

Hazy roadmap for fixing interpreter issues



No REIT re-evaluation



Ken Rubin: CBSA under the microscope



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THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Foreign influence registry's lack of legal carve-out undermines 'sacred' relationship, say lawyers

BY STUART BENSON

The proposed foreign influence registry is raising concerns amongst Canada's legal community over its lack of exemptions for solicitors providing legal advice and representation to foreign clients—a deviation from similar western allies that lawyers say could lead to a “slippery slope” undermining a “sacred” relationship that underpins Canada's justice system.

On May 6, Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) introduced Bill C-70, the Countering Foreign Interference Act, in the House of Commons.

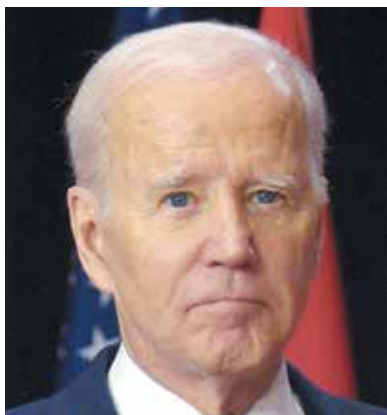
Alongside amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Act, the Security of Information Act, the Canada Evidence Act, and the Criminal Code, the bill also proposes a new Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, which would create a foreign agents registry to be administered by an independent transparency commissioner.

Those working for foreign powers, economic entities, or states would be required to register if they are undertaking influence activities under foreign

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NEWS

As Canada preps for U.S. election, parliamentarians bring Ukrainian pitch to Capitol Hill



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, centre, travelled south of the border to give an address in Philadelphia on May 21, five months before American voters decide if U.S. President Joe Biden, left, or former commander-in-chief Donald Trump will get another four years in the White House. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade and photograph courtesy of Gage Skidmore

BY NEIL MOSS

With less than half a year before the looming American presidential election, a group of Canadian parliamentarians took their lobbying act to Capitol Hill where they ended up pushing skeptical Republican lawmakers on the virtues of backing Ukraine's war efforts.

Eight MPs and Senators on the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary

Group (IPG) held a number of meetings with American lawmakers across the partisan divide in Washington, D.C., from May 15-16.

The trip comes as the government's “Team Canada” United States engagement efforts kick into high gear, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) in Philadelphia on May 21 addressing the Service Employees International Union's North

American convention. Trudeau's trip follows that of a handful of ministers trekking across America to highlight Canada-U.S. links. In January, Trudeau announced the relaunch of the U.S. engagement effort that the government deployed during the NAFTA renegotiations.

The Nov. 5 presidential election brings the prospect of

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NEWS

BOIE approves new security funding, expanded MP-protection programs

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The House of Commons' executive governing body recently approved new funding to support security programs for both the Hill and MPs as individuals, and agreed to expand and make permanent security programs aimed at helping protect MPs when they're away from the Parliamentary Precinct and the watchful eyes of the Parliamentary Protective Service.

The new funding and policy changes were both approved during the in-camera portion of the House Board of Internal Economy's (BOIE) April 11 meeting, and noted in subsequent meeting minutes made public earlier this month.

Specifically, the all-party BOIE has made permanent an expanded version of the off-precinct security pilot program it originally approved in November 2022. During the pilot phase, the program enabled MPs who were hosting events related to their parliamentary duties outside of the Parliamentary Precinct to charge up to \$600 in security costs to their Members' Office Budgets (MOB), with any costs above that limit charged to the House of Commons' central budget.

Previously, as part of this pilot, MPs had to request an exception

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Diplomats and political strategists warm up for annual Ottawa Race Weekend



Lithuanian Ambassador Darius Skusevičius, pictured at one of the eight marathons he's run while in Canada, will be joining other diplomats and political types at the Ottawa Race Weekend on May 25-26. Photograph courtesy of Darius Skusevičius

From May 25-26, Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend will close dozens of roads to vehicular traffic as thousands of runners from near and far descend on the capital for six different road races of varying lengths covering scenic routes in and around downtown. For most Ottawans, the weekend is one of traffic jams and detours, but for thousands of others, it's a celebration of months of hard work and training to achieve a personal fitness goal.

"I like the course, I like the people, I like running in Ottawa in general," Lithuania's Ambassador to Canada **Darius Skusevičius** explained when **Heard on the Hill** recently asked about the upcoming event.

Skusevičius will be taking part in the full marathon on May 26, his fifth such race in Ottawa since he was first posted here in 2019. And it will be a special, farewell run for him, as Skusevičius will be leaving Ottawa at the end of the year.

"This is very symbolic and meaningful if you are a runner, to run a marathon in the capital of the country you are posted to," said Skusevičius, who is just one of dozens of diplomats who are running this weekend.

He confirmed that Swiss ambassador **Olaf Kjelsen** will join him in the marathon, Polish Ambassador **Witold Dzielski** and his wife **Anna Maria Dzielska** will run the 10 kilometre race, and Hungarian Ambassador **Mária Vass-Salazar** is registered for the 5 km event. He noted that diplomats representing Estonia,

Germany, Mexico, Israel, and the United States will also be lacing up their running shoes for various races that weekend.

HOH—who will be lacing up for the half-marathon herself—also caught up with a trio of runners from Summa Strategies who are similarly preparing for the race weekend.

Tim Powers and **Rhys Dumond** have both run the race weekend before, but are each doing a new challenge this year. Dumond is upgrading from a half-marathon to his first full-length marathon on May 26, while Powers is doing a sample platter of sorts.

"I am registered and doing the 36 km challenge," said Powers, which he explained involves running the 5 km and 10 km races on Saturday, and then the 21 km half-marathon on Sunday. The former Conservative staffer said he started training in February as a precursor to a race he will be doing in June in his home province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Their colleague **Josie Sabatino** is a race weekend veteran who will be running her third half-marathon on Sunday.

"I've been running since I moved to Ottawa in 2013," she told HOH last week. "It was an affordable way to get exercise when I started out as a staffer on the Hill, and now it's a great way to unplug from technology," said Sabatino, also a former Tory staffer.

Dumond noted "the energy is always next level at Race Week-

end, so I'm most excited for that. I've heard the phrase, 'the training is the marathon, race day is the celebration'."

"Race weekend brings out to the very best in the Ottawa community," said Sabatino. "From fellow runners, to the volunteers and neighbours taking in the event, it's a really positive event that we should all be proud of."

Powers says he is looking forward to "seeing my son's smile when crossing the finish line and then having him say 'Dada, why were you so slow?'"

Toronto–St. Paul's byelection date set

Think the political excitement will end when the House calendar runs its course on June 21? Think again. Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** announced on May 19 that the party will continue with a byelection in Toronto–St. Paul's, Ont., on June 24.

The riding has been vacant since Jan. 16, when longtime Liberal MP and cabinet minister **Carolyn Bennett** stepped down from her role. Bennett is now Canada's ambassador to Denmark.

Toronto–St. Paul's has been in Liberal hands since 1993. Running to fill Bennett's Grit shoes is former Liberal chief of staff **Leslie Church**. Financial professional **Don Stewart** is running for the Conservatives, while the NDP have put up non-profit director **Amrit Parhar**.

Advance voting days will be from June 14-17.

Voting open for *Hill Times'* annual staffers survey

Will the prime minister's chief of staff **Katie Telford** and Liberal staffers **Jeff Jedras** and **Wendy Wu** defend their titles as the triumvirate of top terrificness?

Only you can decide.

The Hill Times' annual Terrific 25 Staffers survey awaits your input.

For the next two weeks, the bilingual poll is live at hilltimes.com, and eager to hear from Hill-lites about which political staffer is the best at their job.

Categories include which staffer is the most knowledgeable, influential, or discreet. Who is the best at controlling spin? Who has the best access to the powers that be? And—as it says on the tin—which staff member is just all-round gosh-darn terrific.

There are also categories for each political party, and for Hill versus constituency staff.

Powered by Form Research, *The Hill Times'* Terrific 25 Staffers Survey closes at 5 p.m. ET on June 5. The results of the survey are expected to be published later that month. Visit hilltimes.com to take the survey.

Michael Ignatieff receives Spanish prize



Former Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff has been given Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences. *The Hill Times* file photograph

Three days after his 77th birthday, former Liberal leader **Michael Ignatieff** was granted the 2024 Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences, the Embassy of Spain announced on May 15.

Jesús García Calero, a member of the jury for the 2024 Princess of Asturias Award for Literature, nominated the Canadian academic and essayist, according to a press release. A total of 36 candidates from 17 different nationalities were put forward for the Social Sciences Award.

The award will be presented in October "in a solemn ceremony" presided over by the Spanish royal family. Each Princess of Asturias Award comprises a **Joan Miró** sculpture symbolizing the award, a diploma, an insignia, and a cash prize of 50,000 euros.

Creeson Agecutay joins APTN's midday news show



Formerly of CTV, Creeson Agecutay is the new host of APTN's noon-hour newscast. Photograph courtesy of Creeson Agecutay's X account

Creeson Agecutay is the new host of APTN National News' midday show based in Winnipeg.

"Winnipeg is me and my family's new home and we are already loving it here," the journalist announced on X on May 15, posting a photo of himself behind the APTN news desk.

"I took this photo on Jan. 20, 2022, while visiting Winnipeg and it felt like I was going to sit here one day, I just didn't know when," said Agecutay, who most recently was reporting for CTV, and spent roughly a year and a half in the network's parliamentary bureau starting in the fall of 2020.

Congratulations poured in for Agecutay from well-wishers including executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada **Cindy Blackstock**, **Annie Bergeron-Oliver** with CTV News' parliamentary bureau, and the Canadian Press' **Alessia Passafiume**.

Originally from the Cowessess First Nation on Treaty 4 Territory in Saskatchewan, Agecutay graduated from the University of Regina's School of Journalism.

Jamming lineup for July 1 announced

Heritage Minister **Pascale St-Onge** announced the musical headliners scheduled to perform on Canada Day in Ottawa.

As has been the case during the past few years of construction on Parliament Hill, the Canada Day festivities will be held at LeBreton Flats Park.

In alphabetical order, performers include **Chromeo**, **Corneille**, **FouKi**, **Kanen**, **Kiesza**, **Maestro Fresh Wes**, **Metric**, **Neon Dreams**, **Qattuu**, **Sara Dufour**, and **Willow**. **Isabelle Racicot** will be the host.

A more fulsome lineup of activities and events for July 1 will be published on May 30.

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News

New funds for Translation Bureau largely aimed at existing efforts to tackle federal interpretation shortfall

Interpretation capacity issues already brewing pre-pandemic have constrained parliamentary work since the shift to hybrid work following the onset of COVID-19.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

This spring's budget included more than \$35-million in funding for the federal Translation Bureau with the stated aim of helping it boost interpretation capacity and establish a scholarship program, but there's little new in the details for how it hopes to do so.

Already coming under strain amid a global shortage of qualified interpreters prior to the pandemic, the Translation Bureau has grappled with an interpreter shortfall since the shift to hybrid parliamentary proceedings prompted by COVID-19 put added pressure on the workforce. Higher levels of virtual participation led to increased reports of injuries. This caused available interpretation hours to dwindle due to both medical leaves and measures introduced to try to protect the workforce, such as reducing shift hours, and increasing the number of interpreters required per shift.

Interpretation capacity issues have put constraints on parliamentary work, and while there are now fewer reports of House or Senate committee meeting cancellations as a result of a lack of available interpretation resources, parliamentary work continues to be affected.

With a hard line now drawn on the finite number of available interpretation hours, late-night House sittings can eat up available capacity, and some parliamentary meetings—like those of regional caucuses or special interest groups—have been starved of interpretation resources as a result. Last fall, the House of Commons began phasing in use of remote simultaneous interpretation, which enables interpreters to work from outside the National Capital Region, and was estimat-



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, right, pose with copies of the 2024 federal budget in the House of Commons foyer on April 16. The budget included more than \$35-million for the Translation Bureau. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ed to add capacity for eight new events per week, up from 57, or an additional 16 hours of interpretation services, up from 160.

While the Senate has returned to fully in-person proceedings, the House is now a permanently hybrid institution.

But beyond the added layers of risk posed by interpreting virtual participants, injuries can still occur in person, as seen in April when an interpreter covering the House Foreign Affairs Committee suffered what's been described as a "significant hearing injury" from feedback caused by an earpiece device getting too close to a microphone in the committee room, known as the Larsen effect. As reported by the Canadian Press, the interpreter went on leave as a result of the injury, and the incident led to a federal Labour Program order calling for changes to how meeting rooms are oriented. In response, stickers have been added to committee rooms to guide MPs on where to place earpieces, and House Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.) issued a new memo to MPs regarding use of microphones and earpieces.

Injuries aside, the bureau's interpretation workforce is

aging, and there aren't enough qualified new graduates each year to keep up with attrition. Last year, the then-head of the bureau warned MPs that there's "no miracle recipe to solve" the interpretation shortage.

Nonetheless, the 2024 federal budget tabled by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) on April 16 committed new funds for the bureau, recognizing that "[l]abour shortages and resource constraints have strained translation services, putting Canadians' ability to engage in democracy at risk."

Specifically, the budget outlined \$31.9-million in new funding over five years starting in

2024-25, and \$3-million annually going forward, for the Translation Bureau overseen by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to "expand translation and interpretation capacity in Parliament and uphold Official Languages Act requirements." Additionally, it committed \$1.1-million over five years starting in 2024-25, and \$200,000 annually going forward, for PSPC to "establish a scholarship program" to help "train the next generation of official language interpreters," noting funds for the program will be reallocated from within "the department's existing resources."

Asked about both funding envelopes, few new details were available.

The bureau got temporary funding in 2021-22 to help support a hybrid Parliament, and in an email response PSPC said the new funding "acknowledges that Parliament will remain hybrid and temporary funding levels must be extended to support this." In 2021, the bureau was allocated \$18-million over two years to help support a hybrid Parliament, \$5-million of which was later "reprofiled" and spent in 2023-24.

Extra funding is needed in supporting a hybrid Parliament because the reduction of shift hours to try to protect interpreters means "more interpreters are required to cover" meetings, incurring higher costs, PSPC said. On top of that, PSPC noted freelance interpreters—who currently cover roughly 40 per cent of the bureau's workload—"have increased their rates in recent years." The department has also commissioned a number of expert studies to try to better understand the risks facing interpreters.

This year, the bureau is expecting reports commissioned from Western University on "the perceived quality of sound at the House of Commons"; from Laval University on the "quantity of sound" being received by Hill interpreters; and a final report from the University of Ottawa "on the evolution of interpreter hearing health over two years."

"Further studies will depend on the inquiry lines suggested by the authors of these latest studies, and other investigations that might be deemed appropriate to support interpreter health and safety," said PSPC.

The more than \$30-million in new funding will also "be used to continue the provision of translation services," and to "ensure continued support to various capacity initiatives for interpretation implemented by the Translation Bureau," added PSPC, pointing to a statement from last fall outlining work it had done to date to try to boost capacity. That list includes existing partnership agreements signed with the only two universities in Canada currently offering a master's degrees in conference interpretation—the University of Ottawa and York University in Toronto—and efforts to engage other universities about offering an interpretation program of their own. As also noted in the statement, the bureau increased the frequency of its accreditation exam to two times per year, and it continues to extend job offers to all new qualified graduates, and "explore recruitment opportunities abroad."

