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# THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR, NO. 2095

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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## NEWS

# MPs' sponsored travel back in spotlight as House Ethics Committee, NDP MP Green call for complete ban

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Conflict of interest rules for MPs could be reviewed for the second time in less than two

years after a committee examining Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's winter vacation and a series of politicians' paid trips overseas brought the practice of

sponsored travel and other gifts under renewed scrutiny. The House Ethics Committee (ETHI) unanimously moved NDP MP Matthew Green's (Hamilton

Centre, Ont.) motion on Jan. 30 calling on both the Commons Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) and Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) to

amend the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons to explicitly ban

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## NEWS

# Almost a year after deadline, less than half of incumbent Liberal MPs have been nominated for the next election

Down in the polls and way behind the Conservatives in fundraising, the federal Liberal Party has given MPs until next month to fulfil the nomination conditions if they want to be candidates without going through the stressful nomination process, according to two Liberal sources. But the party also said if MPs need more time, it will be flexible.

BY ABBAS RANA

The federal Liberals had set March 2023 as the deadline for all MPs to meet certain conditions if they want to be their

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Nearly a year after the nomination criteria deadline passed, only 69 of 156 Liberal MPs have been nominated so far, according to Liberal Party. Of the 69 nominated Liberal MPs, 40 are from Ontario; 12 from Quebec; seven from B.C., two from Manitoba; three from Nova Scotia; two each from New Brunswick and Newfoundland; and one is from Alberta. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## NEWS

# New rule: incumbent Tory MPs whose ridings changed 25 per cent or more will have to go through nomination contests

BY ABBAS RANA & STUART BENSON

Incumbent Conservative MPs whose ridings have changed in population by 25 per cent or more will have to go through open nomination contests, according to new rules approved by the Conservative Party's powerful national council.

"The party is opening up nominations [in ridings] that have changed 25 per cent or more," said one Conservative source who spoke to *The Hill Times* on not-for-attribution basis because the new nomination rules were announced at a closed-door caucus meeting. "Population change is the criteria."

Conservative sources told *The Hill Times* that Jenni Byrne, senior adviser to leader Pierre

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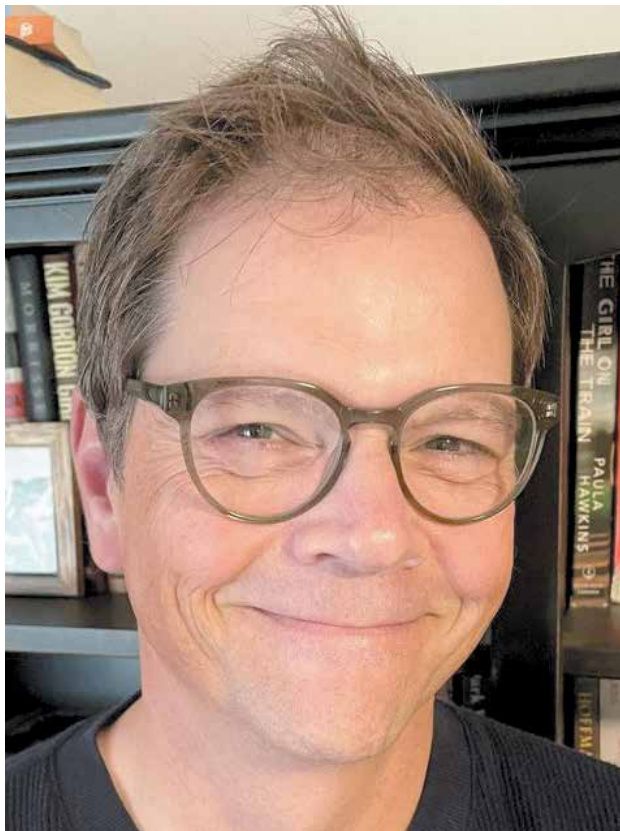
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Mike Lapointe

## Heard On The Hill

# James McCarten, CP's Washington correspondent and stylebook editor, now acting Ottawa bureau chief as Joanna Smith exits post



James McCarten, Washington, D.C., correspondent for The Canadian Press, is now the acting Ottawa bureau chief for the organization in addition to his reporting responsibilities in the United States. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

**James McCarten**, who has worked for The Canadian Press for nearly three decades in a number of different roles in both Canada and the United States, has taken over from former Ottawa bureau chief **Joanna Smith** “on an acting basis for the time being.”

McCarten told *The Hill Times* that he’s still also CP’s Washington correspondent, and that his assignment there doesn’t end until a little bit later this year.

“The position in D.C. has been posted, and we will assign someone to replace me down there in due course,” said McCarten.

McCarten is also the editor of *The Canadian Press Stylebook* as well as CP’s *Caps and Spelling*, two style guides that are a must-have for reporters and editors across the country.

McCarten said the organization doesn’t comment on staff departures, but on LinkedIn, Smith wrote that “it was a thrilling adventure—and a great honour—to build and lead a team of talented and dedicated journalists on Parliament Hill as bureau chief over the last three years.”

“The reporters, editors and photographers in the Ottawa bu-

reau of The Canadian Press are among the smartest and strongest in the country. They are also courageous and caring human beings. I am proud of the stories we told and the important work we did together to tell Canadians what they need to know,” wrote Smith in a Jan. 31 post. “My life is now leading me to a new adventure, which I look forward to beginning after a bit of time to reflect, learn and enjoy precious moments with my mentors, friends and my loving family. Thank you to everyone who has reached out with messages of support.”



Joanna Smith’s tenure as CP’s Ottawa bureau chief ended recently. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Smith is now listed as a freelance reporter on the Parliamentary Press Gallery’s website, but has no contact number.

## PM announces another shakeup in senior ranks of public service

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** announced yet another shakeup in the senior ranks of the public service on Jan. 29 following a major shuffle earlier this month.

**Catherine Blewett**, currently deputy minister of economic development and, concurrently, president of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, becomes secretary of the Treasury Board, a move effective on Feb. 6.

**Mala Khanna**, currently associate deputy minister of Canadian Heritage, has been appointed as deputy secretary to the cabinet (governance) in the Privy Council Office as of Feb. 12.

The current associate deputy minister of Transport, **Dominic Rochon**, will start his new job as chief information officer of Canada at the Treasury Board Secretariat on Feb. 12, as well.

Long-time public servant **Graham Flack**, who spent decades in the bureaucracy and most recently served as the secretary of the Treasury Board, announced his retirement earlier this year. The prime minister thanked him for his service.

## Blanchet says he hopes ‘Stornoway has a lot of mirrors’ for Poilievre ‘because he really does like himself’

Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves-François Blanchet** had a bit of fun with reporters in a Hill scrum on Jan. 29 when he was asked to clarify his party’s support for the Liberals government on certain votes, but he took the opportunity instead to take a shot at Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre**. “I voted against all the last budgets

of this government. And he’s [Poilievre] actually going to make—I do not know how to translate. ... There’s no limit about the level of

lights he [Poilievre] wants on himself. I hope Stornoway has a lot of mirrors in the rooms because he really does like himself.”

## Alberta Premier Smith to address Economic Club in Ottawa on Feb. 5

Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith** will be in the nation’s capital on Feb. 5 for a keynote speech during an event hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. The topic on the agenda will be “Alberta’s Advantage is also a Canadian Advantage.”

Director of government relations with the Economic Club of Canada **Natasha Morano** will deliver the opening welcome, with **Shannon Joseph**, chair of Energy for a Secure Future scheduled to deliver opening remarks.

**Bob Masterson**, president and CEO of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada is on the agenda to deliver closing remarks.

According to the event description, “while Alberta retains a strong oil and gas sector, it is

a home for investment in other emerging energy sources and has the ability to power the province’s—and the country’s—economy for decades to come, all while responsibly reducing emissions.”

The event will be held at Delta Hotels Ottawa from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith is coming to Ottawa for an Economic Club of Canada event on Feb. 5. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## AG to deliver audit on ArriveCan on Feb. 12



Auditor General **Karen Hogan** will deliver her performance audit of the controversial ArriveCAN app on Feb. 11. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Public Services and Procurement Canada managed all aspects of the app, “including procurement and expected deliverables, with due regard for economy, efficiency, and effectiveness,” according to a release.

The app, which was launched shortly after the outset of the pandemic in April 2020 to help Canadians navigate travel during the health crisis, proved to be problematic and way over budget, eventually costing \$54-million instead of the original price tag of \$80,000.

Hogan is scheduled to table the report at approximately 11 a.m. following a motion adopted in the House of Commons on Nov. 2, 2022, calling for an audit.

Auditor General **Karen Hogan** is scheduled to deliver her performance audit report on the controversial ArriveCAN app on Feb. 12.

The audit will focus on whether the Canada Border Services

## Former Bloc MP Pomerleau dies at 76, Champoux says Pomerleau ‘took with him a small piece of Quebec’s very soul’

Former Bloc Québécois MP **Roger Pomerleau** died on Dec. 21, 2023, at the age of 76.

Bloc Québécois MP **Martin Champoux** paid tribute to the late Pomerleau in his MP’s statement in the House on Jan. 29, saying Pomerleau “took with him a small piece of Quebec’s very soul” when he passed away.

Pomerleau served in the House from 1993 to 1997, representing the riding then known as Anjou-Rivière-des-Prairies, Que. He was defeated in 1997 by Liberal candidate **Yvon Charbonneau**, but was re-elected in 2008 in Drummond, Que., and subsequently defeated in 2011 by NDP candidate **François Choquette**.

“Anyone who ever saw former MP Roger Pomerleau campaign

on the phone will no doubt have a vivid memory of the experience,” said Champoux in the House. “He was a man of conviction and unfailing integrity and, first and foremost, he was a man of action. Roger Pomerleau has left us to join other illustrious members of our political family, members with names like **Lévesque, Bourgault, Miron, Julien, Leclerc, Landry, Falardeau** and many others. We stand on the shoulders of these giants who are now gone, having eased the way for us to finally keep our promise to give Roger the little bit of country that we owe him, in return for everything he did to achieve it.”

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## News

# Unifor ‘in full campaign mode’ as MPs discuss controversial anti-scab legislation

Advocacy groups representing workers and businesses are ramping up outreach to MPs to discuss Bill C-58 as the House resumes.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Canada’s largest private-sector union is promising intense lobbying activity in the coming months as advocacy groups representing employees, and others representing businesses, clash over a controversial bill that could prohibit the use of replacement workers during contract disputes.

“We do not believe that you stop or take your foot off the gas until this is actually done. We are engaged in full campaign mode to make sure that this bill is the strongest possible piece of legislation that we can see for working people,” said Lana Payne, national president of Unifor, which represents about 315,000 members. “I think what I would say is that this is going to be a very important few months.”

Bill C-58, the so-called “anti-scab legislation,” is now in second reading in the House after it was introduced on Nov. 9, 2023, by Minister of Labour and Seniors Seamus O’Regan (St. John’s South-Mount Pearl, N.L.). If passed, the bill would make it illegal for employers in federally regulated industries—such as transportation, banking and telecommunications—to bring in replacement workers to continue operations during a legal strike or lockout. The bill also includes a penalty of up to \$100,000 per day for employers found breaking the new rules.

Payne told *The Hill Times* to expect increased advocacy activity with members of her organization reaching out to their local MPs to push for the bill to move forward as quickly as possible. About 70,000 Unifor members are covered by the Canada Labour Code, and have “a very big interest” in ensuring the bill achieves royal assent, according to Payne.

“It’ll be a number of ways. Obviously, our members in different provinces across the country will be reaching out to their MPs, and we will continue our efforts to speak with all parties, but also to make sure that we’re at committee hearings [and] we’re making sure that our voice is heard in all



Minister of Labour and Seniors Seamus O’Regan, pictured on the Hill, introduced Bill C-58 on Nov. 9, 2023. If passed, the bill would make it illegal for employers in federally regulated industries to bring in replacement workers to continue operations during a legal strike or lockout. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of the places that is necessary, including the Senate,” she said.

Payne argued speed will be key in pushing forward the bill because of how long it would be before the legislation takes effect, even if it is passed. The bill includes a clause saying it will come into force 18 months after it receives royal assent, which O’Regan said was included largely to give agencies responsible for handling labour disputes time to adapt, as reported by CBC News on Nov. 13, 2023.

Payne argued that the ability to use scabs gives employers more power at the bargaining table during negotiations with unionized workers, and therefore Bill C-58 has the potential to create a better balance.

“Employers can use scabs directly, or when you’re in bargaining, they threaten to use scabs, and that sends a chill through the bargaining table,” she said. “When a dispute is finally over after scabs have been employed, you go back to work and this is a very ... often poisonous labour relations climate that occurs. It is hard to get over that. And if you’ve been on a picket line for six months or a year while the employer has hired scabs to do your job, it is probably the most demoralizing thing that can occur in your working life.”

Bea Bruske, president of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), told *The Hill Times* her organization’s members are very keen to see swift passing of Bill

C-58, arguing it could benefit one million workers across Canada. She said that strikes are never easy decisions, and often-times they are motivated not just by wages, but by working conditions.

“I think it’s really important that both parties come to that bargaining table prepared to do the hard work, and not having to worry about a scab taking your spot while you’re exercising your right to strike or while you’re being locked out. This is a game changer in terms of the respect and dignity employees can expect,” she said.

Bruske said supporting the bill will be a top priority for the CLC, adding that her group’s members will advocate for the 18-month wait before the legislation comes into force be reduced to 12 months.

“We’re going to continue to keep this front and center of all of our lobbying efforts and digital outreach to our activists, and all those kinds of things,” she said. “Considering that we’ve been lobbying for this for decades, the sense of urgency is very high for us for a whole variety of reasons.”

**Small businesses will be ‘the great loser’ if Bill C-58 is passed, says CFIB vice-president of national affairs**

Critics of Bill C-58 include the Canadian Federation of Inde-

pendent Business (CFIB), which argued the proposed legislation would be “terrible news for small businesses,” in a statement released on Nov. 9.

Jasmin Guénette, CFIB’s vice-president of national affairs, told *The Hill Times* that the bill is unnecessary, and argued it was clearly introduced as a political move by the Liberals intending to please unions and the New Democratic Party.

Introducing legislation to prohibit replacement workers during strikes or lockouts was among the listed priorities in the supply-and-confidence deal between the Liberals and the NDP released in March 2022.

Guénette argued that the effects of strikes stretch outside of the specific businesses and workers involved.

“What we’ve heard ... is that when prolonged strikes at ports or rail companies happen, the impact of those strikes, obviously, go far beyond the sole activity of that specific company, and so the impact is felt throughout the economy. It can be crippling for small businesses because they don’t have the resources to withstand financial shocks of these strikes,” said Guénette, “If B.C. ports are on strike, it’s not like small businesses can find alternative modes of moving those goods rapidly, and even, in many cases, it’s just not possible to do. The financial impact of those strikes ... that is really the concern for our members.”

Small businesses could be “the great loser” if the bill passes, according to Guénette.

“We are worried that this bill would encourage more frequent strikes and so we will continue to advocate against it in the next couple of weeks and in the next couple of months,” he said. “We’re hoping also to be invited if that bill goes to committee. We’re hoping to be invited to committee to share small business stories and why we think this bill is not necessary.”

Eric Smith, senior vice-president of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, told *The Hill Times* a major concern of his regarding the bill is that banning replacement workers in the telecommunications industry could hinder the ability of service providers to keep critical infrastructure functioning properly, especially during an emergency.

“We’re obviously seeing a lot more frequent and more intense severe weather events, natural disasters, [and] all those kinds of things. Our concern is that you impair their ability to maintain and repair services if they coincided with a labour strike or lockout,” he said. “Canadians are increasingly reliant on telecommunication services, whether it’s for education, whether it’s for accessing critical services, like health-care, and of course, emergency services.”

Smith argued that the current legal framework under the labour code for federally regulated industries already achieves “very good balance between labor and management for employers.”

“Workers have the right to engage in legal strikes, [and] employers can use replacement workers temporarily during the strike. The striking employees are entitled to return to their jobs after the strike ends, and employers are prohibited from using replacement workers to undermine unions,” he said. “That balanced approach, I think, has been very successful, historically, especially in federally regulated industries where typically you have sort of larger companies and sophisticated labor unions that have been able to work effectively under the Canada labor code.”

Smith said he would prefer for Bill C-58 to not pass, but if the legislation does move forward, he would like to see an exception to the ban on replacement workers when it comes to critical infrastructure, such as for telecommunications.

“We do expect to have conversations with government, whether it’s through meetings, or whether it’s participating when this legislation gets to committee,” he said. “I think we always try to apply the appropriate level of advocacy to the seriousness of the issue. This is a very important issue. There is a heightened sense of the need for resilient and robust telecommunications networks, and this legislation runs counter to achieving that goal.”

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# Immigration is our future

Immigrants are and must be part of the solution to complex issues facing Canada and our global community. From the health-care industry to the construction industry, and from Ontario to the Northwest Territories, we can bring our skills and our abilities to help move Canada forward.



Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marc Miller makes an announcement about additional supports for asylum claimants in the Commons foyer on Jan. 31, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

burden on government revenues to fund essential services. Ultimately, Canada will not succeed economically unless we continue to welcome immigrants, as we have done for generations.

The conversation around immigration cannot be economic alone. Immigrants who arrive in this country aspire to study, grow, and thrive. We want to invest in our careers, our families' futures, and the communities around us. We bring a diversity of perspectives, cultures and experiences that drive innovation, and enrich our nation as a whole.

At World Education Services, where I serve as managing director for Canada, we are listening carefully to the needs of newcomers. Every year, we issue 500,000 academic credential evaluation reports to people hoping to study and work in North America. Our expertise is rooted in the evaluation of education from more than 57,000 academic institutions in 203 countries and territories. Our goal is to see immigrants arrive and thrive once they get here, and we know they want a voice in the dialogue that is currently happening in Canada.

Immigrants face social and economic barriers that impact their ability to build a life here. Immigrants entering the workforce experience hurdles in finding jobs, especially those commensurate with their experience. For example, studies have found that immigrants with a degree in health fields are six times more likely to work in jobs that do not use their training.

At the same time, last year, 1.2 million immigrants arrived in this country,

the highest level ever recorded in this country's history. Canada also broke the 40-million mark in terms of population. This population influx has heightened strains and fractures in longstanding, complex issues around housing affordability, health care, economic mobility, and more.

Complex issues require cohesive solutions. So, as we enter a new parliamentary session, we ask for the government to bring a holistic approach to this critical issue. That includes centralizing the issue at the federal level in the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council Office. That includes incentivizing collaboration and ensuring accountability at the provincial level. And that includes ensuring that immigrant leaders and immigrant-serving organizations have a seat at the table when these issues are being discussed, along with employers, regulators and others invested in the success of this country and its newest residents.

Immigrants are and must be part of the solution to complex issues facing Canada and our global community. From the health-care industry to the construction industry, and from Ontario to the Northwest Territories, we can bring our skills and our abilities to bear across the nation to help move this country forward. We are ready to work together with all levels of government and stakeholders who serve newcomers to create the long-term immigration strategy Canada desperately needs. We believe immigration is our future, and we are ready to dig in together to make it happen.

*Shamira Madhany is the managing director for Canada and deputy executive director at World Education Services. The Hill Times*

Shamira Madhany

Opinion



Commons to remember that immigration is our future. To ensure a successful future, we need a cohesive, pan-Canadian immigration strategy that is implemented through strong centralized leadership, clear consultation, and meaningful inter-governmental collaboration.

Immigration is key to Canada's future prosperity and economic growth. By 2030, the last of the baby boomer generation will be turning 65 years old, and demographers predict most of them will be retired. That is just over five years away. Immigrants are a key piece as to how we will fill gaps in our workforce, and how we will reduce the

TORONTO—As the new parliamentary session begins, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and cabinet are back in Ottawa, newcomers across the country, who are arriving in larger numbers, want politicians on both sides of the House of



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## News

# AI ‘platforms won’t regulate themselves,’ says Heritage Minister St-Onge as government considers tech’s challenges to media

Parliamentary secretary Taleeb Noormohamed acknowledged ‘frustration that the government hasn’t done more to regulate,’ but ‘the question becomes what exactly are you trying to regulate.’

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge has told a conference of media producers that the effects of artificial intelligence is an evolving challenge for regulation, as concerns grow about its potential to affect creative industries and promulgate misinformation.

“One lesson that we’ve learned, I think, from the past decades and the difficulties that we had bringing forward legislation and regulation is the fact that these platforms won’t regulate themselves,” St-Onge (Brome-Missisquoi, Que.) told the audience at the Canadian Media Producers Association’s (CMPA) Prime Time conference in Ottawa. “One of the challenges that a government has is to be able to move as quickly as technology... none of us really know exactly the extent of the changes that artificial intelligence is going to bring forward.”

While Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) has taken the lead on proposed legislation related to artificial intelligence (AI), concern has grown within organizations that typically deal with Canadian Heritage as generative AI that can create images, text, and other data has raised global concerns about the effect on creative industries, media, and copyright implications.

In the United States, *The New York Times* is suing OpenAI and

Microsoft for copyright infringement, alleging that the two companies’ AI models were trained by using millions of the publication’s articles. Protections from AI and digital recreation were also a key component of labour disputes between Hollywood studios and both the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA.

Charles Morgan, a McCarthy Tétrault partner and national co-leader of the firm’s cyber/data group, said it was important to think about the issue globally with Europe tending toward regulation of the space, and the Americans more heavily invested in innovation, leaving any regulation to litigation through the courts.

“Canada is in between,” he told a panel about safeguarding national interests while promoting growth on Feb. 1. “You’ve got innovators on one side, regulators on the other, and Canada’s trying to find a comfortable, uncomfortable spot between a rock and a hard place.”

The federal government has proposed the creation of the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act as part of a raft of measures included in Bill C-27, which is currently before the House Industry Committee. Amendments proposed last year would include defining seven types of “high-impact” AI systems, similarly to the European Union’s AI Act.

Champagne also announced a voluntary code of conduct on the responsible development of advanced generative AI systems in October. So far, 22 companies have signed on to the code, which outlines measures related to safety, accountability, fairness and equity, transparency, human oversight and monitoring, and validity and robustness.

Morgan said that code was a “reasonable draft,” but that it had no enforcement mechanism. He also noted that, with the exception of IBM, none of the larger American firms involved in AI had signed on.

