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# THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR, NO. 2038

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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**NEWS**

NDP 'a loser' in recent byelections, should be 'very worried' about hemorrhaging support to Liberals, say political players

BY ABBAS RANA

With the Liberals winning five per cent more votes on average in the last five byelections compared to the 2021 general election—largely at the NDP's expense—New Democratic Party Leader Jagmeet Singh must reconsider if he wants to keep propping up the government going forward, say political insiders.

"These byelection results are going to put more pressure on the NDP to think about the sequence of events where they distance themselves from the Liberals without defeating them in preparation for an election where they'll try to challenge the Liberals," said Nik Nanos, chief data scientist for Nanos Research, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

Since the 2021 federal election, five byelections—three for Liberal-held ridings and two for Conservative-held seats—have taken place. Of those, the Liberals won three and the Conservatives won two. Even though the Liberals have been in power for about eight years and polling numbers are showing a growing fatigue with the government, the party has been winning a higher percentage of votes in these byelections.

A major chunk of that support has come at the NDP's expense. Last year, the NDP and the Liberals collaborated on a confidence-and-supply agreement. According to this deal, the NDP

Continued on page 18

**OPINION**

## Dear Ottawa: pick a lane on climate and hit the accelerator

What the climate emergency demands is the same single-minded focus and dispatch that the federal government brought to its pandemic response.



With the majestic Peace Tower as a backdrop, a man walks his dogs across Metcalfe and Sparks streets as wildfire smoke hangs in the sky from northern Quebec on June 16, 2023. The wildfires are expected to get worse over the summer months in Canada. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BY SUSAN RILEY

**CHELSEA, QUE.**—Forget the long-promised federal cap on oil sands emissions, now expected (maybe) in September. Forget

the "just transition" or "sustainable jobs" strategy: the Trudeau government's recently-released plan to devise a plan to find new, well-paying jobs for Alberta's supposedly endangered oil workers.

And, while we're at it, not another word about ending (inefficient) subsidies to the oil and gas sector, first agreed to in

Continued on page 20

**NEWS**

Disaster funding, adaptation and resilience plans emerge as Canada endures worst wildfire season on record

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

**E**mergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair and his provincial and territorial counterparts discussed the need for federal disaster assistance funding to boost resiliency in affected communities last week, following the release of the National Adaptation Strategy and amid the country's worst wildfire season on record.

"We talked about the need of making sure that we invest that money in a smart way, to help those communities not only rebuild, but to rebuild in a way that is much more resilient to future disasters, and to work with provincial, territorial, Indigenous and municipal partners across the country to make sure that, when they make decisions about where they build and how they'll build, that it's done in an informed way that actually helps communities and Canadians reduce their risk," Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) said on June 28.

Blair was responding to a question from *The Hill Times* at a press conference following a

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Mike Lapointe

## Heard On The Hill

# Politicians head to Calgary Stampede; Don Martin recovers from skin cancer surgery; and Kory Teneycke gets married



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured with supporters at the 2022 Calgary Stampede. This year's stampede will unfold July 7-16. Photographs courtesy of Twitter

Cowboy hats, cowboy boots, pancakes, babies, and parades will be on full display during the “greatest outdoor show on earth,” as politicians from all corners of the political spectrum head to the Calgary Stampede from July 7-16 for the annual pilgrimage. It’s a giant political schmoozefest for politicians and lobbyists.

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** has regularly attended the Calgary Stampede, an event which also consistently attracts opposition leaders.

Last year, now-Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre**, in the middle of the party’s leadership race, stood with supporters and with now-finance critic and Conservative MP **Jasraj Singh Hallan** for photos.

NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** has also attended in the past to work the crowd during pancake breakfasts.

Astronaut **Jeremy Hansen**, who will be part of the *Artemis II* mission, the first crewed mission to the moon since 1972, is set to lead the Stampede Parade.

## CTV’s Don Martin recovering from second bout of skin cancer surgery

CTV columnist **Don Martin** is recovering from his second bout of skin cancer surgery, he posted on Facebook last week. “It’s back. Those are great words to hear about a missing cat, but not so great if the surgeon is talking about malignant melanoma returning in a more savage form than the first go-round. Just to update friends and family, a lump in my neck I detected in March turned out to be a fairly concentrated cancer cluster attached to the parotid gland, a.k.a. your spit generator. After a bit of humming and hawing and scanning, they booked me for extensive surgery, which happened last Thursday.

“The surgery ran on for almost five hours as they hacked out a golf-ball-sized tumour, removed the parotid and harvested 50 lymph nodes. The team seemed

confident they got it all. They’d better be ‘cause there’s not much left to remove.

“Four hellish nights in hospital later—you really can’t imagine what it’s like ‘sleeping’ a metre away from a poor palliative lung cancer patient with a chronic chest-wracking cough—I was freed after bombarding the surgeons with recordings of **Engelbert Humperdinck’s Please Release Me, Let Me Go**,” Martin wrote.

“Now ... off into a cancer-free future. And a future where I never want to hear ‘It’s back’ again. Below is the ‘just before surgery’ picture. You don’t want to see the ‘after’ version,” he wrote.

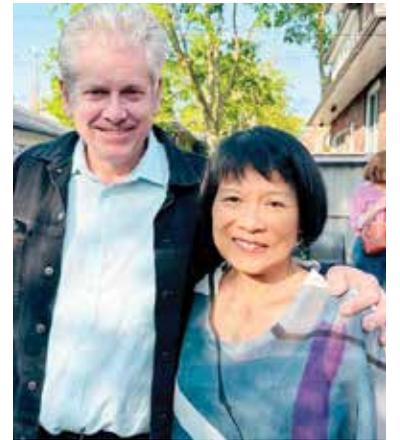
He said his wife **Annette Martin** was taking excellent care of him, and that they were planning a holiday to Prince Edward Island with the entire family. Reached by **HOH** to wish him the best, Martin said has one recommendation for all *HT* readers: “wear sunscreen.”

## Singh, NDP MPs give thumbs up to new Toronto mayor-elect Chow

Former NDP MP **Olivia Chow**, who was elected mayor of Toronto on June 26, received kudos for her big win from some federal NDP MPs. NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** congratulated Chow, saying on Twitter: “Olivia’s campaign focused on the real issues. She inspired a movement of people working to make Toronto a city for everyone. The City of Toronto is in great hands with Olivia as its mayor.”

And this from NDP MP **Charlie Angus** who posted on Facebook on June 26: “Congratulations to Olivia Chow. She is going to put Toronto residents and liveable neighbourhoods ahead of the agenda of the developers and lobbyists. **Doug Ford**, **John Tory** and *The Toronto Star* editorial board couldn’t slow her down.”

And NDP MP **Leah Gazan** said on Twitter: “I have deep respect for the late **Jack Layton**. A true leader. However, can people stop qualifying @oliviachow’s win by who her husband was? She is a formidable politician with years of elected experience both municipally and federally. An historic win! Do better! #misogyny.”



NDP MP Charlie Angus, left, and Olivia Chow. Photograph courtesy of Charlie Angus’ Facebook page

## House transport, maintenance and printing staff under PSAC calling for ‘fair collective agreement for workers’

On June 21, House of Commons transport, maintenance and printing employees, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada’s Local 70390, presented a petition from House of Commons staff to the Speaker of the House calling on the House to “negotiate a



Transport, maintenance and printing employees at the House of Commons, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada’s Local 70390, presented a petition from staff to the House Speaker calling on the House to ‘negotiate a fair collective agreement for workers,’ last month. Photograph courtesy of Twitter

fair collective agreement for workers,” according to a tweet.

“Workers on the Hill deserve fairness and respect!” tweeted **Alex Silas**, PSAC’s regional executive vice-president, National Capital Region. “[House Speaker **Anthony Rota**], [Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**] these workers are there for you. Will you be there for them at the bargaining table?”

## Tory pundit Kory Teneycke ties the knot



Look who got married: Nicole Ouellet, left, and Kory Teneycke tied the knot earlier in June. Photograph courtesy of Jill Thompson

Conservative pundit **Kory Teneycke** tied the knot earlier in June, marrying **Nicole Ouellet** in a ceremony in Toronto.

NDP pundit **Kathleen Monk**, who attended the wedding, wrote the two hosted “one of the most spectacular wedding receptions I’ve been to, and the couple was simply radiant,” on Facebook.

“It was a celebration of their vows, but the gathering could have easily been labelled ‘politico palooza,’ with premiers, pollsters, pundits and a number of reputable journos!” wrote Monk. “Best wishes to Kory & Nicole for a life of laughter and love.”

Teneycke, who’s a regular Conservative pundit, worked

as the director of communications for former prime minister **Stephen Harper**, and also served as the campaign manager for Ontario Premier **Doug Ford**’s bid for the province’s top job in the 2018 Ontario election.

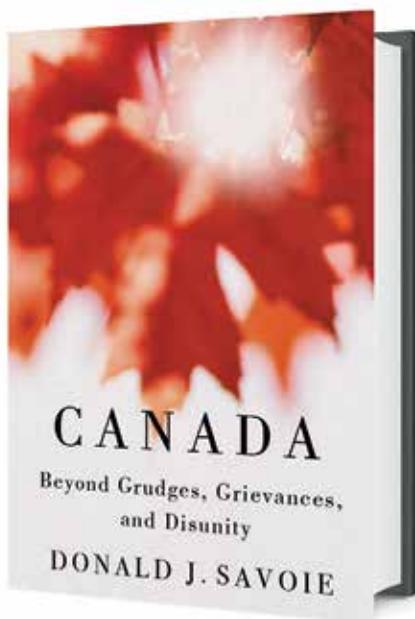
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**CORRECTION:**  
*The Hill Times*, June 28 issue

Re: “Israel marks anniversary,” (*The Hill Times*, June 28, p. 13). Nigerian High Commissioner **Adeyinka Olatokunbo Asekun** was incorrectly identified in a photo outline. *The Hill Times* regrets the error.



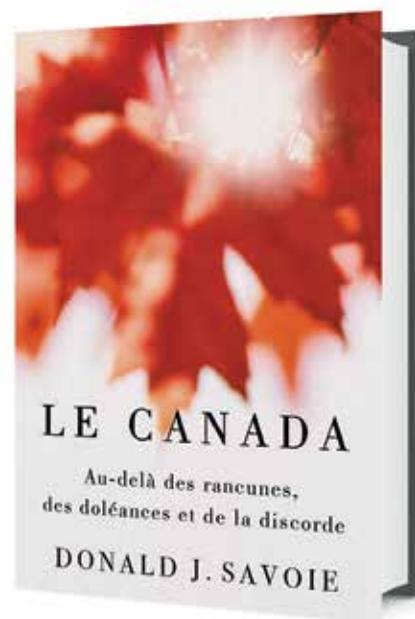
Don Martin, pictured before his recent cancer surgery. ‘The just-before surgery picture. You don’t want to see the after version,’ Martin wrote. Photograph courtesy of Facebook



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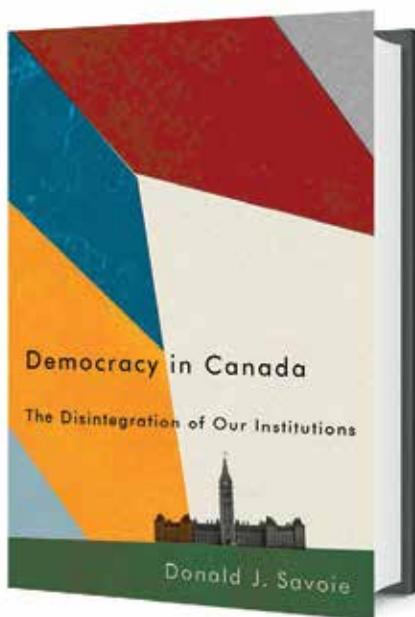
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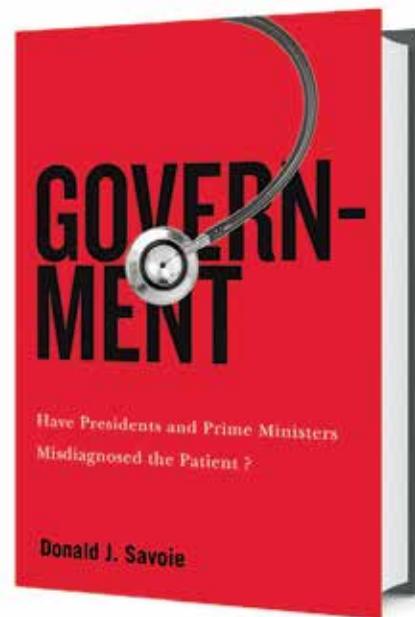
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## News

# ‘We want to work in partnership instead of begging’: municipal leaders call for new funding framework



Halifax Mayor Mike Savage, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Big City Mayors' Caucus meeting in 2022. The FCM has called for talks about a funding framework tied to population growth for municipalities. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Local governments want to discuss a new framework tying funds to factors such as economic and population growth, instead of relying primarily on property tax.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Municipalities have called for a national conversation about the “outdated fiscal model” for local governments, arguing that their federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts should work with them on a more sustainable system.

“The way municipalities are funded has not kept pace with the modern accountabilities of cities and communities across this country,” said Carole Saab, CEO of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). “They rely on the property tax, which does not grow with the economy.”

FCM members voted in favour of the resolution for a new growth framework for municipalities at the organization’s annual conference earlier this year.

The resolution declared that a modernized fiscal framework was required for municipalities, “that FCM shall lead the development

of a municipal growth framework that links municipal financial capacity to factors such as national population growth and economic growth, and that FCM shall call on the federal government to engage with FCM in the development of that framework with a focus on new sources of municipal revenue.”

Saab told *The Hill Times* that a new model for municipalities would become increasingly important as Canada’s population grows. According to Statistics Canada, the country reached a population of 40 million on June 16.

Saab said population growth is important for economic growth, but called for local governments to have a better mechanism for raising revenue in order to meet municipal responsibilities.

“As it stands, something’s got to give, and we need a different looking framework within which to operate,” she said. “Importantly, as we get ready to grow our population substantively, as our economy needs us to do, we need to really take a moment and think about how we’re going to work together across orders of government, and how we’re going to match resources to the accountabilities of every order in order to go forward.”

Local governments were still operating on a model largely devised in 1849, Saab said. In that year, the pre-Confederation Municipal Corporations Act established a system of municipal governance in Upper Canada, granted those governments the power to raise property taxes and

enact bylaws, and set a precedent of provincial responsibility for municipalities within their jurisdictions.

“The pandemic really shone a light on how fragile municipalities really are and the current fiscal framework that they’re operating within,” Saab said. “When your baseline is already stretched and troubled, and you’re vulnerable in that context, it certainly doesn’t inspire a lot of confidence for our ability to successfully manage the growth and successfully integrate new Canadians into thriving inclusive communities the way I think everybody shares an objective around.”

*The Hill Times* reached out to the office of Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) to ask about the federal government’s response to FCM’s policy resolution, but did not receive a response by press time.

## Trudeau says ‘provinces need to step up’

Mike Savage, chair of the FCM’s Big City Mayors’ Caucus and mayor of Halifax, N.S., said at a press conference during the federation’s annual conference on May 28 that the current model was not sustainable.

“Cities and municipalities have had to take on new responsibilities with respect to health, social services, housing, and economic development, and longstanding city responsibilities like policing, waste management, water and wastewater services are becoming

more and more complex due to the challenges linked to mental health, homelessness, and climate change,” he said.

Property tax did not grow in the same way as the mechanisms for federal and provincial revenue such as sales or income tax, Savage said.

“The province of Nova Scotia’s budget, I think, increased this year by \$1.5-billion. The entire budget of Halifax, half the province, is \$1-billion,” he said. “Property tax, to begin with, isn’t a good way to collect money ... but it is what we have.”

Given the diverse needs of municipalities across the country, Savage said there was not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to a new model, which was why starting a national conversation is important.

Valérie Plante, mayor of Montreal, Que., said at the same press conference that the current model has led municipalities to “a situation where we’re asking for a little piece here and there... We want to work in partnership instead of begging.” Municipal representatives were also the main contact for residents in times of crisis, she said.

“I wish that the parliaments, both provincial and federal, would have a question period like we all do [as] mayors, where we have people coming to us when there’s flooding or a fire or people cannot find a roof on top of their head, and they’re coming in and crying,” she said.

Plante noted that Quebec’s 11 largest cities will hold a municipal taxation summit this September to discuss potential solutions ahead of a fiscal pact negotiation with the provincial government next year. The City of Montreal also established a committee to examine ways to expand the city’s revenue base beyond property taxes in April.

