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THE HILL TIMES

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NEWS

Liberals' filibuster at House Affairs 'ugly to watch,' but a 'survival technique,' say pollsters and politicians

The Liberals' ongoing filibuster at the House Affairs Committee is 'ridiculous,' but Grit pundit Scott Reid says there's a point behind it, to stop protect staff from testifying. However, the whole thing could backfire on the government in the end.

BY CHELSEA NASH

A filibuster at a House Affairs Committee meeting may not be some-

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Liberal MPs Bardish Chagger, left, chair of the House Affairs Committee, and Greg Fergus, pictured March 14, 2023, before the 11-hour meeting on the Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

'Really unfortunate that NSICOP has been so politicized,' says PM's former national security adviser amid China's election interference concerns

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Following weeks of reports surrounding alleged Chinese interference into Canadian elections at all levels of government, national security experts say that although they have faith in the work expected from the National Security and Intelligence Com-

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Mike Lapointe

Heard On The Hill

No holds barred: Samara Centre for Democracy launches new podcast featuring former MPs ‘to hear in their own words what this job is really like’



Sabreena Delhon, executive director of the Samara Centre of Democracy, *Humans of the House*, the centre's new podcast, is set to launch on March 21. Photograph, image courtesy of Samara Centre for Democracy

The Samara Centre for Democracy is set to launch a new podcast, *Humans of the House*, a six-part series that features interviews from 12 former MPs who left office between 2015 and 2021.

“You know what a politician sounds like on the job. But once they leave office, that’s when they can share what’s truly on their minds,” said Sabreena Delhon,

executive director of Samara in the podcast’s trailer.

Hosted by Delhon, the podcast will feature interviews with former Liberal MPs **Adam Vaughan**, **Catherine McKenna**, who served as environment minister and infrastructure minister, **Celina Caesar-Chavannes**, former parliamentary secretary to the prime minister, **Matt DeCoursey**, **Rob-**

ert-Falcon Ouellette, and **Scott Brison**, who crossed the floor just days after the merger of the Progressive Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance in 2003, and went on to serve as Treasury Board president in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**’s first cabinet.

Former Conservative MPs **James Cumming**, **Peter Kent**—who served as minister of environ-

ment under former prime minister **Stephen Harper**—and former deputy party leader **Lisa Raitt** are also featured, as well as former NDP MPs **Cheryl Hardcastle**, **Kennedy Stewart**, and **Romeo Saganash**.

“I spoke to a dozen former Members of Parliament in Canada to hear in their own words what this job is really like. To get the big picture. Why they left. And what it cost them personally and professionally to serve their communities,” said Delhon in the trailer. “Join me, Sabreena Delhon, on a journey exploring the human side of politics. Prepare to be surprised, maybe even moved, by what really goes on in the House of Commons.”

Delhon frequently provides commentary on democratic engagement for outlets including *The Globe & Mail*, CBC Radio, and *The Toronto Star*, and has appeared as an expert witness before Parliamentary committees on matters relating to political participation.

The podcast, produced by Media Girlfriends, is set to launch March 21.

Global News on the hunt for new Hill reporter after multiple layoffs just weeks ago

Corus Entertainment, owner of Global News, is looking for a new reporter in Ottawa following the layoffs of seven people at the beginning of the month.

“Global News has posted a number of new jobs after laying off seven women (including Rachel and me), five of whom were part of the online team,” tweeted former Global News journalist **Teresa Wright** on March 15. Wright,

who was with Global News for just under a year, previously worked for three years with the Canadian Press in Ottawa as part of their parliamentary bureau, as well as *The Guardian*’s chief political for more than 11 years in Prince Edward Island.

Alongside fellow journalists **Rachel Gilmore** and **Irelyne Lavery**, among others, Wright announced she had been let go on March 2.

Canadian Journalists for Free Expression announced that Gilmore was one of three recipients of the **Tara Singh Hayer** Memorial Award earlier this year, alongside *The Toronto Star*’s **Saba Eitizaz** and *The Hill Times*’ **Erica Ifill**. The three, who have been subject to a considerable uptick in online abuse and harassment, “went on the attack of their attackers, refusing to accept harassment as part of the job,” according to the CJFE.

Lavery tweeted that “despite my personal feelings on the matter, I am very proud of the journalism I have been able to share at Global,” and that “to the sources I’ve met along the way, thank you for letting me tell your stories.”

Corus spokesperson **Cathy Paine** told *The Hill Times*’ *Politics This Morning* in a statement that attributed the layoffs to “a difficult advertising market and the ongoing regulatory imbalance for Canadian broadcasters.”

Her statement said that the rehires will fill roles “combining both broadcast and online skills,” and invited the laid-off employees to apply.

The posting for a digital broadcast journalist position at Global News Ottawa seeks a candidate who has a “proven record of breaking major stories, building a network of sources and contacts, and delivering to tight deadlines with strong editorial judgment.”

MLI to host panel discussion on “A third way for drug addiction policy in Canada”

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is set to host a panel discussion on “A third way for drug addiction policy in Canada” on Tuesday, March 21, at Kildare House in Ottawa.

Stanford University professor **Keith Humphreys**, a former White House drug policy adviser in the Bush and Obama administrations will join policy consultant **Blair Gibbs**, a former senior adviser to then-U.K. prime minister **Boris Johnson** on stage.

According to a March 14 release from Health Canada announcing over \$7-million for eight projects in Ontario through Health Canada’s Substance Use and Addictions Program, the government has invested \$350-million in over 300 projects addressing harms related to substance use since 2017.

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Monday’s photo

Liberals continue to filibuster:

Liberal MPs Greg Fergus, left, and Anita Vandenberg, pictured March 14, 2023, at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee meeting in the West Block. The committee members are looking into China’s attempts to influence the 2019 and 2021 federal election campaigns, but the Liberals are filibustering against calling the prime minister’s chief of staff, Katie Telford, to testify before the committee.

The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



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News

Trans Mountain's next private sector loan likely to be significantly more expensive than last year's 'sweetheart deal,' say observers

Former Liberal staffer Elliot Hughes says it was just fortunate timing that the pipeline company secured its first private loan last year while interest rates were still low, and not preferential treatment from the banks.

BY KEVIN PHILIPUPILLAI

A financial report reveals private lenders only charged the Trans Mountain Corporation 1.85 per cent interest on its initial \$10-billion private-sector loan, in what one environmental advocate describes as preferential treatment for the government-owned pipeline company. But Trans Mountain will need billions more to cover the latest cost overrun, says Eugene Kung, a staff lawyer at the advocacy group West Coast Environmental Law, and interest rates have risen significantly in the past year.

Trans Mountain will need to borrow an additional \$9.5-billion from private lenders to cover the latest cost increase, according to Kung, who has studied financial statements from Trans Mountain and from the Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV)—the Crown corporation that acts as the government's holding company for Trans Mountain.

Trans Mountain announced on March 10 that the cost estimate to complete the expansion project had risen to \$30.9-billion, up from \$21.4-billion in February 2022 and \$5.4-billion in 2013. Finance Canada followed up by announcing that the expansion project remains commercially viable, and the company will seek private financing to complete the remaining 20 per cent of construction.

Kung questioned whether Canada's biggest banks would be willing to offer another "sweetheart deal" of 1.85 per cent interest for the next round of financing.

According to the most recent quarterly report from CDEV, Trans Mountain is paying 1.85 per cent interest to a group of private lenders for its April 2022 loan,



Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's Feb. 18, 2022, announcement that the federal government would provide no further public money to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project came at a time when interest rates for private sector loans were still low. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

plus a 3.15 per cent fee to the government for providing a loan guarantee. That adds up to a 5.0 per cent total rate on a one-year \$10-billion loan—or \$500-million.

Kung said the most recent quarterly report from CDEV indicates that Trans Mountain was on pace to spend the \$10-billion by the time the one-year loan term expires on April 29, meaning it is "likely already in conversations" with Canada's major banks to obtain additional financing.

"And then the question is, do the banks continue to give them preferential treatment and sweetheart deals?" he asked.

"Even if it's not 1.85 per cent, anything below prime is a slap in the face to Canadians," he said, given ongoing discussions about the financial industry's role in addressing climate change. The prime rate at Canada's major banks was 3.2 per cent when Trans Mountain secured its April 2022 loan, and has since risen to 6.7 per cent.

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) released new guidelines on March 7 about how financial institutions should manage and disclose climate-related financial risks. That includes a requirement to report, by the end of 2025, on how the projects they invest in contribute to overall greenhouse gas emissions.

An official from the Department of Finance re-iterated in a March 17 email that "the government will spend no additional public money on the project and does not intend to be the long term owner." The official did not respond to a question about whether Trans Mountain or the government would seek a comparably low rate for additional third-party financing.

An accompanying email from CDEV said the 1.85 per cent borrowing cost charged by the banks was based on "their cost of funds plus any lending margin during the [third quarter of 2022]," while the government's 3.15 per cent loan guarantee fee was calculated so it would set Trans Mountain's total borrowing costs at 5.0 per cent, which is the same rate the government charged for the earlier loans of public money.

'Just fortuitous' Trans Mountain secured loan while interest rates were low, says former Liberal staffer

Elliot Hughes, who worked in then-finance minister Bill Morneau's office through three federal budgets, told *The Hill Times* he didn't agree with the characterization of the 1.85 per cent interest rate for Trans Mountain as a "sweetheart deal" from the banks. He pointed out that the banks would have set their rate for the loan at a time when the Bank of Canada's benchmark interest rate was much lower than the current 4.5 per cent.

"It looks like a pretty good deal now, based on the rates being way higher," said Hughes, now a senior adviser at Summa Strategies. "But I think the fact that they got this done before [interest rates] went up is, in a sense, just fortuitous."

The Bank of Canada's key interest rate was at 0.25 per cent when Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) announced on Feb. 18, 2022, the government would not spend any more public money on the

Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, and the company would therefore have to obtain further financing from the private sector.

The central bank's key rate had risen to one per cent by April 29, 2022, when Trans Mountain secured the \$10-billion loan from an unnamed group of private lenders. Finance Canada has declined to disclose the identity of these lenders, but the *National Observer* reported on May 31, 2022, that it was Canada's six largest banks—TD, RBC, CIBC, BMO, Scotiabank, and National Bank, with TD serving in a co-ordinating role.

The Hill Times has reported that the government's decision to change Trans Mountain's status from that of an agent to a non-agent Crown corporation days before the initial private-sector loan was finalized on April 29, 2022, meant the loan did not require parliamentary approval.

Hughes said it was highly unlikely the banks will give Trans Mountain the same low rate in the future. "Whenever that next tranche of lending happens, the interest rate is going to be a lot higher, for sure," he said. "That's just going to be the math at that point."

Hughes said the Trans Mountain expansion project is one of many projects across the economy that is going to "feel the pinch" over the next few years given the sudden increase in interest rates.

Hughes said the negative headlines about Trans Mountain cost increases will cause the government "short term pain," but said he could not see the government stepping away from the expansion project at this point, given that the project is "80 or 85 per cent done."

"There's a sense of inevitability with any large infrastructure project, especially these days, that costs spiral and can overrun," said Hughes. "Big energy projects like this tend to go up and come in a little bit more than what you might estimate. It's obviously something that the government would like to avoid, and maybe a bit of a learning opportunity."

'Perhaps the largest boondoggle in Canadian history,' says pipeline opponent of latest cost increase

The government's 2018 purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline has been deeply unpopular among the Bloc Québécois, NDP, and Green Party. By

contrast, the Conservatives have described the pipeline expansion as an infrastructure project that is in the national interest, and have instead criticized the Liberals for allowing interruptions to the regulatory and approvals process that they say have contributed to cost overruns.

Sven Biggs, Canadian oil and gas program director for the environmental organization Stand.Earth, said in an email that "at \$30.9-billion, this pipeline has become perhaps the largest boondoggle in Canadian history."

"For that kind of money, the federal government could have more than doubled the amount of renewable electricity generated in the country," said Biggs.

Environmental advocates have been skeptical of Freeland's February 2022 promise that the government would not spend any further public money on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, pointing out they consider the government's loan guarantees to be a form of financial support for the project. They have also pointed to the fact that the government advanced \$1.6-billion to Trans Mountain through Export Development Canada to bridge the gap between Freeland's Feb. 18, 2022, announcement and the finalizing of the April 29, 2022, private loan agreement.

The CDEV quarterly report says Trans Mountain paid back the government's \$1.6-billion advance on May 2, 2022, out of its new \$10-billion private loan.

An October 2022 report from West Coast Environmental Law, authored by economist Robyn Allan, argued the government is laying the groundwork to write off part or all of the \$17-billion debt the Trans Mountain Corporation will owe to the government by the end of 2023.

Given that long-term contracts only allow Trans Mountain to pass on 20 per cent of additional construction costs to its customers—the oil companies who pay to use the pipeline—Kung estimated that the most recent \$9.5-billion cost increase will add almost \$8-billion more to Allan's earlier \$17-billion estimate of Trans Mountain's overall debt load.

The existing \$10-billion private sector loan expires on April 29, and can be extended for six months, which would take it to Oct. 29. Trans Mountain's most recent projections say it aims to complete construction by the end of 2023 and have the expanded pipeline be operational by the first quarter of 2024.

The government has previously said it does not plan to be the long-term owner of the Trans Mountain pipeline, and that it will look to sell part or all of the completed pipeline after construction is complete and the project has been "derisked."

Allan has previously speculated that derisking could be a reference to Trans Mountain's debt load, and predicted the government is laying the groundwork to forgive part or all of this debt in order to lower the pipeline's eventual sale price and make it more appealing to potential buyers.

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The Hill Times

AN OPEN LETTER TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER & MINISTER OF FINANCE CHRYSTIA FREELAND

NOW IS THE TIME TO PROTECT CANADIAN BREWERY WORKER JOBS

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

On behalf of the union brewery workers of Canada, we are writing to demand that you freeze federal taxes on beer at 2022 levels in your upcoming budget.

Your government has already raised beer taxes six times since 2017. Beer taxes in Canada are already the highest in the G7.

Canada is experiencing the highest cost of living increases in a generation. This is squeezing family budgets and making workers in the brewing sector nervous about their jobs. Using your upcoming budget to announce a freeze on federal beer taxes is the single most important thing you can do for our workers and their families.

Please, listen to our request and freeze federal beer taxes. Our workers and their families are counting on you.



News

Johnston reprises role as ‘adult in the room’ as special rapporteur on foreign interference, but a ‘big question mark’ remains on timeline and scope, say observers

Political scientist Lori Turnbull says the government would have been aware that David Johnston’s connections to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation may be questioned, but the ‘strength of the appointment’ meant the government was willing to ‘risk manage whatever mud can be flung.’

BY IAN CAMPBELL

At a time of rising tensions on alleged foreign interference in Canada’s federal elections, David Johnston’s selection for the role of special rapporteur shows he has “emerged as the adult in the room” who Canada turns to whenever there is a “political quagmire that needs sorting,” says political scientist Lori Turnbull.

“I think he has such impeccable credentials, and has served in the highest office in the country,” said Turnbull in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “He’s somebody who has been appointed by different governments of different partisan stripes, out of a recognition of what he brings to the table, and so he has an unusual grasp of the kinds of issues that can face the country.”

On March 15, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced that Johnston, former governor general from 2010 to 2017, would take on the role of special rapporteur on foreign interference in elections. The role is one of several measures Trudeau announced on March 6, with his government facing growing pressure to take action after leaked CSIS documents alleged a plot by the Chinese government to influence the 2019 and 2021 Canadian federal elections.

Johnston has served in a number of non-partisan roles throughout his career, including

On March 15, former governor-general David Johnston was announced as the special rapporteur on foreign interference in elections. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright



drafting the terms of reference for the public inquiry into the airbus affair at the request of then-prime minister Stephen Harper. Most recently, Johnston was commissioner for federal leadership debates, a role he will step down from to become special rapporteur.

Johnston’s appointment drew praise from many corners, but strong criticism from others, as some observers and opposition politicians pointed to ties between the Johnston and Trudeau families. Trudeau has previously described Johnston as a family friend, and Johnston is a member of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation—an organization that has become involved in the foreign interference issue because of a \$200,000 donation it received in 2014, which it is now returning, after reports alleged that funding had a potential connection to Beijing.

Turnbull said she does not accept that this constitutes an actual conflict of interest. She suggested the government must have determined any perception of conflict was manageable, and that Johnston’s credentials outweighed the downside.

“He’s not in a conflict because of his role in the Trudeau foundation,” said Turnbull. “Is it a perceived conflict? Is it something that there’s a possible political liability there, because he’s seen

as part of the Trudeau fold? Well, possibly, but clearly, because of the strength of the appointment, the government is willing to manage that. They’re willing to risk manage whatever mud can be flung.”

Pollster Greg Lyle said that most of his public opinion research to date on the foreign interference issue has found views tend to go along partisan lines, with Liberal supporters believing the government is handling it effectively, and Conservative supporters indicating the opposite.



Pollster Greg Lyle said Johnston’s appointment may see a ‘crosscut’ of support across party lines, but not be a ‘silver bullet’ for all Conservative supporters. Photograph courtesy of Greg Lyle

He said the fact that Johnston has previously been appointed to roles by Harper may create a more interesting “crosscut” in terms of how this appointment is viewed. While it may not be a “silver bullet” for all Conservative supporters, said Lyle, for some of them it may make a difference.

Marjory LeBreton, a former Conservative Senate leader under prime minister Harper, and who has served Conservative leaders going back to John Diefenbaker, expressed strong confidence in Johnston, calling him “the epitome of decency, honesty and loyalty to Canada.”

“He has faithfully served the people of Canada in many capacities and has the ability to stay above the partisan fray and objectively assess what’s fact and what’s hearsay,” she told *The Hill Times*. “He will do this in the interest of Canada and Canadians, and not be swayed by political gamesmanship.”

Former NDP MP Peggy Nash said she also recognizes the strength of Johnston’s credentials, but questioned whether his ties to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and family could cause an issue of perception.

“I think David Johnson is someone who is very widely, if not universally, respected,” Nash told *The Hill Times*. “He’s got a

long career of public service. And he is seen as fair and ethical.”

Nash said her concerns were “not in any way to impugn Mr. Johnston” but to “flag that any person in that position needs to be seen as completely removed from even the faint possibility of a potential conflict.”

She said that’s why her criticism falls to the prime minister for his selection.

“It’s not a reflection of Mr. Johnson, but rather a reflection of a perception, that, I think, is the responsibility of the prime minister, because he is making the appointment,” Nash said.

The Hill Times also reached out to several veteran former Liberal MPs, but none were available for comment.

Scope and timeline remain ‘a big question mark’

Lyle said Johnston may need to address these issues in order to be effective in his new role.

“I think he has to say, ‘I understand there’s the appearance of conflict, but here’s the reality, and why I feel that it won’t impact how I approach this,’” said Lyle.

However, Turnbull suggested Johnston will be most effective by not engaging in this dialogue. She said the concerns being raised about Johnston are of a partisan nature, and that while this is the purview of opposition parties to raise such concerns, Johnston must not respond.

“He will not, I’m willing to bet. And he should not,” she said. “It is not his job to, frankly, get involved in this partisan back and forth, which has nothing to do with him, and has everything to do with the fact that the Conservatives want ... to question the integrity of the government’s appointments.”

“I think it would make Johnston’s position untenable if he was to entertain partisan attacks on him. The whole point is that he is not partisan,” said Turnbull.

Several observers noted that the scope and timeline of Johnston’s role is still to be defined, and this will impact how his role plays out going forward.

“That’ll be a big issue,” said Lyle. “If he actually helps to design his own scope, and that scope does not deal with the questions of: ‘What did the Prime Minister know, and when did he know it?’ Then this thing’s off the rails.”

Lyle said the prime minister has “gone way out of his way to duck” those two questions, and the opposition will continue pressing for answers on them.

Nash said the matters of scope and timeline remain a “big question mark.”

“You’d think before they announced a special rapporteur, they would have had the who, the what, where, when all worked out ahead of time. But I guess it sounds like they’re kind of making these decisions as they roll them out,” she said.

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Real People. Real Stories.

Meet Joey, one of our Canadian scientists. He is one of the many people at Gilead committed to improving the lives of people living with HIV around the world.

Decades of scientific innovation, community partnership and public health advocacy transformed HIV from an inevitably fatal disease to one that for many can be well controlled and prevented. But, at Gilead, we believe we must go further. We continue to champion innovations, support access programs and drive collaborative partnerships that support the long-term wellness of all people impacted by HIV. Whether it's researching how medicines work in priority populations (such as Indigenous peoples and women), or how innovative HIV prevention and treatment strategies can drive more equitable HIV care, our goal is to bring safe and effective therapies to everyone who needs them.

The Gilead Alberta facility is involved in the development of both processes and analytical methods for many of the company's worldwide research programs. With 370 highly-trained scientists and technical personnel, the Edmonton-based team manufactures active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) to support clinical trials of investigational Gilead therapies, and leverages ground-breaking technologies to refine and improve manufacturing processes for production of both clinical and commercial products. Their

ability to perform is critical to Gilead's success and, most importantly, to the millions of people around the world who rely on our medicines.

With a decade of clinical research experience, Joey Su joined the Gilead team in 2008, and took on the role of API lead for an investigational HIV medicine. Joey's journey with Gilead started to get interesting as he, along with a dedicated team, followed in the footsteps of many others in the company who have focused on improving lives, and began to develop a manufacturing process and appropriate controls for this compound. While a great deal of what we work on will not ultimately be successful, this compound continued to show promise, was eventually filed and approved, and is in commercial use today.

"Right from the start, the whole team recognized that continuous scientific innovation is the key to supporting the global goal of ending the HIV epidemic by 2030, so we are committed to advancing our development and manufacturing efforts every single day," said Joey, Su, API lead at Gilead Sciences. "Through the innovative approaches we use here in Alberta, we hope to continue to address the

evolving needs of the people impacted by HIV not just in Canada, but all over the world."

Joey believes one of the reasons for the group's continued success is that it is such a great place to work, with state-of-the-art facilities and talented people skilled at developing the right manufacturing processes for optimal clinical and commercial purposes. It is a unique, fully Canadian operation that has a growth mindset and cohesive team culture.

Joey also knows there's always more to do. The Alberta team continues to be committed to research in HIV and to Gilead's vision of creating possible. With a few victories under their belt, they plan to use the knowledge, insights, and learnings to not just treat some of the world's most challenging public health threats – but to help achieve the global elimination goals.

Decades of scientific innovation, partnership, and advocacy have helped transform HIV from a fatal diagnosis to one that could be managed chronically. Joey, and all of his Gilead colleagues, will continue their commitment to improving the lives of people living with HIV around the world.

Editorial

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Editorial

Is the Liberals' House Affairs Committee filibuster a crack in this minority Parliament?

It's all fun and games, until a House committee meeting goes on for 21 hours.

As the Liberals filibuster the House Affairs Committee to prevent the prime minister's chief of staff Kate Telford from appearing as a witness, one can't help but notice that games of parliamentary process aren't often a good sign for a minority government.

Think back to the last election. At the time, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau went to newly sworn-in Governor General Mary Simon and asked her to dissolve Parliament. The reason given: Parliament had become a toxic and dysfunctional place at a time when the government was making big decisions about the pandemic recovery and the economy.

The average minority government in Canada lasts about two years, a point which this 44th Parliament is quickly approaching.

The Liberals weren't always going to lose the vote on bringing Telford before the House Affairs Committee. When Conservative MP Michael Cooper first brought that motion before the committee, the NDP voted in line with the Liberals, agreeing that ministerial responsibility meant that staffers should not be called to testify. Cooper accused the NDP at the time of propping up the Liberals given its supply-and-confidence deal.

However, the NDP changed its tune after another story about China's alleged interference in Canada's elections broke from Global News' Sam Cooper.

Cooper reported that three weeks before the 2019 election, "national security officials allegedly gave an urgent, classified briefing to senior aides from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office, warning them that one of their candidates was part of a Chinese foreign interference network."

The mention of senior aides being briefed was good enough for the NDP to change its mind. If it was the supply-and-confidence motion that was keeping the NDP onside with the Liberals on this issue, perhaps there's a crack in the foundation there now.

As reported by Global News' David Akin, the Conservatives are going to use their opposition day in the House of Commons to put forward a motion there to request that Telford appear before Parliament.

As Akin noted on March 17, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was asked whether he would make the opposition day motion a confidence vote, Trudeau neglected to provide a direct answer. If he does, it will be a real test for the Liberals' confidence-and-supply deal with the NDP on an issue on which the NDP has already expressed its disagreement with the governing Liberals.

Either way, a dysfunctional Parliament that gets bogged down in games of parliamentary procedure doesn't likely have a long lifespan.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Alberta Premier Smith should spend wisely, sustainably, create green jobs, writes Tom McElroy

Re: "Feds sustainable jobs plan a good start, but too soft on emissions reductions, say environmental experts," (*The Hill Times*, March 8, by Jesse Cnockaert). In this article about addressing the climate crisis by moving to a sustainable energy system, a quote from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith clearly shows that she has been sleeping in school. Smith says that a program to roll back fossil fuels will impact Alberta's need to increase the use of natural gas to produce electricity. Natural gas is largely methane, CH₄. The 'C' in CH₄ is carbon. When it is oxidized—that means burned—it produces carbon dioxide, the problem greenhouse gas that is fuelling the climate crisis.