“We have a fairly high stakes regulatory framework, voluntary codes that are trying to provide some guidance on what responsible AI governance would look like, and really, the big ticket items are what’s happening in Europe, and what’s happening in the U.S.,” he said.

Liberal MP Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, B.C.), parliamentary secretary to the heritage minister, told the conference on Feb. 1 during the same panel discussion that regulating AI is akin to “building the plane while we’re flying it.”

“It’s a stupid analogy, but literally, the thing is moving and we’re trying to figure out—whether you’re lawyers, whether you’re in industry, whether you’re in government—what to do with this thing and nobody actually knows what it is going to be 30, 60, 90, 120 days from now, let alone two or three years from now,” he said.

Noormohamed defended the voluntary code as a starting point, noting that “there is frustration that the government hasn’t done more to regulate, but again, the question becomes what exactly are you trying to regulate.”

Regulating AI, he said, would be concerned with ensuring that its use in creative industries did not undermine human work, and its use in misinformation and disinformation campaigns. That would require collaboration between the government and private sector, he said.

“People say, ‘Oh, well, citizens don’t actually have a voice.’ We do,” he said. “The most important voice we have is our pocketbooks—where we spend our money, who we interact with, who we engage with, who we do business with. If we’re seeing bad actors in the market, we do have the ability to say we’re not going to interact with these people, and government has that opportunity as well.”

Speaking on the same panel, News Media Canada president and CEO Paul Deegan said journalism by humans mattered as AI encroached. He pointed to that morning’s *Globe and Mail* front page, with stories about foreign interference. “AI cannot do what they do. And this is so important to our democracy,” he said.

Deegan said the news media did not have an “audience problem, but we have an advertising problem.” He said government support through the Online News Act and local journalism initiatives helped, but that government ad dollars could also help keep organizations afloat.



Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge told the Canadian Media Producers Association’s Prime Time conference that ‘none of us really know exactly the extent of the changes that artificial intelligence is going to bring forward.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“There’s no better place to advertise than that,” he said, as opposed to “putting dollars onto platforms that really do nothing in terms of misinformation and disinformation.”

## Defunding CBC a ‘bad idea’

Another recurring topic during the conference was the future of CBC/Radio-Canada. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) has promised to “defund” the public broadcaster if he wins the next election, and has repeatedly described it as a Liberal propaganda outfit.

In his opening remarks at the conference, CMPA president and CEO Reynolds Mastin said no public broadcaster should be immune from criticism, but warned that “we ignore the wider context at our peril.”

“Today, public criticism of CBC is instantly weaponized, it’s used as ammunition for the purpose of dismantling the single biggest commissioner of Canadian content, including independently produced content, in the country,” he said.

St-Onge, meanwhile, said in French that the government was working on the premise that “that Canadians deserve a strong, well-supported public broadcaster.” When asked about the

suggestion that only the English component of CBC/Radio-Canada be defunded, she said that would not make sense in broad swathes of the country.

“About defunding CBC, what a bad idea,” she said, to applause from the room. “I’ve met a lot of people from Alberta, Saskatchewan, B.C., and Ontario, and all the provinces across Canada here today. Do you think that you deserve a public broadcaster? Why should you pay for a public broadcaster that would only serve French communities and only in Quebec?”

St-Onge is striking an advisory committee to discuss the future of CBC/Radio-Canada, though she noted that there would not be a “big, broad consultation” in the 18 months before the next election.

“We have a lot of expert panels that thought about this that gave great recommendations. We have other public broadcasters around the planet that we can get inspired by as to what the best practices and the best ideas are, and this is what I’m going to be talking about with the expert committee,” she said. “It’s really a committee that will advise me on a concrete proposition to bring forward to the community about the future of CBC/Radio-Canada.”

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## Editorial

### Hogue's promise to search for truth on foreign interference is good news for democracy

Marie-Josée Hogue, head of the Foreign Interference Commission, struck a welcome tone upon launching the commission's preliminary hearings last week.

The commissioner, a judge of the Quebec Court of Appeal, said on Jan. 29 that her only objective is to find out the truth about any foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections in Canada, and wants to eventually recommend ways to limit countries like China, Russia, and India from having any influence on Canada's elections.

"Given the importance of protecting our democracy, these allegations have sparked significant debate and discussion, both at the political level and in the media. My team and I will make every effort to get to the bottom of things and understand what the country has faced, and what it may still be facing in terms of foreign interference," said Hogue.

This is welcome news for Parliament, the government, all political parties, MPs, candidates, and the Canadian public. Hopefully, the Hogue Commission will indeed shed more light on attempts by foreign actors to influence our elections, putting an end to it.

According to its official mandate, the commission, established through an order in council on Sept. 7, 2023, will focus on the interference of China, Russia, and other foreign actors. It will look at the national and the constituency level. It will

also examine and assess the flow of data within the federal government on these issues, particularly how much information about such interference was circulated between the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force and the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol panel, and how it was communicated to senior decision-makers and interested parties, including elected officials.

The commission will look at the capacity of federal departments, agencies, institutional structures, and governance processes to permit the Government of Canada to detect, deter and counter such interference. It will hold public hearings throughout the year, and will submit an interim report by May 3, 2024, followed by its final report by Dec. 31, 2024.

While last week's hearings dealt primarily with how much information can be made public, given the national security implications of what is being discussed, the evidence Hogue heard will then be used to guide the commission forward.

Discussions over foreign interference have been dogged by partisan bickering and government obfuscation since they were first raised. At long last, an impartial series of public hearings will hopefully shed light on the challenges Canadian democracy has already faced, and must be prepared for in the future.

Let the sun shine in.  
*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor

### My father, Eugene Forsey, would have been proud of Penny Becklumb: Helen Forsey

Re: "Wake up the Scrutiny of Regulations Committee—the rule of law is at stake," (*The Hill Times*, Jan. 19). Heartfelt thanks to Penny Becklumb for her article about the importance of the Joint Scrutiny of Regulations Committee, and the need for it to get back at its job, pronto.

My father, the late Eugene Forsey, was co-chair of that committee in the 1970s when he was in the Senate, and in his 1990 memoir, *A Life on the Fringe*, he devotes an entire chapter to its work "preserving the rule of law." In it, he pulls no punches, going after the political and bureaucratic transgressors with his relentless logic and trenchant wit, just as he did on the committee itself.

He would be appalled at the way it has now become practically the norm for governments at all levels to weasel their way around regulations in order to serve

"administrative convenience" and the vested interests of the corporate world.

My father saw the committee (initially called the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments) as an essential tool of democracy, bringing together independent perspectives and expertise from both House and Senate to hold governments accountable to Parliament and thus to the citizens it represents.

My dad would be applauding Becklumb's work; in fact, he would be writing to the press himself to echo and reinforce what she is saying.

I trust her article will resonate with enough of us to truly wake up the committee and get it working as it was intended to. The need for its eternal vigilance is more urgent every day.

Helen Forsey  
 St. John's, N.L.

### Hamas committed to Israel's destruction, not to reaching peace: Alan Williams

Re: "The jig is up on western imperialism," (*The Hill Times*, Jan. 24). Columnist Eric Ifill contends that "western messaging on this war has fallen flat, sowing more distrust in our institutions, politics and media." I fully agree. Ms. Ifill's op-ed is a perfect example as to why this is the case.

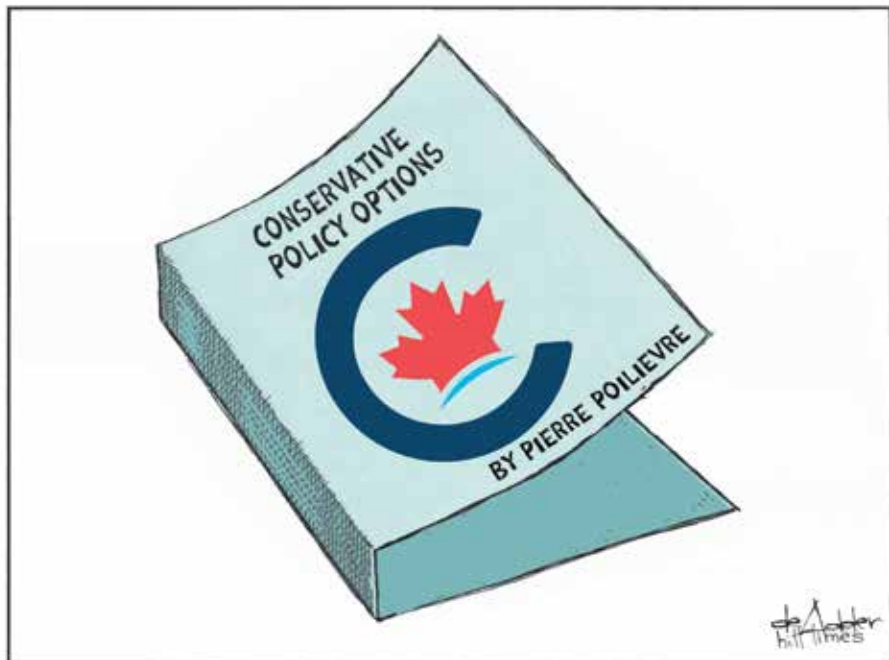
Reading Ms. Ifill's comments you would think that the proposed two-state solution is in jeopardy due to its rejection by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. However, nowhere does she mention that Khaled Mashal—a key figure helping to run the terror organization from Qatar—rejected this notion saying, "it means you would get a promise for a Palestinian state, yet you are required to recognize the legitimacy of the other state, which is the Zionist entity." He is committed to the destruction of Israel, not to reaching peace with Israel. Hearing his pronouncements, does anyone seriously believe Israel could ever negotiate a two-state solution with Hamas?

Reading Ms. Ifill's comments, you would think that Israel is responsible for the tragic death of more than 20,000 Palestinians. She neglects to mention that these losses result from Hamas violating the ceasefire on Oct. 7 (fully knowing that Israel would respond), and by locating

their military equipment within civilian populations. Ms. Ifill neglects to mention that the war would end if Hamas surrendered and released the Israeli prisoners. Truth is Hamas—not Israel—is accountable for the Palestinian deaths.

Lastly, Ms. Ifill revels in the fact that the dual objectives of freeing the hostages and destroying Hamas may be mutually incompatible, and that family members of the hostages are demanding more be done to free their loved ones. How to balance these two objectives will indeed be an agonizing one for the Israeli government. Unlike Gaza, Israel is a democratic country founded on the principles of human rights, equal justice and freedom of speech. People are free to demonstrate and to voice their opinions. While Hamas views any life, be it Israeli or Palestinian, as expendable, Israel values the sanctity of every individual's life. I don't envy the difficult negotiations and decisions the Government of Israel will need to undertake. But I am proud of the high moral standards and values that underline its actions and deliberations. Not the values exemplified by Hamas. Not the messaging reflected by Ms. Ifill.

Alan Williams  
 Ottawa, Ont.



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# Basic housing should be a human right for all Canadians

Social housing should be national in scope, and part of a major income reform. Immigration and refugee support should be regionally based, and there should be incentives for moving to underpopulated regions.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Immigration Minister Marc Miller made a \$362-million refugee housing announcement last week.

Instead of garnering positive impact, the announcement

opened the door for provincial governments and critics to claim that the amount in question is simply too little to deal with the problem.

Quebec is looking for a cheque for \$470-million, as outlined in a letter from Premier François Legault last month.

Legault is also asking the federal government to stem the flow of refugees finding their way into the country by land, sea, and air.

Miller's announcement seemed to reinforce Legault's concerns.

"I think we owe it to Canadians to reform a system that has very much been a stopgap measure since 2017 to deal with large historic flows of migration."

Miller is speaking frankly, but his admission simply sets the government up for further criticism.

If 2017 is the date when things went sideways, the federal government has had seven years to come up with a solution.

Like the housing crisis, the Liberals are taking the full brunt of criticism for immigration spikes.

The link between the two is tenuous at best, but the government doesn't seem able to convince the public about who is

responsible for the housing crisis in the first place.

It is not refugee spikes.

It was bad public policy foisted on Canada when the federal government was convinced by the provinces to get out of the housing field back in 1986.

For 30 years, the provinces had full responsibility, including federal transfer funding, for housing construction in their jurisdictions.

For the most part, they did nothing to fill the gap in social or Indigenous housing, while city hall used housing payments for new builds as a way to finance municipal coffers.

The responsibility for housing was completely in provincial hands for three decades until Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took the courageous step of getting back into housing in 2017.

The refugee housing problem would not exist if sufficient social housing had been built over 30 years for residents in need. Help should be available to anyone who cannot afford market solutions.

Meanwhile, the cost of market rental housing for those who can pay continues to rise as demand outstrips supply.

That is a completely different issue from the cost of immigration and refugee services.

For the federal government to defend itself against accusations that it caused the housing crisis, it needs a national strategy engaging cities and provinces in the solutions.

There are a few provinces that have continued to support social housing in the past three decades but, by and large, the availability of housing for the poor has not been increased.

The Liberals have worked to tackle child poverty, and some of those direct payments have definitely made a difference.

According to statistics, more than two million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty because of the Canada Child Benefit.

But as incomes grow, the cost of living grows along with it.

The Liberals need a big new idea that goes beyond simply ministers making announcements in their own bailiwicks.

At one point, the government was looking at the creation of a Guaranteed Annual Income for all Canadians.

That idea needs to be dusted off, and the feds need to invite provinces and municipalities

to the table to see who can help in what manner with the creation of a guaranteed income.

Basic housing should be a human right for all Canadians, with the guaranteed income built on the cost of housing by region.

Social housing should be national in scope, and it should be part of a major income reform.

Immigration and refugee support should be regionally based, and there should be incentives for moving to underpopulated regions of the country.

A big vision on how to house the underhoused, feed the underfed, and finance the poor would get everyone to the table.

In the current system, everyone is blaming the federal government for a problem that has largely been caused by provincial indifference and municipal greed.

The country also needs to understand what constitutes a basic housing right.

What should be the average housing size for socially funded financing?

Many Canadians live alone these days, which changes the type and size of housing we should be building.

There are no magic bullets. But the federal government needs to think bigger than single housing announcements if it wants to spread the responsibility—and the blame—for the current crisis.

A guaranteed income is the answer.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister and a former deputy prime minister.

The Hill Times

# Trudeau needs to match Poilievre's energy

Maybe the Liberals do have a path to victory. It just won't be a sunny way.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—American political activist Morton Blackwell once said, "In politics, nothing moves unless it's pushed."

In other words, if a political campaign is going to gather momentum, if it's going to gain sustained and consistent traction with voters, it requires energy. Lots of it.

And what usually provides that energy is human emotion, both positive and negative.

This is why when political campaigns reach out to voters, they often stress emotional messaging, and simple, concise



Justin Trudeau, left, and Pierre Poilievre. The prime minister may want to tap into positive energy, presenting himself as the forward-looking and hopeful alternative to populism, if only because that reflects his own persona, but he will ultimately be forced to match Poilievre's negative energy, writes Gerry Nicholls. The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and illustration by Neena Singhal

appeals designed to win over hearts instead of minds.

For his part, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau certainly understands this political reality.

Indeed, he touched upon it recently when commenting on Donald Trump's easy victory in the Republican Iowa caucuses.

Said Trudeau, "Do they [Americans] want to be a nation that is optimistic and committed to the future? Or will they choose a step

backwards, nostalgia for a time that never existed, a populism that reflects a lot of the anxiety and fury that people are going through without necessarily offering solutions?"

Essentially, he's arguing that this year's American presidential election will pit the positive emotion of optimism against the negative emotions of fear and anger.

Of course, when Trudeau made that comment it seems certain he

was also making a not-so-subtle reference to Canada's own political situation.

That's to say Trudeau is implying he represents optimism and idealism, whereas his chief rival, Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, is focusing on fomenting anxiety and acrimony.

But will Canadians really be faced with such a stark choice when they next go to the polls, one that offers an option between light and dark, hate and hope?

Yes, it can be argued that "anxiety and fury" are two negative emotions fuelling Poilievre's political machine.

But what about Trudeau? Will he really be the guy wearing the white hat of positivity?

Don't count on it.

True, the prime minister may want to tap into positive energy, presenting himself as the forward-looking and hopeful alternative to populism, if only because that more truly reflects his own persona, but I've long believed Trudeau will ultimately be forced to match Poilievre's negative energy with his own negative energy.

As a matter of fact, a recent Angus Reid poll has reinforced my belief.

That poll showed that just nine per cent of the Canadian electorate is passionate about and inspired by the prospect of voting Liberal.

In fact, according to the poll, 63 per cent of Liberal supporters

are more motivated to prevent a Conservative government rather than to support Trudeau and Liberal policies.

The report also noted that 36 per cent of NDP supporters said they would likely switch their vote to Liberal, and 30 per cent said they would consider that option if it would help prevent a Conservative victory.

What all this means, in short, is that Trudeau's support will mainly be coming from Canadians who view him as a lesser evil than Poilievre.

That's hardly a positive rallying cry.

So clearly, it seems to follow that a future Liberal campaign won't gain much energy if it highlights Trudeau's cheery demeanor or stresses his optimistic plans for Canada's future.

Canadian voters aren't in the mood for that rah-rah stuff.

As Trudeau himself put it, "there's a lot of people who are just rightly grumpy at the world right now."

Consequently, Trudeau's only option will be to turn ripples of concern about Poilievre into a tidal wave of fear in the hopes that this will generate enough energy to push Canadian voters into his camp.

So, maybe the Liberals do have a path to victory. It just won't be a sunny way.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

## Opinion

# ‘Authenticity’ must be Trudeau’s word of the year



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was at his most authentic during the pandemic, and he can reclaim that in the fight against climate change, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Our public space has become a house of mirrors, where nothing is what it seems. People want to know who and what they are actually dealing with, especially in politics, where so much is just marketing and makeovers. Where Trudeau could reclaim that kind of authenticity is the fight against climate change.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Could a good dictionary help Justin Trudeau

refurbish his tarnished image?

I think it could. Allow me to explain.

Since 2003, the Merriam-Webster dictionary has been putting out a list of words that were of particular interest to people in that year. It then chooses the “Word of the Year” based on the public’s searches of its various websites. The word with the most hits shoots to the top of the list.

Why do these words matter? Simple. They almost always relate to what is on people’s minds during a particular year. In 2020, for example, “pandemic” was the Word of the Year. In 2016, the year Donald Trump became U.S. president, the top word was “surreal”—something marked by the intense irrational reality of a dream.

Think of it as the “dictionary poll.” There are many examples to show the relevance of these particular words, but here is the best one.

In 2022, the Word of the Year was “gaslighting.” It is defined as any psychological manipulation of a person over an extended period of time that causes them to doubt their own perception of reality. In the end, they defer to the manipulator.

People wanted to know more about “gaslighting” because it was at the heart of what Trump was—and still is doing—to American politics.

Through epic gaslighting, Trump has convinced millions

of Americans that is okay to believe what you want to believe, rather than what is known to be true. Hence the belief in the MAGA world that the 2020 election was stolen, and Joe Biden is not a legitimate president.

The top word of 2023 is “authentic.” A nice, clear word, defined as something not fake or an imitation, but real and actual.

It is not surprising that authenticity was on people’s minds in 2023. The plague on all Western democracies—including Canada’s—of misinformation, disinformation, and the sudden and unregulated rise of artificial intelligence. AI makes deceptions that are frighteningly convincing into relative child’s play.

Interestingly, another word that appeared on the Merriam Webster list for 2023 was “deepfake.” It dovetails with the public interest in authenticity. Deepfake is all about altering an image or recording so convincingly that people believe it.

The prime minister knows all about “deepfake.” A tweet by user Theo Fleury on Feb. 16, 2023, claimed that “Justin Trudeau is on the Epstein Island list.”

His alleged proof was a graphic used by CNN to show the people who had actually been on the infamous sex-trafficker’s flight list. A message appended to the tweet posed a question: “Anyone else shocked? Nope.” There was also a photo showing Trudeau and Epstein side by side.

It is true that some big names showed up on that flight list, including Trump, Bill Gates, and Prince Andrew. Which is not to say that it is a crime. But according to fact-checking by a number of news agencies, including *Newsweek*, the whole Trudeau thing was an ugly fake. Deep fake.

CNN’s graphic of the flight list had been altered to include the prime minister’s name. Nor did Trudeau’s name appear in any of the court documents that were filed with this scandalous case and subsequently unsealed. Sadly, 533,000 people viewed the spurious tweet before it was revealed as a fraud.

Is it any wonder that in 2023 the public has a keen interest in the word “authentic”?

Our public space has become a house of mirrors where nothing is what it seems. People want to know who and what they are actually dealing with, and that is especially true in politics where so much comes down to marketing and makeovers.

The Conservatives invested \$3-million in a makeover of leader Pierre Poilievre after his nearly seven terms in Parliament. Their goal was to persuade Canadians that underneath that contemptuous sneer beats the heart of a regular, apple-eating guy who feels their pain. A potential prime minister.

Canadians may legitimately wonder: who is the real Pierre Poilievre? Is it Stephen Harper’s

former political hit man, or the guy-next-door persona created by the big makeover?

Trudeau’s authenticity problem is arguably even bigger than Poilievre’s. A lot of Canadians think they already know who he really is—a spoiled son of privilege who operates in a world with special immunity from the hardships his fellow citizens are experiencing.

After eight years of running the country, the prime minister is beyond makeovers. And he can’t get by on “rizz” anymore.

Rizz is another word on the Merriam-Webster 2023 list, a diminutive of “charisma.” It means personal appeal and charm. Trudeau has all but exhausted that asset over the course of winning three federal elections—that, and the generally thankless work of governing through a pandemic and economic hard times.

When Poilievre recently asked Trudeau a legitimate question about his recent free trip to a luxury resort in Jamaica, the prime minister responded with a statement about Islamophobia.

That looked worse than weak. Trudeau came across like someone who thought he didn’t have to answer. Leaders always have to answer. Ignoring questions, or leaving it to deputies to take the heat in Question Period, doesn’t cut it.

Trudeau was at his best, his most authentic, during the pandemic. He paid the bill to keep Canadians afloat during the unprecedented health-care crisis, and just as importantly, he talked to the country every day.