As for the scholarship program, its development is still in the early stages, but PSPC said the bureau will implement it "as soon as possible in co-operation with the academic sector and other federal organizations."

"Discussions are beginning with potential interdepartmental partners towards the program. An implementation plan is expected to be in place in the coming months."

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The Hill Times



A parliamentary interpreter covers a press conference with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building in Ottawa in February 2021. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BOIE approves new security funding, expanded MP-protection programs

Altogether, the Board of Internal Economy gave the nod to new funding totalling almost \$24.6-million related to security earlier this spring.

Continued from page 1

to have the cost of security for events they were hosting off the Hill be fully covered by the central budget. To get this exception, the determining conditions set out by the BOIE included whether the RCMP or police of jurisdiction confirmed they were not able to provide protection services after assessing threat risks; if a security assessment of the event “reveals sufficient security concern that requires on-site security presence”; and if the House chief financial officer “determines that the on-site security cost would create undue financial pressure to the” MOB.

As of April 11, this off-site security program has been made permanent, and has been expanded to also cover events an MP attends—not just hosts—related to their parliamentary functions. All security costs will now be fully charged to the House central budget.

The BOIE also agreed to expand its “Mobile Duress Program,” which was first approved in October 2020 and provides MPs with a “mobile device that will trigger an alert at a third-party monitoring centre when activated,” as described in the corresponding meeting minutes.

Asked by email how this mobile program will be expanded, Mathieu Gravel, director of outreach and media relations in the House Speaker’s Office, noted that “for security reasons, detailed information about security programs is not shared publicly.”

As has been previously reported, along with mobile panic buttons, the House of Commons gives MPs the option of getting an expert security assessment of their homes and having security systems installed.

Altogether, the BOIE approved funding of almost \$24.6-million related to security, including for: “accreditation services, the visitor registration program, open-source intelligence, the technical security countermeasures program, event and travel security, risk management and investigations, security operations support services, residential and constituency office security, and security awareness,” as described in the April 11 meeting minutes.

That includes roughly \$7.7-million for 2024-25, of which about \$4.8-million will be directed to the House administration, while almost \$2.9-million will go to central budgets. This new funding is set to be requested through future supplementary estimates this year.

The board also OK’d roughly \$8.4-million in funding for 2025-25, of which almost \$5.6-million will go to the adminis-



Conservative MP Marty Morantz makes his way past Parliamentary Protective Service officers to get to the West Block on Jan. 31, 2022, amid the so-called Freedom Convoy’s occupation of Wellington Street. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

tration, and \$2.8-million to central budgets. Another \$8.4-million was approved for 2026-27 “and subsequent years,” including almost \$5.6-million for the administration—of which \$3.6-million is tied to salaries, almost \$1.8-million to operating expenses, and \$175,000 to equipment and life-cycling costs—and \$2.8-million for central budgets, including \$1.3-million for operating expenses, and \$1.5-million for equipment and life-cycling costs.

“Funding for future fiscal years will be sought through the main estimates,” note the April 11 meeting minutes.

As noted in the minutes, roughly \$1.4-million of the overall \$24.6-million in approved funding will be directed toward employee benefit plans.

Following a request from Conservative Whip Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey–White Rock, B.C.) during deliberations on whether to approve the proposed April 11 meeting minutes earlier this month, a line was added to note that the administration was asked “to, when possible, identify and evaluate opportunities for cost savings to offset spending.”

As detailed in a 2022 *Hill Times* series, MPs have reported being subject to increasing harassment, hate, and security threats in recent years. Privy Council Office data obtained by *The Hill Times* and reported earlier this year also confirms federal cabinet ministers—including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.)—faced increasing numbers of threats during the first three years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last week, RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme told the Canadian Press he was interested in having the government look at legislative changes to address threats against elected officials that don’t currently meet thresholds in the Criminal Code.

“People feel more free to express what they really think, which is a good thing, but it has to be done in a in a civil way. Every elected official has a right to feel secure in doing their job,” Duheme told CP.

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Opinion



Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc. CBSA remains the only major enforcement agency without independent civilian oversight, and the government's bill to create it is not high among its legislative priorities, writes Ken Rubin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

CBSA: a troubled agency under the microscope

The government has not acted, despite CBSA becoming more of a failed agency that is too authoritative, too administratively weak, and too secretive.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



The Canadian Border Service Agency is facing criticism on a number of fronts, such as late and lost access-to-information requests, corrupted contractual practices, and its controversial law enforcement operations in detaining high-risk immigrants.

On the access-to-information side, the latest problems include having difficulties with handling a large backlog of hundreds of immigration-related requests as highlighted in a recent Information Commissioner of Canada special report. CBSA has also had to publicly acknowledge that it has experienced a technological breakdown, and as yet is unable to retrieve or find hundreds of previously submitted access requests.

CBSA has always had a high number of complaints about its processing delays and exemption claims that my access-to-information experience confirms. This includes lengthy delays and limited responses on subjects like criminal activities at ports of entry, and cross-border car and gun smuggling.

At one point, I discovered CBSA was overstepping by profiling my various access requests inside the agency because I was filing applications on behalf of Maher Arar. They probably did not like that I had found out that Arar was on their look-out list. That dug-up data became part of the O'Connor Inquiry record examining his rendition to Syria.

On the contractual side, CBSA's mishandling of contracts has been exposed by the media, by the auditor general and procurement ombudsman, and in Parliament, especially in the ArriveCan application case.

CBSA has been called out as an agency that too often tries to bypass competitive bidding while conducting inadequate contract-bid evaluations. Its sparse and sloppy recordkeeping has been the subject of more than one inquiry.

All this keeps CBSA from being an accountable agency, and, at times—combined with its arbitrary powerful law enforcement operations—has made CBSA suspect, feeding the narrative that it is untrustworthy. Its vast powers of arrest, detention, search, and seizure—with some of its officers being suspended for misconduct

and bias—make its benign image of mainly just doing work checking travellers and goods look bad.

Its enforcement powers include being able to detain and arrest non-citizens, which is made possible under section 55 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. But its treatment of persons deemed to be high risk or a flight risk, and detained at immigration holding centres (IHC)—or until recently, at provincial jails—without requiring warrants, has attracted much attention, criticism, reports, and queries.

Highlighted here is its practice of placing some detainees considered high risk in solitary confinement. A Jan. 16, 2023, CBSA access-to-information document defends solitary confinement as “not potentially amount[ing] to cruel and unusual treatment,” arguing that a detainee's stay in sol-

itary confinement beyond 15 days at an IHC “may not immediately equate to a breach of a detained client's section 12 Charter rights.”

CBSA also admits that detainees initially placed in the staging detention holding area “should not be held there for more than 48 hours, unless there are extraordinary reasons necessitating a longer replacement.” An April 5, 2022, briefing note also confirms “that minors are housed or detained as last resort,” and that “the vast majority of minors held at an Immigration Holding Centre are not detained but are housed [there].”

Another operational note dated Nov. 29, 2022, stresses that officers can—under certain circumstances—arrest and detain immigrants, but should “do so with the least amount of force necessary.”

Further instructions on monitoring detainees put in solitary confinement note that officers should be doing “informal counts at every hour.” As a last resort only, “should the use of a flashlight and the nightlight not be sufficient to confirm the detainee's identity and well-being, the guard must enter the room to witness breathing/identity and or wake the detainee.”

There have been deaths, including by suicide, at CBSA detention centres that even checks twice daily checks or going into detainee cells to see if they are breathing have not stopped. The CBSA directives/memos cover their officers' powers of detention, but do not describe services for detainees or the type of humane treatment detainees can expect.

Now, the 2024 federal Budget is putting millions of dollars into expanding CBSA's immigration holding centres for detainees and wants some detainees held at federal prisons. Yet no new instructions are provided requiring new service standards or changes for dealing with the most vulnerable and high-risk detainees.

Critics who already see CBSA's treatment of detainees as harsh, inhumane, and abusive fear the proposed use of federal prisons as abetting those practices.

However, CBSA remains the only major enforcement agency without independent civilian oversight. The government's Bill C-20 to create such oversight is not high among its legislative priorities.

The government has not acted on all these fronts, despite CBSA becoming more of a failed agency that is too authoritative, too administratively weak, too secretive, and in need of a major makeover and stronger oversight.

Ken Rubin writes on transparency matters and is reachable at kenrubin.ca.

The Hill Times

Canada Border Services Agency president Erin O'Gorman appears before a House Government Operations and Estimates Committee meeting studying the ArriveCan app on Jan. 18. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



EV investments paving the way for Canada and Japan's 'new chapter': ambassador

Honda and Asahi Kasei's new projects will be a game-changer, and are proof that Canada and Japan are taking a new direction in EV production around the world.

Kanji Yamanouchi

Opinion



One of Japan's leading comprehensive chemical manufacturers announced on May 14 a \$1.6-billion investment in Ontario, responding to the increasing demand in North American supply chains for zero-emission vehicles, writes Kanji Yamanouchi. *Unsplash photograph by Maxim Hopman*

world, and it is no exaggeration to say that the United States' presidential election in November will have the greatest impact on future global trends.

Under these realities, it is important to see Canada and Japan share so many things together like freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, a market economy, and membership in major international frameworks such as the G7, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Our bilateral relationship has recently been enhanced in various ways. We see closer co-operation in the areas of national security, environment, energy, cultural and people exchanges, as well as business and investment.

On May 14, Asahi Kasei—one of Japan's leading comprehensive chemical manufacturers—held a press conference to announce a \$1.6-billion investment in Ontario.

This new funding is to build the world's first-ever integrated factory for wet-separation production, which is an indispensable part of the lithium-ion battery. This will respond to the increasing demand in North American supply chains for zero-emission vehicles, including for Honda.

It was only three weeks ago that Honda announced that it has entered the final stages of considering a major investment totalling \$15-billion to build a full value chain for zero-emission vehicles in Canada. I had the honour of attending the press conference held on April 25 along with Honda president and CEO Toshihiro Mibe, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

This amount is the largest investment not only in Honda's history, but also in Canadian history, let alone in the automom-

otive sector, and for any single company. This is a groundbreaking project that builds a comprehensive electric-vehicle value chain from the mountain to battery to mobility in one country.

I believe that Honda and Asahi Kasei's new projects will be a game-changer, and that is only possible in Canada because of its major advantages, such as having abundant resources including critical minerals, and being within a highly transparent, competitive, and stable market integrated with the United States under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. They will greatly strengthen the supply chain, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and then contribute to the 2050 net-zero commitment. This is proof that Canada and Japan are taking a new direction in EV production around the world. On top of that, they will also bring significant benefits to Canada itself, including the creation of a large number of jobs.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, and its steady implementation are excellent news for Japan and the Indo-Pacific region. Our two countries are partnering in the implementation of our joint action plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Strengthening co-operation between governments is sure to spread and permeate the private sector as well.

Canada-Japan relations have steadily entered a new chapter. Living in an increasingly unstable world, now is the time for Canada and Japan to come together as one to confront the world's challenges. Strengthening our bilateral relations is imperative, and in a sense, it is inevitable. It is my mission to work together to lead the way with my Canadian friends.

Kanji Yamanouchi is the ambassador of Japan to Canada.

The Hill Times

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Editorial

Time to get serious about ‘silly’ season

After a six-sitting-day respite from the Hill, MPs have returned for the final House of Commons push before the summer adjournment.

This scheduled five-week run at the end of the spring sitting is a dicey proposition in any session of Parliament, but prospects are particularly fraught this time around given it's the latter days of a government that's going on nine years.

It's euphemistically known as “silly season” on the Hill, but as time goes on and the political environment changes for the worse, “silly” isn't quite the word for it anymore.

There've been no shortages of calls for civility from this publication and others, and it's expected that they'll continue to fall on firmly plugged ears, but as politicians head into this final stretch they should be asking themselves: is this really the best foot I have to put forward?

As much as people like to say that no one pays attention to what's happening in the Ottawa bubble—and that's even more likely in the lead-up to and during the summer—MPs are concurrently frantically trying to make the case that an election could come at any time, and that their party is the best one for the country.

Some of what has been sullying the tenor of Hill proceedings comes directly from that competition for attention, manifesting in personal attacks, name-calling, and general playground antics.

Meanwhile, the security situation becomes more precarious—and we're all paying for it, in multiple ways.

As *The Hill Times*'s Laura Ryckewaert reports, the House Board of Internal Economy recently approved millions of dollars in new funding related to security for the Hill and MPs as individuals. Cementing a pilot project that was first approved in November 2022, under the new funding protocol, MPs hosting and attending events related to their parliamentary duties outside of the Parliamentary Precinct can charge security costs to the House of Commons, if they meet certain criteria. The BOIE also expanded the panic-button program for MPs.

Liberal MP Pam Damoff recently cited the toxic and potentially dangerous political environment as one of the reasons she won't reoffer in the next election, and security is bound to be top of mind following the frightening shooting of Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico on May 15.

MPs are supposedly community leaders. If they want people to pay attention to them, they should model behaviour that benefits society, not just their political pursuits. If the outward display is that we don't have to respect anyone we disagree with, and they are the enemy, don't be surprised when everyone else falls in line.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Ministers Virani and Holland should act on MAID expansion: Ottawa reader

I am writing to again advocate for the expansion of the medical assistance in dying (MAID) legislation to allow advance requests at least where the patient has been diagnosed with a serious and incurable medical condition, disease, or disorder leading to incapacity.

I didn't think I could be more disappointed than I was earlier this year when the elected officials on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying (AMAD) Committee decided to postpone, yet again, Canadians' right to MAID where their sole underlying medical condition is a mental disorder. This horrendously impacts those very few Canadians who otherwise meet the very stringent eligibility requirements and safeguards set out in the MAID legislation. As someone with recurring depression who does not currently meet these requirements, I nevertheless felt stigmatized for the first time by the lack of courage shown by elected officials—including the government—who essentially concluded that I am too “vulnerable” to make my own choices.

I tried to cheer myself up by thinking that the Liberal government would redeem itself with advance requests. Instead, it replied to e-petition 4726—which received an incredible 16,466 signatures—with the lame old excuse that the issue is

complex and requires further consultation and study. The government said the same thing in June 2023 when replying to the AMAD Committee report that recommended that it amend the MAID legislation to allow advance requests following a capacity-eroding diagnosis.

The vast majority of Canadians support this first step. This majority is now up to 83 per cent in the April 2024 Ipsos poll.

Most worthwhile policy changes are complex and require consultation with provinces and/or other communities. Where the matter is a question of our human rights, however, complexity is not a reason to down tools. Also, Quebec already has legislation in place, and is simply awaiting changes to the federal legislation. In addition, a number of clinicians associated with the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers have studied the framework needed for advance requests, and the Benelux countries and Spain have implemented this option, so some of the work has been done.

We will continue to advocate for this change at the federal and provincial levels. In the meantime, it would be helpful to know what consultations and studies have taken place in the last year.

Sherry Moran
 Ottawa, Ont.

Yes, honesty would be the best policy: Nuclear Society

Re: “Nuclear energy never will be ‘clean,’ write Jones and Edwards,” (*The Hill Times*, May 6, p. 8).

