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THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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News

Canadians are 'confused and anxious': COVID-19's third wave making Liberals 'vulnerable,' say pollsters

BY ABBAS RANA

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals are becoming politically "vulnerable" as the country is being hit by a serious third wave of COVID-19 along with the more deadly variants, and Canadians are unhappy and "confused and anxious," while the vaccine rollout continues to be slow and public health guidelines are contradictory in different regions of the country, say some pollsters. "The public aren't happy, they're very confused and anxious," said Ekos Research president Frank Graves, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "They are not impressed with the conflicting guidance about public health, or vaccines. AstraZeneca has caused a lot of hesitancy and confusion. I think everybody seems more or less caught in the bad mood."

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured April 6, 2021, in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. With the COVID-19 variants hitting Canada hard, the PM's Liberals could become politically vulnerable as the electorate is 'unhappy and 'confused,' say pollsters. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

News

'Enough is enough': new group aims to open path for Filipino-Canadian candidates

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

Ignore Filipino-Canadian candidates at your own peril: that's the message a new political action group is sending to federal parties, as jockeying for nomination races for the next election gets underway in earnest.

The Filipino community could be a decisive political force for

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News

MPs call for re-vamp of federal role in long-term care system devastated by COVID-19

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

One week away from one of the most anticipated budgets in recent Canadian history, MPs and advocates are calling for greater federal support for infrastructure

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HEARD ON THE HILL

by Samantha Wright Allen

Renowned Canadian Supreme Court Justice headed to Harvard



Sitting Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella has been named as a three-year visiting professor at Harvard University's law school. Photograph courtesy of Supreme Court of Canada Collection, by photographer Philippe Landreville

Supreme Court Justice **Rosalie Abella** has been named a visiting professor at Harvard Law School for a three-year term. The prestigious university will be in good company with the 2004 high court appointee who in an April 7 announcement was described as "world-renowned" for her decisions and theories on equality, human rights, and constitutional law.

"Justice Abella is a brilliant, principled, and impactful jurist who also has had a storied career of public service off the Court, including her transformative work defining equality rights in employment," said school dean **John F. Manning** of Justice Abella, whose parents were Holocaust survivors.

Early in her 50-year career, she invented the concept of "employment equity," a legal concept to eliminate discriminatory barriers in the workplace that has been used to inform laws and policies in New Zealand, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and the U.S.

Until 2025, she'll be expected to lead workshops, seminars, and reading groups on dealing with comparative law, human rights, and the role of judges in a democracy.

Lametti's 'lucky day': a dose, a diplomat, and bragging rights

Justice Minister **David Lametti** had a little company getting his COVID-19 jab

last week. He ran into Canada's former UN ambassador **Marc-André Blanchard** at the McGill University Health Centre during his April 8 visit to get the AstraZeneca vaccine.



Justice Minister David Lametti sits with UN ambassador Marc-André Blanchard, pictured April 8, 2021, as they await their COVID-19 vaccine in Montreal. Photograph courtesy of Twitter

"Today was my lucky day. Not only did I get to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, but I also ran into Canada's former UN ambassador," said the 59-year-old minister on Twitter.

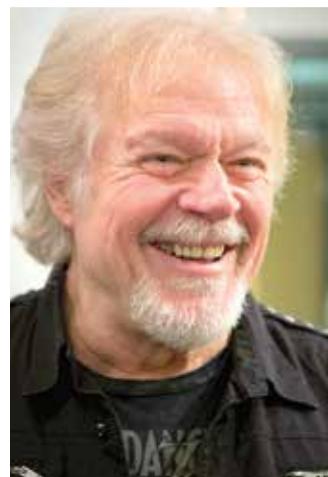
Sporting a sweatshirt, you might not think he was dressed for the occasion. But the Oxford logo is a nod to his alma mater, where researchers produced the two-shot vaccine.

In his post, Mr. Lametti encouraged the public to get vaccinated and said he was glad to get the dose of the vaccine. This version has had a troubled rollout, following reports of rare blood clots and Canada shifting its age recommendations for eligibility, most recently suspending use for people under 55.

Vinyl Tap off CBC air later this year

Vinyl Tap has tapped out. From the CBC Radio ring, at least. Host of the long-running weekend show **Randy Bachman**, who is a wonderful storyteller, says he's shopping around for a new home.

Starting this summer, the two-hour episodes will be on repeat, featuring the selections of the former *The Guess Who* member, reminiscing about his time as



Canadian singer Randy Bachman, pictured at the 2013 Hope Live benefit concert in Ottawa. The Hill Times file photograph by Jake Wright

a rocker between classic rock, jazz, and contemporary pop songs.

"I am dedicated to continuing *Vinyl Tap* elsewhere despite the CBC's cancellation this summer. I love sharing the stories [and] memories that bind us," said Mr. Bachman in a March 27 tweet.

Aired on Saturdays and Sundays, the fixture weekend show has been running since 2005 headed by Mr. Bachman, who also was part of Bachman Turner Overdrive, which released *Takin' Care of Business* in 1973.

The Winnipeg artist told *The Canadian Press* he tried to change the broadcaster's mind about ending the show, even delivering dozens of handwritten letters, emails, and postcards from listeners.

But, that was to no avail. CBC Music's senior director **Steve Jordan** told *The Canadian Press* that it regularly reviews its programming lineup to "make room for new voices and genres" and there will be "more to share" later this year.

Jacques Shore and his late mother Lena Allen-Shore pen children's book, *Sleep, My Baby*

Jacques Shore, a high-powered partner at the law firm Gowling WLG in Ottawa, is also the co-author of a children's book, *Sleep, My Baby*, which he wrote with his late mother, Dr. **Lena Allen-Shore**. The book, published by Simon & Schuster, will be released on April 20.



Jacques Shore, pictured at Bob Rae's book launch in Ottawa in 2014. The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster

Mr. Shore, well-known in Ottawa's federal political circles, is also one of the founders of the Library and Archives Canada Foundation and one of the owners of the Ottawa Titans Baseball Club. He says the book is a lullaby, which his mother sang to him and his brother Michael when they were young. His mother wrote the book and Mr. Shore finished it.



The late Dr. Lena Allen-Shore. Photograph courtesy of Jacques Shore

"It is so beautifully illustrated and perfect for children in a world today where we so desperately need more peace and tranquility each day; especially before sleep. This lullaby reminds us of a mother's most simple message to her child and the moments of comfort that should embrace us at bedtime. The message also conveys that we have a little more love to share with our fellow neighbors as well. Underscored with kindness and compassion, *Sleep, My Baby* draws the reader into an open armed cuddle of love," said Mr. Shore.

A professor and a survivor of the Holocaust, Mr. Shore's mother was also an author, music composer, poet, and an advocate for "building bridges," Mr. Shore said, and she spent her life "spreading themes of understanding and universality."

"I believe this work will be recognized as an important part of my late mother's legacy," said Mr. Shore.

The Breach, new media outlet to launch this spring

There's a new media outlet coming onto the scene called *The Breach* and it's billing itself as "journalism for transformation."

"Canada's establishment media won't tell it like it is—or how it could be. National newspapers are owned by billionaires or U.S. hedge funds, the CBC has become afraid of its own shadow, and social media platforms are swimming in ugly clickbait," reads its website, which promises to launch this spring. "They notably misrepresent our most pressing issues, but they leave people hopeless about ever changing them. *The Breach* is a new media outlet that will do journalism differently, telling stories that help us map a vibrant and just future."

The outlet won't have any ads and won't have a paywall, but will be supported by readers' financial support and subscriptions. The *Breach* Team includes **Naomi Klein**, **Azeezah Kanji**, **Amy Miller**, **Dru Oja Jay**, **Isabel MacDonald**, **Russ Diabo**, **Moirra Peters**, **Linda McQuaig**, **Avi Lews**, **Pamela Palmater**, **El Jones**, **Martin Lukacs**, and **Bianca Mugenyi**.

The Breach promises to offer in-depth investigations, video shows, and explainers and will cover Indigenous issues, white supremacy, foreign policy, state-sponsored Islamophobia, the oil and corporate lobby, police, the military, structural racism, colonial land theft, inequality, and big tech.

Annnd the Canadian Screen Award nominees are in

Hundreds of Canadians who write, produce, and host for film, TV, and digital platforms have been named as finalists for this year's Canadian Screen Awards.

There are 141 categories and there are some notable newsmakers up for the honour of best in their genre this year.

The Best National Reporter nominees are **Christine Birak** and **Chris Brown**, both with CBC News: *The National*, **Avis Favaro**, for CTV: National News with **Lisa LaFlamme** (who is up for a Best News Anchor nod), and **Jeff Semple**, of Global National.



Evan Solomon, left, and his team at CTV Power Play and Vassy Kapelos' CBC Power & Politics crew are both vying for the title of Best Talk Program or Series. Photograph courtesy of Twitter

Politics is also in the mix. The CBC *Power & Politics* **Vassy Kapelos** crew is facing off against CTV's *Power Play*'s **Evan Solomon** et al at a chance to be named Best Talk Program or Series.

CBC Ottawa reporter **Joanne Chianello** is in the running for Best Local Reporter, facing competitors in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

Meanwhile, Canadian darling *Schitt's Creek* continued its final season success, with the most nods—21—for this event. Earlier this month the CBC sitcom took home two Screen Actor Guild Awards for the ensemble's performance during its sixth season, and earlier this year nabbed best comedy series at the Golden Globes. **Catherine O'Hara**, who portrayed matriarch Moira Rose, won acting awards at both shows.

Winners will be announced by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television over a seven-part series for presentations starting May 17 until May 20.

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The Hill Times



Canada should be on the frontlines of developing and manufacturing new vaccines, therapies and other technologies, so we can enjoy those everyday moments.

Prime Minister, we can work with you to build a world-class life sciences sector to make this happen.

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU FROM CANADA'S LIFE SCIENCES, RESEARCH AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

A year ago, Canadians could not have anticipated how a new coronavirus would so profoundly change and disrupt their lives or harm them or their loved ones.

But even before the pandemic was declared and the first COVID-19 restrictions came in mid-March 2020, scientists were working on vaccines and treatments. Some Canadian innovators had already started developing them and contributing to the global effort. That's how the world got the first COVID-19 vaccines in record time before the end of the year. They promise to be our ticket back to health, socializing with family and friends and economic recovery.

These vaccines are flagships of an exciting new era of medical innovation. We are mining genetic secrets to discover not just how to stop viruses but also to create new therapies and vaccines for some of our most intractable illnesses such as cancer, cystic fibrosis and Alzheimer's disease among many others.

Canada can and must be a leader in this new era.

Prime Minister, we can work together – our companies, your government and the provinces, Canada's researchers and health institutions, and the patient community – to

ensure the life sciences ecosystem we built in Canada over the past 30 years can grow and be put to work even more effectively for the benefit of Canadians and our economy.

To succeed, we need to do both more and less.

More collaboration to solve for the pandemic today and future health challenges.

Less uncertain and complex regulations that are blocking our ability to move at the speed of science.

We can achieve this with a coherent life sciences strategy.

Now, more than ever, we need public and private sector leaders to continue to work together to address these issues and other serious challenges.

We applaud your government's initiatives on biomanufacturing, but more needs to be done to create a competitive commercial environment for the full life cycle of health technologies: from labs to the frontlines of healthcare.

Building together a world-class life sciences sector will enhance Canada's resilience in the face of challenges and ultimately help ensure our health and economic security.

We are asking you to join us to make this a lasting positive legacy of COVID-19. Sincerely, Canada's life sciences, research and business communities.

Anie Perrault
Executive Director
BioQuébec

Bob McLay
Chair
The Canadian Forum for
Rare Disease Innovators (RAREi)

Brian Lewis
President & CEO
Medtech Canada

Carl Viel
President & CEO
Québec International

Charles Milliard
President & CEO
Fédération des chambres
de commerce du Québec

David Wojcik
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Mississauga Board of Trade

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Innovative Medicines Canada

Perrin Beatty
President & CEO
Canadian Chamber
of Commerce

Richard Fajzel
Chair
Canadian Health
Research Forum

Robb Stoddard
President & CEO
BioAlberta

Rocco Rossi
President & CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

Rory Francis
CEO
Prince Edward Island
BioAlliance

Scott Moffitt
Executive Director
BioNova

Wendy Hurlburt
President & CEO
LifeSciences BC

Meaghan Seagrave
Executive Director
BioNB

News

Thirteen suburban ridings will be key battlegrounds in next election, say former Liberal MPs and pollsters

If an election were held today, the Liberals would win most of the 13 suburban ridings decided by the closest margins in the last election, say pollsters.

BY ABBAS RANA

The 13 suburban ridings that were decided with the closest margin in 2019 will be the battleground ridings in the next election, and winning them all could deliver the Liberals a majority government, say former Liberal MPs who are running in the next election and pollsters.

"In terms of the Liberals being able to form government, they are very important," said former B.C. Liberal MP Gordie Hogg, who was elected in a 2017 byelection in the B.C. riding of South Surrey-White Rock, but lost to Conservative MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay in the 2019.

Mr. Hogg, who lost the last election by a margin of 4.5 per cent of the votes, told *The Hill Times* that he's recently been officially nominated again to carry the party's banner in the next election. He said that he's started to hold strategy meetings with his riding association, and is optimistic that he will win this riding back. Mr. Hogg described his riding and the 12 other suburban ridings that Liberals lost in 2019 as target ridings for his party and opposition parties that will play an important role in the outcome of the next election.

"All parties always look at close losses and close wins as areas that they have to focus on, concentrate on those," said Mr. Hogg. "Those are the ones that they would naturally see, and I know that Conservatives have done the same thing."

In 2015, the Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) Liberals won a majority government with 184 seats, but they were reduced to a minority in 2019—13 seats short of a majority government.

To win a majority in the 338-member House, a party needs 170 seats. The Liberals need to add 13 seats while keeping the ones they have to get another majority. In 2019, they won 157 seats,

the Conservatives 121, the Bloc 32 seats, the NDP 24 and the Greens three seats.

In the last election, 13 suburban ridings were decided with a close margin of seven per cent or less. The Trudeau Liberals won 10 of these 13 ridings in the 2015 election but lost all of them in 2019. Of the 13, five each are located in Quebec and British Columbia, two in Ontario, and one in Manitoba. The Conservatives picked up eight of those 13 ridings and the Bloc Québécois five.

The riding of Port Moody-Coquitlam was decided by the closest margin. Conservative MP Nelly Shin won by 153 votes, getting 31.2 per cent of the vote, while the second place NDP candidate, Bonita Zarrillo, got 30.9 per cent, and the third place Liberal candidate, Sara Badieli, won 29.1 per cent.

The riding of Montarville, Que. was decided by a margin of 7.3 per cent of the vote, when Bloc MP unseated then-incumbent Liberal MP Michel Picard.

Generally, downtown ridings of major urban centres like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver are seen as part of the Liberal base, while rural ridings are considered to be part of the Conservative base. The suburban ridings historically have been seen more centre-right on the political spectrum, but that has started to change over the years, as more left-of-centre millennials have migrated to suburban areas.

"Younger people are moving out there, they tend to be more progressive, or centre-left at least," said Earl Washburn, senior analyst for Ekos Research. "The suburbs are changing and they're making them more Liberal friendly. So, for the Liberals, that's where their primary areas are to pick up seats to in order to get a majority."

Suburban ridings are often considered to be swing ridings where political parties focus their attention. Pollsters and the media pay close attention to suburbs to determine which way the political winds are blowing.

"Those are where the swing voters are," said Mr. Washburn. "Those are the people who are most likely to swing one way or the other, either a Conservative or a Liberal. That's how elections have been fought in the last few elections in Canada, and they've been fought over the suburban ridings."

Former Liberal MP Dan Ruimy, who won the riding of Pitt



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pictured at the Jan. 23, 2020 caucus meeting in Ottawa. The Liberal Party could win a majority government in the next election if they win 13 suburban ridings decided by the closest margins in 2019. The Liberals won 10 of these 13 ridings in the 2015 election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Meadows-Maple Ridge in 2015, but lost to Conservative MP Marc Dalton in 2019, said that controversies such as the SNC-Lavalin and brownface/blackface played an important role in his electoral loss last time. The Green Party's vote also doubled in 2019 compared to the 2015 election, which became the deciding factor in 2019 in his riding, he said.

Mr. Ruimy lost by 3,525 votes, a 6.5 per cent margin. As of last week, Mr. Ruimy was undergoing the party's vetting process and had not been nominated as the official candidate. He said that since the last election he's stayed in touch with people in the riding and has been providing feedback to his former Liberal colleagues in Ottawa about what people think about the government's performance. Mr. Ruimy said that his party is targeting this riding for the next election and will be the one to watch next time around.

"I've always thought this was a battleground riding," said Mr. Ruimy.

"If the Green Party didn't double their vote counts, where would those votes have gone? So, I don't like to call it vote splitting, because I don't believe in vote splitting. But, like I said, 62 per cent of this riding want progressive ideas moving forward. So that's the opportunity there for us in this riding."

In 2019, Mr. Dalton won 36.2 per cent of the votes, Mr. Ruimy 29.7 per cent, the NDP candidate John Mogk won 23.9 per cent, and Green Party candidate Ariane Jasschke carried eight per cent.