The City of Toronto, Ont., meanwhile, has launched its own public campaign to pressure the federal government into providing more resources.

Canada’s most populous city launched the “Shortfall” campaign on May 23, asking residents and businesses to email their local MPs to request that the federal government provide \$235-million “at minimum” to cover a pandemic-related shortfall in Toronto’s 2022 budget.

“The city recently received \$235-million in funding from the province of Ontario for the city’s pandemic-related 2022 Budget shortfall. In addition, the province committed to providing additional transit funding of \$37-million,” the campaign said. “These provincial commitments result in a remaining 2022 Budget shortfall of \$454-million. At minimum, the City has requested that the Government of Canada provide a matching \$235-million contribution to offset the remaining 2022 budget shortfall.”

When asked about the city’s request at a press conference on June 28, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said the federal government had provided significant support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The provinces need to step up now to support the cities that are their area of jurisdiction,” Trudeau said. “We will continue to be there as a federal government as a partner, but we will not be able to, with the importance of fiscal responsibility, be able to be there in replacing the province in areas where they have the need and they have the means to invest significantly in their cities.”

## COVID and climate change

Saab said the conversation about a new framework had already started with leaders of all parties and at all levels of government.

“We had an opportunity at our annual conference to engage directly with the prime minister, with leaders from the opposition parties as well, and this was a central theme of our conversation,” she said. “We came away from those meetings feeling encouraged about our ability to start a national conversation.”

COVID-19 had presented additional challenges to all levels of government, but it also demonstrated the possibility of intergovernmental co-operation that could be applied to the funding discussions, Saab said.

“We learned that we can do things differently and better, we learned that governments can work together across orders better, and we learned that the critical role of municipalities needs to be funded in a more sustainable way,” she said. “I think it really really behooves us as a country, and we owe it to Canadians, to learn those valuable lessons from such an awful experience and apply them.”

Issues such as health, housing, and climate change were also priorities across governments, Saab said.

“Further exacerbating the situation and adding to the urgency are things like the housing crisis that we’re facing right now across the country, mental health and addictions, which communities are on the front lines of, as well as the very real impacts of climate across the country and the climate crisis,” she said.

On the issue of climate change, the House Transport Committee heard from eight mayors and municipal officials during its study of adapting infrastructure to face climate change between May 4 and June 6.

Antonin Valiquette, mayor of Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Que., told the committee on June 6 that more sustainable, reliable funding was the key to supporting disaster preparedness and resilience.

“We in the municipality are in the best position to know our territory, the sectors that should be prioritized and the places where we need to do preventive work,” Valiquette said in French. “The key is definitely sustainable and preventive funding. That would allow us the necessary flexibility to anticipate weather events and take action upstream.”

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*The Hill Times*

# House Veterans Affairs Committee says feds should 'acknowledge gaps' in its case managers comms strategy, but department says stakeholders were consulted during process

The rehab program intake process is 'unique to each veteran,' says a Veterans Affairs spokesperson. 'The timelines for assessments are tailored to their individual needs.'

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

With a contract worth more than half a billion dollars in place for rehabilitation services for veterans, the House Veterans Affairs Committee has recommended more communication with case managers and with the Union of Veterans Affairs Employees in a recent report, and has called on the government to "acknowledge the gaps in its initial case managers communications strategy and immediately specify which of the case managers' responsibilities will be transferred to [Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services'] rehabilitation service specialists."

The contract, scheduled to be in place for an initial five-and-a-half-year term, was awarded to Partners in Canadian Veterans Rehabilitation Services (PCVRS), a joint venture between WCG International and Lifemark Health Group. The contract has the possibility of three extensions of two years each, according to the committee.

The committee's report, presented to the House on June 14, contains 10 recommendations. Members recommended much more regular communication with the Union of Veterans Affairs Employees (UVAE), acknowledgment of the lack of consultation surrounding the implementation of the new \$570-million PCVRS contract, and the hiring of more case managers.

The report also recommended that the government hire more

permanent case managers in order to limit the number of cases assigned to each manager to a maximum of 25.

The final recommendation was that the veterans ombudsman be asked to publish a report in one year on the effects the contract has had on veterans, employees, and service providers.

Virginia Vaillancourt, national president of the UVAE, said the union had "always raised concerns that privatizing services to veterans is not the right thing to do for veterans, and it's not the right thing to do for the Canadian public," noting that the committee didn't denounce privatization of the services in its June report.

"I've been trying to meet with the minister of veterans affairs and talk about the concerns and come up with a plan, and he still will not meet with me to this day," said Vaillancourt.

NDP MP Rachel Blaney (North Island-Powell River, B.C.), her party's veterans affairs critic and a member of the committee, said she thought the committee's report reflected the needs of veterans "fairly well" and identified something that's occurred repeatedly.

"Which is the communication structure that's in place does not seem to work very well for veterans," she said in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "And so I appreciate that."

But Blaney said she was disappointed that they "weren't willing to take that next step, and either eliminate or put this agreement on pause."

"We know that it's not working," she said. "It's not going well for veterans and somehow there has to be better communication with veterans about how we're going to do things and how it's going to change."

"These are some of the people who have done the most for our country and, in some cases, suffering the most profoundly," Blaney said. "If you're going to do the best job, then it seems that you should listen to people who receive the services and the people who deliver the services, and I don't think that was done."

Blaney said she's hearing concerns from veterans about

being able to access services and that the government keeps hiring people temporarily.

Chris Banks, a veteran of peacekeeping in Bosnia and who was also in combat in Kandahar, Afghanistan, said "everything is pointing to the fact that this contract is bad for veterans as clients, bad for the case managers as the practitioners, bad for the taxpayers, [and] bad for the government, because it's not going to actually make things easier for them."



Union of Veterans Affairs Employees national president Virginia Vaillancourt, right, says she has been 'trying to meet with' Veterans Affairs Minister Lawrence MacAulay, left, to discuss the union's concerns. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

"The only people who seem to be benefitting are the contractor, and I think someone needs to start asking questions as to why the government would get into a contract that is so bad for everyone except for those who are receiving a cheque at the end of the day," Banks said.

Clayton Goodwin, who served for close to 10 years in the reserves and was injured, said his personal feelings were that "we are treating veterans like a commodity."

Without mentioning names, Goodwin said he knew of three veterans "who are no longer with us" and who were waiting for services.

"I can guarantee you, as an individual Canadian, I can get MAID [medical assistance in dy-

ing] faster than I can get service from Veterans Affairs Canada under [Veterans Affairs Minister] Lawrence MacAulay and the Liberal government."

## 'No services have been privatized,' says Veterans Affairs spokesperson

The government will table a response to the committee's recommendations when the House resumes in the fall, according to Marc Lescoutre, who is with media relations at Veterans Affairs Canada.

"No services have been privatized," said Lescoutre, noting that Veterans Affairs Canada has been providing rehabilitation services through a contract since 2006.

"Before then these services were not offered," he said. "Our priority is for veterans to receive the professional services they need, be they from physiotherapists, nurses, psychologists or others, in their communities of choice."

"Veterans applying to the rehab program should receive an eligibility decision from their case manager within 14 days, and once referred to PCVRS, to begin the intake process, first contact can be expected within a week," he said.

"The rehabilitation program intake process is unique to each veteran," said Lescoutre. "The timelines for assessments are tailored to their individual needs.



Lescoutre noted that veterans, case managers, and stakeholders were consulted throughout the contracting process and into the transition to the new contract, and that all service providers were contacted to advise them about the changes as a result of the new contract.

"We can and will continue to consult and provide information on the feedback we received," he said. "Veterans and stakeholders are encouraged to take part in our ongoing consultations and briefings and to reach out to the Department with their questions."

## 'We all take an oath or affirmation'

*The Hill Times* was provided with an email sent to employees from Assistant Deputy Minister Steven Harris, dated March 15, 2023, in which he notes that recipients "may have received a request from the Union of Veterans' Affairs Employees (UVAE) soliciting confidential information about veteran clients and counselling them to speak to the media" and that "as you already know, sharing the identity of a client Veteran or any information that was provided in confidence in your VAC role, could be a breach of the Privacy Act, the Security of Information Act, the VAC Code of Conduct and/or your Oath or Affirmation as a public servant."

"The request for employees to share such information is serious, as such violations may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment," according to the email. "We all take an oath or affirmation upon entering the public service not to disclose matters that come to our knowledge by reason of such employment."

"Counselling clients to contact the media or third parties is also outside the scope of our roles as VAC employees," according to the email. "Clients who have concerns regarding their benefits and services should be directed to the Office of the Veterans' Ombud, or escalated through our normal processes."

In response, Lescoutre said an email reminder was sent to ensure that all were aware of their responsibilities and obligations as employees of VAC, telling *The Hill Times* that the department's "priority is veterans' well-being" and that "an important part of that responsibility is to ensure that their privacy and personal information is safe with the department."

"It is standard practice for senior management to communicate to staff via email for the purpose of ensuring they are aware of new and ongoing initiatives, up-to-date on standard operating procedures and policies and general information that is pertinent to their day-to-day work at the department," said Lescoutre.

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*The Hill Times*

## News

# Gifts and hospitality rule changes may be hardest adjustments under new code of conduct, say lobbyists



Megan Buttle, president of the Government Relations Institute of Canada, spoke to the House Ethics Committee on Feb. 17 to discuss the third edition of the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. She told *The Hill Times* that most of the updated code has been 'really well-received' by lobbyists, although sponsored-travel restrictions may be difficult for some. *ParlVu screen capture*

## The 2023 edition of the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct came into force on July 1.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Changes to the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct came into force at the start of July, and some lobbyists are facing a rethink of how they approach campaigns or offer travel to public office holders under the new restrictions.

"It's really going to change how a lot of lobbyists, their clients, and grassroots organizations approach their government relations, because when it comes to events, it's going to be a lot harder to host receptions, just with the spending limits," said Daniel Perry, a Summa Strategies consultant and Conservative commentator. "I think we're going to see a lot of changes around the use of lobbying days when it comes to hosting a reception."

The 2023 edition of the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct, which sets the standards of behaviour for lobbyists, was published in the *Canada Gazette* on May 27, 2023, and took effect on July 1. Among the biggest changes are new rules intended to provide greater clarity regarding the allowable gifts and hospitality lobbyists may provide to public office holders. Rules 3.1 and 3.2 prohibit providing any gift or hospitality to an official other than those of low

value, such as a token of appreciation or promotional item. The low value amount is a maximum of \$40 per gift, with a total annual limit of \$200.

Perry told *The Hill Times* that the spending limits on hospitality could make hosting receptions more difficult, depending on food choice. As an example, he said some groups may wish to provide culturally-appropriate food, which could cost more than other food choices.

"You are able to apply for exemptions, but when you're hosting a lobby day, the last thing you want to do is have to wait to hear if your spending can change a little bit. I think there's some concern when it comes to hosting Indigenous receptions, as well as halal receptions, just because of the added cost," said Perry. "It's going to be hard to make those types of receptions work with such a low bar, just because it costs a little bit more."

The new code also clarifies that offering sponsored travel is also considered to be a gift. Organizations such as Results Canada and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs—which provide travel programs to parliamentarians—have expressed concern that the new rules will limit their ability to educate MPs and Senators about foreign policy issues and international development, as previously reported in *The Hill Times*.

The code permits the commissioner to grant exemptions to the gift and hospitality rules by considering several factors, including by how much the monetary limits

are exceeded, and if the gift or hospitality is related to the exercise of the official's power, duty, or function.

Megan Buttle, president of the Government Relations Institute of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that most of what has been presented in the new code "has been really well-received by the community," but the limitation on sponsored travel could be disruptive for some.

"There are certain stakeholder groups that have relied on sponsored travel as a part of how they educate and speak to parliamentarians and public office holders. It doesn't affect a large cohort, but there are certain individuals and groups in particular that will



Daniel Perry, a Summa Strategies consultant, says the new Lobbyists' Code of Conduct rules regarding gifts and hospitality may make it more difficult to host Indigenous or halal events 'because of the added cost.' *Photograph courtesy of Daniel Perry*

be reaching out to [the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying], I anticipate, and working to see if there will be an exemption granted, which [the commissioner] herself said is an option," said Buttle. "Bringing parliamentarians [and] public office holders outside of Ottawa into circumstances that really help show the impacts and tell that story is an extremely powerful education tool."

The 2023 code also expands on the conflict-of-interest rules from the previous edition, and prohibits lobbying a public office holder if they "could reasonably be seen to have a sense of obligation towards" the lobbyist due to a close relationship. Examples of close relationships are provided in the code, such as close family members, best friends, intimate or romantic partners, or close financial relationships, such as sharing ownership in property or co-managing shared investments.

Buttle, who also serves as the principal leading the digital strategy practice at Earncliffe Strategies, said that, overall, the updated code won't be a massive change for the government-relations community, and that lobbyists are prepared.

"I don't anticipate much concern from lobbyists to comply right away. The expectations are well-known. Registered lobbyists are very aware of the changes that are coming. I think we can see compliance being pretty strong from day one," she said.

Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger told *The Hill Times* that she isn't expecting a difficult transition for lobbyists in complying with the 2023 edition of the code. Between 2020-2022, the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying conducted three rounds of consultations to gather input on updating the code.

"People are aware. It's a long time coming, and since the publication on May 27, they've had ... a month and a half to get ready. We've been receiving a lot of questions. We're doing presentations. We're out there already doing outreach and answering questions," she said.

The most common questions posed to the OCL are regarding the changes to the code related to gifts, hospitality and sponsored travel, she said.

"People are planning on how to set up their year to make sure that they comply with the code, and we're here to help them and give them the guidance that they need," said Bélanger. "We've got to make sure that the people who offer sponsored travel understand the rules. We've been getting questions from parliamentarians. 'Am I able to accept? And ... if I go, what will be the cooling-off period for them not to lobby me?' And it will depend on the facts of each case."

Kyle Morrow, an associate for law firm Fasken, told *The Hill Times* that the updated code contains significant changes, including those surrounding political work.



Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger says her office has been 'receiving a lot of questions' about the changes to the Lobbyists' Code of Conduct. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Under the previous code, when a lobbyist undertakes "political activities" on behalf of a person which could reasonably be seen to create a sense of obligation, they may not lobby that person for a specified period. The "specified period" is not defined in the code, but a separate guidance document suggests that the moratorium for higher-risk political activities should be equivalent to a full election cycle, which is usually four years.

The new code allows a shorter cooling-off period. Rule 4.2 prohibits a lobbyist from lobbying a public office holder for up to 24 months following "political work" for that public office holder. Examples of political work can include canvassing, coordinating campaign office logistics, or organizing political fundraising.

"The rules around political work, I think, have been the most controversial, but the [lobbying] commissioner has made it clear that she reserves the right to reduce the cooling-off period on a case-by-case basis. I think that will allow some more flexibility in the new rules compared to the old rules," said Morrow. "The biggest risk under the code is reputational risk. Non-compliance with the code could result in a public report to Parliament. I'd say all the rules are going to be important for lobbyists to study and adhere to."

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*The Hill Times*

# Lobbying watchdog seeks more tools to penalize lobbyists who file late

Bélanger's report notes not all errors are equal, with current penalties either 'nothing or sending it to the RCMP.'

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Record levels of federal lobbying since last year included an increased number of lobbyists failing to file required communication reports on time, and Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger wants her office to have more ability to impose sanctions on rule-breakers to contend with what she called "a detriment to transparency."

Bélanger published her annual report on June 22, highlighting activities for the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying (OCL) between April 2022 and March 2023. The fiscal year covered in the report showed an all-time high of 7,707 active lobbyists reached in January 2023. A new record of 30,681 total communication reports filed was also set for the year, marking a 19 per cent increase over the 2021-22 period, and a five per cent increase over the previous record established in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Along with the heightened lobbying activity was an increase in the number of late communication reports filed by lobbyists, according to the report. Although nearly 94 per cent of communication reports were filed on time, more than 1,800 communication reports were filed after the deadline provided in the Lobbying Act, which is no later than 15 days

after the end of the month when the communication occurred.

According to the report, "far too many" communication reports were filed up to 180 days late, and another 102 were filed even later than that.

Bélanger recommended in the report that the Lobbying Act be amended to allow "a spectrum of sanctions" for the OCL to impose against lobbyists who fail to comply with their obligations.

"Not all infractions to the act are created equal, and right now [possible responses are] either nothing or sending it to the RCMP," Bélanger said. "I think there needs to be the ability to provide the appropriate remedy for the offense that occurred."