As a direct result of the Liberal government’s response, 35,000 Canadian lives were saved. No other politician in Canada has that on their resumé.

Today’s political landscape is no longer dominated by a deadly pandemic. The issues driving the daily agenda are the more traditional ones: the economy, inflation, the housing crisis, and a health-care system that seems to be on life-support itself. No one has quick and easy solutions to any of these issues, no matter their glib rhetoric.

But there is one issue where Trudeau could reclaim the kind of authenticity he earned during the pandemic: the fight against climate change.

If the prime minister still has the fire in his belly to do the job, there is no more important file than this one. That is especially true when the alternative to the Liberals has no plan to fight global warming, only one to burn more fossil fuels.

Trudeau has got to re-engage in the battle to save the planet, and convince Canadians that there is no greater irresponsibility in public life than pretending the existential dilemma doesn’t exist.

You can’t get more authentic than that.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and columnist.

*The Hill Times*



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre at his party's caucus meeting on the Hill on Jan. 28, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# A western Conservative's advice to Pierre Poilievre

Voters also want to like the people they vote for, so have fun on the stump. Hold them to account using humour and make fun of yourself, too. That shows humility, something that is in short supply in politics, but that voters highly value.

Monte Solberg

Opinion



**C**ALGARY—When first elected in 2015, the Trudeau Liberals went for big climate ideas, the progressive-chic look, and a splash of sunny ways. That worked with the left and a swath of the wavering middle, but in post-COVID 2024, Canadians are in deep financial trouble, and a gender-balanced cabinet doesn't buy hamburger for a struggling family. Affordability is such a dominant issue that the Liberals are rebranding what is probably their biggest policy win to date. It's easy to see why. Lauding the merits of the consumer carbon tax during an affordability crisis is like handing drowning consumers a bowling ball with an autographed picture of Steven Guilbeault taped to the side, and then wishing them a nice day. The polls reflect the disconnect.

Pierre Poilievre, you saw the signs two years ago and have been pounding on housing and affordability since. You are attracting big crowds. Your videos are

getting millions of views. You're connecting. The Liberals are now 14 points behind. Still, Pierre, if I were you, I'd be uneasy. The next election could still be 18 months away, and the crafty Liberals are just starting to push back.

My advice: you need a majority, and 40 per cent support is not enough when chance or folly can erode support in the dying days of a campaign. Yes, Justin Trudeau is overexposed and has a wagon-train of baggage. Even many Liberal supporters would prefer someone new at the helm, but the Liberal brand still compels in the country's biggest cities and in Atlantic Canada. In times of uncertainty, it would be easy for undecideds to drift back to the Liberal security blanket, and we should expect uncertainty, especially if Donald Trump wins the U.S. presidency in November. If that happens, you and your team will be scrutinized for signs that you'd toady up to the Trump administration—which could be

fatal. You need to be ready with a message that says you will stand up for Canada and Canadian values against Trump, while still being respectful of our biggest trading partner. We all need to remember how Trump insulted and taunted Trudeau.

Housing and affordability are messages that got you to where you are, but you need something more to reach the next five per cent, many of whom will be in the suburbs, in newcomer communities, and among blue-collar workers. Yes, for many voters, the next election will be an up or down vote on Trudeau himself. Voters start to sour on their leaders after eight years. Take advantage of that. Push his name and face out in every ad buy because you know the Liberals will attempt to hide him. But in those swing ridings, especially, you will need more than that.

A strong message on safe streets, crime, opioids, and addictions will help. The Liberals are vulnerable in scores of ridings on immigration, but again, take care. That's where your partner Anaida comes in: an immigrant herself, charming, and a gifted public speaker who can give newcomers and women the assurance that her husband has their interests at heart. You also need a responsible but practical message on climate. Get rid of the consumer carbon tax but incentivize clean technology, and when you say you intend to tackle climate change, mean it. A practical, but credible plan on climate will matter for thousands of potential Conservative voters in tight urban ridings.

And remember that voters aren't just machines. They want to see your humanity. In your videos, you do a great job of reflecting the stories of struggling Canadians. Keep doing that. It shows that you're a listener. Voters also want to like the people they vote for, so have fun on the stump. Better to

lampoon your political opponents than to insult them. Hold them to account using humour and make fun of yourself, too. That shows humility, something that is in short supply in politics, but that voters highly value.

“  
My advice: you need a majority, and 40 per cent support is not enough when chance or folly can erode support in the dying days of a campaign.”

Pierre, you have a great shot at winning a majority government, but the election is far from decided. Your work is only just beginning.

Monte Solberg is the CEO of New West Public Affairs, and is a former Conservative federal cabinet minister under prime minister Stephen Harper. He was the MP for Medicine Hat, Alta., from 1993 to 2008.

*The Hill Times*

## Opinion

# The daily struggles to survive as Indigenous

Fifty years ago, an alarm was raised about the proportion of Indigenous Peoples in prisons, 23 per cent at the time. Systemic changes were proposed to eliminate the biases against Indigenous Peoples that created this mess. Today, that number is 32 per cent. One in three Canadians in prison is Indigenous. That is a stark measure of institutional racism.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—On an overcast day a few weeks ago, a young Indigenous man stood up in the Ottawa Courthouse to hear his judgement. Let's call him Mitig. Far from his First Nations community in northern Ontario, there was no family to support him. It's a long story, but the short version is family is difficult to maintain through crisis, and Indigenous families have been through many crises.

Mitig is one of thousands and thousands of Indigenous Peoples who can't find their way home, who can't find belonging. If Mitig could tell his story it would make you cry. But he likely won't share his story for fear of judgment and stigma, and he's had enough of that in his short life. Mitig just wants the support in order to heal, and give back to society and find his place. It's not clear that will happen in prison, but that's where he is today. Mitig joined the thousands of other Indigenous Peoples in Canada's prisons, and it's a system that is statistically biased against Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples are more likely to endure use of force by police than white Canadians, more likely to be refused bail by courts, more likely to receive longer sentences by judges, and



A person holds up a feather at the ceremony marking the conclusion of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls at the Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., on June 3, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

more likely to be in solitary confinement. Layer upon layer of racism leads to the high number of Indigenous Peoples in Canadian prisons.

Fifty years ago, an alarm was raised about the proportion of Indigenous Peoples in prisons. Systemic changes were proposed to eliminate the biases against Indigenous Peoples from policing to courts through to jails that created this mess. Back 50 years ago, 23 per cent of the prison population was Indigenous—far beyond the proportion in the population. That is a stark measure of institutional racism.

Today, that number is 32 per cent. One in three Canadians in prison is Indigenous. That number is truly shocking. Imagine if one third of the people in jail today were (fill in the blank with any other minority in Canada). We would call it a travesty.

This is the finding in *Ten Years Since Spirit Matters: Indigenous Issues In Federal Corrections (Part II)*, released in Jun 2023, in which Correctional Investigator of Canada Dr. Ivan Zinger states: "On nearly every measure of correctional performance—time spent behind bars before first release, placements in maximum-security institutions, involvement in use of force, recidivism and revocation rates, suicide and self-injury, placement in restrictive confinement units—the correctional system seems to perpetuate

conditions of disadvantage and discrimination for Indigenous People."

Zinger detailed numerous issues on how the TRC Calls to Action have not been enacted. Corrections Canada has underfunded Indigenous cultural healing programs, and Elders who are supposed to be viewed

like chaplains are actually paid less. Painting art of "every child matters" in the hallways of jails doesn't really get at the root of the issue. Just saying.

The required changes seem to get bogged down in systems working to protecting themselves and the status quo rather than address the alarming racial

disparities. In other countries, this is when a massive lawsuit is launched in order to get the changes required. Sometimes international courts might even give a quiet second look when a country jails a ethnic minority at something like 10 times the rate of other races.

Canada joins the small group of offending countries who jail racial minorities at a much higher

rate such as Russia, Belarus, and the United States. For comparison, 37 per cent of the prison population in the U.S. is Black, but only 13 per cent of the overall population is Black. One could say that Canada is much more effective at jailing a minority than the U.S., given that the overall Indigenous population is only 4.5 per cent but the jail population is 32 per cent.

The name Mitig means 'tree'. I hope Mitig finds the support he needs to grow into his name-sake of strength and protection. It's what we hope for when they are our neighbours.

Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the West Coast and the CEO of the Indigenous Reconciliation Group. She writes twice a month about Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. In *Tlingit worldview, the stories are the knowledge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.*  
*The Hill Times*

## Indigenous Peoples in Federal Prisons:

Per Cent of Incarcerated Population

First Nations  
**22.6%**

Métis  
**8.6%**

Inuit  
**1.0%**

Total:  
**32%**

Per cent of Indigenous women in correctional facilities in Canada:

**Almost 50%**

SOURCE: Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report, 2022-2023

## From Ten Years Since Spirit Matters: Indigenous Issues in Federal Corrections (Part II)

- "In releasing the original *Spirit Matters report* (2013), my predecessor, Mr. Howard Sapers, concluded that Indigenous-specific provisions of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA), articles of intention that were deliberately enacted by Parliament in 1992 to reduce over-representation, were 'chronically under-funded, under-utilized and unevenly applied by the Correctional Service. In failing to fully meet Parliament's intent ... the federal correctional system perpetuates conditions of disadvantage for Aboriginal people in Canada.' As my updated findings make clear, a decade later and more than 30 years since the promulgation of the CCRA, the plight of Indigenous peoples behind bars has become steadily and progressively worse. Indeed, Canada's correctional population is becoming disturbingly and unconscionably *Indigenized*." —Ivan Zinger, Canada's correctional investigator
- "Arising from the impacts of colonialism, the offending circumstances of incarcerated Indigenous peoples are often related to socio-economic, political and cultural disadvantages, inter-generational trauma and abuse, Residential Schools, the Child Welfare System, and the Sixties Scoop, among other factors. There are higher

rates of poverty, substance abuse, and homelessness in Indigenous communities and lower rates of formal education and employment, among other factors, reflecting the intergenerational and present-day effects of colonialism and systemic racism. Problematic substance abuse is linked to high rates of poverty and unemployment, and family and community breakdown among First Nations, Métis and Inuit. These socio-economic and historical factors result in increased Indigenous contact (and re-contact) with Canada's criminal justice system, a proverbial revolving door that keeps Indigenous peoples criminalized, marginalized and over-incarcerated." —Ivan Zinger, Canada's correctional investigator

Public awareness of the lingering effects of colonization—such as the intergenerational impacts of Residential Schools and the 60s scoop—has increased over the last decade since the release of the Office's original *Spirit Matters* report. As documented last year, in *Part I* of our update on *Spirit Matters*, the federal government has recently recommitted to advancing reconciliation and building nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples. Other contemporary drivers of change include: the Calls to Action of

the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG); and, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

• The most relevant of these still mostly unanswered calls to action and justice to reduce Indigenous over-representation in the federal corrections system include:

TRC Recommendation # 30 – calls upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the over-representation of Indigenous people in custody over the next decade.

TRC Recommendation # 35 – calls upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Indigenous healing lodges within the federal correctional system.

TRC Recommendation #37 – calls upon the federal government to provide more supports for Indigenous programming in halfway houses and parole services.

TRC Recommendation #42 – calls upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Indigenous justice systems.

SOURCE: Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report, 2022-2023

# Keeping Canada-U.K. trade issues in perspective

Two-way trade in goods and services between our two nations totals nearly \$45-billion per year. It's growing, and it's 99 per cent tariff free. The current kerfuffle is about that remaining one per cent. Let's keep those orders of magnitude in perspective.

Ralph Goodale

Opinion



LONDON, U.K.—There was a bit of hyperventilating recently when the United Kingdom unilaterally announced a “pause” in free trade talks with Canada because they didn't think they were getting a deal

that “delivered” for them. They specifically mentioned their cheese exports to Canada, and the “rules of origin” affecting some of their manufactured exports to Canada.

The Canadian reaction was basically “keep calm and carry on!”

Two-way trade in goods and services between our two countries totals close to \$45-billion per year— that's about \$1-billion in British pounds every fortnight. It's growing, and it's 99 per cent tariff free. The current British kerfuffle is about that remaining one per cent. It does not affect the 99 per cent. It's useful to keep those orders of magnitude in perspective.

Until recently, trade between Canada and the United Kingdom was governed very successfully by the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union. It was negotiated when Britain was part of the EU, and the U.K. took good advantage of it. For example, CETA provided ample quotas to sell British cheese—tariff free—into Canada.

But then, in 2020, the British decided to leave the EU and get out of CETA. That was their sovereign choice, but it does have consequences—including their abandonment of that cheese quota into Canada. They left it with the EU in Brussels.

Immediately following Brexit, Canada and the U.K. negotiated a Trade Continuity Agreement to fill the void. It came into effect early in 2021, and remains ongoing. For the most part, it extends much of what previously existed under CETA.

With respect to cheese, since the quota the U.K. had been using to export to Canada was reserved specifically for the EU, Canada granted Britain a grace period of close to three years—to Dec. 31, 2023,—to adjust to the new reality that they were no longer an EU member. This time frame was clearly laid out in writing by both countries, and is consistent with the U.K.'s terms of departure from the EU. The U.K. bears the prime responsibility for dealing with the consequences.

About the rules of origin: trading partners typically spell out such rules in their trade deals to define those goods that are domestically manufactured and therefore eligible for tariff preferences, as opposed to non-domestic products which have too much foreign content to qualify for tariff breaks. Canada has successfully negotiated sensible rules of origin in our multiple trade agreements with Europe—including CETA— North America, and the Pacific region.

We know this is a topic of importance to the U.K. because of the significant EU

content in some of their manufactured goods, like autos, for example. Again, recognizing the need for a transitional period after Brexit, Canada and the U.K. gave themselves until March 31, 2024,—still two months from now—to negotiate an appropriate new bilateral rules of origin regime. Those negotiations were underway and making progress until the U.K. “paused.” That timing is puzzling.

In any event, Canada is always available to resume talks. We want a deal that works well for Canadians, too. We have a good reputation as a trusted trading partner that works hard to uphold a fair and effective, rules-based, international trading system. That is important at a time of global uncertainty and upheaval.

Also important are the other things that a new bilateral Canada-U.K. trade agreement could move forward, such as greater engagement in international trade by our small businesses and enterprises owned by women, Indigenous people, and cultural minorities; more bilateral partnerships in science, technology and innovation to drive advancements in pharmaceuticals, food ingredients and proteins, clean energy, the digital economy, AI, quantum, and cyber; and stronger supply chains for critical minerals and other vital commodities essential to national and economic security in both our countries.

A reliable ally, partner and friend, Canada is ready to get on with it.

*Ralph Goodale is Canada's high commissioner in the United Kingdom. He is a former federal minister of agriculture, natural resources, public works, finance, and public safety, as well as former House leader in both government and opposition.*  
The Hill Times



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Opinion

# Reducing red tape to make Canada a better place for business

The necessary measures in Bill S-6, together with broader initiatives to modernize our regulatory system, are non-partisan issues that have the potential to deliver wide ranging benefits to Canadians. Let's work together to pass Bill S-6 into law.

Treasury Board President Anita Anand, ISG Senator Yuen Pau Woo & CSG Senator Colin Deacon



Opinion

In 2020, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimated that complying with regulations at all levels of government cost Canadian businesses \$38.8-billion, including \$11-billion in unnecessary "red tape." More than 50 per cent of small businesses across the country say that cutting red tape would result in greater efficiencies and higher wages.

Reducing red tape means simplifying government to reduce costs, maintaining Canada's global competitiveness and stimulate innovation. For instance, let's look at permanent residents. When they apply for a temporary application, they take time to answer more than 100 questions. When



Regulatory modernization is increasingly important for Canada to maintain its competitive edge, especially in this current challenging economic time, write Treasury Board President Anita Anand, ISG Senator Yuen Pau Woo, and CSG Senator Colin Deacon. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

they then apply for a settlement stream in a specific province, they must answer most of them all over again because the federal government is not empowered to share that data with provinces. This is redundant and inefficient.

Recognizing the need to reduce such inefficiencies, the government introduced an Annual Regulatory Modernization Bill (ARMB) in 2019. Yet the latest version of the ARMB, Bill S-6, An Act Respecting Regulatory Modernization passed the Senate in June 2022, remains stalled at second reading in the House of Commons.

In total, Bill S-6 seeks to amend 28 different acts to reduce barriers—including financial and time-costly burdens—to innovation and economic growth. Passing

Bill S-6 in the House will clear the way to introduce the next annual regulatory modernization bill. In fact, the Treasury Board Secretariat has consulted with stakeholders about possible measures to include in the next ARMB, and is looking for ways to improve the breadth and depth of regulatory improvements in future iterations of the bill. Cutting red tape and modernizing regulations will help small businesses, farmers, newcomers, and—ultimately—all Canadians.

Reducing the costs of regulation also benefits consumers through a more rapid rollout of innovative products, timely protection against harms from new technologies, and potentially lower prices. On a macro level, the reduction of such

deadweight losses will increase producer and consumer welfare, and boost the economy as a whole—at virtually no cost to taxpayers.

While Bill S-6 introduces long-overdue changes in specific regulations, the government will work to take bolder steps at regulatory modernization beyond the ARMB. Some of the ideas under consideration include whole-of-government modernization where standards, certifications and codes-of-practice can be used to increase regulatory agility across all departments. This would include adopting national standards more widely and introducing regulatory sandboxes.

In this way, all stakeholders—not just government officials—would be enlisted into the ongoing task of creating and updating rules to ensure that the products that we buy are safe and affordable. Consultations around these policy tools are being championed by members of the Senate and are undergoing review at the Treasury Board.

We know that regulatory modernization is increasingly important for Canada to maintain its competitive edge, especially in this current challenging economic time. The necessary measures in Bill S-6, together with broader initiatives to modernize our regulatory system, are non-partisan issues that have the potential to deliver wide ranging benefits to Canadians. Let's work together to pass Bill S-6 into law.

*Liberal MP Anita Anand is the president of the Treasury Board of Canada. British Columbia Senator Yuen Pau Woo is a member of the Independent Senators Group, joint chair of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, and sponsored Bill S-6 (An Act respecting regulatory modernization) in the Senate. Nova Scotia Senator Colin Deacon is a member of the Canadian Senators Group, a former technology entrepreneur, and an advocate in Canada's Upper Chamber for innovation and harnessing of the digital economy.*

The Hill Times



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# INNOVATION

The Hill Times  
February 5, 2024

**Big look at  
Innovation  
Minister  
Champagne**

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**Canada's  
innovation  
challenges**

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**INNOVATION IN  
AI IN CANADA:**  
*Lib MP Ryan Turnbull*

**INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY  
LITERACY AND  
CANADA'S  
PATH TO  
PROSPERITY**



**CANADIAN  
WOMEN  
RESEARCHERS**  
make their mark

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*HIGHER VALUE  
MUST BE PLACED ON  
THE CREATION OF  
KNOWLEDGE: NDP  
MP CANNINGS*

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**BEYOND  
COMMERCIALIZATION**  
to full societal  
impact of research

**CANADA HAS A  
STRONG HEAD  
START IN THESE  
EASY INNINGS  
OF AI**

## Innovation Policy Briefing

# National strategy needed to address fragmented innovation ecosystem, say researchers

‘There is a sense that we are not certain as to how we are going to invest, grow, and make our innovation ecosystem prosperous for the next generation,’ says the University of Saskatchewan’s vice-president of research.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne shows “energy and passion,” but putting the country’s innovation ecosystem back on track will require addressing funding problems, and the fragmentation of vision and research support, according to researchers.

“We are at a standstill when it comes to either investments in innovation, which is part of the research, development and innovation landscape, and whether it comes to taking care of our major research facilities in the country, or making Canada an attractive place for talent to come and get educated and build their careers and advance their innovation story in our country,” said Baljit Singh, vice-president of research at the University of Saskatchewan. “I use the word ‘standstill’ a little bit out of charity, but actually we have been losing ground on this front for a few years now.”

When it comes to innovation, Canada is falling behind globally, according to Singh, with one of the major challenges stemming from a lack of a coherent,



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne said that ‘today’s science is tomorrow’s economy,’ and that the Liberal government is ‘committed to ensuring that our talented, world-class researchers have the right support for the crucial work they are doing,’ in a departmental press release on March 20, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

national strategy. Addressing fragmentation across the innovation ecosystem was among the recommendations in a report released on March 20, 2023, that was prepared by an independent advisory panel on the federal research support system.

“Because we know that today’s science is tomorrow’s economy, our government is committed to ensuring that our talented, world-class researchers have the right support for the crucial work they are doing. That is why we requested this report by experts and will thoroughly consider the report’s recommendations as we advance our efforts to strengthen the federal research support system,” said Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.) in an Innovation, Science and Economic Development press release announcing the release of the advisory panel’s report.

Singh was among the experts on the advisory panel, which was chaired by Frédéric Bouchard, dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences at the Université de Montréal.

According to Singh, no progress has been made in implementing any of the report’s recommendations almost a year after its release, although he said it could take some preparatory work for the federal government to take in the scope of the report and “really understand where the action needs to be.”

“If I have to sum it up: Canada is uncertain. There is a sense that we are not certain as to how we are going to invest, grow, and make our innovation ecosystem prosperous for the next generation to come, and make Canada a very attractive place for the top-level talent to come into this country,” said Singh. “How do we

create an end-to-end connected system, not only for the funding from basic science to commercialization, but also from the cities or the villages and towns, to the provinces, to Ottawa?”

The three national funding agencies in Canada supporting research at post-secondary institutions are the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research—collectively referred to as the Tri-Agency or Tri-Council.

The granting councils “have excelled at their mission of knowledge creation and talent development,” but funding levels have not kept pace with evolving needs, and the councils are also often tasked with mandates that are similar, but uncoordinated, according to the report. This fragmentation creates “lack of clarity among the various players with respect to their individual roles and responsibilities, non-complementary overlaps, inconsistency in supports between disciplines, and increased administrative burden for the research community,” the report says.

To address fragmentation issues, the report recommends development of a new governance mechanism, called the Canadian Knowledge and Science Foundation, to work in parallel with the Tri-Agency, with the role of addressing emerging research and innovation needs, supporting co-ordination and planning across the research system, and co-ordinating the planning and implementation of talent development programs.