The Liberals have a comfortable lead in national public opinion polls, at least in part because of what Canadians see as an effective handling of the pandemic. It's expected the governing party could now pick up most of the 13 ridings that were decided by the closest margins in 2019, pollsters said.

However, it's not known when the next election will happen, what will be the key issues at that time, and what quality of candidates the parties will field in those ridings.

"There's a lot of dynamics at play," said Mr. Washburn. "But if [the] election were today, the Liberals would have a good chance of winning most of those ridings."

The 13 Closest Suburban Ridings That Can Win a Majority for Liberals

MP Name	Riding Name	Vote Margin	Percentage Margin
Conservative MP Leona Alleslev	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Ont.	1,060	2%
Conservative MP Nelly Shin	Port Moody-Coquitlam, B.C.	153	.3%
Conservative MP Tamara Jansen	Cloverdale-Langley City, B.C.	1,394	2.5%
Conservative MP David Sweet	Flamborough-Glanbrook, Ont.	1,652	2.6%
Bloc MP Denis Trudel	Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Que.	2,590	4.3%
Bloc MP Luc Desilets	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Que.	2,620	4.5%
Conservative MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay	South Surrey-White Rock, B.C.	2,618	4.5%
Bloc MP Alain Therrien	La Prairie, Que.	3,203	5.2%
Conservative MP Marty Morantz	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Man.	2,417	5.2%
Bloc MP Louise Chabot	Thérèse-De Blainville, Que.	3,498	6%
Conservative MP Marc Dalton	Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge, B.C.	3,525	6.5%
Conservative MP Kenny Chiu	Steveston-Richmond East, B.C.	2,747	6.5%
Bloc MP Stéphane Bergeron	Montarville, Que.	4,305	7.3%

Table courtesy of Earl Washburn, Ekos Research

Since the start of the pandemic in Canada early last year, COVID-19 has been the top of mind issue for all Canadians. During this time, the Trudeau Liberals have mostly enjoyed a double-digit lead over their rival opposition parties in opinion polls. There have been a couple of occasions where the governing party's popularity has significantly declined, including when the WE Charity scandal broke last summer, and when the supply of COVID-19 vaccines was interrupted early this year. However, the Liberal Party's polling numbers recovered on each occasion.

Last week, however, a poll by Ekos Research suggested that the Liberals' popularity had started to decline again, as a third wave of the pandemic has hit Canada hard.

The poll suggested that the Liberals and the Conservatives were tied with 32 per cent and 30.4 per cent support, respectively. The NDP was at 16.3 per cent, and the Greens at 8.3 per cent. The poll of 1,734 Canadians was conducted from April 1-6 and had a margin of error of 2.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Frank Graves, CEO of Ekos Research, told *The Hill Times* that the Liberal numbers have gone down as people are unhappy for the continuously slow rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, and the inconsistent public health guidelines in different regions of the country. He said that they are frustrated with hundreds of contradictory stories about the efficacy of AstraZeneca CO-

VID-19 vaccine and its possible link to a rare type of blood clot called vaccine-induced prothrombotic immune thrombocytopenia (VIPIT), which is having a serious impact on vaccine hesitancy in Canada. He said that people want one clear and firm approach across the country on how to fight the pandemic.

To make matters more complicated for the Liberals, *The Globe and Mail* reported on April 9 that the Commissioner of Canada Elections is investigating whether WE Charity undertook any political activity that gave any advantage to the Liberals Party in violation of election laws. The House of Commons Ethics Committee has already been conducting its own investigation into the WE Charity scandal.

Pollster Greg Lyle of Innovative Research agreed that winning the 13 suburban ridings that were decided by close margins last time will help the Liberals win a majority. But, he added that the governing party could lose some seats that they won in 2019, so they have to look elsewhere to make up the difference.

"If the election were today, the Tories would be losing seats, particularly in Ontario, and maybe in B.C. and maybe in the Atlantic, but the election isn't today," said Mr. Lyle, president of the Innovative Research Group. "So in addition to the 13 or so seats they need to win from where they stand today, they'll also need to make up for any losses."

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Years later, still looking for clarity on Correctional Service Canada's prison farm plans

But with unsettling evidence now leaking into the public domain, CSC is doubling down on its efforts to control public perceptions and the fifth estate, disparaging any reporting not grounded in CSC's own propaganda as being 'not grounded in fact.'



Calvin Neufeld

Opinion

Re: "Clarity needed on prison farm program, says CSC," (*The Hill Times*, March 17). When it comes to the Correc-

tional Service Canada's new prison farm program, I couldn't agree more on this point: clarity is precisely what's needed. It's what our advocacy group, Evolve Our Prison Farms, has been seeking for years. CSC's letter argues that the claims in Helen Forsey's article ("Scandal brewing over feds' prison farm plan," March 8) are "not grounded in fact." In fact, I have in my possession the evidence that proves Forsey right, and CSC wrong.

I have spent the past five years investigating every aspect of the new (and still unfolding) prison farm program. Since 2018, I have filed 63 access-to-information requests and received thousands of pages of documents which, despite redactions, provide the very facts that CSC continues to deny.

CSC denies that "plans were already established for a large goat dairy program." The documents I have obtained, such as CSC's "Nutrient Management Strategy: Corcan Farms (fall 2018-fall 2023)," provide precise details of a plan very much established for a large goat dairy operation. Number of goats: 2,200. Size of milking barn: 44,000 square feet. Housing conditions: confinement. Size of manure lagoon: 14 feet deep, 120 feet in diameter. Five-year material production of solid waste: 495,803 cubic feet. That's just for the goats.

For the 90 dairy cows, CSC will construct a separate milking barn to produce milk purely for research quota (non-

consumption). This will add a 16,200 square foot facility generating an additional 194,665 cubic feet of solid waste and 222,399 cubic feet of liquid waste. There is also the volume of milking centre washwater (202,686 cubic feet from the cows, 241,032 cubic feet from the goats), which "is exposed to high concentrations of chlorinated alkaline solutions, acidified waters and heavy detergents that can harm the environment." The documents further note that "bacteria in the milk can transmit disease," yet the distance from surrounding wells and waterways is calculated in metres.

Does CSC really expect readers to believe that its plans for a large goat dairy operation are not established, or that the development of this program was done "with primary consideration given to the benefits for participants"? The only beneficiaries of the prison industrial goat farm are industry stakeholders, and as Forsey points out, the addition of cows is mere window-dressing. The recent academic report, "Canada's Proposed Prison Farm Program: Why It Won't Work and What Would Work Better," by professors Amy Fitzgerald and Amanda Wilson, shows that CSC's current prison farm plan will not benefit prisoners, staff, or local communities. Quite the contrary.

At a loss for any real defence, CSC resorts to pointing out that they have not yet procured any goats, but this is not for lack of trying. CSC issued two public

requests for proposals in 2018 and 2019, available for viewing on buyandsell.gc.ca, for the first 800 female dairy goat kids. Internal documents reveal that both procurement attempts failed for multiple reasons, including farmers' assertions that the conditions—such as minimum delivery of 200 kids per contract—were impossible to meet. That didn't stop CSC from purchasing a bulk dairy cooler with a capacity to store a maximum daily production of 9,000 litres of goats' milk, which, according to Ontario Goat, would require some 3,200 goats in active milking (not counting "dry" does and kids). CSC's ambitions for their prison industrial goat farm are detailed, established, and ambitious indeed.

In light of the facts, it is audacious and ironic for CSC to issue a call for "clarity" (now that the manure is hitting the fan) when Evolve Our Prison Farms has spent years painstakingly seeking the truth and extracting the evidence from underneath CSC's "heap of verbiage extolling the benefits of the prison farms," as Forsey put it.

With unsettling evidence now leaking into the public domain, CSC is doubling down on its efforts to control public perceptions and the fifth estate, disparaging any reporting not grounded in CSC's own propaganda as being "not grounded in fact."

Calvin Neufeld, who is based in Perth, Ont., is the founder of Evolve Our Prison Farms. www.evolveourprisonfarms.ca
The Hill Times

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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News



Celina Caesar-Chavannes was appointed as the prime minister's parliamentary secretary in December 2015. When she left the role in January 2017, it remained unfilled, until the March 19 announcement that Quebec MP Greg Fergus would take on the role, a move she says 'seems like one more window-dressing piece.' Photograph courtesy of Celina Caesar-Chavannes

"It's just a continuation of a pattern of behaviour. So why does the prime minister need a parliamentary secretary right now, as we're about to roll out into possibly another election season. Do you need a literal Black face to go across the country for you?"

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, Mr. Fergus said, "It is with great enthusiasm and a profound sense of duty that I have accepted the role of parliamentary secretary to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau. In my new capacity, I will continue to pursue the aims of making our public service even more diverse and effective, as well as a Canada wherein diversity is a guiding light for our country and a reality at all levels within government."

In her new memoir *Can You Hear Me Now?: How I Found My Voice and Learned to Live with Passion and Purpose*, Ms. Caesar-Chavannes details a less-than-rewarding experience as the prime minister's parliamentary secretary.

Unlike her counterparts Adam

up on her French in case she was called on in Question Period, like her colleagues (which she never was), and ultimately drafting up a framework in which she offered to engage in community outreach as well as liaise with backbench MPs and other parliamentary secretaries who were coming to her "to ask how to do their jobs," thinking as the PM's delegate, she may have some insight.

She describes the parliamentary secretary system as uneven, pointing to success stories like the match-up of former finance minister Bill Morneau and his then-parliamentary secretary François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champplain, Que.). "That was brilliant, I studied that. That should be an exercise in how to do parliamentary secretaries," she said, calling the pair "two sides of the same coin" in their working relationship.

Meanwhile, others were "useless," she said. "It's only useful if your minister has the self-awareness enough to not be threatened by another successful person being their parliamentary secretary,

Feds brushing 'crumbs' to Black Canadians, says former Liberal MP Caesar-Chavannes

In appointing her successor as parliamentary secretary, Celina Caesar-Chavannes says the prime minister is continuing a 'pattern of behaviour.'

BY CHARELLE EVELYN

When former Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes heard the news that the prime minister had a new parliamentary

secretary, it was "a little bit of a gut punch."

Parliamentary secretary appointments and shuffles are typically a fairly mundane exercise, and this one was no exception. With a pair of Liberal MPs—Kate Young (London West, Ont.) and Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Ont.)—announcing they would not be running in the next general election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) shuffled the team of MPs who assist cabinet ministers to fill the roles the outgoing caucus members occupied on March 19.

But amongst those tweaks was the addition of MP Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.) as parliamentary secretary to the prime minister, a role in which Ms. Caesar-Chavannes started on

Dec. 3, 2015, and had gone, until now, unfilled since her exit from the position a little more than a year later.

Mr. Fergus, already the parliamentary secretary to the digital government minister and Treasury Board president, adds the role to his responsibilities that also include chairing the Parliamentary Black Caucus.

In the wake of a country-wide reckoning on systemic racism, particularly anti-Black racism, that flared in the wake of the May 25, 2020, killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by police in Minneapolis, Minn., and calls for action by the government, something about last month's appointment seemed "performative," Ms. Caesar-Chavannes told *The Hill Times*.



Liberal MP Greg Fergus, chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus, was named as the prime minister's parliamentary secretary on March 19. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Vaughan (Spadina-Fort York, Ont.) and Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, Que.), who were appointed to assist on the prime minister's self-delegated portfolios of intergovernmental affairs and youth, respectively, in those early years, Ms. Caesar-Chavannes says she wasn't given anything to do.

"If I have been appointed as your parliamentary secretary to fill some gender or racial gap you have in your government, I do not want the job," she says she told the PM during their first meeting about the appointment. He assured her that wasn't the case and asked if she trusted his judgement. She told him no.

"I thought, as the first parliamentary secretary to this PM, he needed me to tell him the truth, to be his eyes and ears when things were going awry, and this was something I had heard other Liberals say," she writes, adding that it appeared to have been the wrong thing to say.

Ms. Caesar-Chavannes says in the book, which was published, on Feb. 2, she made multiple attempts over the months to turn the title into a real role, taking every meeting and attending every event she was invited to, brushing

because they're ultimately thinking, 'Oh this person's gunning for my job.'

The framework she put together was never approved by the PMO and she continued to struggle with a lack of direction and communication from the top office about what was expected of her. Before she was shuffled to the international development portfolio Jan. 28, 2017, she was asked to attend only two events on the prime minister's behalf—the September 2016 opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and the early January 2017 inauguration of the Republic of Ghana's new president.

Ms. Caesar-Chavannes said she wants to see what Mr. Fergus—who she says once told her that she was the "Malcolm to his Martin"—does with the role.

"I don't know what the angle is on the government side. It just seems really performative to me. It just seems like one more window dressing piece that I don't know if it's going to be substantive."

Continued on page 20

Addressing mental health will require fresh resolve

Our collective success will depend on having partners across every sector, in every jurisdiction, working hand-in-glove, as we continue to leverage resources and expertise to create improved mental health outcomes.



Michel Rodrigue

Opinion

Responding to the physical threat of COVID-19 is proving to be no easy feat. From procuring vaccines to booking portals and creating pop-up vaccination sites, it's a monumental task demanding that all levels of government act in a spirit of cooperation. Like everyone across Canada, I am watching this incredible effort take

shape with the hope that it will mean winning the race against the spread of new variants.

Still, as I assume the helm at the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), I can't help but think about our preparations for the nation's next great challenge: mustering our resolve to address the mental health implications of the pandemic, which will linger long after we've rolled up our sleeves for the vaccine.

While we should always seek to intervene early to ensure the best possible mental health outcomes, we cannot turn a blind eye to the upcoming post-pandemic fallout. It will likely be complex and multi-layered and affect different populations in distinct ways.

Women, for instance, have borne the brunt of job losses and have carried the heavier burden of child care. Among mothers who remain employed during the pandemic, one third have thought about leaving their jobs. The mental health impacts of these setbacks are as real as the financial losses they bring. To use one example, we know from a joint MHCC survey, conducted in collaboration with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), that just 28 per cent of women in households with children under 13 reported excellent or very good mental health during the pandemic, compared to 45 per cent among men. Before COVID-19, women were already two-and-a-half times more likely than men to experience depression and one-and-a-half times more likely to experience anxiety.

The weight of the pandemic has also disproportionately fallen on the shoulders

of racialized populations, who were more likely to contract the virus—for the same socio-economic reasons that create barriers to sufficient mental health care. In one study, 37.5 per cent of African, Caribbean, and Black respondents reported COVID-19-related financial insecurity.

Lower paying front-line jobs and lack of paid sick time aren't just precursors of greater susceptibility to the virus. They also tilt the playing field when it comes to mental wellness. And they are compounded by the justifiable mistrust of the health and mental health systems that translate into social barriers to seeking care that are very real—if invisible.

The explosion in e-mental health care—like the federal government's groundbreaking Wellness Together Canada portal—can bridge many important gaps, but this way forward on its own will inevitably leave many behind.

As someone who has been separated from close, elderly loved ones throughout the pandemic, I am keenly aware that staying connected virtually has its limits, and I recognize that some of those same challenges apply to virtual mental health care. While statistics may tell us that seniors “on the whole” are reporting reasonably good levels of mental health, they paint a distressingly incomplete picture—ignoring the deep pockets of need in long-term care and the profoundly worsening isolation experienced by seniors living with dementia.

But perhaps we can have the greatest ability to effect positive change, and bend the cost curve down across the lifespan, by addressing the mental health challenges faced by young people—whose very lives

were put on hold at a critical stage of their development. Impaired social interactions, reduced access to schooling, lack of activities and routines, and the grief of losses big and small, may leave an indelible impression on young lives. This is also borne out in our survey with CCSA, in which half of youth aged 16-24 describe their mental health as hovering at the low end of the scale.

Now is the time to ensure that we have the right kinds of supports for young people, when and where they need them. Endeavours like the post-secondary standard for psychological health and safety—which helps institutes of higher learning to co-create healthier campuses—are a huge step in the right direction, but there is much work to be done to meet the growing need of all our youth.

Now, more than ever, addressing mental health is a top priority for people in Canada, and leaders are being called upon to ensure the best possible care is available when and where it's needed most.

That's why the MHCC is working across many fronts to address some of these urgent needs. But our collective success will depend on having partners across every sector, in every jurisdiction, working hand-in-glove, as we continue to leverage resources and expertise to create improved mental health outcomes.

How we address these challenges may be worthy of debate. That we must do so should not be in question.

Michel Rodrigue is president and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The Hill Times

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Editorial

Lick is right: drop political posturing, pay attention to the victims, and fix sexual misconduct crisis in Canada's military

Gregory Lick, the federal military ombudsman, delivered a powerful message to MPs on the House Defence Committee last week as they continued their study of who in the current Liberal government knew what, and when, about the allegations of sexual misconduct against former chief of defence staff General Jonathan Vance. He asked them to remember the victims of sexual misconduct, and to drop the political posturing.

"I will make the observation that we are watching the issue of sexual misconduct in the military unfold in the media and in committee testimony with more concern over political and institutional posturing than with fixing the problem," Mr. Lick said. "And yet, the issue continues to play out in the real lives of survivors and witnesses who find themselves falling between the cracks of a broken system and fearful of coming forward because of possible reprisal or career-ending moves.

"This issue has played out so far with conflicting and sometimes incorrect information. Testimony has changed about who knew what when, who had authority to act, what should have been done and who is accountable," he said. "I say enough. Enough of the self-protectionism and deflecting. Enough political foot-dragging."