Under the Lobbying Act, it is a criminal offence to fail to register lobbying activities and to fail to file a monthly return. Currently, the commissioner can only deal with non-compliance through the imposition of criminal sanctions following an investigation and referral to a peace officer. However, the current practice for the OCL in addressing late filings is to accept the late communication reports, educate the lobbyists about their reporting obligations, and then monitor their compliance for one year, according to Bélanger.

"To encourage people to submit their [monthly communication reports], we accept the late registrations and we remind them of the importance of registering on time, because it is an offence," Bélanger said. "Should there be someone who's not understanding that message, then I could investigate it and send to the RCMP. It's really an incentive for them to understand the gravity of being late. But except for that, I don't really have any other tools."

The annual report referred to a list of recommendations for im-



Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger published her office's annual report on June 22, which showed record highs for the number of active lobbyists and communication reports filed. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

proving the Lobbying Act, which was released by the OCL on May 30, 2022. The list includes a recommendation that the OCL have the ability to impose administrative monetary penalties (AMPs) on rule-breakers, and as examples, cites the lobbying registrars in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, which can each impose AMPs up to \$25,000 for contraventions of their respective acts. Bélanger's recommendations also include for the OCL to be able to issue temporary prohibitions banning an individual from lobbying for a specified period, or impose mandatory training and education for lobbyists.

Megan Buttle, president of the Government Relations Institute of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that the OCL could try increasing its educational outreach as a way of addressing late filings. Buttle also serves as the principal leading the digital strategy practice at Earncliffe Strategies.

"Maybe before entering into considerations around increased sanctions, [the OCL should be] taking a look at if there are ways to communicate about the deadlines more clearly, whether it's through reminders or other tools," she said. "I would say, first, there's probably a step that needs to be taken in terms of increasing those communications, prior to maybe evaluating some of the sanctions that she is considering."

In regards to the record levels of lobbying from the last fiscal year, Buttle said that made sense because of the Liberal government's "ambitious policy agenda."

"The government set out a pretty diverse and broad policy agenda, and as a result, there is a lot of engagement and conversations through different advocacy tools from stakeholders across

the country," she said. "I think it's natural with where the government has set its priorities that there has been this rise."

Scott Thurlow, an Ottawa lawyer and founder of Thurlow Law, argued that greater power to impose sanctions would not help the OCL in addressing the issue of lobbyists filing late.

"Most people do it—file late—because they make a mistake. [Sanctions are] not going to make them not make mistakes," said Thurlow. "I think that the underlying position is that this is going to act as some kind of a lever to improve transparency and accountability, when [Bélanger's] own report admits that all of these late filers adjust, and the information becomes public."

Thurlow said he has difficulty with any system where someone would be both the trier of fact and the one doling out punishments.

"[The lobbying commissioner is] not a regulator. She is an administrator. Her job, her primary responsibility, is making sure that we have a very robust, accurate and conspicuous registry of lobby-

ists, which we have," said Thurlow. "She has invoked other jurisdictions that have AMPs as a useful precedent. I don't think that in any way speaks to the principle, which is AMPs aren't going to improve transparency. They are punitive."

## Prime Minister's Office is increased focus of lobbying

Lobbying targeting the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) specifically, increased by 43 per cent last year, according to data in the OCL's 2022-2023 annual report.

The PMO was listed in 1,602 communication reports, including communications with Trudeau present, during the fiscal year, compared with 1,117 communication reports in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. A total of 56 reports in the last fiscal year listed communication with the prime minister only, which was a slight increase over the 53 communication reports listing Trudeau only in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) filed the most communication reports between April 2022 and March 2023 listing communication with Trudeau alone. The organization filed four communication reports for communication specifically with Trudeau on Dec. 06, 2022, and one communication report on June 3, 2022.

*The Hill Times* reached out to the FCM to ask about communications with Trudeau, but did not receive a response by deadline. The subject matter of the communications listed in the reports includes housing, climate and infrastructure, the registry shows.

The most recent communication with Trudeau alone during the fiscal year was filed by the Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC). The organization communicated with Trudeau on March 21, 2023.

"The focus of the discussion with Prime Minister Trudeau was on sustainable agriculture, in particular the Best Management Practices Guide to Mitigate Emissions on Dairy Farms that we developed for dairy farmers to support them in achieving our goal of net-zero [emissions] by 2050," said Lucie Boileau, DFC's director of communications in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times* on June 28.

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*The Hill Times*

## Lobbying the prime minister

Organization	Communication reports
Federation of Canadian Municipalities	5
Breakfast Club of Canada	3
Canadian Geographic Enterprises Inc.	3
12118124 Canada Inc.	2
FCA Canada Inc.	2
National Council of Canadian Muslims	2
Siemens Energy Canada Limited	2

The above table shows the organizations which filed the most communication reports listing a communication with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alone between April 2022 and March 2023. Information courtesy of the federal lobbyists' registry

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## Editorial

### Elections Canada must oversee party nomination elections

Federal nomination contests, run by our major federal parties, continue to be problematic.

Recently, another disturbing layer was added to this ongoing controversy when former governor general David Johnston, in his first report on foreign interference, said that there “is well-grounded suspicion” that China’s government interfered in the 2019 Liberal nomination election in Don Valley North, Ont., to have Han Dong win the contest. The report added that Dong had no knowledge of this meddling.

Currently, nomination elections are run by party offices. Whenever they want a specific outcome in a contest, they have mechanisms in place to make that happen. Even if Elections Canada receives complaints of alleged rigging in a nomination election, their role in halting it is very limited.

Following Johnston’s report, it is hoped that the chief electoral officer will call on all federal parties to amend the Canada Elections Act, and let Elections Canada supervise the nomination contests. Political parties should proactively make this amendment.

Nomination elections are the heart and soul of Canadian democracy, and every effort must be made to protect the integrity of this process.

For months, the Conservatives and NDP have blasted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberals for not calling a

full-blown public inquiry into foreign interference in Canadian elections. The three parties are on the record as stating that foreign meddling is unacceptable. Allowing Elections Canada to oversee the nomination process will be a key test as to whether these parties are serious about addressing the issue.

In the June 19 byelections, the Conservative Party’s winning margin was reduced from 27 per cent to only seven per cent in Oxford, Ont., because the party faced allegations of rigging the nomination process. Prior to becoming party leaders, both Trudeau and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre promised free and fair nominations to their respective party bases. After becoming party leaders, both did the opposite.

The practice of saying one thing and doing another doesn’t work anymore. If Poilievre wants to become prime minister, he should carefully study Trudeau’s meteoric rise and decline: in particular, his practice of making promises that he has no plans on delivering.

Any leader who wants to be successful in this era of transparency will have to make sure that the nomination elections are free, fair, and open without any interference from the parties’ leadership, or they should say publicly that they only want candidates in elections who they like, period.

*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor

### A way to improve work conditions for temporary foreign workers is to end closed work permits: letter writer

Canada is a country full of opportunities—a desirable destination for foreigners looking to enhance their future. Temporary foreign workers are essential for the country’s economy and workforce. Yet, despite their important contributions, they experience abuse and precarity due to inadequate policies and regulations.

I want to use my voice because I have seen how my loved ones struggled over years while working under closed work permits. The Government of Canada issues temporary foreign workers closed work permits which tie them to one employer, one occupation, and one location. Over time, these permits can affect your mental health and create a strong resentment to your workplace. While temporary foreign workers wait for

their permanent residency to be processed, they are tied to an employer for years while being subjected to challenging work conditions. Despite the negative effects on their mental well-being, workers carry on with their job obligations, with the sole purpose of obtaining permanent residency and gaining their freedom back.

A way to improve work conditions for temporary foreign workers is to end closed work permits, and develop open or sector-specific permits to fill gaps in the labour market. The freedom to choose where to work is essential to live a life free of abuse, and to simultaneously contribute to needs of the country.

**Rocio Dona Whistler, B.C.**

*The writer is a volunteer at a migrant workers centre.*

### Our political climate is divisive, based on too many lies and disinformation: writes Victoria, B.C. letter writer

We live in a time of absurd and frightful confusion, with political divisions widening every day like a planet fragmenting into shards in the latest Armageddon-based blockbuster film. The relentless advance of lies is beyond the human capacity to remain reasonable. The hyper-connected overload from social media and disinformation, and the rapidly accumulating trauma of history and the recent past conspire to put us increasingly in peril from dissociation and destruction borne of bad decision-making.

The jury remains out on how we will sentence ourselves: will we be at each

others’ throats until we can’t anymore, or learn to collaborate in resolving the collective prisoners’ dilemma before things go even further?

Understanding the ways that political rhetoric short-circuits reason and how we come to believe their lies are critically important if we are to leverage knowledge for optimism and compassionate action. Given the state of politics, there’s no time like the present, and, sadly, like collective climate action, we may be too late.

**William Perry Victoria, B.C.**

### Don’t privatize health care, private health care is a business: Ottawa reader

Do not privatize health care. It is clearly a mistake. Private health care is a business. Its primary concern is making money and private health-care services are more costly than those of the public system. The private system is drawing health-care practitioners away from

the public system which causes further degradation of the services it can provide. Please listen to doctors’ input on public system improvements and implement them.

**Michele Tetrault Ottawa, Ont.**



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# Canada's not broken, we're a work in progress

Individual rights are not paramount in Canada. And that's a good thing. We know to build a nation we need to strengthen communities, geographic and demographic.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Is Canada broken? Canadians celebrating our national day across the country don't seem to think so.

And neither does the world.

Just last week, three of Canada's cities ranked in the top 10 of

world livability, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Our most livable city, Montreal, didn't make the cut but Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary did.

Millions of Canadians who live in other places believe their community is best.

Newfoundland is known worldwide for its friendly people. CNN broadcaster Anderson Cooper made his way to St. John's, N.L., to cover the tragic loss of the Titan submersible, but could not leave the city without a special shoutout to the generosity of the people.

Just last week, Canada became one of the first countries in the world to guarantee equality in professional sport payments.

Tennis Canada announced the change in a release which said it would fund increased women's prize money via a hike in the number of days of competition and a revenue share increase with the Women's Tennis Association.

The announcement means a huge financial boost for women's tennis. In the 2023 Canadian tennis tournaments next month, men's prize money is \$7.623-million while the women's purse is only \$2.788-million.

It will take five years to reach equality, but women are ecstatic that Canada is taking the lead in an area that will have ripple effects around the world.

The tennis move should also send a message to other sports, where women's participation is grossly underfunded.

Just last week, millions of Canadians joined in a celebration of our country's LGBTQ-plus diversity.

From small communities to megacities, Canadians joined to celebrate the right to be who we want to be and love who we want to love.

In Caraquet, N.B., at the same moment New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs was making life more difficult for transgender teens, the community was repainting its crosswalks in pride colours.

Higgs' obstinacy on transgender issues has cost him several cabinet ministers, and his job as premier is now on the line.

The Progressive Conservative party has already started a process to replace Higgs, largely because of his decision to ram through legislation where schools

must inform parents if a student chooses to change the pronoun identifying their gender.

Higgs' response to cabinet objections was to ignore complaints about his leadership style and simply dump dissenters.

In small and large towns across the country, people wore the pride colours positively in recognition of the fact that Canada is a country where we can embrace our differences.

When the wildfires hit in Nova Scotia, Canadians from across the country reached out to help with financial support and firefighting expertise.

As the smoke still filters across the land, we know that we are in this together.

Do we have problems? Yes, housing affordability is top of the list for young people who cannot pay the high price of housing in most parts of the country.

Homelessness and mental health challenges mean urban centres are magnets for those who have nowhere else to go. In a country like Canada, help for those most in need should be top of mind on our Canada Day to-do list.

The effects of colonization and deculturalization on Indigenous Peoples are only now being tackled in a serious way with financial reparation and collective recognition of the damage that has been inflicted.

Reconciliation is still a work in progress, as is the attempt to build a country where race and religion play no role in your capacity to grow as a person or community.

We are not there yet. But the fact that most Canadians can see equality of race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation as a positive goal is something to celebrate.

The old saying that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence does not apply here.

The grass is already much greener on our side of the fence.

Canadians don't need to win a lottery. We have already won in the lottery of life, either having been born or having migrated to a country that strives for success for all its citizens.

Individual rights are not paramount in Canada. And that is a good thing.

Instead, we understand to build a nation we need to strengthen communities, geographic and demographic.

There is much work ahead, but, on this Canada Day, we can say with certainty that our country is not broken.

Instead, we are a work in progress.

Happy Canada Day!

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

# When pop culture meets pol culture

The line between political culture and popular culture is increasingly blurry as more and more politicians adopt a pop culture style to their messaging campaigns.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—The line separating political culture from popular culture is getting increasingly blurred.

Certainly, more and more politicians have adopted a pop-culture style to their messaging campaigns.

As *The New York Times* noted a few years ago, "Political battles are waged through pop songs and novelty prayer candles and evocative emoji."

But it goes the other way, too, by which I mean popular culture, at times, has adopted the tactics of political culture.

An interesting case in point, is how a Hollywood studio decided to market the recently released superhero movie, *The Flash*, as if it were a political campaign.

To see what I mean by this, let's consider the similarities.

First off, given that *The Flash's* star, Ezra Miller, had become embroiled in a series of highly publicized legal problems, the studio decided to keep the controversial actor on the sidelines: no press conferences, no TV interviews, no promotional appearances, basically no nothing.

The studio was trying to hide what it considered a liability.

This, of course, mirrors the tactics of political campaign strategists, who will often hide or shun people who are considered a liability to their electoral prospects.

A good example of this occurred during the 2018 American midterm elections when former U.S. president Bill Clinton, who,



*The Flash*, starring Ezra Miller, Sasha Calle, Michael Keaton, Ben Affleck, Kiersey Clemons, Michael Shannon, Ron Livingston, Maribel Verdú, and Antje Traue. It is interesting how a Hollywood studio decided to market a new superhero movie, *The Flash*, as if it were a political campaign, writes Gerry Nicholls. Image courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures, DC Studios,

thanks to his admitted and alleged sexual indiscretions—which made him potentially toxic in the "#MeToo" era—was essentially told by Democratic strategists to stay off the campaign trail.

In short, like Miller, Clinton was not to draw attention to himself.

Another political-style tactic the studio adopted to promote its movie was the way it leaked the results of a special test screening, which reportedly gave *The Flash* the "highest scores ever" for a D.C. superhero flick, to the media.

The equivalent move to this in politics occurs when an election campaign leaks the results of its own internal polls, which is usually done to offset negative public polls, so "insiders" can say something like, "Our campaign is surging ahead and gaining ground every day."

Political campaigns obviously pull this public relations trick to generate positive headlines, which, I suspect, is also why the studio released its test screening results.

The final similarity between *The Flash's* marketing strategy and a political campaign is how the studio apparently sought out high-profile third-party endorsements.

A few months ago, for instance, the *Hollywood Reporter* broke the story that movie megastar Tom Cruise, who was given

a private screening of the film, absolutely loved *The Flash*.

Noted the paper, "Cruise is said to have raved about the movie, saying something to the effect that *Flash* is 'everything you want in a movie' and 'this is the kind of movie we need now,' according to insiders."

Meanwhile, noted horror author Stephen King, who, like Cruise, was given a special private screening of *The Flash*, also lavished praise on the movie, writing on Twitter: "As a rule I don't care a lot for superhero movies, but this one is special. It's heartfelt, funny, and eye-popping. I loved it."

Isn't this reminiscent of a candidate scoring key endorsements from "big names"?

At any rate, the studio marketing campaign was successful as it generated lots of media buzz for *The Flash*, making it one of the summer's most eagerly anticipated movies.

Unfortunately, after *The Flash* hit theatres, it bombed at the box office.

Turns out, despite all the hype, people just didn't like it.

This, too, reflects a political reality: you can do everything right in terms of generating good media coverage for your candidate, but, at the end of the day, sometimes it's just not enough.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.  
The Hill Times

# Politics

# Press freedom will last only as long as we are willing to fight for it

Press independence, and therefore the quality of news the public gets, is under pressure by interfering owners almost everywhere.

Michael Harris

Harris



**H**ALIFAX—If there is one thing I have learned on the battlefields of journalism, it is that press freedom is never free.

Journalists have to pay for it—often with their jobs.

For the people who own the newspapers, radio stations, or TV networks, journalism is a business like any other. The bottom line is not great reporting, but ratings, return on investment, and a kind of immunity from being reported on.

Bob Fife blew the whistle on the sad state of affairs inside CTV, when he reported in a June 27, 2023, story in *The Globe and Mail* that Wade Oosterman, a top Bell Media executive, urged his news team to avoid “negative spin” in coverage of the network’s parent company.