Lynn Jones and Gordon Edwards are incensed that the government used the word “clean” to describe nuclear power, implying that the use of this word is dishonest. In fact, the government has good reason to use that word, but ironically the authors themselves then use several linguistic tricks.

In their second paragraph, for example, they talk about tailings at uranium mines, and state, “these materials are responsible for countless thousands of deaths,” leaving the reader to assume it is the tailings that cause the deaths when it is not. It is instead the isotopes those tailings contain that occur naturally in people's houses that give rise to these deaths. Those deaths have nothing to do with the nuclear industry.

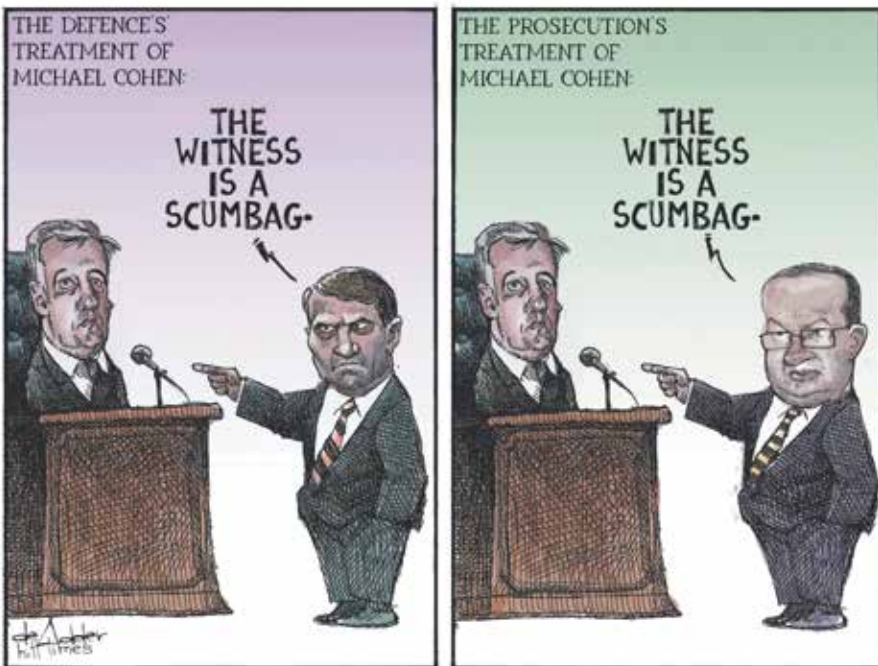
They also boldly state that “all” radioactive waste must be kept out of our food, air, and drinking water for countless millennia when, in fact, some radioactive wastes are processed and then injected into people to diagnose and cure disease, while others are used to sterilize medical

instruments. Many wastes radioactively decay so that they're indistinguishable from the non-radioactive counterparts in months or years, not millennia. Their statement is blatantly incorrect.

In comparison, one can see why the government thought it appropriate to describe nuclear as clean, even though it does produce some small quantities of waste—as everything does. The government could have used “non-emitting,” as this would likely have had the same effect on the audience, and would have been indisputable. But it likely also wanted to convey the idea that nuclear keeps the air clean, does not cause respiratory distress, and so improves health across the nation.

Perhaps Jones and Edwards should concentrate on removing the plank from their own eyes before criticizing the speck in the government's eye.

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Never-changing playlist of political hits growing stale

Thoughtful, solution-based policy will be hard to find amid the main players' established routine of combat.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



The Justin Trudeau-Pierre Poilievre tango doesn't have much room for much else, and that is not good for political discourse, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

OTTAWA—The Victoria Day long weekend has come and gone. An election is still well more than a year away. To the surprise of everyone but perhaps the prime minister himself, Justin Trudeau remains in both that job and that of leader of the Liberal Party. While he has earned that right, continuing to exercise it doesn't seem to be to his party's advantage.

As the very able Campbell Clark of the *Globe and Mail* wrote recently, we are already seeing the traditional campaign-style

rhetoric from the Liberals, who are accusing Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre of being soft on abortion rights. Regardless of the fact that Poilievre has said abortion rights won't be in jeopardy under a future Conservative government, the Liberals are doing their normal pre-election posturing. As Clark notes, this early needling from the Liberals speaks to the deep political desperation the party feels being regularly 20 points behind the Conservatives in all major polls for the last few months.

If Trudeau is to be believed when he says he will be leading

his party in the 2025 election campaign, it creates a fairly predictable—but woefully disheartening—quandary. Specifically, if the two principal opponents are already locked in for 2025, it is unlikely we are going to see any substantive public discussion about the policy solutions needed for the next decade and beyond. Not that we ever get much of that anyway in a pre-campaign period, but it is even less probable if this dynamic holds.

Trudeau is a known quantity, and while history will probably have some favourable recognition for his efforts on childcare,

climate policy, and potentially other aspects of health like dental care, he no longer has enough political credibility with the public to be a change agent, or to even be seen as an innovator. When he opens his mouth to advance his government's positions, he's more often not listened to, derided, or dismissed.

Poilievre is less of a known quantity to the nation, but frankly, he doesn't need to be one now for his electoral journey to succeed. As he has been, Poilievre simply needs to position himself as the anti-Trudeau. The one who feels your pain around affordability and dislocation. The one who—if he gets elected—will bring you relief. He is the nation's painkiller.

Have a conversation in any part of the country with a regular Canadian about the politics of the day, and it usually starts and ends with “the guy in power has been around a while, I am not happy with where things are, a change is probably in order.” I have edited out the expletives that are also part of that chat, but the dialogue structure is a pretty reliable one.

The Trudeau-Poilievre tango doesn't have much room for much else, and that is not good. I saw a classic example of this last week

when I was home in Newfoundland and Labrador where all the federal political chat was about the real possibility that the Conservatives could sweep the province's seven seats. Why? Again, local lore was that there was so much anger with the prime minister, that it is the likely scenario.

Meanwhile, our national news was about the wildfires forcing the evacuation of Fort McMurray, Alta., and surrounding areas. A brief reminder: it was early to mid-May when this happened, not the dead of summer. If there ever was a time when we ought to be hearing our leaders truly diving into genuine policy discussions about wildfires or other environmental disasters, it is now. But the best we are going to get is “carbon price” versus “end of the carbon tax.”

Thoughtful, solution-based policy will be hard to find with the political climate battle lines drawn because the main players' established routine of combat has little space for obstruction by the big issues of the day. That is a shame.

If Trudeau were to step aside, a potential public benefit to that might be a change in the way the pre-election and election campaigns play out. A new player may at least cause enough disruption that the requirements for public discourse could be altered. Here's hoping, but otherwise, hang on for the never-changing playlist of political hits.

Tim Powers is chairman of *Summa Strategies* and managing director of *Abacus Data*. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

The Hill Times

Stopping the CAF 'death spiral'

The Liberal government should put out the call for former service members to return to duty on an emergency call-up basis to enrol and train the new admissions.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Last week, there was seemingly some good news for Canada's beleaguered Armed Forces. A May 7 *Toronto Star* news headline noted that “The number of applicants to join Canada's military is soaring.”

Unfortunately the text continued with: “Why hasn't that resulted in more of them in uniform?” The answer, it turns out, is

that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are unable to process the applications they receive in a timely fashion. As a result, the gap between recruiting and those serving personnel who are releasing from the CAF continues to widen.

At last count, there were 16,500 vacancies on the payroll of the CAF's combined regular and reserve establishment of 101,000 people. At a recent defence conference in Ottawa, Minister of Defence Bill Blair referred to the current recruiting versus retention crisis as a “death spiral.” According to the new defence policy update, despite the promise of billions of dollars added to the budget, there is no course correction mentioned that will reduce that 16,500 shortfall in personnel until the year 2032.

While Blair told *The Star* that he doesn't “want to wait till 2032 to replace the 16,500. I think we need to go faster,” he offered no plan of action which would hasten the timeline.

However, what *The Star* article reveals is that Canadians are still willing to enlist in the military. In fact, they did so in record numbers last year with 70,080 individuals volunteering to serve in uniform. The year

before that, the number of applicants was 43,934, amounting to a two-year total of 114,014 potential personnel for the CAF. That is more than enough to replace the Armed Forces' entire authorized strength.

However, the overwhelmed recruiting centres were only able to process 4,301 applicants last year, and just 3,930 the year before. That comes to a two-year total of 8,231, which means 105,231 would-be recruits went unprocessed.

This makes one question the rationale for the CAF senior leadership to radically reduce the dress and deportment regulations in order to cast a wider net to address the recruiting shortfall.

The theory was that if any and all hairstyles were acceptable, including facial hair, tattoos and piercings, the CAF would be a more welcoming and diverse workplace. Uniforms are still to be worn, albeit they are no longer gender specific. For traditionalists, the idea of coloured hair on the parade square seemed a drastic measure to attract otherwise hesitant applicants.

Given the numbers, it would seem that dress and deportment was not the problem, but rather it was the recruiting and training

branches that simply could not process the influx.

Another policy change was to allow immigrants with permanent resident status to enlist in the CAF. Prior to Nov. 1, 2022, a recruit needed to be a Canadian citizen. This move bore fruit, as more than 21,000 permanent resident cardholders to date have eagerly flocked to recruiting centres. Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources through which to conduct the necessary background checks on these people, only 77 such applications had been processed as of February 2024.

If a pilot were to announce over the intercom to the passengers that their plane was in a “death spiral,” you would expect the next words to include a plan to take drastic measures to correct said spiral.

Instead, Blair continues to display a total lack of urgency.

Here is a suggested course of action. The present understrength CAF is like a starving person too weak to digest the necessary nutrients in order to recover. As a short-term measure, the Liberal government should put out the call for former service members to return to duty on an emergency call-up

basis. They would not require background checks, and they already know their trade. The job would be simply to enrol and train the new admissions.

They could be offered a lucrative signing bonus, and a lucrative temporary salary. This money could come out of the savings the CAF has been realizing as a result of having 16,500 unfilled positions for the past two years. That amounts to billions of dollars if you do the math.

There are thousands of applications already on file, and there is no shortage of new volunteers to join. The legion of called-up veterans could temporarily flesh out the training centres, and process the necessary admin and medical procedures.

As for those with permanent resident status, why not conduct their security clearances while they are going through their basic military training courses? It is called concurrent activity. Surely, there are enough retired military police, intelligence branch, and Canadian Security Intelligence Service staffers willing to commit to restoring the CAF to full operational strength.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, and these are definitely desperate times.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of *Esprit de Corps* magazine.

The Hill Times

Comment

2024 leaving no wig unsnatched

Between climate change standing on our necks, and alleged war criminals getting gathered, the world is literally burning.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



OTTAWA—Pim pim (meaning “welp”). Big tings a gwan.

What a beautiful long weekend amidst the world burning. Literally. Alberta and British Columbia’s fire seasons started early this year with forest fires already blazing in February. *The National Post* reports: “The wildfire season typically runs from April to October. However, Alberta declared an early start to their wildfire season at the end of February, and has 52 active wildfires as of April 16. Ontario declared the start of fire season on April 1.” The unusually warm fall and winter meant less snowfall, which created abnormally dry conditions. A hot summer will exacerbate those conditions, eventually manifesting into wildfires (for much of the winter, Calgary temperatures were above zero). Canada experienced its worst wildfire season last year, and this year threatens to be worse.

Putting that into perspective makes the Conservatives’ bloviation particularly irritating and insulting to those of us who want to live in a world that’s not on fire. But then the Conservatives slander existing Liberal policy without having counter-policies to replace those which are necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change.

On May 19, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, and Foreign Affairs Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian died in a helicopter crash. This should have interesting political implications for the country, given that Raisi was considered next in line to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. This dude never met a violent crackdown he didn’t like, as *Al Jazeera* informed: “In 1988, he was part of a committee overseeing a series of executions of political prisoners.” He also “led the country during the 2022 protests over the death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of Iran’s morality police, a period during which the UN said Iran committed crimes against humanity.” Charming.

On May 20, the head prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan, applied for arrest warrants against Hamas leadership—Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri (Deif), and Ismail Haniyeh—for war crimes including the taking of hostages, torture, and murder. Khan has also applied for warrants for Israeli officials: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. They stand accused of starvation of the civilian population as

a method of war, murder as a war crime, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population, and other crimes against humanity. Khan contends that Israel has committed these crimes as part of a systemic and systematic framework conceived by Israel: “We submit that the crimes against humanity charged were committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Palestinian civilian population pursuant to State policy. These crimes, in our assessment, continue to this day.” Khan cites that Israel intentionally kept humanitarian aid from the population, leaving them to starve alongside Israel’s “obstruction of aid delivery by humanitarian agencies; and attacks on and killing of aid workers,” among other crimes.

The year 2024 continues to snatch wigs. I thought we were told by White House national security communications adviser John Kirby that “they [Israel] have made a commitment to increase that humanitarian assistance.” The United States and European countries that cut off aid to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are partially culpable for the starvation of the Palestinian people. *The Financial Times* concluded: “The problem with unplugging UNRWA is that there is no organization that can possibly take its place. The agency provided a lifeline for Palestinians in Gaza and further afield, long before this crisis.” No UNRWA, no effective humanitarian aid. There seems to remain a delta between the aid, infrastructure, expertise, and experienced staff in the region that UNRWA provided, and humanitarian aid efforts without the organization. In-between lies famine.

Israel’s accusation of terrorists embedded in UNRWA, and the closing of humanitarian corridors have created conditions of intense and unnecessary suffering for the people of Gaza. *The Financial Times* reports: “An independent review commissioned by the UN has said that Israel has not substantiated allegations it made that staffers working for the body’s agency for Palestinian refugees were members of terror groups.” At least the Canadian government restored that funding, making it look less murderous.

Spurious allegations seem to be part of the concerted effort to starve Palestinians as a means of warfare. I have reached out to Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly’s office to ask how Canada is ensuring the distribution of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza. Her office did not respond.

These arrest warrants, if granted, prove a couple of things: the South African case for Israel committing genocide has teeth and truths, and the anti-genocide protesters and the students are correct. Hopefully those who have been involved in silencing those who disagree with them will face some sort of karma, but then the ruling class is never held to account.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the Bad+Bitchy podcast.

The Hill Times

Quebec in a tizzy over the Canadian flag on *Journée des patriotes*

Social media was on fire in Quebec this holiday weekend after the Canadian flag appeared in a notice posted at Caisses Populaire Desjardins branches.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Nationalists in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society may need to be reminded the Maple Leaf goes back to their organization, while the flag of the secular Quebec ‘nation’ honours religion and French colonialism, writes Andrew Caddell. Flickr photograph courtesy of Caribb

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—I hope you, dear reader, had a good Victoria Day weekend. Here in Quebec, it was *Journée nationale des patriotes*, as it has been since 2003. And what better day to celebrate the rebels who fought the troops of the new Queen Victoria in the late 1830s?

In any event, social media was on fire in Quebec this holiday with the “scandalous” appearance of the Canadian flag in a notice posted in a handful of windows at branches of the Caisses Populaire Desjardins.