He's right. It's vitally important that there be due process and that the truth is told. It's even more important that the military and political leaders finally do

the right thing and clean up the sexual misconduct crisis in Canada's military.

Since Feb. 21, when Maj. Kellie Brennan told Global News that she had a longtime and inappropriate sexual relationship with Gen. Vance, other women have come forward publicly. Admiral Art McDonald, the man who replaced Gen. Vance as chief of the defence staff, had to step aside on Feb. 24 and is also under investigation for sexual misconduct. Admiral McDonald was replaced by acting Chief of Defence Staff Lt.-Gen. Wayne Eyre. Vice Admiral Haydn Edmundson, commander of Military Personnel Command in Ottawa, has also stepped aside amid a military police investigation over allegations of sexual assault, according to CBC and the *Ottawa Citizen*. He denies the allegations. Lt.-Col. Eleanor Taylor, who was in uniform for 25 years, recently quit the Canadian Armed Forces, saying she was "sickened" by the military leadership's response to the current investigations into top military commanders.

This is not a new crisis, it's been going on for at least three decades, but it's time to put an end to it. It will take strong and coordinated political, government, and military leadership to get rid of it. The military has to be re-conceived. It has to be more diverse and inclusive. Lt.-Gen. Eyre says he's working on developing a plan that will focus on culture change. Inappropriate sexual behaviour in Canada's military should be eliminated and this should now be a top priority.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Don't call or force a federal election, work together for the people, says London reader

As a concerned citizen, I am writing because it is ethically and fiscally wrong to call for an early election. In the middle of the pandemic, with a deficit of \$381-billion and growing, an election is the last thing we need now. I checked Elections Canada's website to see what an election might cost.

The 2011 election cost \$290-million, the 2015 election cost \$443-million (a 53 per cent increase due partly to the longer campaign time and increased voting mechanisms), and the 2019 election cost in excess of \$509-million (Elections Canada only had 95 per cent of estimated incurred costs as of July 2020). How much more will the next election cost us, especially in the midst of the pandemic, with all the required COVID-19 mitigation protocols that will be needed? Where would that money be better spent—on vaccines, helping people who have been laid-off or whose jobs or businesses have completely disappeared, mental health, reforming long term care, safe housing and water for Indigenous people, protecting the environment, or supporting the rebuilding of the economy? The list is long.

The Canadian electorate is smart enough to see what their elected officials are doing. And it is time that the electorate stands up and says, "enough." For too long, a majority of our elected representatives have been concerned only with being re-elected, their generous pensions and power.

I call on all Canadians to stand up and say, "enough" to join me in demanding that the current Parliament complete its mandate to govern in the best interests of Canada and all Canadians. To this end I call on all Canadians to add their names to this letter and send it the prime minister with a copy to their Member of Parliament as well as all of their contacts who might be like-minded. And if an early election is called, I call on every Canadian to rise up and refuse to vote for any candidate or party that voted "yes" for an early election call. Elizabeth May wrote that "politics is not a spectator sport." I call on all Canadians to get involved, to stand up and say "enough."

Inge Stahl
 London, Ont.

Reforms needed at Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, say activists

Canada's nuclear regulatory agency, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission says it's the "World's best nuclear regulator" on its website. That "self-image" of the CNSC's is inconsistent with statements made in recent years by international peer reviewers, high-ranking Canadian officials, international nuclear proponents and others.

The International Atomic Energy Agency recently reviewed Canada's nuclear safety framework. It identified numerous serious deficiencies including: not following IAEA guidance on nuclear reactor decommissioning, failure to justify practices involving radiation sources, inadequate management systems for transporting nuclear materials and allowing pregnant nuclear workers four times higher radiation exposures than IAEA would permit.

In testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee, in November 2016, Canada's environment commissioner said: "the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission... was quite difficult to work with... I would say that the commission was aggressive with the auditors."

In April 2017, an expert panel on reform of environmental assessment, in its final report noted that it had heard many concerns about lack of independence at the CNSC.

The nuclear industry publication, Nuclear Energy Insider, recently touted Canada's "benign regulatory environment" as a reason for SMR developers to come to Canada to experiment with and promote "small," "modular," nuclear reactors. A *Globe*

and *Mail* article in November 2018, revealed that CNSC officials had engaged in backroom lobbying to exempt small modular nuclear reactors from environmental assessment. A June 2020 briefing session for MPs and media by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and other NGOs, outlined several ways in which the CNSC was creating "pseudo regulations" to benefit the nuclear industry and allow cheap and ineffective nuclear waste facilities to receive approval and licensing.

A recent petition to the auditor general from our respective public interest citizens' groups and Quebec colleagues, entitled "Nuclear governance problems in Canada," noted that the CNSC has a mandate to protect health but lacks a health department. A review of CNSC's organizational chart reveals that the word health does not appear on it.

We believe the CNSC is in need of serious reform if Canadians want it to become a world-class nuclear regulator that prioritizes the health of Canadians and the environment over the health of the nuclear industry. The Government of Canada should address regulatory capture and other serious problems at the CNSC as soon as possible.

Lynn Jones
 Concerned Citizens of Renfrew
 County and Area
 Ottawa, Ont.,
 Anne Lindsey
 Concerned Citizens of Manitoba
 Winnipeg, Man.



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Rainmaker made it rain, Trudeau's got to keep loyal Liberals loyal

It would be dangerous for Liberals to skew their campaign to millennial voters. That cohort was a winner in 2015, delivering a solid majority to the Liberals. But it is not likely to be as effective this time around.



Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner

Liberal Rainmaker Keith Davey led the party to multiple successful elections.

Such was the Senator's electoral prowess that he is widely credited with the Liberals becoming the "natural governing party" in the last century.

Last weekend's Liberal convention reflected Davey's rule.

He always said that the key to Liberal success was campaigning from the left and governing from the right.

The party secured the best policies for a socially progressive country while remaining fiscally prudent, so as not to scare the business community.

But this century is turning politics on its head.

In an effort to guide Canada through the pandemic, the government is spending as widely and rapidly as possible.

So, when it comes to a pre-election message, the party will have to prove that it can also be fiscally prudent.

So do not expect a blanket endorsement of a guaranteed annual income, even though this has been on the agenda of many progressives for decades.

Instead, there will be a resolution to cost the plan, and incorporate the views of provincial and Indigenous governments before anything specific moves forward on the national level.

Such a resolution will give some comfort to Bay Street, which is already making noises about excessive Liberal spending. And main street will be reassured in knowing that national income support will be available at least through the pandemic.

The convention will also embrace near unanimity on a resolution calling for the implementation of national standards for long-term care residences across the country.

There was a time when such a resolution would have meant political death in Quebec.

And everyone knows that it is near impossible to secure a majority government without substantial support in La Belle province.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Quebec Premier François Legault have been making multiple joint announcements in recent time, so they will probably organize an opt-out clause to handle the claim of federal interference in provincial health matters.

But at the end of the day, the death rate in Quebec cannot be ignored and simply assuming that more of the same will be a solution does not make sense.

The sturm and drang of a convention will allow all sides to

air their perspectives but, in the end, the party will come out united behind a policy that will ensure a national strategy for long-term care and no national consensus on the Guaranteed Annual Income.

Party organizers have been very pleased with the participation level at the convention, with more than 4,000 registrants, of whom 60 per cent are new members.

New members are good news, but the party also has to be concerned about the ongoing support of long-time, loyal Liberals.

I was chatting last week with a former cabinet minister, who was a very active political organizer in the past, and he is sitting the next election out.

In his words, the party seems a lot more interested in recruitment than in involving those who have been around for a long time.

That could spell trouble, because in most elections where the Liberals lose, their loyal voters don't necessarily change sides. They just don't bother to vote.

Pollsters have recently identified that the party is either behind or in a toss-up in 13 ridings which they need to form a majority government.

Most of those ridings are rural, with a population that is

not likely as mobile so long-term, loyal voters are important to the victory.

New political participants are important for energy and excitement. The young generation is most likely made up of urban participants who will not carry the day in the case of a tight election.

It would be dangerous for Liberals to skew their campaign to millennial voters.

That cohort was a winner in 2015, delivering a solid majority to the Liberals. But it is not likely to be as effective this time around.

The longer any party has been in government, the harder it is to keep everyone happy.

Marijuana legalization is a distant memory, and that policy will not persuade those new voters to support the Liberals again.

Instead, the party will depend on older people to carry tight ridings in rural areas.

Seniors are usually most likely to vote in large numbers, but the pandemic has altered everyone's habits.

Trudeau's covid hotels have also cost support among snowbirds who represent up to 500,000 voters.

Hopes for majority could depend on whether the Trudeau glow is losing lustre with loyal Liberals.

The convention could kickstart that renewal—or not.

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

Political 'hired guns' like to keep policies simple

This is why election campaigns are the way they are, i.e., often devoid of any 'important' policy debates. For political strategists, that's not a bug, it's a feature.



Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit

OKAVILLE, ONT.—With a federal election looming, strategists from all the major political parties are currently trying to figure out which policies their leaders should promote.

And when I say that, I don't mean they're researching which policies are best for the economy or best for the environment or best fighting for COVID; what I mean is they're asking them-

selves one simple question: what policies would help us win an election?

That's their litmus test for what makes "good" policy.

Yes, I know that sounds jaded and cynical, but keep in mind, strategists are not policy wonks, they're political warriors who want to get their leader elected.

What's more, this "winning is everything" attitude is even stronger in freelance professional consultants, whom political parties often hire to help them design a winning campaign message.

Remember, these "hired guns" are judged and evaluated on their won-lost record.

My point is political consultants and party strategists are heavily incentivized to push for a policy formula that first and foremost will work electorally.

So, what makes for a politically effective policy?

Well, first off strategists want a policy that's easy to understand and that can be communicated quickly and concisely: "Tax the Rich," "Cut Government Waste," "Help the Middle Class."

We saw such a concise policy in the 2006 federal election, when the Conservatives pledged to slash the GST.

In other words, party strategists will usually want to avoid policy ideas that have lots of details or moving parts, since, from their point of view, a complicated



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured March 30, 2021, on the Hill, basically won the 2015 federal election, based on his winning, rock-star, personality. His policies went largely unnoticed, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

policy proposal risks alienating voters.

The classic example of this was the Liberal Party's complex "Green Shift" policy plan that was pushed in the 2008 federal election. Nobody really understood it, and the Conservatives easily branded it as a "tax on everything."

Mind you, truth be told, strategists would be happy if they could run a campaign without promoting any sort of major policy initiatives; they'd much rather focus on the sizzle instead of the steak.

And yes, this is possible.

For instance, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau basically won the

2015 federal election, based on his winning, rock-star, personality.

His policies went largely unnoticed.

At any rate, you can see how this perspective of a party strategist will often clash with views of a party's ideologues.

After all, for most ideologues, ideas are everything.

Thus, I'm guessing there's something of a schism right now between the NDP's strategists and the NDP's rank-and-file, who at their recent online convention were pushing for policy resolutions that included, nationalizing "big oil," removing all statues of

John A. Macdonald and even phasing out the Canadian military.

If the party's strategists have anything to say about it, none of these controversial and potentially unpopular policies will wind up getting much play.

Maybe this is why some deeply ideological parties are against the idea of taking on a political consultant. Recall the controversy that erupted within the Green Party a few years ago after it hired noted political brawler Warren Kinsella.

Of course, political strategists aren't always right and ideologues aren't always wrong.

Consider, for example, the 2016 Republican presidential primary, where Donald Trump enthusiastically embraced the ideas and values of the party's right-wing populists and then proceeded to crush his rivals along with their high-priced political consultants.

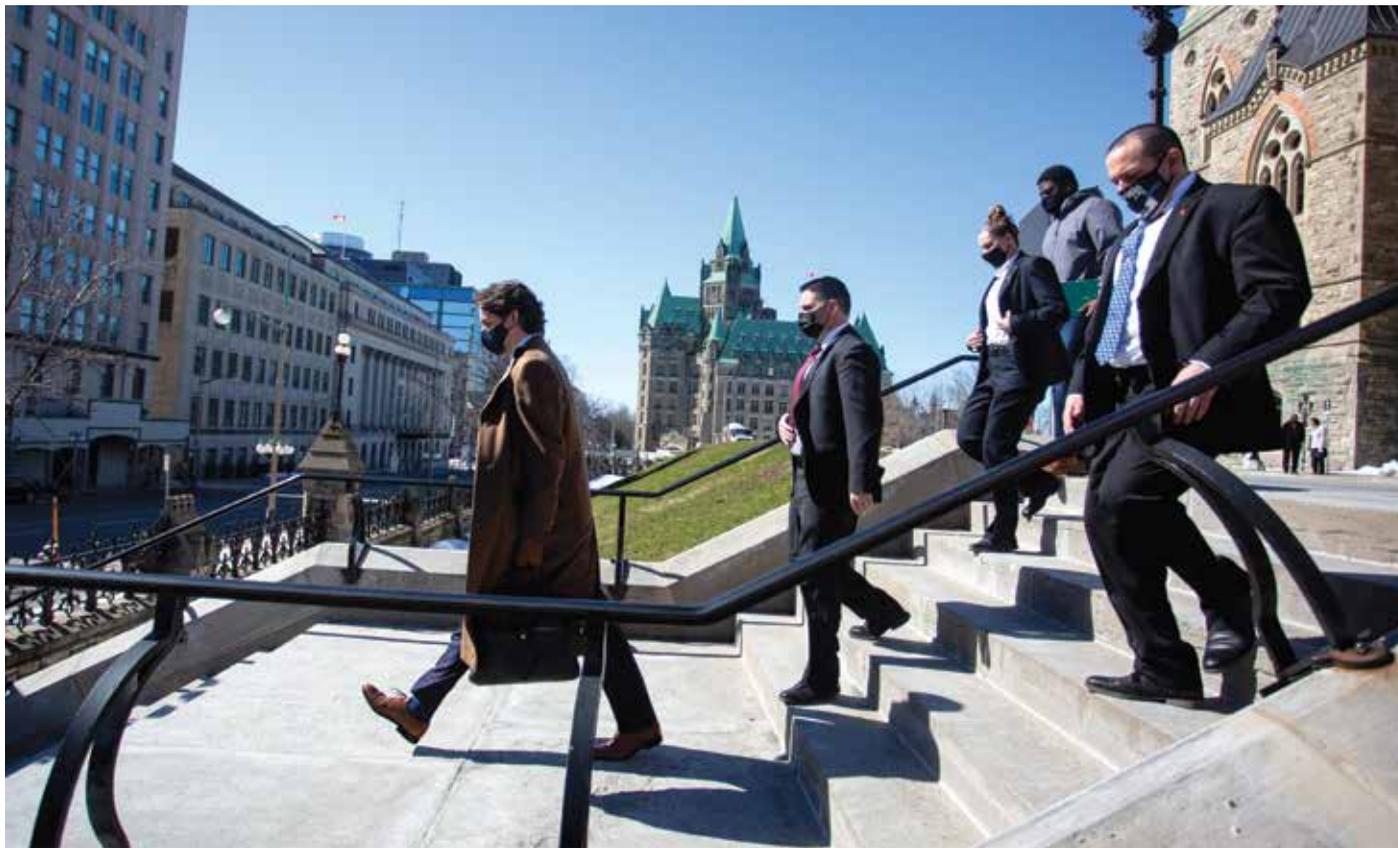
Yet, at the end of the day, party leaders will typically follow the advice of their strategists, who can prove their case with polling data and market research.

This is why election campaigns are the way they are, i.e., often devoid of any "important" policy debates.

For political strategists, that's not a bug, it's a feature.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.
The Hill Times

Opinion



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured recently on the Hill. It would be a grave mistake for the Trudeau government to use the current weakness in the opposition to indulge in the fantasy that because you have power now, you will always have it. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Most dangerous time for a government is when opposition is weak

That is how the stars have currently aligned for the Trudeau government. The Liberals would be wise not to view this as unmitigated good luck.



Michael Harris

Harris

HALIFAX—The most dangerous time for a government is not struggling to preserve itself in a minority situation.

In fact, minority governments often produce the best results. After all, compromise and cooperation are not optional, the way they are when one party has a majority. Democracy is better

served when every Member of Parliament has some degree of influence over legislation.

The most dangerous time for a government, whether majority or minority, is when the opposition is weak or in disarray. That is how the stars have currently aligned for the Trudeau government. The Liberals would be wise not to view this as unmitigated good luck.

It would be easy for the government to swagger a little more than usual these days. Their polls suggest that they are majority bound. Nor do they face a government-in-waiting in the CPC, but a party in free fall.

After choosing the wrong leader, many Conservatives are not following Erin O'Toole. His "big tent" is mostly empty. Instead, the man who wants to grow the base by moving to the centre is the victim of a whisper campaign, in which people are laying odds on how long he can survive in his post. One Conservative columnist recently opined that it was time to beg Stephen Harper to come out of retirement. Thankfully, the political bat mobile doesn't run in reverse. The one notable exception to that rule is Richard Nixon and that didn't turn out very well.

The lesson for O'Toole? You don't edit the Conservative bible without consequences. And philosophical changelings like O'Toole

have the added problem of credibility. As much as he tries to talk away his past voting record in the Harper government, the more he falls victim to one of the fundamental axioms of politics; when you're explaining, you're losing.