When it comes to assets to reduce CO₂ emissions and to make green energy, Alberta is one of the most blessed provinces in Canada. In fact, there is a long history of alternative energy production in Alberta that has been deliberately stymied by the fossil fuel industry and its government cheerleaders. It is the Pincher

Creek wind farm, about 200 km south of Calgary, that was the first installation in Canada to send energy onto the electrical grid in 1993. Contracts let in 2018 by the Alberta government were based on a cost of electricity below 4 cents per kWh.

Alberta is one of the best places in Canada for the development of renewable energy with an abundance of clear sunny days and near-constant westerly winds. In addition, it has access to abundant water power (including pumped-water energy storage) and geothermal power. Alberta has the possibility to generate hydrogen with green energy for storage, industrial consumption and export. Premier Smith was recently bragging about her budget and the full coffers in Alberta. She should start using that money wisely, and in a sustainable manner. Stop the unsustainable polluting of the environment and make a bright future with green jobs for your citizens.

Tom McElroy
Toronto, Ont.

Who politicians meet with matters: Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

Re: "Anderson meeting shows Conservatives give a nod and a wink to far-right elements, says anti-hate group founder" (*The Hill Times*, March 6, 2023). Who politicians meet with matters. It's becoming increasingly apparent that far-right politics are gaining a foothold in Canada. While this article mentions a recent meeting between Conservative MPs and far-right Israeli real estate developer Chaim Silverstein, this only scratches the surface of connections between Canadian officials and Israeli extremists.

In February, Trade Minister Mary Ng met with Ofir Akunis, a minister in the most far-right government in Israel's history, and an anti-Palestinian extremist who advocates for annexing the occupied West Bank.

More recently, Senate Speaker George Furey and Senators Don Plett and Patti

Laboucane-Benson met with members of Israel's far-right government on a trip to Israel. Of particular concern was Furey's meeting with Knesset Speaker MK Amir Ohana (Likud), who is on record as saying that Muslims have a "murderous culture" and that Palestinians are merely "guests" in their country.

Let's face it: politicians need to be more discerning about with whom they rub shoulders. Far-right Israeli extremism is dangerous as it has a real-world impact on the lives and safety of Palestinians under Israel's regime of oppression, which human rights groups describe as apartheid. Canadian officials must stop giving them a pass.

Jason Toney
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME)
Montreal, Que.



EDITORIAL

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Johnston has his work cut out for him

Foreign interference allegations are not limited to China. Recent reports of Russian interference have also surfaced. Politics is always a messy business. With identity politics, it will get even messier, writes Sheila Copps.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Surprise, surprise: the first political casualty of the Chinese interference allegations was an Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP. Vincent Ke resigned last week from the PC caucus, despite characterizing the allegations as “false and defamatory.”



David Johnston, pictured in 2016 when he was governor general of Canada. The PM appointed Johnston the last week special rapporteur to look into allegations of foreign meddling in Canada's last two federal elections. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Ke tweeted his departure. “While the Global News allegations about me are false and defamatory, I do not want to be a distraction to the government and take away from the good work Premier Ford is doing for the province of Ontario.”

Global has been at the forefront of leaked stories about financial links between the Chinese government and

Chinese-Canadian members of parliament.

Leaks are reported to be coming from inside the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

The RCMP has been investigating the leak's source, according to other news reports.

During last year's provincial election, the Ontario Provincial Police was asked by the Liberal Party of Ontario to investigate the

incorporation of 15 companies or associations associated with Ke.

Ke established the corporations after his election to the legislature in 2018.

At the time, Ontario Premier Doug Ford defended Ke, saying that several incorporations included non-profit cultural associations.

Ford defended his MPP's exit last week in a statement. “Not

proven, they [allegations] are serious and deserve his full and undivided attention as he works to clear his name.”

Identity politics will also take centre stage in upcoming federal investigations into electoral foreign interference.

By choosing former governor-general David Johnston to head a probe into foreign meddling, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has managed to secure an individual with impeccable credentials.

Appointed governor general by then-prime minister Stephen Harper, Johnston managed to secure broad public support during his seven-year tenure.

However, his nomination was criticized by the Conservatives because, after retirement, he volunteered for the Trudeau Foundation.

Johnston has his work cut out for him. Foreign interference allegations are not limited to China.

Recent reports of Russian interference have also surfaced.

Politics is always a messy business.

With identity politics, it will get even messier.

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

The Hill Times

Playing the game of attack and counter-attack

Justin Trudeau is trying to turn the tables on Pierre Poilievre, he wants to put him on the defensive and put him into a denying mode. So yeah, in politics, insults are often underpinned by communication tactics. It's just how you play the game.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—If you're following the news emanating from Ottawa, you'll know



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre have been going at it lately—hammer and tong—exchanging insults bordering on the savage. How you view this sort of rough-and-tumble political combat depends on your perspective, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre have been going at it lately—hammer and tong—exchanging insults bordering on the savage.

How you view this sort of rough-and-tumble political combat depends on your perspective.

Some, for example, see it as a sad commentary on our civil discourse.

I saw a headline recently in *The Toronto Star*, for instance, declaring, “The fight between Justin Trudeau

and Pierre Poilievre is taking Canadian politics to a dark place.”

On the other hand, however, if you're a student of political communications, the Trudeau/Poilievre rumble is an opportunity to see how rhetorical war is waged.

To see what I mean, let's go back to when this feud erupted.

It all started after news was leaked to the media indicating China's communist government was seeking to interfere in Canadian elections, basically to help the Liberals.

Reacting to this bombshell report, Poilievre hit hard at Trudeau, saying to the media that Canada's intelligence community was “so concerned about how the prime minister is acting against Canada's interest and in favour of a foreign dictatorship's interests, that they are actually releasing this information publicly.”

Clearly, that's a vicious attack. So why would Poilievre take such a controversial stance?

Well, it's political communications 101: he wants to put Trudeau on the defensive, he wants him to get up in the House of Commons and say something like, “I'm not helping a foreign dictatorship.”

After all, there's an old saying in politics, “if you're denying, you're dying.”

This concept was well-illustrated in a movie called *Ides of March*, where a political consultant, played by Ryan Gosling, learns that his candidate's rival in a presidential primary race may have invested in a Liberian diamond mine.

Not knowing whether the mine story is true or false, Gosling's character still releases the information to the media, justifying this action by saying, “I want to hear him denying it let them spend the next day telling the *Post* that he doesn't own a diamond mine in Liberia.”

Anyway, given that Trudeau has so far been handling the whole Chinese meddling in our elections story, so ineptly (as one commentator put it, “for a man who rode to power on the horse of accountability, Trudeau

is acting like a cowboy who can't find the stirrups”) it's no wonder Poilievre is seeking to deliver a knockout punch.

Of course, Trudeau knows perfectly well what Poilievre is doing, so he's come up with a few counterattacks.

First off, he's playing the victim card.

In responding to Poilievre's attacks Trudeau said, “To suggest that anyone in this House isn't devoted to serving Canadians, and keeping those who serve Canada in dangerous positions safe, is quite disgusting.”

This is a non-defensive stance which puts Poilievre in a bad light.

Secondly, Trudeau is fighting fire with fire, launching his own savage attacks against Poilievre.

As a matter of fact, one time in the House after Poilievre asked him about China, Trudeau demanded the Conservative leader apologize because three of his MPs met with a controversial German politician.

Said Trudeau “I do want to point out another issue that I know is preoccupying for Canadians. Just recently, Conservative Party MPs knowingly dined with a far-right German politician.”

Of course, Trudeau is trying to turn the tables on Poilievre, he wants to put him on the defensive and put him into a denying mode.

So yeah, in politics, insults are often underpinned by communication tactics.

It's just how you play the game.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Politics



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. Incumbent governments are not just incompetent boobs who are mucking things up and ought to be shown the door. They are now the 'enemy,' who must not only be replaced, but wiped out, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, and illustration by Neena Singhal

This ain't no party, but populism is destroying our federal politics

Something fundamental, and dangerous, has happened to the normally partisan world of politics, with all its warts. Populism has arrived like an 18-wheeler crashing into a bridge abutment, scattering its ugly cargo of racism, xenophobia, and trumped up distrust of government and government institutions all over the road.

Michael
Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Opposition politics has always been the process of casting the appropriate lights and shadows over the other guy's record—and the facts.

No surprise there.

The job of opposition is to oppose, so the characterization of incumbent governments has almost never been what might be called “good-faith” criticism. There is little credit for the good things a government

does, and a hyperbolic focus on its clunkers. That's fair enough: politics isn't Sunday school.

But something fundamental, and dangerous, has happened to the normally partisan world of politics, with all its warts. Populism has arrived like an 18-wheeler crashing into a bridge abutment, scattering its ugly cargo of racism, xenophobia, and trumped up distrust of government and government institutions all over the road.

Now incumbent governments are not just incompetent boobs who are mucking things up and ought to be shown the door. They are now the “enemy,” who must not only be replaced, but wiped out. Now the frontal attack on incumbent government is not sim-

ply a matter of offering voters a skewed version of its record. Now it is about whipping people into a frenzy of hatred and distrust of the status quo—and of individual politicians. It is rage set to political slogans, it's anger on steroids.

Donald Trump invented what could be called the “everything-is-broken” narrative, which has been picked up in this country by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre.

In the United States, that narrative has branded U.S. President Joe Biden as an illegitimate president and an “enemy” of the people.

There is no mention of Biden's estimable legislative record of bipartisan achievement in a divided Congress—the American Rescue Plan to fight COVID 19; the trillion-dollar infrastructure deal; the first gun control law in 30 years; uniting NATO in support for Ukraine against Russia's invasion; or the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 to help fund the manufacture of microchips in the United States, rather than relying on China.

All the better to portray Biden as a doddering octogenarian with a corrupt son.

Likewise in Canada: Poilievre has characterized Justin Trudeau

as the foppish son of privilege, who has led the country into massive decline across the board, from the economy and national unity, to the loss of personal freedoms.

There is no mention of Trudeau's considerable successes as one of the longest serving leaders in the 37-country Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; no mention of the government's landmark national deal on funding for health care that even Alberta endorsed; no mention of the government's \$10-a-day national childcare initiative; no reference to Canada's stalwart support of Ukraine in its life and death struggle with Russian invaders; and not a word about the Investing in Canada Plan, which will pump billions of dollars into infrastructure over the next decade.

All the better to reduce the Trudeau record to blackface and being soft on China's interference in Canadian elections.

In Canada, there is a stubborn problem with Poilievre's patently false claim that everything is broken. It is called the facts.

Here's one of them. Every year, *U.S. News and World Report* assesses 78 nations and comes up with a Best Countries list. They

clearly didn't get the Poilievre memo. Canada was rated the No. 1 country in 2021, and the third best in 2022. The assessment is based on quality of life and social purpose, a good job market, concern for human rights, and non-corrupt governance.

Despite its obvious and massive intellectual dishonesty, populist politics persists. Sadly, it even prospers. That's because many political operatives see it as an effective tool for winning power. At the recent Progress Summit at the Broadbent Institute, the former campaign manager for Bernie Sanders' presidential bid had some advice for NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. Capitalize on the righteous anger of working class people.

What does that mean?

According to one academic who attended the conference, it was a call to “speak a common language about what resonates” with regular Canadians. That's one way of putting it. But it sounds to me a lot like telling them what they want to hear. Go after the same people they are angry at. Fan the flames of their grievances. Make it emotional, not rational.

That, after all, is what the serial liars over at Fox News do every night in the United States. In the wake of the collapse of the Silicon Valley Bank, all of them—led by Tucker Carlson—blamed the demise of the bank on a \$73-million loan to Black Lives Matter.

Fox broadcast that message all day on March 14. It was widely picked up on conservative social media. Just one problem; SLB didn't lend a penny to Black Lives Matter. Like Trump's Big Lie, which Carlson and Company endorsed publicly while privately admitting that it was false, the facts about the alleged SVB loan to BLM didn't matter.

Why? Because next to Christmas and loneliness, lying has become the biggest business in America, thanks to Donald Trump. The latest ratings for cable news stations have just come out.

Guess what?

Despite the humiliating revelations about lies for profit at Fox News, including Carlson's private assertion that Trump was a demonic force, Murdoch's mendacity team blew out the competition. Fox had the top eight shows in the hours from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Carlson himself had the No. 1-rated cable show, slaughtering the diligent Anderson Cooper over at CNN, with an audience four times as large. As Friedrich Nietzsche put it, “Best seller, ill-smeller.”

I don't know whether Jagmeet Singh's bespoke suits connect with working-class people. I don't know if a Timex would be more popular with voters than his Rolex. But I know this. The poison of populism is not the way for the NDP or any other party to achieve power—except the brand that is not worth having.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

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Politics

While fake scandals roil Ottawa politics, the real ones continue

A tailings pond full of toxic effluent has been leaking out of Imperial Oil's Kearl project since last May and the company never bothered to tell the Indigenous people whose land, fishing, and livelihood were imperilled. 'Very worrisome,' that Alberta regulators didn't alert their federal counterparts at once, said Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—Official Ottawa—politicians, media, retired senior intelligence officials, and lobbyists—think they have a good scandal by the tail and they are wagging it to death. It concerns amateurish Chinese interference in our elections in recent years, and, if you are Pierre Poilievre, Justin Trudeau's unseemly pandering to a foreign government and rampant cronyism.

The latest wrinkle was the full-throated Conservative-led attack on the appointment of former governor-general David Johnston—as milquetoast a moustache-twirling villain as you could find—as Trudeau's special "rapporteur" (Poilievre says the word with a theatrical sneer) on the aging-out China spy drama. Nice guy, by all accounts, but after a few pages of Johnston's cheery disquisition, the entire country will have forgotten what the issue was.

And Poilievre and posse will be shouting about something else: misuse of the jet used to carry the prime minister abroad, or the cost of napkins used during European Union president Ursula von der Leyen's recent visit, perhaps? (Poilievre doesn't seem to like her much, either.)



Environment Minister Stephen Guilbeault, pictured recently in a Hill scrum. The recent leak at Imperial's Kearl site, located about 70 kilometres north of Fort McMurray, is only the tip of a much larger scandal: the power the fossil fuel industry continues to wield over the country's governments and regulators, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Among other things, the amount of attention paid to relatively marginal matters is a reminder of how disconnected official Ottawa is from the rest of the country. Because there is a real scandal unfolding—or, at least, the latest iteration of an enduring scandal—in a section of northern Alberta bush that few MPs, journalists (including this one), or television panel experts have ever visited.

The story: a tailings pond full of toxic effluent has been leaking out of Imperial Oil's Kearl project since last May and although the company notified the regulator, it never bothered to tell the Indigenous people whose land, fishing, and livelihood were imperilled. Nor was the neighbouring Northwest Territories government informed of the leak at the site, about 70 kilometres north of Fort McMurray. A communications error, Imperial said, after the news finally emerged. And we're fixing the problem.

To compound the wrong, Alberta's energy regulator knew what was going on at Kearl from the beginning and never told the federal environment department (or anyone else), until the provincial agency finally published an environment protection order against Imperial on Feb. 6 about another tailings pond leak from the site. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) officials weren't told directly about that separate spill either.

Imperial says none of the ongoing gush of contaminated water made it from surrounding wetlands into a small lake, or two

nearby river tributaries, where local people fish. Some scientists say that is unlikely, which is the polite term for errant nonsense; it is inevitable that groundwater will seep into fresh water and the volume, and length of time, the toxic sludge flowed suggests major injury to the land and its human and animal inhabitants.

"Very worrisome," that Alberta regulators didn't alert their federal counterparts at once, said Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault. "Unfortunate" incidents, which suggest the "design of the holding ponds is not quite where it needed to be," said Alberta Energy Minister Peter Guthrie.

"I think it's fair to qualify this [incident] as contempt," said Bloc Québécois MP Monique Pauzé, more precisely. Alberta NDP MP Blake Desjarlais wondered: "Would an executive of Imperial Oil be happy to eat a fish that his tailings pond went into?" And Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, who knows a real scandal when she sees one, was succinct and correct: "This is an outrageous act of environmental racism."

So politicians did react and the issue got good play in what we'll call the "new" media: the *National Observer*, the *Narwhal*, the environment blog *DeSmog*, and various progressive online sites. But the leader of the official opposition was clearly not scandalized, and his MPs were not exactly lining up at the mics to denounce this most recent environmental disaster. And it barely moved the needle on the Parliament Hill scandal metre.

Big Oil's many friends in politics left the cleanup to Alberta Premier Danielle Smith who criticized Imperial's poor communications, then repeated corporate talking points: "I'm pleased to report that none of this spill got into the tributaries, which means it didn't get into the river, which means it didn't get into the drinking water."

The Kearl incident, however, is only the tip of a much larger scandal: the power the fossil fuel industry continues to wield over the country's governments and regulators. The Trudeau government likes to portray itself as green—and has made commendable progress in nudging the auto sector towards electrification, for example. Meanwhile, on the Mr. Hyde side, the feds continue to approve new fossil fuel projects (Bay du Nord, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador; an Indigenous-owned floating LNG platform in Kitimat, B.C.).

They are also, of course, building the TMX pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific Coast, helping pay to clean up the mess oil companies leave behind and shovelling billions, by way of subsidies, to a profitable sector.

And it is all leading in one direction: increased production of Canadian oil and gas at a time when the responsible world is embracing alternatives and the dire consequences of climate change become more stark. Scandal, anyone?

In fact, the stated objective of the Pathways Alliance, a lobby for the six largest oil companies operating in Alberta, is to keep

Canadian oil flowing for decades. If the companies get to net-zero emissions by 2050, as promised, they argue that Canadian oil will be the cleanest on offer and domestic production will flourish. What this fails to consider is that 80 per cent of emissions associated with a barrel of crude oil comes when it is burned, typically in a car engine. Even if production becomes emissions-free—a huge if—the oil produced will increase greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere. It seems obvious.

As to getting to net zero by 2050, the industry expects taxpayers to take the risks while it reaps record profits (\$35.6-billion in 2022), most of it going to share buy-backs and dividends and only a tiny fraction (\$500-million) into greening its operations. It is banking on carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS), but wants governments to pay up to \$16.5-billion for phase one—which sounds risky, given the uncertain future of oil, globally, and the CCUS's failure to significantly reduce emissions in pilot projects.

Then there is the Trans Mountain pipeline, now 80 per cent complete, expected to cost \$30-billion, considerably more than the \$4.5-billion the federal government paid in 2018 to a Texas-based company that couldn't unload it fast enough. Few observers expect the pipeline to ever pay for itself—never mind return taxpayers' huge investment.

Why isn't this scandal dominating headlines? And what about the fact that all this corporate welfare—more, if you include billions in subsidies for orphan well reclamation and methane containment—isn't notably reducing emissions? Indeed, they are going up. According to recent figures from the Canadian Climate Institute, 2021 emissions increased by 2.8 per cent over the previous year, although they are down 6.7 per cent from 2005.

That is still a long way from the federal government's announced target of 40-45 per cent reductions below 2005 by 2030. It means moving radically faster towards energy transition, instead of approving new fossil fuel projects and continually throwing Big Oil lifelines.

Why is this still happening—and in plain view? It isn't even a conspiracy. Why isn't it dominating headlines?

Partly because there is no cartoon villain, no pilfering the petty cash, no powerful political opposition to this dangerous drift (they're all afraid of Big Oil and its Alberta-based constituency). There are only dense charts of damning figures, along with increasingly severe floods, wildfires, droughts, toxic spills and disappearing species, most happening a comfortable distance from Ottawa.

Well-beyond the official scandal zone.

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times

Fraudulent claims of Indigenous identity are risking community for the rest of us

Rose
LeMay

*Stories, Myths,
and Truths*



OTTAWA—Picture Canada in 1958: the time of the baby boom, the Dodge Regent, growing influence of unions, the new unemployment insurance, and first version of health insurance. Does your history of Canada include Indigenous Peoples?

In 1958, the number of residential institutions for Indigenous children in the south was decreasing. The UN Declaration on Human Rights in 1951 was passed that outlawed trying to destroy a minority group by stealing children and Canada was forced to change the more onerous bits of the Indian Act. But civil service leaders lamented that Indigenous kids without residential schools needed some kind of structure. Picture the secret meeting with scotch and cigars, and the feds gave over child protection to the provinces.

By the late 1950s, more Indigenous kids in the south were finally living at home. This concerned the mostly white folks who were social workers, and they 'scooped' kids, or stole kids out of Indigenous communities because the houses didn't have perfect picket fences, the stay-at-home moms and working dads, or the kitchens with chrome-plated tables. Blatant racism in social work called Indigenous parents 'bad' and their kids were adopted or sold to white families—good families. Hopefully those kids would lose that pesky Indigenous identity. The '60s Scoop kids were separated from families, and adopted out across Canada, the United States, and around the world. It's estimated that 22,500 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children were removed from the homes in the '60 Scoop. Any connection to culture and belonging was severed completely.

Flash forward to the 1980s and the '60s Scoop survivors were reaching adulthood, assuming they survived. No Indigenous language left. No knowledge about their own culture. And most were completely lost about their identity.

The journey to reconnect to Indigenous community is not always easy. Birth parents may not be ready and the community may not have records. The '60s Scoop survivor may act 'too white' to be accepted by the community. The survivor may have been deeply impacted by the experience of racism, and not know how to move beyond it. The reconnection journey is fraught with emotional turmoil and it takes years. A survivor has to learn how to be part of the community, learn how to be Indigenous, how to introduce themselves as part of a community correctly.

On the West Coast, First Nations communities were connected through relations and reciprocal responsibilities. We have clans, communities, and ancestors all over the West. It's remarkably difficult to do genealogy on Indigenous families without the oral histories because of the complexity of our concept of family, and because Indigenous peoples tried to hide their identity from census takers, because of racism. And then there's the stories of whole families moved away from home to try to make a living and escape the racism.

We've had yet another allegation of Indigenous identity fraud in the last few weeks, and it's not clear if the allegation will prove to be true. It seems it will be decided on social media rather than with the facts, and I cringe when I think what Elder Woody Morrison would have said about that. But every allegation of identity fraud is making the reconnection journey so much harder for '60s Scoop Survivors and others who have yet to make the link.

Yes, there are fraudulent Indigenous communities and fraudulent individuals like the self-proclaimed 'shamans' around Ottawa who have no idea about Indigenous knowledge. 'Shaman,' by the way, is your cue for fraud. We don't put that stuff on our business cards.

Identity is not clearcut. It is not a card and it's not blood quantum. It's not a tenuous link to one 1500s First Nations grandma (or I'm Scottish and I'm claiming a reserve north of Edinburgh), but a genealogy of

complex ties to Indigeneity. It is not about where you live (UN Human Rights Declaration yet again) but it is about land. It's not about specific knowledge or values (because that's a cult and those always end badly), but it is about a unique culture that one learns in life. Identity is not about shared trauma or racism (because that's just sad), but Indigenous Peoples have endured too much. Identity is complicated.

As Indigenous communities and leaders out the frauds, may we also bring grace to those who are First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and need belonging and safety. They are our kids, our aunts, our uncles, our messy extended family.

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

The Hill Times

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Opinion

Freddy and the ice: messages from the future

Two new things on the climate front, and both bad news. Hurricanes used to be like drive-by shootings: one pass, one hit, and then gone. Now they're starting to come back for a second hit.

Gwynne
Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Two new things on the climate front, and both bad news. Hurricanes used to be like drive-by shootings: one pass, one hit, and then gone. Now they're starting to come back for a second hit.

And until now scientists only worried about the West Antarctic ice-shelf sliding into the sea (which would add three or four metres to sea level). But they have just discovered that the main ice-sheet that covers Eastern Antarctica, 10 times bigger, is also in motion (potentially 52 metres of sea-level rise).

Why does the bad news just keep on coming?

"Thirty years of climate science has given us so much understanding, and what I now see very clearly as a red thread during that entire journey is that the more we learn about the Earth System, the more reason for concern we have," Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, told me three years ago.

"People think we raise the alarm because human pressures are increasing, but that's not the case at all. It's just that we are learning how the planet works, and the more we learn the more vulnerable she is."

"When humans started this massive global experiment of putting pressure on the planet, with greenhouse gases and cut-



Cyclone Freddy started in the usual place, off northwestern Australia. It followed the usual path across the Indian Ocean to East Africa. It was the biggest cyclone ever to hit Madagascar and the Mozambique coast, but that's not the big deal. Records were made to be broken. *Image courtesy of Commons Wikimedia*

ting down forests and loading nutrients into the oceans, what did the Earth System do?

"It responded by buffering and buffering and buffering, and dampening the impacts, just shoving our planetary debt under the carpet, because we were so far away from the tipping point that the systems had huge redundant capacity—what we call resilience."

That was largely still true three years ago, but cracks are now appearing in that wall of resilience.

Cyclone Freddy started in the usual place, off northwestern Australia. It followed the usual path across the Indian Ocean to East Africa. It was the biggest cyclone ever to hit Madagascar and the

Mozambique coast, but that's not the big deal. Records were made to be broken.