Photos of the notice began to pop up on social media, with grim-faced *indépendantistes* in the foreground. The notice said simply, “*Journée Nationale des Patriotes* (National Patriots’ Day): our offices will be closed Monday, May 20.” And beneath, a young man with a Canadian flag looking to the sky.

The outrage was palpable: the *Journal de Montréal* blared a headline equivalent to a declaration of war: “The Canadian flag used to underline National Patriots’ Day at Desjardins.”

Then provincial Minister of Culture and Communications Mathieu Lacombe weighed in: “While we await Desjardins’ explanations, let’s agree that this visual is inappropriate. It shows a lack of understanding of the significance of National Patriots’ Day.” In other words: where was the Quebec flag?

He added, “I see it as yet another illustration of the need for a *Musée national de l’histoire du Québec* (Quebec History Museum),” throwing gasoline on the fire of a recently announced Coalition Avenir Québec government project: a museum focusing on the history of the Quebec “nation” with exclusive reference to the accomplishments of francophones.

The next to denounce this *lèse-majesté* was Marie-Anne Alepin, the president of the nationalist Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, who said, “This is proof we have a lot of educating to do around this holiday.” Then she elaborated: “The Fête des Patriotes is a celebration of the people of Quebec and the patriots. The Canadian flag is another country.”

It is actually Alepin who could use a little education. First of all, *les Patriotes* were not exclusively francophone—one-third were anglophone, including the key leaders: Edmund O’Callaghan, Thomas Storrow Brown, and the Nelson brothers, Wolfred and Robert. Second, their fight—according to the 92 Resolutions drafted in 1834—was for a bilingual, secular Lower Canada, with cabinet responsible to the legislature. The resolutions, drafted by Louis-Joseph Papineau, begin with a greeting from the “loyal subjects

of the King.” It should be noted William Lyon Mackenzie was also preparing his own, brief rebellion in Upper Canada.

Within a few years, the Patriotes were fighting British soldiers and Canadian rerservists. In short order, the British took the upper hand, Papineau fled, a dozen rebels were hanged, and dozens more were exiled to Australia and the United States.

Out of this struggle came Lord Durham’s report, calling for the assimilation of French Canadians and the union of Lower and Upper Canada. However, the French Canadians resisted, and Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine became joint premiers of the united Canada, pushing for change, and paving the way for Confederation in 1867.

The Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society was founded in the fateful year of 1834, recognizing the maple leaf as its symbol. The maple leaf was later adopted by Canadian soldiers abroad, and graced our new flag in 1965. Then-prime minister Lester Pearson wanted to showcase the break with the United Kingdom, and a modern country about to celebrate its centennial.

In Quebec in 1947, the independent and extreme nationalist member of the legislature for Kamouraska, René Chalout, proposed a new flag for Quebec. It resembled a traditional church flag, with a white cross and fleur-de-lis, honouring the Bourbon kings of France.

So Alepin might be reminded the Maple Leaf goes back to her organization, while the flag of the secular Quebec “nation” honours religion and French colonialism. Another country, indeed.

I have long argued we proud Canadians should underline our own history, and celebrate the patriots who fought for democracy in Upper and Lower Canada. While Victoria was queen when Canada became a country, after 157 years, I think it’s time we moved on.

However, now I wonder: if Canadians celebrate the *Patriotes*, will *les Québécois* dump them? It would all be funny if it weren’t so sad.

Andrew Caddell is retired from *Global Affairs Canada*, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

Memo to Canadians: the capital gains tax adjustment will still constitute a very generous tax break for the wealthy



Under Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's capital gains gambit, companies and individuals making profits on the sale of assets will still enjoy special tax treatment, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“The favourable treatment of capital gains disproportionately benefits the rich and companies, and contributes to the outrageous income inequality that is undermining Canadians' confidence in their political and economic systems.”

We know that a decade of personal and corporate tax cuts under the Paul Martin and Stephen Harper governments failed to produce the hoped-for economic boom.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—Let's try to get this into perspective. There may be persuasive arguments for keeping the favourable capital gains tax rate unchanged. But suggesting the changes proposed by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland are somehow grossly unfair to the few mostly wealthy people who will be affected is not one of them.

The revised capital gains taxation measures in the 2024 budget simply mean those who make a hefty profit on the sale of assets—generally well-off Canadians—will not enjoy quite as much of a special income tax break as they did previously.

But companies and individuals making profits on the sale of assets will still enjoy special tax treatment. Unlike employees, who have to pay income tax on 100 per cent of their earnings, people benefitting

from capital gains on investments will only have to pay income tax on 66 per cent of the profit from the sale of their assets.

And that's under the new, increased capital gains inclusion rate put forward by Freeland on April 16. Previously, beneficiaries of capital gains only paid income tax on half of what the average person would pay on the same employment earnings.

And, just to clear up one apparent misunderstanding: the new capital gains measure would not have any effect whatsoever on the capital gains exemption homeowners enjoy on the sale of a principal residence.

How much people should pay in tax when they make money on investments, as opposed to employment income, has been debated in Canada for 60 years. Arguing that “a buck is a buck,” the 1966 Royal Commission on taxation contended that all income should be taxed equally, including gains on assets and investment. But when capital gains taxation was introduced in 1972, the federal government only taxed 50 per cent of capital gains at an individual's highest marginal tax rate.

It is well established that the favourable treatment of capital gains disproportionately benefits the rich and companies, and contributes to the outrageous income inequality that is undermining Canadians' confidence in their political and economic systems.

The tax break on capital gains for individuals and businesses has been costing the federal government at least \$35-billion a year in foregone revenues, the bulk of which goes to wealthy Canadians.

For instance, a study by University of Toronto economists Michael Smart and

Sobia Hasan Jafry found that the richest 0.01 per cent of families—whose total income including capital gains exceeded \$6.9-million—on average declared \$6.1-million in realized net capital gains that were subject to tax, accounting for 11 per cent of the total of such gains for all families. Spreading the focus wider, they found that the top one per cent of wealthiest families accounted for 57 per cent, and the top 10 per cent accounted for 82 per cent of net capital gains.

Further to that point, Freeland said that—taking into account her decision to allow the first \$250,000 in an individual's capital gains annually to be taxed on the old 50-per cent inclusion rate—only a tiny fraction of taxpayers will be affected by the new rules. The budget forecasts just 0.13 per cent of Canadians—people with an average income of about \$1.4-million a year—will pay more in personal income tax on their capital gains as a result of the new approach. And, to balance the measure, the budget increased to \$1.25-million

As expected, the rich are dead-set against the idea of picking up a bit more of the tab for Canada's socio-economic programs through an adjusted capital gains tax. Opponents of the new measure are probably right in saying that it will in the short term bring about some reduction in investments that are needed to help the idling economy. But there's no proof there will be a lasting impact. Beyond that, we know that a decade of personal and corporate tax cuts under the Paul Martin and Stephen Harper governments failed to produce the hoped-for economic boom.

Even medical associations, which should have a more calibrated sense of social justice, have joined with much of the business community weighing in against the capital gains tax change. We'll see over the next little while if the government sticks with this modest attempt to rebalance the wealth picture for Canadians.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times

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News

House Canada-China Committee looking to interrogate officials and parliamentarians who visited China

The five officials and parliamentarians invited to appear before the committee are among the first high-level Canadian visitors to China since the relationship with Beijing cooled dramatically.

BY NEIL MOSS

With a spate of Canadian officials and parliamentarians starting to re-engage with Beijing, MPs on the Special House Committee on the Canada-China Relationship are looking to hear from them.

During a May 6 meeting, the committee agreed to invite Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.), Foreign Affairs deputy minister David Morrison, Canadian Ambassador to China Jennifer May, as well as Canada-China Legislative Association co-chairs Liberal MP Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Ont.) and Independent Senator Paul Massicotte (De Lanaudière, Que.) to appear in person before June 21 to “reflect on their recent visit to China.”

All five people have had recent interactions with Chinese officials after Canada’s relationship with the country chilled amid the Two Michaels affair, allegations that China interfered in Canada’s 2019 and 2021 elections, as well as concerns over Beijing’s human rights record and the persecution of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

“You never go wrong from getting intelligence from the street level,” said Liberal MP Ken Hardie (Fleetwood-Port Kells, B.C.), who chairs the special House committee.

“We just wanted to get a sense of the lay of the land in China right now,” he said. “We’re nowhere near normalizing relationships with them—there’s been a lot of pressure points over the last number of years—and we wanted to basically find out from people who had been in China meeting with officials there what the mood was.”

He remarked that Guilbeault will provide a “very unique take on the relationship” as despite the rocky relationship, Beijing has remained engaged on climate change issues, which Hardie called “a very positive thing that we should do our best to sustain.”



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault was the first cabinet minister to travel to China since 2019 when he made a visit in August 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In August 2023, Guilbeault travelled to China to participate in the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED). The trip was the first one made by a Canadian cabinet member since 2019. At the time, the Conservative Party called the decision to go to China a “shocking move,” and called for Guilbeault to resign his position as executive vice-chair of the CCICED since it is chaired by Ding Xuexiang, a high-ranking member of the Chinese Communist Party’s politburo.

Last month, *The Globe and Mail* reported that Morrison would travel to China “shortly,” noting that his trip is an “effort to thaw relations,” citing unidentified sources.

Jowhari and Massicotte were in China in March as part of a delegation of five parliamentarians, which also included then-co-chair and Independent MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.), NDP MP Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.), and Conservative Senator Victor Oh (Mississauga, Ont.).

While in China, the group didn’t press Chinese authorities over concerns of foreign interference, Davies told *The Hill Times* last month. The delegation met with May, as well as senior officials from China’s National People’s Congress, and Ministry of Ecology and Environment vice-minister Zhao Yingmin, according to an itinerary shared by Massicotte. The legislative association last sent a delegation to China in May 2019.

Hardie told *The Hill Times* that the testimony could give the committee insight about opportunities “to improve relationships if that is at all possible.”

Not on the invitation list is Navy Commander Angus Topshee. The same day the committee agreed to invite the five potential witnesses, *The Ottawa Citizen* reported that Topshee was the first senior military official to visit China since 2019 when he visited Qingdao in April for the Western Pacific Naval Symposium.

Hardie said he was unaware of the visit, but that MPs on the committee may decide to invite him down the line.

“Anybody who is prepared to come in and have a discussion with us about their experiences there—who they met with, what was the tone of the conversations, what was the tone generally of the hospitality—all of those things that really give us a good fix as to where the relationship, which has become mainly transactional, where it might be able to go,” he said.

Hardie said it’s not out of the question that MPs on the committee may raise issues they have about why the invited officials and parliamentarians decided to go to China during the current period of a chill in the relationship.

During an April 29 committee meeting, Bloc Québécois MP Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, Que.), his party’s foreign affairs critic, first gave notice of the motion to invite the witnesses, which included a reference that the invitations were made “in light of the government’s expressed intention to normalize relations with the People’s Republic of China [PRC].”

Hardie said he thought the government was “a long, long way from normalization.”

Last November, Bergeron told the committee that Guilbeault’s visit “stirred up a lot of controversy.”

“Some people wondered whether it was the right time to be resuming ministerial visits,” he added. “The minister seemed to care a lot about it, thinking that his presence might make it possible to rebuild bridges, and move collaboration on the plan for strategies to combat climate change forward.”

A spokesperson for Guilbeault said the department has yet to receive an invitation from the committee. A Global Affairs Canada (GAC) spokesperson said the department received an invitation on May 8 for Morrison and May to appear before the group, and they are working on a date and time for them to appear. Massicotte’s office said it had yet to receive an invitation.

Referencing the visits of Guilbeault, Morrison, and the Canada-China Legislative Association, Bergeron said on May 6 that they



Bloc Québécois MP Stéphane Bergeron introduced the motion to invite five Canadian officials and parliamentarians with recent travel to China to the Special House Committee on the Canada-China Relationship. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“were tasked specifically with normalizing relations with the PRC.”

In response, Human Rights Watch acting China director Maya Wang told the committee that, given China’s political system, she questioned if any country could have a “normalized relationship” with China without “essentially falling into China’s trap of language.”

“Essentially having a normalized or stabilized relationship with China is often code for playing by the Chinese government’s rules,” she said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) spoke with Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi twice earlier this year. In January, the pair “highlighted that despite recent challenges in the bilateral relationship, it is important to keep communication channels open,” according to a GAC readout.

In February, the two top diplomats met on the margins of the Munich Security Conference during which the two “agreed that bilateral issues should continue to be discussed pragmatically and constructively, in a spirit of mutual respect, with regular communication between the two sides,” the GAC readout noted.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry offered additional details in a readout of Beijing’s expectations of Canada to return to a “sound and stable track” in the relationship, which included Canada establishing a “correct understanding of China,” to “stop hyping up the ‘China threat’ theory,” to “stop spreading false information about the so-called ‘Chinese interference in Canada’s internal affairs,’” and to “stop overstretching the concept of national security” to include economy and science.

Last September, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) downplayed re-engagement with Beijing, remarking in an interview with Bloomberg that “China has made decisions over the past years that have made it more difficult—not just for Canada, but for other countries—to engage.”

At the same time, a briefing note for a meeting Morrison held with then-Chinese ambassador to Canada Cong Peiwu on June 21, 2023, had a “top-line message” noting that Canada “continued to be concerned about continued lack of access for Ambassador [Jennifer] May in China.” The note also indicated that Canada was continuing “to seek open channels of communication.” *The Hill Times* understands that May has met with the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s director general for North American and Oceanic Affairs.

During a major foreign policy speech last October, Joly stressed the need for Canada to have a “pragmatic diplomacy,” noting that Canada needs to “engage countries of different perspectives.” While she remarked that Canada would “defend our values,” she added that the country “cannot afford to close ourselves off from those with whom we do not agree. For engagement does not mean that we support or condone the policies and actions of others.”

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Federal government 'ghosted' civil society on REIT tax treatment decision: housing advocates

The REIT structure is a 'democratization of real estate investment,' not a tax loophole, says CAPREIT's Larry Greer.

BY STUART BENSON

Affordable housing advocates say they feel they've been "ghosted" by the federal government's decision to not change how real estate investment trusts are taxed. Despite multiple federal studies by a House committee and the federal housing advocate, Green Party MP Mike Morrice says the "ultimate question" of the "social value the exemption provides" remains unanswered.

Real estate investment trusts (REITs) are companies which allow individuals to invest in real estate properties owned and operated by a corporation. However, in the 1990s, then-finance minister Paul Martin introduced a tax exemption for REITs, allowing them to avoid paying corporate taxes on net income. Instead, most of a REIT's profits are distributed to its shareholders, who are taxed individually.

On May 8, the Finance Department announced it would not change how REITs are taxed, posting a three-sentence statement on the department's website.

"The government is committed to making housing more affordable for Canadians and recognizes [REITs] own a significant share of Canada's rental units," the statement reads. "While more needs to be done to ensure that Canadians are not subject to renovations and that rental units are affordable for Canadians, the government understands that REITs provide a critical channel for new investment in rental units. In this spirit, no changes to the tax treatment of REITs are being considered at this time."

During the 2021 election, the Liberals' campaign platform

included a promise to review the tax treatment to "curb excessive profits" of large residential property owners. The December 2021 mandate letters to Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), as well as then-housing minister Ahmed Hussen (York South-Weston, Ont.) set out a priority to support "the review of, and possible reforms to, the tax treatment of real estate investment trusts."