Though it has an articulate and capable leader, the NDP's poll numbers are mired at about 17 per cent of decided voters. The problem isn't Jagmeet Singh. He scores high in leadership qualities.

The main problem is that the NDP has been pushed from its natural political real estate by the gifted elbows of the Grits. It is hard to portray the NDP as the party that will spend more on social programs, when Justin Trudeau is already spending the numbers off the national credit card.

When the best you can do by way of criticism of a government is that you would spend more, or would have spent it sooner, it hardly galvanizes many voters. That is especially true when people are already beginning to worry about the massive scale of Liberal spending.

Once the new budget finally comes out, after a two-year drumroll, the Liberals may carry political plagiarism of NDP policy all the way to larceny. There have already been broad hints from finance minister Chrystia Freeland

that the Liberals plan to do a lot more social spending, including finally doing something about some form of national childcare plan. In that scenario, the NDP would be reduced to the role of parliamentary helper, rather than a viable alternative to the Liberals.

And even the Green Party, that bastion of principle and integrity in the wasteland of politics as usual, has hit political white water. Published accounts claim that the Greens are being torn apart by a conflict between its new leader, Annamie Paul, and the party's national council.

Former leader Elizabeth May has been slandered as the divider behind the party's alleged troubles. How ugly have things gotten? There have been published reports that the first Black woman to lead a national party in Canada is the victim of racism. May told *The Hill Times* that there is absolutely no racism in the party, and no conflict between the new leader and the National Council. She also emphasized that Paul has her absolute support.

With every opposition party having problems of its own, the Liberals seem to be on political easy street. Not to say that the problems they are grappling with aren't immense. They are, and will be, for some time. But no one on the opposition side is present-

ing as an alternative to Justin Trudeau. And that is the danger. As one Senator put it to *The Hill Times*, "In the end, the Liberals always take themselves down with the same thing. Arrogance. The notion that they can do anything and pull it off."

You don't have to go further than Jean Chrétien to prove the Senator's point. The little guy from Shawinigan had a love affair going with the Canadian people. In 1993, he took down the Mulroney Conservatives and won a majority government. He scored two more majority governments in 1997 and 2000. It looked like he and the Liberal Party could go on governing forever.

And then the arrogance kicked in. At first, no one cared much that Chrétien faced weak opposition from regional parties during his winning streak, the Bloc Québécois, and the Reform Party. But towards the end of Chrétien's tenure, bad things started happening. A split in the party became embarrassingly obvious between the PM's supporters and the supporters of Paul Martin. At times, it was vicious.

And then the grand-daddy of scandals came down on Chrétien's watch—the ad sponsorship fiasco. It was bad enough that the Liberals were caught funnelling cash to their pals through crown corporations. Against the advice of his then clerk of the privy council, Chrétien assumed personal control of the ad-sponsorship program. The hot mess was all his, and he left office under that cloud. Most recently, Chrétien's name was linked by Radio-Canada's Enquete to a secretive international group planning to use Newfoundland and Labrador as a dump site for nuclear waste from other countries.

Justin Trudeau's government has more than once ventured down the slippery paths of arrogance. The WE Charity scandal; the summary dismissal of two cabinet ministers who were later vindicated by Canada's ethics commissioner; and the withholding of documents from a parliamentary committee with every right to see them unredacted.

It is also a form of arrogance to believe you can say one thing, and do another. It was arrogant to take that trip to the Aga Khan's private island. It was arrogant to go from the pinnacles of Paris Accord rhetoric on fighting climate change, to the valley of non-performance on key environmental issues.

Several reports paint Canada as an environmental laggard compared to other countries in the OECD. The country still has Stephen Harper's emission targets and it still subsidizes the oil patch—despite the promises to do otherwise. And 61 Indigenous communities in Canada are still boiling their water.

It would be a grave mistake for the Trudeau government to use the current weakness in the opposition to indulge in the fantasy that because you have power now, you will always have it.

The great Romantic Shelley once wrote a poem that the PM and all his cabinet ministers should read. It is called *Ozymandias*.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist. The Hill Times

Opinion

This just in: IMF advocates for more active government in post-pandemic world

The global agency, once noted for its dogmatic—and at times destructive, unbridled free-market ideology, is now an advocate of more active government and is making clear the connections between social policy, economic policy, and environmental policy for our post-pandemic world.



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, pictured Nov. 23, 2020, on the Hill. In preparing her first budget, she would be well-served by reading the latest advice coming out of the International Monetary Fund, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century

TORONTO—Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, in preparing her first budget, would be well-served by reading the latest advice coming out of the International Monetary Fund. The global agency, once noted for its dogmatic—and at times destructive—unbridled free market ideology, is now an advocate of more active government and is making clear the connections between social policy, economic policy, and environmental policy for our post-pandemic world.

So climate change, deep-rooted inequality, and early childhood development are now among the IMF's concerns—they all influence economic, social, and environmental progress. "Returns to investment in early childhood development are especially large," the IMF argues. In fact, as the IMF notes, there is growing public emphasis on social inclusion as a key part of fiscal policy.

Perhaps this is because since 2011, the IMF, global agency most responsible for guiding the world economy, has been run by women, first Christine Lagarde, who now heads the European Central Bank, and now Kristalina Georgieva. The new head of the World Trade Organization is also a woman. And Freeland is our first female finance minister. Times are changing and so are our values as we shift from shareholder capitalism to stakeholder capitalism and from excessive individualism to community.

In its current advice to governments, the IMF sets out a useful framework for finance ministers planning for the post-pandemic world, with three priorities:

First, address the inequality that is likely to result from the pandemic by expanding social safety nets and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to health care, early childhood development and education.

Second, support productivity through policies to facilitate job mobility, including training, and to promote competition and innovation and raise the potential growth rate of the economy.

Third, boost public infrastructure investment specially in green infrastructure.

The risk that the post-pandemic world will see even greater inequality between those at the top and the rest of society is a major concern for the IMF since growing inequality can threaten social cohesion, political divisiveness and is a drag on the potential of the economy. Low-income Canadians have been the hardest hit by the pandemic and can face major difficulties in advancing in the post-pandemic world.

In its call for the need to address post-pandemic inequality, the IMF argues that "governments need to provide everyone with a fair shot—enabling all individuals to reach their potential—and to strengthen vulnerable households' resilience, preserving social stability and, in turn, macroeconomic stability." As it stresses, the pandemic has exposed the failures of modern society and highlighted the need for change.

Strengthening access to health care and investing in early childhood development are important ways to help build a more inclusive society, as is a better understanding of the social determinants of health. So is helping people get back to work, through what are known as active labour market policies, by finding new jobs, through hiring subsidies, improved training, public works jobs, and better job search programs.

Boosting productivity is also essential, since this is the key to generating future wealth and jobs and our ability to pay for the public goods we want. As the IMF economists point out, recessions delay new business investment in technology and in research and development, weakening future productivity growth. But Canada's future depends on increased innovation and the growth of Canadian companies with proprietary technology. So that has to be part of the budget.

The post-pandemic recovery also provides an opportunity to sustain economic growth and job creation through major investments in infrastructure, including infrastructure that facilitates the transition to a green economy. This would also contribute to the urgent need to move to a net-zero carbon emissions economy.

But the IMF also makes clear that governments will have to consider tax increases as we move out of the pandemic. This would not only help bring down deficits and debt. Governments will also need fiscal room to spend more to deal with inequality, to foster growth and to achieve climate change commitments.

It points to the need for more progressive taxation, a review of tax deductions that mainly favour the wealthy, a review of inheritance and capital gains taxes, greater efforts to curb the use of tax havens and a global minimum tax on corporations. The IMF is a strong proponent of carbon taxes which it says are a key tool to achieve lower greenhouse gas emissions. But while it recognizes some countries—Norway, France, Spain, and Switzerland—have wealth taxes it says more study is needed. In the meantime, it says, government should look to closing tax loopholes.

But the IMF also recognizes that while the huge budget deficits that governments have run to avert a repeat of a 1930s-style Great Depression has been money well spent, tax increases will be needed so that future generations are not saddled with repaying resulting debt. One possibility, it says, is a temporary COVID-19 recovery tax as a supplement to personal income tax rates, as well as on "excess" profits earned by companies that prospered as a result of the pandemic.

Canada has some experience with a personal tax surcharge. In the early 1980s the federal government introduced two deficit reduction surtaxes—one of three per cent which applied to all taxpayers and another, of five per cent, which applied to taxpayers with incomes of \$65,000 or more. In the early 1990s, the three per cent surtax was eliminated while the five per cent surtax was retained. In Budget 2000, the surtax was eliminated for those with incomes below \$85,000 and completely eliminated by 2004 after the deficit had been eliminated.

So that's the fiscal bottom line for Freeland. More spending to address inequality and create opportunity for the less-advantaged, to boost productivity and wealth creation and to invest in much-needed infrastructure and the green economy—but also the honesty to acknowledge that we will need to raise taxes as we progress out of the pandemic. The IMF provides validation for all of this.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.

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Brian Gallant, Sandra Pupatello & JP Gladu
Co-Chairs

Global

Another Nobel Peace Prize winner goes rogue



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 2019, waited the statutory two years before launching his genocidal war in Tigray last November. Photograph courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

Can I defend Abiy Ahmed too? I understand how difficult his situation was, and all the other separatist pressures in Ethiopia, and the fact that he started out as a child soldier, but no, I can't. Message to the Nobel Peace Prize committee. Next time, wait a little longer.



Gwynne Dyer
Global Affairs

LONDON, U.K.—Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 2019, waited the statutory two years before launching his genocidal war in Tigray last November. ‘Statutory’ is the right word. U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger, who won the Peace Prize in 1973 for ending the Vietnam War, even admitted that he only wanted a ‘decent interval’ of two years after the U.S. withdrawal before North Vietnam conquered South Vietnam—which it did in 1975.

Whereas Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader who won the prize in 1991, waited almost 20 years before defending the genocide against the Rohingya committed by the government she nominally led before the International Court of Justice.

They should all remember Groucho Marx’s rule: “I refuse to join a club that would have me as a member.” The Peace Prize Club has some very dodgy members, so I went back and looked at what I wrote when these luminaries first won their prizes. (I’ve been in this game for a long time.) It turns out that I sort of defended all of them.

Henry Kissinger wasn’t trying to win a prize. He knew the United States had lost the war in Vietnam and he wanted to get out, but he needed to disguise

the defeat in order to bring the more ignorant nationalists in Congress and the country along with his policy. So he signed a ‘peace treaty’ that neither he nor his North Vietnamese counterpart expected to last.

Cynical realpolitik, if you like, but they were actually trying to minimize the killing, knowing full well that there was more yet to come. That’s the defence that I also offered for Aung San Suu Kyi. She couldn’t stop the army from massacring the Rohingyas,

and she defended its actions internationally because she thought that might stop it from seizing power again.

If that was her motive, she failed: look at the bloodbath in Burma now. Was that really her motive? It’s impossible to tell, because she has repeated the military’s racist lies about the Rohingya with more enthusiasm than was strictly necessary just to placate the generals. But you can see both her and Kissinger as intelligent people trying to choose the lesser evil.



Henry Kissinger, left, wasn’t trying to win a prize. Aung San Suu Kyi waited almost 20 years before defending the genocide against the Rohingya. As with the preposterous Peace Prize for Barack Obama only 10 months after he took office in 2009, the selection committee just jumped too soon, writes Gwynne Dyer. Photographs courtesy of Commons Wikimedia and The Hill Times files

This defence is not available to Abiy Ahmed, who got the Peace Prize just 17 months after ending the ‘frozen conflict’ with Eritrea and 19 months after taking power in Ethiopia. As with the preposterous Peace Prize for Barack Obama only 10 months after he took office in 2009, the selection committee just jumped too soon.

At least Obama did not start a war, whereas in retrospect it seems likely that Abiy Ahmed signed a peace treaty to end the 20-years-dormant military confrontation with Eritrea because he saw it as a likely ally in the war he already foresaw with his own erstwhile allies in Tigray. (Tigray is an Ethiopian province that shares a border with Eritrea.)

The war was almost inevitable, because Abiy’s rise to power marked the end of a 27-year period when members of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated Ethiopia. (Abiy belongs to one of the countries two biggest ethnic groups, the Oromo.)

Tigrayans are only six per cent of Ethiopia’s 100 million people, but their fighters outnumbered everybody else in the guerilla army that finally overthrew the Derg dictatorship, so they just naturally slid into the seats of power in 1991—and stayed there semi-permanently.

Every other ethnic group was seeking a way to oust the TPLF without a civil war, and Abiy seemed a good choice because he had fought alongside Tigrayan rebels from the age of fourteen and spoke fluent Tigrinya. But that wasn’t enough to reconcile Tigrayans to their loss of power, of course, and Abiy and the TPLF both knew it would probably end in war.

Which it has, and the Eritrean army joined Abiy’s Ethiopian federal troops in invading Tigray. The TPLF’s regular forces were defeated in a few weeks, and the years-long, maybe even decades-long war against Tigrayan guerilla resistance has begun. So have the mass murders, the mass rapes, the looting and random destruction that are the hallmarks of ethnic wars.

Now the first videos are appearing, of Ethiopian troops shooting unarmed young Tigrayan men and kicking their bodies over a cliff. (Why do they always make these videos? Are they proud of it?) By the end of this year, we will be probably be officially calling it a genocide, but that won’t stop it. Nothing will, for a long time.

And can I defend Abiy Ahmed too? I understand how difficult his situation was, and all the other separatist pressures in Ethiopia, and the fact that he started out as a child soldier, but no, I can’t.

Message to the Nobel Peace Prize committee. Next time, wait a little longer.

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)’.
The Hill Times

Indigenous partnerships key to conservation goals and sustainable prosperity

When the COVID-19 pandemic starts to recede, the existential threats of climate change and loss of biodiversity will continue to mount.



Valérie Courtois

Opinion

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on local and regional economies across the country, and this latest spike in COVID cases will create more uncertainty. But as we had into spring, it is time to plant the seeds for regrowth and recovery. The next few months will be decisive. Even as we focus on jumpstarts for struggling sectors, we must also invest in solutions that flourish year after year and generation after generation.

We need to take the long view on prosperity now more than ever, because when the COVID-19 pandemic starts to recede, the existential threats of climate change and loss of biodiversity will continue to mount. And the impacts of these challenges—from intense wildfires to health impacts—pose significant risks to our nation and our economy.

Now is the time for bold action.

On April 19, the federal government will issue the first budget in two years. This is a pivotal moment: an opportunity to spur economic growth today and lay the groundwork for a better future. Canada has vowed to protect 30 per cent of lands and oceans by 2030 and slash carbon emissions. It has also pledged to foster equity and sustainable development.

Indigenous nations stand ready to partner on these goals. We are honouring our responsibility for the land in ways that are good for people and the economy. With

added investment, Indigenous nations can help Canada emerge from the pandemic as a leader in economic recovery, conservation, and climate action.

This approach is already thriving in Indigenous nations across the country.

More than 25 Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) are in development and dozens more have been proposed. These areas will ensure healthy lands that sustain caribou, salmon, and clean water and store massive amounts of carbon in soils and wetlands. More than 70 Indigenous Guardians Programs operate across the country. These teams of trained experts use Indigenous and western science to monitor water quality, address climate impacts, and support informed decision-making.

IPCAs and Guardians Programs form a keystone of economic sustainability across the North. They create good-paying jobs and a diversity of opportunities. Northwest of Yellowknife, for instance, the K'asho Got'me hired guardians to partner with federal and territorial scientists on wildlife research last winter. And in northern B.C., the Kaska Dena Council is working with a dozen guide outfitters—including Kaska-owned companies—on plans for operating in the proposed Dene K'eh Kus n Indigenous Protected Area and attracting millions of dollars in tourist business.

They also provide certainty for industry. When Indigenous nations determine areas they want to protect, they also identify places where development can be considered. And having guardians on the ground creates the conditions for informed consent. The largest nickel mine in the world—Voisey's Bay in Labrador—advanced in part when Innu Nation Guardians became independent, onsite monitors.

Their success is gaining recognition. At their first official meeting last month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Joe Biden singled out the leadership of Indigenous nations and “agreed to be partners in protecting nature, including by supporting Indigenous-led conservation efforts.” And they acknowledged the importance of working with Indigenous peoples “in advancing climate solutions and protecting nature.”

Meanwhile, a growing number of corporate leaders within Canada have highlighted the role and importance of Indigenous-led conservation. More than 50,000 people have joined the Land Needs Guardians campaign to call for sustained



At their first official meeting, held virtually Feb. 23, 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Joe Biden singled out the leadership of Indigenous nations and 'agreed to be partners in protecting nature, including by supporting Indigenous-led conservation efforts.' Official White House Photo by Adam Schultz



Dehcho Guardians working on wildlife trails in Edehzhie. More than 70 Indigenous Guardians Programs operate across the country. These teams of trained experts use Indigenous and western science to monitor water quality, address climate impacts, and support informed decision-making. Photograph courtesy of Indigenous Leadership Initiative

investment in Guardians Programs. And scientists have confirmed that IPCAs offer the most ambitious proposals for achieving Canada's conservation targets.