Hurricanes usually lose power soon after they go over land. The big deal is that Freddy went back out to sea, gathered more energy from the warm surface water, and came back for a second bite this week. Hundreds more dead in Mozambique and even in Malawi.

If cyclones in the Indian Ocean can do this, sooner or later so will typhoons in the western Pacific and hurricanes in the North Atlantic. We have crossed some sort of invisible threshold.

The other bad news is the discovery that East Antarctica, which contains 90 per cent of the world's ice, is not as stable as people thought. Australian scientists now know that in at least two places, Denman and Totten glaciers, megatonnes of ice are sliding into the sea each year.

There may be more glaciers like that, and an urgent search is now underway to determine how imminent the threat of accelerated sea level rise is. But we should have expected this sort of surprise.

"We've followed a 150-year journey since we kicked off the industrial revolution," said Johan Rockström, "and we've gradually been losing resilience, but up until recently the models have been right. Things change linearly when it's resilient, but when you lose resilience...Bang! Things can crack, and you tip over into new states."

Many big changes in natural systems are 'non-linear': abrupt and often irreversible lurches, not smooth transitions. Human beings prefer to think about climate in terms of gradual change, so we will continue to be surprised.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is *The Shortest History of War*.

The Hill Times

Filing taxes to support household finances

H&R
BLOCK

Canadians are currently feeling financial pressures on a number of fronts, and filing taxes could help many in need. It may seem counterintuitive, but tax filing could be a worthwhile investment for many Canadians' finances.

Ipsos polling has shown that many Canadians are very worried about their financial situation. Over half are concerned about the impact of rising interest rates that are putting a squeeze on those with mortgages and consumer loans. A similar percentage are concerned about not having enough money for food. Inflation is at its highest in 40 years. Canadians' daily costs for groceries, gas and other essential goods have skyrocketed. On top of all this, many Canadians also find themselves having to pay back to the government CERB support they received during the pandemic.

Canada's federal and provincial governments are very aware of these challenges, and in response have unveiled various supports for Canadians to help them better manage rising household costs. The federal government announced one-time top ups to the Canada Housing Benefit and the GST Credit Payment. Many provinces also announced their own one-time payments and, in some cases, ongoing financial assistance. The federal Canada Dental Benefit will help qualifying families with the costs of dental care for their children.

What some Canadians may not realize is that access to many of these benefits is dependent on filing taxes.

Governments typically verify income eligibility for support programs and payments through filed tax returns. An outstanding tax filing could stand in the way of benefits that Canadians are entitled to receive. Without up-to-date tax records, a benefit may only be partially paid out or even denied.

A 2022 study by the CD Howe Institute showed that approximately 4 per cent of Canadians don't file their taxes

and are unaware that Ottawa may owe them money from unclaimed eligible benefits. While tax filing this year will certainly help Canadians access current financial supports, it may also unlock previously unclaimed benefits from prior year returns that have not yet been filed. In some cases getting caught up on filing can result in a life-changing financial benefit. We had a single mother of two come into one of our offices recently who hadn't filed in several years. After working with the individual to get caught up on all of their unfiled tax returns going back several years, the taxpayer qualified for over \$95,000 in refunds, GST and child tax benefits. While we don't see this amount everyday, it's not uncommon to see Canadians in similar situations on a regular basis. Sadly, most non-filers feel intimidated to file taxes for fear that they owe money or will get in trouble with the government when quite often the opposite can be true.

And for those Canadians who have CERB debt, their best course of action is to file to maintain their benefits. They should then contact the CRA to negotiate a fair and manageable payment plan to repay any remaining debt that CRA may choose to collect. Owning the government money never feels good but working with the CRA to repay debt is generally the best financial path forward for taxpayers.

To help Canadians access their benefits and repay CERB debt, governments need to work in partnership with industry, along with the charitable and non-profit sectors to reemphasize the importance of filing taxes, and to make filing more responsive to Canadians' growing preference for virtual products and services.

To this end, the Canada Revenue Agency has temporarily allowed e-signatures on certain tax forms the last few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Budget 2021 and Budget 2022, the Government of Canada committed to

amend legislation to make this permanent and to include more tax forms for e-signature, making tax filing more convenient for Canadians by allowing virtual delivery of more tax products and services such as refund advances. But no legislative timeline has been provided. Without legislative certainty granting permanent e-signature, we can't fully evolve tax filing to match Canadians' expectations and further encourage non-filers to file.

If we want Canadians to receive their benefits and repay CERB debt, we must collectively raise awareness of the importance of filing taxes and remove as many roadblocks as possible, especially when filing can help Canadian households manage through some of the difficult financial headwinds we will face this year until our economy recovers.

Peter Bruno has been with H&R Block Canada for over 35 years and served as President since 2017. Headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, H&R Block Canada is Canada's largest assisted tax preparation firm. During tax season, we have nearly 1,000 locations across the country with approximately 10,000 Associates helping Canadians file their taxes.



Peter Bruno
President, H&R Block Canada

Employee ownership trusts a promising new model to keep businesses and property in Canada

ISG Senator
Tony Loffreda

Opinion



Seventy-six per cent: that's the number of Canadian business owners who anticipate retiring in the next decade and must now explore what's next for their company and legacy.

This usually means one of a few options. Entrepreneurs can sell their company to any interested party, or they can transfer their business to a family member. It could also mean a foreign takeover or merger with some other entity.

In other words, some of Canada's most successful and vibrant small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) could be swept up by foreign interests and, even worse, jobs could leave the country.

But another option, which is gaining much traction in many business circles and is becoming

increasingly more appealing, is the idea of employee ownership trusts (or EOTs).

Employment ownership, in broad strokes, is when a company's employees own shares in the company's stock. EOTs are a form of employee ownership designed for succession, where an owner sells a majority of a company to employees all at once. Company shares are bought through a trustee, using borrowed money to buy these shares at fair market value. These shares can then be distributed to all employees, not just executives, at no cost to workers.

Selling shares to employees through an EOT requires an owner to provide much of the financing themselves. Rather than sell to an outside investor or a competitor and get fully paid upfront, the owner would take on more risk and get paid over a much longer period.

In both the United Kingdom and the United States, politicians of all stripes have decided that the outcomes of employee ownership are so good that they need to be

encouraged and facilitated. The Government of Canada has also been watching what's going on abroad.

In last year's federal budget, the government proposed to create the Employee Ownership Trust and committed to engaging with stakeholders to finalize the development of rules for EOTs and to assessing barriers to their creation.

With the American and British models, owners who sell a substantial portion of their company to employees have access to capital gains tax incentives. In the United Kingdom for example, thanks in part to this waiver, business sales to workers have increased from about ten a year to approximately 300 in 2021.

The federal budget in 2023 is just around the corner, and I understand the government may be finalizing the regulations and amendments needed to enact EOTs. As a supporter of the newly formed Canadian Employee Ownership Coalition, I would urge the government to give serious consideration to include a

capital gains tax exemption in the EOT model it will propose. The capital gains tax is simply deferred to when the employees who purchased their shares sell them.

The benefits of legislating EOTs into our Income Tax Act are plentiful. When businesses are sold to their employees, it helps support local economies and protect jobs, and it contributes to employee wealth. In this age of increasing affordability challenges, building wealth for Canadian workers is a great way of mitigating inequality.

I spent over three decades in banking, mostly in commercial banking, prior to my appointment to the Senate. During those years, I worked closely with countless entrepreneurs as they grew their businesses, increased sales and promoted their brands. Business owners risk everything ... every day.

In my experience, one common denominator for these entrepreneurs was the value they attributed to their employees. For many 'Mom-and-Pop shops,'

employees are the heart and soul of the company. In SMEs, employees become like family for the owners. Many stick around through the highs-and-lows and they are often best positioned to help businesses succeed, grow and remain in Canada.

For many retiring business owners, who have put their sweat and tears into their company, selling their business is a very difficult decision, heart wrenching even. They want to secure their legacy and, hopefully, ensure the business they've built continues to thrive. EOTs are a great option in securing this legacy and, perhaps more importantly, it gives an added incentive to employees, who would now have skin-in-the-game to work harder, innovate and help grow the business.

For employers and employees, EOTs are a win-win situation.

A properly developed EOT, with the appropriate capital gains tax incentive, has the potential of protecting Canadian businesses, securing jobs domestically, increasing the return on labour, creating wealth for workers and, in so doing, taking a long-term view in the overall well-being of our economy and our workforce.

ISG Senator Tony Loffreda (Quebec) is a member of the Senate Standing Committees on Banking, Trade and the Economy; National Finance; and Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. He was a vice-chairman and executive at RBC.

The Hill Times

How much money does Canada's health system really need?

Michael
Wolfson

Opinion



As usual, Canada's provincial premiers have been demanding the federal government give them tens of billions more per year than they've been offered for health care, while at the same time claiming (incorrectly) that health care is solely their jurisdiction.

But if health care is solely a provincial responsibility, with taxing powers of their own, why do they demand massive federal cash transfers with no strings attached? There are several possible reasons.

One is that health-care costs are increasing too rapidly. This is not a new argument. In 1977, the federal government cut federal income taxes, giving "tax room" for the provinces to raise theirs by equal amounts, leaving overall taxes for Canadians the same, while shifting billions of dollars of revenue from federal to provin-

cial treasuries—the infamous "tax point transfer." The provinces could thereby fund more of their health care from revenues growing in line with the economy.

But the provinces conveniently ignore this major reform and count only federal transfers in cash—then blame the federal government for being stingy, while avoiding raising their own taxes.

Of course, the federal government does have a national role in health care and needs to be accountable to Canadians—so why shouldn't they attach strings to any additional cash transfers to the provinces, ensuring the funds are being used to improve health care and Canadians' health?

Another reason provinces say they need more money is that health care is so expensive. However, Canadians do not know whether the provinces are managing health-care cost effectively. Indeed, evidence suggests not.

Internationally, Canada spends more per capita on health care than many other OECD countries, but performs poorly.

There are also worries about an aging population. But many

OECD countries both spend less on health care per capita than Canada, and already have more elderly populations.

So, the real solution is not throwing more federal money to the provinces. Rather, it is overcoming decades-long blockages preventing meaningful health-care reforms to contain costs and improve outcomes.

Broadly speaking, there are four main areas of health care: hospitals, drugs, doctors, and long-term care. Long-term care has been seriously underfunded for decades, so the federal proposal to increase pay for personal support workers is most welcome.

But within long-term care, there is a huge imbalance between home care and nursing homes.

Provinces seem keen to build new nursing homes, while continuing to starve home care of funding. This is not what Canadians want or need, nor is it cost effective.

Other than for long-term care, there is no need for health-care costs to rise dramatically over the coming decades—if there are

appropriate structural reforms and better more integrated management.

Of course, "you cannot manage what you can't measure." Canada generally lacks data to understand one of the most important signals of inefficiency—"postal code medicine," the often large variations across regions in numbers of surgeries and other kinds of health care, but these are inputs, not outcomes.

Data to provide explanations why c-section rates and stenting after heart attacks can vary threefold across health regions are generally lacking. In the rare cases where we have the data, there are health regions with no obvious benefit in terms of health outcomes—hence wasting money.

So why do provinces continue to fund health care that has no benefits in terms of peoples' health? This may take the form of inappropriate diagnostic imaging, unnecessary lab tests, repetitive doctor visits, overly expensive "me too" prescription drugs, excessive invasive surgeries, and doctors providing services more

than adequately provided by less costly nurse practitioners in primary care teams.

And why do hospitals have so many beds occupied by patients who could be more appropriately and less expensively cared for by long-term care?

One reason is that too many Canadians are overly wowed by new drugs and diagnostics. Putting public monies into home care and collecting and analyzing the data needed for cost-effective management of health care is not as sexy.

Let's also "follow the money."

Overall doctors may see their own incomes fall if funding were to be redirected to primary care teams. Hospital budgets would fall if some of their funding were reallocated to long-term care. Pharmaceutical firms would see declining profits if a national pharmacare program were implemented.

Before more is spent on health care, Canadians need to insist on evidence that they are getting better value for the existing expenditures, and demand their politicians exercise the leadership to implement needed structural reforms.

Michael Wolfson, PhD, is a former assistant chief statistician at Statistics Canada and an adjunct professor in the faculties of medicine and law at the University of Ottawa.

The Hill Times

Top 100 Lobbyists

Top 100 Lobbyists in 2023: green tech and economy boosting set for top advocacy priorities in 2023, say lobbyists

Lobbyists anticipate this year’s federal budget could be the last before the next election.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT & STEPHEN JEFFERY

Lobbying activity related to building the economy and the green technology sector will likely find traction in 2023 as the parties look ahead to a possible federal election before 2025, according to lobbyists.

“I honestly think a lot of what will define 2023 is what will or will not be in the budget. I think Canadians are facing hard economic times. I think that’s going to be front and centre,” said Daniel Perry, a Summa Strategies consultant and conservative commentator. “I think if you were in the green-tech sector, you’re going to have a great 2023. If you’re in the agriculture sector, or if you’re in parts of the financial sector, such as open banking, you’re probably not going to have the same year as others, just because the government’s really



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne was the top-lobbied cabinet minister in 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

focusing on resetting the economy, [and] looking to fund green-tech projects.” The 2023 federal budget is to be unveiled on March 28, which Perry said he expects to be the “budget of austerity.” He said the Liberals will likely favour projects that boost the economy for the rest of 2023 in order to secure a strong position if an election comes in the near future. “I think the government’s going to have to walk this very,

very fine line of looking to save money, but also at the same time allowing enough money to be put back into our economy so that we don’t go into a recession,” said Perry. “The reality is, if the Liberals do go into the election, either later this year or even next year, and the economy isn’t coming along, they might have some real problems.” Kevin Bosch, a managing partner with Sandstone Group, told *The Hill Times* that the anticipation of an election makes it a critical time for lobbying, as the parties prepare their platforms. Parties begin thinking about their platforms a year or more in advance of an election, he said. “I’m not expecting an election this year, although surprises do happen in a minority government. But I am thinking, obviously in 2024 or 2025 ... we are going to have an election,” said Bosch, who is also a former deputy director of the Liberal Research Bureau. “Often parties will match each other at election time. They’ll say, ‘Okay, this party promised pharmacare, so we’re going to promise it, too.’ If you can get a given idea that you’re pushing for into a platform, it’s almost like a gold medal in the lobbying world.” A major driving factor for the federal government will likely be the electrification of the economy, according to Bosch.

“We’re moving towards net zero. Anything related to clean energy, [and] moving off of carbon ... is going to be hot,” he said. “If we’re all going to be driving

electric cars ... we’re going to have to revolutionize the electric grid in Canada. I think there’ll be a lot of desire for the government to get active on that, whether it’s building up the grids or building the cars or building the net zero future that we’re all aiming towards. I think that’s going to be the theme of the next 10 or 20 years, let alone the next year.” Jacquie LaRocque, founder of the consulting firm Compass Rose and a former Liberal ministerial Hill staffer, told *The Hill Times* that this year’s budget will likely be the last before an election is called, and so eyes will be on the Liberal government to release concrete plans to carry-forward its commitments. “When you’re realistically looking at a forthcoming, [and] likely last budget before the next election, you look at the commitments that the government’s made, and you say, where to next? What now?” she said. “Watchers are really seeking to get beyond words by looking at, what are the details of that fiscal responsibility? And at the same time, where are the plans for growth of our economy, because without the growth of our economy, the other commitments that are in platforms ... cannot get implemented.”

Top 20 Most-Lobbied Cabinet Ministers in 2022:

1. Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne: 283 communications
2. Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson: 205 communications
3. Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault: 199 communications
4. Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau: 177 communications
5. Transport Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport: 154 communications
6. Tourism and Associate Finance Minister Randy Boissonnault: 145 communications
7. Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos: 115 communications
8. Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland: 103 communications
9. Treasury Board President Mona Fortier: 87 communications
10. International Trade Minister Mary Ng: 81 communications
11. Labour Minister Seamus O’Regan: 81 communications
12. Canadian Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez: 79 communications
13. Minister of Mental Health and Associate Minister of Health Carolyn Bennett: 78 communications
14. Immigration Minister Sean Fraser: 77 communications
15. Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough: 72 communications
16. House and Diversity Minister Ahmed Hussen: 68 communications
17. Northern Affairs and Prairies Economic Development Canada Minister Dan Vandal: 68 communications
18. Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray: 64 communications
19. International Development and Pacific Economic Development Canada Minister Harjit Sajjan: 63 communications
20. Official Languages and ACOA Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor: 62 communications



Daniel Perry, a Summa Strategies consultant, says this year’s federal budget will be ‘the budget of austerity.’ *Photograph courtesy of Daniel Perry*

Top 20 Most-Discussed Issues in 2022:

1. Environment: 5,528 communications
2. Economic Development: 4,910 communications
3. Health: 4,220 communications
4. Industry: 3,965 communications
5. Energy: 3,838 communications
6. Agriculture: 3,253 communications
7. Climate: 3,099 communications
8. Science and technology: 2,845 communications
9. International trade: 2,652 communications
10. Research and development: 2,625 communications
11. Transportation: 2,575 communications
12. Budget: 2,311 communications
13. Taxation and finance: 2,203 communications
14. Infrastructure: 2,188 communications
15. Employment and training: 2,145 communications
16. Indigenous affairs: 1,852 communications
17. Labour: 1,465 communications
18. Education: 1,213 communications
19. Broadcasting: 1,037 communications
20. Consumer issues: 979 communications

Top 100 Lobbyists

Top 100 Lobbyists 2023:

The Hill Times compiled this list after reaching out to more than 30 lobbyists, including both in-house representatives and consultants, on background for input. The list is not a popularity contest, but is intended to showcase prominent lobbyists at the federal level based on their reputation and perceived effectiveness, as judged by their peers. This list was compiled by The Hill Times reporter Jesse Cnockaert and Lobby Monitor editor Stephen Jeffery, and organized alphabetically by the lobbyist's last name.

Lobbyist	Title	Organization
Andre Albinati	Principal	Earncliffe Strategy Group
Ashton Arsenault	Vice-president	Crestview Strategy
Chris Aylward	National president	Public Services Alliance Canada
Jennifer Babcock	Senior director, government and public affairs	Canadian Cattle Association
Alana Baker	Senior director, government relations	Automotive Industries of Canada
Andrew Balfour	Managing partner (Ottawa)	Rubicon Strategy
Tim Barber	Principal	Bluesky Strategy Group
Perrin Beatty	President and CEO	Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Hardave Birk	Government relations director	Shaw Communications
Kevin Bosch	Managing partner	Sandstone Group
Michael Bourque	CEO	Canadian Real Estate Association
Sam Boutziouvis	Vice-president, government relations	SNC-Lavalin
Diane Brisebois	President and CEO	Retail Council of Canada
Bea Bruske	President	Canadian Labour Congress
Tabatha Bull	President and CEO	Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
Stéphane Cardin	Director of public policy	Netflix
Dave Carey	Vice-president, government and industry relations	Canadian Canola Growers Association
Philip Cartwright	Senior vice-president	Global Public Affairs
Sean Casey	Managing director	PAA Advisory
George Christidis	Vice President Government Relations and International Affairs	Canadian Nuclear Association
Gary Clement	Director, government relations	TD Bank Group
Paul-Emile Cloutier	President and CEO	HealthCareCAN
Catherine Cobden	President and CEO	Canadian Steel Producers Association
David Cooper	Vice-president, government relations	Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
Laura D'Angelo	Vice-president, national strategy and public affairs	Enterprise Canada
Dennis Darby	President and CEO	Alliance of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
Paul Deegan	President and CEO	News Media Canada
John Delacourt	Senior vice-president	Counsel Public Affairs
Joanne Dobson	Senior Director, government relations (federal and Ontario)	Air Canada
Bruce Drysdale	Managing partner	Longview Communications
Simon Dwyer	Director, government affairs	BCE
Kristina Farrell	Director	Temple Scott Associates
Deborah Flint	President and CEO	Greater Toronto Airports Authority
Marlene Floyd	National director, corporate affairs	Microsoft Canada
Cheryl Fougere	Senior manager of government relations	Rogers Communications
Pamela Fralick	President	Innovative Medicines Canada
Robert Ghiz	President and CEO	Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association
Andy Gibbons	Vice-president	WestJet Airlines
Jacob Glick	Vice-president, public policy	Telus Corp.
Sarah Goldfeder	Manager of government relations	General Motors of Canada
Pierre Gratton	President and CEO	Mining Association of Canada
Tim Gray	Executive director	Environmental Defence
Susie Grynol	President and CEO	Hotel Association of Canada
Kate Harrison	Vice-chair	Summa Strategies
Bruce Hartley	Senior partner	Prospectus Associates
Katie Heelis	Vice-president and health practice lead	Enterprise Canada
Steven Hogue	Director, Global Policy and Public Affairs (Canada)	Pfizer Canada ULC
Kelly Hutchinson	Public Affairs counsellor	Compass Rose Group
Goldy Hyder	President and CEO	Business Council of Canada
Dan Kelly	President, CEO, and chair	Canadian Federation of Independent Business

Lobbyist	Title	Organization
Lauren Kennedy	Director, public affairs	Chicken Farmers of Canada
Jason Kerr	Managing director, government relations	Canadian Automobile Association
Brian Kingston	President and CEO	Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association
James Kusie	Vice president, public and government affairs	Imperial Oil
Tim Lambert	CEO	Egg Farmers of Canada
Eric Lamoureux	Managing partner	PAA Advisory Conseils
Jacque LaRocque	Principal	Compass Rose Group
Jacques Lefebvre	CEO	Dairy Farmers of Canada
Megan Leslie	President and CEO	World Wildlife Fund
Dan Lovell	Senior associate	Sussex Strategy Group
Robin MacLachlan	President	Summa Strategies
Greg MacNeil	Director of government relations	Irving Shipbuilding
Dan Mader	Partner	Loyalist Public Affairs
Elise Maheu	Head of government affairs	3M Canada
Monica Masciantonio	Vice-president, government affairs	Scotiabank
Kelly Masotti	Vice-president, advocacy	Canadian Cancer Society
Bob Masterson	President and CEO	Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
Devin McCarthy	Senior vice-president	Sussex Strategy Group
Dave McHattie	Institutional relations director	Tenaris
Colin McKay	Head of public policy and government relations	Google Canada
Don Moors	President	Temple Scott Associates
Sheamus Murphy	Partner and federal practice lead	Counsel Public Affairs
Derek Nighbor	President and CEO	Forest Products Association of Canada
Chima Nkemdirim	Vice-president, government relations	Shaw Communications
Wendy Noss	President	Motion Picture Association - Canada
Monette Pasher	President	Canadian Airports Council
John Penner	Vice-president	Strategy Corp
Azin Peyrow	Director, government relations	Canadian Medical Association
Beth Potter	President and CEO	Tourism Industry Association
Alex Pourbaix	President and CEO	Cenovus Energy
David Pratt	Principal	David Pratt and Associates
Pierre Pyun	Vice-president, government affairs and public affairs	Bombardier
Gordon Quaiattini	Partner	Maple Leaf Strategies
Mark Resnick	Managing director	McMillan Vantage Policy Group
Chad Rogers	Partner	Crestview Strategy
Elizabeth Roscoe	Senior vice-president	Rubicon Strategy
Carole Saab	CEO	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Conrad Sauvé	President and CEO	Canadian Red Cross
Susan Smith	Principal	Bluesky Strategy Group
Jennifer Sloan	Vice-president of public policy (Canada)	Mastercard
Andrew Steele	Vice-president	StrategyCorp
Leslie Swartman	Senior director, government relations	MDA
Robert Taylor	Assistant vice-president, North American advocacy	Railway Association of Canada
Gordon Taylor Lee	Managing Partner	NATIONAL Public Relations
Matt Thompson	Vice-president, associate general counsel	CORUS
Carla Ventin	Senior vice-president, government relations	Food, Health, and Consumer Products Canada
Flavio Volpe	President	Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Associati on
Joelle Walker	Vice-president, public affairs	Canadian Pharmacists Association
George Wamala	Director, regulatory and government affairs	RBC
Huw Williams	President	Impact Public Affairs



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Top 100 Lobbyists

Top 100 Lobbyists in 2023: green tech and economy boosting set for top advocacy priorities in 2023, say lobbyists



Kevin Bosch, a managing partner with Sandstone Group, says federal parties will often try to match each other in their election platforms. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Kate Harrison, vice-chair at Summa Strategies, says a top lobbyist needs to be able to put themselves ‘in decision-makers’ shoes even if you have nothing in common with them.’ *Photograph courtesy of Kate Harrison*

Credibility and thinking outside the box key for lobbyists in 2023

Lobbyists who wish to succeed in this environment need a combination of credibility, subject matter expertise, and a willingness to try new approaches on behalf of their clients or organizations, according to some consultants.

“I believe the success of our team ... is about mastery of our subject matter and credibility in representing clients to the federal government,” said Chris Benedetti, managing partner at Sussex Strategy. “You have to understand both how government works, but also understand how your issue and subject matter fits into the larger agenda and how to find alignment between the two.”

That view was echoed by Sheamus Murphy, partner and federal practice lead at Counsel Public Affairs. In addition to the ability to communicate complex issues clearly and effectively, Murphy said commanding both trust and respect were vital for top lobbyists.