With the 2024 federal budget on the horizon, Singh said he is hoping for announcements that are “very emphatic, very bold,” and that “will clear out all the uncertainty” for Canada’s innovators.

“[Champagne] understands that it is through innovation we can ensure a prosperous way of life for Canadians,” he said. “Whenever I met with him, I believe he has the drive and the energy. He’s doing regular activities and bringing investments into electric batteries, for example. But we need to work together somehow to move this file forward.”

NDP MP Brian Masse (Windsor West, Ont.), his party’s innovation critic, told *The Hill Times* that he considers industry scale-up to be one of the biggest hurdles holding back innovation in Canada.

“That’s where I think we lag behind is protecting some of our own intellectual property patents,” he said. “I think we have too many Canadian companies that are bought up as they scale-up. And it’s very attractive to cash in on some of those advances that you make as a company, but not see it [through] to become a Canadian champion.”

Masse said to help companies scale up, measures should be implemented aimed at reducing costs associated with supporting employees, such as through training, health and wellness.

“Supporting employees ... is far more advantageous, because even if those companies decide to either leave, or are bought up or do not go forward, the skill set remains with the Canadian investment of the worker and a family,” he said.

Masse said he gives Champagne credit for working hard and being approachable, but added he would like to see more national policies.

“I’d like to see more national strategies that are clear, [and] have direct, identifiable goals, and they’re ones that can be measured, whether they be in aerospace, auto, all kinds of different other sectors ... instead of trying to do one-hit wonders across the board or hail mary passes at the last end,” said Masse.

Elicia Maine, associate vice-president of knowledge mobilization and innovation at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, told *The Hill Times* that Champagne is doing a lot of things well, with examples including recent investments in bio-manufacturing. Since March 2020, more than \$2.1-billion has been invested in the Canadian biomanufacturing and life sciences sector, according to an Innovation press release issued on Oct. 27, 2023.

Maine said that Canada is a nation of inventors that punches above its weight, but the challenge lies in converting inventions into patents and products. The university science innovation ecosystem needs a “build-for-scale” strategy that takes a longer view, according to Maine.



Baljit Singh, vice-president of research at the University of Saskatchewan, says ‘If I have to sum it up, Canada is uncertain,’ regarding the innovation ecosystem. *Photograph courtesy of Baljit Singh*



NDP MP Brian Masse says Canada lags behind when it comes to ‘protecting some of our own intellectual property patents.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



Elicia Maine, associate vice-president of knowledge mobilization and innovation at Simon Fraser University, says the university science innovation ecosystem needs a ‘build-for-scale’ strategy. *Photograph courtesy of Elicia Maine*





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## Innovation Policy Briefing

# Innovation in AI in Canada

Start-ups and scale-ups in Canada's AI ecosystem are pushing boundaries in various domains, from healthcare and finance to natural language processing and computer vision.



The Artificial Intelligence and Data Act, part of Bill C-27, sets a foundation for regulating the design, development, and deployment of AI systems, writes Liberal MP Ryan Turnbull. Photograph courtesy of rawpixel.com, distributed under a CC0 1.0 DEED license

Liberal MP  
Ryan Turnbull

Opinion



Canada has emerged as a global hub for innovation in artificial intelligence (AI), fostering an environment that encourages research, development, and application of cutting-edge technologies. We were the first country to launch a fully funded national AI strategy to grow the economy and improve living standards, while retaining and attracting top research talent, and promoting the responsible development and use of AI.

Canada plays a leading role internationally. Through forums

such as the G7, G20, OECD, and UNESCO, Canada actively shapes guiding principles for responsible AI, and helps develop tools to empower other countries to turn these tools into practical action. Through 2023, Canada played an active role in the Global Partnership on AI, the United Kingdom's AI Safety Summit, and the G7 Hiroshima AI Process. All direct governments and companies on how to safely and responsibly develop and deploy advanced AI systems.

Here at home, the Government of Canada is driving innovation through strategic initiatives such as the Global Innovation Clusters and the Strategic Innovation Fund. These programs are

incubators for transformative AI projects, bridging the gap between conceptual AI research and market-ready innovations.

I'm proud to say these efforts are paying off: today, Canada is home to some 1,500 firms developing or implementing AI solutions, 20 public AI research labs, 75 incubators and accelerators, as well as 60 groups of AI investors. It should come as no surprise that Canada leads G7 nations in the growth rate of AI talent and ranks third in venture capital investment for AI.

The strong emphasis on diversity in the Canadian tech landscape has also contributed to the perspectives fuelling AI development. Inclusivity is not

only a moral imperative, but also a catalyst for unlocking the full potential of AI technologies, ensuring they serve the needs of a diverse and global society.

Start-ups and scale-ups in Canada's AI ecosystem are pushing boundaries in various domains, from health care and finance to natural language processing and computer vision. As AI technology is becoming integrated into our critical systems, it is increasingly clear that the world is at an inflection point. As legislators, it is our duty to make sure we understand the capabilities of this technology and to put in place the right guardrails to move from challenges to opportunity, all the while protecting Canadians.

To that end, the government has proposed a legislative framework to guide AI innovation in a positive direction, and to support trust in the adoption of AI by businesses and Canadians alike. The Artificial Intelligence and Data Act (AIDA), part of Bill C-27 (Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022), sets a foundation for regulating the design, development, and deployment of AI systems. For businesses, this means clear rules to help them innovate and realize the full potential of AI. For Canadians, this means that AI systems built or used in Canada will be subject to strict requirements designed to reduce the risk of harms. The government also

recognizes that, to be effective, the act needs to align and work with the approaches being taken by our key trading partners, including the United States and the European Union.

While AIDA is being considered by Parliament, and to bridge the gap in time until its regulations are developed and in force, the government has developed a Voluntary Code of Conduct for Advanced Generative Artificial Intelligence Systems to provide Canadian companies with effective guardrails to ensure that they are developing and using generative AI systems responsibly. In addition to undertaking specific measures related to fairness and equity, accountability, transparency, and safety, signatories commit to developing and deploying AI systems in a manner that will drive inclusive and sustainable growth in Canada, including by prioritizing human rights, accessibility and environmental sustainability, and harnessing the potential of AI to address the most pressing global challenges of our time.

As Canada charts its course in the dynamic landscape of AI innovation, our country stands as a beacon of progress, showcasing how collaboration, ethical considerations, and a diverse talent pool can propel a country to the forefront of the global AI revolution.

Liberal MP Ryan Turnbull, who represents Whitby, Ont., is the parliamentary secretary to the minister of innovation, science and industry.

The Hill Times

# Higher value must be placed on the creation of knowledge

The period between innovation and commercialization has been called 'The Valley of Death.' The period before a market has been established requires considerable investment with little return.

NDP MP  
Richard Cannings

Opinion



In its recent report on intellectual property, the House Science and Research Committee stated

that Canada has "the lowest level of corporate R&D funding in OECD and G7 countries." This low level of corporate investment means that every year, ideas developed with our tax dollars are exploited by foreign companies willing to take the investment risk—a risk Canadian companies are unwilling to take.

Intellectual property lawyer Jim Hinton elaborates: "we allow our publicly funded IP to be given away. We do the hard work of funding the research and creating the great ideas, but then we assign the rights to that IP to foreign companies. They make the money on our IP, sell the products back to us and, most devastatingly, they use Canadian-funded IP against us."

Baljit Singh, vice-president of research at the University of Saskatchewan, gives the example of a vaccine against a pig virus: "Researchers at the University of Saskatchewan discovered a virus, which led to the development of a vaccine in collaboration with Queen's University Belfast in [Northern] Ireland and Ohio

State University in the U.S." However, that vaccine technology was purchased by a company in France, so although the university and inventors received more than \$100-million in royalties, the job creation took place in France.

Mike McLean, CEO of the Innovation Asset Collective, frames the problem like this, "You cannot commercialize what you don't own. Only companies with sufficient freedom to operate can be assured of capturing the high returns that deliver prosperity to Canada's economy. In comparison, many countries are implementing strategies to successfully commercialize innovation and build dominant IP positions."

McLean suggests this lack of investment may be due in part to Canada's history: "For me, the largest roadblock is the lack of understanding about IP strategy and approaches to capture and commercialize IP. Canadian companies do not have access to role models or peers who understand these issues. Our economy has been dominated by resource com-

panies and financial institutions for a long time. Until recently, those businesses have not needed to build strong IP positions in order to succeed. Our technology and knowledge-based companies, however, do. They don't have access to the right talent sets, peer groups and networks to build those capacities and understand those businesses. We need to build institutions and role models that can help drive that change and build successful companies that can then spawn others."

This period between innovation and commercialization has been rightly called "The Valley of Death." The period before a market has been established requires considerable investment with little return.

Louis-Félix Binette from the Mouvement des accélérateurs d'innovation du Québec, stated, "The valley of death extends to the early commercialization period, because when you have a highly technological, highly innovative solution, there is a fair chance that your first clients will get a prototype-level solution and

it will probably cost you three or four times, 10 times or 100 times more to produce that first prototype than you can actually get from the sale. The more you sell, the more your balance sheet goes into the red. That's the valley of death."

While the risks and costs are very high, so, too, are the rewards, as Binette says: "For an investment fund, sometimes it's enough for one company to succeed in order to replenish the entire fund. That one transaction out of the 20, 30, 40 or 60 can be enough."

Along side this loss of IP is the continued loss of researchers to other countries simply due to lack of financial support for early career scientists and for basic research. Financial support graduate students and post-doctoral fellows—the people who do the majority of on-the-ground work in Canadian research—has remained stagnant for over 20 years. Meanwhile the three federal granting agencies are facing a five per cent budget cut.

Unless Canadian governments and businesses begin placing a higher value on the creation of knowledge, our future prosperity is at risk.

NDP MP Richard Cannings, who represents the riding of South Okanagan-West Kootenay, B.C., is his party's deputy critic for innovation, science and industry.

The Hill Times



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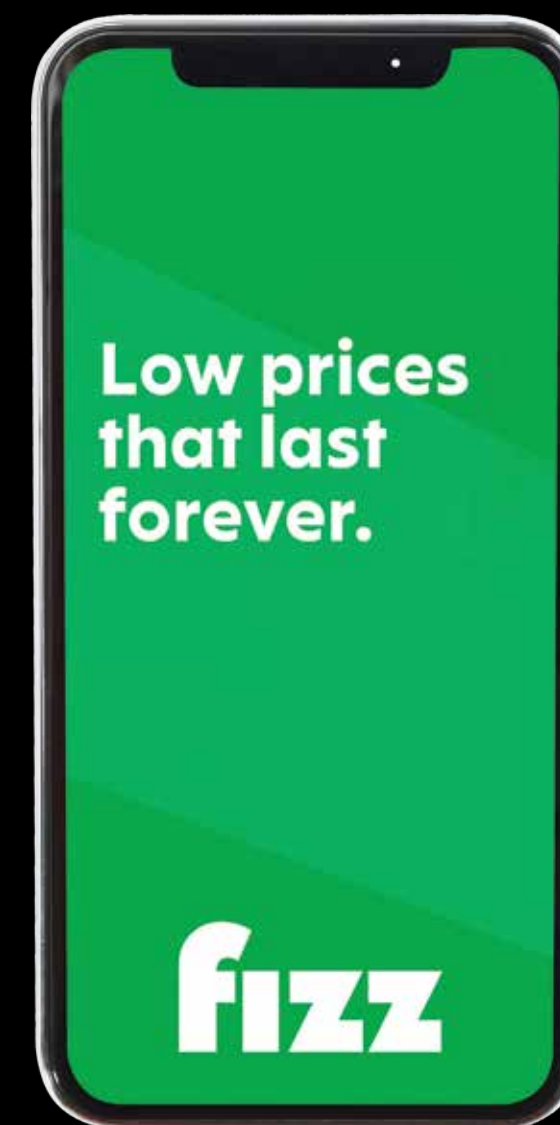


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## Innovation Policy Briefing



In then-prime minister Jean Chrétien's last term, innovation was held as Canada's great economic hope, writes Ken Coates. Chrétien is pictured in a Hill scrum in 2016, years after he left office. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

benefit from focused commercialization of technology, have been largely left out of the innovation economy.

Canadian efforts to build a new economic order have foundered on two very different forces. First, the country's traditional reliance on natural resources has protected the country from the vicissitudes of the global economy. Even as the federal government tries to undermine the oil and gas sector and constrain the mining industry, the nation's economy relies heavily on oilsands activity and revenues, and on the industrial activity associated with drilling, extraction, and pipelines. Central Canadians struggle to appreciate the central role energy plays in national prosperity, and the risks associated to interfering with proper development. But even as Canadians largely ignore the western Canadian resource sector, it remains the backbone of national prosperity.

More ominously, Canadians have become remarkably dependent on government payments and subsidies. Even before the pandemic and CERB took reliance on government spending to new levels, our innovation efforts had become substantially dependent on government financial support. The nation's greatest new economy initiative—excepting some remarkable largely private investments in transformation in the oil sands and broader energy industry—is a dramatic multi-billion-dollar subsidy for EV battery plants in central Canada. Innovation that is routinely propped up by government funding is neither sustainable in the long-term, nor likely to be internationally competitive.

Canada's innovation challenges will not be overcome by another government program or an infusion of more federal cash. This has not worked in the past, and it is unlikely to do in the future. The fundamental goal must be to unleash domestic creativity and entrepreneurship. To get here, Canada must—like Norway—embrace its energy wealth, and use the wealth to fuel commercial development. Government direction and innovation management has produced some results, but they are meagre compared to the spending and even less compared to the opportunity.

Our national innovation economy needs real innovation. It needs honest talk about our national strengths and weaknesses, and a realization that sustaining entrepreneurship is more crucial to the next economy than scientific discovery. It has taken Canada billions of dollars in ever-so-optimistic government spending on innovation to realize that the current pattern does not work. Sadly, it is not yet clear the lesson has been learned.

*Ken Coates is a professor of Indigenous governance at Yukon University, and formerly the Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. He is also a distinguished fellow with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute in Aboriginal and Northern Canadian Issues.*

*The Hill Times*

# Canada's innovation challenges

Canada's innovation challenges will not be overcome by another government program or an infusion of more federal cash.

In then-prime minister Jean Chrétien's last term, innovation was held as Canada's great economic hope. Expand the universities. Hire hundreds of Canada Research Chairs. Create the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and give it a start-up contribution of several billion dollars. Expand academic research funding. Create subsidy programs for scientific and technical research. Open commercial incubators. Expand Canadian-owned intellectual property.

The country did all of these things and more. Billions of dollars have been spent on the Canadian version of the widely implemented national innovation "equation." Universities and research institutes threw them-

selves wholeheartedly into the enterprise. So did many communities, with conspicuous successes (Waterloo, Fredericton, and Kelowna) but generally limited achievement. Some companies flourished, like OpenText, and others languished, like BlackBerry. Potential commercial superstars continue, like Ballard Power, but at less than three per cent of its peak market capitalization in 2000.

What did Canada get for its investments, beyond hundreds of press conferences and ribbon cuttings, many government announcements, and millions of hours spent applying and accounting for government grants? The answer is far from ideal.

Our national competitiveness is falling, and Canadian GDP forecasts for the coming decades have us near the back of the OECD. Far from the innovation-fuelled, research and education-driven robust economy promised by the advocates of scientific and technological innovation, we have a country where the only real growth industry is government, where the future of our cornerstone resource sectors are in doubt, and where universities have been made curiously dependent on international student fees.

The problem is even greater than this. Entrepreneurship—never this nation's roaring strength—appears to be in decline. Investment capital remains tight, save for that for residential construction that moves slowly in the same direction as rapid urban population growth. Canadian innovation, often paid for in substantial measure by government grants, loans and subsidies, is highly mobile, often accompanying the inventors and entrepreneurs out of the country.

This does not mean that advocates of innovation were and are wrong. In the highly competitive and tumultuous global economy, radical economic transformation remains a clear avenue toward prosperity. There are numerous success stories, and not just in Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver. The high-tech sectors in Victoria, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Sherbrooke, and Halifax are doing well. But on a national scale, the country falls short of both its lofty aspirations and many competitor nations. Smaller cities, rural areas, and northern communities, all of which would

Ken Coates

Opinion



Canada's innovation conversation has sure changed.



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## Innovation Policy Briefing

# Canadian women researchers make their mark

International Day of Women and Girls in Science is a time to celebrate the talented researchers and entrepreneurs who are inspiring the next generation. We will all benefit when we are truly inclusive and see the possibilities of greater good.

Roseann O'Reilly Runte

Opinion



In Voltaire's story *Candide*—which has been made into a film and musical—after having searched the world over for wisdom, the titular character returns home and, leaving his mistress in the kitchen to bake pies, concludes that the path to happiness lies in “cultivating one's garden” where he works with a group of his friends. The garden and teamwork are the keys to prosperity.

We think less frequently of Voltaire's story, *Le Crocheteur borgne*, in which a one-eyed beggar is consoled by the fact that he only sees half the evil in the world. Yet he also sees only half the good. Like *Candide*, who did not include women as active contributors to the success of the

garden, the beggar knew a world where the contribution of women was largely restricted.

Today, Catalyst, the global non-profit that helps build workplaces that work for women, has published statistics illustrating the impressive success of businesses that include women on boards and in the C-suite. The numbers are clear. They tell us that the boards of the 10 most profitable companies in the Fortune 500 include women, and 82 per cent of the top 50 firms have at least one female director. Yet, how many of us can name more than a handful of women board directors?

As we celebrate Feb. 11, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, we ask the same question about women researchers. It is appropriate and timely to focus on a few stories of women who have added, and who continue to add significantly to research and innovation through their personal work, and who have undertaken to create the conditions which will encourage the participation of others. If we want to succeed today, we need to recognize the extraordinary achievements of women in science and enterprise.

Let me introduce you to Dr. Leyla Soleymani who is working on wearable sensors, continuous glucose monitoring for diabetics, and is developing a cardiac patch which will be used by astronauts. She has helped to establish companies that produce medical devices and antimicrobial nanoparticle films which ensure surfaces remain free of contagious pathogens. Each time Soleymani completes a project, she consults her list of ideas and starts on the next. In between, she has taken on the

role of associate vice-president of research at McMaster University, assisting students and colleagues in their work.

Her colleague at McMaster, Dr. Sheila Singh, is a pediatric neurosurgeon who focuses her research on cancer, and is best known for her truly significant laboratory discoveries that will save lives. She has also been instrumental in founding companies such as Empirica Therapeutics and spinoffs such as Century Canada Labs which have international connections and offer opportunities for her former students to carry on her vision.

Dr. Priti Wanjara works for the National Research Council where she looks at problems: from designing economical and environmental solutions to manufacturing. They include repairing aluminum cathodes used to extract zinc for use in protective coatings on cars to developing the 3D printers that may one day be used in outer space. Back on Earth, she proposes innovative designs that will make manufacturing plants more efficient and profitable.

At the University of British Columbia, Dr. Gail Murphy, a computer science professor and vice-president of research and innovation, is co-founder and chief scientist at Task Top Technologies Inc. She works on improving software to enable companies to keep up to date with evolving technologies and demands of the workplace. Murphy puts her colleagues first, and always promotes their work and helps connect discovery and innovation with the application of new knowledge.

As a professor in the chemistry department and dean of science at Carleton University, Dr. Maria De Rosa leads the



As we celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on Feb. 11, here are a few stories of women who have added and who continue to add significantly to research and innovation through their personal work, writes Roseann O'Reilly Runte. *Image courtesy of Pexels.com*

Aptamer Lab for the Discovery and Development of Emerging Research where she works on synthetic nucleic acids, folding them into 3D nanoscale structures. Her research applies this knowledge to plant genetics and Parkinson's disease. At the same time, she actively supports her students and fellow colleagues, making possible their discoveries and encouraging innovative applications.

These women are but a small sample of the extraordinary women researchers who contribute to the discoveries and innovations that will improve the health and economic development of our country. They are not only committed to their own work, but also to nurturing the next generation of researchers and supporting their colleagues in their work. It

is an honour and privilege to recognize them on Feb. 11. And I do so knowing full well that they are but a few of the many researchers, innovators, and leaders who merit recognition and inclusion among those we celebrate and those we will invite to serve on the boards of businesses and industry that will in turn become even more successful for having included them. We will all benefit when we are truly inclusive and open *both* eyes to the possibilities of *greater good*.

Roseann O'Reilly Runte is president and CEO of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, a non-profit corporation that invests in research infrastructure at Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals and non-profit research institutions.

*The Hill Times*

# Beyond commercialization to the full societal impact of research

To address big national issues, we need a broader approach that incentivises and supports the mobilization and translation of all the knowledge generated by Canadian researchers to all sectors of the economy and society.

Amir Asif & David Phipps

Opinion



Whether it's rising antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racism; interest rates and inflation; housing and homelessness; carbon pricing and climate change; or truth and reconciliation, the issues dominating Canadian

headlines are multifaceted and complex.

Knowledge and expertise in our research organization can make a valuable contribution to these which are just some of the many issues that researchers are working on every day: conducting research, gathering data, developing new theories and approaches, teaching the next generation, and sharing their knowledge.

These big issues are captured in national priorities for science, technology and innovation. The Canadian government has five science, technology and innovation priorities encompassing 58 specific areas of focus, all underpinned by advanced technologies, social sciences and humanities, including ethics. The five priorities are Healthy Canadians, Innovative and Resilient Communities, Sustainable Food Systems, Clean and Resource Rich Canada, and Technologically Advanced Canada.

Government policy in recent years has prioritized research commercialization: incentivizing universities and academics to collaborate more with industry, and measuring success with indicators such as the number of patents, the licensing of intellectual property, and the creation of start-up companies. The Ontario government recently launched

a Commercialization and IP Framework, and created a new government agency to drive commercialization activities in the post-secondary sector. The federal government launched Lab2Market and the Canada Innovation Corporation. The Report of the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System focused on commercialization as a pathway to economic impact. And Canadian research institutions respond in kind establishing supports for commercialization, industry liaison and entrepreneurship.

But here's the gap between our priorities and the response: fully half of Canada's focus areas for science, technology, and innovation will never be realised by filing a patent application, or starting up a new company.

We are never going to patent our way to reconciliation.

In order to address big national issues, we need a much broader approach that incentivises and supports the mobilization and translation of all the knowledge generated by Canadian researchers to all sectors of the economy and society. Commercialization is one important pathway to impact, but there are many more.