According to *The Globe*, Oosterman said on an audio tape obtained by *The Globe* that there was a lack of “balance” in the network’s coverage. Although *The Globe* reported that he said

he was not asking reporters to “shill” for Bell in its coverage of the company, that is exactly what his words sounded like. “But for God’s sake,” he reportedly said, “If there is a choice between helping and not helping—help.”

*The Globe* reported that Oosterman gave an unsettling example. When Bell reported flat revenues and an eight per cent profit, arguably obtained by cuts, he didn’t like the way CTV played the story.

The network reported the heart of the business story: that revenues were flat, not the single digit improvement in profits. “Why would we take that negative spin instead of the positive spin?” Oosterman reportedly asked.

He should know that real journalists are not in the spin business, but rather the fact business. Spinning is more in the line of business executives.

There were already signs of what looked a lot like a meltdown within CTV before this audio tape surfaced. First came the dismissal of veteran news anchor Lisa LaFlamme. Some said that her crime was letting her hair go grey, which the company denied.

But *The Globe* reported that two former news managers at CTV said that Oosterman thought LaFlamme’s newscast was too “favourable” to the federal Liberals.

If true, the Bell executive quoted in *The Globe* story is guilty of the one cardinal sin that no media owner or manager can commit without consequences. He had scaled the editorial wall and interfered in the professional business of gathering the news.

And he did it at a time when Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is promising to shutter one of CTV’s main competitors: the CBC.

Of course, ownership has its privileges. Owners and managers hire the people who produce the news and, yes, sometimes fire them. But they’re not supposed to suggest how their news teams should go about

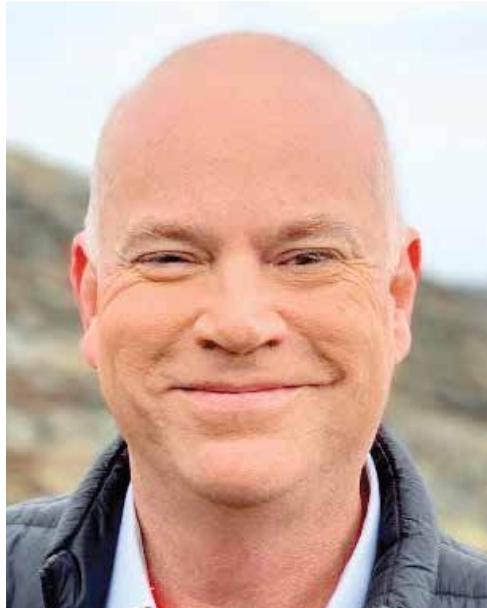
Napier had been a correspondent for Société Radio-Canada before joining CTV. McGregor was the investigative print journalist who broke the robocalls scandal along with his then-colleague Stephen Maher. And Workman spent most of his long career as the CBC’s Paris-based correspondent.

With their departures, invaluable experience walked out the door.

If you have a ratings problem, seasoned journalists like Napier, McGregor, and Workman with proven track records are exactly the people to turn that around. Instead of letting these people go, BCE might have considered investing more in the Ottawa bureau. Instead, they have chosen to chastise, hobble, and diminish it.

Fife, who himself had been Ottawa bureau chief for CTV before joining *The Globe*, made an incredibly important point in his story. It could be persuasively argued that Oosterman’s reported attempt to inject more balance into CTV’s coverage by lecturing news managers runs contrary to BCE’s own journalistic independence policy.

As Fife reported, the policy is clear: “Any interference, either direct or indirect, actual or perceived, undermines the principles of news independence and can erode the credibility of Bell Media News, which is critical to maintaining the trust of our viewers and listeners.”



CTV Ottawa reporter Glen McGregor, left, and bureau chief Joyce Napier were among many journalists let go by Bell Media on June 14. Instead of cuts, Bell might have considered investing more in their trusted journalists, writes Michael Harris. Photo courtesy of Twitter, and *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

their business. They should never ask for positive spin.

Whatever CTV may have gained in replacing LaFlamme, it was not a better news anchor or journalist. She had undeniable grit, experience, and presence, now absent from CTV’s national news program, though it remains the No. 1 newscast in the country.

Then came the disturbing termination of two of CTV’s finest Ottawa bureau assets: bureau chief Joyce Napier and reporter Glen McGregor. Along with Napier and McGregor, Bell also iced the network’s chief international correspondent, Paul Workman.

In response to Fife’s report, a Bell spokesperson said its journalistic code of conduct does allow executives to “offer ideas for news coverage to Bell Media News teams,” but stressed decisions on coverage are made by editors.

However, it seems that instead of representing the spirit of those words, Oosterman’s bleak message to his news managers on that audio tape, as reported by *The Globe and Mail*, was: either connect with more eyeballs or face further cuts.

The sad truth is that press independence, and, therefore, the quality of news the public gets,

is under pressure by interfering owners almost everywhere.

There was a time when Jeff Bezos, the owner of *The Washington Post*, promised to keep his hands off the paper. Then he began to reach beyond his publisher, Fred Ryan, directly contacting people in the editorial department.

After nine years in the job, Ryan resigned on June 12, and Bezos paid personal visits to the *Post*’s newsroom at exactly the time when the place was awash with rumours of layoffs and business problems. Get circulation up—or else.

Over at Twitter, owner Elon Musk has taken a wrecking ball to the place. During his short tenure at the social media company, Musk has laid off 80 per cent of the staff and tried to impose an absurd fee of \$8 a month for blue-check verification of accounts. Many extremist groups, including neo-Nazis, got a verified account simply by paying for it. In the end, even Musk realized it was not such a great idea.

And then there is the case *Le Journal du Dimanche*, France’s leading Sunday newspaper. Here, the journalists took pre-emptive action before being taken over by French billionaire Vincent Bolloré. They went on strike rather than work under Bolloré’s new editor, 34-year-old Geoffroy Lejeune.

Lejeune came from a far-right magazine that had been fined for racist insults. Journalists at

*Le Journal du Dimanche* feared their centrist paper was about to be transformed into a right-wing platform.

Their fear is well-founded. Bolloré is known as the Rupert Murdoch of France, a man who appears to be busily constructing a conservative media empire styled on Fox News.

Given the turn the world is taking, we will all get about as much press freedom as we are willing to fight for.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

*The Hill Times*

# Canada should be aspiring to be more than a branch-plant economy



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, pictured June 1, 2023, speaking at the CANSEC trade show in Ottawa. Can the government focus on building a Canadian-owned and headquartered corporate community that has the scale, talent, and intellectual property to make us a serious player, asks David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

If we want a more independent Canada, we have to build the talent, own the tech, and grow firms so wealth is created here and the critical decisions for our future are made by the people who live here with the biggest stake in what kind of country we can become.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—A little more than a year ago, as Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne proclaimed that “our government

wants Canada to be a strategic global leader in the semiconductor industry,” as he announced a \$150-million Semiconductor Challenge Callout.

This callout, his department said, was to invite “large-scale ideas from industry and other ecosystem players that address how Canada can build on existing R&D and manufacturing strength, contribute to a national network and supply chain and position Canada as a critical global supplier of specialized semiconductors manufacturing.”

These are big aspirations. But an important question is whether the government will focus on building a Canadian-owned and headquartered corporate community that has the scale, talent, and intellectual property to make us a serious player, or whether the policy depends largely on more subsidies for foreign corporations to locate here along with the ongoing takeover of potentially important Canadian firms by these multinationals.

Certainly, Champagne has his eye on attracting the multinationals. “Whether it’s high-value or large-scale manufacturing, we want to see Canada be home to the world’s leading semiconductor manufacturers,” he said. But we should aspire to be more than a branch-plant economy that spends its money to develop

talent, create intellectual property and provide investment subsidies to companies from the rest of the world.

Foreign investment can add to our strengths, especially if it includes a commitment to develop Canadian suppliers and enable domestic niche players to develop “black boxes” of intellectual property in global supply chains of these corporations. Nor are all takeovers bad—our companies also take over businesses in other countries. But we need a clear view of which firms strategically matter.

This is why the creation of SILICAN—the Semiconductor Industry Leadership and Innovation Canada Action Network—matters. An initiative of the Council of Canadian Innovators, it brings together Canada’s Semiconductor Council, CMC Microsystems, Ortonique, ISEQ, the Alliance for Semiconductor Innovation, the Canadian Innovation Network, and the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities to work with federal and provincial governments to develop a “made-in-Canada action plan for strategic leadership in the global semiconductor value chain.”

Success will mean more than simply growing the industry. It must help build a core of world-scale Canadian-owned companies in the global semiconductor value

chain. If policy can’t accomplish this, then it will be a failure. Fortunately, the Council of Canadian Innovators will be a strong voice in speaking up for Canada and our companies. But this will take much hard thinking and great determination.

In late March, the federal government announced a subsidy of \$36-million for Ottawa-based Ranovus Inc. The money is to support the company’s \$100-million expansion of its production capacity for semiconductor products and services. Ranovus has developed technologies that fill an important niche in the digital world. This is the feds’ second investment in Ranovus; in 2018 it received \$20-million from the Strategic Innovation Fund. It has also received \$13.5-million in funding from the Sustainable Development Technology Fund. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a \$40-million grants to a leading Canadian quantum computing company, Xanadu Quantum Technologies, towards its \$177.8-million plan to advance its quantum computing system.

But what happens if a foreign firm tries to buy Ranovus or Xanadu? Probably nothing. A couple of weeks before the Ranovus announcement, another promising Canadian semiconductor company, GaN Systems

Inc. was acquired by the German chipmaker Infineon Technologies for US\$830-million. As with many such sales, the opportunity was lost to grow a promising home-grown tech company into a Canadian-headquartered and owned global-scale business, with all its potential.

There is no active Canadian policy to provide an alternative to these takeovers, and no apparent desire to invoke the national interest as a reason to step in. Canada spends much money educating talent and attracting expertise from abroad, investing in university-based research for new knowledge, and funding the early-stage development of companies seeking to commercialize new knowledge and create intellectual property. The early-stage development of firms is a screening process to sort out new ideas—many do not survive, but some, like GaN, do and go on to build and grow. Once successful, foreign corporations then move in to buy them if they can.

In effect, Canada produces seed corn for multinationals which go on to capture the benefits, including talent, intellectual property and the future growth benefits. If we are serious about building a competitive and innovative Canadian role in the global semiconductor industry, with wealth creation and good jobs for Canadians, how do we do this if we don’t move beyond providing seed corn for others?

There is nothing new in this. There is a long history of foreign corporations buying up our businesses of the future. One of the largest was the 2006 takeover of ATI Technologies, a leader in graphics chips, by U.S., chip-maker AMD for US\$5.4-billion. In 2007, Genesis Microchip, a specialized chip provider, was acquired by the European semiconductor company STMicroelectronics. In 2009, Tundra Semiconductor was acquired by American tech firm Integrated Device Technology. In 2010, DALSA—a world leader in sensor technology—was acquired by Teledyne, a U.S. corporate giant. In 2012, Gennum Corp., a world leader in semiconductors for hearing aids, was acquired by California-based Semtech Corp. Last year Semtech also acquired Sierra Wireless of Vancouver. Between 2006-2022, IBM acquired 17 Canadian tech companies, and Google acquired 12.

How do we build a Canadian role in semiconductors if so many of our best companies are snapped up by foreign corporations? How much lost opportunity has there been because of past takeovers?

If we want a more independent Canada, we have to build the talent, own the technology, and grow companies so that wealth is created here, and the critical decisions for our future are made here by the people who live here, have their families here, and have the biggest stake in what kind of country we can become.

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

*The Hill Times*

## Opinion

# Lack of care and response for contractors who worked on Canadian projects in Afghanistan is unacceptable

Immigration Minister Sean Fraser, pictured on the Hill. Sayad Ali Mousavi Azad says the response from Fraser's department regarding the resettlement program has been disappointing. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



The Afghan nationals who helped Canadian efforts in Afghanistan are at risk, and Canada is bound to them. The lack of care and urgency displayed in this process is not only a disservice, it also tarnishes Canada's reputation as a leader in humanitarian aid.

Sayad Ali Mousavi Azad

Opinion



VANCOUVER—It has been a year since the Afghan-Canadian's sister—who is a lawyer and whose identity cannot be released for safety reasons—applied for the Special Immigration Measures Program for Afghans who closely

assisted Canadian efforts in Afghanistan. She advocated for women's rights, and sought safety in Islamabad, Pakistan, after receiving death threats from her client's spouse, who joined the Taliban following the fall of Afghanistan's government. Despite their efforts, they have only received "Do-not-reply" emails regarding their requests for updates on the program. The process has been long and difficult, and it seems like no one cares about their situation.

The Afghan female lawyer and her children are of the Shia minority and the small (one per cent) Sadat ethnic minority. Her spouse, who is also a lawyer and Shia, and belongs to the small (20 per cent) Hazaras ethnic minority. Despite her eligibility for the special immigration measures program for Afghan nationals who closely assisted Canadian efforts in Afghanistan, as well as the humanitarian program, her request from the Lifeline Afghanistan team within the Diversity Institute was rejected. Although she provided and met all the criteria and requirements to receive their help, she was still denied.

The program's steps are vague, and there is a lack of response from Canadian organizations that conducted projects in Afghanistan. The Afghan female lawyer worked for War Child Canada in Afghanistan through local

contractors, and she has contacted them several times for a clear response or at least a letter of support. Unfortunately, War Child Canada were unable to issue such a letter as the lawyer had worked for a third-party vendor, and was not a direct employee. This lack of care and response from Canadian organizations is unacceptable.

Additionally, the response from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada regarding the program has been disappointing as it indicated that the Afghan-Canadian's family may not qualify for the pathways offered so far. Despite having evidence that goes towards most of the pathways of this program, they show the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees as the only option. Their family is not safe even in Pakistan, and is still being threatened by the people who are looking for them. It is devastating to think that their lives are not being taken seriously by those who have the power to help.

The lawyer and her family urge the government and human rights organizations to take their situation seriously, and to provide a clear and transparent process for Afghan nationals seeking resettlement in Canada. They are grateful for the support they have received from their MP's office, but they need more help. Their lives are at risk, and they need urgent action to be taken. They are willing to

share all the documents related to this issue, as well as their family documents. They hope that someone will hear their voice and take action to help them.

## The Importance of Humanitarian Aid

Canada has a long-standing history as a leader in humanitarian assistance, and it is crucial that this legacy is upheld in this situation. The lives of Afghan nationals who assisted Canadian efforts in Afghanistan are at risk, and it is the responsibility of the Canadian government to ensure their safety. The lack of care and urgency displayed in this process is not only a disservice to those at risk, but it also tarnishes Canada's reputation as a leader in humanitarian assistance.

## The Role of Human Rights Groups

Human rights organizations play a crucial role in ensuring that the rights of individuals are protected. It is imperative that these groups take action to support Afghan nationals who are in need of assistance. Their advocacy and support are essential in ensuring that the Canadian government takes immediate action to provide a clear and transparent process for Afghan nationals seeking resettlement here.

## Conclusion

The situation faced by Afghan nationals seeking resettlement in Canada is urgent and requires immediate action. The opaque process for resettlement is causing further distress to those at risk, and it is imperative that the federal government takes responsibility for its part in this process. Humanitarian assistance and support from human rights organizations are crucial in ensuring that the safety of those at risk is ensured. They urge the Canadian government and human rights organizations to take immediate action to ensure the safety of Afghan nationals who assisted Canadian efforts in Afghanistan.

*Sayad Ali Mousavi Azad is a human rights activist, artist, and survivor of minority-based violence. He worked to promote artistic freedom, women's rights, and opposed Taliban, terrorism, and religious extremism in Afghanistan. After being attacked by extremist forces in Kabul in 2013, he fled to Canada as an asylum seeker. He became a Canadian citizen, and continues to advocate for the rights and safety of refugees and asylum seekers. He believes that short documentary films have the power to bring about change and create more inclusive societies that value diversity and human rights.*

*The Hill Times*



The irony is that Canada's natural resource industries implement the highest environmental standards in the world, but Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault seems not to care, writes former Conservative MP Robert Sopuck. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# The war on rural Canada

Rural culture is based on co-operation and neighbourliness. Rural Canadians are slow to anger, but the realization has dawned that the deck is stacked against us. For the good of the country, this must change.

Robert Sopuck

Opinion



**S**ANDY LAKE, MAN.—The war on rural Canada is largely a one-way street, given the vast population imbalance between

large cities and rural communities. For the purposes of this essay, rural Canada refers to the country's agricultural and natural resource producing regions. Sometimes referred to as the "southern working landscape," this is where the vast majority of our commodities—from food, to energy, minerals, and forest products—are produced. These commodities make up—well, they make up everything. Just look around the room you are in and try to find something that was either not grown or dug out of the ground. I rest my case.