In reaction to the announcement, NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, Que.), his party's housing critic, accused the Liberals of letting "[wealthy investor friends] off the hook."

"Trudeau's refusal to make them pay their fair share has already let these CEOs avoid \$1.5-billion in taxes," Boulerice wrote in a statement to *The Hill Times*. "New Democrats have been and will keep pushing the government to stop corporate landlords from buying up homes so Canadians can find more affordable places to live."

Green Party MP Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, Ont.) told *The Hill Times* the decision not to change how REITs are taxed is "pretty disappointing," and that ending the exemption would have been a welcome indication that the Liberals were finally getting "serious about addressing the financialization of housing."

"Removing the tax exemption would mean [the trust] would simply become a real estate investment corporation, and pay taxes like any other corporation pays," Morrice explained. "It would just level the playing field for them to be treated the same as corporations already are."

By leaving the exemption in place, the government is "walking away" from a potential \$285-million in additional tax revenue, Morrice said.

A costing note from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) released on April 3, 2023, estimates that the federal government could collect between \$285.8-million and \$670.2-million in additional tax revenue over the next five years by taxing

REITs the same way it taxes corporations.

Morrice requested the PBO report after he gave notice of his private member's motion, M-71, in the House of Commons in September 2022. The motion calls on the government to "immediately remove the tax exemptions for REITs" and use the subsequent tax revenue to invest in non-profit and co-op housing.

"That's money that could have gone to increasing funding to build affordable housing," Morrice said.

Ricardo Tranjan, a senior researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), told *The Hill Times* he finds the government's decision "concerning," particularly how the Finance Department "arrived at the conclusion that REITs provide a critical channel for new investment in rental units."

"This is not a conclusion one would easily draw from the research commissioned by the [federal housing advocate] or the presentations to the National Housing Council's review panel on the financialization of purpose-built rental housing," Tranjan explained. He said that while the federal government had "already made up its mind," the review panel has not yet publicly released its recommendations.

"Putting aside the adverse effects of housing financialization, this decision-making process is a mockery of citizen participation and evidence-based policymaking," Tranjan said, accusing the government of "ghosting" civil society on the decision.

"Two government entities consulted extensively on this issue, used public resources, tapped into civil society's limited capacity, and asked people with lived experience to share their traumatic experiences publicly, only to release a three-sentence statement on a website without offering justification or rationale," Tranjan said. "Canadians deserve to know who informed this decision."

Morrice said he believes the decision results from "successful advocacy" by REITs themselves. He pointed to the lobbying group Canadian Rental Housing Providers for Affordable Housing, which

represents Canada's five largest publicly traded residential REITs: Canadian Apartment Properties REIT (CAPREIT), Boardwalk REIT, Killam Apartment REIT, InterRent REIT, and Minto Apartment REIT.

Morrice noted that the organization was the first group to submit a brief to the House Human Resources, Skills, and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee's study on the financialization of housing.

"Surprise, surprise, one of their recommendations was not to end the tax exemption," Morrice said.

Additionally, in the lead-up to the release of this year's budget, lobbyists with the group met with Ben Chin, a senior adviser to the Prime Minister's Office, on Feb. 16, and with Andrew Bevan, chief of staff in Freeland's office, on Jan. 19. Since 2022, the group has met 18 times with Liberal MPs and ministerial staffers, as well as with the NDP, including with Jonathan Gauvin, deputy chief of staff to NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.), on Nov. 10, 2023, according to the federal lobbying registry.

Morrice said the argument REITs made to the committee was that they are building new housing as well as purchasing existing supply, and that ending the exemption would harm efforts to increase housing stock.

However, REITs are "almost exclusively" buying existing units, and the total number of units built in 2021 was in the hundreds, representing a fraction of a per cent of their total holdings in multi-family rental units, Morrice said.

Morrice also pointed to an August 2023 CBC News interview with Boardwalk REIT chairman and CEO Sam Koliass, who said maintaining and upgrading existing properties was a higher priority than building new ones.

"It's so expensive, so challenging, and difficult to really make economic sense with new supply," Koliass told the CBC. "It really requires a much longer-term perspective, and expectation for returns have to be a lot more patient and longer term."

Morrice told *The Hill Times* that keeping the REIT tax exemption "works at cross purposes" with measures like the new \$1.5-billion housing acquisition fund announced in the most recent budget.

"At the same time as they're creating an acquisition fund to allow a non-profit to buy an existing unit, they're also maintaining a tax exemption that incentivizes a [REIT] to buy that same unit," Morrice explained. "If the argument is that this is about not wanting to reduce new supply getting built, then at the very least, they could have removed this exemption from any REITs that are buying existing multi-family rentals."

As for the government's rationale explaining its decision, Morrice said the "ultimate question" those calling for the change are asking remains unanswered.

"For those of us who were looking for an answer to the

social value of the exemption, it doesn't look like an answer will be provided, and we'll keep the status quo," Morrice said.

Larry Greer, CAPREIT's senior vice-president of corporate affairs, called the federal government's decision "sound government policy," which would alleviate much of the uncertainty stifling investment in Canada's real estate market.

"The REIT structure exists in over 40 countries, and it has been in place in Canada for decades," Greer said, adding that while critics describe the structure as a "tax loophole," in his view, "nothing could be further from the truth."

"There is no tax loophole or leakage because the income REITs generate is distributed to the unit holders and taxed in their hands," Greer said, explaining that the tax structure was "specifically designed to allow for the democratization of real estate investment of all kinds."

Additionally, Greer rebutted the contention that REITs impose "undue influence" on the housing market, noting that REITs own less than three per cent of the overall housing stock in Canada, and that, "by definition," the vast majority of rental housing not owned by REITs are financialized investments.

Greer also said he disagrees with "any inference that REITs are somehow not contributing to new supply."

"Speaking for CAPREIT, our current strategy is to sell some of our older buildings, and invest in newly constructed assets," Greer said. He added that across the REIT sector in Canada, there are currently more than 230,000 homes in the "development pipeline."

"That's about a year's worth of housing starts in Canada, just from the REIT sector alone," Greer said. "REITs harness the capital markets, and use that capital to invest in new housing and play a disproportionate role in creating new housing development in Canada."

Of the approximately 120,000 existing apartment suites and homes owned by the five largest REITs, Greer said more than half of those are considered "affordable" housing based on the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) definition. The CMHC defines affordable housing as accounting for less than 30 per cent of a household's pre-tax income.

Greer also challenged the PBO's evaluation of how much tax revenue could be accrued if the exemption was removed, pointing to a study by the accounting firm Ernst and Young.

The private sector report found that taxing trusts at the same combined federal/Ontario corporate tax rate of 26.5 per cent would have a "marginal impact" on government tax revenues. It estimates the change would raise "no more than \$195-million" over five years. Alternatively, the change could also result in a \$93.5-million reduction in revenue due to decreased investment and economic activity, it said.

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Opinion



NDP MP Peter Julian's private member's bill, C-273, aims to repeal a provision in the Criminal Code 'that authorizes the correction of a child by force if certain criteria are met.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Protecting our children should inspire unanimous support in the House of Commons

Bill-C273 is Canada's opportunity to deal with the injustice inherent in Section 43 of the Criminal Code, and unequivocally protect our future through our children's rights.

George Zimmerman

Opinion



Despite appearances, there are occasions when the House of Commons comes together to unanimously pass legislation that clearly benefits all Canadians regardless of party affiliation because it is the absolute right thing

to do. It is the prayer of this op-ed that Bill C-273, which is now ready for the third reading in the House of Commons, receives the same treatment. Bill C-273 will repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada. That section—long left over from an archaic past—denies Canadian children the same protection from violence that is afforded adults. Section 43 of the Criminal Code allows for violent discipline of children.

At least two past bills that received unanimous support involved the rights of children. In 1988, then-NDP leader Ed Broadbent got the unanimous support of the House on a motion to end child poverty by the year 2000. On Nov. 26, 2013, the House voted unanimously to strengthen Canada's criminal laws against sexual exploitation and trafficking. Speeches from that debate appealed to MPs' respect for children as it was stated several times that 50 per cent of the victims of this heinous crime were children. Canadians love their children deeply, and of course all parties of the Parliament of Canada do, too.

Studies repeatedly published in leading peer-reviewed journals

in psychology, psychiatry, education, athletics, and child development have clearly shown that physical punishment of children as allowed under Section 43 does nothing to instill the self-regulation needed for productive functioning adults. Further, the evidence shows there is significant risk of dangerous harm to the well-being of children being disciplined with physical punishment. Finally, there are well-researched, more-effective interventions that only use positive non-violent methods of needed discipline in raising children.

If there are any lingering concerns about instilling self-regulation in children using no physical punishment, but rather only positive methodology, I am prepared to bear witness about a powerful example of a Kenyan community where only positive discipline is effectively used with hundreds of children. I volunteer as a chaplain and teacher of leadership at the Mully Children's Family (MCF) of Kenya. MCF has been rescuing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating traumatized and abandoned children from the poverty that kills in Kenya for 35 years. CEO

and founder Dr. Charles Mulli has built an astounding program that has within its scope today some 6,600 children in 11 campuses. MCF uses only positive non-corporal discipline to rehabilitate some 27,000 street children. Mulli reasons that physical punishment as discipline would only serve to harm further these already traumatized children, consistent with the research.

The studies are definitive. It is no longer a matter of further research; it is a matter of what now must be done in the light of that evidence. The result of this evidence of harm and violation of children's human rights led the United Nations in 1990 to adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes protection of children from physical punishment. Canada ratified the UN convention in 1991, but continues to invite repeated admonishments for not upholding its obligation to remove the legal justification for any level of violence against children. Inexplicably, Canada continues to lag behind the many countries that have, to date, reformed their laws and developed public policy precluding the use of physical punishment to discipline children.

Scotland, Wales, New Zealand, Germany, France, Australia, and Kenya have modified their laws to preclude physical punishment of children as a form of discipline. Nations continue to change their laws to reject physical punishment as a means to instill self-regulation in children, the latest being Laos. If developing countries see clearly the justice to protect—by law—the human rights of all its citizens, including the children, why would Canada, with all our education, mature justice system, and reputation as a champion of human rights continue to support this archaic law? It is ludicrous on its face. Canada should be leading nations on the responsible and most effective way of child development, not lagging behind.

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called

for the repeal of Section 43 as a vital act of reconciliation, calling it "a relic of a discredited past [that] has no place in Canadian schools or homes." It is a colonial law that violates children's rights to protection, dignity, and physical security. Then-commission chair Murray Sinclair stated the case well: "Children are totally dependent on adults for their basic needs. When their rights are violated, their lack of power renders them incapable of resistance or of taking action. Their vulnerability also causes them significant emotional and mental harm, precisely because correctional assaults are inflicted on them by adults that they depend on for protection, for love and for emotional well-being." How the government has not yet implemented this recommendation as an inexpensive effective way towards reconciliation is beyond reason.

In summary, Bill C-273 is Canada's opportunity to deal with the injustice inherent in Section 43 of the Criminal Code. I urge the House to pass Bill C-273 quickly and unanimously. In doing so, Canada would be unequivocally protecting by law our future through our children's rights, and would be strongly supporting the definitive science about child development. The members of the House of Commons, together, would be satisfying a key recommendation of the TRC, correcting a gross anomaly on our reputation for human rights, and joining many countries in the legal protection of their children. A great legacy indeed.

Retired naval captain George Zimmerman served in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1972 to 2010. He has served as a reserve naval officer and then, for 30 years, as a regular force chaplain. A Presbyterian minister, Zimmerman retired after 13 years from St. David and St. Martin Church in Ottawa. In retirement he enjoys time with his family, sailing during the summer, and volunteering as a chaplain to Mully Children's Family, Kenya.

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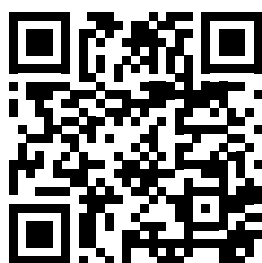
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Opinion



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly, and the Canadian government can help Israelis and Palestinians lay the foundations for lasting, just, and equitable peace in their homelands by heeding calls from Christian church leaders, write Leah Reesor-Keller, Carmen Lansdowne, and J. Dorcas Gordon. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The housing crisis and the municipal heritage of Canadian nationalism

There's a paradoxical relation between continental geography and municipal culture in defining Canada: the capacity for being a multi-national federation is linked to a national culture rooted in municipal loyalties.

Douglas
Jarvis

Opinion



Canada must act to end cycle of violence in Israel and Palestine

The Canadian government must unequivocally uphold international law and human rights, and hold states accountable for their legal obligations.

Leah Reesor-Keller,
Carmen Lansdowne
& J. Dorcas Gordon



Opinion

In January, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to take measures to prevent acts of genocide in the Gaza Strip. The government of Israel is not following this order.

Since the ICJ's ruling, about 9,000 Gazans have been killed, humanitarian aid has been blocked, and several aid workers have been killed. Now, Israel has started a military offensive on Rafah, where 1.5 million civilians shelter because there is no safe place to relocate in their homeland.

As Christian faith leaders, we are compelled to speak against hatred and injustice, and to pursue peace. We urgently ask the Canadian government to unequivocally uphold international law and human rights, and hold

states accountable for their legal obligations.

KAIROS Canada and its member churches represent more than four million Canadians. Our Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage: Canadian Churches for Just Peace, where pilgrims walk or roll—in full or in part—the 41-kilometre length of Gaza, offers solidarity for the people of Palestine and Israel, and culminates in a pilgrimage to Parliament Hill on May 22.

Many of us have long-standing partnerships with civil society and church-led partners in Israel and Palestine, some of whom receive international assistance from the Canadian government. For years, we have joined hands with them to urge an end to the cycles of violence and the decades-long occupation.

Our partners witness and survive the harsh impacts of Israeli occupation and the current armed conflict, which has overwhelmingly affected women and children. Under occupation, our partners see the lack of access to agricultural land, places of work, and medical support; child arrests; interrogation, and, often, detention without charges under Israeli military law. During the bombing and ground assault, they watch helplessly as family members are killed, their bodies buried under the rubble.

Despite this, our partners are committed to peacebuilding, and providing essential support to their communities.

One of us, the Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, just returned from Palestine. After seven days of

intense conversations with NGOs, Christian church leaders, and United Nations agencies in the occupied West Bank, on the latest of many such trips, she shares their message to the Canadian government: work honestly for peace with justice committed to ending the devastation of war, occupation, and ethnic cleansing.

Since Hamas' surprise attack against Israeli civilians and soldiers on Oct. 7, 2023, Israel's response has resulted in the deaths of more than 34,600 Palestinians, mostly women and children. Those who remain are at great risk of dying from persistent armed conflict, disease, dehydration, famine, and lack of adequate medical care.

Every state has a right to defend itself according to international law. It must do so within the bounds of these laws, including the laws governing occupation. Collective punishment and attacks against civilians violate this law, whether by immediate violent force, or long-term structural oppression.

We know from the response to Ukrainian refugees that we are capable of much more support to Palestinian refugees and family reunification. The Canadian government's lack of response to this crisis is cause for deep concern.