In 2006, we started Research Impact Canada—a network of 31 universities and research

institutions—to build capacity for knowledge mobilization with a focus on research's societal impacts. These include the significant contributions to public policy, social services, community development, and professional practice. These can be harder to quantify than commercial impacts, but they are no less important for our ability to achieve national goals.

For example, research on youth homelessness conducted at York University in partnership with A Way Home Canada, a national non-profit group, is helping thousands of Canadian youth to stay in school, re-establish positive relationships with family, obtain employment, and avoid the criminal justice system.

A new framework for Canada and Canadian research organizations should encourage researchers to think about impact from the beginning of their projects rather than trying to measure it after the fact. It should support partners from community as well as public sector agencies to engage on an equal footing with academic researchers. It should build capacity for this work across the country, and support collaboration rather than creating more rankings that drive competition.

The federal granting agencies—NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR—fund programs that support knowledge mobilization, but only at the project level. One way for government to ensure Canada's universities can maximize the social and economic impact of research is to increase institutional support for all forms of knowledge mobilization.

From 1995 to 2009, the granting agencies funded the Intellectual Property Mobilization program, which funded VPs Research to invest in capacity for technology transfer and commercialization. Today, university supports for impacts mediated through policy, social services and professional practice are similar to supports for commercialization in 1995. Some universities are doing it. Many are not. And there are few standards and programs to build capacity. Canada needs funding for institutions to build capacity to support all federal priorities, not just those mediated through patents, licensing and start-up companies.

With funding, capacity building and collaboration among research organizations across Canada, we can maximize our contribution to the big issues facing our society.

*Amir Asif is the vice-president, research and innovation and professor, electrical engineering and computer science at York University in Toronto. As assistant VP research strategy and impact, David Phipps is the administrative lead for all research programs and their impacts at York University.*

*The Hill Times*

# Canada has a strong head start in these early innings of AI

Canada's coordinated AI strategy was the first ever in the world, though many other countries caught up by quickly developing their own.

Rikia Saddy

Opinion



As I write this, Google announced that its Bard AI chatbot had outpaced Chat-GPT.

Things move fast in AI, but one thing remains constant: the Canadian tendency to discount our place in it.

For example, when you learned that the pan-Canadian AI strategy had chosen three research clusters to support in Toronto, Montreal, and Edmonton, did you assume the latter was tacked on for regional parity? Yet Edmonton's Amii institute, created back in 2002, is a model of AI literacy, expansion, and research at the highest ranked Canadian university for AI research over the past two decades.

Canada's coordinated AI strategy was the first ever in the world, though many other countries caught up by quickly developing their own. In the intervening years, it seems some of them have passed us, with billions of dollars in centralized government funding (China), private venture capital from a pool larger than anywhere in the world (United States), or uniting neighbouring countries already linked through binding agreements (European Union).

Canada's simultaneous commitment to ethical development

and deployment has furthered our place on the world stage, assuring that fairness, transparency, safety and accountability be part of the national dialogue. This is an essential step when so many experts in the field have spoken out on the risks and dangers of generative AI.

There remain immediate areas for funding and improvement. Canadian researchers urgently require greater computational power. Currently their public supercomputer networks hum at maximum capacity, 24 hours a day. Corporate Canada needs to be quicker to adopt AI, with only 3.7 per cent of businesses having done so as of 2021. This may require university business and accountancy programs adapted to include coursework and post-graduate upgrade opportunities that will help financial decision-makers understand key AI opportunities and metrics to improve their bottom line.

None of this means that Canada is failing. Far from it. In 2023, the three national institutes plus Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, in conjunction with Deloitte, released a report on Canada's success so far. Despite a sub-40 million population, Canada ranks fifth in the world for AI start-ups. We're first among G7 nations in building and retaining AI talent. Canadian researchers produced more AI publications per capita in 2022 than any other G7 nation. And from 2022–2023 the total number of Canadian AI patents leapt 57 per cent, the second highest growth rate in the G7. This is IP power.

For all this work to take root in Canada, it must have a place to grow. Sustaining the health of the entire ecosystem is essential, by connecting talent to industry, venture capital, and global innovation networks.

This makes it both a government and citizen challenge.

On top of funding research and collaboration, governments must work to preserve digital sovereignty, set frameworks to manage ethical risks, and lead by example in adapting and modelling their own use of AI. Governments can also play a role in fostering innovation through new taxation models, STEM education initiatives, and re-training citizens for the new economy.

Business and finance will need to be braver, investing in AI to increase profitability, productivity, and global competitive advantage. The alternative is to live in a world where public innovation in Canada becomes privately held by companies in other countries.

Canada's AI researchers have earned lifetime achievement awards, global recognition, and even the Turing Prize for contributions of lasting and major technical importance in computer science. The old guard has mentored, led, and nurtured a group of major scientists 1,000-strong across the country, all while contributing to patents that underpin the most well-known and promising technologies in the world. The rest is up to us.

*Rikia Saddy is a strategic adviser to CEOs in Canada, the United States and Europe.*

*The Hill Times*



## Innovation Policy Briefing



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, centre, said that 'developing and retaining intellectual property is vitally important for the success of Canada's innovation strategy,' in a departmental press release on April 26, 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# Intellectual property literacy and Canada's path to prosperity

IP strategy, both as a matter of public policy and as an essential business strategy for SMEs, has a direct impact on our national prosperity.

Karima Bawa & Myra Tawfik

Opinion



For the better part of the last two decades, we have been working in various capacities on the commercial and academic aspects of intellectual property (IP) strategy, recognizing that such a strategy, both as a matter of public policy and as an essential business strategy for SMEs, has a direct impact on our national prosperity.

For too long, however, this topic has been relatively neglected, understood by few, and truly valued by even fewer people. The result has been a generation of entrepreneurs, innovators, researchers, and industry and policy leaders who failed to properly understand the strategic value of IP and its impact on the competitiveness of Canadian firms.

Thankfully, this began to change in 2018 when the federal government launched the National Intellectual Property Strategy (the National IP Strategy) to help Canadian SMEs protect their ideas, and realize commercial success. A suite of programs and services was established in support of this objective. Similar IP policy initiatives are occurring at the provincial level, as well. Ontario and Quebec have both created unique agencies that offer IP services and resources. Other provinces—notably Alberta, British Columbia and the Atlantic jurisdictions—are in the process of finalizing or implementing their own approaches. Across all these policy initiatives, the emphasis is on ensuring that innovators and entrepreneurs possess IP literacy skills that focus on the importance

of IP strategy—namely, the ways in which businesses can generate, protect, and deploy their IP assets for commercial advantage. In some cases, government funding is now contingent upon the successful completion of approved IP education programs.

The recent evaluation of the National IP Strategy conducted by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) in June 2023 concluded that “[t]he ISED-led initiatives contributed to increased IP literacy and awareness among federal officials, SMEs, and underrepresented groups, particularly for those with a low baseline level of IP knowledge.” From our experience developing and delivering IP education programs across Canada’s innovation ecosystem, we unequivocally agree with this statement.

Federal and provincial initiatives are showing positive results in terms of raising awareness of IP, especially among innovators and entrepreneurs. Indeed, in our own work with start-ups, we have been witnessing greater levels of IP literacy, something that we could not say with confidence

before the launch of the National IP Strategy. Canadian SMEs have become more adept at identifying the different forms of IP, recognizing IP risks, communicating with IP experts, and taking advantage of IP funding opportunities.

This increased literacy and awareness, however, has yet to fully translate into the commercial outcomes we collectively need to ensure our future prosperity. As the ISED evaluation concluded: “there remain “[c]hallenges around low awareness of services among some stakeholders and a need for more advanced or specialized IP training.” Once again, we could not agree more.

A common and pressing concern among those with whom we have been working is that they lack the sophisticated skills needed to effectively leverage IP to advance their commercial interests. It is one thing for business leaders to know what a patent is and how to secure patents in Canada and globally, but it is quite another for them to grasp the commercial nuances of a revenue-generating licensing agreement.

Similarly, while our SMEs are engaging in collaboration efforts and showcasing their innovations to investors, they are still vulnerable when it comes to properly securing and sharing their IP. And while legal advisors are necessary to assist in these and other IP commercialization efforts, lawyers can only ever play a supporting role. It is up to the business to ensure that its business objectives are met in the commercialization of its IP, and the implementation of its IP strategy. This requires greater facility in the more complex aspects of IP strategy and a solid familiarity with the business of IP. Existing foundational IP literacy programs do not address these kinds of issues, nor were they intended to.

Advanced and specialized IP education programs are required to enable Canadian businesses to reap the economic rewards of IP commercialization. We are very encouraged by the success of the National IP Strategy and its provincial counterparts in increasing the levels of IP awareness across the system.

Policymakers must now redouble their efforts. Continued policy engagement is required to encourage mastery-level skills in the practical aspects of the business of IP.

*Karima Bawa is the chair of IP Ontario, a member of the board of directors for the College of Patent Agents and Trademark Agents, and is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). Myra Tawfik is the Don Rodzik Family Chair in Law and Entrepreneurship and distinguished university professor at the University of Windsor. She is also a senior fellow at CIGI. She is an expert in intellectual property law and capacity-building in IP literacy.*  
*The Hill Times*

# National strategy needed to address fragmented innovation ecosystem, say researchers



Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry François-Philippe Champagne speaks with reporters before the Liberal cabinet meeting in West Block on Jan. 30, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Dan Breznitz, co-director of U of T's Innovation Policy Lab, says the federal government should 'start coming up with systematic approaches' to address challenges facing innovation. *Photograph courtesy of the Donner Prize*

Continued from page 16

"These research-based, scalable science-based ventures, and the other types of social and economic value creation that can come from our strong invention, intangible assets, these things [happen] over a long timeframe," she said. "They're over a long timeline, they go from basic research and discovery, [and it] may be 20 years before the full scope of the value is seen."

As an example, Maine pointed to AbCellera Biologics, a British Columbia-based biotechnology firm that was founded in 2012 by Carl Hansen, Véronique Lecault, Kevin Heyries, Daniel Da Costa, and Oleh Petriv.

"Carl Hansen, when he was doing his PhD at Caltech, this is when the first relevant patent was filed. That time period is also when international networks are formed. That's when the ideas start to get shaped," said Maine. "You don't see them being an overnight success story until DARPA [the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] invested in them in about 2018, and then after COVID they suddenly became a \$15-billion market cap company."

"That's not taking an existing company and helping it scale up. That's setting the conditions in place to allow us to convert more of our world leading invention into innovation," she added.

Leah Cowen, vice-president of research and innovation and strategic initiatives with the University of Toronto, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Jan. 31 that challenges to commercializing research discoveries in this country include a lack of venture capital support at the early stages.

"[University of Toronto] startups tell us they face challenges moving from startup to scale-up and beyond. Competing for highly skilled talent is also an increasing challenge.

To drive innovation, we need to collaborate on those challenges and simultaneously protect the investments made to date into the foundations of innovation," said Cowen in the emailed statement. "Canada has the skilled talent learning at our universities who are eager to innovate. Many of them are taking their [intellectual property] to U.S. hubs that have robust innovation ecosystems and strong entrepreneurial cultures."

The federal government cannot lose sight of the need to invest in the people who create tomorrow's economy, and "in the ecosystem that supports their success," according to Cowen.

"We need to reverse stagnant funding for our top students and increase investment in priority advanced fields, from life sciences to advanced manufacturing and [artificial intelligence]," said Cowen in the emailed statement. "Recent investments by the United States into energy security, R&D, regional high-tech hubs and a bigger STEM workforce create a magnet for talent and further investment. To maintain competitiveness, Canada needs to invest here at home over the next decade."

In the email, Cowen described Champagne as a champion of innovation who understands the relationship between research and innovation very well.

"Innovation depends on all parts of the ecosystem working together, including our universities and all levels of government. To advance innovation, our universities must continue to welcome the world's top talent," she said in the emailed statement.

John Wilson, president and CEO of Innovate Calgary, an innovation hub at the University of Calgary, argued that Canada does poorly on business expenditure and research and development because, historically, "our industries have not come out of our universities." He argued that innovation in Canada could be improved through university-led investment funds which could

support commercialization of technology and intellectual property from those institutions.

"We should continually work with the industries we've got, and work collaboratively together with our universities, but in addition, we should try and generate a whole new set of industries, as much as we can, reasonably, using our universities and other intellectual assets centres. And that is what we haven't done," he said. "If you go to Cambridge, U.K., the whole of the drive 30 miles

around ... [is] full of high-tech industries that have come out of the university, and so not surprisingly, again, they collaborate intensively back with Cambridge University, and you end up with great stats."

Dan Breznitz, co-director of the Innovation Policy Lab, a hub within the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, argued that Canadian businesses are able to have high profit margins without investing in new technology and innovation, and the federal government should try to understand why.

"[Canadian businesses] are doing the right thing. Canadian businesses see their profit margins and say 'Our role is to maximize profit, not to fix innovation ... [and] if Canada gives us a place where we can have such high profits without taking risks, why should we take risks? We're doing the right thing.' It's the government that need to change that equation," said Breznitz. "It's the federal government ... or public officials and the Canadian public, which should worry about our productivity completely being stagnant."

Breznitz argued that Canada's innovation ecosystem has been in decline for more than two decades, and this is a systemic problem that cannot be fixed with "one-time programs."

"We have to admit it is serious and start coming up with systematic approaches that looks at the market framework, looks at our trade regime, [and] looks at our innovation regime," he said. "It needs to have a systematic approach over many years in which you experiment to see what works ... and you need to understand why our system allows, or actually incentivizes, Canadian business to make a lot of profit by not engaging with new knowledge."

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*The Hill Times*

## Business innovation support stats

- In 2021, as Canada recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government provided more than 33,000 businesses with innovation and growth support valued at \$4.5-billion through 134 federal programs.
- Across Canada, Business Innovation and Growth Support (BIGS) mainly went to small- and medium-sized enterprises, which accounted for 96 per cent of all recipients in 2021. The BIGS database defines small and medium enterprises as those

with fewer than 500 employees. These enterprises received more than three-quarters (77 per cent) of the total support value.

- The payroll of BIGS recipient corporations grew by 16 per cent year over year in 2021, compared with a five per cent increase from 2019 to 2020.
- In terms of revenue, BIGS supported corporations also saw a year-over-year increase, up 18 per cent in 2021, three times higher than that in 2020 (+six per cent). Export revenue

increased by 15 per cent during the same period, after declining by four per cent from 2019 to 2020.

- BIGS recipients continued to innovate in 2021, as their research and development spending grew by 12 per cent on a year-over-year basis, which was comparable with the 11 per cent increase seen for this type of expense from 2019 to 2020.

*Source: Business Innovation and growth support, 2021, Statistics Canada, released on Nov. 2, 2023*

## Innovation in Canada and the world

- In the Global Innovation Index's 2023 report, Canada was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of 132 nations for innovation, behind nations including Israel, Japan, China and France. The top three ranked nations for innovation in the report were Switzerland, Sweden and the United States.
- Canada leads in some innovation indicators, including venture capital recipients (at first place), impact of its scientific publications (4<sup>th</sup>) and software spending (5<sup>th</sup>).
- In 2023, Canada, along with Norway (ranked 19<sup>th</sup>) and Uzbekistan (ranked 82<sup>nd</sup>) all improved in converting inputs into outputs, no longer underperforming on this metric.
- Globally, "two promising innovation waves are making their presence felt across economies



and societies: a digital innovation wave, built on artificial intelligence (AI), supercomputing and automation, and a deep science innovation wave, based on biotechnologies and nanotechnologies," according to the report.

- On the other hand, "anemic growth and high inflation, coupled with the lingering effects

of the pandemic, are hampering global innovation. After a remarkable boom in 2021, innovation finance fell back dramatically [in 2022], with the value of venture capital investments declining by 40 per cent," according to the report.

*Source: The World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index, 2023, released Sept. 7, 2023*

## News

# Issue of MAID could end up back in the courts, but some advocates will first seek to block government's legislation in the Senate

With many key readiness criteria in place, advocates and opponents of expanding MAID say the latest developments point to a larger shift in the federal government's position on the issue.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

With the federal government making a significant shift in its approach to MAID following the recommendation of a joint parliamentary committee, some advocates on both sides of the issue are saying the matter could end up back in the courts—but some proponents of expanding MAID will first look to the Senate to stifle the government's legislation that would change the coming sunset clause.

On Feb. 1, Health Minister Mark Holland (Ajax, Ont.) introduced legislation in the House of Commons that would delay legalizing medical assistance in dying (MAID) for patients who have mental illness as their sole underlying cause until 2027.

The move comes in follow-up to a Jan. 29 report from the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, which recommended that this form of MAID “should not be made available in Canada until the minister of health and the minister of justice are satisfied, based on recommendations from their respective departments and in consultation with their provincial and territorial counterparts and with Indigenous Peoples, that it can be safely and adequately provided.”

Presently, a sunset clause is set to expire on March 17, which would change the Criminal Code to make this form of MAID legal in Canada. That means legislation must be passed both the House and Senate before that time in order to stop the change in law from coming into effect.

Advocates and opponents of expanding MAID broadly agree that Ottawa's plan to seek a delay of four years indicates a significant shift in the government's position, after several years of Canada moving towards an increasingly more permissive MAID regime.

In 2016, Bill C-14 legalized track one MAID—for patients whose death is reasonably foreseeable—in response to the Supreme Court's *Carter* decision. In 2021, Bill C-7 legalized track two MAID—for patients who are suffering from a serious illness, disease, or disability, but whose death is not reasonably foreseeable—in response to the *Truchon* decision from the

Health Minister Mark Holland, left, has introduced legislation to delay an expansion of MAID until 2027 in response to a report from a joint Parliamentary Committee. One Senator, in a dissenting opinion on the report, said Justice Minister Arif Virani, right, should seek a Supreme Court reference on the matter. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Helen Long, CEO of Dying With Dignity Canada, said her organization will wait to look at the extension legislation before finalizing its next steps. *Photograph courtesy of Dying With Dignity Canada*

**On Jan. 29, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying issued a report that recommended that MAID when mental illness is the sole underlying cause ‘should not be made available in Canada until the minister of health and the minister of justice are satisfied, based on recommendations from their respective departments and in consultation with their provincial and territorial counterparts and with Indigenous Peoples, that it can be safely and adequately provided.’**



Quebec Superior Court. Originally, Bill C-7 was set to exclude patients who had a mental illness as their sole underlying cause for this form of MAID, but an amendment introduced in the Upper Chamber by ISG Senator Stanley Kutcher (Nova Scotia) proposed adding irremediable mental illness as grounds to access track two MAID. The bill was returned to the House, and passed with a two-year sunset clause in place before that form of MAID would come into effect in March 2023.

As the previous sunset clause approached, the federal government announced it would introduce legislation to extend that deadline by one year, on the grounds that provinces, territories, and health care professionals needed more time to get ready to safely provide this form of MAID. At that time, many observers believed the government was still intent on ultimately moving ahead with the expansion.

However, given that three of the key readiness criteria identified by the government at that time—establishing national practice standards, a MAID curriculum, and a training program for MAID practitioners—appear to have largely been completed, according to experts in several provinces interviewed by *The Hill Times* who have been working on these components, many are interpreting the latest

developments as a larger shift in the government's position.

Some of the key players have also changed. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) has appointed a new health minister and justice minister since the previous extension for MAID was sought, with Holland replacing former health minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que.) and Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Ont.) taking over the justice portfolio from outgoing Liberal MP David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Que.)—who recently indicated he would still move ahead with the expansion were he in his old job.

There are also signs of hesitation at the provincial level that appear to cut across partisan lines. On Jan. 30, the health ministers for seven provinces and all three territories—representing a mix of conservative, Liberal, and NDP governments—wrote to Holland asking for an indefinite pause to this expansion of MAID.

Alexandra McPherson, an Alberta-based psychiatrist who has been involved in readiness activities, including work on developing and teaching the MAID curriculum, told *The Hill Times* that, in her view, all of the key pieces identified by the federal government were ready in her province.

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"I think that by those readiness metrics that we're ready," said McPherson. She added it is not clear what additional metrics the federal or Alberta government might be looking for, leaving her to conclude the decision points to a shift in political direction on the issue.

"They don't really mention what it is exactly entirely that we need to do in order to be ready," said McPherson. "I think the idea of an indefinite pause is not justifiable. I think it's probably unconstitutional. And it will be challenged probably."

Derryck Smith, a British Columbia-based psychiatrist who had been offering feedback on readiness materials to the provincial government in his province, offered similar observations when it comes to readiness, and said returning to the courts may be "the only way to go."

"I think we could wait for 10 years and the governments wouldn't be ready," said Smith.

"In fact, the court is the only venue in which we've gotten any MAID laws in Canada," he added, in reference to the *Carter* and *Truchon* decisions leading to the federal government making past changes to the laws. "If we waited for the politicians, we'd have zero MAID laws in Canada right now. So going to court is a great idea."

Helen Long, CEO of Dying with Dignity Canada, told *The Hill Times* that while her organization is not yet planning to seek legal action, it will listen to expert advice for the best way to move forward.

"I think the first point is let's see what the bill [to delay the end of the sunset period] says," said Long. "But if at some point, this looks like a viable road, I'm certainly not saying we wouldn't consider pursuing it ... If the experts feel like this is the most expedient way to go. We're certainly not opposed to that."

### Committee recommendation the result of 'a democratic process,' says disability advocate

In light of the committee's recommendation to delay, advocates of expanding MAID—including members of the committee who wrote dissenting reports—have

criticized the committee for straying too far from its mandate to look at readiness. A dissenting report from Kutcher, ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie (Quebec), and CSG Senator Pamela Wallin (Saskatchewan) said the committee had "failed to address its mandate."

However, Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.), another member of the committee—and one of several Liberal members on the committee to have been changed since its last report—told *The Hill Times* he believed this broader approach was warranted.

"The way I see it, we did look at the readiness, but we looked at it in more broad terms than maybe those who disagreed with the majority thought the focus should be," said Scarpaleggia. "They were focusing on whether the specific protocols are in place, but the way I look at it is it's not just about whether we have protocols, it's whether the protocols take into account these broader issues."