The opportunity is clear. As it maps out a post-pandemic path, Canada can generate sustainable prosperity by partnering Indigenous nations. IPCAs and guardians will create economic opportunities that endure

and help ensure our grandchildren live in a world rich with wild animals, birds, and fish. They are a gift to the world. And now is the time to respect and honour this gift.

Valérie Courtois is the director of the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and a member of the Innu community of Mash-teuiatsh.

The Hill Times

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Opinion

CRA approach for policing faith smacks of Islamophobia and should alarm everyone

It's time for the CRA to better define its mandate and guidelines for charities and acknowledge that it is not within its purview to be auditing the religious beliefs and practices of Canadians.



Mohammed Iqbal Alnadvi

Opinion

For years, Muslim charities have raised concerns of intrusive audits. As more charities have come forward about this issue to the Canadian Council of Imams (CCI), it has become apparent that a disproportionate selection of Muslim organizations

is being targeted by a specific division in the CRA. Suspicions of bureaucratic discrimination and Islamophobia have been confirmed in a recent report by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS) at the University of Toronto.

The report exposes the CRA's pattern of using seemingly benign tax audits to shut down charities, apparently in judgment of what is an acceptable form of practising one's faith. An important question arises from the whole debacle: why is the CRA policing faith at all?

Yes, it is also true that charitable organizations in Canada must follow a set of rules in order to operate and that there are specific allowable activities for charities to engage in. However, when it comes to Muslim organizations the CRA has gone beyond that public interest mandate, and has done so by relying on very problematic approaches to support their revocation of charities.

In Canada, one of the four mandated categories a charity can fit into is the "advancement of religion." This means that teaching religious tenets, doctrines, practices, and culture associated with a specific religious way of life is a legitimate charitable endeavour. Whether operating through synagogues, churches, guadaras, mosques, or

other places of worship, faith-based charities are an important segment of Canada's charity sector.

In the aftermath of 9/11, multiple security agencies viewed the Muslim community and its organizations purely through a security lens, ignoring the essential work they do and their place within Canada's social fabric. It is important to note that Canada's Muslim community has been singled out in this respect and the findings of the report expose that bias. The result has been a directive within the CRA's Review and Analysis Division (RAD) that puts Muslim charities chronically under suspicion and assumes them to be ever-susceptible to allegations of terrorism and extremism. This is textbook Islamophobia.

In the process of their audits, the CRA launches questionable investigations which include looking into social media accounts, lectures, and other media of speakers and volunteers associated with those charities. They have also used "sources" to support their revocations which are produced, edited, and altered about Muslims by far-right hate platforms.

In the case of their revocation of Ottawa's As-Salam Mosque's charity status in 2018, the CRA relied on a video edited by a British neo-Nazi group to misrepresent the words and even prayers of Imam

Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick. An independent investigation by The Star has since determined that intentional mistranslations of this prayer have been used by far-right groups to discredit Canadian imams. The CRA further accused Imam Said Ragheeh for having "anti-Western attitudes" because of sermons he delivered to Muslim audiences which included questions about basic Islamic practices such as avoiding alcohol or gambling.

Would it be acceptable for the CRA to criticize a Catholic Church's recommendations to sacrifice something for Lent? Or a synagogue's celebration of Passover by abstaining from leavened bread? These are common faith positions for people practicing these religions which a government agency has no business or jurisdiction debating.

The CRA refers to their practice as a "public benefit test," but it is essentially subjecting Islam in particular to a quasi-values test that undermines the Canadian value we can all agree on despite our differences—a value enshrined in our Charter: freedom of religion.

Canadians of all stripes and faiths should be alarmed by these revelations. These findings raise the question of how equipped a taxation agency is in wading through the complexities of religious tenets and practices. CRA auditors are

simply not religious experts and should not be in the practice of critiquing religious tenets with zero contextual understanding and questionable research methods.

There are more than 80,000 registered charities in this country. Muslim charities in particular have been some of the top contributors to Canadian society in past years, making the top 25 charities list in the country. When the charity sector is dominated by religious organizations, this kind of policing threatens everyone and especially the very valuable work these charities are doing. It wastes time, taxpayer money, and it unfairly puts on trial upstanding individuals who are doing everything they can to give back to the communities they serve.

NCCM has called for the suspension of RAD pending a government review. It's time for the CRA to better define its mandate and guidelines for charities and acknowledge that it is not within its purview to be auditing the religious beliefs and practices of Canadians.

Dr. Mohammed Iqbal Alnadvi is the chairman of the Canadian Council of Imams and one of the leading Islamic scholars in Canada. He serves as religious counsel to the Canadian Muslim Chaplain Organization and the chair of the Islamic Finance Advisory Board.
The Hill Times

How to address the housing shortage

Canadians are moving out of cities, out of province and into smaller and more remote communities. They are taking their jobs with them and need reliable high-speed internet to remain there, long term.



Michael Bourque

Opinion

There is a shortage of housing in Canada. This has contributed to soaring prices, multiple offers and disheartened consumers in real estate markets from Maple Ridge to Moncton. Our most recent forecast,

which we believe is conservative, predicts an average price increase of 9.1 per cent for 2021, based on continued tight supply and strong demand for housing.

Like politics, real estate markets are local. The supply and demand dynamics are unique to each area, but housing shortages are universal. In fact, very few jurisdictions in the world have tackled this problem successfully. Many are trying, including the U.K., where a federal government white paper released in 2020 titled "Planning for the future" acknowledged that persisting undersupply is resulting in increasingly expensive housing, underlying their goal of completely revamping their planning processes.

Our supply shortage has created an urgent situation impacting the most vulnerable in our society, renters, new immigrants, and aspiring home buyers across the price spectrum. There are too many Canadians, including families, who are homeless or living in inadequate housing. Millennials, young families, and new Canadians need more housing choice, not further restrictions on financing or new taxes. The focus should be on reducing the significant impediments to timely, affordable and sustainable home building.

Governments in Canada have already spent billions of dollars dealing with the pandemic and some will argue that new invest-

ments are not affordable. Heading into a spring budget and a vigorous debate about policy options, we are proposing a new approach that will spur development of all housing types. This approach takes a long view of the work that needs to be done, so that any investments, public policy or action is sustainable, laying a foundation for more efficient processes going forward.

For too long, municipal leaders have been incentivized to block new residential housing projects, infill housing or higher density developments such as high rises. They have put into place a variety of barriers including by-laws, taxes, fees, review committees and other impediments that grind progress to a halt. The simple reason for this is nimbyism. "Support new development in my neighborhood and I'm voting you out".

The resulting supply shortage has become a national problem. Predictably, there are now calls to add more regulatory barriers at a federal level to curb demand. This includes the latest idea to reduce the capital gains exemption on primary residences. But this would only exacerbate the situation by creating a disincentive to move, which would further reduce housing supply while decreasing household wealth. Curbing demand has proven to be ineffective, but there are actions

the federal government can take.

The federal government already spends some \$15-billion per year on infrastructure, often in response to applications from municipalities. However, there are few conditions attached to those investments when it comes to housing. It's not enough to simply invest in infrastructure. Impediments such as red tape, taxes, charges and nimbyism are deeply entrenched obstacles. Federal funds must come with incentives or conditions to make them effective in addressing housing shortages and affordability. In exchange for the city offering up land, permitting improvements, rezoning to enable more housing, or a combination thereof, the federal government would invest into the infrastructure needed to build housing units including telecommunications, roads, sewers and water. The result is new housing and better processes for approving and building homes as well as new infrastructure that is needed to improve business productivity more broadly.

We also have a productivity challenge. There have only been 1.1 million housing completions since 2015, which falls far short of Statistics Canada's estimated population growth of 2.4 million over the same period. The federal government should prioritize R&D into residential construction productivity and innovation. Homes should be built

like automobiles, not constructed like cabins. Canadian builders are building at a furious pace, as evidenced by housing starts, sales of lumber and other materials. However, many residential building sites still use traditional construction materials and methods. We can help them build faster, more affordably and more efficiently.

Another tactic is the redevelopment of existing assets, including office buildings, hotels and storefronts. There are significant opportunities to create new housing in downtown neighborhoods that were once unaffordable. Previously inaccessible areas would provide many Canadians with greater resources and opportunities to be involved in society, a pillar of CMHC's Social Inclusion Index.

Finally, we cannot ignore that Canadians are moving out of cities, out of province and into smaller and more remote communities. They are taking their jobs with them and need reliable high-speed internet to remain there long-term. Telecommunications investments, such as those announced in the Ontario budget, will help with housing affordability.

This new approach would be a significant driver of economic growth. It would also address the long-term balance between housing supply and demand, while tackling urgent social and human needs across the housing spectrum.

Michael Bourque is the CEO of the Canadian Real Estate Association.

The Hill Times

The return of industrial policy



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured March 3, 2021, in Ottawa. There is no reason Canada cannot be a winner in this new global business context provided we aim purposely for the podium, write Kevin Lynch and Paul Deegan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The new industrial policy going forward should be focused on creating technology advantages, building pools of incredibly talented scientists, technicians and workers, and setting up regulatory regimes that encourages innovation, experimentation, and flexibility.



Kevin Lynch & Paul Deegan

Opinion

An unintended consequence of populism and geopolitics is the return of industrial policy in most Western countries. Whether it is populist “Buy America” policies creating protectionist trade walls, or expanding tech export and investment restrictions as the United States and China compete

for dominance in key technologies, or the lack of resiliency in global supply chains exposed by COVID-19 generating pressures to re-shore in strategic sectors, or the pivot towards engineering greener economies in response to climate change, governments everywhere are once again getting more involved in the business of business.

Industrial policy in our competitors has gone through many challenging iterations over the years, and smart trade policy and strong Canadian government and industry collaboration have been the hallmarks of our successful responses. As a mid-size economy, Canada has always needed access to larger markets for our goods, and this usually has come with some form of trade reciprocity. As we have painfully learned, access alone has never been enough—we have to be competitive in our costs, offer a compelling product and have the protections of a rules-based trading system. The history of the Canadian auto industry is a clear case in point.

The first Canadian automobile was built by Henry Seth Taylor back in 1867. By the early 1900s, the Ford Motor Company and McLaughlin Buick, which was later acquired by General Motors, began large scale production near Windsor and Oshawa, and Canada was soon the second largest auto producer in the world. But wars, protectionism, a limited Canadian market and industrial policies in other countries meant that, by the early 1960s, the Canadian auto industry was in crisis.

In typically Canadian fashion, a Royal Commission on the Automotive Industry was established

and it recommended a seminal modification to long standing Canadian content provisions of domestic sales to include a credit for exports, thereby opening up the possibility of duty-free exchange. This was quickly followed by the 1965 Canada-U.S. Auto Pact, a truly transformational trade agreement that removed auto tariffs between our two countries and resulted in bigger, more efficient Canadian plants, more employment in our auto sector at higher wages, and lower prices for Canadian consumers.

But other countries wanted a larger share of this growing global car market and put in place aggressive industrial policies to stimulate their auto sectors, particularly Japan and Germany. Imports flooded into Canada and, by the early 1980s, Ed Lumley, Canada’s international trade minister, wanted the Japanese government to agree to voluntary quotas on auto exports to Canada. When the diplomacy failed, Lumley got tough using ‘border actions’ to slow Japanese auto imports, and eventually Japan not only agreed to quotas but also a plan to increase the Canadian content of the Japanese products. Japanese production plants in Canada followed.

Lumley’s vision was not a world of quotas but a bold leap to free trade. By the mid 1980s, after another royal commission, the new government of prime minister Brian Mulroney shared that vision and entered into negotiations with president Ronald Reagan for a Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. With the ink on the FTA barely dry, Mulroney pursued a broader North American arrangement, NAFTA, which

was ratified by prime minister Jean Chrétien and president Bill Clinton. Free trade in autos in 1965 had paved the way for comprehensive free trade across North America by 1994.

Besides a supportive trade regime, the auto sector has benefited when leaders such as Maureen Kempston Darkes of GM Canada, Yves Landry of Chrysler Canada, and Ken Harrigan of Ford Canada worked with Canadian governments to strengthen the Canadian auto advantage and then pushed inside their global companies for a greater share of investment in Canadian plants. Entrepreneurial leadership at auto parts firms like Magna and Linamar deepened the scale and scope of the auto sector in Canada. And governments, both federal and provincial, have been supportive, particularly when various American states offered incentives to attract auto facilities from other locations including Canada.

The last decade has been one of challenge for the Canadian auto industry. The bankruptcy of GM and Chrysler during the global financial crisis of 2008-09 necessitated large-scale government intervention by American and Canadian governments to prevent the collapse of the industry and its massive supply base. The Trump administration pursued an America-first strategy, and encouraged U.S. industry to do likewise, regardless of trade agreements. Foreign competition surged, including new players from South Korea and China. The digital technology revolution shifted competitive advantage in the auto sector from hardware and assembly to software and programming. And, public concerns about climate

change led to demand shifts toward electric vehicles, which Canada did not produce. The Canadian auto sector was rocked by this tsunami of change.

The response is to adapt and innovate, as the Canadian auto sector has done for over a century. Canada has a highly skilled and flexible workforce, great depths of technology strengths in advanced materials, AI, electric propulsion and batteries, and a history of purpose driven industry-government partnerships—all essential to designing and building the cars and trucks of the immediate future. And recent announcements by GM, Ford, and Chrysler suggest they understand this Canadian auto advantage in a rapidly and profoundly changing industry.

Regardless of the sector, the new industrial policy going forward should be focused on creating technology advantages, building pools of incredibly talented scientists, technicians and workers, and setting up regulatory regimes that encourages innovation, experimentation, and flexibility. It is not about picking winners and losers—effective industrial policy never has been—but rather about creating winning conditions for business and entrepreneurial success in a disruptive and changing world. There is no reason Canada cannot be a winner in this new global business context provided we aim purposely for the podium.

Kevin Lynch is former clerk of the Privy Council and former deputy minister of Industry. Paul Deegan is CEO of Deegan Public Strategies and former deputy executive director of the National Economic Council at the White House.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Canada needs tax fairness for skilled trades workers: a balanced post-COVID economic recovery depends on it

There is no good reason for the Liberal government and this Parliament not to adopt the measures of this bill now, level the playing field and get on with replacing the million jobs we have lost in the pandemic.



Sean Strickland

Opinion

Recently, the Government of Canada announced it was doubling the federal Gas Tax Fund transfer through tabling Bill C-25, and rebranding it as the Canada Community Building Fund.

If passed, an additional \$2.2-billion will flow directly to cities and communities injecting much needed capital into municipal budgets that have been hard hit by the pandemic.

This same government has shown, time and again, their commitment to creating jobs and investing in infrastructure—through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, one-million jobs plan and, hopefully, through infrastructure stimulus in the upcoming budget.

Why then, are the thousands of skilled men and women who are expected to build this infrastructure not given equal treatment to deduct work-related travel expenses?

National infrastructure projects require a highly skilled and mobile workforce moving from construction site to construction site across Canada. Yet, our Income Tax Act does not allow this vital workforce to deduct

expenses such as meals or accommodation connected with travel to work sites.

This same, century-old legislation would permit them to deduct those expenses if they were travelling to the same construction sites to sell supplies and equipment or perform professional services like accounting.

This difference in treatment may have made policy or bureaucratic sense when it was written. But it doesn't make common sense in the 21st Century especially when Canada is resetting its economy to recover from the pandemic and focus on climate change.

The tax code simply isn't fair to the skilled men and women we are counting on to build this badly-needed infrastructure. Nor does the act address the skilled labour shortage experienced in some jurisdictions, high unemployment in others and the job creation we need to recover from the pandemic.

This is why all Parliamentarians should support a private member's bill by NDP MP Scott Duval, whose measures would

incorporate a Skilled Trades Workforce Mobility program into our tax system. Bill C-275, if passed, would allow for expenses for trades people travelling more than 80 kilometres to a job site to be tax deductible.

Unfortunately, placement in the order of precedence in the House of Commons makes it unlikely Bill C-275 will be debated in this session of Parliament.

As a result, Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) are calling on the Government of Canada to adopt and implement this bill.

Currently, we have thousands of unemployed construction workers in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador because of the energy sector's hardships.

Yet infrastructure projects in B.C. and Nova Scotia are facing shortages of skilled trades people at the same time.

Until we have a Skilled Trades Workforce Mobility program to remove a serious policy imbalance, absurdities like this will continue.

So will steep disincentives and barriers to the mobile construction workforce that Canada needs.

The CBTU recently commissioned a report estimating the financial projections of implementing a Skilled Trades Workforce Mobility Tax Deduction that estimates it costs a construction worker over \$4,000 to temporarily relocate for work.

The report, conducted by accounting firm Hendry Warren LLP, also found Ottawa would save \$347-million per year by implementing such a tax deduction, putting more Canadians to work, reducing EI payments, and increasing tax revenues.

The average construction worker would save \$2,532 a year in temporary relocation efforts.

During the 41st Parliament, a virtually identical private member's bill, was defeated on second reading by the Conservatives. The Liberals voted with the NDP in May 2014 to support it, including a new MP at the time, Chrystia Freeland.

There is no good reason for the Liberal government and this Parliament not to adopt the measures of this bill now, level the playing field and get on with replacing the million jobs we have lost in the pandemic.

It's time to get this done.

The April 19 budget would be a fitting time to make this right.

Sean Strickland is executive director of Canada's Building Trades Unions, an alliance of 14 international unions in the construction, maintenance and fabrication industries that collectively represent over half a million skilled trades workers in Canada.