Canada was slow to call for a ceasefire.

Canada paused funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Canada ships military equipment to Israel; clearly, doing so is in violation of international law.

Canada agreed to stop approving arms sales to Israel, but it has not stopped shipments of arms already approved. It must do so immediately, or it is complicit in war crimes and violations of human rights. Ending all arms transfers to Israel is one of five calls by national and local church leaders, congregations, and communities of faith across Canada.

The other calls are: an enduring and sustained ceasefire; immediate flow of life-saving humanitarian assistance to Gaza; the release of all captives, including hostages and Palestinians imprisoned by Israel; and an end to the Israeli occupation.

Canada is vocal in its support for a rules-based global order, and international humanitarian law. We urge it to apply this approach to Israel's occupation of Palestine, and to immediately and decisively adopt our calls to action.

Canada can play a critical role in international efforts to end this cycle of violence. It can help Israelis and Palestinians lay the foundations for lasting, just, and equitable peace in their homelands.

A peace that is so urgently needed for the security, rights, and dignity of all.

Leah Reesor-Keller is the transitional executive director of KAIROS Canada. The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne is moderator of the United Church of Canada. The Rev. Dr. J. Dorcas Gordon is principal emerita, Knox College, the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The Hill Times

Continued on page 17

Don't let entrepreneurship concerns shield passive investors from fair taxes

We should eliminate unjustified tax breaks, and craft targeted capital gains exemptions that incentivize beneficial behaviours.

Lucas Szwarcberg
and Ramiz Razzak

Opinion



If you have been following Canadian news recently, you might be bracing for economic Armageddon. Since the federal government announced it would increase the inclusion rate for capital gains from one-half to two-thirds above certain thresholds, critics have been quick to denounce the measure in no uncertain terms. As we will argue, although there are valid concerns about losing entrepreneurs to other countries that may justify special exemptions for their capital gains, those concerns should not detract from including most types of capital gains at a rate of two-thirds or higher.

The common-sense intuition that income from different sources should be taxed equitably is the moral underpinning behind quips like “a buck is a buck,” popularized by Kenneth Carter, chair of the mid-1960s Royal Commission on Taxation. Although it may not have the same ring to it, we’d like to propose a slight amendment: a buck is a buck, *unless the Canadian economy stands to suffer as a result*. That is, our tax code should treat all income similarly by default, carving out exceptions only when there are compelling economic justifications.

Consider the Canadian entrepreneurial landscape. Innovation drives economic growth, and all Canadians benefit from an economy that is expanding and creating new jobs. As the tech community has pointed out, startup founders could be tempted to start their company in the United States rather than Canada to pay less in capital gains taxes on an eventual sale. Since entrepreneurs are likely to hire employees where they live, incentivizing them to locate in Canada through tax breaks on the sale of business shares could have significant positive ripple effects on the economy.

The government has already taken steps in this direction by raising the lifetime capital gains exemption, which will allow individuals to exempt certain sales of small-busi-



Canada could do more to attract ambitious founders, but there is no equivalent rationale for providing preferential treatment to many other kinds of capital gains, write Lucas Szwarcberg and Ramiz Razzak.

Photograph courtesy of Unsplash

ness shares up to \$1.25-million, and by creating the Entrepreneurs’ Incentive, which provides a reduced inclusion rate on an additional \$2-million. However, we are sympathetic to the argument that Canada could do more to attract ambitious founders, like matching the lower capital gains tax rates in the U.S. for startup founders’ share sales above these limits.

Crucially, though, there is no equivalent rationale for providing preferential treatment to many other kinds of capital gains. For instance, while an investor with a 200 per cent capital gain from Nvidia stock is surely entitled to profit from their investment, why should they pay less tax on this gain than they would on wage or dividend income? A passive investment in a foreign company cannot possibly generate more positive externalities to the Cana-

dian economy than participation in the workforce does.

Similarly, although some may legitimately worry that increasing taxes on investment properties could slow down construction amid a historic housing shortage, this concern doesn’t justify providing a broad tax break on property value gains. Direct incentives for construction, like the budget’s accelerated depreciation for new rental housing, are more effective than tax exemptions on property value gains because a portion of these gains reflects factors unrelated to investment like the inherent scarcity of land. Moreover, by fully taxing rental income while partially taxing capital gains, the tax code currently skews purchases toward booming markets with high price appreciation, which contributes to speculative growth and housing affordability issues in our urban centres.

The unfortunate reality about the current debate is that commentators are conflating multiple kinds of capital gains, which—on economic grounds—deserve drastically different treatment. The result is that in their well-intentioned desire to promote a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem in Canada, they are implicitly promoting a system that is both less fair and less efficient.

To build a better tax system, we should eliminate unjustified tax breaks, and craft targeted exemptions that incentivize beneficial behaviours. Importantly, advocating for a higher inclusion rate on most types of capital gains does not necessarily mean supporting bigger government. The newfound fiscal room can be used to cut personal income taxes, just like it can be used to fund spending or reduce deficits. Regardless of your political stance, one thing is clear: the solution is certainly not to exempt a whole class of people from taxes on the grounds of an innovation argument that doesn’t apply to them.

Lucas Szwarcberg and Ramiz Razzak both studied economics at Harvard University. Razzak is completing graduate studies in economics at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and is a former policy intern in Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland’s office.

The Hill Times

The housing crisis and the municipal heritage of Canadian nationalism

Continued from page 16

face politically risky scenarios. The Conservatives have even promised usage of the financial whip against municipal governments that don’t mandate housing according to federal guidelines. Whoever wins the next election will be facing the most pressing challenges of national unity and federal governance that are comparable to the era of Confederation and the Charter negotiations. Underlying that challenge is an even deeper cultural issue, which is the unique nature of “municipal” values in defining Canadian nationalism.

The major paradox of Canada is that it is both a continental and municipal nation. Canada is world famous for two main reasons: its northern expanse, and its multi-national structure. Both these features are connected to the paradoxical relation existing between continental geography



Each political party will have to present a national policy approach to housing, meaning the federal government will inevitably have a greater place in the internal dynamics of both provincial and local governments, writes Douglas Jarvis. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and municipal culture in defining our country. The capacity for us being a multi-national federation is linked to a national culture rooted in municipal loyalties. Our name arguably found its source in the Iroquoian phrase for a “collection of huts.” During the Quebec

Conference, John A. Macdonald, in his dream of a continental dominion, referred to the provinces as “glorified municipalities.” Our municipal governments may be “creatures of the provinces,” but as any premier knows, a provincial government is largely formed by

the coalition loyalties surrounding municipal concerns. Premiers are often found to be “creatures of the municipalities.” Even our post-war national identity and multi-partisan commitment to multiculturalism and global immigration is defined by the 1960s phrase “the global village,” which relies on municipal aesthetics.

As numerous studies of the country have shown, citizens are on the whole proud of being Canadian, but those definitions of what it means to be Canadian are almost always found to be expressed according to local values. The 2022 convoy protests—as divisive as they were when it came to disagreements over government policy—were also reflective of the differences that exist between rural and urban ideals of what it means to be Canadian. It was our municipal loyalties, as much as social media, that established the cognitive dissonance between the convoy

protest’s supporters and detractors that so divided us as a nation.

Now we are united by the housing crisis. We may differ on what is to be done, but we are all stuck with its consequences within each municipality. Every community in Canada now faces becoming a dire “collection of the hut-less.” To address that issue, we will have to muster the energy to unite on a national scale envisioned by strong federalist leaders such as Macdonald and Pierre Trudeau. Whoever leads the federal government will have to develop that nation-unifying energy with the underlying reality of Canadian federalism kept in mind, as defined by Georges-Étienne Cartier’s principle of political nationality. That principle relies on the fact our loyalty to Canada is often defined necessarily by the municipal values and loyalties we affirm to maintain a multi-national country across generations.

Dr. Douglas Jarvis is an assistant professor of political science and history at the University of Northern British Columbia. He has published in the *Journal of Family History*, *American Review of Canadian Studies*, *Canadian Review of American Studies*, and *The Hill Times*.

Opinion

First Nations Clean Water Act continues to fail treaty peoples



Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu tabled Bill C-61 in December 2023, which provides no long-term assurance for funding that will address existing gaps in infrastructure needs, and address new and growing costs to provide services for all First Nations, the Chiefs Steering Committee writes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Bill C-61 actually represents Canada's intent to offload its responsibilities by leaving First Nations liable and responsible after decades of living with underfunded and outdated water and wastewater systems.

Rupert Meneen

Opinion



Bill C-61 is currently at second reading in the House of Commons. Introduced late last year, it is touted by Canada as "the next step to ensure First Nations have clean drinking water for generations to come." The federal government claims C-61 will "recognize and affirm the inherent right of First Nations to self-govern-

water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on, in and under First Nation lands." Furthermore, that it will create "rights-based regulatory pathways to protect water and source water adjacent to First Nation lands, in consultation and co-operation with First Nations, other federal ministers, and provinces and territories, to help protect drinking water sources flowing onto First Nations lands."

Seems and sounds good, right?

In theory, yes. In practice, not a chance.

This legislation needs to be re-drafted to bind Canada's commitments to First Nations respecting our inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights to water, ensure overall health and sustainability of water and water infrastructure, and address the immense and glaring disparity in water standards and sub-standard conditions facing more than 600 nations across Turtle Island.

The Government of Canada has a shameful, racist history when it comes to protecting and providing resources for clean water and water/wastewater infrastructure in First Nations. Bill C-61 is a product of the Clean Water Class Action Settlement Agreement between Canada and the plaintiff First Nations in 2021. This class action sought to

serve drinking water advisories, and Canada's failure to ensure adequate access to safe drinking water in these communities.

Under the settlement agreement, Canada committed to a minimum of \$6-billion in funding, with approximately \$400-million annually from 2021 until 2031 towards constructing, upgrading, operating, and maintaining water and wastewater infrastructure for First Nations. For generations, Canada has repeatedly failed to address reserve infrastructure needs, and as treaty leaders, we have little confidence that C-61 will be the solution Canada claims it to be to resolve the immense disparity in water standards and infrastructure.

The promises of the Crown in treaty to respect our inherent rights to our lands, resources, and institutions as part of our mutual understandings to co-exist were intended "for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the waters flow." This is how the Crown and treaty relationship is supposed to be valued, to grow, and evolve. Our inherent and treaty right to access clean, safe water, and protect and preserve water sources needs to be less rhetorical and more concretely represented in Bill C-61 as the foundation upon which the Crown upholds its commitments.

Bill C-61—while referencing the ideals of recognizing our rights—actually represents Canada's intent to offload its legal and fiduciary responsibilities to ensure safe and clean water by leaving First Nations liable and responsible after decades of living with underfunded and outdated water and wastewater systems. In Alberta alone, the gap to simply bring existing First Nation water systems up to current standards is close to \$500-million. This amount doesn't consider costs to ensure access to, or health and sustainability of, local water sources. Bill C-61 provides no long-term assurance for funding that will address existing gaps in infrastructure needs, and address new and growing costs to provide services for all First Nations. Although the settlement agreement provides that Canada will at minimum need to spend \$400-million annually over the next 10 years, the math doesn't add up to be able to address current deficiencies across the country, let alone address new concerns stemming from impacts of climate change. Further, there are too many loopholes in Bill C-61 for Canada to delay implementation and commitments to funding. This is the perfect out for Canada to present itself as addressing First Nation water and wastewater infrastructure needs while at the

same time dumping its responsibilities to address liabilities related to chronic underfunding, and decades of outright neglect directly onto First Nations.

Bill C-61 also purports to ensure water protection zones, which involves First Nations, provincial, municipal, territory, and even county participation for source waters. The intention is that all parties will work together. C-61 falls short here, and doesn't consider situations or consequences when parties aren't collaborating. Recently, the Province of Alberta announced a plan to deal with unprecedented drought and water shortages, and has declared an early start to the wildfire season. This plan does not include us, or provide assurance towards future collaboration and prioritizing water protection zones.

Water is life. Water is sacred. Water is not a commodity to be licensed and manipulated for access. As First Peoples, our access to safe, clean, and lasting water is threatened. And here we are, with the prospect of another federal offload law purporting to give us something that is now in shortest supply after centuries of overuse, misuse, and outright abuse.

Canada needs to reset, re-evaluate, and look to the principles and intentions of our treaty relationship to find a mutually acceptable means to protecting water, our rights, and truly establishing a viable answer to our ongoing water and infrastructure needs. As treaty rights holders, we remind Canada of our expectations for free, prior, and informed consent, guaranteed in Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. At minimum, we need to redraft Bill C-61 to better address and accommodate our basic needs and bind the Crown to follow through. Failure to do so will result in this bill adding to Canada's long list of failures to ensure and protect First Nation access to healthy, safe, and sustainable water sources, and demonstrate Canada's shameful efforts to offload liabilities and ignore us.

Rupert Meneen is chief of Tallcree First Nation, Treaty 8. This piece is on behalf of the Chiefs Steering Committee, which also includes: Chief Trevor John, Kehewin Cree Nation; Chief Aaron Young, Chiniki First Nation; Chief Clifford Poucette, Wesley First Nation; Chief Wilfred HOOKA-NOOZA, Dene Tha' First Nation; Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation, Treaty 6; Chief Troy Knowlton, Piikani Nation, Treaty 7.

The Hill Times

Foreign influence registry's lack of legal carve-out undermines 'sacred' relationship, say lawyers

Unlike similar foreign influence registries in the U.K., U.S., and Australia, Canada's version would not exempt legal advice from triggering an obligation to report.

Continued from page 1

direction to communicate with the Canadian public or office holders or are handing out money to develop policy, legislative proceedings, decision-making, or elections and nominations.

During a technical briefing before the legislation was tabled, reporters asked Public Safety officials if the legislation included exemptions for lawyers providing legal advice or representation, and were told none had been included.

Canada's proposed foreign influence and transparency registry would only exempt foreign nationals who hold diplomatic or consular passports, employees of foreign principals "acting openly" in their official capacity, and any person "specified in the regulations."

Speaking with *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis, one lawyer said the lack of an exemption could pose a "legitimate problem," and that there isn't a clear understanding of the rationale for excluding one.

"Privilege is a pretty big deal," the lawyer said, adding that other colleagues they had spoken to had been "genuinely shocked"

Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc testifies at the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference on April 10. LeBlanc introduced a new Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act that would require those working for foreign powers to register, capturing a broad range of activities including legal advice. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



at the prospect of legal advice triggering an obligation to report to the government.

"It puts lawyers in a weird position where they're going to have to warn people—depending on the nature of the engagement—that they might have to make a report to the government," they said. "It feels very un-Canadian, and would not fly in many like-minded countries."

Additionally, they said that the lack of a carve-out could potentially be challenged in court, as the duty to report could infringe on the right to solicitor-client privilege.

"The sales tactics about Canada is that we have a great system of the rule of law," they said. "Yet, when it comes to a foreign party coming to Canada, they're a bit of a second-class citizen when it comes to using their lawyers."

They said the profession's general view was shared in recommendations the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) sent to Public Safety Canada in June 2023. A letter from the group called on the government to exempt legal advice from the foreign influence registry.