Rather than “connections, the number of meetings or adaptability,” Murphy said top lobbyists reflect attributes such as a commitment to “contributing to the broader public debate and working across partisan lines,” the achievement of wins for their clients or sector on issues of national importance, and “enhancing the reputation of the lobbying industry as a whole, as a leader within their own firm [or] organization and as an ethical contributor to better public policy.”

Kate Harrison, vice-chair at Summa Strategies, said that being an effective lobbyist involved putting aside your own partisan

views to navigate government and major issues.

“You need to be able to put yourself in decision-makers’ shoes even if you have nothing in common with them, and guide your client accordingly,” she said.

Dave Carey, vice-president of government and industry relations at the Canadian Canola Growers Association, said top lobbyists “are able to disagree without being disagreeable by focusing on bad policy, not bad people.”

“They have seats at tables where decisions are made,” he said. “They are sought out by parliamentarians, department officials and industry leaders for their input and opinion on key issues. They are listened to, respected and used as sounding boards.”

Carey said those skills are important, as “Ottawa has never been more crowded, with parliamentarians still stuck between in-person and virtual.”

Ashton Arsenault, vice-president at Crestview Strategy, said he expects that virtual meetings could become a permanent fixture of lobbying, which made it important for lobbyists to be able to master both in-person and online versions.

“COVID fundamentally changed how we engage with decision-makers and stakeholders,” he said.

Visibility is important, but a lobbyists’ effectiveness should not be measured by the number of meetings held or communication reports filed with the federal lobbyists’ registry, Arsenault said. “An effective federal lobbyist, above all else, is somebody who is

able to consistently achieve objectives on behalf of their clients or organization,” he said. “In short, drive outcomes.”

For newer members of the profession, Christian von Donat, vice-president of government relations and strategy at Impact Public Affairs, recommended thinking outside the box.

“Over my seven years with Impact, it’s been the constant push to think innovatively and to

not be afraid to try new strategies that have yielded some big wins, on behalf of clients I work with,” he said. “Politicians and staff are so conditioned to 30-minute meetings, evening receptions, one-pagers... the true test for top lobbyists is breaking out of what is perfectly fine in order to deliver something special.”

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The Hill Times

Top 20 Most-Lobbied Departments in 2022:

- 1. House of Commons: 10,170 communications
- 2. Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada: 3,118 communications
- 3. Environment and Climate Change Canada: 2,040 communications
- 4. Finance Canada: 1,764 communications
- 5. Natural Resources Canada: 1,651 communications
- 6. Global Affairs Canada: 1,465 communications
- 7. Senate of Canada: 1,374 communications
- 8. Prime Minister’s Office: 1,301 communications
- 9. Health Canada: 1,218 communications
- 10. Canadian Heritage: 1,060 communications
- 11. Employment and Social Development Canada: 1,024 communications
- 12. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: 931 communications
- 13. Transport Canada: 857 communications
- 14. Infrastructure Canada: 518 communications
- 15. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada: 446 communications
- 16. Privy Council Office: 425 communications
- 17. Fisheries and Oceans Canada: 389 communications
- 18. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: 373 communications
- 19. Public Services and Procurement Canada: 339 communications
- 20. Indigenous Services Canada: 305 communications

Top 21 Most-Lobbied Public Office-Holders in 2022:

- 1. Eamonn McGuinty, senior policy adviser (minister of environment and climate change): 297 communications
- 2. Michael Brewster, director of policy (nature and biodiversity) (minister of environment and climate change): 265 communications
- 3. Francis Drouin, Liberal MP, parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture and agri-food: 260 communications
- 4. Kevin Deagle, senior policy adviser (minister of innovation, science and industry): 255 communications
- 5. Peter Opdam, senior policy adviser (minister of innovation, science and industry): 231 communications
- 6. Kurtis Layden, senior policy adviser (minister of environment and climate change): 228 communications
- 7. Fiona Simons, director of policy (clean energy and innovation) (minister of environment and climate change): 223 communications
- 8. Blake Oliver, senior policy adviser (minister of natural resources; deputy prime minister and minister of finance): 219 communications
- 9. Bianca Hossain, policy adviser (minister of innovation, science and industry): 211 communications
- 10. Anson Duran, senior policy adviser (minister of innovation, science and industry): 208 communications
- 11. Brian MacKay, senior policy adviser (minister of Canadian heritage): 208 communications
- 12. Bud Sambasivam, deputy director of policy (deputy prime minister and minister of finance): 196 communications
- 13. Matthew Gray, Policy Advisor (Minister of Canadian Heritage): 187 communications
- 14. Francesco Sorbara, Liberal MP: 181 communications
- 15. Sandenga Yeba, deputy director of policy; senior policy adviser (minister of health; minister of agriculture and agri-food): 179 communications
- 16. Emerson Vandenberg, director of policy (minister of agriculture and agri-food): 170 communications
- 16. Jaxson Khan, policy adviser (minister of innovation, science and industry): 170 communications
- 17. Julie Dabrusin, Liberal MP, parliamentary secretary to minister of natural resources and to minister of environment: 169 communications
- 18. Ian Foucher, chief of staff (minister of innovation, science and industry): 165 communications
- 19. Nina Lothian, senior policy adviser (minister of environment and climate change): 165 communications
- 20. Dominic Cormier, chief of staff (minister of environment and climate change): 164 communications

SOURCE: Data compiled by The Lobby Monitor editor Stephen Jeffery from the federal lobbyists’ registry

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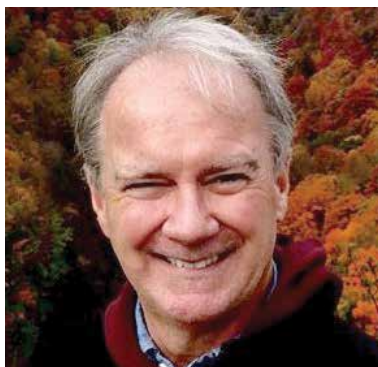
Grocery Code of Conduct to address transparency in agri-food industry set for April release

The federal government received a draft of the code in late 2022, following more than a year of negotiations between industry groups representing farmers, national retail chains, independent grocers and food processors.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

The much-anticipated Grocery Code of Conduct, a set of rules intended to promote transparency between retailers and producers and to help ease some of the pressures facing the food supply chain, is expected to be released in a few weeks.

"We basically have most of the provisions of the code drafted," said Gary Sands, senior vice-president of public policy and advocacy for the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG). "We want to give the industry, as a whole, a chance to look at the document and ask any questions, but we're pretty confident we've got everything in there."



Gary Sands, senior vice-president of public policy and advocacy for the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, says the agri-food industry will be given a chance through consultation to review the proposed Grocery Code of Conduct. *Photograph courtesy of Gary Sands*

The federal government received a draft of the code in late 2022, following more than a year of negotiations between industry groups representing farmers, national retail chains, independent grocers, and food processors. The development of the draft code was led by a 10-person steering committee representing most of the agri-food industry, which has met monthly since mid-2021.

Sands, a member of the steering committee, told *The Hill Times* that once the code is released, a wider consultation will be conducted to gather feedback from the agri-food industry.

An adjudicator will be hired to listen to complaints and enforce the code. Some of the details still to be determined revolve around how complaints will be enforced, according to Sands.

"What process does the adjudicator follow? How is that office of an adjudicator structured? How many staff do they need? And what's the process for dealing with a complaint? What are the steps involved in it? Those are all the things that we're going through now," he said. "We also have to have an industry board set up that oversees the governance of the office. We don't want the adjudicator reviewing themselves; we need the board to review the process."

Following the consultations, the code could be in force as early as the fall, according to Sands.

Canada's federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) agriculture ministers agreed in late 2020 to launch an investigation into controversial fees some of the largest grocery chains were charging suppliers during the pandemic. The FPT working group on retail fees released a report in July 2021, which found that concentration in the retail sector enables retailers to use their bargaining power to levy a range of fees on suppliers. The unpredictability and lack of transparency in how some fees are levied, along with limited recourse for dispute resolution, has led to "an overall straining of supply chain relationships from retailers down to primary producers," according to the report.

Independent retailers do not have the same leverage as large

grocers when negotiating with their suppliers. It is alleged that some suppliers provide the larger retailers with hidden discounts, which results in smaller, independent grocers having no choice but to absorb the increased costs, according to the report.

A code of conduct is intended to promote more fairness through detailed rules to guide commercial relationships, and provide an easier dispute resolution process.

Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau (Compton-Stanstead, Que.), along with Quebec's Agriculture Minister André Lamontagne, said that a code of conduct will help make Canada's food supply chain more resilient by enhancing transparency and predictability, in a joint statement released on Jan. 13, 2023.

"We do recognize that a Grocery Code of Conduct will not address all pressures facing the food supply chain. Issues at stake are very complex and need to consider a variety of conditions and perspectives," reads the joint statement. "We are supportive of the current process and highly encourage widespread voluntary adoption of the Code of Conduct, so it can be swiftly implemented and help improve the strength and resilience of Canada's food supply chain, while also building consumers' trust."

Sands said that a code of conduct is not about leveling the playing field between Canada's small- and medium-sized grocers and the major grocery chains, such as Loblaw and Sobeys, but will establish principles by which the agri-food industry should do business.

"It's like a highway, and on that highway you've got small cars, you've got mid-sized cars, and you've got the big transport trailers, which are the big guys. And I'm not talking about just the big retailers, I'm talking also about the big suppliers," said Sands. "The code of conduct is about putting signs up on the highway. 'Here's how you're supposed to drive,' and that's really what the code of conduct is doing. We're setting out, what are the principles that this industry should be operating by? What are the practices that we encour-



Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, pictured on the Hill, said a grocery code of conduct will help make Canada's food supply chain more resilient by enhancing transparency and predictability. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

age everybody to follow, and we expect you to follow?"

Along with the steering committee, additional work on the draft of the code was provided by an eight-member sub-committee formed in August, 2022. Sub-committee members included Serge Boulanger, the senior vice-president of procurement and corporate brands at Metro Inc., Doug Nathanson, the executive vice-president, chief development officer and general counsel of Empire Company Limited and Sobeys Inc., and Errol Cerit, the senior vice-president of Food, Health & Consumer Products of Canada (FHCP).

"As a volume-based business, both retailers and manufacturers do not benefit from high inflation. The reason for that is because we sell less product," he said. "When you're selling less, that means you're manufacturing less ... [and] you're less productive. And that costs money. And that's inefficiency," said Cerit in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

The implementation of a grocery code of conduct could help drive down the rising prices Canadians are seeing at the grocery store, according to Cerit.

Food prices were up 10.4 per cent year-over-year in January—a slight increase from 10.1 per cent in December—while the rest of the Consumer Price Index items decelerated to an annual pace of 5.9 per cent, according to Statistics Canada.

Factors that contribute to food inflation include supply chain disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's war with Ukraine, according to Cerit.

"Those are issues that are out of our control, directly. Of course, we can have some influence within Canada, but I would say it's because of those global factors—those macro factors—that the Canadian supply chain in the Canadian grocery industry has to be a lot more efficient and has to work together to come up with solutions within Canada. And I think that's what the code provides," he said. "The principles that we came up with ... [are] essentially around fair dealing, co-operating, having written agreements, and providing reasonable notice for changes and basically negotiating and having dialogue about the changes that are to happen."

Mathieu Frigon, president and CEO of the Dairy Processors Association of Canada, appeared before the House Agriculture Committee on March 6, and argued that a code of conduct that is clear and simple would allow for efficient resolution of commercial disputes between suppliers and retailers.

"The best way governments can help us deal with inflation is to increase supply chain efficiency. We believe this is precisely what a code of conduct would achieve for the grocery products sector, by improving contractual

Continued on page 21

Policy Briefing **Agriculture**

Loblaw Companies Limited President and Chairman Galen Weston, pictured March 8, 2023, before he testified at the Agriculture and Agri-Food House Committee, along with other big grocery retailers, about the rising costs of groceries. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

other stakeholders to put in place a formalized process to allow the movement of food and essential goods through Canada's ports of entry in the event of emergency events or disruptions," said MacGregor. "I would also like to see immediate and meaningful support for businesses in identifying and navigating available environmental programs, and provide reasonable and fair recognition for past efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implement more environmentally sustainable practices."

Jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Canada agriculture industry statistics

- Canada's agriculture and agri-food system provided one in nine jobs in Canada, or employed 2.1 million people in 2021.
- The agriculture and agri-food system generated \$134.9-billion (around 6.8 per cent) of Canada's gross domestic product in 2021.
- Canada includes approximately 189,874 farms that are considered primary agriculture, which is defined as work that is performed within the boundaries of a farm, nursery or greenhouse. Those farms occupy 62.2 million hectares or 6.3 per cent of Canada's land area, and are concentrated across the Prairies, Quebec and Southern Ontario.
- Average farm size has doubled over the last 50 years due to increased consolidation and technological advances.
- In 2021, Canada exported nearly \$82.2-billion in agriculture and food products (including raw agricultural materials, fish and seafood, and processed foods). Canada is the fifth-largest exporter of agri-food and seafood in the world, exporting to more than 200 countries in 2021.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Food price inflation statistics

- Food prices in Canada, which include groceries and food from restaurants, rose by 10.4 per cent year over year in January 2023, up from 10.1 per cent in December.
- Restaurant food prices increased 8.2 per cent in January, up from 7.7 per cent in December.
- Grocery price acceleration in January was driven in part by year-over-year growth in meat prices (+7.3 per cent), resulting from the largest month-over-month increase since June 2004. Fresh or frozen chicken prices were a notable contributor to the gain, rising nine per cent in January compared with December, the largest monthly increase since September 1986.
- Other year-over-year price increases for products in Canadian grocery stores includes dairy products (+12.4 per cent), fresh fruit (+10.9 per cent).

Source: The Consumer Price Index, January 2023, Statistics Canada

Continued from page 20

certainty and collaboration between the different links in the chain," Frigon told the committee. "The link between inflation and the code of conduct is probably an indirect one, but it's there nonetheless, in that it will improve supply chain efficiency and help manage inflationary pressure."

Michael McCain, chief executive of meat-packing giant Maple Leaf Foods Inc., also appeared before the committee on March 6, but was critical of the idea that a code of conduct would really make a difference in regards to food inflation.

"I've experienced both. I've sold products in jurisdictions with a code of conduct and jurisdictions without a code of conduct. We are completely agnostic to that," McCain said to the committee. "Truth be told, I think it will have absolutely no impact on our business, on anybody else's business or on the consumer outcome."

McCain, one of the wealthiest individuals in Canada with an estimated net worth of \$1.38-billion, is scheduled to step down as chief executive for Maple Leaf Foods this spring. He will be replaced in the role by Curtis Frank, currently president and chief operating officer.

The CEOs and presidents of three of Canada's top three grocers, Empire Co., Loblaw Cos. Ltd., and Metro Inc., appeared before the Agriculture Committee on March 8, and argued they are not profiting from soaring food inflation.

Michael Medline, CEO of Empire, told the committee that Empire is doing everything it can to contain price increases "on paper-thin profit margins of 2.5 per cent."

"Several factors have contributed to the high food inflation Canadians are experiencing, including geo-political events, product input costs, extreme weather, soaring energy costs and labour shortages," Medline told the committee. "The truth is, we are at the end of a very long food supply chain that has economic inputs at every step and stage. We detest the decisions inflation is forcing Canadian families to make, and that we see in our stores each and every day."

Medline appeared along with Galen Weston, chairman and president of Loblaw, and Eric La Flèche, president and CEO of Metro.

Keith Currie, who was announced as the new president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) on March 7, told *The Hill Times* that food producers are not immune to the cost pressures that are contributing to rising food prices, such as supply chain disruptions.

"When it comes to primary production or farmers, we are price-takers, not price-setters. Every time there's a new increased cost, we have to absorb it," said Currie.

"Whenever a cost is incurred by Loblaw, or Walmart or McDonald's [or] whoever, typically they can add a nickel or a certain amount of money to each product going out the door. But as farmers, we don't have that option. Our prices are pretty much set."

Currie said a code of conduct won't specifically target food inflation, but it will allow for transparency all the way through the value chain to ensure that everybody is playing fairly.

"Everybody deserves to make money. We can't have profit being a dirty word

in the food system. A lot of what's been going on around food inflation is about the profits that grocery stores are making, but we shouldn't deny them the right to make money either," said Currie. "I don't know that food inflation is necessarily because they're being greedy and making a lot of money. There's a lot of other factors involved."

NDP MP Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, B.C.), his party's agriculture critic, told *The Hill Times* that to address competitiveness and capacity in the agriculture sector, Ottawa must fix its "siloed decision-making."

"Too often, decisions made by Environment and Climate Change Canada, or Health Canada, or Global Affairs Canada if it relates to trade, are butting up against Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, creating confusing and conflicting policy goals, causing havoc for farmers and producers," said MacGregor in an emailed statement on March 16. "When it comes to international trade ... the government must ensure all tools in its toolbox are employed to fight back against countries breaking World Trade Organization rules so that agricultural producers aren't being used as pawns in international trade disagreements completely unrelated to the food they produce for Canada and the world."

MacGregor said in the email that he would like Bibeau to make "meaningful headway" on implementing recommendations from the National Supply Chain Task Force, such as the establishment of a supply chain office.

"Her government must also allocate resources for government departments to work proactively with port authorities and

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Agriculture Policy Briefing

Biting back against 'greedflation'

About 5.8 million people across the country suffered food insecurity in 2021, and the situation has worsened since.

NDP MP
Alistair
MacGregor

Opinion



Another spring is coming, but the rising cost of living—especially in food—is evergreen. Food is the great equalizer, as everybody eats. The present food inflation crisis started rising in 2021, a year in which about 5.8 million people across the 10 provinces suffered food insecurity for any period. The situation has worsened since.

Many factors are responsible for food inflation. While we know supply chain issues following the pandemic have contributed to cost increases, New Democrats have been very concerned about “greedflation,” where companies use the expectation of inflation as an excuse to mask corporate greed, and jack up prices more than necessary to bring in record profits at the expense of Canadians struggling to keep up.



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, left, and Loblaw Companies President Galen Weston, pictured March 8, at the House Agriculture Committee meeting. Rates of food-specific inflation have not only been more than a full percentage point higher for most of the 12 months between February 2022 and January 2023, writes NDP MP Alistair MacGregor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The House Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee unanimously agreed to a motion I introduced proposing a study into greedflation, and has held six meetings so far, investigating food price and those who profit from it. D.T. Cochrane of Canadians for Tax Fairness and Jim Stanford of the Centre for Future Work have testified and argued that it isn't the fault of the carbon tax, as the Conservatives have tried to insist. Oil and gas companies are raking in massive profits, reporting increased profits of 1,011 per cent over pre-pandemic levels in the last quarter of 2022, which is also driving up the cost of living.

Some people might think the issue has more to do with problems in our food supply chain than anything else. It is true that more than half of retailers have said, in the second and third quarters of 2022, that they expected at least six months' worth of trouble acquiring inputs, products, or supplies or keeping their inventories steady. But these facts don't fit with the skyrocketing rates and levels of big grocery profit—these are net profits, after costs.

Month-by-month, inflation rates have been falling since last June. Rates of food-specific inflation, however, have not only been more than a full percentage point

higher for most of the twelve months between February 2022 and January 2023, but they've also climbed most months during that period. Food retailers, according to Stanford's figures, are among fifteen sectors in the Canadian corporate landscape that made more net income between October 2021 and September 2022 than they did in 2019. On Feb. 13, I introduced another motion at the House Agriculture Committee to summon the CEOs of the big three grocery retail giants: Loblaw, Metro, and Empire. My committee colleagues unanimously agreed, and the CEOs finally appeared before the committee on March 8, where they were grilled with questions by MPs, including NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh.

What can we do about this out-of-control greedflation? Corporate power and market dominance is the back story to all of this. Relying on the charity of CEOs to voluntarily lower prices that consumers are forced to pay is a fantasy proposition Canadians don't have the luxury of relying on. Instead, we should solve the problem at its source. Fortunately, there are promising signs that the government is starting to get the message, if only under pressure from the NDP.

Last year, the government did announce plans to review the Competition Act. Today, the Competition Act doesn't forbid drip pricing or wage fixing, for example. Beefing it up by increasing the maximum fines for

violations would discourage such practices—something the NDP has been pushing for: a stronger crackdown on anti-competitive behaviour.

Progress towards another regulatory reform took a step forward this January, with some movement, finally, toward a mandatory Grocery Code of Conduct. Producers have supported a mandatory code of conduct at the retail level for some time now: it's crucial to their economic survival. If it stopped retailers from double-charging producers, imposed stronger penalties for violating the terms of their contracts, or any number of other things, it would be a big improvement.

There's also an economic reform: a windfall profits tax. The NDP has been pushing this option to return money from large corporations to Canadians. The Parliamentary Budget Office found last November that applying a windfall profits tax on fossil fuel and grocery companies together could raise over \$4-billion a year. Think how much that could do for people. Under intense questioning at the March 8 House Agriculture Committee, the big CEOs wouldn't clearly state a position on a windfall profits tax.

Big grocers are eating through our wallets. It's time Canadians bit back, and I won't stop pushing the government to find the political will to balance the scales for families and everyone who relies on big grocery chains for food.

NDP MP Alistair MacGregor represents Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, B.C., and is his party's for Agriculture and Agri-Food, and Food Price Inflation.

The Hill Times

Agriculture sector experiencing labour shortages

Future generations of farmers and farm families will continue to struggle with worker availability unless the problems are addressed now, writes Conservative MP Lianne Rood.

Conservative
MP Lianne
Rood

Opinion



Sadly, after eight years of the Trudeau Liberal government, the agriculture sector discourages

new-market entrants. There's a lack of interest from the younger generation. It's also unaffordable for young Canadians to become farmers.

The harmful costs of the federal carbon tax and the punishing restrictions placed on fertilizer will have a devastating effect on the agriculture industry and the supply chain, ultimately increasing costs for consumers at the grocery store.

The CEOs of major grocery chains appeared before the House Agriculture Committee on March 8. While this appearance was quickly dismissed by many in the media as political theatre, the big grocery stores are using every opportunity to drain farmers of their hard-earned money by nickel-and-dime them with extra fees. This is very real and has a huge impact on the sustainability of family farm businesses. That is why I have been advocating for years for Canada to implement

a Grocery Code of Conduct to support our country's fruit and vegetable farmers.

No other nation in the world forces such one-sided agreements and punitive fines on a farmer to have their produce stocked on grocery store shelves, and the Canadian public is largely unaware of these practices occurring.

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada have said that 44 per cent of fruit and vegetable producers are selling at a loss to big grocers. Prices in stores are inflated far beyond the cost a farmer is being paid to grow and deliver to a big grocer's distribution centre.

The government must begin recognizing the agricultural sector as a key economic driver, and as core to Canadian identity. The agri-food sector has long been facing problems such as labour shortages. From domestic, to foreign labour recruitment, the needs of Canadian farmers

for workers has far outpaced the number of workers available. Programs and supports are relied upon to encourage individuals to enter the agri-food industry and encourage current farmers to continue their legacy. Future generations of farmers and farm families will continue to struggle with this unless we address the problem now.

The skills and responsibilities that are demanded of a food producer are numerous and costly. However, as it stands, the agricultural sector sees an aging workforce that faces immense pressure and is receiving the opposite of support from the current federal Liberal government.

The Liberal government's high spending, which has driven our current inflationary crisis, has placed a burden on the agri-food industry by increasing taxes, both for the producer directly and across the supply chain. Farmer, producers, and ranchers

are disadvantaged because of the Liberal carbon tax.

Conservatives proudly introduced Bill C-234, an Act to amend the Green House Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which aims to exempt food producers from the carbon tax in their use of natural gas and propane to perform necessary and fundamental tasks to provide quality food for Canadians. This small step will help farmers and producers now while Conservatives continue to fight to see the carbon tax removed altogether.

We know there are many ways to demonstrate our appreciation of hardworking and valuable Canadian farm families throughout the country. That is why Conservatives will continue championing their success and ensure the agriculture sector is able to prosper.

Canadians deserve fresh, healthy, home-grown food to eat. We need to support and encourage the next generation of Canadian farmers to not lose hope and to stay in business. After all, food security is national security.

Conservative MP Lianne Rood, who represents Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Ont., is a member of the House Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee.

The Hill Times

Growing Canada's agri-food sector requires a sustainable approach to meet consumer demand

Over the next five years, the new Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership will drive \$3.5-billion in federal-provincial-territorial investments.

Liberal MP
Francis Drouin

Opinion



Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry is a powerhouse of our economy, contributing \$135-billion to our GDP, one in nine jobs—and a record \$92.7-billion dollars in exports last year.

This is an incredible achievement given the powerful headwinds faced by Canadian farmers and food processors over the past three years, with a global pandemic, Putin's illegal war, climate

disasters, labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, animal disease, and high input costs. It's a remarkable success story that many Canadians are simply not aware.

To give us a strong foundation for future growth, on April 1, 2023, federal, provincial, and territorial ministers will launch the new Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), our shared vision for the sector as a world leader in sustainable agriculture and food while protecting farm livelihood.