The Hill Times

Canadian Jews most targeted group for hate crimes

We may not see the eradication of anti-Semitism in our lifetimes, but we can certainly push it to the margins of society, where it rightfully belongs.



Mike Fegelman

Opinion

Once again, Canadian Jews have the dubious distinction of being the most targeted group for hate crimes. In a report released on March 29, Statistics Canada revealed that Jewish Canadians were the single biggest victims of religiously motivated hate crimes across the country in 2019.

According to Statistics Canada, there were 296 anti-Semitic attacks

across the country in 2019, out of a total of 608 hate crimes targeting religion. Of all the religiously motivated hate crimes in Canada, about half were specifically anti-Semitic. Despite the shocking number, there may be a silver lining. Statistics Canada reports that the number of anti-Semitic attacks spiked by an eye-popping 63 per cent in 2017, and a smaller three percent increase in 2018, but fell 20 per cent in 2019. However, whether this most recent fall is a long-term trend or merely a short-term dip remains to be seen.

Ultimately, regardless of whether 2019 was an aberration of the beginning of a longer-term positive trend, the reality is that the Jewish community consists of just over one per cent of Canada's overall population, and yet represents a significant proportion of hate crimes recipients. This should act as a clarion call for all Canadians concerned about the social fabric of their country. As we know all too well from history, the hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.

Of the nearly 300 police-recorded anti-Semitic incidents in 2019, some notable ones include:

1. An anti-Semitic and anti-Israel riot erupted at York University, in Toronto, after a group of pro-Israel speakers were invited to speak on campus.
2. Halton Regional Police investigated after a series of antisemitic flyers and posters were distributed



In a report released on March 29, Statistics Canada revealed that Jewish Canadians were the single biggest victims of religiously motivated hate crimes across the country in 2019, writes Mike Fegelman. Image courtesy of Pixabay

ed across the town of Burlington, Ont., including on a traffic post.

3. In the summer of 2019, an identifiable Jewish man wearing a kippah reported that he was verbally assaulted by a taxi driver in Montreal, and when he tried to take a photo of the taxi's licence, the driver began to punch and assault the Jewish man.
4. A sukkah (or temporary hut for the Jewish holiday of Sukkot) was vandalized with anti-Semitic graffiti at a rabbi's home in Georgina, Ont.
5. The *Edmonton Journal* newspaper published an editorial cartoon with clearly antisemitic undertones: A man with classical anti-Semitic physical characteristics, including a large hooked nose, hiding in a wallet, stealing information, under the

caption "what's in your wallet?"

It's abundantly clear that anti-Semitism in Canada is not limited by geography or intensity; it exists from coast to coast, and manifests on social media, in traditional media like newspapers, on campuses, and on the streets.

Canada's Jewish population is strong, vibrant, and growing, now numbering about 400,000. But that has not stopped anti-Semitic attacks, including verbal assault, physical assault, and graffiti.

Given that this Statistics Canada report was only for the 2019 calendar year, it does not take into account the rise in anti-Semitic propaganda as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, which has included false information that Jews or Israel were behind the COVID-19 outbreak, and are benefiting from it.

The good news is that, despite the worrying number of attacks targeting Jews in Canada, the evidence suggests that these are the actions of a small minority, and do not reflect the attitudes of most Canadians. A 2019 report from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) found that only eight per cent of Canadians hold anti-Semitic views, ranking Canada the second-best of 18 countries surveyed by the ADL.

Of course, while that statistic reflects well on most Canadians, the reality is that the remaining 92 per cent of Canadians who do not harbour antisemitic attitudes have a duty and responsibility to ensure that attacks targeting Jews—and all other groups—are condemned forcefully and without hesitation. And the Canadian media also has a responsibility to publish news covering anti-Semitic incidents, as uncomfortable as they may be, so that all Canadians can be informed of this cancer which has infected our society since time immemorial.

We may not see the eradication of anti-Semitism in our lifetimes, but we can certainly push it to the margins of society, where it rightfully belongs.

Mike Fegelman is Executive Director of *HonestReporting Canada*, a non-profit organization ensuring fair and accurate Canadian media coverage of Israel. www.HonestReporting.ca.

The Hill Times

MPs call for re-vamp of federal role in long-term care system devastated by COVID-19

A slew of reports has documented the failures of Canada's long-term care homes to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. With the most anticipated federal budget in recent Canadian history just around the corner, MPs from both sides of the aisle are calling for desperately needed infrastructure funding and support for staffing in those homes.

Continued from page 1

and staffing for long-term care homes that have been devastated over the last year by a COVID-19 pandemic for which many were completely unprepared.

A recent report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) that analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care in Canada within the first six months of the pandemic found that long-term care homes have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in Canada, and that the pandemic experience had not improved overall for the sector through the second wave.

"The second wave of COVID-19 in Canada was bigger and broader than the first wave, reaching more parts of the country, and resulting in a larger number of outbreaks, infections and deaths in LTC and retirement homes," according to the report.

Central Canada is now in the grips of a third wave of the virus.

The report also found that the proportion of COVID-19 deaths in long-term care and retirement home residents in Canada, at 69 per cent, remained "significantly higher than the international average" of 41 per cent.

Early on in the pandemic, Operation LASER, which ran from April 2020 through July 2020, saw the military step into five Ontario homes "that were in urgent and immediate need of personnel to provide humanitarian relief and medical support," according to the military's report released in May 2020.

The report found that in some homes, COVID-19 positive residents were "allowed to wander," staff were undertrained and unresponsive, there was poor infection control, inappropriate availability and usage of Personal

Protective Equipment (PPE), and inadequate nutrition provided to residents due to staffing issues.

Liberal MP Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering-Uxbridge, Ont.), the parliamentary secretary for health, told *The Hill Times* she didn't know what was going to be in the budget released next week by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), but she expected it would continue to fund supports already earmarked for the sector, such as the \$1-billion announced for the Safe Long-term Care Fund announced in the fall economic statement, and support for setting national standards for the sector.

"And no one was paying attention," said Ms. O'Connell. "For us, here, it's a provincial issue and it was frustrating, and even now, it's a challenge because we know where we need to go with this, but if we don't have provincial support, we can't just tell provinces 'here's how you have to do this.'"

"We have to find the right balance of creating the policies that are going to have those outcomes that we genuinely want, but we do operate in a system where we do need that provincial buy-in, so it's been frustrating to say the least because it's been so obvious to me and my constituents," said Ms. O'Connell.

Liberal MP Judy Sgro (Humber River-Black Creek, Ont.)

said that as much as this is getting ourselves into provincial territory, and we have to skate COVID carefully, this was an issue that we all cared about."

Conservative MP Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords-Lloydminster, Sask.), her party's senior's critic, said the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated some of the issues that some long-term care facilities are facing.

"I think that when we look at things that have been or not been done in pandemic spending in the last year, I think the Liberals actually missed opportunities to have long-term care facilities or senior residences apply for infrastructure spending," Ms. Falk

generation changes to its policy framework for long-term care."

In an interview with *The Hill Times* last week, professor Tuohy said she would want to see "a significant down payment on the long-term care front, together with a commitment to a broader, longer-term strategy" in the upcoming budget.

"Probably the most effective way to do that in the short-term is through infrastructure and capital funding, until we have a program for generating sustained operational revenue over time, such as a long-term care insurance plan," said Prof. Tuohy.

The federal government could tackle staffing shortages through bilateral agreements with the provinces that would aim to bring in immigrants to fill the jobs where needed.

"That's a time-honoured approach in Canadian immigration policy," said Prof. Tuohy. "Ideally it would be through an overall federal-provincial agreement so that we start with a premise that there will be common standards across the country, but failing that, bilateral agreements can at least start building up the supply and some agreement on a kind of common denominator of standards so we can make it a more attractive occupational option."

"The places that are bad for residents are bad for the workers as well—they're workplaces and not just residences," said Prof. Tuohy.

Canada has a relatively large population of people over the age of 80 living in institutions compared to other countries, said Prof. Tuohy. "So in a way, it's not surprising that we would have a larger proportion of COVID deaths that would occur in long-term care."

"There's a real attractiveness to the idea" of substituting home care for long-term care as much as possible, said Prof. Tuohy. "But in fact, international experience suggests that if you expand home care—that's a good thing, people are getting more care at home—but it doesn't necessarily substitute for institutional care."

"There's a range of needs for which you need to be in facility to be cared for. There's probably a point where home care just isn't feasible, and that really is what we're going to see. It's a good thing to expand home care, there's an unmet demand for home care, but in other countries like Germany and Japan, it just adds to care—which is good—but it substitutes only at the margin and it's not going to be an answer to the long-term care that we need."

"We're going to need more long-term care beds given the demographic surge [we're going to see], and they're certainly going to need to be of higher standard than the older stock that is currently there."

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Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Carolyn Tuohy, professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, says Canada has 'a window of opportunity to make once-in-a-generation changes to its policy framework for long-term care.' *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

"Let's face it, there are very real challenges in terms of establishing what these standards are in the first place, and we actually need provinces and territories to actually agree to them," said Ms. O'Connell. "It's not that simple, so I look at the long-term care issue as short, medium and long-term."

Ms. O'Connell also pointed to infrastructure investment as a large issue in the long-term care file.

"We know that with disease prevention, people living in congregated spaces where curtains are the walls in these places, that's obviously not supportive for pandemic preparedness," said Ms. O'Connell.

One of the homes listed in the military's report, Orchard Villa Retirement Community in Pickering, Ont., is in Ms. O'Connell's riding. Ms. O'Connell said she was attending a virtual memorial on April 8 for those who passed during the pandemic.

"To be blunt, my experience has been frustrating," said Ms. O'Connell when asked about what has happened in her riding and in the Orchard Villa facility during her time in office. "It doesn't matter if I'm an MP or a parliamentary secretary or anything else—seeing your community go through this is frustrating."

Family members and local politicians were trying to raise the issues they were seeing in the home before the CAF report came out, according to the Liberal MP.

told *The Hill Times* that attention to the long-term care issue has brought the Liberal caucus together.

"To continue to see the amount of deaths happening in these nursing homes was absolutely disgraceful, and all of us felt awful to see what was happening there to these innocent people who were spending their last years in a place that we thought were getting better care than what they were getting," said Ms. Sgro. "This is not just a Liberal issue, this is an issue that people cared about no matter which side of the equation you were on."

"We had a moral responsibility, whether the provinces and territories liked it or not, to do something," said Ms. Sgro. "This is a blight on our country, and it calls on all of us as Canadians to protect the most vulnerable in society."

Hawthorne Place Care Centre, located in North York and in Ms. Sgro's riding, was another one of the five problematic homes listed in the CAF's May 2020 report.

When asked how that experience has shaped her approach to this issue, Ms. Sgro said it "reminded me of why I'm here."

"We got into politics to make a difference, and we have a chance to make a difference," said Ms. Sgro. "As I said to the prime minister, we have a moral responsibility to take action, and I have to

said in an interview with *The Hill Times* from her constituency office in Saskatchewan.

"The seniors that do live in long-term care facilities, that's their home," said Ms. Falk. "It would make sense to me to think that these facilities should have the same opportunities for infrastructure when it comes to housing."

"It will be interesting to see if [the Liberal government] put any of the measures in place in the budget that opposition critics have highlighted for them," said Ms. Falk.

What the Liberals want to do is quickly train people, according to Ms. Falk, but "we're putting them into an environment that is stressed already with staffing and the jobs that are required for that."

'The places that are bad for residents are bad for the workers as well'

Carolyn Tuohy, professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, recently authored a report for the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) entitled "Federalism as a Strength: A Path Toward Ending the Crisis in Long-Term Care" that argues Canada has "a window of opportunity to make once-in-a-

'Enough is enough': new group aims to open path for Filipino-Canadian candidates

Filipino-Canadians could rally voters in closely contested ridings across the country, say the founders of the Filipino Canadian Political Association.

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whichever party manages to rally it, say two of the founders of the Filipino Canadian Political Association, a new group devoted to breaking down barriers that have left the community without representation in Parliament since 2004.

"The numbers speak for themselves," said Grant Gonzales, a second-generation Filipino-Canadian in Toronto who is serving as the chief spokesperson for the group.

More than 837,000 Canadians identified as having a Filipino ethnic origin in the 2016 census, about 2.5 per cent of the population. More than 100,000 people from the Philippines have been given permanent resident status in Canada since then.

The 2016 Filipino population was bigger than the margin of victory in the last election in 37 federal ridings, including nine of the 25 most competitive races, according to an FCPA analysis of data from Statistics Canada and Elections Canada.

The group issued a press release on April 6 calling on political parties to nominate Filipino-Canadian candidates in winnable ridings ahead of the next election, which could come later this year. The data analysis was included in the release.

"Parties have attempted to activate us [in the past], but it's always to support another candidate

from a different community, not necessarily one of our own," said Paul Saguil, another co-founder of the FCPA who is also running for the Liberal Party nomination in Brampton Centre, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

"The information is there for party organizers to now think about very carefully. Knowing these demographics, why wouldn't you run a Filipino-Canadian to activate these populations in favour of your party?" he said.

The two men founded the group along with Joseph Guiyab last fall, after the Liberal Party appointed former TV broadcaster Marci Ien as its candidate for a byelection in Toronto Centre. That appointment shut the door on an open nomination contest for would-be candidates including Mr. Saguil, who later stepped back from another nomination contest in Don Valley East when Liberal MPP Michael Coteau announced that he would be running there.

Mr. Saguil said Ms. Ien's appointment, as well as other unsuccessful attempts by Filipino-Canadians to secure party nominations, played a role in the formation of the group. Mr. Gonzales was more explicit.

"That [appointment] drove a lot of sentiment around how difficult it is for racialized communities, especially Filipino-Canadians, to get into office," he said. "We thought, 'enough is enough,' let's start more intentionally bringing attention to these issues, this gap in representation."

Both men said they held no ill will toward Ms. Ien, who went on to win the Toronto Centre byelection. Ms. Ien is Black, and Black Canadians are also underrepresented in Parliament: Black Canadians account for 3.5 per cent of Canada's population, but hold only five—or 1.5 per cent—of the 338 seats in the House of Commons.

Mr. Gonzales said he wants to see the parties make it easier for Filipino-Canadians to run, whether that means making an

appointment, as was the case for Ms. Ien, or just doing more to recruit Filipino candidates.

Filipino-Canadians have won seats in provincial legislatures and municipal councils in Canada, including Mable Elmore, B.C.'s first Filipino MLA. Some have secured nominations to run for federal parties, including Julius Tiangson, who ran for the Conservatives in York Centre in a byelection last year, and is running to secure the party's nomination in that riding for the next election. Mr. Tiangson did not respond to an interview request last week.

Federal ridings contain an average of about 112,000 people. A perfectly representative House of Commons would have eight MPs from the Filipino community. There are currently none, and there has been only one in Canadian history: Rey Pagtakhan, who represented Winnipeg's north end for the Liberals from 1988 to 2004.

partisan, and operate across the country.

The organization isn't aiming to sway votes toward one party or another, said Mr. Saguil, but rather draw political parties' attention to the Filipino community's power in closely-contested ridings.

"There's a lot of pride in our community. And when they see someone putting their name forward, and when they see a party actively putting someone forward because they want the support of the Filipino-Canadian community, then it's a natural expectation that they'll want to rally behind someone, whichever standard that they're representing," he said.

"If I'm thinking strategically for these ridings, and I want to make sure that there is no margin of error for the next election, why wouldn't I be asking the party leadership, 'Where is our Filipino-Canadian candidate who would help rally this population?'" said Mr. Saguil.



Paul Jonathan Saguil, left, Joseph Guiyab, and Grant Gonzales are the founders of the Filipino Canadian Political Association. They want political parties to start doing more to recruit Filipino candidates. Photographs courtesy of the Filipino Canadian Political Association, Paul Jonathan Saguil

"It's the same conversation we have when we're talking about women in politics. The number of times they need to be asked to run for office, because of the barriers, the attitudes that they face when they run for office," said Mr. Gonzales.

"If you have a political party reaching out to you and saying, 'we'd be interested in having you run for a nomination contest,' well that adds a lot of confidence already to a candidate."

In the meantime, Mr. Saguil said he wants the FCPA to be able to fill some of that void left by the parties, providing information and connections to Filipino-Canadians who are thinking about a run in politics.

The FCPA is still in its infancy as an organization, and does not yet have a network of volunteers and supporters broad enough to move votes in swing ridings on its own. It has not yet begun to raise money, and does not have paid staff.

The three founders have reached out to leaders within the community and had conversations with some people in federal politics, including Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino (Eglington-Lawrence, Ont.) and Green Party Leader Annamie Paul, said Mr. Gonzales.

FCPA will have to show community can be mobilized: NDP strategist Romeo Tello

All three founders of the FCPA are Toronto residents with Liberal ties. Mr. Gonzales said they want the organization to be cross-

Winnipeg North and Winnipeg Centre are the only ridings in which Filipinos account for 20 per cent of the population or more.

The Philippines has been among the top source countries for immigrants to Canada for most of the past 20 years. Still, the community is a relatively young one, and many of those who have immigrated to Canada from the Philippines have been focused on carving out a life for themselves in a new country, said Mr. Saguil.

Running for office requires financial resources, and connections with political parties and other communities. "All of those things take literally one person's lifetime, if not more, to accumulate," said Mr. Saguil.