Our largely urbanized society is divorced from agriculture and natural resource production with few urban people ever directly experiencing modern agriculture, forestry, etc. This is not to denigrate city-dwellers; after all, it is only natural to take for granted the consistent supply of food in grocery stores when our society has known nothing but abundance.

And make no mistake: this war is real, and rural people are feeling the pinch more than most. Have you ever noticed that almost

all the environmental wars are being fought against rural Canada? From opposing pipelines, to waging campaigns against forestry and mining, working to throttle modern agriculture, and to aggressively increasing energy costs, it is rural Canadians—especially the rural poor—who are paying the price.

Take the recent increases in the carbon tax and the new so-called clean fuel regulations. The parliamentary budget officer conducted an analysis of these new rules and concluded: "Once these regulations take full effect, according to figures the PBO obtained from Environment and Climate Change Canada, it will increase the price of gas and diesel by as much as 17 cents per litre."

Furthermore: "That impact is felt even more in the Prairies, and Newfoundland and Labrador," the PBO said. "In 2030, the clean fuel regulations will cost the average household in Saskatchewan \$1,117, or 0.87 per cent of their disposable income."

Keep in mind that for rural residents the incremental cost is

even higher given the distances they must travel. Furthermore, given the preponderance of "working vehicles" such as pickup trucks, farm machinery, and construction equipment in rural Canada, the "hit" on these residents will be even worse.

Anti-rural industry activism threatens to kill the goose that lays the golden equalization egg. Four provinces contribute to equalization: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. These provinces are major fossil-fuel producers, and their resource royalties allow them to pay equalization which in turn pays for vital services such as education and health care in so-called "have not" provinces. What is puzzling is that no one in the current government seems to care, and assumes that these benefits will continue to flow regardless of their efforts to throttle our natural resources and agricultural industries.

This deliberate blindness has been neatly described by David Yager, an Alberta oil executive, who noted this in a September 2021 CBC article entitled "Rural vs. urban voters: resources, unity and the 2021 election."

"The polarization is obvious," wrote Yager. "Resource producing and processing regions vote Conservative. Urban resource consumers vote Liberal or NDP. The Liberals don't need a single vote in the resource extraction and producing regions of Canada to form a majority government. ... While it clearly works for the Liberals at the ballot box, it comes at a very high cost for national unity as it intentionally pits Ca-

nadians against Canadians. And it ultimately damages the entire economy."

One need only examine the composition of the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) to realize the importance of our natural resource industries. The TSX has more mining stocks than any other exchange in the world. Financial companies and energy companies make up 49 per cent of the TSX. The prosperity of all Canadians—whether you use health care, have children in school, or drawing a pension from stocks—depends on the health of our rural-based natural resource industries. Does our enlightened environment minister even think about these things? The irony is that Canada's natural resource industries implement the highest environmental standards in the world, but Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault seems not to care.

The litany of attacks on rural Canadians is not limited to federal energy policies. From the new firearms laws, to animal rights campaigns, to the almost complete elimination of the fur trade, our rural populations are under assault like never before. This is taking its toll both economically and emotionally. Rural culture is based on co-operation and neighbourliness. Rural Canadians are slow to anger, but the realization has dawned that the deck is stacked against us. For the good of the country, this must change.

Robert D. Sopuck is the former Conservative Member of Parliament for the Manitoba constituency of Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa.

*The Hill Times*

## News

# Amid summer staffing crunch, no provinces have yet submitted health-care ‘action plans’ to feds

The outstanding health action plans are an ‘urgent’ matter, but provinces must take the time to get them ‘as close to right as possible’ says the president of the Canadian Medical Association.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Over four months after a deal between Ottawa and its provincial and territorial counterparts ended an intense round of sparring on funding for health care, none of the nine provinces that signed bilateral deals with the feds have submitted action plans that are required to access a portion of the funding.

With another wave of news stories in recent weeks about emergency room overcrowding, and the coming summer season—a time when experts warn additional staffing shortages cause a perennial strain on emergency rooms—the leader of an organization representing Canada’s doctors says the urgency to complete these actions plans is high—but so is the need to take the time to get them right, because they are meant to be part of a long-term solution.

“I think it’s pretty clear that the urgency is high,” said Alike Lafontaine, a medical doctor who serves as president of the Canadian Medical Association, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “The hope from frontline providers is that it happens as soon as possible. But how we measure [outcomes in the action plans] determines how we deploy the funding, so it’s very important to get it as close to right as possible.”

On Feb. 13, the Council of the Federation announced that all of its members were accepting an offer from the federal government for \$196.1-billion of health-care funding over 10 years, including \$46.2-billion in new money. The offer included a one-time \$2-billion unconditional top-up to the Canada Health Transfer, for which the money would flow right away. Another element of the federal offer was to set aside \$25-billion for bilateral deals with provinces. To receive this money, each province or territory needs to reach a bilateral agreement with the federal government on shared priorities, and then submit



A spokesperson for Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos, pictured, said the federal government expects it will begin to receive provincial action plans in the coming weeks with ‘concrete and precise examples’ of how funding will be spent. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

an action plan based on that deal in order for the money to flow.

Most of the bilateral deals were reached within weeks of the acceptance of the federal offer. Only Quebec and the territories have yet to sign bilateral deals.

At the time the offer was announced, Ottawa billed the bilateral agreements and the required action plans as one of the ways that it would put strings on the new money. Throughout the negotiations, the federal government’s core position had been that it would not send more money unconditionally because it could end up being used for purposes other than health care. Many stakeholders in the health-care system had called for strings to be attached to the funding for that reason.

The bilateral deals were also billed as a way of tailoring the funding to regional needs.

However, as the bilateral deals were announced, each came with a nearly identical press release, in which the only differences were the name of the province and the amount of funding associated with its bilateral deal. Each of these statements announcing the bilateral deals described the same four core priorities:

- “Access to high-quality family health services when they need them, including in rural and remote areas, and for underserved communities;
- a resilient and supported health workforce that provides them high-quality, effective, and safe health-care services;
- access to timely, equitable, and quality mental health, substance use and addictions services; and
- access to their own electronic health information that is shared between the health professionals they consult.”

Guillaume Bertrand, a spokesperson for Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que), told

*The Hill Times* that the federal government expects to begin receiving action plans in the coming weeks, and that these will require the provinces to provide much more “concrete” objectives about the outcomes they will work to achieve.

“What we will ask is concrete and precise examples of how it will increase results for Canadians,” said Bertrand.

As an example, he said an objective in an action plan could be setting a specific target for the number of residents in a province that would gain a family physician. The government, he said, is more focused on these types of targeted outcomes in the action plans as opposed to a line-by-line accounting of how a province plans to spend its money.

He said the federal government “sent a letter to every province telling them exactly what needs to be in those action plans,” but these letters have not been released publicly.

Bertrand did not specify what criteria could lead to the federal government turning down an action plan. However, he did say federal officials were working with provinces as they develop their plans, so the government expects when plans are submitted they will meet the necessary criteria.

In the view of the Canadian Medical Association, Lafontaine said setting these objectives as measurable benchmarks is vital.

“The importance of any string is that we have a metric that shows whether or not things have changed,” said Lafontaine. “As Canadians sit back and reflect on whether or not this money has been effective, these benchmarks are going to go a long way.”

He said the federal approach of requiring action plans may allow the provinces to be “a bit more introspective as they iden-

tify, ‘What further constraints do we want to put on funding as it goes forward?’”

## Alberta, P.E.I., and New Brunswick expect to submit plans before end of summer

*The Hill Times* reached out to the offices of the ministers of health in all nine of the provinces that have reached bilateral deals with the federal government, inquiring about the status of their action plans, and how the process of developing the plan in collaboration with Ottawa was working for them.

Scott Johnston, a spokesperson for Alberta Health Minister Adriana LaGrange, told *The Hill Times* that his province expects to submit its action plan before the end of the summer.

Johnston said that, within the four priority areas identified in the bilateral agreements, Alberta plans to allocate the largest portion of funding towards enhancing primary care, with a focus on rural, remote, and underserved communities.

Despite the province’s sometimes fractious relationship with Ottawa, Johnston said the Alberta government was “encouraged by the flexibility” the bilateral agreements provide, because it allows the provinces to adjust as needed when “new focus areas may emerge.”

However, he repeated the refrain from the provinces that more funding is still needed.

“We continue to reiterate that the transformation required in our health system requires further funding. We see this as a positive first step,” said Johnston.

Morgan Martin, a spokesperson for the Prince Edward Island Department of Health and Wellness, provided a statement

from the department in response to an inquiry sent to Prince Edward Island Health Minister Mark McLane, saying the province may submit its action plan by July 1.

Martin said P.E.I. is currently developing its action plan “independently under the parameters set out by the federal government.”

“Once the plan is submitted, we expect further negotiation will be required to finalize various aspects of the plan,” said Martin in the email.

She said the federal government’s four priorities were a good fit with the needs that had been identified in P.E.I.

“Senior leaders in the P.E.I. health system have reviewed the list of health initiatives planned for the next several years and have recommended shared health priority funding to several key, high priority, high impact initiatives,” she said, pointing to the areas of family health teams, health workforce and backlogs, mental health and substance use, and modernizing health data systems.

“Fortunately, the four priority areas identified by the federal government align very closely with the joint health priorities of the P.E.I. Department of Health and Wellness,” said Martin.

While P.E.I. officials stated they were working independently from the federal government at this stage of developing their action plan, a statement from the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services said that province was “working collaboratively with our federal counterparts” as it develops the plan.

The department did not indicate a timeline for completing its action plan, but said the funding offered under the four priorities in the bilateral agreements “aligns well” with the priorities set out by Newfoundland and Labrador.

The New Brunswick Department of Health said in a statement that the province plans to submit its action plan “in the coming weeks,” while the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health did not indicate a timeline, but said the province “continues to move forward with the necessary requirements.”

The offices of the health ministers for British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia either did not reply, or would not comment publicly.

Lafontaine said the current progress on setting benchmarks and getting funding to flow means this summer will likely be a tough one for health-care staff and patients, but he sees a prospect for improvements on a longer timeline.

“I think we should prepare ourselves for another wave of struggling with acute care access in communities and struggling with a lot of the same problems that we saw last year,” said Lafontaine. “But if we continue to move forward, and the quicker we get some of this stuff moved out as far as benchmarks, I think we’re going to start to see the changes further down the line.”

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*The Hill Times*

# Qanittaq: a unique vision for clean Arctic shipping

Lisa Koperqualuk  
& Neil Bose

Opinion



On May 12, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and key cabinet ministers met with Inuit leaders at the Illuak Cultural Centre in Naina remote community in the Nunatsiavut region of Newfoundland and Labrador. He was there for the Inuit-Crown Partnership Meeting (ICPC).

It was a perfect setting to highlight a remarkable collaboration initiative announced two weeks earlier in Montreal by Innovation, Science and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne. It's a project that will work towards developing cleaner ships travelling through Arctic waters, such as those carrying nickel from the Voisey's Bay mine—visible outside the windows of the ICPC meeting room in Nain—as well as those right across the North.

To say we are thrilled with this research challenge would be an understatement. The Qanittaq Clean Arctic Shipping Initiative will see Inuit communities and leaders partner with national and international academic institutions, industry, and government. In Inuktitut, Qanittaq means “freshly fallen snow,” and this initiative takes a fresh approach to research.

Memorial University and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Canada are co-leading the global partnership to address and respond to the increase in Arctic shipping and vessel traffic, the related environmental impacts affecting Arctic populations and to support Inuit communities' needs for safe and cost-efficient resupply.

Collaborators will develop robust and innovative ship design and operation technologies, surrounding policy and governance, and support capacity building in communities to meaningfully participate and lead in the future of Arctic shipping.

The initiative received an investment of \$91.6-million over seven years through the Canada First Research Excellence Fund. Funding a truly co-lead and co-developed project between academia and an Indigenous organization sets a precedent to support more Indigenous-led research in the future.

As the largest research funding ever to be awarded to either Memorial or ICC Canada, the investment will strengthen academic and Indigenous partnerships. The initiative has the shared objective of creating an inclusive and internationally relevant Inuit-driven research project and governance approaches using Inuit knowledge.

It comes at a time when there is a huge international focus on Arctic shipping, considering the effects climate change is having on the increase in shipping traffic and the consequences to the Arctic environment. For Inuit, this will be a game-changer, and help position them as leaders in the field.

It's a message we at ICC Canada are bringing to the United Nations' International Maritime Organization as we work to address issues such as underwater noise, invasive species, situational awareness, grey water discharge and black carbon.

With this international research initiative, Canada has an opportunity to be a world leader in the development of cleaner shipping globally.

From the beginning, Memorial has been deeply proud to work side-by-side with ICC Canada, Indigenous partners and collaborators to place Inuit priorities as the key goals of this transformational initiative, while building on the university's global reputation for cold ocean innovation.

Talented early-career and established scientists and scholars are ready to re-

spond to critical issues facing the world. As one of Canada's top 20 research universities, Memorial is the only post-secondary institution in the country with a stand-alone ocean and naval architectural engineering program, and has demonstrated research strengths in areas such as natural resources, climate change, and science and technology.

The Qanittaq Clean Arctic Shipping Initiative is co-developed with Inuit organizations and input from Inuit knowledge-holders in the Arctic. It will support research with various academic experts and teams

in addition to Memorial, such as the University of Ottawa—our institutional partner for the initiative—Dalhousie University, Université de Montréal and the University of British Columbia.

Inuit partners include the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunatsiavut Government, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Makivvik Corporation, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the National Inuit Youth Council.

Traditionally, the governance of Arctic shipping has occurred predominantly at the international and national levels without Inuit involvement, even though the Arctic spans Inuit Nunaat, the ancestral Inuit homeland. Qanittaq presents an opportunity to rethink governance to ensure that Inuit interests and perspectives are at the centre of maritime governance.

*Lisa Koperqualuk is president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, and Neil Bose is president and vice-chancellor of Memorial University in St. John's, N.L.*  
*The Hill Times*

## THE HILL TIMES' POLITICAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING INTERNSHIPS FOR INDIGENOUS AND BLACK PEOPLE

The Hill Times is excited to announce its internship program for aspiring Indigenous and Black journalists. We are seeking passionate applicants who are eager to pursue a career in journalism and have a keen interest in politics, policy, and governance. These paid internships will take place at The Hill Times newsroom located in Ottawa.

### About The Hill Times:

The Hill Times is a dynamic, twice-weekly newspaper and daily news service dedicated to providing comprehensive coverage of Parliament Hill, the federal government, and federal politics. Our readership includes cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament, Senators, federal public servants, political insiders, lobbyists, foreign diplomats posted to Canada, industry associations, authors, journalists, and academics. We pride ourselves on our unique insider perspective, offering unparalleled insights into federal politics.

### Job Description

The internship will include writing news and features in a fast-paced newsroom, where successful applicants will be mentored in a challenging but supportive environment. Interns will be tasked with covering hot topics from an insider perspective, including:

- Breaking political news
- What makes Parliament tick (legislation, MPs, political staff, the PMO, the House, and Senate)
- Finance and budget
- Lobbying
- Public service
- Environment and climate change
- Foreign policy
- Politics and polarization
- Innovation and technology
- Justice and public safety

This internship is a paid, full-time, contract position. Internships vary in duration from three months to one year, depending on the availability of the applicant and the newsroom. Please state your availability on the application, keeping in mind there is a three-month minimum.

### Qualifications:

For this internship, we will be considering both candidates who have studied and worked in journalism, and other professionals who have strong writing skills, a passion for politics and governance, and want to take up a career in journalism.

You must have a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, and a passion for journalism.

Interns should be enthusiastic, talented, curious, and intelligent.

We are looking for candidates who bring energy, ideas, and new perspectives to Canadian politics and governance.

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## News



Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez says 'big tech would rather spend money to change their platforms to block Canadians from accessing good quality and local news instead of paying their fair share to news organizations.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

that regulatory process, engage and make your views known to government and also to publishers," he said.

"There should be a way to make sure that regulation is balanced, that it works for them, and it works for us," said Deegan.

Deegan said that his group's main focus right now is on licensing agreements with stakeholders, including Google and Meta.

"Our primary focus is to be on a solid commercial footing, which involves getting paid fairly for the content that we produce," said Deegan.

Canadian Association of Journalists president Brent Jolly said he was "obviously surprised" by Meta's decision, and that his impression was that Facebook was sending veiled threats as a negotiation tactic.