Over the next five years, Sustainable CAP will drive \$3.5-billion in federal-provincial-territorial investments, which includes a 25 per cent increase in funding for cost-shared activities over the previous framework. We have already launched the federal programs under Sustainable CAP, to help the farmers continue to innovate, compete and grow new markets.

Sustainability is at the heart of the new partnership, which will build on farmers' efforts to tackle climate change, targeting a three- to five-megatonne reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As well, the new Resilient Agricultural

Landscape Program, backed by a \$250-million FPT investment, will help producers conserve and enhance the resiliency of agricultural landscapes such as grasslands, wetlands, river banks, and wildlife habitat. Farmers have already done a great job at protecting the environment, but now more than ever consumers across the world are demanding food that is grown sustainably.

That's why, in addition to Sustainable CAP, we are investing \$1.5-billion for initiatives that will help farmers and processors reduce their environmental footprint, invest in clean technologies, and collaborate with researchers in 'living labs' to adopt sustainable practices that work on the farm.

We are also sitting down with farmers across the country to shape Canada's first-ever Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, a roadmap to help farmers adapt to current climate impacts and build resilience to a changing climate. A strategy that will be developed by farmers and for farmers.

By putting sustainability first, we are empowering our sector to compete and meet global consumers' growing demands for sustainable food, while strengthening

food security—and breaking new records in agri-food and seafood exports.

To get there, we will continue to strengthen our ties with key markets. For example, we will open Canada's first-ever agriculture and agri-food trade office in the Indo-Pacific region, to help Canadian farmers, food processors, and exporters maximize their opportunities and diversify their markets in the world's fastest-growing economic zone. As populations in this region grow, they'll need more Canadian canola, Canadian pork and all kinds of high-quality Canadian products and we're taking action to make sure Canada remains the supplier of choice.

To support the stability of the sector here at home, we have delivered on our promise to compensate Canadian supply-managed producers and processors. In total, up to \$4.8-billion will be made available to support dairy, poultry, and egg producers and processors for the impacts of recent trade agreements, including up to \$1.7-billion, delivering on our promise to compensate producers and processors for the impacts of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement.

Failing to meet consumer demand is failing our farmers. Consumers are demanding more sustainable foods and growing sustainable foods will require more innovation. The Government will be there for producers today and into the future to support this innovation while ensuring we protect farm livelihood.

Liberal MP Francis Drouin is parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture and agri-food and MP for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Ont.

The Hill Times



CANOLA: FROM FAMILY FARMS TO THE WORLD

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- Innovators, driving growth in canola's \$29.9 billion per year contribution to Canada's economy
- Proudly taking care of the land
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Agriculture Policy Briefing

Digging into the Senate's new soil study

Cultivating healthier soil in this country can reap benefits for farmers, the environment, and for all Canadians, writes CSG Senator Robert Black.

Senator
Robert Black

Opinion



Climate change is creating complex challenges for Canada's farmers and producers.

Flooding, drought and depleted soil conditions are just some of the recurring realities that test the resilience of the agriculture and agri-food sector.

When it comes to finding solutions, there's a reason to start from the ground up. Cultivating healthier soil in this country can reap benefits for farmers, the environment, and for all Canadians.

Healthy soil helps mitigate some of the effects of climate change. Soil and land man-

The Senate of Canada last studied soil health in 1984, when its Senate Agriculture Committee released a report called, *Soil at Risk: Canada's Eroding Future*. It's a report I used as a student. Now, my colleagues and I are leading the Senate's next study of this critical issue, writes CSG Senator Robert Black. *Photograph courtesy of Pexels*



agement practices can prevent erosion and ease the impact of flooding. Fertile land produces more food, sustains greater biodiversity and contributes to better air and water quality.

History has even shown that civilizations grounded in healthy soil benefit from social, economic, and political stability.

At the same time, soil plays a role in absorbing and storing the carbon that contributes to climate change.

Yet the quality of Canada's soil has been eroding for decades.

The Senate of Canada last studied soil health in 1984, when its Senate Agriculture Committee

released a report called, *Soil at Risk: Canada's Eroding Future*.

It's a report I used as a student. Now, my colleagues and I are leading the Senate's next study of this critical issue.

The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry launched a study on soil health last fall. We are hearing from stakeholders across the country, each sharing their perspectives, the challenges they face, as well as their suggestions to help improve soil health into the future.

So far, we have heard unanimous concern about the need for data sharing that would allow different interested groups to

access and share information about lessons learned. A lack of funding and support for the stewards who have already engaged in or are engaging in soil-healthy practices has also been raised as a challenge.

Committee members and I are grateful to the witnesses who have come forward so far, and we are eager to continue to hear from Canadians across the country in the coming months.

The committee, for example, will be undertaking a fact-finding mission to Guelph, Ont., in April to catch up with some of the cutting-edge research going on at the university. Fact-finding missions

to other regions of Canada are being considered.

When in Guelph, we will also talk to local farmers and check out their operations so we can understand more about how they contribute to soil health—and what support they need to keep growing the food and fibre we all depend on.

A broad perspective remains essential to soil health. Vast environmental, geological and agricultural differences mean that we need to hear from all parts of Canada, and at all levels. If you or someone you know is interested in providing comments for the study, I encourage you to contact the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry Committee at AGFO@sen.parl.gc.ca.

Climate change is affecting our world. Food insecurity is on the rise, and Canadians remain concerned about maintaining our agricultural and processing capacities. Soil health matters, and Canadians are starting to realize this important resource is not infinite. The Senate's new soil health study will help to address these concerns so we can gain a better understanding of how improved soil health can contribute to feeding Canada and the world.

CSG Senator Robert Black (Ontario) is chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

The Hill Times

Fifty years of supply management, 50 years of innovation

Through supply management, we have been able to transform egg farming over the last half-century through national programs and protocols that consistently deliver high quality, safe eggs to Canadians.

Roger
Pelissero

Opinion



Sometimes it takes a pandemic to really appreciate something as simple as an egg. Whether as a reliable and nutritious food staple, or as a guaranteed supply for made-in-Canada vaccines, Canadian eggs take—and make—the cake. That's exactly what they have been doing since 1972, when Canada's system of egg supply management was established. It was an innovative solution to a difficult set of challenges—and today, five decades later, it continues to evolve and deliver essential benefits to Canadians and farmers.

Through supply management, we have been able to transform egg farming over the last half-century through national programs and protocols that consistently deliver high quality, safe eggs to Canadians. While production increased on our farms, we also improved our environmental outcomes. That's why, in a period of 50 years, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 68

per cent, water use by 69 per cent, land use by 81 per cent and the energy used in egg production by 41 per cent. These efforts allow us to support Canada's path to net-zero emissions through the adoption of science-based research, green tech and farm level decision-making tools that help make egg farms even more sustainable. But for us, sustainability does not stop there because building and maintaining a sustainable food system is embedded in everything that we do. It keeps our animals healthy, our food safe, our farms efficient, and our families and communities strong and vibrant.

By supporting the local veterinarians, farming machinery dealerships, and feed providers in small towns across Canada, egg farmers also help keep our rural communities thriving. Backed by the stability of supply-managed egg farming at home, we are also able to share our knowledge and expertise on egg

farming abroad, bolstering food security globally and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by increasing access to a sustainable source of protein in the form of eggs.

The work of egg farmers does not stop there. With the rapid pace of medical research, innovators are looking at the familiar and nutritious egg not only as food but as a tool to support medical advancements. From the use of Canadian eggs in vaccines that are currently saving lives, to eggshells as a tool to regenerate bone tissue, the work of Canadian egg farmers is reaching many unexpected parts of our society today. As we build the future of our farms and sector, we can help Canadians get even further in every part of their daily lives.

By its very nature, our industry depends on co-operation, sustainability, and growth for the future. We would like to thank parliamentarians from all parties

for their ongoing support of supply management and their commitment from the Government of Canada to protect supply management in future trade negotiations. By stepping up and defending the system that has delivered so much to farmers, local communities and consumers, you can help us continue to do what we do best. As we look ahead, there is a unique opportunity to promote supply management as a system that ensures domestic food security and supports the growth of our entire agricultural sector for decades to come.

While much has changed since 1972, I look forward to the incredible achievements that await the future generations of Canadian egg farmers as they become the new agriculture leaders that bring benefits to all of Canada.

Roger Pelissero is an egg farmer and chair of Egg Farmers of Canada.

The Hill Times



From the use of Canadian eggs in vaccines that are currently saving lives, to eggshells as a tool to regenerate bone tissue, the work of Canadian egg farmers is reaching many unexpected parts of our society today, writes Roger Pelissero. *Image courtesy of Pexels*

We know how to support healthy soil, so let's help farmers adopt sustainable methods

Senator
Sharon Burey

Opinion



Healthy soil is the foundation of Canada's agriculture industry—but its impact goes beyond basic food production. Soil health impacts our ability to access food, the quality of the food, water, and air we consume and our diet and nutrition.

In all these ways, soil health is human health.

But this life-giving material, and the agricultural sector at large, continues to be threatened by many challenges, despite scientific and technological advancements in recent decades. Some of these challenges, like soil erosion, aren't new, while others—like supply chain issues, severe weather events and the effects of climate change—are evolving and more unpredictable.

As a pediatrician interested in the social determinants of health and the effects of food insecurity, and as one of the newest members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, these issues concern me deeply.

The Senate Agriculture Committee is engaged in a long-term study on soil health in Canada. Building upon the committee's first study on the subject in the 1980s, Senators are investigating the current state of soil across the country, the challenges of today and solutions to ensure sustainable agricultural growth and healthy soil over the long term.

A component of that is considering innovations in technology and farming techniques—and how to get farmers to embrace these practices. Agricultural land is a limited resource in Canada; only about seven per cent of the country's landmass is suitable for agriculture. It's therefore of paramount importance that we preserve the healthy soil we have in ways that are science-based and proven to work.

According to a 2016 report published by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, soil quality and conditions across the country improved between 1981 and 2011 as a result of improved land management practices and more sustainable agricultural practices.

These practices include growing techniques that minimally disturb the soil, such as "no-till" farming and direct seeding; the use of permanent soil covers (or "cover

crops"); and the installation and maintenance of "shelterbelts," a barrier of trees or other vegetation that helps reduce soil erosion from wind.

There is increased focus on the adoption of regenerative agriculture techniques, often referred to as beneficial management practices. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada describes these as farming practices based in science that minimize or prevent environmental risks, "while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the land and economic viability of the producer."

While we know now what works best, it's not enough—and the government knows this. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Strategic Plan for Science admits: "Currently, there is no clear net-zero pathway for agriculture that does not compromise food production for Canada ... as well as the long-term viability of Canada's agriculture sector."

"Significant research mobilization will be needed to fully engage AAFC's extensive science capacity ... in order to discover new practices and technologies," the plan reads.

However, the knowledge and lessons learned acquired over the last four de-

cadec—and our future innovations—will be for nothing if we can't empower and support the people who can put them into practice.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has heard that knowledge transfer to farmers who need this information remains challenging. The development of the Living Laboratories Initiative by Agriculture Canada is promising, but it needs to be rapidly and equitably expanded.

We should also look to and learn from Indigenous scientists and keepers of knowledge. Sustainability and the stewardship of Mother Earth are at the core of Indigenous farming practices and cultural beliefs.

Providing financial incentives to farmers is another key piece of the puzzle. The committee has heard from young, medium-sized and Indigenous farmers who were unable to access funding and resources dedicated to the adoption of BMPs, which is often a costly investment. We must ensure these practices make better economic sense than their less sustainable counterparts, and that the programs that promote them remain agile and deliver adequate support.

There is much work left to do, but there is no doubt: investing in agricultural innovation and adopting proven, sustainable farming practices is crucial not only to ensuring a thriving agriculture industry, but to the long-term health of our soil and ourselves.

CSG Senator Sharon Burey (Ontario) was appointed to the Senate in November and is a member of the Canadian Senators Group. She is a former behavioural pediatrician.

The Hill Times



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Agriculture Policy Briefing

Challenges facing Nova Scotia agriculture industry

At a time when food security and food availability have never been more important, we are seeing our agriculture industry shrink.

Senator Jane Cordy

Opinion



The Canadian agriculture industry is in transition and Canadian farmers, particularly those small family farms, are feeling the pinch.

The most recent census data released by Statistics Canada provides a snapshot of current agriculture trends across the country. At a time when food security and food availability have never been more important, we are seeing our agriculture industry shrink.



A farm in Nova Scotia, pictured. Between 2016 and 2021, the national total farmland declined by 3.2 per cent. But what is particularly concerning for the East Coast was that total farm area declined by more than 20 per cent in Nova Scotia during that same time frame, writes Senator Jane Cordy. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Between 2016 and 2021, the national total farmland declined by 3.2 per cent. But what is particularly concerning for us on the East Coast was that total farm area declined by over 20 per cent in Nova Scotia during that same time frame. The statistics also showed that there was almost a direct correlation between farmland decline and farmers leaving the industry.

The loss of almost 20 per cent of the operators in our region should be a concern for government. The stats are showing that as people leave the industry, there are few younger operators replacing them.

Indications are that these trends may continue, as Nova Scotia has the oldest average age of farm operators in Canada with over two-thirds of farm operators aged 55 years and older and only 8.1 per cent of whom reported a succession plan. In the not-too-distant future, if steps are not taken now to make agriculture a more financially viable option for younger potential farmers, we will continue to see these declines. Most farm operations in this region are smaller operations, many family-run, and it is becoming more difficult to make them work and turn a profit.

Running a farm and turning a profit is not just a case of putting in the hard work. So many things are out of an operator's control. Climate change is having an effect on growing seasons. For some farmers, warmer weather and longer growing seasons may present the option of new types of crops not possible in decades past. But we are also seeing drought, soil erosion, and more frequent extreme weather events, like the devastating Hurricane Fiona.

The federal government has also made ambitious carbon reduction targets which include the agriculture industry aggressively reducing their carbon footprint. There are opportunities for operators to invest in innovations that will increase efficiency and lower costs over the long term, however for smaller operations these upfront investments can be prohibitive.

Farmers are also struggling to find labour. In a study by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, it is believed that "by 2029, there will not be enough domestic workers in Nova Scotia to fill more than one in

every three jobs that will be required for the provincial agriculture sector to reach its production potential."

Even the Russian invasion of Ukraine is having a serious impact on the world's agriculture industry. Russia controls an estimated 25 per cent of the world's fertilizer supply and as nations put sanctions on Russia the flow of fertilizer from Russia is seriously impeded, driving up cost and increasing demand on a decreasing supply.

These are just a few factors making it difficult to entice new operators into the agriculture industry. There is also the increase in world competition, inflation, and fuel costs, contrasted with low prices received for their products. At a time when grocery chains are reporting record profits, why are our food producers not sharing in that wealth? But that is a discussion for another time.

Governments can't afford to wait. Each province and territory has an important role to play but we also need leadership at the federal level. Ensuring the future of our food production and food supply is not only a food security issue; it is also a national security issue. If we work together, we can secure Canada's agriculture industry for future generations.

Jane Cordy is a Senator for Nova Scotia and leader of the Progressive Senate Group.

The Hill Times

Turning up the heat on climate protections for workers

As the planet warms, how will policy-makers protect farm workers from scorching temperatures?

Anelyse Weiler & Susanna Klassen

Opinion



Farm operators in Canada face a dizzying array of challenges in feeding a hotter planet, with increasingly erratic weather patterns, shifts in the length of the growing season, and volatile pest populations. Policy-makers have slowly begun to acknowledge threats posed by climate change to Canadian agriculture, including the likelihood of even higher food prices on a warming planet. But they're ignoring another massive threat posed

by climate change to Canadian agriculture: the dangerous and deadly impacts of extreme heat on farmworkers.

Farm workers are on the front lines of the climate crisis. When wildfire season spreads thick smoke across Okanagan, B.C., vineyards, they often have little choice but to continue harvesting wine grapes while their lungs fill with dirty air. In sweltering temperatures, many farmworkers face a gruelling pace of work during the daytime. At night, they may return to overcrowded employer-provided housing without adequate fans or air conditioning for relief.

Without bold climate action, the years ahead will likely get much worse. Farm workers die each year of heat-related causes such as heat stroke at a rate 20 times greater than civilians. By mid-century, the number of days U.S. farm workers labour in dangerously scorching conditions could double. Deadly extreme weather events like the 2021 Pacific Northwest heat dome could become a once-in-10-year event.

Heat stress is not only a growing public health concern—

associated with issues like rising cases of kidney disease—but by 2100, heat-related productivity losses could rise to four per cent of GDP. When temperatures rise, workers can be less productive because of "thermal strain." Employers must be prepared to reduce workload, including the intense pace of work expected in piece-rate agriculture.

When workers get hit with rising temperatures across Canada, the patchwork of provincial guidelines and regulations will be inadequate. Ontario's law doesn't include any reference to extreme heat, let alone a thermal upper limit or specific mandatory practices to reduce heat risks for workers. In one of the stronger examples, British Columbia regulation stipulates that if a worker is exposed to conditions that could result in heat stress, measures like a work-rest cycle, personal protective equipment, and the provisioning of water are required by employers. But a weak inspection and enforcement regime for agriculture means this regulation lacks teeth. There's a particular chasm between agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers'

rights on paper and their rights in practice. These gaps reflect Canada's legacy of treating agriculture as an 'exceptional' industry in which it is acceptable to put employer interests far ahead of worker wellbeing.

Jurisdictions south of the border provide a model for occupational health and safety laws that protect workers from extreme heat. California's permanent law for outdoor workplaces includes a "trigger temperature": if the mercury hits 35C, employers must prevent heat illness by implementing procedures like mandatory cool-down rest periods every two hours. Oregon's rules are even stronger, with lower trigger temperatures and requirements for workers to wear masks, respirators and other protections if the Air Quality Index reaches 101. In 2021 and 2022, Washington State implemented temporary emergency measures for outdoor heat exposure and is pursuing more permanent legal protections, likely spurred by years of activism from farmworker organizations and supportive policymakers. A federal bill (the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Preven-

tion Act) has also been introduced in the Senate to not only prevent occupational heat illness, but to protect whistleblowers. Although U.S. laws are far from perfect, they are leagues ahead of what's on the books for climate and labour rights in Canada.

Workplace-level interventions like early warning systems, rest periods, hydration, and shade are crucial to reduce vulnerabilities to extreme heat for farmworkers. However, these must be paired with broader policy changes to ensure workers have the practical ability to refuse unsafe work, especially for Temporary Foreign Workers. Farm workers need a democratic voice in the workplace, permanent immigration status on arrival, and full inclusion in basic provincial labour rights like overtime pay.

Food security for Canada can't be built on the backs of hard-working people growing food in scorching temperatures. To remedy the patchwork of legislation across the country, federal policymakers should show leadership by coordinating provinces to better protect workers from the occupational health hazards of extreme weather.

Anelyse M. Weiler is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Victoria. Susanna Klassen is a postdoctoral research scholar in the Department of Sociology and the University of Victoria.

The Hill Times

Protecting our roots in agriculture



In Canada, family farms are disappearing at an unsustainable rate due in large part to punitive Liberal government policies, writes Conservative MP John Barlow. Photograph courtesy of Pixabay

As Canada struggles with record high inflation, cost of living and food prices, so too do the financial burdens take their toll on family farms.

Conservative MP
John Barlow

Opinion



Planted, cultivated, and harvested by local farm families, Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector is one of the most successful and sustainable in the world and it should be lauded, not punished, for this achievement.

Agriculture is an incredibly valuable pillar of our nation's economy, and a vital key to our economic recovery. While we celebrate the successes of today, we must also look to the future, keeping a keen eye to the pastures beyond and the next crop to grow.

Our young farmers are an important part of our successful agricultural industry. Generational farmers and ranchers are key to our food security, and the reason to preserve our land and rural way of life for the next generation of producers and consumers alike.

However, in Canada, family farms are disappearing at an unsustainable rate due in large part to punitive Liberal government policies.

As our country struggles with record high inflation, cost of living and food prices, so too do the financial burdens take

their toll on family farms. Harmful Liberal policies like the carbon tax, fertilizer tariffs and emissions reduction targets and prioritizing activist voices over proven science continue to threaten the economic viability of Canadian agriculture.

There is a stark contrast in approaches to agriculture and agri-food and this depletes generational family farms from our rural communities.

Conservatives are proud of our farm families and the fact they embrace innovation and technology to improve efficiency, reduce emissions and protect our water, soil, and precious ecosystems. Our farm families do more with less, and Conservatives see modern Canadian agriculture as part of the solution.

In contrast, the Liberals and NDP look at farmers as part of the problem punishing them with punitive taxes, regulations, and making decisions based on activism not science.

I have seen first-hand how farmers today struggle under the carbon tax, and could be made worse with the new Liberal underused housing tax. The crippling Liberal carbon tax, for example, is set to triple. According to the 2023 Canadian Price Index, when the carbon tax triples the average 5,000-acre farm could face more than \$150,000 a year on this tax alone. Add to that the newest Liberal tax, the underused house tax, homes on farm and rural properties could end up costing farmers thousands more in paperwork and potential fines.

Liberals are prioritizing activists over farmers through decisions not based on science, such as their harmful emissions reduction targets. According to CFIB, 72 per cent of farmers will be forced to reduce their yield and overall food production if the Liberal fertilizer reduction policy is mandated. Our farmers have worked hard to be sustainable, efficient and innovative in their use of fertilizer. In fact, they have

reduced emissions and improved yields and they have done so without government intervention, without carbon taxes because it is the right thing to do.

This Liberal policy is not about the environment, it is about tax revenue.

Our farmers should be celebrated for their innovation and sustainability. Instead the Liberals are putting the economic sustainability of our farmers at risk.

As a father, I want to see my children live their best life, in the best world where they have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our generational farmers are the same, working hard every day to take care of their land so their children can plant and prosper.

Achieving this goal is out of reach under Liberal policy. Canada needs policies to support family farms, not force our

farmers and ranchers to walk away from the land they love and labour on. To do so, we must prioritise agricultural prosperity, unleash its potential by repealing the destructive policies implemented over the last eight years by the Liberals.

I will fight for our farmers, calling on the Liberals to stop impeding the sustainability and success of our family farms. Losing more than a family farm a day is simply not sustainable. Our next generation of farmers depend on us today to ensure they can grow tomorrow.

Conservative MP John Barlow is the Member of Parliament for Foothills, Alta., and as serves as his party's critic for agriculture, agri-food and food security. He is the elected chair for the Canada-Scotland Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The Hill Times

Farming a more sustainable future

As egg farmers, we're committed to building a better tomorrow. From how we work with our community, to how we care for the environment, to how we nurture the next generation of farmers, sustainability colours every decision we make. It's our job. It's our way of life. And most of all, it's our passion.

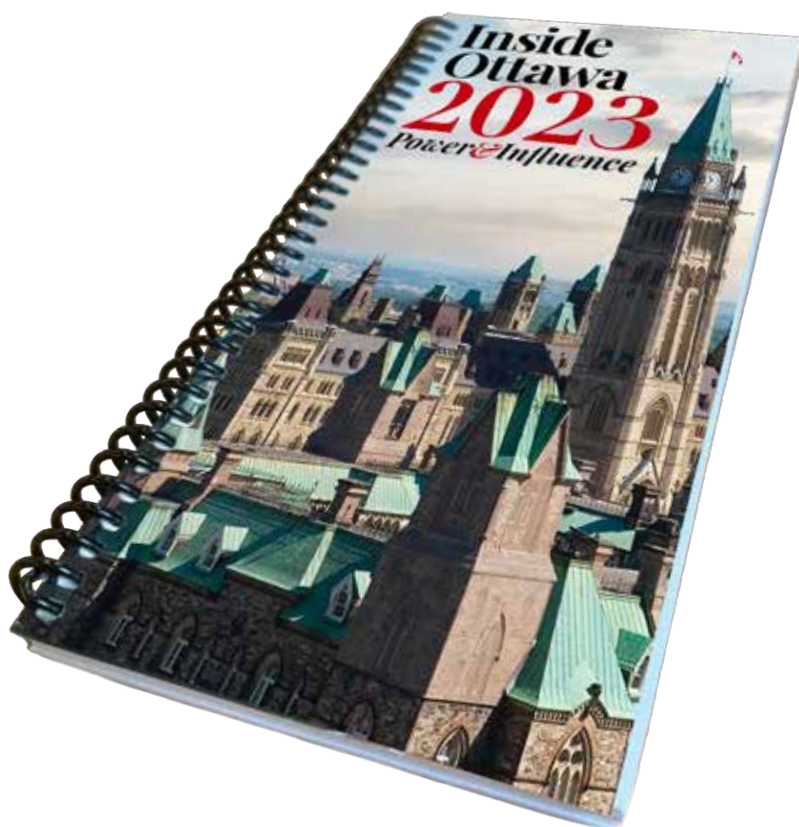
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- List of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and opposition critics
- 2023 sitting calendars for House and Senate

New contacts this year:

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And much more

Publication date: February 2023



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Time to put a stop to workplace injuries plaguing interpreters

While the Translation Bureau has committed to implementing the recommended measures and to exercising more vigilance when it comes to protecting their interpreters' health and safety, there is dire need for all meeting participants to do their part as well.