The statement issued on behalf of the CBA's administrative law, competition law, and foreign investment review sections said that while they welcomed a foreign influence registry, not exempting legal advice would raise "significant concern."

"The exemption is particularly important for legal advice and representation to foreign governments in the administration and enforcement of federal, provincial, and territorial legislation, including the Investment Canada Act and Competition Act," the letter reads, noting that legal advice or representation of a state-owned enterprise or foreign government entity should not be targeted by the registry. The letter also notes that similar exemptions for solicitor-client privilege exist in other jurisdictions with foreign influence registries like the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

The American Foreign Agents Registration Act exempts "any person qualified to practice law, insofar as he engages or agrees to engage in the legal representation of a disclosed foreign principal before any court of law or any agency of the Government of the United States: Provided, that ... legal representation does not include attempts to influence or persuade agency personnel or officials other than in the course of judicial proceedings, criminal or civil law enforcement inquiries,

investigations, or proceedings ... required by statute or regulation to be conducted on the record."

The draft guidance for the U.K.'s Foreign Influence Registration Scheme exempts "lawyers carrying out legal activities," alongside diplomatic family members and news publishers.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, the CBA declined to comment on the legislation as tabled, but noted it would have more to say once it had fully reviewed Bill C-70 and the proposed registry, and "analyzed all its potential impacts."

Lawyer Jacques Shore, a partner with Gowling WLG and former director of research for the Security Intelligence Review Committee, said he believes the foreign influence registry is "really important," but he isn't sure

why Canada would deviate from the examples set by other western allies already engaged with the issue of foreign interference.

"We have to be able to know who is trying to influence us, but we have to be mindful of the importance of the relationship between solicitor and client," Shore told *The Hill Times*. "There's something sacred about that privilege, and it's not something I think we should tamper with."

"I am completely supportive of the fact that we need to have legislation that provides transparency with respect to foreign interference; we need to be in line with our allies," Shore said. "But we don't need to engage the problem differently than our allies, and I think this requires serious, further consideration because if we don't allow this exemption, we could be on a slippery slope."

Additionally, Shore explained that if a lawyer meets with a government official, that lawyer must reveal the clients they represent as a requirement of their existing duties regarding professional and ethical conduct.

"That's already part and parcel of how a lawyer represents their clients," Shore said, noting that the public disclosure to the registry would violate solicitor-client privilege.

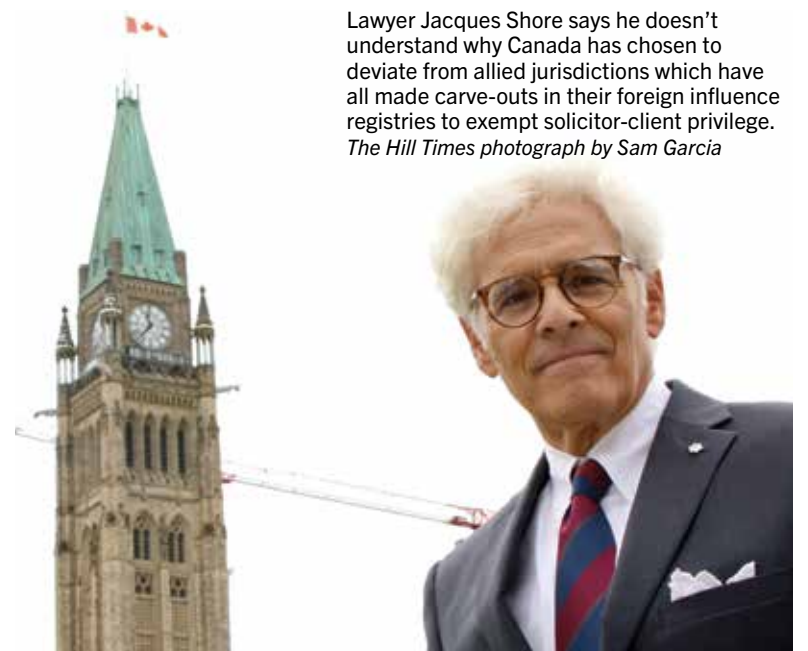
"It's a client's choice whether or not that representation is made public," Shore explained. "A public registry would undermine that privilege, and we really need to consider what extent we want to derogate from that privilege."

In response to questions from *The Hill Times* as to whether any exemptions for legal advice had been considered and why none had ultimately been included in the legislation, LeBlanc's office said the act aimed to set out "broad parameters" to govern who would be required to register.

"Further details will come through regulations once the legislation is adopted and a Foreign Transparency Influence Commissioner is appointed," wrote Jean-Sébastien Comeau, LeBlanc's press secretary.

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The Hill Times

Lawyer Jacques Shore says he doesn't understand why Canada has chosen to deviate from allied jurisdictions which have all made carve-outs in their foreign influence registries to exempt solicitor-client privilege. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia



In her initial report released on May 3, Commissioner Marie-Josée Hogue said foreign interference in the last two federal elections was a 'stain' on Canada's electoral process. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

As Canada preps for U.S. election, parliamentarians bring Ukrainian pitch to Capitol Hill

Questions loom over the future of American support for Ukraine if former U.S. president Donald Trump returns to the White House.

Continued from page 1

a return of Donald Trump to the White House, which brought shocks to the Canada-U.S. relationship. The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) will face a review in 2026 during the next American administration.

Government or not, Canadian politicians say there's merit in continued engagement with their American colleagues.

"We pressed them pretty hard on their wobbliness about Ukraine," said Liberal MP and IPG co-chair John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.), noting that the issue came up a "number of times."

McKay told *The Hill Times* that there isn't a "thin dime" between the political parties in Canada when it comes to their support for Ukraine, while the same condition isn't present south of the border.

"Republicans, in particular, had a couple of excuses, going back to Hunter Biden and ... the first impeachment [of Trump]," he said.

Trump's first impeachment was driven by his 2019 effort to exchange the release of aid that was approved by Congress for information from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy related to Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, that would have been detrimental to the now-U.S. president's election hopes.

"Why Ukraine has to have its legitimate expectation of weapons support curtailed by Republican dissatisfaction with Hunter Biden and the original impeachment, which Ukraine has nothing to do with, seems a little bit off," McKay said. "It's put Ukraine in a very awkward situation where they didn't get their weapons in a timely sort of way and that allowed the Russians to regroup."

He said the topic of Ukraine came up "quite frequently." Congress approved a much delayed



Liberal MP John McKay says the Canada-U.S. IPG made a 'quite forceful' case for supporting Ukraine while speaking to members of Congress. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

US\$61-billion aid package for Ukraine last month.

"Our delegation was making the case for Ukraine, I thought, quite forcefully," he said. "All of us were of the view that this package should have been passed earlier, and that there should be much stronger bipartisan [support]."

"I hope we landed that message," McKay said. "It's not something I anticipated [focusing on] going in. I thought there might be some discussion about Ukraine, but it became a fairly significant discussion."

It is an open question what a potential return of Trump to the White House would mean for U.S. funding for Ukraine. After a meeting with Trump in March, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said the former U.S. president told him that his White House wouldn't "give a penny" towards the Ukraine war. Trump has emphasized that Europe should be taking up the mantle, calling for European nations to match the assistance funds that Washington is giving Ukraine.

For the two-day Congressional visit, McKay was joined by fellow Liberal MP James Maloney (Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ont.); Conservative MPs Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, Alta.), and Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, Sask.); Bloc Québécois MP Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, Que.); Progressive Senator Andrew Cardozo (Ontario); Independent Senator Marty Deacon (Waterloo

Region, Ont.); and CSG Senator Jim Quinn (New Brunswick).

Deacon told *The Hill Times* that the topic of Ukraine was discussed "quite a bit," noting that the winner of the next U.S. presidential election could have an effect on America's relationship with Ukraine, as well as Russia, and what next steps will be taken.

"Those conversations came up throughout the two days," she said, adding that back in Canada, fatigue to confront the conflict is approaching at the same time that the "right equipment and financial support have to be in place."

With the next U.S. election fast approaching, the Nov. 5 vote was on the mind of politicians on both sides of the border.

"It's imperative that Canada be more prepared [than it was in 2016]," Deacon said, adding that she thinks that this time around, Ottawa would be ready for whatever the next election brings.

Prior to the IPG's visit to Capitol Hill, Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) was in Washington, D.C., where he met with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, among others. After Blair, it was Public Services and Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que.) turn to venture inside the Beltway. Last week, Treasury Board President Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) was also in Washington and Chicago as part of the "Team Canada" efforts where she was working to "advance regulatory co-operation," according to a release about her trip.

Before Trudeau and the three cabinet ministers ventured south of the border, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) and International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.)—who are co-chairing the "Team Canada" effort alongside Canadian Ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman—kicked off the initiative with a visit to Washington in February. Since then, there have been trips to Michigan, Ohio, Georgia, New York, and Nebraska.

Champagne was also in Washington in late April for the White House Correspondents' Dinner. According to gift filings with the Ethics Commissioner's registry, PMO chief of staff Katie Telford, deputy chief of staff Brian Clow, and Hillman also attended the gala.

Trade consultant Eric Miller, president of the Rideau Potomac

Strategy Group, said the challenge for the government will be transforming the new connections into tangible benefits for Canada.

"We're spending a lot of time meeting people. We're spending a lot of time telling people [what] things are important," said Miller, a former senior policy adviser in Canada's Washington Embassy. "Ultimately [the question] is: how does that play into CUSMA renegotiations? How does this play into other Canadian priorities?"

"The first part in any process is to build relationships, which is very much what they're in the process of doing. But once you've built the relationships, it is how do you want to leverage those relationships? The key question, of course, will be: how do you get the people you are cultivating to do what you want?"

He said despite rhetoric highlighting the importance of the Canada-U.S. relationship, American interests tend to always trump those of Canada's.

"Engagement to action would be the challenge here," Miller said. "How do we turn the people we're seeing into advocates?"

Former Canadian diplomat Roy Norton, who is a former two-time consul general in Detroit and Chicago, said the government is likely trying to build links in both Democratic and Republican camps so the first call won't be during a crisis.

He said there is great value in building links away from the

Beltway, as it can be easier to convince a Congressional constituent of the value of the Canadian position, rather than a member of Congress themselves.

"If you can enthuse and prospectively rally chambers of commerce in Pennsylvania, unions in Pennsylvania, to a united cause or approach down the road that may have a bigger impact on the voting intention of legislators in Pennsylvania—Senate and House—than simply seeing them in Washington where there is no end in supplicants," he said.

"The people in their districts that create jobs and can influence opinion are the ones with enduring power and capability," he added.

To have greater impact on the ground, Norton said Canada should boost its team of consuls general in swing states, including in Arizona, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and even Wisconsin.

"If we were really serious about enhancing our advocacy prospects on an ongoing basis, we would have consulates in more of the places that matter. And I don't mean matter to business, I mean matter electorally," he said.

Norton said Washington and the White House are increasingly paying attention to voices from swing states.

Both Norton and Miller said the biggest issue for Canada to tackle after the next presidential inauguration is the CUSMA review.

The trilateral trade deal mandates a review after six years to decide if all three countries want to add an additional 16-year term to the pact. If, in 2026, one of three parties doesn't want to renew the pact, it sets out a process for the agreement to collapse by 2036, which will include annual reviews during that period for the option to reverse course and agree to extend the pact.

Miller said the success of the "Team Canada" efforts likely won't be known until the review plays out.

"[The review] is more and more likely to be an extensive process, and that's where hopefully this will pay dividends," he said.

Deacon said one focus during the meetings with American lawmakers was on the upcoming review of CUSMA in 2026.

"We certainly talked about it at great length," she said.

She said that Democratic members of Congress didn't discuss the issue deeply, but that Republican lawmakers indicated a desire to have a "deeper dive as opposed to just a review."

"Our takeaway is that [the review is] a reflection, not a deconstruction," Deacon said. "There may be some adjustments, but not a major overhaul."

McKay said the upcoming review was regularly raised.

"There's no downside to planting the ideas that if this is to be reviewed and if, in fact, Donald Trump is the president, we could do with a lot less drama and a lot more substantive negotiations," he said.

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Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne has been criss-crossing the U.S. as part of the government's 'Team Canada' efforts, with stops in Michigan, Ohio, Georgia, New York, and Nebraska. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Japan hosts tea time

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai's Valerie Mespouledé performs a tea ceremony co-hosted by the Japanese Embassy and International Club Ottawa (ICO) at the Japanese ambassador's residence on April 17.



Gunjan Verma, the Indian high commissioner's wife, left; Betty Leon Ossa, the Colombian ambassador's wife; Tricia Malonda Simanjuntak, the Indonesian ambassador's wife; and Tiina Väljast, the Estonian ambassador's wife.



Sōkō Ueda, Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai instructor, left; Mespouledé; Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi; Verma; Isabella Abols, ICO Talks chair; and ICO president Vicky Jasperse.



Tokurō Furuya, deputy head of mission at the Japanese embassy, left; and Abols.

Hungary commemorates Holocaust



Soprano Florajove Katz performs at a memorial event for the victims of the Holocaust in Hungary on April 16 at the Hungarian Embassy.



Hungarian Ambassador Mária Vass-Salazar, left, welcomes Israeli Ambassador Iddo Moed.



Violinist Shaina McPhee performs.



European Union Ambassador Melita Gabric, left; British High Commissioner Susannah Goshko; and Vass-Salazar.



Vass-Salazar, left; and Holocaust survivor Vera Gara.

Canadian, ASEAN business allies throw bash



Canada-ASEAN Business Council (CABC) co-chair Jan De Silva, left, and Senator Mohammad Al Zaibak pose at the CABC reception in the Senate of Canada Building on Feb. 27.



PSG Senator Clément Gignac, co-chair of the Canada-ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group, left; CABC honorary chair Jean Charest; and Thai Ambassador Kallayana Vipattipumiprates.



Liberal MP Chandra Arya, left, and Conservative Senator Victor Oh.



ISG Senator Stan Kutcher, left, chats with Conservative MP Ed Fast.



Conservative MPs Damien Kurek, left, and Ziad Aboultaif; and Vipattipumiprates.



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

O'Regan names acting comms head, hires new issues manager

Jane Deeks has left Labour and Seniors Minister Seamus O'Regan's shop to join Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office as director of digital communications.

There's been some notable movement in Labour and Seniors Minister Seamus O'Regan's office this spring, with deputy chief of staff and director of communications Jane Deeks' departure to join the staff ranks in 80 Wellington St., and the return of director of parliamentary affairs Damien O'Brien.



Jane Deeks is now director of digital communications in the PMO. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Deeks, who had been working for O'Regan since the fall of 2022, has joined Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office as director of digital communications—a role that's been unfilled since Johanna Robinson's exit from the top office this past January. She marked her last day in O'Regan's office on April 16.

Deeks was first hired to work as director of communications in O'Regan's office as then-solely labour minister in October 2022, and a year later—after the July 2023 cabinet shuffle that saw O'Regan add on responsibility for the seniors file—Deeks was promoted to also serve as the minister's deputy chief of staff.