"But it seems like they continue to push the envelope a little bit further," said Jolly. "I know that this is certainly going to have a real impact for publishers."

When asked about Rodriguez's comments regarding support for newsrooms, Jolly said he wasn't sure what the minister was alluding to, but "could surmise it's tax credits" or "some kind of modification to the digital subscription tax credit."

### 'Hundreds of newsrooms have closed,' says heritage minister

Rodriguez said "hundreds of newsrooms have closed because billions in advertising revenue they used to rely on has shifted to Google and Facebook," according to a statement provided by Rodriguez's press secretary, Laura Scaffidi.

"This status quo is not working," said Rodriguez, adding that C-18 "levels the playing field by putting the power of big tech in check."

"Big tech would rather spend money to change their platforms to block Canadians from accessing good quality and local news instead of paying their fair share to news organizations," said Rodriguez. "This shows how deeply irresponsible and out of touch they are, especially when they make billions of dollars off of Canadian users."

"Canada needs to have a strong, free and independent press, it's fundamental to our democracy," said Rodriguez.

The government also said it has had constructive talks with Google, and have been working with them to provide clarity on next steps as Online News Act is implemented.

"This decision is unfortunate, but we'll continue to work with them through [the] regulatory process," according to the spokesperson.

Rachel Curran, head of public policy in Canada at Meta and a former policy adviser to former prime minister Stephen Harper, said on CBC's Power & Politics program on June 27 that the company is "proceeding towards ending the availability of news permanently in Canada."

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*The Hill Times*

# 'Real impact for publishers': Meta and Google's responses to Bill C-18 add to turmoil in Canadian media

'Canada needs to have a strong, free and independent press,' says Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez, adding, 'it's fundamental to our democracy.'

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

In the midst of a tumultuous month of layoffs and major legislation affecting Canadian media, digital giants Facebook and Google have both announced that they will be ending news availability for Canadian users following the passage of Bill C-18, the Online News Act.

On June 22, Meta confirmed that local news offerings will end on Facebook and Instagram for all users in Canada prior to the Online News Act taking effect.

"We have repeatedly shared that in order to comply with Bill C-18, passed today in Parliament, content from news outlets,

including news publishers and broadcasters, will no longer be available to people accessing our platforms in Canada," according to a release on that day. Meta declined requests for an interview with *The Hill Times* last week.

Shortly thereafter, on June 29, Google announced in a press release that it has informed the government that when the law takes effect, "we unfortunately will have to remove links to Canadian news from our Search, News and Discover products in Canada, and that C-18 will also make it untenable for us to continue offering our Google News Showcase product in Canada."

"We're disappointed it has come to this. We don't take this decision or its impacts lightly and believe it's important to be transparent with Canadian publishers and our users as early as possible," the release said.

The news follows weeks of upheaval for the Canadian journalism industry, with Meta and Google's announcements coming just days following Bell Media's decision to lay off 1,300 employees.

"The world has changed and the same way we're adapting to platforms, well, the platforms also

have to adopt to the new reality," Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) said in an interview with CTV News on June 27.

Linda Solomon Wood, CEO of the Observer Media Group, and founder and editor-in-chief of the *National Observer*, has been keeping a close eye on Bill C-18 and the legislation's ramifications.

In a newsletter, she wrote that the federal government said the bill would level the playing field between online news companies and the tech giants that have monopolized digital advertising, adding that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said "the fact that these internet giants would rather cut off Canadians' access to local news than pay their fair share is a real problem, and now they're resorting to bullying tactics to try and get their way. It's not going to work."

"Many people think this is a threat, this is just a tactic, this is just Meta throwing its weight around in a way that's meant to intimidate," said Wood.

Wood said that if Canada looks at what happened in Australia, "we can project that that they will back down."

Following the passage of the Online News Act as the most recent parliamentary session wrapped up, News Media Canada said they welcomed the passage of the bill, "which allows for news businesses—large and small—to come together to negotiate fair market arrangements for news content with dominant search and social media companies," according to a release.

Paul Deegan, president and CEO of News Media Canada, told *The Hill Times* that even before C-18 was introduced, one of the things his organization looked into was how publishers in Australia and the United States worked through licensing agreements.

"Almost everything that's happened in Canada with both companies has been pretty much straight out of their playbook in Australia," said Deegan, who said there will probably be a six-month regulatory process.

"And our message to both Google and Meta would be: we want to work with you, you've been valuable partners to publishers in Canada and all over the world, we want to continue that relationship, and as we make our way through

# Infighting at AFN shows it's 'largely detached' from grassroots, says Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation member Coburn; former Neskonalith Indian Band chief Wilson says 'there are no winners today'

Chiefs and proxies representing Assembly of First Nations members voted on June 28 to remove National Chief RoseAnne Archibald from office following the conclusion of a human resources investigation.

BY KEVIN PHILIPUPILLAI

The sudden removal of the Assembly of First Nations' national chief didn't garner the attention it should have from chiefs or their communities, says one observer, because the group has become "an Ottawa lobbying organization" that has lost its original connection to grassroots concerns.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) voted on June 28 to remove National Chief RoseAnne Archibald from office, two years into a three-year term that has been marked by conflict between the organization's first ever woman national chief and the regional chiefs who make up the rest of its executive committee.

The vote happened at the end of an all-day Zoom meeting where chiefs or proxies representing AFN member nations were presented with opposing interpretations of the results of a human resources investigation into complaints against Archibald by five AFN staff members.

University of Ottawa political science professor Veldon Coburn told *The Hill Times* on June 29 that the infighting and dysfunction at the political and administrative levels of the AFN confirms a sense among grassroots Indigenous people that it has become "an Ottawa lobbying organization" that is "largely detached from the greater issues that are affecting us all."

Coburn is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, located west of Ottawa on Golden Lake. He said the "lacklustre turnout" for the vote on Archibald's future—with only 231 chiefs or proxies participating out of approximately 633 member nations—was an indicator of the declining credibility and relevance of the AFN among the people it is supposed to serve.

"It's a sad ending to two years of a very tumultuous ride for our first woman national chief," said Coburn, but added the AFN has been "going down this road to a self-serving political voice" under previous national chiefs as well, going back "at least to the 2000s."

Coburn said the current Liberal government has flowed a lot of money back into the AFN after



RoseAnne Archibald, pictured Dec. 8, 2022, has been removed as national chief of the Assembly of First Nations two years into a three-year term that has been marked by conflict. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

the Harper government cut its funding "down to the bare bones."

"But that's where you see it becoming self-serving," he said. "When it starts fighting for its own survival and losing sight of its initial purpose. Which was, whoever is in government be damned, we're going to fight."

The AFN did not respond by deadline to questions from *The Hill Times* about when the interim national chief will be named, and about Coburn's criticisms of its relevance.

Judy Wilson, former kùkpi7 (chief) of the Neskonalith Indian Band and former secretary-treasurer of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, told *The Hill Times* on June 29 that AFN regional chief Paul Prosper said it best at the June 28 meeting when he said "there are no winners today."

"He was quite emotional about that," said Wilson, who participated in the online assembly as a proxy for another chief. "It was a very emotional day for everyone," she said, describing feelings of frustration and anger that were made worse by the fact that the chiefs and proxies weren't able to speak privately or caucus with each other on the Zoom meeting the way they had been able to at last year's general assembly in Vancouver.

"It's almost 25 years in politics for me, and I've never experienced this before at this level," she said, adding that she didn't want younger leaders present at the June 28 special assembly to think this is how things are done, or that it is an everyday occurrence.

Coburn said his research into other movements such as Black Lives Matter has reinforced his view that "legitimate social movements" can be co-opted when they

incorporate and begin to fight internally over contracts and money.

On the other hand, he said, there are groups that resist this process. "The founders of Idle No More, they didn't become the Association of Idle No More. If they had, you can imagine them glad-handing and navel-gazing in Ottawa," he said. "Unfortunately that's what's happened with the AFN."

Coburn said some regional organizations, such as the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, are "a bit more fierce" than the AFN in how they deal with the federal and provincial governments. But he said these present-day regional organizations still don't have the kind of grassroots momentum that the AFN, first known as the National Indian Brotherhood, had during the 1970s and 1980s when it travelled to Ottawa "on its own dime" to push for a place for Indigenous people in the Constitution.

Wilson said she believes political organizations such as the AFN play an important role when it comes to collective advocacy on issues such as climate change, access to clean water, housing shortages, child welfare, and more. But she said she had been reflecting on how the AFN operates after the June 28 meeting, especially in the context of her family's involvement in the early days of the organization.

Wilson's uncle, Grand Chief George Manuel, was recently honoured with a Canada Post stamp for his role in lobbying for Indigenous rights to be included in the Constitution. Wilson described travelling with her uncle

and her father, Grand Chief Joe Manuel, and with other family members to meetings in community long-houses, gymnasiums, and open-air settings for long discussions that were never cut short or resolved unilaterally.

She contrasted this willingness to keep talking until everyone had been heard with the complaints she heard from chiefs who felt rushed during the June 28 meeting. "We've had to learn to get our points across in a short time now," she said.

According to CBC News, employment lawyer Raquel Chisholm from the Ottawa-based law firm Emond Harnden, presented the June 28 online assembly with a summary of the firm's investigation into the five complaints against the national chief. Archibald and her lawyer then presented a response that reportedly accused Chisholm of furthering the regional chiefs' plan to depose her. Archibald has

previously said the full version of the report "vindicated" her.

CBC reported that several regional chiefs then reiterated their view of the seriousness of the human resource complaints, and repeated their recommendation that the chiefs in assembly vote to remove Archibald from office.

The meeting was only open to chiefs and proxies, but CBC News was able to gain access under embargo. Other media outlets, including *The Hill Times* and Indigenous broadcaster APTN, were not given access.

The meeting ended with 163 out of 231 chiefs or proxies present voting for a resolution to remove Archibald with immediate effect. There were 62 votes against and six abstentions. The successful resolution also called on the regional chiefs to choose one of their own to fill Archibald's position on an interim basis until December, when a new national chief will be elected.

The June 28 online vote was a reversal of what happened at the AFN's annual general assembly in Vancouver in July 2022, when 252 out of 322 chiefs or proxies voted in support of Archibald and against the regional chiefs' attempt to suspend her while the human resources investigation proceeded.

Archibald is from the Taykwa Tagamou Nation in Treaty 9 territory in northern Ontario. After serving as the first woman chief of her own community, she went on to be elected as deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, grand chief of the Mushkegowuk Council, and to lead the Chiefs of Ontario as Ontario regional chief.

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*The Hill Times*

## News

# NDP 'a loser' in recent byelections, should be 'very worried' about hemorrhaging support to Liberals, say political players



All five byelections since 2021 have shown the Liberals are making gains at the expense of the NDP, so party leader Jagmeet Singh, left, may want to reconsider propping up Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals going forward, says Nik Nanos, chief data scientist for Nanos Research. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Recent byelection results should make the NDP rethink their supply-and-confidence deal with the government, says Innovative Research president Greg Lyle.

Continued from page 1

will support the government on all confidence votes in the House, which could keep the Liberals in power until 2025, in return for the government making progress on key NDP priorities like dental care and pharmacare.

Both the Liberals and the NDP are left-of-centre political parties and share a similar support base. So, whenever one party's support goes up, it means bad news for the other party. This is

why in every recent election, the Liberals have called on left-wing Canadians to vote strategically for the party in order to stop the centre-right Conservatives from coming to power.

In the four byelections on June 19, the Conservatives won two—Oxford, Ont., and Portage-Lisgar, Man.—as did the Liberals: Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Que., and Winnipeg South Centre, Man. The fifth byelection took place in December 2022 in Mississauga-Lakeshore, Ont. That riding was retained by the Liberals.

The composition of the House of Commons did not change after these byelections as both parties held onto the same ridings they had held previously. The riding of Portage-Lisgar opened up after the resignation of former Conservative interim leader Candice Bergen; Winnipeg South Centre was vacated after the death of former Liberal cabinet minister Jim Carr; Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount freed up following the resignation of ex-cabinet member

Marc Garneau; and Mississauga-Lakeshore opened up after the May 2022 resignation of Liberal MP Sven Spengemann.

Former Conservative Hill staffer Branden Leslie was elected in Portage-Lisgar; Ben Carr, son of Jim Carr, in Winnipeg South Centre; ex-Tory staffer Arpan Khanna in Oxford; former Liberal Party president Anna Gainey in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount; and former Ontario Liberal finance minister Charles Sousa in Mississauga-Lakeshore.

A sixth byelection in Calgary Heritage, Alta., is scheduled for July 24. Alberta is the heartland of the Conservative Party base and its candidate, Shuv Majumdar, is expected to win the riding that was once represented by former prime minister Stephen Harper. Former Conservative MP Bob Benzen succeeded Harper after a 2017 byelection, and resigned from his seat late last year.

Former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.) has also announced his plans to step down from his seat, but as of last

week had not yet tendered his resignation.

Nanos said that these byelection results appear to be creating a winning scenario for the Liberals, where the NDP vote is going to the government to stop the Conservatives from coming to power. If the supply-and-confidence agreement continued between the two parties, the government could stay in power until 2025. But, before that, Nanos said, the New Democrats would have to withdraw their support from the Liberals and make a case to Canadians to vote for their party in the next election.

"At some point, they're going to have to decouple from the parliamentary arrangement. The NDP can't one day be part of a parliamentary arrangement, and the next day go into an election because they defeated the government or triggered the defeat of the government," said Nanos. "They'll just get absolutely crushed, because progressive voters will say, 'Well, how's it that last week you were supporting the Liberals, and this week you say we should vote for you?'"

He added that byelection results indicate that the second-tier parties like the Greens and the People's Party of Canada (PPC) are being squeezed by the Liberals and Conservatives. In the riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, a Liberal stronghold, the Greens fielded deputy leader Jonathan Pedneault as the candidate, but still came in fourth place. The second-place NDP candidate, Jean-François Filion, won 13.8 per cent, Conservative candidate Matthew Kaminski received 13.5 per cent, while Pedneault achieved 13.4 per cent.

Nanos said on progressive issues like the environment, there's a lot of competition on the left side of the political spectrum.

"If you're worried about the environment, there's a lot of options," said Nanos. "There's the Liberals who are very pro-environment, the New Democrats who are very pro-environment and the Green Party. So, there's just no space for them [the Greens] to really make any kind of breakthrough."

Similarly, Nanos said, the Portage-Lisgar byelection was bad news for the PPC, where its leader Maxime Bernier ran, but failed to win. Conservative candidate Leslie won the riding with 64.9 per cent of the votes, and Bernier came in second place with 17.1 per cent of the votes. In 2021, PPC candidate Solomon Wiebe received 21.5 per cent of the votes, which was the party's greatest vote share of any riding that year.

Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research, said the recent byelections were a chance for the NDP to convince centre-left voters to send a message to the Liberals to do more on progressive issues, but said the party had failed to achieve that. In minority governments, Lyle said, smaller parties usually lose and major parties make gains. It remains to be seen, he said, if the NDP can to make a case in the next federal election as to why Canadians should vote for them instead of the Liberals.

"They're a loser, they have no silver lining in this. In every way, they're a loser," said Lyle. "At least the Greens tied for second in NDG [Westmount], the Greens have a moral victory out of this. The NDP have no moral victory."

But Lyle cautioned that the Liberals should not get a false sense of confidence from the results as things could change in the coming months.

"The greatest risk for the Liberals is that they're going to think that the fact that they did well in the byelections meant that there was never a risk that they were going to do poorly, and, in fact, there was a large risk that they would do poorly," said Lyle. "They can't assume that the Tories won't learn the obvious lessons out of these byelections."

Dan Arnold, a former senior strategist for the Liberals in the last three federal elections, said the last five byelections have been encouraging for the government, considering the amount of time they've been in power. He said that usually when a party has been in power for this long, the appetite for change starts to play out in byelections. But based on the recent results, he said, it appeared there was not a groundswell of change in sentiment across the country. Arnold pointed out that these byelections took place in ridings that were either Liberal- or Conservative-held. If the NDP had lost any of their held ridings, it would have been a major wake-up call for the New Democrats.

"In those places where there are Liberal-Conservative races, at least NDP voters there still see the Liberals probably as the lesser of two evils," said Arnold. "I guess it'd be the less charitable way to look at it, or maybe the better option, if you want to be more positive."

NDP MP Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, B.C.) said that he was not worried about the byelection results, as national polls indicate his party has improved on its numbers compared to the last federal election numbers.