Greg Phillips

Opinion



Some of us have been unlucky enough to experience a virtu-

al meeting with piercing sound that caused excruciating pain in our ear. For federal interpreters who have been simultaneously interpreting for hybrid parliamentary meetings, such incidents are far too common, and have led to a record number of reported injuries over the last three years.

Their employer, the federal government, has allowed this to go on for too long.

Known as "acoustic shock" these types of incidents produce concussion-like symptoms and can lead to permanent hearing loss, among other long-lasting effects, depending on their severity. Last fall an incident while interpreting was so severe it sent a freelance interpreter to the hospital by ambulance.

How could this happen? The guidelines in place to prevent these injuries are not consistently followed.

Three years of constant injuries

Since the move to hybrid meetings due to the pandemic, interpreters' work has been hampered by technical glitches and participants' poor compliance with technical standards, with only minimal improvements,

causing many interpreters to be injured on the job.

The toll has been considerable. Since 2020, hearing issues have led 33 out of 70 staff interpreters to take 349 sick days for these workplace injuries. In any given month, 10 or so are reassigned to other duties on doctor's orders.

Most federal employees will go their entire career without filing an incident report. The situation is highly anomalous.

As a result, some interpreters have chosen to abandon their profession, rather than risk further injury.

Knock-on effects for official languages

Interpreters are a highly skilled workforce and difficult to replace. When they are out on sick leave, work reduced hours, are reassigned to other duties, or leave the profession, it causes a shortage of qualified interpreters that directly affects proceedings.

Just two weeks ago technical issues caused service disruptions which postponed a meeting where officials from Google were to testify. Other committee meetings have seen delays in starting as technicians assess the poor sound quality the interpret-

er notes during testing. While this is a good step in protecting interpreters' health and safety, it impacts parliamentary business. A permanent solution is still needed.

If interpreters' health and safety is not enough to convince leadership of the dire necessity to address this matter, disruption of parliamentary proceedings should.

Everyone must step up

For years, the government's response has been to pass the hot potato around to various departments and people despite repeated warnings, reports, meetings, and requests to implement recommendations.

On Feb. 1, following a formal complaint filed one year earlier, the Labour Program of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) ruled in favour of interpreters, recognizing the employer's failure to protect against the health and safety risks.

This was only a small victory, as it did not address the inadequacies of Parliament's audio-visual system which interpreters rely on. According to the National Research Council's October 2021 report on the sound quality, it is neither up to standard nor safe.

While the Translation Bureau has committed to implementing the recommended measures and to exercising more vigilance when it comes to protecting their interpreters' health and safety, there is dire need for all meeting participants to do their part as well.

Following the guidelines is the obvious first step. But parliamentarians can also use their power to support the allocation of financial resources to ensure the Parliament's audio-visual equipment is no longer a health hazard.

A glimmer of hope

Since the appointment of Helena Jaczek to Public Services and Procurement Canada, which oversees the Translation Bureau, we have seen some movement in the right direction. However, trust needs to be restored between interpreters and the Translation Bureau, which needs to live up to its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of its employees.

One incident is one too many. Greg Phillips is the president of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE). CAPE is the third largest federal public sector union, representing over 23,000 economists, policy analysts, statisticians, translators, terminologists, researchers in the Library of Parliament, and analysts in the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, as well as 70 professional interpreters in the federal public sector.

The Hill Times

Toronto police and the illusion of safety

It is inconceivable that the department implicated in the deaths of many Black and Brown people with mental health issues is the same one tasked with keeping Torontonians safe.

Eberechukwu Peace Akadinma & Cecilia Amoakohene

Opinion



TORONTO—On Jan. 9, 2023, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) approved an additional \$48-million to the police budget after a 14 per cent increase in the total budget within the past five years. Despite protests from the city's critics, Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw maintained that the increase was necessary

to improve response times and increase the presence of officers. Conversely, decades of research demonstrate that the police create the illusion of safety. So how exactly, then, do former mayor John Tory and his colleagues justify the recent increase in the police budget, or the \$337,000 for the "copaganda" podcast? We argue that at a time when Toronto is becoming aware of the full extent of harm caused by this organization, this move is simply a way of attempting to restore the tarnished image of TPS.

Interestingly, the illusion of safety only benefits a certain population: the white, cis- and able-bodied demographic. Every other community is acutely aware of how quickly the wrong encounter with the police can escalate, leading to detention or, worse, death. The homeless woman sleeping on the TTC. The psychiatric patient going home for a short visit with a hospital pass. The young Black adult with a hoodie or durag. These experiences and that of the Indigenous and LGBTQ+ communities provide concrete examples of the harms of surveillance, as their lives are intimately acquainted with negative policing. Even TPS'

data on June 15, 2022, show that their surveillance has brutalized Black bodies.

While safety concerns in the subways have recently garnered much media attention, it is unclear how increased police presence can mitigate these safety issues. In fact, the opposite has always been true; where the police gather, harm occurs. From Toronto's Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy dedicated to serving "priority neighbourhoods," to their response to mental-health crises, what is evident is that an institution with a history of causing harm cannot be expected to commit to repair. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that the department implicated in the deaths of many Black and Brown people with mental health issues is the same one tasked with keeping Torontonians safe.

Herein lies a fact: any attempt to fix or address crime that fails to look at structural factors is only an illusion of intent. The Toronto Police budget continues to expand, yet the policies consistently fail to produce tangible results. To continue to fund and expand the police budget is to mismanage taxpayers' dollars. Furthermore, as there are worries over the sustainability of

the \$1.7-million in expenditures past March 20, 2023, we are concerned that the increased budget will not be the last budgetary ask from TPS. If the boundaries are not clearly drawn on the TPS purview, we will see continued requests for funding that only draws support away from other much-needed programs in the city.

As graduate students, we contend with absolute certainty, as other policy experts have pointed out, that the crime rate decreases significantly when people's needs are adequately met. In light of global economic inflation, people are resorting to stealing food and groceries for their daily sustenance. The city's nurses continue to leave the profession in droves due to the endless stretch of their labour and poor compensation. The TTC remains poorly maintained. The rate of homelessness continues to increase.

Now, more than ever, there is a need to champion the social determinants of health approach in policy and budgetary decisions. The monies pumped into the police piggy bank can be invested in creating jobs, social housing, public transportation, childcare, disability welfare, food security, education, and healthcare. These

sorts of investments will increase the amount of affordable housing in the city, allowing those with housing needs to have a safe place to rest their heads and, subsequently, mitigate the rate of homelessness. Correspondingly, ensuring that education, from elementary to post-secondary, is accessible allows us to provide a future with no bounds for Toronto's next generation. Likewise, creating job opportunities and welfare access for those living on the margins of our society supports them in building a safer and more sustainable life.

Here, we want to reiterate that continuing to finance the police is an expensive venture that yields no tangible results. Instead, if our ultimate goal is to address crime and create a safer Toronto, we must engage an upstream approach by looking at the structural determinants of crime. A truly safe Toronto is one where all its residents are housed and properly cared for without constant surveillance.

Eberechukwu Peace Akadinma and Cecilia Amoakohene are both masters students of health policy and equity at York University in Toronto. Thanks to Marina Morrow for her expert opinion.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Canada's Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, pictured in a Hill scrum. What we need is a clearer 'frame' for the Canadian innovation ecosystem. We are too program-orientated rather than training a lens on the enabling environments for innovation, write Kevin Lynch and Paul Deegan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



What's missing in our innovation agenda?

The reality is that Canada's productivity and innovation challenge runs deep and broad, and the keys to its solution lie in many hands, not just government support programs or agencies. Here's hoping the proposed Canada Innovation Corporation avoids the pitfalls of some well-meaning previous efforts and is focused on improving the innovation environment not on sprinkling lots of small grants to many firms.

Kevin Lynch
& Paul
Deegan

Opinion



To tackle Canada's persistent innovation deficit, the federal government recently announced the Canada Innovation Corporation (CIC), a new Crown corporation, with the ambitious and inclusive mandate to "help Canadian businesses across all sectors and regions become more innovative and productive." This new "innovation sherpa" joins an already crowded field of federal innovation programs, supports,

and agencies, and it raises the obvious question of whether another government entity, at some considerable cost, will make a meaningful difference to our innovation performance as a nation.

Innovation has today become one of those buzzwords that can mean different things to different people. What it has traditionally meant is the ability to turn ideas into commercially successful new products and services, or to produce and deliver existing ones in new and better ways. Viewed this way, someone once quipped that "research is turning money into knowledge, and innovation is turning knowledge into money." And growth—innovation drives productivity, competitiveness and

GDP growth, areas where Canada has been consistently underperforming our peers in recent decades.

Unfortunately, our forward-looking prospects are worse: the OECD is predicting that Canada will be dead last in real GDP per capita growth over the 2030-2060 period—not a great legacy to leave the next generation.

What's behind this weak innovation and productivity performance? There is a nefarious band of possible culprits—taxes, regulations, insufficient focus on IP, lack of scale, scarcity of venture capital, lack of competition, risk-averse procurement, and insipid business spending on R&D—which have been likened to an Agatha Christie mystery where "everyone did it."

This is a mystery worth exploring. Canada certainly has some of the right "infrastructure" for an innovation economy. We have relatively high public investment rates in university research, a well-educated and diverse workforce, an inclusive immigration system, a sound financial system, and strong civic institutions. So, what is missing?

What we need is a clearer 'frame' for the Canadian innovation ecosystem. We are too program-orientated rather than training a lens on the enabling environments for innovation.

First, the 'macro innovation environment'. Governments play a lead role in establishing the enabling environment of public finance, tax, regulation, competition, and trade—but often without a clear or explicit innovation and productivity lens. Governments also need a greater innovation and productivity focus in how they operate, just like the private sector. After all, they are huge suppliers of health, education services, pensions, passports and a myriad of other services—all of which are amenable to more innovation and greater productivity. Health-care reform springs to mind.

Second, 'the micro innovation environment'. Universities and colleges play a lead role in developing the talent and the research capacity Canada needs. To justify new government investments in higher education and research, universities can do a better job of explaining the societal benefits to the public, rather than a focus on university budgets. To better prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow and to build better connectivity with needs of employers, more universities should shift to the co-op model of undergraduate education. To increase their R&D orientation, businesses should invest more in research partnerships and co-op placements at universities, and universities should facilitate such connections. We need a true partnership

model between government, universities and colleges, and the private sector to build a world class talent and research environment which enables innovation.

Third, the 'community innovation environment'. It is in communities where innovative start-ups are conceived, incubated and raised, supported by mentors, angel investors and peers. This has been the Silicon Valley version of industrial policy—picking technologies and sectors with the potential for disruption, and attracting the innovators and entrepreneurs to make the disruption happen. Done well, it brings together—at either a specific geography or around a specific technology—university researchers, risk capital, managerial expertise, potential customers and government. Density matters, and this argues for clusters and critical mass rather than the government sprinkling support and incubators hither and yon in pursuit of regional equity.

Fourth, the 'organizational innovation environment'. It is firms who establish the internal structures, incentives, and capacity to promote corporate innovation. Today, most corporate innovations start with the ideas of consumers and front-line staff, not the C-suite. But to turn consumer wants into commercially viable products requires the support of corporate leadership, technological know-how and organizational structures. Corporate boards of directors can do more, encouraging long term investments in R&D rather than short term share buybacks. And financial markets can be clearer as to how they view lower Canadian business spending on research and innovation compared to U.S. peers.

Rather than more boutique innovation support programs, improving the enabling environment for innovation would have the biggest multiplier effect in helping to reverse the unfortunate productivity and growth trajectory we are on. We should deploy innovation support programs more judiciously, where there is clear market failure and where the public good from the support outweighs the private benefit.

Being average is not a recipe for success, particularly when the benefits of innovation go disproportionately to early adopters. While Canada has produced a number of world-class innovators, no one would rank Canada as either an 'innovation nation' or a 'nation of innovators'. This comes at a cost to our competitiveness and living standards.

The reality is that Canada's productivity and innovation challenge runs deep and broad, and the keys to its solution lie in many hands, not just government support programs or agencies. Here's hoping the proposed Canada Innovation Corporation avoids the pitfalls of well-meaning previous efforts and is focused on improving the innovation environment not on sprinkling lots of small grants to many firms everywhere, all at once.

Kevin Lynch was clerk of the Privy Council and vice-chair of BMO Financial Group. Paul Deegan was a public affairs executive at BMO and CN.

The Hill Times



Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, pictured during a scrum on the Hill. Her much-publicized Washington speech on Oct. 11, 2022, she endorsed the misguided and dangerous American policy that would divide the world into competing blocs—democracies versus autocracies—as the organizing system for the future, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

What the world needs now is multilateral reform

Chrystia Freeland should pay attention to the warnings of Kevin Rudd, the former Australian prime minister and now Australian ambassador to the United States. ‘We have entered a new, uncharted era where there are, as yet, no new rules of the road. China has reached a similar conclusion. The time has therefore come to craft some new ones before it’s too late.’

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—A little more than 50 years ago, our new prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, declared that “many of the major world issues will not be resolved com-

pletely, nor in any lasting way, unless, and until, an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation.” Despite American opposition, he established diplomatic relations in 1970 with the government in Beijing. Trudeau felt that China was too important to remain isolated.

Much has changed since then, notably the astonishing rise of China itself. One consequence is that for the first time in more than 75 years, we face the challenge of how to deal with a changing world order where the hegemony of the United States is no longer sustainable to one which will also have some Chinese characteristics. We need a multilateral world order where the major powers can find effective ways to minimize the risk of war and maximize the opportunity to solve global problems.

In the past, Canada played a constructive role in building a multilateral world—from the establishment of the United Nations and the creation of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, to, more recently, helping launch the International Court of Criminal Justice. But in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau government’s most important foreign policy speech in some time, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland changed gears. Rather than speaking as a champion of multilateral reform, in her much-publicized Washington speech on Oct. 11, 2022, she endorsed the misguided and dangerous American policy that would divide the world into competing blocs—democracies versus autocracies—as the organizing

system for the future. This is the wrong direction and out of step with long-standing Canadian interest in a multilateral system that sets rules and reduces risks. Multilateral reform today is needed more than ever. Our multilateral system was built for a 20th century world and we are now in the 21st century.

The pandemic clearly underlined the need for global co-operation and a strengthened World Health Organization. Pandemics are global threats that do not distinguish between democracies and autocracies, and COVID-19 showed just how rapidly a life-threatening virus can spread. Many factors are increasing the risk of future pandemics: from population growth, migration, and the ability of viruses and bacteria to mutate, to climate change, and the clearing of forests and forms of habitat encroachment. A group of American epidemiologists earlier this year, in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, warned that many future risks exist from coronaviruses and from bacterial threats. Humanity, it said, “could get hit with a novel coronavirus or an influenza virus” that “would challenge the very survival of our species.” Clearly, a multilateral system of global public health is needed.

The 2008 global financial crisis provides another example of why multilateralism is critical. A key reason the world avoided a global depression in 2008 was the role China played providing a much-needed stimulus to the global economy. We have to assume the world will face future financial crises that will require

strong multilateral institutions and co-operation. China is such a large economy, well-integrated into the global economy so it would have to be part of any effective plan for global financial stability. The key institution is the IMF. But dividing the world into competing blocs may threaten the ability to deal with future global financial or economic crises. IMF reform is critical.

Dealing with climate change also requires effective multilateralism. The risks to human society from climate change are existential and pose many risks, including floods and droughts that threaten food supplies and access to water, to human health and large-scale human migration, with enormous potential for conflict and loss of life. Climate change can only be addressed as a global challenge. We need strengthened global agreements and perhaps even a new global climate institution to avert climate disaster.

Nuclear proliferation and arms control are yet another example of where a multilateral approach is critical. The division of the world into competing blocs escalates the risk of war, as democracies and autocracies pursue a growing arms race. We need a high level of statecraft to defuse potential risks. Instead, we risk a march to folly, leading the world into an atomic Armageddon that no one wants, just as the world marched blindly into World War I, with its 40 million deaths.

Space is another area where there is an urgent need for global rules. Space activity is accelerating, with the militarization of

space, the dangerous and growing buildup of debris in space, the rapid growth in satellites for a wide range of applications, and planetary exploration with implications for resource extraction and potential claims of planetary “ownership.” As space activity continues to grow, the potential for conflict will also grow. We will need a new global institution to govern the use of space.

This is why Freeland’s speech was the wrong speech. Rather than offering constructive ideas for multilateral reform, Freeland largely echoed American policies dividing the world into competing blocs. We should continue to stand up for human rights and championing democracy as a desirable system of societal organization. Likewise, we should take strong issue with efforts by other countries or foreign corporate interests to interfere in our political system. But we must also work hard for a future that de-risks major wars, addresses climate change, reduces future pandemic risks, creates the conditions for a stable world economy, avoids new forms of conflict in space and addresses many other threats.

Freeland should pay attention to the warnings of Kevin Rudd, the former Australian prime minister and now Australian ambassador to the United States. “We have entered a new, uncharted era where there are, as yet, no new rules of the road. China has reached a similar conclusion. The time has therefore come to craft some new ones before it’s too late,” he argues. This is, he contends, the really big challenge we face: “How to preserve the peace and prosperity we have secured over the last three-quarters of a century while recognizing the reality of changing power relativities between Washington and Beijing.” Freeland’s speech doesn’t help get us there.

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The Hill Times

News

Foreign influence transparency registry needs to be more than ‘political theatre,’ says Wark

National security expert Wesley Wark says the proposed foreign influence transparency registry should list ‘foreign states of concern,’ including China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, and Canadians who have ‘beneficial’ engagements with them.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

The federal government’s proposed foreign influence transparency registry will need to “tightly define its purpose” and be more than “a piece of political theatre that is designed to falsely reassure the Canadian political classes or the Canadian public that a registry solves the problem of foreign interference,” says national security and intelligence expert Wesley Wark.

“On its own, it won’t solve the problem—and if it’s constructed in too baggy or too loose a fashion, it won’t work at all,” explained Wark, a senior fellow with the Centre for International Governance Innovation who served two terms on former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper’s Advisory Council on National Security from 2005 to 2009. “One of my concerns is that if you create a registry, it’s really only going to work if there’s the backroom machinery in terms of knowledge of foreign governments’ activities on the clandestine front, such as espionage—a problem for the intelligence and security agencies.”

“I don’t want to see this registry created at the expense of money and resources that can go into the important work of investigations, analysis and reporting, and I very much fear that it will have that zero-sum effect.”

On March 10, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino (Eglington-Lawrence, Ont.) launched a public consultation to gather input for the proposed registry—a process that will conclude on May 9.

Its purpose is three-fold, he said at a news conference announcing the launch. The



On March 10, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, pictured, launched a public consultation to gather input for the proposed registry—a process that will conclude on May 9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

consultation will seek to “foster transparency regarding legitimate foreign state lobbying and activities; modernize existing legislative authorities to address and mitigate foreign state activities that go beyond legitimate diplomacy in an attempt to clandestinely, or deceptively, manipulate Canada’s open democracy, economy, and society; and finally, to broadly engage all Canadians in a conversation about how to protect our institutions from foreign interference in an inclusive manner that respects the diversity of our population and of course, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,” the minister said.

The goal of the registry, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said four days before when he unveiled his government’s response to foreign interference following media reports of China’s meddling in the last two federal elections, is “to ensure transparency and accountability from people who advocate on behalf of a foreign government and ensure communities who are often targeted by attempts at foreign interference are protected.”

Former senator Vern White, who also served on the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians that has also been tasked by the prime minister to assess the extent of foreign interference in federal elections, told *The Hill Times* that a registry “would bring into the light that which was occurring in the dark.”

“Most actors in the registry would be legitimate engagement so most often would not be a problem,” said White, a former RCMP assistant commissioner and past chief of the Ottawa Police Service, who added that the registry would clarify what foreign engagement is “appropriate and what is not.”

Independent Senator Yuen Pau Woo (British Columbia), former president and CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, said that he supports the public consultation, but encourages

Canadians “to reflect on whether a foreign influence transparency registry can be developed in such a way as to not punish or stigmatize certain communities, stifle legitimate political debate and foster parochialism.”

He suggested that anyone participating in the online deliberation consider “what communities would we want covered by this proposed registry that we would not want other countries to have in their own approach to our influence activities abroad.”

Former Canadian diplomat Colin Robertson, who served as consul at the Canadian commission in Hong Kong before its transfer from British to Chinese control in 1997, said the registry “probably satisfies the political requirement, but the challenge will be the enforcement.”

The proposed registry will focus on a subset of foreign interference the federal government calls “malign foreign influence.” The consultation paper defines it as an individual or entity that “exerts influence, through covert or non-transparent means, at the direction of, or on behalf of, or with the substantial support of a foreign principal...to shape Canadian government policy, outcomes or public opinion without disclosing their foreign government ties,” such as a “prominent Canadian academic” recruited by a foreign government—which he or she does not disclose—to write an op-ed in “a widely circulated national newspaper” and recruit student groups on campus to oppose the federal government’s approach to an international issue.

The federal government envisions the foreign influence transparency registry to include five key elements.

They include “explicit or implicit” arrangements between a foreign principal and an individual or entity in Canada where the intent is to “undertake influence activities in Canada or towards Canadians,” and “payment or any other advantage to a person or entity acting on behalf of the foreign principal would not be

required to undertake the activity and for the arrangement to be registrable.” Failure to register such an arrangement could result in monetary, regulatory/civil and/or criminal penalties levied against the individual or entity.

The federal government submits that “registrable activities” could include parliamentary or general political lobbying, but should also consider including “communications activity” that “can influence the views and opinions of people involved in political and government processes, individuals in Canada, or Canadian society,” and “may also look to manipulate the information environment, diminish trust in democratic institutions, processes and sow discord all in service of the geo-strategic interests of a foreign government.”

There should be exemptions, suggests the government, and they could include legal advice, diplomatic activity, “and situations where an individual is engaging in registrable activities but is doing so in their transparent capacity as an employee or representative as a foreign government.”

The government envisions a public registry “in order to support greater transparency and build societal resilience to malign foreign influence,” and one—not unlike the requirements under the Lobbying Act—that that includes “personal details for the individual or entity undertaking the activities, dates, the purpose of the activity, and the nature of the relationship between the individual/entity and the foreign principal.”

Failure to comply will result in penalties—first, through “administrative enforcement mechanisms” that would issue notices following a tiered system, beginning with publicly declaring “an individual or entity” a foreign principal. The second tier could “compel an individual or entity to produce any information or documentation where, for example, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the individual or entity has a registration obligation in relation to a foreign principal.”

The government adds that a process would be in place to appeal the issuance of notices.

Administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) could also be used and be “a high enough amount so that individuals or entities that may seek to avoid registration obligations wouldn’t simply consider paying fines as a cost of doing business.” Anyone subject to AMPs “could be publicly listed on the registry as an additional mechanism to bolster transparency and deterrence,” according to the consultation paper.

And, there could be criminal sanctions to “provide Canada with an alternative means of countering potential national security threats that would complement national security prosecutions.”

Criminal and regulatory offences in the registry could include: “undertaking registrable activities while not being registered; failure to fulfill responsibilities under the law, [such as] reporting and disclosure obligations; providing false or misleading information or documentation in relation to an individual’s registration; inducing or directing individuals or entities to undertake activities which, if taken, would be registrable activities; and, destroying records.”

Wark provided *The Hill Times* with his model for the foreign influence transparency registry, which would fall under the purview of Public Safety Canada.

He would list “foreign states of concern”—China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, as a start—and Canadians who have “beneficial” engagements with them.

“It shouldn’t be about activities, which would have to be very broadly defined, but about people who could be influencers,” explained Wark, who imagines the registry having “classes” or “categories” of Canadians who may be subject to registration.

The classes would include: anyone who has held public office (elected or not, such as police chiefs) within the past 10 years, potentially including Ontario MPP Vincent Ke, who recently resigned from Ontario Premier Doug Ford’s Progressive Conservative caucus to sit as an Independent following allegations that he served as a financial intermediary in election-interference schemes by the Chinese Communist Party, a claim which he has denied; persons permanently pledged to secrecy under the provisions of the federal *Security of Information Act*; former employees of the Department of National Defence and past members of the Canadian Armed Forces; and scientific researchers engaged on projects with potential military and national security implications, with fields of research to be listed.

“Individuals who belong to these specified classes would be required to register details of all ‘beneficial’ engagements with listed foreign states,” said Wark, a former professor at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

“It’s essentially warding off people by saying that you’re going to come under scrutiny as a particular class of influencers.”

He explained that the details of listing requirements would be defined in legislation, along with a definition of the meaning of “beneficial.”

Failure to register or “omissions” in registration would only be subject to administrative financial penalties, said Wark.

“When you have multiple steps of sanctions, you get into a very complicated machinery of enforcement.”

The Hill Times

Liberals' filibuster at House Affairs 'ugly to watch,' but a 'survival technique,' say pollsters and politicians

The Liberals' ongoing filibuster at the House Affairs Committee is 'ridiculous,' but Grit pundit Scott Reid says there's a point behind it, to stop protect staff from testifying. However, the whole thing could backfire on the government in the end.