"That's what we mean by systemic barriers in the FCPA. Other communities in Canada have had generations to accumulate what we'll call collectively this political capital."

The younger generation who immigrated with their parents—including Mr. Saguil—or were born in Canada are now more ready and able to step into the political fray, he said.

Mr. Saguil will face tough competition for the Liberal nomination in Brampton Centre. The riding was created as part of the 2013 electoral boundary realignment. It is currently held by Independent MP Ramesh Sangha, who was kicked out of the Liberal caucus earlier this year over remarks he made about some of his fellow Liberal MPs. Mr. Sangha won it as a Liberal candidate by double-digit margins in both the 2015 and 2019 elections. All five of Brampton's MPs are Indo-Canadian.

Two other Liberals have started a campaign for the nomination in Brampton Centre so far: Amin Dhillon, a multimedia personality and former Miss India Worldwide Canada, and businessman Nasir Hussain.

Indo-Canadians are the most numerous ethnic group in Brampton, outnumbering Filipinos almost 10-to-one in the city. The Brampton Indo-Canadian community includes veteran political organizers and fundraisers.

Mr. Saguil said he has built a "broad coalition" of support already for his nomination bid, including volunteers and organizers from the Punjabi, Black, and Pakistani communities, and Filipino-Canadians from across the country.

If his odds of winning the nomination are long, the payoff of a victory could be great for Mr. Saguil. The last two elections suggest that the next Liberal candidate in Brampton Centre will have a good chance at winning.

Mr. Saguil is the deputy head of TD Bank's global sanctions compliance and anti-corruption program, as well as a lawyer and a gay rights activist. MPs from under-represented communities who have impressive resumes are often good candidates for a cabinet appointment, even as political rookies. Procurement Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), who boasts a resume a mile long, and was made Canada's first Hindu cabinet minister shortly after winning her first election in 2019, is one recent example.

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Canadians are ‘confused and anxious,’ COVID-19’s third wave making Trudeau Liberals ‘vulnerable,’ say pollsters

Canadians are tired and worried and they aren’t making distinctions between the federal and provincial governments.

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Mr. Graves said that Canadians are frustrated with dozens of contradictory stories about the efficacy of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and its possible link to a rare blood clotting disorder, which is having a huge impact on vaccine hesitancy at a critical time. Canadians are also upset, Mr. Graves said, about shifting and contradictory public health guidance with different provinces undergoing different levels of lockdowns and some with no lockdowns. He said that people want one clear and firm approach on how to tackle the pandemic in all regions of the country.

Mr. Graves said Canadians are not currently making any distinctions on who to blame between the federal and provincial governments and he said Canadians appear to be comparing their government’s handling of the pandemic with the U.S. and Britain’s more muscular strategy, which is more aggressive with definite timelines.

“Boris Johnson’s talking about having a pint in a pub on April 12,” said Mr. Graves. “People want to hear that. We’re not there but they don’t want to hear it might be October. And I think it’s having a corrosive impact on the compliance levels, the overall mood of the country. And I think it’s also shaking confidence in government and it’s also possibly reducing the willingness to take a vaccine, all those connections.”

U.S. President Joe Biden announced last week that he has set the goal of 200 million vaccines administered within his first 100 days in office which will be completed April 30. On average, three million shots are administered every day and by last week, about a third of the U.S. population had received at least one shot.

As of last week, there were 1,020,893 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Canada, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada. By April 7, an average



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberals are becoming politically ‘vulnerable’ as the country is being hit by a serious third wave of COVID-19 along with the more deadly variants. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

of 6,416 cases of the virus have been diagnosed per day across the country in the previous seven days, with 31 deaths per day, the agency website stated. The same day, 3,215 new cases were diagnosed in Ontario alone. Along with the regular COVID-19 virus, thousands of Canadians in different regions are also being diagnosed with variants, including B.1.1.7 (U.K.) variant, B.1.351 (South Africa) variant and P1 (Brazil) variant. In B.C., more than 20 players and coaches of the Vancouver Canucks were suspected of being affected with the Brazilian variant, last week.

Five COVID-19 vaccines—Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, COVISHIELD, Jansen—have been approved and administered in Canada. The Jansen vaccine is given as one dose while the rest as two doses. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 4.5 million or 11.9 per cent of the population has received at least one dose, 667,983 or 1.76 per cent of the population has received two doses, and 3.89-million or 10.16 per cent of the population has received only one dose. In comparison, the U.S. has already inoculated 19 per cent of its population.

On April 6, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced a strict four-week stay-at-home order that came into effect the next day. The same day, Quebec Premier François Legault also further tightened restrictions in the regions where the COVID-19 numbers are high. In Alberta, doctors called on Premier Jason Kenney for a strict lockdown to slow down the surge

of COVID cases in the province, but it remains to be seen if that will happen as a quarter of his caucus public opposed a strict lockdown.

In a troubling development, according to a *National Post* report, Canada was on course of “matching—perhaps surpassing—the United States in the number of COVID-19 cases relative to its population.”

Ekos poll shows Liberals, Conservatives in statistical dead heat

According to a recent poll by Ekos Research, provided to *The Hill Times*, the Liberals and the Conservatives were in a statistical dead heat with 32 per cent and 30.4 per cent support, respectively. The NDP was at 16.3 per cent, and the Greens at 8.3 per cent. The poll of 1,734 Canadians was conducted from April 1-6 and had a margin of error of 2.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Regionally, the Conservatives were miles ahead of the Liberals in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. But the Liberals were enjoying a comfortable support in the vote-rich province of Ontario, home to 121 House of Commons seats, with 41.7 per cent support, compared to the Conservatives who were at 29.9 per cent. The NDP was at 13.1 per cent and the Greens 8.9 per cent. In Quebec, with 78 electoral seats, the Bloc and the Liberals were tied at 28.6 and 27.2 per cent support, respectively. The



Ekos Research pollster Frank Graves says that Canadians want one uniform public policy guideline across all regions to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Hill Times file photograph*

Conservatives were at 19.8 per cent, the NDP 14.4 per cent and the Greens 6.7 per cent. In Atlantic Canada, the Liberal support was at 43 per cent, the Conservatives 21.3 per cent, the NDP 14.2 per cent and the Greens 13.2 per cent. In B.C. the Liberals were tied with the NDP and the Conservatives 24.1 per cent, 26.5 per cent and 25 per cent support, respectively.

Mr. Graves said that even though the Liberals and the Conservatives were tied nationally, the wide lead in Ontario could either deliver a majority or close to a majority for the Liberals. To win a majority government, the Liberals need at least 170 seats in the 338-member House. In 2019, they won 157 seats, the Conservatives 121, the Bloc 32 seats, the NDP 24 seats, the Greens three and one Independent. For the next election, Ontario is seen as the largest battlefield province because of not only a high number of electoral seats but also swing seats. In 2019, the Liberals captured 79 of the 121 seats in the province, the Conservatives 36 and the NDP six.

Polls conducted before the April 6 Ekos Research poll have shown the Liberals with a potential comfortable majority government.

According to a Nanos poll released April 2, the Liberals had the support of 39 per cent of Canadians, the Conservatives 26.9 per cent, the NDP 18 per cent and the Greens 7.9 per cent. The poll also suggested that for 44 per cent of Canadians, COVID-19 was the top-of-mind issue of concern, while only 12 per cent identified jobs and economy, a distant second, as the important issue.

The weekly rolling poll of 1,000 Canadians, released on April 2, had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The Liberals took a hit in their popularity January when the vaccine supply was interrupted but started to make a steady recover in early March. Before that, the WE Charity scandal also turned out to be a disastrous scandal for the Liberals. Since then, they have recovered the lost political ground but it remains to be seen how the coming days unfold for the Liberals.

In a minority Parliament, an election can happen at any time, but given the current state of the pandemic, it appears highly unlikely one will happen this spring. Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.)

is scheduled to table the government’s first budget in more than two years on April 19. This will require a vote of confidence and even though the Liberals don’t have the majority of votes, it’s expected that one of the three opposition parties—most likely the NDP—will vote with the government.

Prime Minister Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) also told his caucus late last month not to expect an election this spring chiefly because of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

Pollster Greg Lyle of Innovative Research said that the COVID variants could be a very serious potential vulnerability for the Trudeau Liberals. He said that so far it has not been the focus of the media attention because all the attention was focused on the distribution of the vaccine, its rollout and who should be vaccinated first. Also, he said, Canadians gave a pass to the government when the COVID-19 hit Canada early last year because of a majority of countries around the world were affected by it. But, since that time, the federal government has been singularly focused on COVID and still the variants were able to arrive in the country.

“Clearly, it’s a vulnerability for the government,” said Mr. Lyle, president of Innovative Research.

“So one of the things that could come up is, to what degree will people start to ask themselves how the heck did the Brazilian variant get in here after we had a year of getting ready to stop new variants from getting in? So that could well be the sort of thing that drives time for a change.”



Pollster Greg Lyle says that it’s yet unclear what the ballot question is for the next election. He says it’s too early to predict that the next election will be a referendum on Trudeau’s handling of the pandemic. *Photograph courtesy of Greg Lyle*

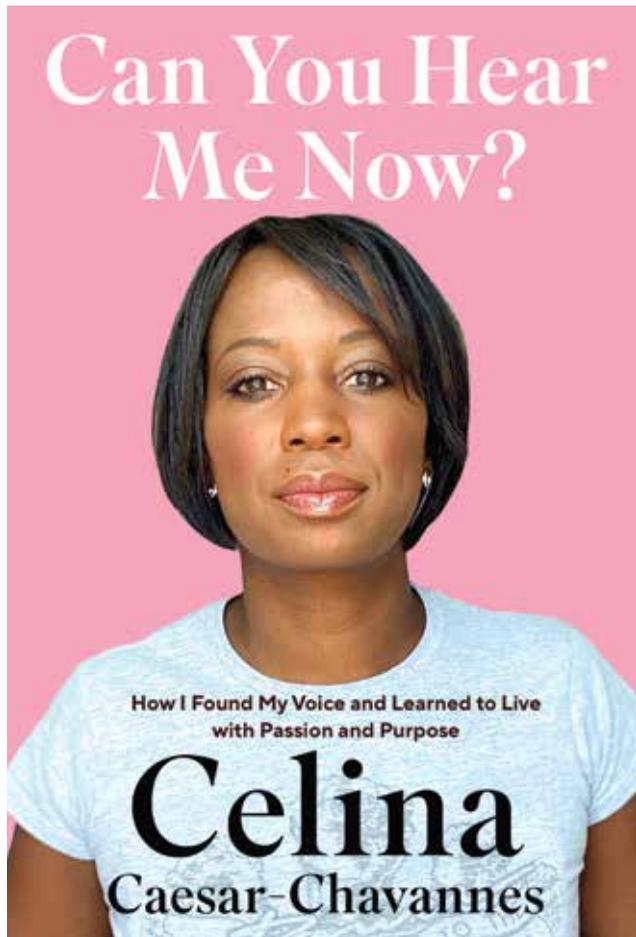
Since the start of the pandemic, most pundits have said that the next election will be a referendum on the government’s handling of the pandemic and what vision the two main parties have for the recovery phase of the pandemic. But Mr. Lyle said it’s too soon to predict the ballot question for the next election.

“I don’t think it’s settled,” said Mr. Lyle. “If the government is seen as doing well, in terms of dealing with COVID, the practical implications of that are that Trudeau goes into the election with a stronger brand. It’s not that people are going to vote because they’re grateful, because almost nobody votes in the rear-view mirror, unless they’re mad, and they want to get even.”

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News

Feds brushing 'crumbs' to Black Canadians, says former Liberal MP Caesar-Chavannes



Former Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes released her memoir on Feb. 2. Photograph courtesy of Penguin Random House Canada

"It's these little crumbs that they expect to fall off the table and we're supposed to be like, 'Oh, thank you, thank you for that.' And I don't get that in combination with Greg Fergus, in combination with fighting this class-action lawsuit [launched by Black public servants], in combination with having Black female organizations that are fighting gender-based violence and saying, 'We've made a historic announcement investment of \$2.5-million in dozens of organizations,' when in 2018, they gave one organization, Equal Voice, \$3.8-million for one program. It seems like they've got a lot of crumbs to get rid of on the table and they're just dusting them on the floor to Black people."

Because of the historical movements of the prime minister's father, is there a sense of a debt owed within communities, specifically Black communities, specifically immigrant, specifically West Indian communities, that lends itself to this feeling the Liberals' actions won't lead to a loss of support?

"Oh, for sure. For sure there is this allegiance, and I think it's generational, so they have to be really careful, and this will be my caution to this sort of sprinkling of performative allyship that we're getting from the government when it comes to Black communities is that, at some point, it's going to come home to roost, and it's not going to be enough for you to list up all of these arbitrary little pieces of stuff that you've given to our community and say that we've done this, we've done that, be thankful."

"I don't want to sound like I'm so disappointed, but I actually am disappointed. I'm disappointed that the rhetoric was just rhetoric, and now they have to tiptoe instead of being bold and transformative the way Trudeau actually could have been. And he could have set a legacy for himself and not been still riding off his father's coattails of his legacy in the Black community. He could have done something substantive, or a few things substantive, especially with recognizing the [UN International Decade for People of African Descent]. He has not and he continues to demonstrate that he has no capacity to do so. Everything is a half step."

We're in minority Parliament situation and people are looking over their shoulders constantly with respect to an election, and this budget, in particular. So, would it be that surprising if they don't make those types of investments or announcements?

"Ontario just tabled a \$186-billion budget. So, if the feds are going to spend, they have the capacity to do it and do it right."

"Post-2020, you've got to really be living in an absolute alternate universe to not take this seriously. People are liter-



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Celina Caesar-Chavannes are pictured at the government's Black History Month event in Ottawa in February 2019. The prime minister will have to do more to create his own legacy with Black Canadians, Ms. Caesar-Chavannes says. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Continued from page 6

The following Q&A with *The Hill Times*, which was conducted in two separate interviews, has been edited for length and clarity.

Now that there's been a little more runway between the release of your book and the reception that it's received, do you feel as though the message is being received in the way that you'd hoped it would. Do you think people are hearing the message or are they just kind of giddy that there's somebody swearing on TV [recalling] talking to the prime minister? (Ms. Caesar-Chavannes recounts in her book a heated February 2019 conversation with Mr. Trudeau where she told him she would not be running again as a Liberal and would be leaving caucus, that culminated in her telling him "motherfucker, who the fuck do you think you are speaking to?")

"I don't think that the message is being received. The message is being received as an individualized exchange between myself and the prime minister. What is not being seen is that the way I was treated by the prime minister is a microcosm of way the way he treats Black communities. There isn't an intention to recognize us as individuals, to give us equity."

"So, you could stand in front of an elected official who got to the job the same way you did, had to go knock doors and say that she owes you something, like if I didn't work hard. Well, that's what he's been saying to Black communities. 'Oh well, we give you this, we give you that, we

give you the other, you should be grateful to us.'

"It's an actual lens into his view of our community. It couldn't be more evident. And it couldn't be more evident post-2020. This may be a provincial issue, but the amount of people who are dying from COVID 19 [you would think] there will be a national data collection strategy on disaggregated data related to COVID-19, nationally, screw what the provinces want, screw what the municipalities are doing. If they want to collect data, collect data nationally because these pockets of Black individuals are being impacted. No. Why? It's inconvenient, you are inconvenient for me in winning the next election."

There have been a couple of moves, whether it's substantive or not, by the government, for example, in terms of their justice bill.

"What, C-22? (kisses teeth)"
 "Again, when we talk performative, if the government actually wanted to repeal mandatory minimums, they would have done so when they had a majority. And they wouldn't have put this no-teeth, denture-wearing, C-22-ass bill in there and then put the label 'justice' on it. [Justice Minister] David Lametti should be ashamed of himself, putting the word justice on that bill. It still does not remove all mandatory minimums that are still unconstitutional that still have an overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people in our prison population, that will not keep Canadians any more or less safe. Why not repeal them all?"

ally dying. So, we're talking 10 to 12 per cent of a national housing strategy allocated for Black communities. Reference back to Africville and say, 'Yes, here's the apology, here is how we're going to redress and then address some these issues going forward.' Look at mental health and how it has impacted Black communities with a pandemic and racial inequality. That is why we need a \$200-million investment—at bare minimum. There's just so many things here that we should see in this budget. An actual reform to the Employment Equity Act that specifically addresses Black individuals within the federal public service."

In your book, you write "Even I've needed to learn the lesson of reconciliation again and again." Have you been able to reconcile with some of the actors in those four years that you were an MP that led to all of this?

"Yeah, you know what, I don't hold grudges, so I mean I've reconciled with them. As to whether or not they've reconciled with me, I have no idea. I don't have issue with Trudeau, I never did. I don't have issue with anybody in that government. I have issues with some of the things that they did. So, when you are hashtagging #MeToo, and then throwing Jody [Wilson-Raybould] under the bus at the same time because you don't want to believe her. Well, that was the whole point of #MeToo was to believe her, right? Or criticizing or pushing back against blackface or what they are or are not doing for Black communities. That's not a criticism or an attack. I don't have issue with anybody within our

government. It's not my responsibility to make your job easy. And I don't think it ever has been."

