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NEWS

'The trust has been broken': accountability for racism in PCO requires resignations, says Black Class Action lead Thompson

The Privy Council Office can't be relied on to get its own affairs in order after a damning internal report detailing a culture of racism and workplace discrimination, says a coalition of federal employees and civil society groups.

BY STUART BENSON

As Canada recognized Emancipation Day last week, commemorating the 1834 abolition of slavery across the British Empire, a coalition of Black public service employees and their union allies marched to the steps of the Privy Council Office demanding "accountability and resignations" to free the office and its employees from racial discrimination.

Led by representatives from the Black Class Action Secretariat, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and the Cana-

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Black Class Action Secretariat CEO Nicholas Marcus Thompson addresses an Emancipation Day rally calling for action on workplace discrimination within the PCO on Aug. 1 at the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

All aboard: Tory MP Reid wants to change how House rules can be amended

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Conservative MP Scott Reid has pitched changes to how House of Commons rules can be amended, with the aim of incentivizing all-party consensus, and his proposal is headed to committee for study this fall.

But while MPs unanimously voted to send Reid's (Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, Ont.) motion, M-109, to the Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) in June, it could face opposition down the legislative road.

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NEWS

Another privilege battle brewing as feds refuse to give House unredacted green fund docs

BY NEIL MOSS

The House of Commons' top lawyer is sounding an alarm as scores of gov-

ernmental departments and agencies failed to turn over unredacted documents

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Speaker Fergus sets first House party



House Speaker Greg Fergus will host his first garden party at The Farm for MPs and press gallery members on Sept. 17. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

House Speaker **Greg Fergus** sent out save-the-date cards last week to his parliamentary colleagues and members of the press gallery for his garden party on Sept. 17.

Official invitations will follow. The House speaker traditionally holds an annual party at the official residence, known as The Farm, in Chelsea, Que.

This will be Fergus' first time hosting such a party after being elected as Speaker on Oct. 2, 2023.

Last year, then-Speaker **Anthony Rota** was all set to welcome reporters and MPs to The Farm for a feast of seafood and other delicacies on Sept. 26, but cancelled the event just hours earlier following his departure from the post. His resignation was fallout from his decision to invite a former Ukrainian soldier who fought under the Nazis to the House during Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy's** official visit last September.

Rota ended up donating the party food—which included scallops, shrimp, oysters, lamb meatballs, and pouding chômeur—to the Ottawa Mission shelter in Sandy Hill, CTV Ottawa reported at the time.

Former Health DM joins Public Policy Forum

Stephen Lucas is keeping busy in his retirement. After a lengthy public service career that culminated in serving as the deputy minister for Health Canada for roughly five years—through a global pandemic, no less—Lucas has signed on as a fellow with the Public Policy Forum.

Greg Orenacsak was tapped to fill Lucas' shoes at Health Canada, effective Aug. 19.

Lucas retired from the public service in May, and will be bringing his 35 years to bear at PPF, the organization announced on July 31.

"Lucas is an accomplished public servant with extensive experience in economic, environment, social and health policy, as well as science and technology," PPF said in a social media post. "At PPF, we pride ourselves on putting forward ideas that help tackle the biggest issues of our time; we've found an excellent partner in Lucas and look forward to benefiting from his wealth of knowledge and wisdom on all fronts."



Health Minister Mark Holland, left, and deputy minister Dr. Stephen Lucas at the House Health Committee meeting on March 21. *Screenshot courtesy of Parlvu*

Ministers Khera and Valdez at next month's Next Campaign Summit



Cabinet ministers Kamal Khera, left, and Rechie Valdez are among the speakers at the Next Campaign summit on Sept. 12. *The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade*

Billing itself as "Canada's first non-partisan event focused on political campaigning, innovation, and modern technology," the Next Campaign Summit is sure to be a hot ticket for those with electioneering on the brain.

The one-day event is scheduled to take place in Toronto on Sept. 12 with a decent list of noteworthy confirmed speakers. Among them are two GTA cabinet ministers—Minister of Small Business **Rechie Valdez**, and Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities Minister **Kamal Khera**—and two ex-PMO staffers: past director of operations, outreach, and planning **Vandana Kattar-Miller**, and former principal secretary **Gerald Butts**.

Ontario Transport Minister **Prabmeet Sarkaria**, Angus Reid Institute president **Sachi Kurl**, political strategist **Nick Kouvalis**,

and **Jeremy Broadhurst**, the federal Liberals' national campaign director, are also among the presenters.

The day's session topics include timely issues like "Artificial Intelligence and Canadian Politics"; "The Next Federal Election: Defining the Future of Campaigning"; "Online Advertising, Connected TV & Future of Political Digital Marketing"; and "Political Campaigns and Cybersecurity." All this fun will be taking place at Hotel X Toronto at 111 Princes' Blvd., a stone's throw from the island airport on Lake Ontario.

The summit is organized by ex-PMO staffer and Nexus Strategic Consultants co-founder **Brett Thalman**, who has helped run the past three Liberal election campaigns; digital strategist **Harneet Singh**, who owns and is principal consultant at EOK Consults; and **Hasneet Singh Punia**, who is a former chief of staff to both a provincial minister and to a mayor of a large urban Canadian municipality, according to the event's website. Punia also has experience working on "numerous campaigns across Ontario and has been instrumental in leveraging modern technology for voter contact, GOTV [Get Out The Vote] and ethnic reach."