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thing most Canadians notice, but pollsters say it is still a risky strategy for the government, as Liberal MPs deploy their rhetorical skills in an effort to prevent the prime minister's chief of staff Katie Telford from being called before the committee.

On Tuesday, March 21, the House Affairs Committee will reconvene to continue a meeting that's been ongoing for two weeks and nearly 21 hours, as the Liberals filibuster to put off a vote on a Conservative motion. The meeting began on March 7, and ran for three hours; on March 9 it spent six hours in a meeting; and on March 14, during a break week, the MPs met for a staggering 11 hours and 37 minutes.

Political analyst Scott Reid, who was the director of communications for the former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, said the filibuster is "ugly to watch."

"It's never an attractive thing," he said. "Hard as it might be to imagine it though, there's a point behind it, there's a principle there. And in this case, they're trying to draw the line and say, 'Look, we're not going to permit staff to appear, and to be called to testify. We're not going to allow that precedent to go unchallenged,'" he said.

Ipsos Public Affairs CEO Darrell Bricker said the filibuster is part of a "survival technique" the Liberals are employing, as they try to run out the clock and hope the public's attention moves on as the Easter break approaches.

Maybe they can do that, Bricker said, "but it's not like people are responding to the way that they're approaching this, and anything else that's going on around the government right now, with great enthusiasm," he said, referencing recent polls that have the Liberals trailing the Conservatives. He points out the vote hasn't changed much since 2019,



Conservative MP Michael Cooper, left, put forward a motion to the House Affairs Committee that would see the prime minister's chief of staff Katie Telford be invited to testify before the committee on China's alleged interference in Canada's elections. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

which has led to the Liberals last two minority governments.

At the meeting on March 14, the filibuster was kicked off by Liberal MP Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Ont.), who is not a normal member of the committee, but came to speak for nearly an hour about why Telford should not appear before the committee, when all the members know she would not be able to comment on classified information anyways. Liberal MP Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Ont.), also temporarily joined the committee in order to lend his oratory skills. He tried to remind the Conservative opposition that back in 2010, during the Harper government, they blocked Harper's director of communications Dmitri Soudas from testifying at a committee examining political interference in access to information requests. He said if roles were reversed, and the Conservatives, the NDP, or the Bloc were in government, they would each be taking the same position as the governing Liberals, and trying to protect the principle of ministerial responsibility.

David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, said Canadians have "an underlying desire to understand what's going on" regarding China's interference in Canadian elections, and the filibuster won't change that.

"The Liberals are still going to be under pressure," he said, and if the government looks like it is being hypocritical on the issue, "that could ultimately hurt them."

"If you have senior leaders in the government saying, 'this is an important issue, we want to share as much information as we can,' and at the same time, they're preventing a parliamentary committee from doing its work, then that could be seen as questionable," he said.

they are feeling is that something happened and they're not getting a clear sense of what that was. And there doesn't seem to be a real desire by the government to get to the bottom of it, which has led to this thing that we're seeing in the House of Commons, which, for the casual observer, just kind of looks like, 'what the heck is going on?'"

According to Bricker, the Liberals' filibuster can be seen as part of a broader pattern of how the government behaves when it finds itself dealing with scandals.

"They're just following what they believe has been a successful strategy for dealing with similar kinds of things in the past, and that is to delay for as long as possible until either the opposition runs out of energy, or another event shows up, or the public just gets bored with it," he said in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

Bricker said the filibuster "comes off as really defensive on an issue that people do care about."

"At some point, you have to wonder what the motivation of all the stalling is," he said. "For people who follow this closely, they probably made up their mind one way or the other already, but for people who are kind of sitting on the fence, it's just a bad look."

Reid said the Liberal government does have a rhythm or pattern when it comes to managing issues.

"It often deflects, defends, declines, dismisses, and then finally, after it becomes obvious that there's just no avoiding it, they summon themselves, and ironically, they usually manage these things reasonably well," he said.

"It's just that, you know, they sort of permit themselves to get slapped in the face over and over again on the way there."

But according to Reid, the filibuster itself doesn't fall into that pattern, and he said he thinks the government has made a "calculation" in deciding to filibuster the committee.

"They've determined that even though they are a minority Parliament, they're just going to draw the line that, if they keep saying yes to invitations to staff to speak, that there's no going back," said Reid.

Reid acknowledged that this amounts to "trying to put the genie back in the bottle," seeing as staffers—including Telford herself—have indeed testified at committee hearings in the past.

Telford appeared before the House Finance Committee in 2020 to testify alongside Trudeau on the government's contract with WE Charity to administer the Canada Student Service Grant, and also appeared before the House Defence Committee in

2021 to testify on sexual misconduct in the military.

But Reid said he would suppose the Liberals' logic is the government has to draw a line on staff testifying at committee hearings at some point, because if not, "then this becomes the new normal and it ought not to be."

Reid said the average Canadian "doesn't give a damn if Katie Telford testifies or not or if government staffers are ever compelled."

"But my Aunt Gladys does notice on the issue around the interference if the government isn't really able to get heard on any of its priorities or policy agenda items, because Ottawa just seems like it's caught up in argument and filibuster and allegation and accusation. At some point, that gets noticed and people go, 'Well, I don't know what I think about Chinese interference, but I do know that it looks like Ottawa is getting nothing done,' and eventually that rolls back on the government," he said.

Opposition MPs frustrated with filibuster

Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.) told *The Hill Times* in an interview that he wants the committee to continue its work on studying foreign interference in Canada's elections because he believes the committee is uniquely positioned to examine the issue quickly and in the public domain.

"It can happen now, as it has been happening, but for efforts by the Liberals to sabotage the work of the committee at the direction of a prime minister, who, ironically only weeks ago was saying, 'Let the committee do its work,'" he said.

"The whole issue could be resolved very quickly if Liberal members will simply allow a vote to happen. They know they're going to lose the vote, and so they wasted about 24 hours of the committee's time," he said.

Committee members from the NDP and the Bloc (of which there is only one of each) said they would be supporting Cooper's motion to invite Telford to appear before the committee, which puts the Liberal members in a minority position.

Meanwhile, the NDP's committee member—MP Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, B.C.)—said in a statement that the filibuster "proves our point that PROC isn't the right place for this investigation."

The NDP has been calling for the government to undertake a public inquiry into allegations of China's election interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections.

"We need to get to the bottom of the very serious foreign interference in elections with a public inquiry, and this filibustering is a clear attempt to stop a transparent, public and independent process. It's shameful—and Canadians deserve answers from the Liberals, not continued delays," Blaney said in the statement.

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News

‘Really unfortunate that NSICOP has been so politicized,’ says PM’s former national security adviser amid China’s election interference concerns

‘The prime minister knew full well that the practical, obvious solution to this problem was one that that wasn’t going to fly on its own, and therefore had to create a triple-headed review enterprise,’ says national security expert Wesley Wark.

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mittee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), it’s unfortunate that the body has been politicized due to its secretive mandate, something which they say has motivated the prime minister to open up three separate lines of inquiry.

Vincent Rigby, former national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister from 2020 to 2021, said that NSICOP has been presented with a number of challenges since it was created in 2017 and that they rose to the challenge every time.

“I’ve got very high regard for the body, I think it’s done some excellent work,” said Rigby.

In a statement, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) said that “NSICOP has been used in the past—and is being used here again—to avoid accountability. It takes place in secret and is controlled by Justin Trudeau.”

Rigby said he thought it was “really unfortunate that NSICOP has been so politicized,” and that it was unfortunate that some people have said it’s a “secret body, meeting in secret, that there is no daylight into their activities, and nobody knows what they do.”

“Yes, they deliberate in secret because they deal with highly, highly classified documentation,” said Rigby. “But they produce public reports, they have produced quite a number of public reports, and they’re extremely well done. They’ve been praised by not just those in our government, but in other governments.”

In 2019, the committee released a report urging the government to take the threat

of foreign interference more seriously, noting that “Canada has been slow to react to the threat of foreign interference.”

“The government must do better,” according to the report. “Canada’s long-term security depends on the integrity of its sovereignty in decision-making, strong and independent fundamental institutions, and the protection of the rights and freedoms of Canadians.”

“This is an experienced body, under extremely able leadership with David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.), a strong secretariat, public servants who know their stuff,” said Rigby. “It’s unfortunate that it’s been kind of hidden away and people are only now becoming aware of it, because they’ve been producing some really first-rate reports for a while and really added to the transparency of our security and intelligence community.”

As the former national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, Rigby said that “yes, the documents go through the PMO and the prime minister for final sign off, but I never saw anything from the PMO or the prime minister in suggesting that they have to be removed for political purposes.”

“If anything, the prime minister wanted more transparency in the reports,” he said.

The committee consists of nine members, including Liberal MP and chair McGuinty, Liberal MPs Iqra Khalid (Mississauga-Erin Mills, Ont.), Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard-Saint-Michel, Que.), and James Maloney (Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ont.), as well as Senator Frances Larkin.

Bloc Québécois MP Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, Que.) also sits on the committee, as well as NDP MP Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.), and Conservative MPs Rob Morrison (Kootenay-Columbia, B.C.) and Alex Ruff (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Ont.).

NSICOP is not a parliamentary committee—it’s a committee of parliamentarians, and the distinction is important as it reports directly to the Prime Minister’s Office.

PM had to create a ‘triple-headed review enterprise’ says Wesley Wark

National security expert Wesley Wark, a senior fellow with the

Centre for International Governance Innovation, called into question why the government has so many reviews on the move at the moment.

“What the government has done is set in place an array of reviews—three—why three?” said Wark.

The government named former governor general David Johnston as the ‘special rapporteur’ last week to look into election interference. Johnston was appointed governor general in 2010 by former prime minister Stephen Harper, a position he held until 2017.

In addition to the NSICOP review and the special rapporteur’s investigation, the prime minister also spoke to the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency (NSIRA) about a review of how Canada’s national security agencies handled the threat of foreign interference during the 43rd and 44th federal general elections.

“The government knew that giving this kind of review over to one of the existing review bodies would not meet the expectations of Canadians, so we’ve ended up with three reviews essentially, because the most practical solution is to have some kind of body look more closely at the classified evidence and produce a public report,” said Wark.

“The one body that was best able to do that was the NSICOP, but it’s not sufficiently trusted and in particular, it’s not trusted by the Conservative Party,” said Wark. “So the prime minister knew full well that the practical, obvious solution to this problem was one that wasn’t going to fly on its own, and therefore had to create a triple-headed review enterprise,” said Wark.

In his recent book *Intelligence as Democratic Statecraft*, Christian Leuprecht, a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada and national security expert and co-author Hayley McNorton noted that prior to 2017, Canada was an outlier among the Five Eyes intelligence community as there was no parliamentary committee or committee of parliamentarians which had access to classified material for the purpose of holding intelligence agencies accountable.

Leuprecht told *The Hill Times* that the prime minister should let the committee of parliamentarians do their work “let them decide what they feel they can should and want to report to.”

“That’s the compromise solution,” said Leuprecht. “If we’re not going to have a public inquiry, and there’s good reasons for not having a public inquiry, including the fact that’s going to take like three years or something, we’ll be well past the next election.”

“And we need to get this solved well before the next election,” said Leuprecht.

Rigby said he was “still a little bit cautious about saying, OK, this is something that is completely and utterly out of control, and we have a full blown crisis, and our electoral system is being completely overwhelmed.”

“I cannot say that at this point, but there is enough there that deeply concerns me, there’s definitely a lot of smoke, so yes, I am concerned how much more is going to come out, and that’s the question, but again, we all knew this was taking place,” said Rigby.

On numerous occasions since he retired, Rigby has said that governments in Canada don’t take national security as seriously as they should.

“And so if it turns out that all of this intelligence is reflective of the government not responding, I won’t be shocked,” he said.

NSICOP doing the work is ‘a good first step,’ says former Senator Vernon White

Former Senator Vernon White, who retired from the Red Chamber earlier this year and previously sat as a member of NSICOP, told *The Hill Times* that in his view, “there may be an overlap between NSIRA and NSICOP, although they have very different mandates.”

“The biggest bonus to having NSICOP do their work is the fact that they have a strong secretariat that has been through this type of work and a strong committee,” said White.

White said he thought NSICOP taking on this work was “a good first step, and depending on what comes from there, it might be enough. And if not, do something else.”

“NSICOP can work quickly compared to some other avenues. And remember the committees’ report of 2019 speaks to foreign interference...they did their job,” said White.

Members of NSICOP were not accepting interview requests from

The Hill Times, but the secretariat said that committee members are required to hold a “top secret security clearance and swear an oath that they will not communicate or inappropriately use the information they obtain in fulfilling their duties.”

“In doing so, they waive their parliamentary privilege on information that a department is taking measures to protect and they are privy to during their time on the committee,” according to the secretariat.

Security clearances are determined and attributed in accordance with the “Standard on Security Screening” and the requirement that members have the necessary security clearance, which is set out in section 10 of the NSICOP Act. The clearance process and swearing of the oath are managed by the appropriate branch of the Privy Council Office, according to the secretariat.

Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Mark Holland (Ajax, Ont.), has been designated as the minister for the purposes of the NSICOP Act.

“The committee first submits the report to the prime minister to enable the review for information injurious to national security, national defence or international relations,” according to the secretariat. “Once that review is complete, the prime minister must table the report in both Houses of Parliament within 30 days.”

In response to a question surrounding the prime minister’s acknowledgment that the government hasn’t always listened to recommendations on foreign election interference from NSICOP, the secretariat pointed to the committee’s 2021 annual report where the committee chair noted that “the committee believes that responses to its recommendations are essential to strengthening the operations and accountability of security and intelligence organizations.”

“It welcomes the government’s commitment, which it has cited as an area for improvement in past annual reports,” according to the secretariat. “It equally encourages the government to respond to the recommendations of the committee’s seven previous reviews of critical issues in the security and intelligence community, including...the absence of a whole of government strategy to address foreign interference in Canada.”

“In the coming year, the committee will engage with organizations implicated in the committee’s earlier reviews to determine whether they accept the committee’s recommendations and what actions have been taken to respond to them,” according to the secretariat.

When asked about timeline surrounding the review, the secretariat noted that there are no timelines established for the committee’s reviews and when they are submitted to the prime minister.

“However, pursuant to the NSICOP Act, the prime minister must table reports within 30 sitting days of their being submitted,” according to the secretariat.

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‘Too much, too quickly’: economists warn of Liberal ‘pro-business’ immigration policy

The government’s rhetoric doesn’t match reality when it comes to higher immigration targets and labour shortages, say three labour economists. But the Century Initiative’s Lisa Lalande argues that economists who are critical of the higher immigration targets are taking a ‘very narrow perspective,’ and should be looking at measures of economic prosperity besides per capita income.

BY PETER MAZEREUEW

The Liberal government’s move to admit record numbers of immigrants to fill a purported “labour shortage” has prompted warnings from economists with years of experience studying immigration to Canada.

The government is selling the policy change as a way to boost economic growth and “help businesses find workers.”

But there’s no evidence, the economists said, that the plan to eventually accept a half million new residents per year will benefit the average Canadian resident—though it might help businesses looking for low-cost labour.

The higher immigration targets—along with a growth in the use of temporary foreign workers and working international students under the Liberal government—have the potential to push down wages for the lowest-paid



Immigration Minister Sean Fraser has been reworking the government’s immigration policies, and setting record-high targets for the intake of economic immigrants. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

workers in the country, many of whom are recent immigrants or refugees, they said.

“The short answer is that the evidence just does not line up with the talking points. It’s not even in the ballpark, it’s not even close,” said Mikal Skuterud, a labour economist at the University of Waterloo who serves as a director for the Canadian Labour Economics Forum.

The Hill Times spoke to three economists with decades of experience researching immigration and labour economics in Canada. All three said they did not believe that the government’s moves to raise its immigration targets and focus on filling “labour shortages” would increase GDP per capita, a proxy for average financial well-being in the population.

“I think what the government is considering is too much, too quickly,” said Christopher Worswick, a labour economist at Carleton University in Ottawa who has published extensively on immigration and immigrant earnings.

Immigration spike could increase income inequality

Canada’s economic immigration system is supposed to prioritize the most skilled applicants for entry. In theory, that should bring in

immigrants with better workforce skills and earning potential than the average Canadian resident and is supposed to raise the workforce’s productivity and GDP per capita.

However, the reality is that immigrants to Canada earn less, on average, than workers born in Canada.

In 2016, immigrants who had been in Canada for a decade earned an average of \$40,700, while the average for the entire population was \$58,100, according to a 2022 study by Worswick, Skuterud, and University of Waterloo economist Matthew Doyle, who used data from Statistics Canada.

Economic immigrants in that sample actually earned a higher-than-average income of \$62,500, but their spouses and dependents earned significantly less, pulling down the average.

Now, there are signs that the Liberal government may be compounding the problem by preparing to move away from the high-skill selection system to accommodate demands from employers for lower-skilled workers.

“I worry a lot about the language coming out of the federal government in terms of the skill level of immigrants,” said Worswick.

Those signs include the government’s upcoming changes to its Express Entry program;

emphasis on resolving so-called “labour shortages;” increase to economic immigration targets; and a relaxed approach to growing numbers of temporary foreign workers and international student workers, the economists said.

Expanding the number of immigrants admitted will mean reaching deeper into the applicant pool, and picking candidates whose workforce skills are, on average, less valuable than those who would be admitted with a smaller target, said Worswick.

“You’re bringing in people who are going to contribute less in terms of GDP per capita at the margin. If they drop a long way below average, you’re probably worsening wage inequality from admitting them compared to not,” said Worswick.

David Green, a professor at the University of Vancouver’s School of Economics, is also critical of the government’s move to increase immigration. He made his case in an op-ed in *The Globe and Mail* in December and again in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

“This feels like, ‘We’re going to pump the numbers up for the sake of pumping the numbers up,’ but won’t create ways to integrate [the new arrivals],” said Green, who has researched labour economics, wage inequality, and immigration since the early 1990s.

“What tends to happen is that the people who suffer the most, in terms of the negative effects of immigration, are the previously-arrived, recently-arrived immigrants—the ones who are going to compete most directly with the new immigrants.”

A 2014 paper by Statistics Canada concluded that the wages of immigrants to Canada fell slightly when the number of immigrants admitted to the country increased.

‘Pro-business’ policy

Canada welcomed more than 400,000 immigrants last year. That was the largest number of newcomers in Canadian history. The government plans to continue increasing its target for admitting immigrants until at least 2025, when the target will be 500,000 people.

Immigration is often viewed through a humanitarian lens, but that’s not what’s driving the increases. Immigration Minister Sean Fraser (Central Nova, N.S.) has made clear that boosting Canada’s economy is the impetus for raising the immigration target.

“There were a million jobs available in the Canadian economy at a time when immigration already accounts for nearly all of our labour force growth,” Fraser told the Canadian Press back in November. “We cannot maximize our economic potential if we don’t embrace immigration.”

Fraser’s press release trumpeting the government’s latest immigration levels plan said that it “embraces immigration as a strategy to help businesses find workers and to attract the skills required in key sectors—including health care, skilled trades, manufacturing, and technology—to manage the social and economic challenges Canada will face in the decades ahead.”

It also referenced “critical labour market shortages causing uncertainty for Canadian businesses and workers” in its opening paragraph.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said in a March 14 press conference the government’s higher immigration targets and the growing population were a “huge selling point for us” for business investors looking to troubleshoot labour shortages.

The underlying premise seems to be that bringing in more workers in “key sectors,” and those with high job vacancy rates will change the economy in a way that benefits most Canadians financially.

The economists who spoke to *The Hill Times* poured cold water on that suggestion.

Bringing in more workers will expand the economy and population in absolute terms, but there is, according to Skuterud, “just no evidence that we could expect this to raise GDP per capita”—the measure of per-person prosperity.

Skuterud is an immigrant, having moved to Canada with his family when he was young. He said he worries that his objections to increasing Canada’s immigrant intake could be seized upon by those who oppose immigration on racial grounds.

Still, he and other economists who spoke with *The Hill Times* said they believed the government had shifted to pursuing economic immigration policies that won’t improve the productivity of Canada’s economy and might even do the opposite.

“The immigration policy I’m seeing is very pro-business,” said Skuterud.

Consultation underway, Express Entry changes coming

The government is now moving to rework its “Express Entry” program via legislative amendments passed in last year’s budget implementation bill.

Express Entry is supposed to be a “cream-skimming” program

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‘Too much, too quickly’: economists warn of Liberal ‘pro-business’ immigration policy

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that invites especially skilled prospective immigrants to jump the application queue, lest other countries scoop them up. However, the government is preparing to create new, more flexible criteria for judging who gets to jump that queue. It has given the immigration minister more control over those criteria.

The new criteria will be implemented in the spring. The government says it will provide “flexibility to respond to evolving economic needs and government priorities, selecting those with the skills and talent needed to support long-term growth and prosperity.”

The criteria will change over time, partly in response to demands from provinces and territories and “stakeholders from across Canada.”

Skuterud said he is concerned these changes will mean prioritizing applicants who help employers fill job vacancies but wouldn’t necessarily have higher-than-average workforce skills.

The wage that a worker can command is one of the most useful ways of evaluating workforce skill, he said.

Skuterud also pointed out that the government has dropped work restrictions on the growing number of international students in Canada, adding competition for entry-level jobs.

Then there is the steady increase in temporary foreign workers under the Trudeau government. More than 400,000 were in the country in 2021 under two different programs: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the International Mobility Program, the latter of which does not require employers to complete a labour market impact assessment. There were a little under 300,000 such workers in Canada in 2014, and fewer than 200,000 in 2011, before the International Mobility Program was established.

The Liberal government moved last year to further loosen restrictions on temporary foreign workers coming into the country.

Fraser has now begun a public consultation on further changes to Canada’s immigration policy. It’s not clear exactly what the purpose is, given that he has set immigration targets for the next several years, and is working to change Express Entry. The press release announcing the consultation said Fraser wants an immigration system that is “strong, easy to navigate, and adaptive to change.”

Fraser’s office said he was not available for an interview for this story. Questions about the con-

cerns raised by the economists who spoke to *The Hill Times* were forwarded to his department, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The department responded with a list of media lines, not all of which were applicable to the questions that had been posed. The department’s response did note that the increases to the government’s annual immigration targets were meant to “address current labour shortages, and attract new skilled workers to build our economy.”

IRCC also said that increased immigration was necessary to help address Canada’s decreasing worker to retiree ratio, low fertility rate, and “labour shortages.”

“Economic immigration is a priority to help fill critical labour shortages throughout the country in key sectors and across all skill levels. It will help position Canada’s labour force for today’s challenges and those of the future,” read a portion of IRCC’s response.

Wages should trump ‘shortages’: economists

References to a “labour shortage” have been filling the inches of government press releases and media responses, as well as politicians’ speeches and newspaper pages.

The labour economists who spoke with *The Hill Times*, however, rejected the notion that a “labour shortage” is a problem for the average Canadian.

On the contrary, they said, a tight labour market benefits workers. It forces employers to compete for the best workers by raising wages and improving working conditions. They are also incentivized to innovate, by purchasing labour-saving technologies, reorganizing their use of labour, or training low-skilled employees to fill vacant higher-skilled jobs.

Bringing in a greater number of workers takes that pressure off, the economists said, helping businesses to maintain their bottom line without changing their production model or raising wages.

“There’s a lot of people in Canada who can do these jobs,” said Worswick. “We should just let the wages rise until either the new immigrants, or the Canadian citizens, or the longstanding permanent residents choose to do those jobs.”

“We should bring people in who are highly skilled and tend to pull up GDP per capita by their presence in the economy. And it’s not because their jobs are essential, it’s because their jobs



John McCallum served as the Liberal government’s immigration minister from 2015 to 2017. *The Hill Times* file photograph

are well remunerated, in terms of earnings,” he said.

“If we just do that, I think we would have a smaller immigration program than they’re planning to have.”

All three economists who spoke to *The Hill Times* said they supported immigration to Canada, but not the sharp planned increase in economic immigration, in combination with the shift in policy away from accumulating human capital and toward filling short-term labour shortages.

“I’m really not convinced that many companies will go bankrupt because of this,” said Worswick, of the notion that businesses be forced to confront job vacancies without a boost to immigration or temporary foreign workers.

“I think what’s more likely is that profit margins might shrink. You might see some restructuring, but you might also see a drop in wage inequality, because usually these are low-wage jobs that governments are being pressured to fill using temporary foreign workers or immigrants.”

Immigrants still earning less on average

But who says immigrants compete for low-paying jobs?

The answer, unfortunately, is decades of research on immigration outcomes in Canada.

“The hard reality is that Canadian immigrants, on average, experience significant shortfalls [compared to those born in Canada] in their earnings throughout their careers, and these shortfalls have tended to increase over time,” concluded Worswick, Skuterud, and Doyle in their 2022 paper.

The three authors also concluded that “Canadian evidence

provides little evidence that Canada has in recent history been successful in leveraging immigration to boost GDP per capita.”

That paper also found that reforms to the government’s immigration selection process over the past two decades had shown some promise of reversing the earnings shortfall of immigrants to Canada—in particular, the introduction of the Express Entry program in 2015, and improvements to it made in the following years. Those reforms, however, could now be under threat by the upcoming changes to tailor Express Entry to short-term job vacancies.