Deeks has been a federal political staffer since the Trudeau Liberals were first elected to government in 2015, with her first gig being that of constituency assistant to then-Toronto Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett. Deeks came to Ottawa to work in Bennett's MP office on the Hill in 2018, and soon after landed the role of press secretary to Bennett as then-minister for Crown-Indigenous relations. She's since also been press secretary and later communications director to then-fisheries and oceans minister Bernadette Jordan—

staying on for a time to do the same for Jordan's portfolio successor, Joyce Murray—and director of communications to then-employment, workforce development, and disability inclusion minister Carla Qualtrough.

Prior to being hired by Bennett in 2015, Deeks was working for Earth + City, a prepared foods delivery, wholesale, and catering company in Toronto.

In the PMO, she'll be working closely with executive director of communications Max Valiquette, director of communications Vanessa Hage-Moussa, and director of media relations Ann-Clara Vaillancourt.

With Deeks' departure, Jonathan Robinson has been named acting director of communications to O'Regan.

Robinson was first brought on to O'Regan's team last fall to fill in as acting director of parliamentary affairs while O'Brien was on paternity leave. O'Brien recently returned from leave, freeing Robinson up to take on another acting role.



Jonathan Robinson is now acting communications director to Minister O'Regan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Prior to joining the labour and seniors minister's shop, Robinson was a senior policy adviser and later director of parliamentary affairs to Murray as then-fisheries minister. A current member of the Canadian Armed Forces, Robinson has also previously worked as an assistant to both British Columbia Liberal MP Hedy Fry and to Murray as the MP for Vancouver Quadra, B.C., and is a former West and North regional affairs adviser with the Liberal research bureau.

In other office news, Joseph Pagani was recently hired as a new issues manager to O'Regan. Pagani moved to Canada from New Zealand late last year after spending most of 2023 as a policy analyst with the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries. He's also previously worked for the Wellington Chamber of Commerce in New Zealand, last under the title of senior policy and external relations adviser, and is a former communications adviser with the London, U.K.-based think tank Progressive Centre UK.



Labour and Seniors Minister Seamus O'Regan speaks with reporters in the foyer outside the House of Commons Chamber in the West Block on Feb. 28. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Joseph Pagani recently joined Minister O'Regan's team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Pagani recently posted about his new job on LinkedIn, writing: "In 2015, as a second-year politics student on the other side of the world, I watched Justin Trudeau's Liberal Government get elected. It's a government I have looked to as an example throughout my career—and a leading light for progressive politics around the world. And now, I'm incredibly honoured to play my own small part in this government's success."

Pagani holds a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations, and a master's in international trade, both from Victoria University of Wellington.

Pagani's hiring helps to fill a gap left by Connor Fisher's departure from O'Regan's office earlier this spring.



Connor Fisher is now an Ontario regional affairs adviser to Minister St-Onge. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Fisher, who had been an issues manager and senior special assistant for parliamentary affairs to O'Regan, left to join Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge's office as an Ontario regional affairs adviser. The Ontario desk opened up in St-Onge's shop at the beginning of the year with Patrick Pereira's departure. As has been noted in these pages, Pereira is now working for the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

Fisher began working for O'Regan after the minister took charge of the seniors portfolio last summer, and had previously

been working for then-seniors ministers Deb Schulte and Kamal Khara, starting as a legislative assistant under Schulte and later becoming a special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs, and finally Atlantic regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary under Khara. He's also a former assistant to Schulte as the MP for King-Vaughan, Ont.

Paul Moen is chief of staff to O'Regan, while Jude Welch is in charge of St-Onge's office.

Trade Minister Ng adds digital content aide

Export Promotion, International Trade, and Economic Development Minister Mary Ng welcomed Holly Johnson to her office as a digital content creator in late April.



Holly Johnson is a new addition to Minister Ng's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Johnson recently graduated from the University of Ottawa with a bachelor's degree in social science focused on conflict studies and human rights, and has experience working as a summer student for the Canadian Real Estate Association, as noted on her LinkedIn profile.

Together with her father, Bruce Johnson, Holly Johnson has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals through an initiative dubbed Motorcycle for Miracles, which has seen the pair embark on multiple motorcycle treks in North, South, and Central America.

In Ng's office, Johnson reports to director of communications Giulia Doyle, who also oversees press secretary Huzair Qaisar.

In a more belated update, Elizabeth Rajanayagam, who had been hired as executive assistant to Ng last December, left the minister's shop a couple of months later in February of this year.

Kevin Coon is chief of staff to the trade minister.

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The Hill Times

Treasury Board boss Anita Anand takes centre stage at Ottawa mayor's breakfast on May 23



Amid the furor over the government's increased return-to-office mandate for public servants, Treasury Board President Anita Anand will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast on May 23 at Ottawa City Hall. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

House Sitting Schedule—The House is scheduled to sit for a total of 125 days in 2024. The House is sitting for five straight weeks until June 21. After the summer break, the House resumes sitting on Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but will take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18-Dec. 17.

AFN Dialogue on Transport and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the fourth in a four-part series, "Regional Dialogues on the Transportation and Storage of Used Nuclear Fuel" from April 9-May 22, to advocate for First Nations' active involvement in decisions about used nuclear fuel, management, and transportation across Turtle Island. Wednesday, May 22, at 8 a.m. ET at the Delta Hotels by Marriott, 2240 Sleeping Giant Pkwy., Thunder Bay, Ont. Details online: afn.ca/events.

SOCAN Parliamentary Reception—The Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) is back on the Hill to host its annual reception that will showcase some of the best in Canadian musical talent. Wednesday, May 22, from 5:30 p.m. (or after votes) to 7:30 p.m. in the East Block Courtyard, Parliament Hill.

An Evening with Joe Clark—The Pearson Centre hosts "An Evening with Joe Clark," a celebration of the 45th anniversary of Clark's election as Canada's 16th prime minister. Wednesday, May 22, at 5:45 p.m. at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Contact info@thePearsonCentre.ca.

THURSDAY, MAY 23

Minister Anand at the Mayor's Breakfast—Treasury Board President Anita Anand will be the special guest at

the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, the *Ottawa Business Journal*, and the Ottawa Board of Trade. Thursday, May 23, at 7:30 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details online: business.ottawabot.ca.

Breakfast: 'VIA Rail's 2030 Vision'—The Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal hosts a breakfast event with Mario Pélouquin, president and CEO of VIA Rail, who will deliver remarks in French on "VIA Rail's 2030 vision: To be at the heart of Canada's passenger journey." Thursday, May 23, at 7:30 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton, 1201 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details online: ccmm.ca.

FRIDAY, MAY 24

Africa Day 2024—The Casa Foundation for International Development hosts Africa Day 2024, "Celebrating Excellence in the People of African Descent," featuring a panel session exploring opportunities for growth in sustainable investment and development in African countries by Canadian entrepreneurs. Participants include government officials, ambassadors and diplomats, industry experts, and entrepreneurs. Friday, May 24, at 9 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St. Details online via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, MAY 27

Ambition 2035 Briefing Reception—Canada's Ocean Supercluster will be on Parliament Hill to discuss its \$220-billion ambition for Canada's ocean economy. A briefing reception will be hosted in the evening that will feature innovation stations highlighting Canadian-made ocean solutions. Monday, May 27, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Contact osc@national.ca.

TUESDAY, MAY 28

Canadian Biogas Association Meet and Greet Reception—The Canadian

Biogas Association is hosting an evening of refreshments and conversation with its members and board of directors as part of its ongoing advocacy for the potential of the biogas and renewable natural gas sector in Canada. Tuesday, May 28, 5-8:30 p.m. ET in the Quebec Suite at the Château Laurier. Those interested are encouraged to RSVP to cba@paainc.ca.

Insurance Brokers Association of Canada Reception—Please join insurance brokers from across the country at a parliamentary reception wrapping up a successful annual advocacy day on the Hill. Tuesday, May 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET, in the Renaissance Room, Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Register: rsvp@summa.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

Ambassador Hillman to Deliver Remarks—Canada's Ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman will deliver remarks in French at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, May 29, at 11:30 a.m. at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal, 1201 Blvd René-Lévesque W., Montreal. Details online: corim.qc.ca.

Vote16 Ottawa Summit—Non-affiliated Senator Marilou McPhedran hosts the Vote16 Ottawa Summit, a gathering of groups and leaders working towards youth empowerment through democratic reform. Wednesday, May 29, at 2 p.m. at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Reception—The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority will be holding a reception. Wednesday, May 29, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa.

Canadian Steel Parliamentary Reception—Join members of the Canadian Steel Producers Association from across the country and the Parliamentary Steel Caucus at a parliamentary

reception to recognize the strategic benefits of Canadian steel's contribution to our domestic economic activity, environmental performance, and overall prosperity. Wednesday, May 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m., in the Wellington Building, Room 310. Please RSVP to RSVP@ottawa@globalpublic.com by May 20.

LAC Scholar Awards—Get ready to honour outstanding Canadians who have left an indelible mark on our country's cultural, literary, and historical heritage at the 2024 Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards. Presented by The Library and Archives Canada Foundation and Library and Archives Canada, with generous sponsor Air Canada. Wednesday, May 29, 6 p.m. ET, at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa.

Riverkeeper Gala—The 2024 Riverkeeper Gala will take place on Wednesday, May 29, 6-11 p.m. ET at the NCC River House, 501 Sir George-Étienne Cartier Pkwy., Ottawa. Tickets: riverkeepergala.com.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29—THURSDAY, MAY 30

CANSEC 2024—The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries holds its annual global defence and security trade show, featuring keynotes from cabinet ministers and Canadian Armed Forces leadership. Wednesday, May 29, to Thursday, May 30, at the EY Centre, 4899 Uplands Dr., Ottawa. For details, visit: defenceandsecurity.ca/CANSEC/.

THURSDAY, MAY 30

2024 Economic Reconciliation Summit—Indigenous Services Minister and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario Patty Hajdu, and Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, and Economic Development Mary Ng are among the speakers at the 2024 Economic Reconciliation Summit hosted by Canada 2020 and Indigenous leaders from across the country. Thursday, May 30, at 10 a.m. ET the Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Canada's Current Economic Landscape'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts a panel discussion, "Examining Canada's Current Economic Landscape" with former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz, and former federal Liberal finance minister John Manley. Which economic policies should Canada look to apply for the remainder of 2024, what are the options available, and what can be done in the immediate future to ensure the health and longevity of the Canadian economy? Thursday, May 30, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto, 145 Richmond St. W., Toronto. Details online: economicclub.ca.

Doors Open at Justice Canada—The Department of Justice is holding its annual hybrid "Open Doors at Justice" event to engage with the public and stakeholders on various topics related to making government more open and accessible. Thursday, May 30, from 2-4 p.m. ET at the Department of Justice of Canada, 284 Wellington St. Details online via Eventbrite.

Steve Paikin to Launch New Book—TVO host Steve Paikin will take part in the Ottawa launch of his biography on a former prime minister, *John Turner: An Intimate Biography of Canada's 17th Prime Minister*. He will sign copies of the book, which is included with ticketed entry. A reception will follow. Thursday, May 30, at 5 p.m. ET at Walter House, 282 Somerset St. W., Ottawa. Details online via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Empowering East African Youth through Education'—The Aga Khan Foundation Canada and the Canada-Mathare Education Trust host a panel discussion, "Rise and Thrive: Empowering East African Youth through Education" exploring innovative approaches, challenges, and triumphs in promoting educational access for girls in East Africa and beyond. Thursday, May 30, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam, 199 Sussex Dr. Details online via Eventbrite.

Tapirit 2024—Inuit Tapirit Kanatami hosts an intimate celebration of Inuit culture and the traditions that unite us. Enjoy an evening of entertainment and a culinary journey of Inuit country food, hunted and harvested across the four regions of Inuit Nunangat. Thursday, May 30, 6-10 p.m. ET, National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details on Facebook or Instagram. Purchase tickets online: itk.ca.

2024 Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture—This year's Ellen Meiksins Wood Prize recipient, economist Dr. Isabella Weber, will deliver the 2024 Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture. Weber is a leading voice on policy responses to inflation, and has advised policymakers in the United States and Germany on questions of price stabilization. Thursday, May 30, at 7 p.m. ET at the Toronto Metropolitan University's George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre. Details online: torontomu.ca.

Webinar: 'How To Run (and Win) Campaigns'—The Right Recruiter Conservative Talent Network hosts a webinar, "How To Run (and Win) Campaigns." Veteran Canadian political campaigner Steve Outhouse will chat with Jenni Byrne, one of the most experienced local campaign managers in the country who has run multiple national general election campaigns, and who piloted Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's leadership campaign in 2022. Thursday, May 30, at 7 p.m. ET taking place online: rightrecruiter.ca/jenni.

German Ambassador in the Yukon—Germany's Ambassador to Canada Sabine Sparwasser will discuss Germany-Canada relations at an event hosted by the Canadian International Council. Thursday, May 30, at 5:30 p.m. PT at the Baked Cafe. Details online: thecic.org.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

Mexican Presidential Election—Mexico's presidential election happens on Sunday, June 2.

MONDAY, JUNE 3

Minister LeBlanc to Deliver Keynote—Minister of Public Safety Dominic LeBlanc will deliver a keynote address at the day-long 2024 National Security Conference hosted by the Policy Insights Forum. Other participants include New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs (by video); former U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman; Shelly Bruce, former chief of the Communications Security Establishment; and two former national security and intelligence advisers to the prime minister: Richard Fadden and Vincent Rigby. Monday, June 3, at 9 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th floor, 99 Bank St. Details online via Eventbrite.

Book Launch and Panel for The Prince—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival hosts a panel discussion for the launch of Stephen Maher's new book *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau*. Panellists include *The Hill Times'* Charelle Evelyn, *The Globe and Mail's* Steven Chase and Ian Bailey, and *Le Devoir's* Marie Vastel. Monday, June 3, at 7 p.m. ET at the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, 154 Somerset St. W. Details online: writersfestival.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

Book Launch: The Prince—Journalist and author Stephen Maher will host a book launch for his new book, *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau*. Tuesday, June 4, 5-7 p.m. ET, at the Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa.

Book Launch: Laurier Liberals and the Theft of First Nations Reserve Land—Library and Archives Canada hosts the Ottawa launch of historians Bill Waiser and Jennie Hansen's new book *Cheated: The Laurier Liberals and the Theft of First Nations Reserve Land*, a compelling narrative of single-minded politicians, uncompromising Indian Affairs officials, grasping government appointees, and well-connected Liberal speculators, set against a backdrop of politics, power, patronage, and profit. Tuesday, June 4, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details online via Eventbrite.

DEFENCE

POLICY BRIEFING

Publication date: **Wednesday, May 29**
Advertising deadline: **Thursday, May 23**

The Liberal government released a defence policy update on April 8 that is projected to bring Canadian defence spending to 1.76 per cent of GDP by 2029, although that still falls short of its NATO commitment to spend two per cent of GDP on defence. Does the update prepare Canada in terms of security and military preparedness?

What are the challenges facing Canada in terms of ensuring security and sovereignty in the Arctic? How can the federal government address Arctic security?

The Canadian Armed Forces has been grappling with a recruitment shortage and delays in procurement of new equipment for years. How can the shortfall in personnel be addressed?

What new technologies and innovations are changing Canada's defence landscape? How can Canada build a culture of innovation for defence?

The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces continue to deal with issues of discrimination and harassment. How can a cultural shift towards a respectful workplace be achieved?

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