You talk about not wanting to be tokenized or trying to be that square peg in a round hole that is Ottawa, in Parliament. And in interviews, the questions always come back to why is it this way and what can be done? How do you feel about having to answer that question when you are not the one who created that system?

"It's an unfair question, because not only did I not create the system ... that was a system designed by someone else who had limited imagination about how you can work or function in a workplace. That doesn't mean that it's consistent."

"The second part to that is I didn't promise Canadians that we were going to do government differently. Now, I may have bought that package, but I wasn't promoting that package. That package came from the Liberal government that said, 'we are going to do politics differently, we're going to be open and transparent and bold. And we're going to have a feminist, diversity is our strength, add women change politics approach.' So, when you don't deliver on what you sell, whose fault is that? The salesperson or the person that actually came up with the slogan? And I didn't come up with any of it. I just expected that what I was selling, what I was peddling was the real deal. And so not only did I not come up with a system I didn't come up with even the present context in which I was hoping to operate in. Neither of those were my responsibility."

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These days, there are more construction workers on the Hill than MPs, Senators, staffers, reporters, and House and Senate employees because of the pandemic. The rehabilitation of Centre Block, meanwhile, is underway and expected to last at least 10 years. All photos were taken on April 7, 2021.

On the Hill

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Construction workers, framed by the main gate to Parliament Hill.



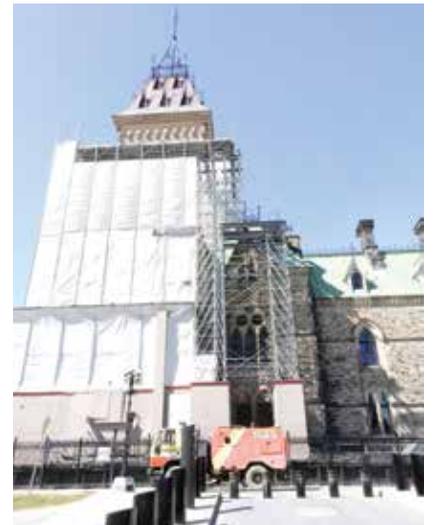
A man tries to take a nap by the Parliament Buildings' west gate on a beautiful, sunny day in Ottawa.



It's closing time. Construction workers, pictured walking down the stairs from the West Block.



Soaring scaffolding outside the East Block's equally soaring tower.



A wider view of the East Block, originally built in 1865, and considered one of the world's finest examples of Victorian Gothic architecture.



HILL CLIMBERS

by Laura Ryckewaert

Tsai-Klassen returns to Hill as chief of staff to International Development Minister Gould

Plus, Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole has a new press secretary: Josie Sabatino.



International Development Minister Karina Gould, pictured on June 1, 2020, has named a new chief of staff to run her office, with Frédérique Tsai-Klassen taking over the role as of April 12. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

International Development Minister **Karina Gould** has found a new chief of staff for her office, with **Frédérique Tsai-Klassen** returning to the Hill to take on the top job as of April 12.

Ms. Tsai-Klassen previously left the Hill in 2017, and until recently had been working as director of communications for the Canadian Embassy in Paris, France since early 2019. Owner of Ottawa's Das Lokal Kitchen & Bar since 2013, Ms. Tsai-Klassen



Frédérique Tsai-Klassen is Ms. Gould's new chief of staff. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

has years of previous federal political experience under her belt, dating back to the mid-90s.

A former assistant to then-Privy Council president **Marcel Massé** and an adviser to his portfolio successor, **Stéphane Dion**, Ms. Tsai-Klassen went on to serve as press secretary to then-industry minister **Brian Tobin**, and as a press attaché and writer in then-prime minister **Jean Chrétien**'s office.

In 2003, she left the Hill to become a communications consultant for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. Two years later, she became chief of communications and media relations in the office of the secretary of the Governor General of Canada. Ms. Tsai-Klassen joined the department of foreign affairs and international trade at the beginning of 2019, starting as a senior strategist and later become deputy director of foreign policy communications and then acting director of foreign affairs and consular communications.



Julia Pennella has joined the seniors minister's office. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

In November 2015, shortly after the Liberals returned to government under Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**, Ms. Tsai-Klassen returned to the political side of the equation as director of communications to then-environment minister **Catherine McKenna**, where she stayed until the summer of 2017.

In Ms. Gould's office, she replaces **Geoffroi Montpetit**, who recently exited to become administrator of the International Organization for La Francophonie, as reported by **Hill Climbers**.

Ms. Gould has also recently welcomed **Julie Delahanty** to her office as an acting director of policy, to fill in for policy director **Hanna Button**, who is set to soon go on maternity leave.

Ms. Delahanty previously worked for Global Affairs Canada, including as director of its Central American Program, director of its gender equality and child protection division, and as deputy director of international women's equality, and up until January 2020, spent roughly five and a half years as executive director of Oxfam Canada.

Over in Seniors Minister **Deb Schulte**'s office, **Julia Pennella** was recently hired as an issues adviser to the minister.

Ms. Pennella marked her first day on the job on March 22 and before then had spent the last almost two years as a special assistant and community outreach co-ordinator to Toronto Liberal MP **Adam Vaughan**, who serves as the parliamentary secretary for housing to Families, Children, and Social Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**. She'd served as an aid to Mr. Vaughan during the 2019 election campaign, which saw him ultimately re-elected to represent Spadina-Fort York, Ont., by roughly 55.8 per cent of the vote.

Ms. Pennella graduated with a master's degree in political science and government from Queen's University in 2019, and while there served for a time as co-editor in chief of the *Queen's Policy Review*. She also has a bachelor's degree in history from York University.

She's done freelance work for the magazine *Panoram Italia*, a Canadian publication, and according to her LinkedIn profile co-founded GTA Sanitation Solutions last May following the outbreak of COVID-19, which distributes Health Canada approved disinfecting chemicals and machinery for workplaces.



Connor Fisher has been promoted within the seniors minister's office. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Also in Ms. Schulte's office, **Connor Fisher** has been promoted to the role of regional affairs adviser for the Atlantic after a year as legislative assistant to the minister.

Before he joined her ministerial office in March 2020, Mr. Fisher had been a constitu-

ency assistant to Ms. Schulte as the Liberal MP for King-Vaughan, Ont., since the fall of 2018. He worked on her 2019 re-election campaign as a volunteer co-ordinator; in the end, Ms. Schulte was re-elected after garnering roughly 45 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Fisher has a bachelor's degree in labour studies and political science from Brock University and later studied government relations at Seneca College, as noted on his LinkedIn profile.

He replaces **Pierce Collier**, who exited at the beginning of the year to become a parliamentary affairs adviser and issues manager to Mr. Hussen.

Frank Tersigni continues as Ontario regional affairs adviser to Ms. Schulte, while **Leena Walia** cover Western and Northern regional affairs, and **Shiraz Keushgerian** covers Quebec while also serving as assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP **Stéphane Lauson**.

Anne Dawson is chief of staff to Ms. Schulte, whose office also includes: **Stephanie Muccilli**, director of policy; **Shane MacKenzie**, director of parliamentary affairs; **Chike Agbasi**, director of operations; **Scott Bardsley**, director of communications; **Daniel Pollak**, press secretary; **Michael MacKinnon**, digital and social media lead; **Maria Campbell**, policy adviser; **Alex Johnsen Howkins**, executive assistant to Ms. Schulte and her chief of staff; and ministerial driver **Najah Abou-Akrouche**.

New press secretary for O'Toole

Conservative Leader **Erin O'Toole** has found a new press secretary, with **Josie Sabatino** having recently returned to the Hill to take on the role.



Josie Sabatino is back on the Hill as press secretary to the Conservative leader. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A Harper-era cabinet staffer, Ms. Sabatino has been working for Spark Advocacy in Ottawa since 2019, starting as an account director and ending as a senior director.

She first began working on the Hill back in 2013, when she was hired as executive assistant to the chief of staff to then-industry minister **James Moore** after interning in the office over that summer. Ms. Sabatino later became an issues management and parliamentary affairs adviser to Mr. Moore.

In 2015, after the election that saw the Liberals unseat **Stephen Harper**'s Conservatives as the governing party, Ms. Sabatino became a legislative assistant to B.C. Conservative MP **Todd Doherty**.

Two years later, she joined the Conservative Official Opposition Leader's Office (OLO) under then-leader **Andrew Scheer**, starting as a press secretary and ending in January 2019 as associate director of media relations and issues management. Ms. Sabatino served as a spokesperson for the party during the 2019 election.

Now back in the OLO under Mr. O'Toole, she fills a role recently vacated by **Chelsea Tucker**, who was promoted to director of communications earlier this year, as reported by **Hill Climbers**.

Mélanie Paradis is director of strategic communications to Mr. O'Toole, while **Mathew Clancy** is manager of strategic communications and **Axel Rioux** is associate director of Quebec communications.

There are also four press secretaries on staff supporting the Conservative shadow cabinet: **Christopher Martin-Chan**, **Katie Hillman**, **Alex Spence**, and **Philippe Refghi**. **Tausha Michaud** is chief of staff to Mr. O'Toole.

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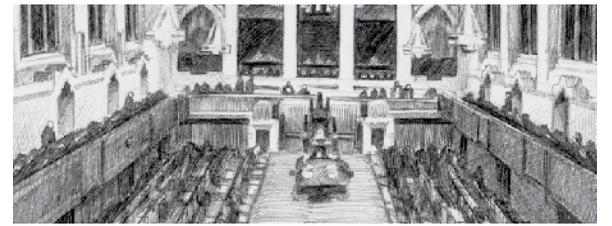
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Parliamentary Calendar



PM's former national security adviser to talk about how pandemic has affected Canada's security threat on Monday, April 12



Daniel Jean, the prime minister's former national security adviser, will be speaking at the University of Ottawa and the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies' webinar on how the pandemic has affected the threat landscape in Canada, along with other experts, on Monday, April 12, 12-1:30 p.m. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ians, parliamentary staff, and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The conference will be hosted by the CPA President (2019-2021), Anthony Rota, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons. All eligible CPA Branches will be contacted with further information and invitations.

MONDAY, NOV. 1–FRIDAY, NOV. 12

UN Climate Conference UNFCCC COP 26—The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC will take place from Monday, Nov. 1–Friday, Nov. 12, in Glasgow, U.K. contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; www: <https://unfccc.int/calendar>

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 24
Writers' Trust of Canada's Balsillie Prize for Public Policy—This new \$60,000 award for the best public policy book in Canada is sponsored by Canadian businessman and philanthropist Jim Balsillie and is part of his new \$3-million commitment to the Writers' Trust of Canada. Three prize finalists will be chosen by a jury composed of writers and experts in public policy selected by the Writers' Trust of Canada. Finalists will be announced on Oct. 13, 2021, with the inaugural winner revealed on Nov. 24. More details at writerstrust.com/BalsilliePrize

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper. We can't guarantee inclusion of every event, but we will definitely do our best. Events can be updated daily online, too.
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MONDAY, APRIL 12

House Not Sitting—The House is sitting in a hybrid format during the pandemic, with most MPs connecting remotely. It's scheduled to be on break March 29–April 9. It's then scheduled to sit every weekday for the next five weeks, April 12–May 14. It will take one-week break after that, from May 17–May 24. It will sit May 25 every weekday until Wednesday, June 23, and will then break for three months, until Monday Sept. 20. In the fall and winter, the House is scheduled to sit for 11 weeks over September, October, November, and December. It will sit Sept. 20–Oct. 8; Oct. 18–Nov. 5; and Nov. 15–Dec. 17.

The Change Conference: Planning for the Unpredictable Future—"The Change Conference: Planning for the Unpredictable Future," hosted by The Pearson Centre, is still on and running April 13, April 15, April 20, and April 21. Speakers include Natural Resources Minister Seamus O'Regan; Transport Minister Omar Alghabra; the Prime Minister's Special Adviser for the Prairies Jim Carr; ISG Senators Frances Lankin and Julie Miville-Deschene; Green Party Leader Annamie Paul; and former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz. For further information, please contact: Andrew Cardozo, president, at acardozo@thePearsonCentre.ca or 613-295-1260, or go to: thepearsoncentre.ca.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Threat Landscape in Canada—The University of Ottawa and the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies host a webinar on "The COVID-19 Pandemic and

the Threat Landscape in Canada," discussing how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the national security landscape in Canada. Participants include Daniel Jean, former national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister; Dr. Leah West, assistant professor, Carleton University; Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam, assistant professor, Queen's University; Marc-André Argentino, research fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization; Dr. Bessma Momani, senior fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation; and Dr. Jean-François Bélanger, postdoctoral fellow working with Dr. Momani. Monday, April 12, 12-1:30 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

The New Climate War with Michael E. Mann—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival hosts a webinar with climate scientist Michael E. Mann who will discuss his book *The New Climate War* with Tzaporah Berman, author and international program director at Stand.Earth. Monday, April 12, 7:30-8:30 p.m. RSVP at writersfestival.org.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13

China-Canada Relations: Which Path Forward?—China's Ambassador to Canada, Peiwu Cong, will discuss "China-Canada Relations: Which Path forward?" with former Quebec premier Pierre-Marc Johnson in a webinar hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, April 13, at noon. Register at corim.qc.ca.

MONDAY, APRIL 19

Federal Budget Day—Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland will release the federal

government's budget 2021 on April 19 at 4 p.m. ET.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards—The online awards ceremony, presented by the Library and Archives Canada Foundation, and Library and Archives Canada, will be broadcast on Wednesday, April 21, at 7 p.m. (Eastern Time). The Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards were created to recognize remarkable Canadians who have made an outstanding contribution to the creation and promotion of our country's culture, literary heritage and historical knowledge. The following recipients of the 2020 LAC Scholar Awards are being honoured: Margaret Atwood, poet, novelist, literary critic, and essayist; Roch Carrier, novelist and author; Charlotte Gray, historian, author, and biographer; Serge Joyal, former senator, art collector, and philanthropist; Terry O'Reilly, broadcast producer and radio personality. Tune in on the Library and Archives Canada's English YouTube and French YouTube channels. No registration is required. The 30-minute event will feature the recipients and special guests.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22

Invitation to Bacon & Eggheads Virtual Presentation—Dr. Alexandre Blais, l'Université de Sherbrooke, will discuss the global race towards quantum technologies and Canada's contributions and imminent opportunities. This presentation will discuss the scientific foundations and the Canadian contributions behind these advances, and

highlight the opportunities for Canada in the global race towards realizing these emerging quantum technologies. Thursday, April 22, 2021, from 12:15 p.m.–1:15 p.m. EDT. There will be no charge for this online presentation. Registration: Please register by contacting Emma Brown, PAGSE Manager email: ebrown@pagse.org or tel: 613-363-7705. The presentation will be in English – Simultaneous interpretation available

THURSDAY, APRIL 29

Progress Summit 2021—Building a Caring Economy to Speed Recover, April 29, 12 p.m.–3:30 p.m. ET, https://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/progress_summit_2021

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2

Writers' Trust of Canada—The Writers' Trust of Canada will announce this year's shortlist for the 2021 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize on Wednesday, June 2, for the year's best non-fiction political book in the country. This year's party will be a digital edition and will be held in the fall of 2021. For more information, contact Julia Yu, events manager, jyu@writerstrust.com or 416-504-8222 x241.

SATURDAY, AUG. 21

65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference—One of the largest annual gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians will take place in Aug. 21–27, 2021, at the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the CPA Canada Region in Halifax. The annual flagship event will bring together over 500 Parliamentar-

Inside Directories 2021

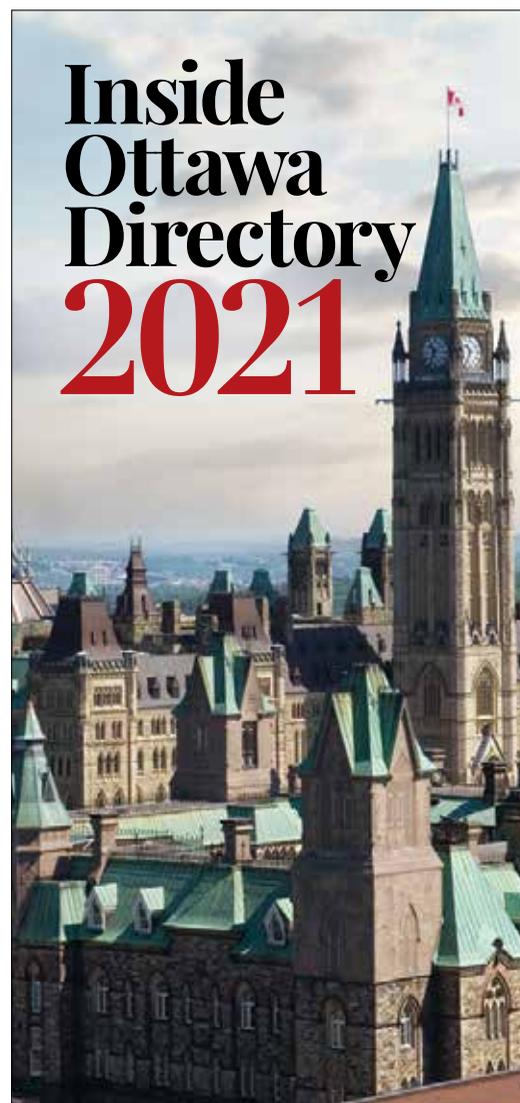
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