‘We need more immigration’: McCallum

The government does have cheerleaders to its current approach, however. Those include former Liberal immigration minister John McCallum, who worked as an economist before getting into politics.

“I have always felt that we need more immigration. I’m in favour of letting more people in,” he said in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

McCallum argued that more immigration is needed to fill in labour shortages, and offset the aging of Canada’s population and its low birth rate. He also said that bringing in more immigrants—who will work and pay taxes—would help take the pressure off Canada’s flailing health-care systems.

McCallum also underlined the social benefit that immigration brings to Canada.

“I think we are better off, culturally, having the diverse population we have today as opposed to the all-white population we have when I was growing up,” he said.

“It enhances the feel of our country. I think, when I look around Toronto today, it’s a much more interesting and exciting place than when I was growing up and everybody was white,” he said.

Skuterud, who immigrated with his family from Norway as a boy, said he thought the benefits of multiculturalism warranted more space in the immigration debate.

That’s not how the government has been selling its shift in immigration policy to the public, however, and the government’s immigration policies are not being designed specifically to increase diversity in Canada. Rather, the government has focused on the purported economic benefits of the policy changes and higher targets.

An aging population

The government has another ally in its corner in the Century Initiative, an advocacy group backed by big business that is calling for Canada to nearly triple its population to 100 million by the year 2100.

On its website and in its reports, the Century Initiative argues that striving towards that target will “mean more skilled workers, innovation, and dynamism” in the economy.” It also argues that a ramp-up in immigration is necessary to offset the aging of Canada’s population caused by the country’s low birth rate—that it would “reduce the burden on government revenues to fund health care, Old Age Security, and other services.”

“We are becoming a nation of old people,” Century Initiative CEO Lisa Lalande said in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

She argued that economists who are critical of the higher immigration targets are taking a “very narrow perspective,” and should be looking at measures of economic prosperity besides per capita income.

She said that the contributions second-generation Canadians make to the economy should also be factored into analysis of boosting immigration.

She also said that Canada’s governments can boost the per capita economic contribution that immigrants themselves provide by reducing barriers to their success—for example, loosening restrictions on the recognition of professional credentials acquired abroad.

“If we address the income gap for newcomers, then that could actually boost GDP per capita” she said.

Green, however, noted that credential recognition problems are nothing new.

“We’ve been trying to figure that one out for a long time. We’ve never yet figured it out. And to just sort of open the gates by an extra hundred thousand per year, and just say, ‘These people are going to do all of these wonderful things because they’re skilled,’—Well you know that [for] a bunch of them, it’s not true, and you don’t have a plan for how to make it better. To me it’s irresponsible.”

The economists who spoke to *The Hill Times* also pushed back against the notion that increasing immigration was a way to prop up the health-care system or other social services as Canada’s population ages.

For one thing, working-age immigrants often bring retired parents or grandparents to Canada with them.

For another, immigrants brought in today to support social services for retirees will themselves one day retire, necessitating an even bigger cohort of working-age immigrants to be brought in to support them.

“I just don’t see how you’re going to get a lot of benefit on the demographic front,” said Worswick.

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Stuart Benson

Party Central

A sip of heaven at Irish ambassador's St. Patrick's Day party

Ireland's Ambassador to Canada Eamonn McKee, and his wife Mary McKee welcomed foreign dignitaries, politicians, and Ottawa's Irish-Canadian community for a St. Patrick's Day house party.

While religious scholars may still debate what heaven looks like, the embassy of Ireland's St. Patrick's Day reception on March 16—replete with high-quality whiskey and frothy pints of Guinness to enjoy while Irish harp music filled the air—is about as close to **Party Central's** vision of what eternal paradise would actually look like.

Hosted at the official residence of **Eamonn McKee**, Ireland's ambassador to Canada, **Party Central** was greeted at the door by McKee, his wife **Mary**, and guest of honour, **Stephen Donnelly**, Ireland's minister of health, who—in the true spirit of Irish céili hospitality—directed guests to the refreshments and live music down the hall.

After waiting to sign the guest book—an experience made more enjoyable by performances of traditional folk songs on the Irish harp by **Pat Marshall**—**Party Central** made his way into the east wing of the residence, at least, this reporter is pretty sure it was the east-wing, but McKee's foyer is bigger than my apartment, so who knows.

After getting directions from the bartender and a complimentary pint of Guinness provided by Brigid's Well Pub—located in the basement of the recently TUPOC-free St. Brigid's Church—**Party Central** found the rest of the gathered party guests, including **Yuliya Kovaliv**, the Ukraine's ambassador; **Janice Miller**, high commissioner for Jamaica; **John Devine** and **Kerry Dickson**, the head and deputy head of the Scottish mission in Canada; as well as **Sandra Aiello**, attaché, and **Gaia La Cognata**, head of mission with the Italian Embassy. **Party Central** also spotted a number of Ottawa city councillors in attendance, including **Theresa Kavanagh**, **Rawlson King**, **Marty Carr**, **Ariel Troster**, and **Wilson Lo**.

While most of the room was taken up by a healthy spread of Irish appetizers and one of the largest cheese boards **Party Central** has seen in a long time, featuring an assortment of cheese from Ireland, England, Ontario, and Quebec, and catered by private chef **Claudine Rachfuss**' Chef with a Basket, the real draw was the number of whiskey sampling booths dotting the perimeter of the room.

As any good reporter would, **Party Central** made sure to enquire about the quality and taste of each kind on offer from the likes of **Bushmills**, **Five Farms**, **Ahascragh**, and **Skellig Six 18**.

Unfortunately, to this reporter's dismay, *The National Post's* **Christopher Nardi** and **Ryan Tumilty** managed to arrive on the scene first to get the scoop on Ahascragh's Clan Colla.

After some brief mingling, the night's guests were invited over to the west wing of the residence for more live Irish music provided by the **Rideau Ramblers** and a performance by dancers from the **Sue Fay Healy School of Irish Dance**.

Ambassador McKee and Donnelly also gave speeches before the performances thanking the guests for attending, with special shout-outs to Liberal MP **James Maloney** for his work to have March officially declared Irish Heritage Month by the House of Commons on March 10, 2021. Retired Canadian general **John de Chastelain** was also recognized for his work as the Canadian representative for the International Commission on Decommissioning following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement 25 years ago.

Donnelly, who had returned to Ottawa earlier that afternoon after attending Montreal's St. Patrick's Day Parade, spoke at length of the deep connections between Canada and Ireland, including Canada welcoming more than 38,000 Irish famine refugees in 1847, who arrived on the shores of the Toronto waterfront at a time when the city's own population was just 20,000 people.

Jumping to the present, Donnelly explained that young Irish immigrants travelling to Canada had begun to prefer the "hipper" shores of Vancouver, which he joked the Irish government would need to create their own propaganda campaign to convince their country's young people to settle a little closer to "[their] own mountain."

"So we're expecting a flood of eager Irish people in their 20s and 30s to arrive in Ottawa any time now," Donnelly added. **Party Central** should note that Donnelly was most likely not referring to the flood of "Irish" young people who would be flooding the Sandy Hill neighbourhood the next day.

Once the speeches had been completed, **Party Central** attempted an "Irish goodbye" but was thwarted by Dymphna Keogh, Ireland's deputy head of mission, who made a valiant effort to convince me to stay. Unfortunately, while the desire to remain in that slice of Irish heaven was almost overpowering, it would absolutely not have been conducive to the actual column-writing process.

Happy St. Patrick's Day party-people, or as they say in Gaelic, "Lá fhéile Pádraig sona dhuit."

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Eamonn McKee, left, Ireland's ambassador to Canada; his wife Mary McKee, and guest of honour, Stephen Donnelly, Ireland's Minister of Health.



Irish Ambassador Eamonn McKee, right, welcomes members of Ottawa's Irish-Canadian community to a St. Patrick's Day party at his official residence on March 16.



Janice Miller, left, high commissioner for Jamaica to Canada; Mary McKee, and Irish Minister of Health Stephen Donnelly.



Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada Yuliya Kovaliv, left, Liberal MP James Maloney, and Ottawa city councillor Theresa Kavanagh.



Ottawa city councillors Theresa Kavanagh, left, Rawlson King, Marty Carr, Ariel Troster, and Wilson Lo.



Samara O'Gorman, left, Queen of Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade; Sandra Aiello, Italian Embassy attaché; Mary McKee; and Gaia La Cognata, Italian Embassy head of mission.



Pat Marshall plays the Irish harp as guests arrive.



Rosalie Boselle, left; Ainsley Smith; Hannah Clegg; Anna Jackson; Cassidy Kennedy; and Fiona Reynolds of Sue Fay Healy School of Irish Dance.



Jennifer Conley, left, chief advancement officer, Carleton University; Sue Fay Healy; Brent Conley, Royal LePage.



National Post reporters Ryan Tumilty, middle, and Christopher Nardi, right, get the inside scoop on Ahascragh Distillery's Clan Colla Irish Whiskey.



Traditional Irish music provided by The Rideau Rambler's featuring Jeffrey McClintock, left, on keyboard; Ellen MacIsaac, vocals; Dennis Alexander, viola; and Frank Cassidy, on flute and banjo.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



CSG Senator Rebecca Patterson, left; Ambassador Eamonn McKee; William Patterson; and Madison Thistle.



John Devine, left, and Kerry Dickson, head, and deputy head of the Scottish Government in Canada.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Treasury Board President Fortier names a director of operations

Plus, there are promotions to note in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office, including that of Oz Jungic, who's now a senior policy adviser.

Treasury Board President **Mona Fortier** has hired a new director of operations for her office, with experienced staffer **Sher Rodrigo** having taken on the role in early February.

Rodrigo was previously director of operations to the international development minister, beginning at the end of 2019 under then-minister **Karina Gould**. She stayed on after current minister **Harjit Sajjan** took over the portfolio following the 2021 federal election, and exited the office in June 2022—her last ministerial gig, until now.



Sher Rodrigo is now director of operations to Fortier. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

There hasn't been anyone working under the title of operations director since Fortier took over the Treasury Board office after the 2021 election. **David Burkholder**, though, continues as a special assistant for operations and executive assistant to the minister.

A former constituency assistant to then-Liberal MPs **Bonnie Crombie** and **Gerard Kennedy**, Rodrigo landed her first ministerial gig in 2017 when she was hired as a special assistant for consular affairs and operations to then-foreign affairs minister **Chrystia Freeland**. She later served as assistant to Freeland's parliamentary secretary for consular affairs (now Transport Minister **Omar Alghabara**), before exiting in the spring of 2019 to join the international development minister's office under then-minister **Maryam Monsef**. Rodrigo started as a senior special assistant for parliamentary

affairs in the office under Monsef and promoted to operations director after Gould took over the portfolio following the election that fall.

Keiran Gibbs is another fresh face in Fortier's office. She recently moved over from Justice Minister **David Lametti**'s team, where she'd been busy as a policy adviser since April 2021, to become a senior policy adviser to the Treasury Board president.



Keiran Gibbs is now a senior policy adviser to Treasury Board President Mona Fortier. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Before joining Lametti's office, Gibbs had worked as an associate lawyer with Hutchins Legal in Montreal for almost six years. She holds a law degree from McGill University and a bachelor of arts degree from Mount Saint Vincent University. Her past experience includes legal internships with Disability Rights International in Mexico and with Lawyers without Borders, among other things.

There are also two staff additions to Fortier's office from last fall to catch-up on that of special assistant for policy **Danielle Louzado**, who was a 2022 Liberal summer leadership program intern in the office, and special assistant for parliamentary affairs **Nicholas Moody**.

Caitlin Szymberski is director of policy to Fortier and also currently oversees senior policy adviser **Kylie Villeneuve** (née Phillips) and policy adviser **Carlos Pena**.

Scott Bardsley is director of parliamentary affairs to the minister, whose office is run by chief of staff **Elizabeth Cheesbrough**.

Promotions in the PMO

There are a number of staff promotions to catch up on in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office, including that of policy adviser **Oz Jungic**, who's added "senior" to his title.

Focused on international relations, foreign policy, defence, and national security, Jungic has been an adviser in the PMO since the end of 2021. A former cyber



Treasury Board President Mona Fortier speaks with media during a French-language program funding announcement at the University of Ottawa on Feb. 15. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Oz Jungic has added 'senior' to his title in the PMO. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

threat assessor with the Communications Security Establishment, Jungic has been working for the Trudeau Liberal government since the spring of 2019, starting as a policy adviser to Sajjan as the then-defence minister. Before joining the PMO, he spent roughly half a year as a senior policy adviser to then-foreign affairs minister **Marc Garneau**.

John Brodhead is director of policy in the PMO, supported by deputy director **Alie Chalke**. The unit also currently includes senior policy advisers **Rebecca Caldwell**, **Jim Kapches**, **Tony Maas**, **Dani Saad**, **Laura LeBel**, and **Katherine Koostachin**; policy advisers **Nathalie Gahimbare** and **Lionel-Fritz Adimi**; policy adviser and senior co-ordinator **Harry Orbach-Miller**; and co-ordinator **Kristina Slodki**.

In January, human resources adviser **Kirsten Strom** was similarly elevated to "senior" status.

A former intern to Liberal MP **Sukh Dhaliwal** and ex-legislative assistant to then-Green MP **Bruce Hyer**, Strom has been working full-time for Liberals on the Hill since the start of the 42nd Parliament, when she was hired as parliamentary assistant to Hyer's Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont., riding successor, now-Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu**. She joined the ministerial staff ranks in the fall of 2018 when she became executive assistant to the chief of staff to then-Health Minister **Ginette Petitpas-Taylor**, later adding on the role of Ontario regional affairs adviser there.

Strom has been at work in the top office since January 2020, starting as a special assistant under then-executive director of planning, administration, and people, **Brett Thalmann**.

In other HR unit news, **Ashley Fearnall** has been promoted from special assistant to human resources co-ordinator and executive assistant to PMO deputy chief of staff **Marjorie Michel**, who oversees planning,

administration, people, operations, and outreach in the PMO.

Fearnall has been working in the PMO since January 2022, arriving fresh from a roughly eight-month run as a pedagogical tools assistant with *The Ecopolitics Podcast*. She also previously interned in Hajdu's office as then-employment and workforce development minister in 2020.

Deliah Bernard also recently found herself in need of new business cards. An Indigenous outreach adviser in the PMO since January 2022, Bernard now holds the title of Indigenous affairs adviser.

Bernard noted the title change on Twitter on Feb. 23, writing: "I've learned so much over the last year and look forward to continuing to build trust, strengthen Indigenous relations and support communities in advancing their priorities."



Deliah Bernard now wears the title of PMO Indigenous affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

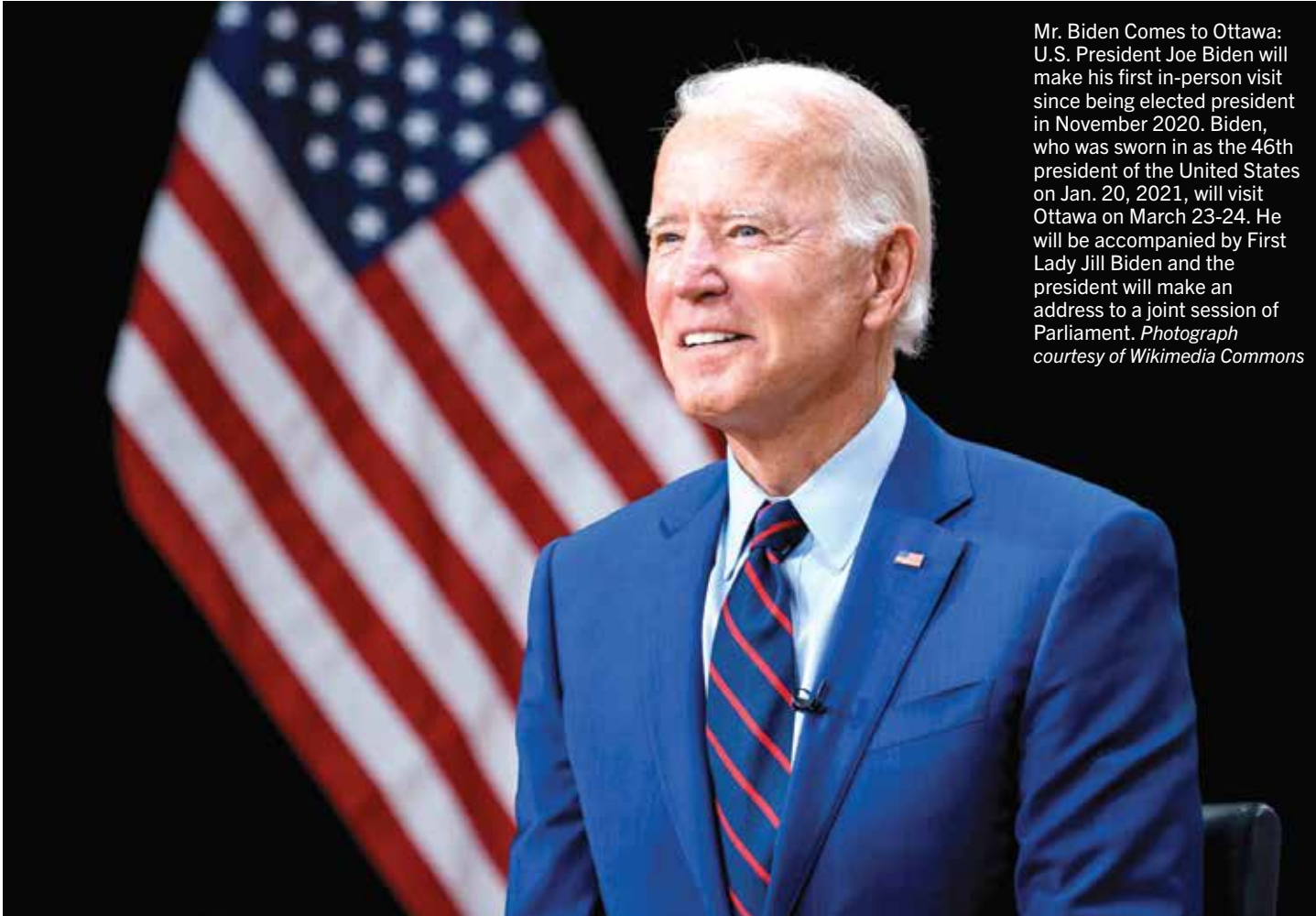
A member of the We'koqma'q First Nation, prior to joining Trudeau's office Bernard was a policy and Atlantic regional affairs adviser to then-Indigenous services minister **Marc Miller**. She's also a former special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Carolyn Bennett**, and tackled outreach work for the national Liberal campaign during both the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.

Also unmentioned to date—and firmly in the "better late than never" category—is the fact that former lead speechwriter **Astrid Krizus** switched gears to become a climate adviser in the PMO back in early 2022.

A former assistant to Liberal MP **Ali Ehsassi**, Krizus first joined Trudeau's office as a speechwriter in the spring of 2018, and almost two-and-a-half years later became the unit's lead.

Katie Telford is chief of staff to Trudeau. lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
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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.



Mr. Biden Comes to Ottawa: U.S. President Joe Biden will make his first in-person visit since being elected president in November 2020. Biden, who was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on Jan. 20, 2021, will visit Ottawa on March 23-24. He will be accompanied by First Lady Jill Biden and the president will make an address to a joint session of Parliament. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

U.S. President Biden comes to Ottawa March 23-24

MONDAY, MARCH 20

House Not Sitting—The House will return on Monday, March 20, and will sit for two weeks (March 20-March 31). It will break again on Friday, March 31, for two weeks and will return on Monday, April 17, and will sit for five consecutive weeks (April 17-May 19). It will adjourn on Friday, May 19, for one week and will return again on Monday, May 29, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (May 29-June 23). It's scheduled to adjourn for the summer on June 23, 2023. It will break for 12 weeks (June 23-Sept. 18) and will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-Nov. 17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15).

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

A Third Way for Drug Addiction Policy in Canada—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a panel discussion on "A third way for drug addiction policy in Canada." Stanford University professor Keith Humphreys, former White House drug policy adviser in the Bush and Obama administrations; and policy

consultant Blair Gibbs, a former senior adviser to then-U.K. prime minister Boris Johnson, will discuss the divergent approaches to the opioid crisis being taken in British Columbia and Alberta, and outline some of the successes and challenges in both jurisdictions. This event will take place at Kildare House, 323 Chapel St., Ottawa. Tuesday, March 21, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

The Energy of Tomorrow and the Path to Net Zero—Join the Canadian Club of Ottawa for a lunchtime discussion on how will we continue to power an increasingly energy-dependent world while continuing the path to net zero. Representatives from across Canada's electricity sector will speak about one of the greatest challenges facing the Canadian economy, and innovative solutions to address them. Tuesday, March 21, at the Château Laurier Hotel, 1 Rideau St. Doors at 11:30 a.m. 12-1 p.m. Tickets: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Southeast Asian Envoys to Deliver Remarks—Malaysian High Commissioner to Canada Siti Hajjar Adnin, Indonesian Ambassador Daniel Tumpal S. Simanjuntak, and Vietnamese Ambassador Cao Phong Pham will take part in a panel discussion on "Southeast Asia: Canada's Partners of the Future" hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations on Tuesday, March 21, 11:30

a.m., at Le Westin Montréal, 270 rue Saint-Antoine O., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Webinar: 'Reflections on Accessibility'—Carleton University hosts "Reflections on Accessibility: A Conversation with Yazmine Laroche," part of the Canadian Accessibility Network's CAN Connect Forum. Former deputy minister for public service accessibility, Laroche will reflect on her life and career in the public service, her personal experiences, and the importance of removing barriers to ensure full participation of persons with disabilities in society. Tuesday, March 21, at 12 p.m. ET. This event will take place online. Head to events.carleton.ca for details.

Panel: 'Should Canadians Worry About Inflation?'—McGill University hosts a panel discussion: "Should Canadians Worry About Inflation? Is the Cure Worse than the Disease?" Expert economists will discuss the problem of inflation for Canadians and for policymakers, and what should our governments be doing to reduce inflation or to reduce its harmful effects. Tuesday, March 21 at 4:30 p.m. ET. McGill University's Faculty Club 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

Canadian Propane Association (CPA) Parliamentary Reception—Representatives from Canada's propane industry, including the CPA's board of

directors and other representatives, are hosting a reception to celebrate National Propane Day and the contributions that CPA members make to Canada's economy and the efforts to reduce Canada's GHG emissions. This event will take place between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in Room 325 of Wellington Building on Tuesday, March 21. Please contact CanadianPropane@tsa.ca for more information.

TUESDAY, MARCH 21—THURSDAY, MARCH 23

National Forum on Income Assistance—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the fourth annual hybrid National Forum on Income Assistance from Tuesday, March 21-Thursday, March 23, at the Enoch Cree Nation, Alta. Details: afn.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Webinar: 'Competition in Canadian Food Retailing'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts a webinar, "The State of Competition in Canadian Food Retailing — Adequate or More Needed?" How much competition is there in Canada's food retailing business? Did it become less competitive as inflation picked up? Does our competition law framework and policy tool kit ensure adequate competition? Wednesday, March 22, at 1 p.m. ET. This event will take place online: cabe.ca.

Climate Change: Workplace Impacts—The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety hosts a free webinar, "Climate Change: Workplace Impacts to explore how climate change affects both our physical and mental health and safety in the workplace." Participants include Katharina van Bronswijk, cognitive behavioural therapist, Psychologists for Future; Joanna Eyquem, managing director on Climate-Resilient Infrastructure, Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo; and Anne Tennier, president and CEO, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health

and Safety. Wednesday, March 22, 2:30 p.m. Register online.

Lecture: 'Disability Justice in Canada'—McGill University hosts a lecture: "Absent Citizens No More: Advancing Disability Justice in Canada". University of Ottawa political science professor Michael Orsini will discuss what it means to centre disability justice in Canadian politics. Wednesday, March 22, in the Billiards Room, Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. 4 p.m. ET. Details: mcgill.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—THURSDAY, MARCH 23

Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium—The Canadian Institute hosts the 22nd annual Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium with programming geared to government and industry professionals involved in Northern infrastructure and resource development. Explor president Allan Chatenay is conference co-chair. Learn more about the future of sustainable resource development in the North and Canada's role in global energy markets. Get the latest on infrastructure advancements, regulatory issues and what's required to move forward with new projects. Meet the decision makers and key Northern stakeholders. March 22-23 at the Hotel Arts, Calgary. Agenda: bit.ly/3hpiwDC. Details: customerservice@canadianinstitute.com or call 1-877-927-7936. Save 10 per cent with *The Hill Times*' promo code: D10-999-HILLTIMES.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22—FRIDAY, MARCH 24

Canada Strong and Free Networking Conference 2023—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is among the speakers taking part in the Canada Strong and Free's Networking Conference 2023 from March 22-24. Other speakers include Conservative MP Garnett Genuis, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, former prime minister Stephen Harper, and Canadian Medical Association president Dr. Alikia Lafontaine, among others. Wednesday, March 22-Friday, March 24, at the Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

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