Krista Carr, executive vice-president of Inclusion Canada, a national federation for people with intellectual disabilities, said she feels the committee did properly assess the readiness issue, while also responding to a broader message that was delivered.

"A democratic process was set up where people were to be heard," said Carr.

"When you hear overwhelming evidence from overwhelming numbers of people, and receive overwhelming numbers of briefs saying the same thing in a democracy I don't think they're out of scope," she added, pointing to an analysis by the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society which found that of 175 submissions to the committee, 155 of them were opposed to expanding MAID.

PSG Senator Pierre Dalphond (De Lorimier, Que.), another member of the committee, and a former judge, wrote a separate dissenting report in which he focused on a series of legal arguments for moving ahead with MAID expansion. He is calling for a Supreme Court of Canada reference as to whether further delays are constitutional.

Dalphond said he believes moving to the courts is necessary because the committee has set out



Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia, pictured, said it was not only a matter of readiness, but whether those protocols take into account 'broader issues.' The *Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade. The *Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

a process that would take years, and is "designed to prolong" and "quite frankly, just to make sure that the issue is on the backburner until after the next election, minimum."

Instead, he believes the issue can be dealt with best in the courts.

"The political forum is not necessarily a forum where logic is driving the process all the way," said Dalphond. "But a court of justice is one where we look at evidence, and we are thought to appreciate evidence, and where everybody has the opportunity to present and cross examine for days instead, instead of an hour panel."

### Issue could go back to court, but some MAID advocates are looking first to the Senate

Daphne Gilbert, a criminal and constitutional law professor at the University of Ottawa, who supports this expansion of MAID, told *The Hill Times* that she believes the immediate best strategy for proponents of the expansion is to look to have the Senate defeat or filibuster any legislation from the House of Commons that would extend the sunset clause.

Because there is already a law on the books that says the sunset clause is to expire on March 17,

if the House and Senate cannot agree on a bill and no further legislation is passed, the expansion of MAID will come into effect on March 17 despite the government's wishes. Given the number of Senators who have been supportive of expanding MAID, Gilbert believes this approach may be plausible.

However, if that does not come to pass, and the matter does end up back in the courts, Gilbert said she would then view that approach as preferable to an "endless pause."

She suggested that it would be best for any question to the Supreme Court to focus on whether such a delay is constitutional, because the Supreme Court may not have the expertise to deal with the particular details of readiness issues.

She said the government's current position still appears to be that previous court rulings established that there is a Charter right to MAID for patients with mental illness as the sole underlying cause, despite its plans to delay.

However, opponents of the expansion argue that none of the previous court rulings have ever established that this form of MAID must be legalized on constitutional grounds.

Trudo Lemmens, a University of Toronto law professor who studies health law and policy,

said the *Truchon* decision—which led to the government legalizing track two MAID—should not be given such weight because it is a lower court decision from only one jurisdiction. Usually, the federal government will only change the law based on a Supreme Court ruling, or several lower court rulings across multiple jurisdictions.

He said there a number of legal issues that remain from that case, which was never appealed to a higher court.

If a Supreme Court reference does move forward, Lemmens said some of the key points he would want to see addressed are the issue of whether a mental illness can be deemed irremediable, as well as what would be the broader impact on suicide prevention if this form of MAID is legalized.

"We have to look at the context and the particular nature of psychiatric illness—taking into consideration the historical discrimination and the historical way in which persons with mental illness have been put at higher risk of inadequate treatment," said Lemmens.

Carr added that disability advocates had wanted to see an appeal of *Truchon*, and had also called for a Supreme Court reference on track two MAID for persons with physical disabilities when that law was brought in, but this step was not taken at that time.

"We were saying, at least do this if you won't listen to us that this is discriminatory, it's going to be disastrous, ... it violates people with disabilities rights to life, liberty, and equality—all those things—then ask the court before you go forward, and nobody would even entertain it," she said.

*The Hill Times* reached out to the offices of Holland and Virani for a comment on the status of the readiness metrics identified by the government last year, and asking whether they would consider seeking a Supreme Court reference on the matter going forward. They did not reply by deadline.

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Krista Carr, executive vice-president of Inclusion Canada, said the committee report reflected 'a democratic process.' Photograph courtesy of Inclusion Canada



University of Ottawa law professor Daphne Gilbert said the next step for advocates of MAID expansion should be to try to block the extension bill in the Senate. Photograph courtesy of University of Ottawa



University of Toronto law professor Trudo Lemmens said there were legal issues involving the *Truchon* case that could be appealed to a higher court. Photograph courtesy of University of Toronto

## News

# Almost a year after deadline, less than half of incumbent Liberal MPs have been nominated for the next election

Continued from page 1

party's candidate without facing nomination challenges, but 11 months after the deadline has passed, only 69 of the 156 MPs have been nominated so far.

"The Liberal Party of Canada is ready to re-elect our dedicated Liberal team in Parliament and continue to elect even more talented, diverse, and hardworking community leaders as new Liberal MPs," wrote Parker Lund, director of communications for the Liberal Party, in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times*. "As of now, we've nominated 69 candidates, and will have more announcements in the days and weeks ahead."

Of the 69 nominated Liberal MPs, 40 are from Ontario, 12 from Quebec, seven from British Columbia, two from Manitoba, three from Nova Scotia, two each from New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, and one is from Alberta.

Of the current 156 Liberals in the House, 75 MPs represent Ontario ridings, 34 Quebec, 15 British Columbia, two Alberta, six each in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, eight Nova Scotia, four Prince Edward Island, and one each from Yukon and Northwest Territories.

In November 2022, the Liberal Party introduced new nomination rules for incumbent MPs if they want to carry their party's banner unchallenged. To do so, each MP had to have at least 65 per cent of the anticipated expense limit in their respective electoral district's association bank account by March 1, 2023; had at least 40 more Victory Fund members compared to the number they had on July 1, 2022; and attempted to knock on at least 3,500 doors or make 7,500 phone calls along with their team of volunteers.



The Liberals under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised \$15.6-million in the last year, less than double what the Conservatives raised. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In every federal election, Elections Canada puts out spending limits for national parties and candidates calculated based on the population of the riding, the length of the campaign, and geography, as well as a cost of living adjustment.

According to estimated spending limits on Elections Canada, all range between \$111,000 to \$180,000. So, the 65 per cent spending limit for these MPs would be somewhere between \$72,000 and \$117,000.

The cost to join the Liberal Party's Victory Fund is \$5 per month.

The party did not provide the exact number on how many MPs have met the conditions. Two sources told *The Hill Times* that the party has recently given this March as the final deadline to all

the MPs who have not met the criteria.

A party official, however, said on background that in some of cases where MPs had not met the conditions, the hold up could be minor issues like an updated headshot or an updated biographical note.

"There's a number of reasons why a current MP may not yet be announced as a candidate. For example, new headshots may need to be taken, their bios may need to be updated, or paperwork could still need to be finalized," the source said.

In not-for-attribution-based interviews with *The Hill Times*, Liberal MPs and other insiders said that there could be numerous reasons for the low number of nominations so far. Some MPs may not seek re-election, are having a hard time raising funds, or did not raise funds because of the redistribution process thinking that some of the money they raise could go to a different riding.

"Some haven't decided whether they're running again, some are struggling to raise money. In most cases people haven't done the work," said a Liberal MP who spoke on not-for-attribution basis only to speak candidly, and that their comments might offend the party and their colleagues. "Some of them are not good at fundraising. They had similar issues in the past."

So far, 11 Liberal MPs from different regions of the country have announced they will not

re-offer in the next election. Two Conservative and two NDP MPs have also announced they won't run again. The next election is scheduled for October 2025, and more MPs from all parties are expected to announce their plans to move on between now and then.

The Conservatives also set nomination criteria in 2022 for their incumbent MPs if they want to reoffer without going through a nomination challenge, but their criteria was a lot easier to meet than the Liberals'.

To be shielded from nomination challenges, each Conservative MP had to raise \$15,000 by December 2022 and donate a combined \$3,350 to the riding and the party.

In 2022, the maximum individual donation limit was \$1,675 annually to a registered party, \$1,675 to a riding association, and \$1,675 to a leadership contestant. Now, the maximum donation limit is \$1,725 each for a party, a riding association, and a leadership contestant.

According to a Conservative source, 12 of the 117 MPs failed to meet these conditions. Some of these MPs could be those who have chose not to run again.

When a minority government is in power, parties usually start nominating candidates sooner rather than later, and a good starting point is to nominate their caucus members, especially when parties are protecting their MPs from nomination challenges.

The Conservatives are far ahead of the Liberals in both polling numbers and fundraising. In polling, the Conservatives have a double-digit margin over the Liberals. In fundraising, the Conservatives raised more than double the Liberals' amount last year.

In 2023, the Conservatives raised \$35-million, while the Liberals ended up with only \$15.6-million.

In 2022, the Conservatives raised \$22-million, and the Liberals brought in \$15-million.

If the current polling trends that show the Conservatives leading the Liberals by a wide margin do not change, it could mean the next election would bring a change in government. Prior to change elections, a significant number of MPs who are expected to lose don't seek re-election for different reasons, including retiring from politics altogether, or changing careers while their party is still in power.

The 2015 election elected 142 rookie MPs. Those who remain are now in their eighth year as an MP, and are now eligible for a parliamentary pension. A significant portion of those MPs could choose not to re-offer. Six years of parliamentary service is required to be eligible for pension.

Prior to the 2021 election, 32 MPs did not re-offer; 47 MPs chose not to run again in 2019; 55 MPs did not run in 2015; and 17 MPs did not seek re-election in 2011.

Another factor that may be part of MPs' decisions whether to run again is the redistribution process.

The independent boundaries commission has completed the redistribution of electoral boundaries process. The new boundaries will come into effect on April 22. At the same time, some MPs may have put their fundraising on hold, thinking that some of the money they raise before the redistribution process is completed may go to someone else.

The change in boundaries ranges from a minor variances to the complete elimination of ridings. Depending on the change, most riding boundaries are reorganized, and electoral district associations share assets and liabilities based on the formulas provided by the parties.

"I don't know where the money is going to go that I raise now," a Liberal MP told *The Hill Times* in November 2022. "What happens if I raise \$100,000 for my riding association, but the riding association that I take over [after the redistribution] has no money, or very little money in its bank account? If there's no election until April 2024, I spend two years knocking on doors and then the new riding kicks in, then I did all this work for someone else."

Meanwhile, a party spokesperson told *The Hill Times* last week that they were flexible if MPs needed more time to meeting nomination conditions set by the party.

"Current Liberal MPs are able to request an extension to our engagement criteria, as per our nomination rules," Lund said in his email.

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The Conservatives under leader Pierre Poilievre raised a whopping \$35-million last year. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# New rule: incumbent Tory MPs whose ridings changed 25 per cent or more will have to go through nomination contests

A dozen current Conservative MPs have failed to meet the nomination conditions set by the party in 2022, according to a senior party member.

Continued from page 1

Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.), and party president Stephen Barber announced the new rules at the last caucus meeting before the House adjourned in December.

The Conservative Party's communications office did not respond to interview requests for this article. *The Hill Times* also contacted several MPs for on-the-record comments, but none responded. However, some did speak, on a not-for-attribution basis, arguing that the rules were announced at the caucus meeting and therefore they could not publicly discuss internal deliberations.

The change in rule has been enacted because of the redistribution of electoral boundaries which takes place every 10 years to reflect population changes in ridings across the country. The changes in boundaries have been undertaken by the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission.

It's a requirement under Canada's Constitution that all riding boundaries be reviewed to reflect population changes in the country's population nationally. Based on this review, five new ridings will be added to the 338-member House of Commons, increasing the number of seats to 343. Alberta will gain three seats, and Ontario and British Columbia each get one more.

Currently, Ontario has 121 seats, Quebec 78, British Columbia 42, Alberta 34, Manitoba and Saskatchewan 14 each, New Brunswick 10, Nova Scotia 11, Prince Edward Island four, Newfoundland and Labrador seven, and Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut one each. With the addition of new seats, Alberta will have 37 seats, Ontario 122, and British Columbia 43.

According to Elections Canada, the new ridings will come into effect on April 22. If the next election happens after that time, incumbent MPs and candidates



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured Jan. 28, 2024, addressing his caucus on Parliament Hill. Any incumbent Conservative MP whose riding has changed by 25 per cent or more will have to go through the nomination contest, say Conservative sources. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

will run in ridings with new geographic boundaries. But if the writ is dropped before that, the election will occur based on the existing ridings.

Statistics Canada estimated Canada's population to be at 40,523,396 on Oct. 1, 2023, an increase of 430,635 people from July 1, 2023, which was the highest population growth rate in any quarter since the second quarter of 1957.

Elections Canada told *The Hill Times* that it doesn't have a list of electoral districts by percentage of change, so it's not clear how many ridings have changed by 25 per cent or more.

Conservative sources told *The Hill Times* that the party internally has done this calculation and has sent letters to individual riding associations and MPs about how the boundaries changes will affect them, both in terms of Elections Canada filing requirements, and how the assets and liabilities will be divided amongst newly formed boundaries. During the redistribution process, depending on the population change, a riding can have either a minor change, or it could be eliminated.

In January, Conservative national councillors, the elected governing body of the party from different provinces, also held virtual meetings with riding association presidents to answer any questions they may have had to address regarding changes in electoral boundaries. Elections Canada has also sent out letters to each riding as to how the

boundaries changes would affect them.

Conservative sources also told *The Hill Times* that the party has held one-on-one meetings with MPs whose ridings have changed 25 per cent or more, and how their respective nominations will be conducted.

In March 2022, the national council of the Conservative Party told MPs that if they each raised \$15,000 annually and donated a combined \$3,350 to the riding and the party, they would be able to carry their party's banner in the next election without going through the nomination contest.

The maximum annual individual donation limit in 2022 was \$1,675 to a registered party, \$1,675 to a riding association, and \$1,675 to a leadership contestant. Currently, the limit is \$1,725 for a registered party and the same to a riding association and leadership contestant.

According to a Conservative source, about a dozen MPs from different regions of the country have failed to meet these conditions that the party set in 2022. This means that these MPs will likely have to go through the nomination contest unless they choose not to seek re-election which could be one of the reasons why they decided not to raise these funds.

These rules were decided before the Liberals and NDP struck their supply-and-confidence agreement in March 2022 which, in theory, allows the Liberals to stay in power until the next fixed election in October 2025, in return

for government progress on key NDP priorities like dental care and pharmacare. If the Liberals and New Democrats are able to keep their deal in place going forward, the next election will happen on Oct. 20, 2025.

But in a minority government, an election could be triggered if the government loses even one confidence vote. The next election could also be called if the prime minister asks the governor general that he wants one, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) did in 2021 in the hopes of winning a majority government. The average lifespan of a minority government in Canada is 18 to 24 months. The Trudeau government has already completed 28 months of its current mandate.

Conservative MPs were told in 2022 that failing to meet any of the fundraising and donation conditions would mean they would have to face the regular nomination process in which anyone can challenge them. Considering the party's consistent double-digit lead in public support, the Conservatives believe the next election is theirs to lose, and consequently, there's a lot of interest amongst party members to seek nominations.

If the party does indeed open up the nomination process where the boundaries have been changed by 25 per cent or more, there could be more potential nomination challengers in Conservative-held ridings than before as winning the nomination means being a member of the

government caucus or potentially a cabinet minister.

The then-national council had come up with these rules in 2022 after consulting with caucus members through its then-caucus liaison Warren Steinley (Regina-Lewvan, Sask.). Also, a nine-member Ad Hoc Committee of the national council had made recommendations to the full national council.

At the Sept. 7-9 policy convention in Quebec City, the Conservative delegates elected their new 20 member council and all committees have been reconstituted.

Currently, the national candidate selection committee is responsible for nominations. They include committee chair Kevin Price (New Brunswick) and vice chair Leona Aglukkaq (Nunavut). Other members include Heather Feldbusch (Alberta), Matthew Conway (Alberta), Mani Fallon (British Columbia), and Stewart Kiff (Ontario).

Nomination contests are always divisive for any party, especially in safe ridings. Most MPs prefer not to go through the nomination contests because a well-organized candidate can unseat them. For this reasons, MPs always lobby their leader not to open the nomination process, especially in minority governments when they have to spend more time in Ottawa while a potential challenger could use that time back in the riding to organize against them.

"Everyone's happy with the nomination rules, that's all I'm going to say," said one Conservative MP.

Another said: "Pierre is smart, things are going well. Why would he open himself up to disunity infighting when things are going well? So this is where we are at."

Conservative sources told *The Hill Times* that for the next election, if a person has ever previously been disallowed to run as a candidate, that individual will be able to apply to run again only if they're able to get a waiver from the party. Also, if someone has lost two consecutive elections, that person will also have to get a waiver from the party to run.

Meanwhile, Parm Gill, former Ontario provincial MPP and cabinet minister, announced on Feb. 1 that he will run federally in the next federal election. It's also expected that more Ontario Progressive Conservative MPPs could choose to run federally next time around.

Like Gill, a former one-term MP, there are two other cabinet ministers in the Doug Ford cabinet who served as MPs in the past, including Greg Rickford and Paul Calandra. Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce worked in Stephen Harper's Prime Minister's Office in the past. Lecce, Transport Minister Prammeet Sarkaria, and Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy are some of the other potential names who are seen as close to federal Conservatives and one or more than one could choose to run in the 2025 general election.

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## News

# MPs' sponsored travel back in spotlight as House Ethics Committee, NDP MP Green call for complete ban

NDP MP Matthew Green said an outright ban on accepting sponsored travel would help parliamentarians 'move beyond the political ambulance-chasing' over the practice, amid a committee study into Justin Trudeau's Jamaica vacation.



The House Ethics Committee unanimously passed NDP MP Matthew Green's, pictured, motion to recommend that two other committees ban MPs from accepting sponsored travel last week. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1  
sponsored travel. Green recommended that members instead be allowed two international trips per year to be paid from their office budgets.

"What I'm asking this committee to do... is to move beyond the political ambulance-chasing, and start to provide a legislative remedy to close the gaps," Green told the committee.

Sec. 15 of the code exempts sponsored travel "that arises from or relates to his or her position" from a ban on receiving gifts "that might reasonably be seen to have been given to influence the member in the exercise of a duty or function of his or her office."

MPs must declare any travel costs that exceed \$200 and that were not wholly paid for either by the members themselves, the consolidated revenue fund, their party, or a recognized parliamentary association. The declaration must be submitted to the ethics commissioner's office within 60 days of the end of the trip.

According to the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, MPs accepted more than \$422,000 in sponsored travel in 2022 across 55 trips. The 2023 total must be published by the office by the end of March.

As a result of Green's motion, ETHI will write letters to both BOIE and PROC with the recommendations to explicitly ban sponsored travel, and to amend the travel system for MPs to include the two foreign trips. MPs are currently permitted 64 travel points, which are primarily used

for travel between Ottawa and their riding, within their constituency, or from the federal capital or riding to their provincial or territorial capital.

Of the 64 travel points, up to 25 can be used for other trips within Canada, and two each can be spent on trips to New York City, N.Y., or Washington, D.C.

Green sought unanimous consent for the motion, "and if not, then I would invite the members to go on the record about whether they support the gravy train or they don't."

"What I'm hearing from the testimony is it's incumbent on us as MPs to create a higher standard with clear definitions, recognizing that terms like 'friends' are not clearly defined, there's too much ambiguity," Green said.

Liberal MP Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Ont.) said she "100 per cent" agreed with Green, but asked that committee members be allowed to review and provide changes to the letter before it was sent to PROC.

Conservative MP Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont.), his party's ethics critic, said he was concerned that there would be added costs or a change to members' budgets, "and wouldn't want to give the idea that we're just looking to have an increase to members' budgets."

Green said the letter was for the consideration of the two committees, which would then in turn decide the financial implications of making such a change.

The number of groups eligible to offer sponsored travel has decreased since last year, when an updated lobbyists' code

of conduct effectively banned the practice for any organizations that are registered to lobby federal officials. However, the conflict of interest code for MPs still includes the exemption for sponsored travel.

PROC last reviewed the code in 2022, and its report of the matter was concurred in the House in March 2023. That report did not recommend a change to sponsored travel rules.

That report stated that, on balance, PROC was "of the view that the regime in place for the acceptability and disclosure of sponsored travel provides sufficient transparency and accountability, and is in-line with current best practices for the prevention of real or perceived conflicts of interest." It made no recommendations to change the rules, but said the committee would continue to monitor its use.

In a submission to PROC, then-ethics commissioner Mario Dion recommended that the ac-

ceptability exemption be removed for sponsored travel.

"Although sponsored travel offsets limited travel budgets that Members may have, it creates in many cases the appearance of a conflict of interest," he wrote in the February 2022 submission. "If sponsored travel is to be seen as acceptable, it should follow the same acceptability test for gifts or other benefits, and the current practice of making a public declaration and providing supporting documents should be continued."

Democracy Watch, meanwhile, recommended deleting section 15 altogether because sponsored travel "is an unethical gift and essentially a form of legalized bribery." The organization believed Dion's recommendation was not strong enough as it "would still allow sponsored travel for speaking engagements at conferences."

The motion was passed during a meeting discussing Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) Christmas vacation to Jamaica. The *National*



Interim ethics commissioner Konrad von Finckenstein told MPs last week that it was up to them to change sponsored travel rules in the conflict of interest code. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Post stated that Trudeau and his family stayed at businessman Peter Green's Prospect Estate resort in Jamaica at no charge, with market rates estimating the cost of the stay at up to \$84,000.

The Prime Minister's Office initially stated that the family would cover the cost of the stay and reimburse the cost of traveling on a government plane, but later stated that Trudeau had vacationed "at no cost at a location owned by family friends."

Interim ethics commissioner Konrad von Finckenstein confirmed to the committee that the PMO consulted his office on the trip. He said that the prime minister was within the rules to accept the gift as Peter Green was a longtime family friend.

"We have no role to pre-clear gifts from family and friends under the [Conflict of Interest] Act. Nor do we approve travel destinations; however, we advise as to whether the gift is acceptable or not," he told the committee. "We determine whether a gift is acceptable or not. A gift from a friend is acceptable."

The Conflict of Interest Act requires public office holders to report a gift worth \$200 or more to the commissioner within 30 days. An exemption exists, however, for gifts "from a relative or friend."