According to a recent weekly rolling poll by Nanos Research, the NDP had the support of 19.6 per cent of Canadians, whereas the Conservatives were at 34.7 per cent and the Liberals 29.4 per cent. In 2021, the NDP won 25 seats with 17.8 per cent of the votes.

MacGregor said that when he talks to people in his riding, they're satisfied with the NDP's performance in this minority government where they have made the Liberals deliver on dental care and are pushing for a pharmacare program, as well.

"We honestly don't look at it from a party perspective as to whether it's helping or hurting us," said MacGregor. "We've always gotten into this agreement because it's about whether it's helping Canadians and especially those who are struggling. That's the yardstick that we use when we're measuring the [supply-and-confidence agreement]."

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# Disaster funding, adaptation and resilience plans emerge as Canada endures worst wildfire season on record

A survey from Abacus Data and Clean Energy Canada shows many Canadians have linked this year's record wildfire season with climate change.

Continued from page 1

meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for emergency management on June 28. As of that day, 477 wildfires were burning across the country, 237 of which were out of control. Approximately eight million hectares has burned since the start of the year. Smoke from the wildfires also returned to the skies over cities such as Ottawa, Montreal, Que., and Windsor, Ont., last week.

"Much of the work among the ministers that were engaged in the conversation today is in response to these emergency events," Blair said. "But we all see the real value in the development and implementation of adaptation strategies that will first of all, reduce the impact of climate-related natural disasters, but also help build greater resiliency and reduce risk among communities and right across the country."

Greater attention to disaster resiliency was among the November 2022 recommendations of an expert advisory panel reviewing the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, which is the mechanism through which the federal government provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments after a large-scale natural disaster, making the 2023 wildfire season the worst on record.

The current guidelines, which came into effect in January 2008, are due to end on March 31, 2024.

The expert advisory panel in 2022 advised that the government consider "shifting the focus from building back after a disaster to building forward together."

Its 10 recommendations included strategically targeting funding to climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and support for vulnerable populations; the creation of an integrated disaster resilience standard; and greater capacity for risk assessment and analysis to integrate future trends, socioeconomic factors, and vulnerabilities.

A cyclist, pictured June 9, 2023, rides past the Parliament Buildings. Smoky skies returned to Ottawa last week as Canada's worst wildfire season on record continued. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



## 'There's no magic wand'

The federal government's National Adaptation Strategy, released on June 27, sets a 2025 target to complete the modernization of the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements to incentivize disaster risk reduction and improve recovery outcomes.

The document is a climate adaptation strategy intended to reduce the risks of climate change-related disasters, such as fires and floods, and build climate-resilient communities.

The strategy notes that wildfires threaten communities, infrastructure, and industry, while smoke can affect human health across the country. The strategy estimates that direct costs of combatting wildfires is approximately \$1-billion per year, and "indirect costs from property loss, industrial shutdowns, health-related expenses" and other issues were expected to rise.

The government expects that the strategy will be updated in

2030. It has allocated \$2-billion to the implementation of the strategy and other adaptation measures since fall 2022.

Other targets set in the strategy include that, by 2030, communities in zones of high risk, as identified by provinces and territories, develop wildfire community prevention and mitigation plans, with up to 15 per cent implemented by 2028. The strategy also proposes the development of a national recovery strategy by 2028, setting out shorter timeframes for displaced residents to return to their homes or resettle after a climate change-related disaster.

Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.) told reporters at a press conference in Vancouver, B.C., on June 27 that "unfortunately, when it comes to climate change, there's no magic wand, there's no solution that is going to either solve mitigation or adaptation issues overnight."



Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair met with his provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss the ongoing wildfire season last week. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

"What we're presenting today is a collective action plan so that we can get there for Canadians and for us as a country," he said in response to a question from a reporter about immediate support for those who cannot currently access cooling centres or air conditioning during heat waves. "We're not there yet, but I think with this plan, we can get there."

In the shorter term, Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) signed a memorandum of understanding with American Ambassador to Canada David Cohen on June 23 to commit to expand the mutual wildfire management systems between the two countries.

A joint press release issued on June 23 stated that the agreement between Natural Resources Canada and the United States departments of the interior and agriculture would expand mutual aid on wildfires from suppression to prevention, research, innovation, risk mitigation, and technical co-operation.

## 'Everybody has a personal story'

The strategy was released a day after a survey from think tank Clean Energy Canada found a majority of respondents linked this year's severe wildfire season to climate change.

The Abacus Data survey commissioned by Clean Energy Canada found that 68 per cent of respondents said they believed the wildfires in Western Canada, Atlantic Canada, and Quebec were at least partly due to climate

change, compared to 24 per cent who did not believe it, and eight per cent who did not know.

Respondents were also asked whether they had observed an increase in natural disasters in the past decade such as wildfires, storms, floods, and droughts, compared to those observed in previous decades, and whether they attributed such an increase to climate change. Seventy-one per cent said that "we are feeling the effects of climate change," 18 per cent had noticed an increase, but said "it's just a coincidence, not climate change," and 12 per cent had not noticed any change.

Trevor Melanson, Clean Energy Canada's communications director, told *The Hill Times* that the survey results may be due in part to climate change moving from an abstract concern to a material one in recent years.

"Even a decade ago, climate change was something you read about in the science section of the newspaper, but you didn't feel that you were feeling it yet. What's the case now is that everybody has a personal story about climate change," he said. "They can tell you about the soccer game that had to get cancelled, they can tell you about their friends who lost their home or were worried they were going to lose their home."

When asked how important it was for political parties to have a "good plan for addressing climate change and growing Canada's clean economy" at the next election, 21 per cent said it was essential for their vote, 38 per cent found it very important, and 27 per cent said it was somewhat important. Eight per cent said it was not very important, and seven per cent said it was not important.

The survey was conducted with 2,000 people between June 6-11. The margin of error for a probability-based sample of the same size is plus or minus 2.2 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Melanson said Clean Energy Canada, which is based at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, B.C., will continue to track trends among the public and its perception of climate change. He said the shifting attitudes will have implications for federal parties at future elections.

"The other thing we see is that people were actually pretty skeptical of parties and governments [and whether] they're doing enough," he said. "Sometimes it's lack of awareness of what's happening, but you do see it correlate with how much those parties are messaging around this and actually implementing real policies."

Melanson said there were risks for the Conservatives in swing ridings if they continued with a platform of removing the federal carbon tax.

"In areas where they need to win — these critical suburban swing ridings where people do care about this issue — they could suffer," he said. "This is a fundamental issue for people, and something that needs to be met in a meaningful way."

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## Opinion

# Dear Ottawa: pick a lane on climate and hit the accelerator



Project Arrow, a zero-emission concept vehicle, on display outside West Block on June 14. Since Canadian governments are afraid to impose production cuts, perhaps they should concentrate instead on diminishing consumer demand for fossil fuel products, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Progress on building the charging network has been slow, uneven, unpredictable: a trickle charge when fast-chargers are urgently needed. The feds provided \$18-million to British Columbia in February for 2,500 more chargers; Nova Scotia, we learn, is adding eight; and the Ontario government boasts of 20 fast chargers at Onroute stops along highways 401 and 400.

Twenty. Along the busiest traffic corridor in the country.

As EV drivers will attest, public chargers are not always reliable or maintained, and large parts of the country remain unserved. There are, according to federal websites, currently 200,000 chargers at 8,700 locations; by comparison, there are some 12,000 gas stations. But, by some measures, Canada will need at least 900,000 chargers by 2050, if that famous net-zero pledge is to be met.

The private sector is gearing up, and Tesla—noted for its well-managed existing network of 12,000 chargers around North America—just announced agreements with Ford, GM, Volvo and others to share its facilities in its bid to become the North American industry standard. Tesla CEO Elon Musk aside, EV drivers can only wish them success.

At the same time, Telus is installing 5,000 public fast chargers across the country in collaboration with Australian firm Jolt. Chevron stations between Vancouver Island and Calgary will soon offer 50 new EV chargers. And IKEA, which has charging stations in all 14 Canadian stores, is adding 25 more in Ontario and Quebec with federal assistance.

But there are still large gaps. Some provinces and cities, especially in British Columbia, now require EV ports in new or redeveloped condos, apartment buildings and townhouses. They should also be a requirement at all major shopping malls, cinema complexes, community centres, downtown parking lots and behind, or near, older rental units. But the national building code, which is supposed to be a model for provincial codes, is silent on the issue and won't be updated until 2025.

According to experts, EV sales need to grow by more than 200 per cent to meet the federal targets between 2026-2030. That won't happen without a massive, organized, sustained investment in reliable charging stations in every hamlet, and every condo, in the country.

You'd expect the federal government to lead this effort. But, distracted and over-committed, it appears willing to abdicate the climate file to forces beyond our borders: the Biden government in the U.S. with its massive new climate spending, or an oil industry nervously eying the exits, given the industry's uncertain future.

But, by all means, keep churning out those lofty plans, Ottawa: even if they are outdated before the ink is dry.

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

*The Hill Times*

What the climate emergency demands is the same single-minded focus and dispatch that the federal government brought to its pandemic response.

Susan Riley

*Impolitic*



Continued from page 1

2009, because it is complicated to define “subsidy,” after all, never mind “inefficient” subsidies. By the time the federal government and industry agree on terms, the entire country could be burned to a crisp.

Meanwhile, last week we got the national climate resilience and adaptation strategy, both a confession of defeat and another list of targets, deadlines, and painstaking statements of the obvious.

“We all recognize Canada is not ready to face the impacts of climate change,” federal Environ-

ment Minister Steven Guilbeault acknowledged recently. (Whose fault that is, he didn't say.) One proposed goal: to “prevent heat-related deaths in 80 per cent of health regions by 2026 and eliminate them by 2040.” Those leisurely time-lines don't exactly scream, “we're on it!” Does it really take that long to set up more cooling centres?

And the biggest heresy of all: forget the 2015 Paris targets and those predictably disappointing American climate conferences, in which all the parties agree to do as little as possible and usually end up doing even less. Maybe don't forget them entirely, as it is worth sending delegations, if only to allow bureaucrats and academics to learn firsthand the latest devastating news.

All these measures—the meat-and-potatoes of “official” climate response and media coverage—are too little, too late. They are, in some cases, stalling tactics; in others, belated attempts to allay mounting public concern about the inescapable and various environmental catastrophes we are living through.

The situation is urgent; the pace of Canadian governments' action, languid. What the emergency demands is the same single-minded focus and dispatch that Ottawa brought to its pandemic response. A lot of government money has been pledged in the climate fight, but it is so widely dispersed that it has had little discernible impact.

It should be clear by now that “Big Oil” runs climate policy in this country, while governments (federal, provincial, municipal, Indigenous) try plaintively to persuade the industry to stop killing ducks, or poisoning Indigenous lands and water, or moving their head offices to Denver or Houston. The only thing that is going to slow—if not stop—the production of oil and gas, and the greenhouse gas emissions that are killing this planet is market forces: specifically, a withering of demand for the product.

It is beginning to happen, thanks largely to the efforts of European and other governments, persistent pressure from environmental groups, and the growth of clean, and affordable, energy alternatives. But Canada, with its vast fossil fuel reserves, is a conspicuous laggard.

So, since Canadian governments are afraid to impose production cuts—afraid of the loss of jobs, revenues and political blowback—why not concentrate, instead, on diminishing consumer demand for fossil fuel products, starting with gasoline? Transportation, after all, accounts for 25 per cent of our national emissions, only slightly less than the oil sands at 30 per cent. That means getting the majority of car drivers into electric vehicles, accelerating the transformation of commercial vehicles to non-fossil fuels, and doing it yesterday.

Canada does have ambitious goals: 20 per cent of cars

sold by 2026 are supposed to be zero-emission; that jumps to 60 per cent by 2030, and 100 per cent by 2035. But today, at least, these targets look ridiculously unreachable.

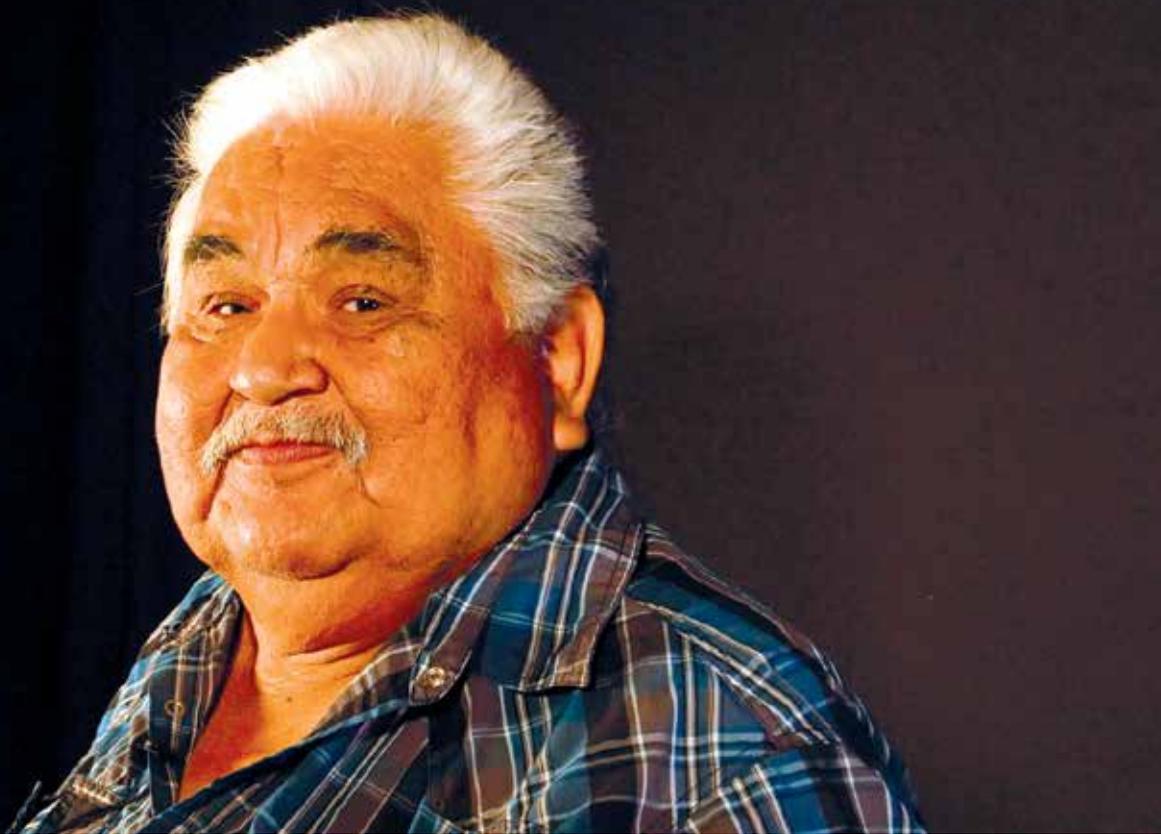
Consider the distance to be travelled: national electric vehicle (EV) sales amounted to 6.9 per cent of total new vehicles purchased in the first quarter of 2023, a slight decline from 8.4 per cent in the last quarter. British Columbia continued to lead with 19.7 per cent of new cars sold, followed by Quebec at 14.4 per cent. The laggard was Ontario—inconveniently, the most populous province—where EV take-up was only 6.2 per cent.

Why? Because the Ford government was a late convert to electrification, but also because of an incomplete and unreliable network of public EV chargers. That, and the usual problem of a loose federation of 10 squawking provinces sharing one nest, making a seamless drive from Victoria to St. John's in an all-electric vehicle very challenging, if not impossible.

But some will say: isn't the federal government investing \$1.2-billion to build 84,500 charging stations by 2027, with funding for specific projects, announced almost monthly? Yes, but what message does that send would-be purchasers? Wait a few years. Don't buy yet, even as car manufacturers produce more EVs every season, with some 50 models now available domestically.

Former elected chief of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Paddy Walkus: 'Our values and teachings are based on our sacred connection to our lands and waters, those traditional lands that we were forcibly removed from. Now we are rebuilding our people's future upon those values and teachings and that sacred connection.'

Handout photograph



# Why the Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people give life and meaning to the word 'resilience'

This is a story of defiance of seemingly impossible odds and of overcoming the worst of human experiences, of courage, resilience, and determination. It is a story of the triumph of culture over colonization, hope over great hardship, and love over immense loss.

Katherine Palmer Gordon

Opinion



Accessible only by water, Takush Harbour, in remote Smith Inlet, lies 60-odd kilometres northeast of Port Hardy, B.C., and as the raven flies some 390 kilometres northwest of Vancouver. In 1950, Paddy Walkus was born in the tiny Gwa'sala village of T'akus, nestled on the sheltered shores of Takush Harbour.

