and all senators in this chamber for their interest and support.

Honourable senators, I truly hope this bill will get quick passage to the other place, and I thank you.