"Thirty days have now passed since the acceptance of the gift by the Prime Minister and nothing has appeared on our website," von Finckenstein said.

Barrett and Conservative MP Luç Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, Que.), his party's deputy House leader, called for Trudeau to release his correspondence with the commissioner's office over the vacation.

"Trudeau has already broken Canada's ethics laws twice and is no longer entitled to the benefit of the doubt. Trudeau must release this correspondence now," they said in a press release.

Von Finckenstein was also asked about the rules surrounding sponsored travel for MPs. Liberal MPs on the committee drew attention to a June trip by Conservative MPs to the United Kingdom paid for by Canadians for Affordable Energy and Hungarian right-wing think tank the Danube Institute.

Conservative MP Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, Ont.) accused the Liberals and NDP of hypocrisy, pointing to a trip Khalid took to the United Arab Emirates in 2017, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh's (Burnaby South, B.C.) trip to Las Vegas, Nev., last August.

Damoff said she is concerned about foreign interference as a result of sponsored travel, "where you're going to have foreign entities like the Danube Institute sponsoring Canadian MPs as a way to get around our sponsored travel rules, but also as a way to influence Canadian elected officials."

Asked for his thoughts on foreign interference, von Finckenstein reiterated that sponsored travel was governed by the conflict of interest code that MPs imposed on themselves. "It's up to you to change it," he said.

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When Black politicians succeed, they do so not because of any boost from the political structures within which they function, but because of their own merit and character. Greg Fergus, the first Black House Speaker, is a good example, writes Bhagwant Sandhu. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# It's 2024, and Black MPs are still being tokenized

In the confines of large organizational structures like political parties, diversity still remains a tactical device.

Bhagwant Sandhu

Opinion



OTTAWA—Black History Month is here again. It is a time for Canadians to celebrate Black excellence and achievement. In some quarters of Canada, it is also a time to separate festivity from a few sombre second thoughts.

Consider the role of Black officials in politics. Within the Liberal party it appears Black MPs are useful not as ministers of major portfolios, but as point people to provide tactical cover. Who

can forget House Speaker Greg Fergus forgiving Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his blackface antics? The message was clear: if a Black person can forgive Trudeau, why can't we?

The Liberals are now fronting Black MP Ahmed Hussen to malign the International Court of Justice for ruling that Israel's actions in Gaza amount to genocide. Right after the Court's decision, Hussen—who as luck would have it is also Muslim and a refugee—started attacking UNRWA, the UN appointed agency to help Palestinian refugees. The Court's judges are also appointed by the UN. The message this time, and the linkages, are a bit more subliminal: if a Black Muslim refugee is casting doubts on everything, shouldn't we?

The Conservatives are no better. Their only Black MP, Leslyn Lewis, has a PhD in law and could provide serious critiques of public policy and propose meaningful alternatives. Instead, she uses her talents to court white Euro-nationalists, and spread conspiracies about the World Health Organization. Her academic aptitude, as she sits on Pierre Poilievre's front bench, has

been reduced to a caricature to promote right-wing populism.

It wasn't always like this. The Conservatives, for instance, have a history of producing some of Black Canada's great political minds. Lincoln Alexander, the first elected Black MP, comes to mind; as does Senator Donald Oliver, the first Black person appointed to the Senate. Their contributions as serious thinkers who helped shape contemporary Canada are legendary. That was a different time. Today, Black politicians—like most other ethnic minorities—are recruited as tokens to get votes, not to add to the corpus of Canadian policy.

Even in top leadership positions, Black politicians are now expected to work as foot soldiers, not to chart direction and shape strategy. Annamie Paul, the first Black Canadian to head a federal political party, is illustrative. Her Green party apparatchiks had her discussing antisemitism rather than coalescing around her leadership in the run up to 2021 elections. It cost her the support of half of her caucus, and the election in her own riding. Bitter and defeated, she has never been heard from since.

One could argue that Black politicians have a choice. They could refuse to be played as pawns. As then-Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes found out the hard way, it doesn't quite work that way. She held the prestigious post of parliamentary secretary to the prime minister in 2015. But soon she started asserting her own personality. When that wasn't received well, she decided she was better off outside of the Liberal caucus, and her political career eventually came to an end.

This need not be the case. As a society, Canada is a unique project in the world. Never have so many different ethnicities and linguistic groups ever been amassed in one single place. For the most part it works very well. Our diversity is accepted as our cultural strength and national identity. That is how Canadians feel and indeed act across the political spectrum.

However, in the confines of large organizational structures like political parties, diversity still remains a tactical device. An individual's ethnicity gets used to achieve narrow political objectives, and their intellectual value or participation in changing the

party's operational fabric often gets pushed aside. It has utility as such to excuse and shield the status quo from fundamental change. Celebrations like Black History Month become external, one-off events—not regular business.

When Black politicians succeed, they do so not because of any boost from the political structures within which they function, but because of their own merit and character. Fergus is a good example. Despite his loyalty to the Liberal Party, he was never rewarded with a cabinet position. He became Canada's first Black House Speaker because of his own grit and effort.

Simply put: Black excellence occurs not because someone has nourished it, but because Black people themselves have achieved it. Black parliamentarians and Senators are mindful of this. Canada's Parliamentary Black Caucus is one example of a place where issues important to the Black community are identified, and non-partisan and cross-partisan coalitions are built to achieve progress.

But on this Black History Month, it's especially important to realize that Black MPs, Senators, and all levels of other politicians cannot be expected to change the system by themselves.

*Bhagwant Sandhu is a retired director general from the federal public service. He also held executive positions with the governments of Ontario and British Columbia.*

*The Hill Times*



## Opinion

# When it comes to war and retaliation: 'A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do'

The biggest post-9/11 mistake the United States made was to do exactly what the al-Qaeda terrorists wanted it to do.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



In the immediate aftermath of the massacre of 1,140 Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorists last October, U.S. President Joe Biden went to Israel and gave Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu some good advice.

"While you feel rage (about the slaughter of Israeli civilians)," Biden said, "don't be consumed by it. After 9/11, we were enraged

in the United States. While we sought justice and got justice, we also made mistakes."

Well, yes. Invading the wrong country (Iraq) will lose you marks in almost any military college. (Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11).

'Avenging' the death of 3,000 innocent Americans on 9/11 by killing around 300,000 Iraqi civilians and wasting the lives of a further 4,500 American soldiers in that same wrong country is definitely a sub-optimal response.

But the biggest U.S. mistake was to do exactly what the al-Qaeda terrorists wanted it to do. That generation of U.S. generals wasn't paying attention during the 'terrorism' module at Staff College. Al-Qaeda carried out the 9/11 attacks because it wanted the United States to invade Arab and Muslim countries, you pitiful excuses for generals.

Al-Qaeda were Islamist revolutionaries, and they couldn't get the Arabs to support their goals. So sucker foreign infidels into invading the countries that al-Qaeda wants to rule, and maybe that will

radicalize the locals enough to back an Islamist revolution. This is Terrorism 101, as taught in almost all the world's military colleges.

Are these the mistakes that Biden was warning Netanyahu against last October? Was he explaining to Netanyahu that Hamas staged the October atrocities precisely because it wanted Israel to invade the Gaza Strip? That Hamas was losing credibility in the Arab world, and triggering an Israeli invasion was the best way to regain it?

Maybe, but it wouldn't have helped, because the Israelis wanted revenge and that meant a lot of blood. Which is exactly the dilemma that Biden now faces in miniature.

Only three American soldiers were killed by the drone attack in Syria on Jan. 29, but it was big in terms of its potential consequences. The people who launched the drone were almost certainly Iraqis, but it was Iran that gave them the drone and told them to launch it at an American target.

This arms-length relationship is meant to give Iran 'plausible

deniability,' but it really doesn't. Iran probably didn't pick the target, the day, or the time for this attack, but there have been 160 Iran-sponsored drone attacks on American targets since October. Sooner or later they were going to kill some Americans.

What did the Iranians think was going to happen then? "The only answer to these attacks must be devastating military retaliation against Iran's terrorist forces, both in Iran and across the Middle East," said Senator Tom Cotton. "Anything less will confirm Joe Biden as a coward unworthy of being commander in chief."

Cotton is a Republican Senator from Arkansas, so his response is to be expected, but still... is going to war with a country of 89 million people (Iran)—a country that could cover the last steps to making nuclear weapons in a few months—a proportionate response to the killing of three American soldiers that may or may not have been directly ordered by Tehran?

Some of the men saying such things—they're almost all male—

are clever, cynical Republicans who know that military strikes on Iran would mire Biden in an unwinnable war and lose him the election.

Most, however, are just responding to their chimpanzee heritage as reimagined in a thousand movies from *High Noon* to *Die Hard XVII*. "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do," as John Wayne once put it.

It's a safe assumption that neither Iran nor the United States wants all-out war with the other. It was therefore stupid of Biden to give Netanyahu a blank cheque in Gaza, just as it was foolish of the clerical regime in Tehran to hand out state-of-the-art drone weapons to a variety of angry people it does not control.

But here we all are, probably not in that street in Sarajevo in 1914, but quite possibly on the *USS Maddox* in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, at the start of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Which is definitely not where we want to be.

It's Biden's move, but he should actually make two moves. Retaliate as little as possible against Iranian proxies somewhere (because a man's gotta do, etc.), but not against Iran itself.

At the same time, compel Israel to end the killing in Gaza, because that's what is giving Iran the leverage to mobilize all these Arab volunteers against America and for the Palestinian cause. Besides, 27,000 dead Palestinians is enough revenge.

Gwynne Dyer's latest book is *The Shortest History of War*.  
*The Hill Times*

# Corporations are not empowered by law to ignore the environment

Surprisingly, the whole notion that the primary obligation of directors is to shareholders is a relatively new idea.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May

Opinion



I dare say that most Canadians would agree that the No. 1 obligation of a CEO is to deliver profits to the shareholders. We hear it often enough, as though the matter is settled law.

It is not settled. In fact, it is wrong.

Yet Suncor CEO Rich Kruger was quoted in the media this past summer saying: "we win by creating value through our large integrated asset base underpinned by oil-



Next time a CEO says climate is not their business, someone should give their board of directors a refresher on Canadian law, writes Green Party Leader Elizabeth May.  
*The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

sands." He also said: "we have a bit of a disproportionate emphasis on the longer-term energy transition."

No one in the media challenged his view that his duty was not to the planet or future generations, but to make more profits and deliver those rewards to shareholders.

Some might be surprised to learn that the whole notion that the primary obligation of directors to shareholders is a relatively new idea, and the assertion of one quite well-known neoliberal.

Milton Friedman of the Chicago School launched his theory in 1970 in an article in *The New York Times*, immodestly calling his essay, "A Friedman Doctrine: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits." Not only did he argue that increasing profits was a business' primary goal, he also went further and argued there is no corporate responsibility to the larger society. It is found in some U.S. law, particularly in the state of Delaware.

In Canada, that is not good law. The Supreme Court decision in *BCE Inc v 1976 Debenture Holders* 2008 SCC 69 set out a view of being a good corporate citizen. More recently, the court's view was clarified in amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act (CBCA). In the 2019 Budget Implementation Bill, C-97, Parliament made it explicit that corporate directors' obligations do not stop at delivering profits to shareholders.

Surprisingly, Treasury Board President Anita Anand—a prominent member of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet and respected legal scholar in her own right—wrote a legal analysis of C-97 as scholar in residence at Torys LLP.

Anand's article, "A New Dimension To Directors' Duties: Bill C-97," sets out Canadian law very clearly: "Amending the CBCA, Bill C-97 sets forth factors that directors may consider when acting in the 'best interest of the corporation.' To elaborate, directors may take into account considerations about the environment, government, creditors, the long-term interest of the corporation and other factors. Furthermore, the legislation, as drafted, suggests that none of these interests automatically prevails over any other. Thus, acting in the best interest of the corporation means more than taking into account the interests of shareholders alone. Directors may consider the interests of other stakeholders (creditors, government, environment, bondholders, etc.). This statutory provision is an explicit legislative rejection of a shareholder primacy approach to corporate governance."

So next time a CEO says climate is not their business and that their job is to make money, someone should give their board of directors a refresher on Canadian law.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May represents Saanich Gulf Islands, B.C.  
*The Hill Times*

# Trudeau still has time to get his act together, but it's going to be tough



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

The next few months will show whether the Trudeau government knows how to score again. After that, it will be too late to show he would be a better choice than Pierre Poilievre.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



**T**ORONTO—If an election were to be held today—assuming the polls are right—Pierre Poilievre would become our prime minister, heading what could

even be a majority Conservative government. For a political party that relies more on partisan battle cries than serious policy ideas for a better future, this would be quite an accomplishment.

But a lot could happen between now and 2025, when the next election is expected to take place, including “events” that are simply not foreseen. Yet the low esteem in which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau seems to be held by so many Canadians is remarkable. It may mean many people no longer even listen to what he says. Most of the blame for this falls directly on Trudeau and his government.

The truth is that Trudeau and his government have failed to provide the quality of leadership the country had hoped for in 2015 while, at the same time, the government’s ability to deliver on promises or manage everyday public services has been mediocre at best.

Moreover, his personal style has alienated many—the most recent being his fumbling efforts

to justify accepting a luxurious Jamaican holiday over Christmas valued at more than what a majority of Canadians earn in an entire year. While not breaking any existing ethical rules, he has shown himself tone deaf to how Canadians see him luxuriating while they struggle—and then not even getting his story straight. There’s nothing that Trudeau has said that suggests he properly understands the daily struggles of many Canadians, or genuinely shares their pain.

For many Canadians, it appears that the top Liberals do not feel the pain of many ordinary Canadians. It’s not just the Trudeau family’s luxurious holiday in Jamaica. It’s Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland saying that her family was sacrificing in difficult times by cutting its subscription to the Disney channel, or former finance minister Bill Morneau declaring that the Canada new child benefit would help parents buy ballerina slippers for their children. This hardly qualifies as “I share your pain.”

The belated scramble to address the housing crisis, the about-face effort to blame immigration for many of our problems, the failure to be up front with Canadians on the necessity, cost, and disruption from transitioning to net-zero emissions and the mangled handling of the carbon tax, to failing to stand up for a strong nation in the face of the destructive undermining of confidence in Canada by various premiers, are all signs of failure.

To be sure, most governments eventually suffer from fatigue—and voters then decide it’s time for a change. Changes in government can re-energize the system. In fact, elections are often about getting rid of a government, not about embracing the opposition. This is a huge challenge now for Trudeau, amplified by a leadership style that appears to offend many people.

Recent polling results from the Angus Reid Institute show that only 36 per cent of Canadians believe that the federal government “cares about issues that are im-

portant to me,” while 58 per cent say that Ottawa does not care about the issues that are important to them. Even 25 per cent of those who voted Liberal in the last election now feel the federal government doesn’t care about the issues that are important to them. This is the sign of a government that is out of touch.

Earlier polling by the Angus Reid Institute and the University of Alberta sociology department showed that even in the 2021 federal election, more Canadians who self-identified as middle class, lower middle class and working class voted Conservative rather than Liberal. The Liberals only did better than Conservatives among Canadians who self-identified as upper middle class, or living in poverty.

The gap in voter support between the Conservatives and Liberals was highest among the lower-middle class and working class, where the Conservatives had greater support. In other signs of disaffection, while 63 per cent of those self-identifying as upper middle class were satisfied with their access to quality health care, and 88 per cent satisfied with family access to quality education, those in the lower-middle class, working class, or living in poverty had markedly lower levels of satisfaction.

In another measure of the Trudeau government’s leadership, only 29 per cent of Canadians said they were “very” or “moderately optimistic” about the future of the next generation, and just 41 per cent about the future of Canada. However, respondents were more optimistic about their own futures, specially those in the upper-middle class and middle class. Optimism declined among those in the lower-middle class, the working class, and those living in poverty.

Trudeau and the Liberals still have time to resonate with voters and attract back support. But this will require showing why they deserve to be re-elected with Trudeau himself rolling up his sleeves—and not just for photo-ops—to show how he can deliver a better future that is widely shared. But this means being much more open and frank with Canadians about the challenges we face, the difficulties we will encounter, and the kind of tough medicine and dilutions that will be needed if we are to change for the better.

He has to convince Canadians that his policies will make them better off, make them more confident about the country’s future and its place in the world, and do what government can to meet the basic needs of a just society.

Poilievre is having an easy time right now—easier than he deserves. As former NDP leader Tom Mulcair has said, the opposition leader is “shooting into an empty net.” The next few months will show whether the Trudeau government knows how to score again. After that, it will be too late to show he would be a better choice than Poilievre.

David Crane can be reached at [crane@interlog.com](mailto:crane@interlog.com).  
*The Hill Times*



Laura Ryckewaert  
**Hill Climbers**

# Beech, Hutchings, and Petitpas Taylor have new press secretaries on board



Citizens' Services Minister Terry Beech, left, Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and Rural Economic Development Minister Gудie Hutchings have all recently hired new press secretaries. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Recent changes in Citizens' Services Minister Terry Beech's office also include Ellen Galupo's promotion to director of policy.

Citizens' Services Minister **Terry Beech**, Veterans Affairs Minister **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**, and Rural Economic Development Minister **Gудie Hutchings** have all recently welcomed new press secretaries to their respective offices.

In Beech's office, **Teodor Gaspar** started on the job as press secretary to the minister in mid-January. Gaspar spent the prior



Teodor Gaspar is press secretary to Minister Beech. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

six months as an assistant to Environment and Climate Change Minister **Steven Guilbeault** as the MP for Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que., having been hired there after completing a summer internship.

Gaspar is currently wrapping up a bachelor's degree in political science, economics, and communications studies at McGill University, and is set to graduate this spring, according to his LinkedIn profile. Along with being involved in the university's model UN assembly, Gaspar has been involved with *The McGill International Review*, previously as a staff writer and now as managing editor since April of last year. His CV also includes time spent working for Quebec Liberal MNA **Jennifer Maccarone**, Quebec Liberal MP **Rachel Bendayan**, and for Hungarian Member of Parliament **Miklós Hajnal**.

Prior to Gaspar's hiring, director of communications and issues management **Erik Nosaluk** was covering press secretary duties for Beech since the Vancouver-area MP was added to cabinet last July. Also currently helping with communications work in the office is **Piper McWilliams** who is both executive assistant to the minister and chief of staff, and assistant for communications.

In other office news, senior policy adviser **Ellen Galupo** has been promoted to director of policy to Beech—another previously unfilled position.

Galupo joined Beech's burgeoning ministerial team last September after more



Ellen Galupo has been promoted to director of policy. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

than three-and-a-half years working for the federal families, children, and social development minister, starting in January 2020 as an Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-minister **Ahmed Hussen**. By year's end, she had been promoted to senior policy adviser, a role she continued in after **Karina Gould**—who's currently on leave from her post as government House leader—took over the families portfolio after the 2021 election. Galupo is also a past legislative assistant and assistant to the parliamentary secretary in then-heritage and multiculturalism minister **Pablo Rodriguez's** office, and interned in the Liberal research bureau over the summer of 2018.

Originally from the Philippines, Galupo founded Humans of Moose River while in university, a play on the Humans

of New York photoblog telling the stories of people in Moosonee, Ont., where her family moved after originally immigrating to Toronto in 2006, as profiled in a 2020 *Timmins Today* article. She also co-founded a Filipino Student Association at the University of Ottawa (UOttawa) while working towards a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies at the school.

Also currently tackling policy for Beech is senior policy adviser **Nathan Bowles**.

Rounding out the recent changes to Beech's team is the addition of **David Desjardins** as Quebec regional affairs adviser and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, currently Quebec Liberal MP **Stéphane Lauzon**.

Desjardins was hired in early January. He was most recently working in Bendayan's Hill office, and is also a former legislative adviser to then-Senate speaker **George Furey**, parliamentary assistant to then-Quebec Liberal MP **Marc Garneau**, and worked part-time as a student in then-fisheries and oceans minister **Dominic LeBlanc's** office while working towards a bachelor's degree at UOttawa.

**Ryan Cotter** is chief of staff to Beech, whose office otherwise currently includes: **Morgan McCullough**, director of operations; **Tenzin Chogyi**, Ontario regional affairs adviser; **Daniel Schnurr**, special assistant for Atlantic regional and parliamentary affairs; and **Justine Vincent**, adviser for parliamentary affairs, issues management, and West and North regional affairs.

Jumping to Petitpas Taylor's team as minister for veterans affairs, **Isabelle Arseneau** was hired as press secretary in mid-December.



Isabelle Arseneau is now press secretary to Minister Petitpas Taylor. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Arseneau was most recently working in Petitpas Taylor's home province of New Brunswick as a journalist with Radio-Canada Acadie in Moncton, and has also previously worked for 93.5 Codiak FM in the city. According to her LinkedIn profile, she worked as an administrative assistant in the office of the president of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) while studying for a bachelor's degree in art and social sciences at the Université de Moncton.

**Mikaela Harrison** continues as director of communications to the veterans minister.

Director of parliamentary affairs **Nathaniel Mullin** bade farewell to Petitpas Taylor's office on Jan. 26, with senior adviser **Richard Léger** already having stepped in to replace him.

Mullin had been working for Petitpas Taylor since the 2021 election, starting as a senior adviser in her office as then-minister for official languages and ACOA. He was promoted to director in February 2023, and followed his boss to her new portfolio after last summer's cabinet shuffle.

Aside from a year and a half spent working for the Ottawa Community

Continued from page 36

Housing Corporation, Mullin has been working on the Hill since the end of 2015, and through the years has also worked for Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Darrell Samson**, now-Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** during her previous turns as then-heritage minister and as then-economic development and official languages minister, and for Hussen as then-families minister. Stay tuned for an update on where he's landed.

The minister's new head of parliamentary affairs, Léger, was previously director of policy to Petitpas Taylor as then-official languages and ACOA minister, and became a senior adviser after being re-hired to her new office post-shuffle (after a shuffle, all ministerial staff have to be re-hired—or newly hired—even if they're sticking with the same portfolio or minister).



Richard Léger is now director of parliamentary affairs and senior adviser to Minister Petitpas Taylor. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

A former lawyer with the Ottawa law firms Caza Saikaley and Vincent Dagenais Gibson, Léger has been working for Liberal ministers on the Hill since 2019, starting as a policy adviser to then-public services and procurement minister **Carla Qualtrough**. He's since also worked as a senior policy adviser, and later director of policy, to Joly as then-economic development and official languages minister.