The baby's arrival was celebrated in T'akus in the Bak'wamk'ala dialect of Gwa'cala, the language of the Gwa'sala people. His first solid foods included a wholesome array of both fresh and cured fish and shellfish, deer meat, wild greens, berries, and other delicacies harvested from the ocean and islands surrounding the village. As a little boy, Paddy helped his family with the typical tasks assigned to youngsters, like fetching wood for the cookstove. He had plenty of time, all the same, to enjoy simple youthful adventures in the sublimely

beautiful forests and waterways around T'akus.

As he grew older, Paddy learned from his Elders about his heritage, his sacred connection to his Gwa'sala homelands and the beautiful ancestral way of life Gwa'sala people had enjoyed since time immemorial. He attended events in the much-loved community *gukwdzi* (big house). His was a childhood, he recalls fondly nearly seven decades later, full of joy and surrounded by unbounded love. "We were always happy and so in tune with nature. When I look back to those years, I realize how fruitful and loving

our lives were. Even as children we had jobs to do, but that was natural, too. We accepted that as part of our daily life. We packed water to the house. If my mother asked us to get some fish, we knew where to go and how many we were allowed to catch."

That was something the Elders had taught him and his young friends. "They educated us about what was important and our values as Gwa'sala people. They told us we must always take care of each other and the homelands. They taught us we must sustain our resources. My grandfather told me, 'you must recognize how important the fish, the animals, and the trees are to us all'. He said we must acknowledge these gifts, not exploit them. I remember that so clearly. They knew you can't just take everything you want. This kind of teaching," reflects Paddy, "has kept us strong with the values that our old people passed on to us. It is part of our culture and our way of life and our laws. It is a system that has existed for thousands of years. We did our part, even as children, to carry those values within us in everything we did."

Not far from T'akus was an equally remote village called Ba'as, in Smith Inlet's Blunden Harbour. The people of the 'Nakwaxda'xw Nation from Ba'as speak a different dialect of Bak'wamk'ala, called Nak'wala. Although they practise similar cultural and social protocols, the 'Nakwaxda'xw and the Gwa'sala have always been two related, but distinctly individual Indigenous Peoples.

What they have in common is that each nation has followed those protocols with remarkable determination. They have remained strong despite the devastation wrought by the diseases settlers carried with them; despite

the occupation and ravaging of their territories by commercial fishing, mining, and logging; despite the hijacking of their rights to govern their vast territories and being confined by the federal government to a handful of tiny Indian reserves; despite having so many of their human rights denied. Worst of all was the theft of their children, taken away forcibly to residential schools, where many were subjected to horrific abuse.

It's difficult to imagine the depth of hardship of that time for Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people. What Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people could not have imagined as the 1960s dawned was that things could get even worse. The Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw were about to embark upon a grim journey in the course of which, on top of everything else they had already been through, they would suffer the loss of their ancestral homes and forced removal from their beloved homelands. Subsequent decades of despair, disease, and darkness would threaten to wipe them completely out of existence by the turn of the 21st century.

The Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw people, however, give life and meaning to the word "resilience." Ultimately—because of Elders who tenaciously clung to the values that Paddy was taught as a child, of visionary leadership, and a community of people determined to reclaim what was always rightfully theirs—the journey would eventually become one of transformation and rebuilding. It would become a passage into a new era of cultural reconnection, optimism, prosperity and hope for the 21st century descendants of the two Nations. Despite how impossible it once had seemed, the Gwa'sala and the Nakwaxda'xw are now on a firm pathway toward independence and well-being. They are once again becoming culturally whole, working toward control of their destiny, and exercising their age-old rights of self-governance in caring for their ancient homelands to sustain future generations.

This is a story of defiance of seemingly impossible odds and of overcoming the worst of human experiences. It is a story of courage, strength, resilience, and determination. Above all, it is a story of the triumph of culture over colonization, hope over great hardship, and love over immense loss.

"Our values and teachings are based on our sacred connection to our lands and waters, those traditional lands that we were forcibly removed from. Now we are rebuilding our people's future upon those values and teachings and that sacred connection." — Paddy Walkus, former Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw chief councillor, September 2020

Excerpted from *This Place Is Who We Are: Stories of Indigenous Leadership, Resilience, and Connection to Homelands*, by Katherine Palmer Gordon, copyright 2022. Reproduced with permission from Harbour Publishing. *The Hill Times*



Laura Ryczewaert  
**Hill Climbers**

# Allie Chalke leaves PMO to run Rural Economic Development Minister Hutchings' office



Rural Economic Development Minister Gudie Hutchings, pictured on the Hill, has a new chief of staff, Allie Chalke. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

There are a few recent staff departures from the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office to report, including that of photographer Alex Tétreault.

Rural Economic Development Minister **Gudie Hutchings** has a new chief of staff, with **Allie Chalke** arriving straight from Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office to take charge of the minister's team as of June 26.

Until recently, Chalke had been busy as deputy director of policy in the PMO since February 2022.

She's been working for the Trudeau Liberal government since the early days of its first mandate, starting as a special assistant for the Atlantic to then-finance minister **Bill Morneau**. Chalke had spent the 2015 federal election working on now-former New Brunswick Liberal MP **Matt DeCourcey**'s successful campaign, after which she lent a hand to the Liberal Party in Newfoundland and Labrador during the province's November 2015 election. By the start of 2018, she'd been promoted to policy adviser in Morneau's finance office, later adding "senior" to her title.

Chalke isn't new to the rural economic development file. At the beginning of February 2019, she left Morneau's office to become director of policy to then-rural economic development minister **Bernadette Jordan**. Jordan was shuffled into the fisheries and oceans portfolio following the October 2019 federal election, bringing Chalke along with her to continue serving as her director of policy.

Chalke worked for Jordan until the spring of 2021, when she left to join the

PMO as a senior policy adviser. She was made deputy director in early 2022 during a shake-up to the PMO policy team precipitated by now-former PMO policy head **Marci Surkes**' exit from the Hill.

No one has yet been hired or promoted to the role of deputy policy director in the PMO. **Sarah Hussaini** is now head of policy to Trudeau, having replaced **John Brodhead**—who remains in the top office as a senior adviser to the PM—in May, as previously reported.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with reporters outside the House of Commons Chamber in the West Block before Question Period on June 20. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Hutchings has been without a permanent chief of staff since **Alex Howell**'s departure from the Hill in early May. Since then, director of policy and programming **Kendra Wilcox** has been acting chief to the rural economic development minister.

Chalke's exit isn't the only recent staff departure from the PMO policy shop. With the start of the summer recess, senior policy adviser **Laura LeBel** marked her last day in the top office on June 26, and policy adviser **Nathalie Gahimbare** did the same on June 28.



Senior policy adviser Laura LeBel has left the PMO. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Nathalie Gahimbare marked her last day in the PMO on June 28. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

A former aide to now-former Quebec Senator **Charlie Watt**, LeBel started her journey as a parliamentary staffer in the Senate in 2013. She moved over to the House side of things in January 2016 when she landed a job as a senior special assistant for parliamentary affairs and operations to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**. A year later, LeBel was promoted to director of policy to Gould, and a year after that, she moved over to then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister **Ralph Goodale**'s office, where she worked as a senior policy and parliamentary affairs adviser until the end of 2019, when she joined the PMO.

Gahimbare had been working in the PMO since the spring of 2018. A former constituency assistant to now-Tourism Minister **Randy Boissonnault** as the Liberal MP for Edmonton Centre, Alta., she first joined the top office as a special assistant for appointments. She switched over the PMO outreach team in early 2020, and roughly a year later in 2021, she switched units again, this time joining the policy team as an adviser.

**Hill Climbers** understands Gahimbare is set to join the private sector.

In other office news, photographer **Alex Tétreault** left Trudeau's office as of June 23.

Tétreault had been shooting for the prime minister (alongside lead photographer **Adam Scotti**) since January 2019. Before then, he was busy as a photographer for the National Observer, through which he was a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, and as owner of A.I.T Photography.

**Katie Telford** is PMO chief of staff.  
lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
*The Hill Times*

Parliamentary Calendar



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured July 10, 2022, at the Calgary Stampede. Photograph courtesy of Twitter/PM

# Calgary Stampede happening July 7–July 16

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](mailto:news@hilltimes.com) by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

**MONDAY, JULY 3**

**House Not Sitting**—The House has adjourned for the summer and is on break for 12 weeks. It will resume sitting again 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. 13-17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15). It's scheduled to return on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024.

**THURSDAY, JULY 6—FRIDAY, JULY 7**

**Seminar: 'Rethinking Democracy Today'**—The Balsillie School for

International Affairs hosts a two-day virtual research seminar, "Rethinking Democracy Today: Ideas, Cases, Perspectives," from July 6-7. Theorists, comparative and empirical scholars, and international relations researchers from the Warwick and Balsillie schools will discuss democratic theory, challenging case studies around questions of democracy, and debate over diverse perspectives on democracy. Details at [balisillieschool.ca](http://balisillieschool.ca).

**FRIDAY, JULY 7—SUNDAY, JULY 16**

**Calgary Stampede**—Politicians from all political stripes will likely be attending the 2023 Calgary Stampede from Friday, July 7 to Sunday, July 16. Details: [calgarystampede.com](http://calgarystampede.com).

**FRIDAY, JULY 7—SUNDAY, JULY 30**

**Theatre: Affairs of State**—The Classic Theatre Festival and *The Hill Times* present Louis Verneuil's *Affairs of State*, a rediscovered post-Second World War comedic gem that originally ran two years on Broadway. This funny, intriguing story about diplomatic deals and double-crosses behind closed doors in Washington, D.C., features a memorable love quadrangle that threatens the appointment of a new under-secretary of state. Revisit an age when satirical comedies were smart, sassy, insightful, and fun, with all the wit and charm of the Turner Classic Movies era. Eight shows a week. *Hill Times* readers enjoy 20 per cent discount tickets with the HTAF code. Arts

Court Theatre, 2 Daly Ave., Ottawa. For information, [classictheatre.ca](http://classictheatre.ca), 613-695-9330.

**MONDAY, JULY 10**

**Chamber Stampede Reception**—The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, together with Parkland Corporation, is hosting a reception at this year's Calgary Stampede. Largely recognized as one of Canada's largest business and political networking events, we are proud to host this evening and invite folks to come connect with the Canadian business community alongside us. Monday, July 10, 3:30-7:30 p.m. MT at the Palomino Smokehouse, Calgary. RSVP: Gabriel Marquez at [gmarquez@chamber.ca](mailto:gmarquez@chamber.ca). Visit [chamber.ca](http://chamber.ca).

**MONDAY, JULY 10—WEDNESDAY, JULY 12**

**Premiers' Summer Meeting**—Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson, chair of the Council of the Federation, will host the 2023 summer meeting of Canada's premiers. Monday, July 10, to Wednesday, July 12, at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg. Details: [canadaspremiers.ca](http://canadaspremiers.ca).

**TUESDAY, JULY 11—THURSDAY, JULY 13**

**Assembly of First Nations AGM**—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its 44th Annual General Assembly. Tuesday, July 11 to Thursday, July 13 at the Halifax Convention Centre, 1650 Argyle St. Details: [afn.ca](http://afn.ca).

**FRIDAY, JULY 14**

**U.S. Ambassador to Deliver Remarks**—U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen will take part in a fireside chat hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Friday, July 14, at 11:30 a.m. AT at the Westin Nova Scotian, 1181 Hollis St. Details: [business.halifaxchamber.com](http://business.halifaxchamber.com).

**SUNDAY, JULY 16**

**Sen. Richards to Deliver Remarks**—CSG Senator David Richards will deliver remarks at the Summerfest Speaker Series. An acclaimed Canadian novelist, essayist, screenwriter and poet, Rich-

ards' commitment to the Miramichi River valley, his province, and the country is reflected in his body of work. Sunday, July 16 at 1:30 p.m. ET in the Horticulture Building, 1525 Princess Patricia Way, Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

**MONDAY, JULY 24**

**Byelection in Calgary**—A federal byelection will be held in the electoral district of Calgary Heritage, Alta.

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 7—SATURDAY, SEPT. 9**

**Conservative Policy Convention**—The Conservative Party of Canada is holding its policy convention Sept. 7-9 in Québec City. Party members will be voting on party policy, training for the next election, and will hear from conservative speakers. Registrations opens at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 7. The opening ceremonies are from 7-9 p.m. on Sept. 7, and the hospitality suites will happen later that night, from 9 p.m.-12 a.m. For more information on hotels, flights, and more, go to the Conservative Party's website.

**MONDAY, SEPT. 18**

**House Resumes Sitting**—The House will resume sitting again 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. 13-17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15). It's scheduled to return on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024.

**FRIDAY, OCT. 13—SUNDAY, OCT. 15**

**Federal NDP Policy Convention**—The federal New Democrats are holding a national policy convention from Friday, Oct. 13 to Sunday, Oct. 15, in Hamilton, Ont. It will be the party's largest gathering in more than three years. More information is here: <https://convention.ndp.ca>

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# Inside Ottawa 2023

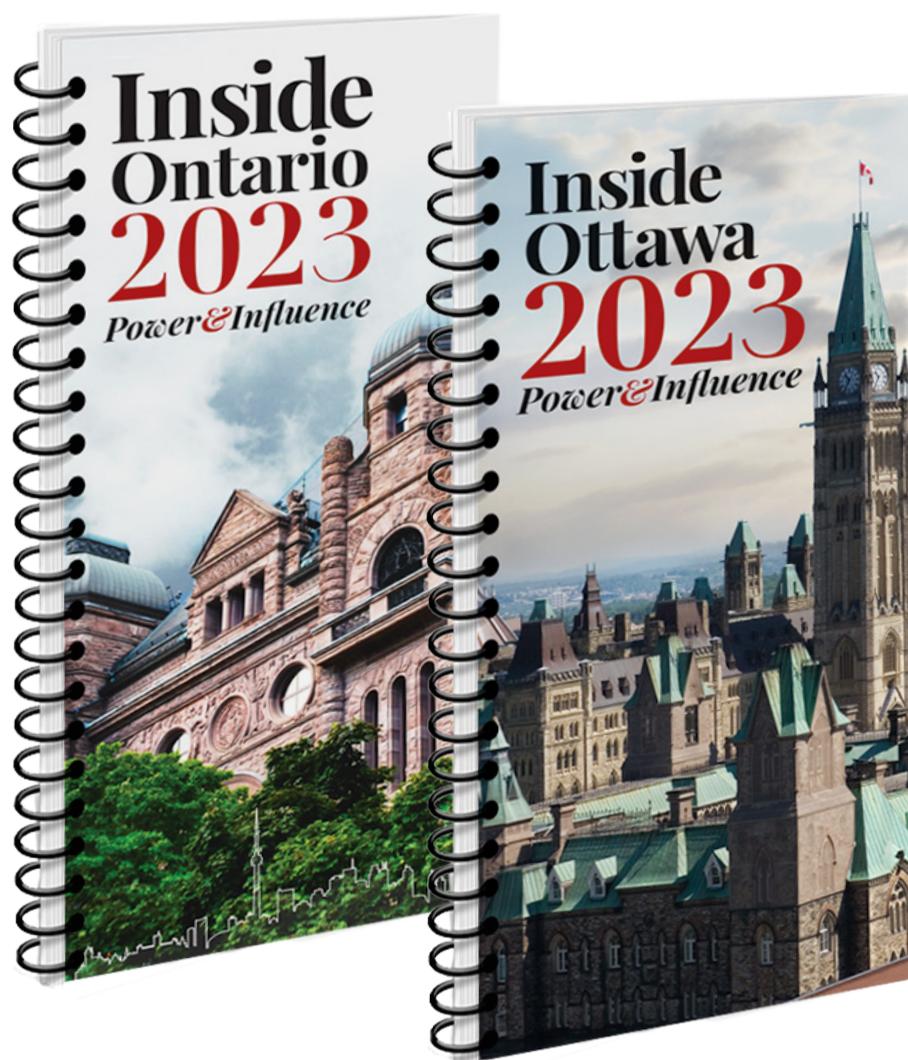
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- Cabinet minister offices and their key political staff contacts
- Party roles, ministers and critics
- Opposition contacts
- Agencies of Parliament
- Media contacts
- Committee members and clerks
- Sitting calendar for 2023
- Seat breakdown

### This year's Ottawa guide includes:

- MP profiles with current photos, Hill and constituency contact info, and riding details from latest census
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- List of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and opposition critics
- 2023 sitting calendars for House and Senate



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