



March 3, 2022

The Honourable Bardish Chagger, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Chagger,

We are writing to you in your capacity as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs about an issue that is very important to our communities of Ottawa Centre and Hull-Aylmer.

The 24-day long unlawful occupation of downtown Ottawa was traumatic for both residents and businesses. Our communities, particularly Ottawa, were harassed, witnessed hurtful and racist symbols, and the incessant honking was unbearable. Not to mention, parking lots were used as urinals, fireworks were hurled down the streets, and there are reports that there was even an attempt to light an apartment building on fire.

In addition, many Members and staff felt unsafe to access the House of Commons. We have heard from several MPs who were harassed and subjected to intimidation. In fact, due to safety concerns, the Sergeant-at-Arms had to cancel the sitting of the House on Friday, February 18th. As such, we need to look to preventative measures to ensure this never happens again.

As the Members of Parliament for Ottawa Centre and Hull-Aylmer, we are asking the Committee to re-evaluate the boundaries of the Parliamentary Precinct to include Wellington and Sparks streets, and Laurier Street in Gatineau. It is our view that the designation of this precinct will allow for more robust safety protocols to be put in place.

To be clear, this is not to stop lawful, peaceful protests — that are critical to a healthy, vibrant democracy like ours — but to ensure an unlawful occupation of our downtown core does not occur again.

We also support the idea of making Wellington Street more accessible to Ottawa residents and visitors who wish to walk, bike and roll in front of our important national institutions. We are committed to increase and improve more active transportation in our national capital. We need to be bold in our fight against climate change.

Thank you for the great work the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs does to make sure Parliament Hill continues to function efficiently and effectively. The preventative measures we are proposing, that is to expand the Parliamentary Precinct, would ensure safety of MPs and staff, and bring peace of mind to our communities, especially the residents of Ottawa. We hope you will strongly consider our request.

Sincerely,

Yasir Naqvi, M.P.
Ottawa Centre

Greg Ferguson, M.P.
Hull-Aylmer