Also currently focused on parliamentary affairs work in the minister's office is adviser **Audrey Aubut-Lévesque**, who also covers Quebec regional affairs.

**Guy Gallant** is chief of staff to Petitpas Taylor.



Connor Burton is press secretary to Minister Hutchings. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Over in Hutchings' office as the minister responsible for both rural economic development and ACOA, **Connor Burton** started on the job as press secretary and communications adviser to the minister in early January.

Burton completed a master's of political management degree at Carleton University last fall, and over the course of 2023, he interned both as a parliamentary research assistant at the Senate, and more recently with StrategyCorp in Ottawa. With an undergrad in history from St. Francis Xavier University, Burton also holds a master's degree in the subject from Queen's University.

**Kevin Lemkay** remains director of communications to Hutchings, whose office is run by chief of staff **Allie Chalke**.

tryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times

### Cabinet's communications and chiefs of staff list, 2024

Minister	Chief of Staff	D. Comms	Press Secretary*	Main Office #	
Trudeau, Justin	Prime Minister	Katie Telford	Vanessa Hage-Moussa (acting)	Ann-Clara Vaillancourt, Mohammad Hussain, Jenna Ghassabeh	613-992-4211
Freeland, Chrystia	Deputy Prime Minister, Finance	Andrew Bevan	Alex Lawrence	Katherine Cuplinskas	613-369-5696
Anand, Anita	Treasury Board	Monique Lugli	Emelyana Titarenko	Ronny Al-Nosir	613-369-3170
Anandasangaree, Gary	Crown-Indigenous Relations	Shaili Patel	Joanna Sivasankaran	Mathieu Perrotin	819-997-0002
Beech, Terry	Citizens' Services	Ryan Cotter	Erik Nosaluk	Teodor Gaspar	—
Bibeau, Marie-Claude	National Revenue	Frédérique Tsai-Klassen	Marianne Dandurand	Simon Lafortune	613-995-2960
Blair, Bill	Defence	Taras Zalusky	Daniel Minden	Diana Ebadi	613-996-3100
Boissonnault, Randy	Employment, Workforce Development, and Official Languages	Elliott Lockington	Alice Hansen	Farrah-Lilia Kerkadi	819-654-5546
Champagne, François-Philippe	Innovation, Science, and Industry	Ian Foucher	Laurie Bouchard	Audrey Champoux	343-291-2500
Duclos, Jean-Yves	Public Services and Procurement	Anthony Laporte	Marie-France Proulx	Olivier Pilon	819-997-5421
Fraser, Sean	Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities	Savannah DeWolfe	Matt Dillon	Micaal Ahmed	343-644-9948
MacKinnon, Steven	House Leader	Rheal Lewis	Mark Kennedy	Philippe-Alexandre Langlois	613-995-2727
Guilbeault, Steven	Environment and Climate Change	Jamie Kippen	Oliver Anderson	Kaitlin Power	819-938-3813
Hajdu, Patty	Indigenous Services, Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario	Randi Anderson (acting)	Simon Ross	Reem Sheet	819-956-5388
Holland, Mark	Health	Cyndi Jenkins	Alex Maheux	Christopher Aoun	613-957-0200
Hussen, Ahmed	International Development	Mike Maka	—	Olivia Batten	343-203-6238
Hutchings, Gudie	Rural Economic Development, ACOA	Allie Chalke	Kevin Lemkay	Connor Burton	613-941-7241
Ien, Marci	Women and Gender Equality, Youth	Dunerci Caceres	Riyadh Nazerally	Nanki Singh	—
Joly, Mélanie	Foreign Affairs	Peter Wilkinson	Emily Williams	Isabella Orozco-Madison	343-203-1851
Khera, Kamal	Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities	Helen Gao	Alisson Lévesque	Laurent De Casanove	819-654-5533
LeBlanc, Dominic	Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs	Jamie Innes (Inter & Demo), Cory Pike (PS)	Kelly Ouimet	Jean-Sébastien Comeau	343-644-9905
Lebouthillier, Diane	Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard	Faizel Gulamhussein	Gabriel Bourget	Jérémy Collard	613-992-3474
MacAulay, Lawrence	Agriculture and Agri-Food	Matthew Mann	Annie Cullinan	Francis Chechile	613-773-1059
Martinez Ferrada, Soraya	Tourism, Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Alex Corbeil	Alex Cohen	Marie-Justine Torres Ames	—
Miller, Marc	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship	Mike Burton	Aïssa Diop	Bahoz Dara Aziz	613-954-1064
Ng, Mary	Export Promotion, International Trade, and Economic Development	Kevin Coon	Giulia Doyle	Shanti Cosentino	343-203-7332
O'Regan, Seamus	Labour and Seniors	Paul Moen	Jane Deeks	Hartley Witten	819-654-5348
Petitpas Taylor, Ginette	Veterans Affairs, Associate Defence	Guy Gallant	Mikaela Harrison	Isabelle Arseneau	613-996-4649
Qualtrough, Carla	Sport and Physical Activity	Kelly Bryant	Dilys Fernandes	John Fragos	819-934-1122
Rodriguez, Pablo	Transport, Quebec Lieutenant	Miled Hill (Transport), Geneviève Hinse (Que.)	Olivier Bouffard (Transport), Jacques Martineau (Que.)	Laura Scaffidi (Transport)	613-991-0700
Sajjan, Harjit	Emergency Preparedness, President of King's Privy Council, Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada	James Cudmore	Emily Heffernan	Joanna Kanga	—
Saks, Ya'ara	Mental Health and Addictions, Associate Health	Sarah Welch	—	Alexander Fernandes	613-948-3265
St-Onge, Pascale	Heritage	Jude Welch	Shane Mackenzie	Ariane Joazard-Bélizaire	819-997-7788
Sudds, Jenna	Families, Children, and Social Development	Chris Evelyn	Margaret Jaques	Soraya Lemur	819-654-5611
Tassi, Filomena	Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Jenn Kuss	Chelsea Kusnik	Edward Hutchinson	1-866-593-5505
Valdez, Rechie	Small Business	Angad Dhillon	Nadine Ramadan	Madeleine Roberts	—
Vandal, Dan	Northern Affairs, Prairies Economic Development Canada, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	Kathy Kettler	Kyle Allen	Carson Debert	819-953-1153
Virani, Arif	Justice, Attorney General	Lisa Jørgensen	David Taylor	Chantalle Aubertin	613-992-4621
Wilkinson, Jonathan	Energy and Natural Resources	Claire Seaborn	Sabrina Kim	Carolyn Svonkin	343-292-6096

\* Not all staff listed in this category hold the exact title of press secretary, but serve in this function



Stuart Benson  
**Party Central**

# U.S. Ambassador Cohen hosts new year's levée at Lornado

U.S. Ambassador David Cohen and his wife, Rhonda, welcomed business leaders, politicians, and journalists for a pair of receptions on Jan. 30 and 31 to ring in the new year at their official residence in Rockcliffe Park.

U.S. Ambassador **David Cohen** and his wife **Rhonda** welcomed cabinet ministers, business leaders, and journalists to their official residence on Jan. 30 and Jan. 31 for a two-day 'Toast the New Year' house party.

For those who have not had the pleasure of visiting the official residence located in Ottawa's Rockcliffe Park neighbourhood and perched high up on a cliff overlooking the mighty Ottawa River, Lornado—a 32-room limestone mansion—is a sight to behold as you walk up the winding driveway. However, if you do get the chance to visit, try and avoid having the Uber drop you off at the bottom of the driveway to skip the walk because it felt like the entire distance of the 10-acre property to the front door.

After finally summiting the driveway just after 6:30 p.m., alongside *The Hill Times'* foreign policy reporter **Neil Moss** who'd secured the invitations, **Party Central** was greeted at the door by a staffer as Cohen was already engaged with National Arts Centre President and CEO **Christopher Deacon**. Fortunately, that gave **Party Central** a chance to take photos while Moss started his reconnaissance on the notable attendees who had already arrived.

While awaiting the field report, **Party Central** did some scouting of his own by the refreshments, and loaded up a plate of lamb strips on fried polenta, fried chicken skewers in mint sauce, mini beef-burger sliders, and a prime rib sandwich. **Party Central** was also heavily tempted to partake in the complimentary pasta, but decided not to risk it in a good suit.

After fuelling up and wandering around the large rooms on the main floor to take in the residence's collection of American art, assorted U.S.-Canada diplomatic memorabilia, and attempting to psycho-analyze Cohen's book collection (unsurprisingly, it's mostly political memoirs and the occasional thriller from **John Grisham** and **David Baldacci**), the rest of the night's attendees began to arrive.

With Moss' help, **Party Central** spotted Special Envoy on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism **Deborah Lyons**, and deputy envoy **Rachel Chertkoff**;



U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen, left, and Citizens' Services Minister Terry Beech at the ambassador's 'Toast to the New Year' reception on Jan. 31 at the official residence in Rockcliffe Park. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Trade Minister **Mary Ng**; Citizens' Services Minister **Terry Beech**; National Revenue Minister **Marie-Claude Bibeau**; International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**; Housing Minister **Sean Fraser**; Royal Helium CEO **Andrew Davidson**; M1 Composites president **Lorenzo Morandola**; U15 Research Universities executive VP **Dylan Hanley**; Interim president and chancellor of Carleton University **Jerry Tomberlin**; Navigator's **Jaime Watt**; Politico's **Zi-Ann Lum**; CBC's **Murray Brewster** and **Catherine Cullen**, and *The Globe and Mail's* **Marieke Walsh**.

While the diplomatic scene isn't **Party Central's** typical stomping grounds, and Moss is less than a social butterfly himself, most of the night was spent standing off to the side waiting for a good moment to interrupt Cohen's discussions with his guests in order to snap a picture. Thankfully the ambassador is most likely professionally accustomed to photos buzzing around his head, and was more than happy to oblige.

Additionally, from that fly-on-the-wall vantage point, **Party Central** was able to observe the obviously close and friendly relationship Cohen has with the cab-mins in attendance, and to overhear his particularly high-praises for Ng.

As the night wound down, Cohen and his wife also spent quite a long period of time chatting with Watt, who was gifted **Mark Segal's** memoir *And Then I Danced*, detailing his experience as the youngest person to be arrested at the Stonewall Riots in 1969, and his life as a gay liberation activist. Cohen told **Party Central** he considers Segal a personal friend, which would probably be a funny thing to tell a 19-year-old Segal as he sat in that police van more than 50 years ago.

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*The Hill Times*



Christopher Deacon, left, and David Cohen.



Marie-Claude Bibeau, left, Cohen, Mary Ng, and Ahmed Hussen.



Kevin Lunianga, left, Jenny Papadakis, Rachel Chertkoff, Deborah Lyons, and Dylan Hanley.



Rhonda Cohen, left, and Ng.



Andrew Davidson, left, Karen Davidson, and Rhonda Cohen.



Cohen, left, Jaime Watt, and Rhonda Cohen.



Bibeau, left, and Cohen.



Cohen, left, and Lorenzo Morandola.



Ng, left, and Cohen.

*The Hill Times* photographs by Stuart Benson



Jerry Tomberlin, left, and Sean Fraser.



Hussen, left, and Catherine Cullen.

# Macklem to deliver speech at Montreal Council on Foreign Relations on Tuesday, Feb. 6



Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem, right, pictured with deputy governor Carolyn Rogers at the House Finance Committee on Feb. 16, 2023, will deliver remarks in English and French at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 11:45 a.m. in Montreal. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## MONDAY, FEB. 5

**House Sitting**—Parliamentarians have returned to Ottawa following six weeks in their constituencies. The House will sit until Friday, Feb. 16. The House is scheduled to sit for a total of 125 days in 2024. It will sit Jan. 29-Feb. 16, and will break for one week (Feb. 19-23). It returns for one week (Feb. 26-March 1) and breaks for two weeks (March 4-15). The House comes back again on March 18 and sits for a week until March 22. It breaks on for two weeks on March 25, and returns again on Monday, April 8, and sits until April 19. It takes a one-week break (April 22-26), returns on April 29, and will sit for two weeks (April 29-May 10). The House returns on Tuesday, May 21 after the Victoria Day holiday, and will sit for five straight weeks until June 21. The House resumes sitting on Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but take Monday, Sept. 30 off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day Week until November 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18-Dec. 17, and that will be it for 2024.

**Alberta Premier to Deliver Remarks**—Alberta Premier Danielle Smith will deliver remarks on “Alberta’s Advantage is also a Canadian Advantage,” a lunch event hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Monday, Feb. 5, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Delta Hotel Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details online: economicclub.ca. Then at 6 p.m. ET, the Canada Strong and Free Network will host a reception for Smith in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Details online: canadastrongandfree.network.

**Minister Duclos to Speak at ‘Better Evidence’ Conference**—Public Services and Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos will deliver remarks at the Better Evidence Conference hosted by Blueprint. Other participants include chief statistician Anil Arora; Dr. Cindy Blackstock, executive director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada; and Tyler Meredith, founding partner at Meredith Boessenkool and the prime minister’s former economic adviser, among others. Monday, Feb. 5, at 9 a.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, Desmarais Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 55 Laurier Ave. E. Details online via Eventbrite.

**Hungarian Ambassador to Deliver Remarks**—Mária Vass-Salazar, Hungary’s ambassador to Canada, will deliver remarks on “Cooperation between Canada and Hungary on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Establishing Diplomatic Relations,” part of Carleton University’s Ambassadors Speaker Series. Monday, Feb. 5, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Westin Hotel, 22nd Floor. Details online: events.carleton.ca.

## TUESDAY, FEB. 6

**Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks**—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver remarks in English and French at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 11:45 a.m. ET at Bonaventure Montréal, 900 de la Gauchetière W., Montreal. Details online: corim.qc.ca.

**PDAC Ottawa Reception**—Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada hosts a celebration Canada’s mineral exploration and mining industry in advance of the 2024 PDAC International Convention, Trade Show, and Investors Exchange taking place March 3-6 in Toronto. The reception will take place Tuesday, Feb. 6, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET, Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. RSVP to rsvp@summa.ca.

**Make Canada Wilder!**—Dr. Clément Lanthier will host a reception for the Wilder Canada Action Plan, the largest co-ordinated biodiversity plan in Canadian history, on Tuesday, Feb. 6, 6-8 p.m., Room 306, Valour Building, 151 Sparks St., Ottawa. Invitation only.

## TUESDAY, FEB. 6—THURSDAY, FEB. 8

**Arctic360 Annual Conference**—Former Conservative leader Erin O’Toole will deliver remarks at the Arctic 360 Conference taking place from Feb. 6-8 on the theme “Prosperity, Community, Security: It’s Time to Meet the Challenge.” Other speakers include Signe Burgstaller, Sweden’s ambassador to Canada; Trine Jøranli Eskedal, Norway’s ambassador to Canada; Hanne Fugl Eskjær, Denmark’s ambassador to Canada; Hlynur Guðjónsson, Iceland’s ambassador to Canada; Jari Vilén, Finland’s ambassador-designate; and Ontario Minister of Northern Development Greg Rickford. Tuesday, Feb. 6, to Thursday, Feb. 8, at The Faculty Club, 41 Willcocks St., Toronto. Details: arctic360.org.

## WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7

**Canada’s Ex-Envoy to Haiti to Deliver Remarks**—Former Canadian ambassador to Haiti Henri-Paul Normandin will take part in a discussion on “Haiti: What’s Next 2024?” hosted by the Canadian International Council. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: thecic.org.

**Lecture: ‘Maritime Monitoring of the Canadian Arctic’**—Carleton University hosts a lecture on “Maritime Monitoring of the Canadian Arctic: R&D Challenges and Opportunities.” Stéphane Blouin, a defence scientist with Defence R&D Canada, will explore R&D efforts that will help enable a sovereign Arctic. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 12:30 p.m. ET at Carleton University, HP 5345 Herzberg Labs, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details online: events.carleton.ca.

**Aerospace on the Hill Reception**—The Aerospace Industries Association of Canada invites parliamentarians and staff for the annual Aerospace on the Hill reception. Wednesday, Feb. 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Room 200. To RSVP, please email communicatons@aiac.ca.

## THURSDAY, FEB. 8

**Summit on Combatting Auto Theft**—A national summit on Combatting Auto Theft will be held in Ottawa, bringing together leaders from key jurisdictions and sectors to ensure a coordinated response to this issue. Contact 343-574-8116.

**Panel: ‘AI Governance: A Board’s Compass’**—Join the Canadian Club of Ottawa for an enlightening exchange of ideas, practical insights, and a collaborative exploration of the path forward in the responsible governance of AI. Together, leading experts will explore key topics such as transparency, accountability, risk management, and the alignment of AI initiatives with organizational values to ensure systems are developed and deployed in a manner that prioritizes ethical considerations and societal well-being. Thursday, Feb. 8, 11:30 a.m. ET at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

**Webinar: ‘Exploring strategies inspired by the Federal Black Class Action Lawsuit’**—Toronto Metropolitan University hosts a webinar, “Black History in the Making: Exploring strategies inspired by the Federal Black Class Action Lawsuit to advance employment

equity.” Nicholas Marcus Thompson, a representative plaintiff in the class action, and Courtney Betty, a Toronto lawyer and legal counsel involved in the class action, will address the ongoing lawsuit seeking long-term solutions to address systemic racism and discrimination in the Public Service of Canada. Thursday, Feb. 8, 12p.m. ET, taking place online: torontomu.ca.

**Liberal MP Chatel hosts Politics 101**—Liberal MP Sophie Chatel hosts “Politics 101,” a competition for people aged 16-35 who are interested in Canadian politics and who want to share their ideas. Thursday, Feb. 8, 6:30p.m. ET, at the Agora, 35 Allée de Hambourg. Details online via Eventbrite.

## THURSDAY, FEB. 8—SATURDAY, FEB. 10

**WUSC International Forum 2024**—WUSC hosts its 13<sup>th</sup> International Forum. Civil society members from the Global South, students and youth leaders, government representatives and private sector, researchers, and international development specialists will take part in discussions on some of the most pressing issues, challenges, and solutions in global development. Thursday, Feb. 8, to Saturday, Feb. 10 at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr. Details online: internationalforum.ca.

## FRIDAY, FEB. 9

**Minister Anand to Deliver Remarks**—Treasury Board President Anita Anand will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Friday, Feb. 9 at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300. Details online: cdhowe.org.

**Huda Mukbil to Deliver Remarks**—As part of its “Canada Talks” lecture series, Carleton University hosts national security expert and author Huda Mukbil who will deliver remarks on “From National Security to Political Candidacy: My Journey and 10 Key Lessons from Running with the New Democratic Party in Ottawa South.” Friday, Feb. 8 at 12:30 p.m. ET at Carleton University, 2017 Duntton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details online: events.carleton.ca/canada-talks.

**Canada’s Envoy to Norway to Deliver Remarks**—Canada’s ambassador to Norway Amy Baker will deliver the Donald Gow Memorial Lecture hosted by Queen’s University. Friday, Feb. 9 at 12 p.m. ET in Room 202, Rob-

ert Sutherland Hall, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ont. Details online.

## MONDAY, FEB. 12

**Auditor General to Table ArriveCAN Audit Report**—Auditor General Karen Hogan will table her performance audit report on ArriveCAN, focussing on whether the Canada Border Services Agency, Public Health Agency of Canada, and Public Services and Procurement Canada managed all aspects of the ArriveCAN application, including procurement and expected deliverables, with due regard for economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Monday, Feb. 12 at 11 a.m. ET in the House of Commons, Parliament Hill. Contact info-media@oag-bvg.gc.ca.

**Webinar with Iceland’s Foreign Minister**—Bjarni Benediktsson, Iceland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, will discuss his country’s foreign policy and external trade in a webinar hosted by the Embassy of Iceland in Ottawa. Monday, Feb. 12 at 11:30 a.m. ET happening online via Eventbrite.

**Manitoba Premier to Deliver Remarks**—Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew will deliver the Kesterton Lecture, titled “Journalism and Politics,” hosted by Carleton University. Monday, Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. ET at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper St. Details online: events.carleton.ca.

## TUESDAY, FEB. 13

**FBC-ABC’s Annual Policy Breakfast**—Food and Beverage Canada invites colleagues involved in agri-food to its annual policy breakfast, “Achieving Agri-Food Workforce Stability by 2030: The Role of Automation and Technology,” held in partnership with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council, and in conjunction with the Future of Food Conference. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7-9:30 a.m. ET at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr. Register here and via Eventbrite.

**USJE Breakfast Panel**—The Union for Safety and Justice Employees hosts “Closing the Gap in Presumptive Injury Coverage for Federal Public Safety Personnel,” a discussion on the mental health struggles faced by front-line public safety workers. A panel of federal public safety personnel will discuss the urgent need to close a gap in presumptive injury coverage for mental health injuries, including proposed changes to the Government Employees Compensation Act. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7:30-9 a.m. in the Valour Building, 151 Sparks St., Room 306. RSVP: kristina@kitpublicaffairs.ca.

**Canadian Vision Day Reception**—Canadian Vision Stakeholders hosts the Canadian Vision Day reception. Representatives from across the country will be in Ottawa to press Parliament to pass C-284, An Act to establish a national strategy for eye care which is currently before the Senate. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 5 p.m. ET in Room 310, Wellington Building. RSVP to Tamara@Sandstonegroup.ca.

## WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14

**Webinar: ‘U.S.-Canada Defence Relations’**—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts a webinar, “U.S.-Canada Defence Relations: Facing Volatile Politics in America” featuring John J. Hamre, president and CEO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 12:30 p.m. ET, taking place online: cdhowe.org.

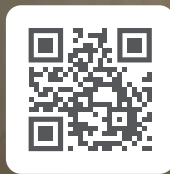
## THURSDAY, FEB. 15

**Breakfast with UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief**—Senator Marilou McPheer and the Baha’i Community of Canada host a breakfast event featuring Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, who will discuss “From Iran to the World: Baha’i Persecution and Trends in Freedom of Religion.” Thursday, Feb. 15, at 7:30 a.m. ET at 151 Sparks St. Details online via Eventbrite.

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