Ulric Shannon headed back to Egypt



Ulric Shannon will be Canada's new envoy to Egypt. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Ulric Shannon has been tapped as Canada's new ambassador to Egypt, Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** announced on July 30.

Shannon will take over from **Louis Dumas**.

This isn't Shannon's first time at the Canadian Embassy in Cairo. The career diplomat previously served there as a political officer, later going on postings to Ramallah, Islamabad, and Istanbul. His first full ambassadorial appointment was to Iraq from 2019 to 2021.

Back in 2012, Shannon received the department's foreign-language fellowship to pursue advanced studies in Arabic.

While on leave at the University of Ottawa in 2022, he wrote a report titled *Competitive Expertise and Future Diplomacy*, which found that foreign language compliance at Global Affairs Canada was between 18 and 23 per cent among Canadian diplomats, also

raising a red flag over Canada's use of a generalist model for its foreign service.

Superior Court expected to rule on Pat King's charges on Oct. 4



Freedom Convoy organizer Pat King. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The Superior Court is scheduled to rule on 2022 Freedom Convoy organizer **Pat King's** criminal charges on Oct. 4.

King has pleaded not guilty to mischief, counselling others to commit mischief, obstructing police, and other offences, The Canadian Press reported last week.

The protest over COVID-19 vaccine mandates and the federal government attracted thousands of protesters and a convoy of trucks, shutting down Ottawa's downtown core around Parliament Hill for almost a month in 2022.

But King's time in court isn't over. He's facing fresh charges of having breached his bail conditions following a broadcast he made at the close of his criminal trial last week in Ottawa, the CBC reported on July 30.

Adam Dodek to release book on law firm Heenan Blaikie

University of Ottawa law professor **Adam Dodek** has a new book coming out in October, *The Making and Unmaking of a Great Canadian Law Firm*, published by UBC Press. "What really happened at Heenan Blaikie? This is the ultimate account of what went on behind the scenes of the largest law firm dissolution in Canadian history," according to the release by UBC Press.

"Dodek astutely situates the firm's rise and fall within the context of events of the time: the 1970s oil shock, Quebec separatism, the flight of business from Montreal to Toronto, economic expansion from the 1980s to early 2000s, and the 2008 financial crisis. *Heenan Blaikie* is a meticulous account that is gripping from beginning to end." The book will be released on Oct. 15.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



China's Decision to Further Deepen Reform Comprehensively Will Bring More Opportunities for China-Canada Cooperation

The world's second-largest economy and a crucial engine of global economic growth, China has been the focus of attention for Canada and the international community. Over the past year, there have been assertions in some Western countries suggesting that the Chinese economic engine has failed. However, such arguments are debunked under the impressive figures from China's recently released economic data for 2023.

The pivotal session was held at a critical moment, as China is striving for national rejuvenation through a Chinese path to modernization. The key outcome of the plenary session is the adoption of the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization*. It outlines 60 specific tasks and 336 reform measures, a highly detailed and wide-ranging plan unprecedented in scope and intensity. It also draws up a new blueprint for China's reform and opening up. The session marks a step forward in China's consistent reform efforts and opens a new chapter for Chinese modernization. Moreover, it will provide a useful guide for Canadian businesses to continue to understand China and seize the development opportunities brought by China's further reform.

Development opportunities will be created for all as China deepens reform of economic system. Recently, the international community has taken an increasingly optimistic view about China's efforts to deepen reform and shown more confidence about China's future development. The latest Asian Development Outlook released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) forecasts that from 2024 to 2025, China will account for 46 percent of the economic growth of Asian developing countries and remain the largest contributor to the global economic growth. China will better leverage the role of the market, foster a fairer and more dynamic market environment, and make resource allocation as efficient and productive as possible. We will ensure that economic entities under all forms of ownership have equal access to factors of production in accordance with the law, compete in the market on an equal footing, and are protected by the law as equals. We will further unify and improve market regulations and enhance the market environment. Meanwhile, China will deepen supply-side structural reform, improve incentive and disciplinary mechanisms for promoting high-quality development, and foster new quality productive forces tailored to local conditions.

Market opportunities will emerge as China pursues all-around innovation in institutions and mechanisms. China has gone up to 12th place on the Global Innovation Index 2023, up from the 34th in 2012. China has been the top filer of international patent applications for four

consecutive years, making itself one of the leading countries in the area of IP and innovation. It will keep its consistent focus on advancing research and education, cultivating high-standard human resources, and driving development via innovation, so as to boost the overall performance of our country's innovation system. China will also channel various types of advanced production factors toward the development of new quality productive forces, develop a financial system that suits the need of scientific and technological innovation, promote in-depth integration between the real economy and the digital economy, boost the cultural innovation creativity, improve the mechanisms for green and low-carbon development, and strive to create new growth drivers and strengths.

Cooperation opportunities will abound as China conducts higher-standard opening-up. China will remain committed to the basic state policy of opening to the outside world and continue to promote reform through opening up. Leveraging its super-size market, China will enhance its capacity for opening up while expanding international cooperation and build a new system of higher-standard open economy. The country will steadily expand institutional opening up, deepen the foreign trade structural reform, further reform the management systems for inbound and outbound investment, optimize the layout for regional opening up, and improve the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. Besides, China will promote high-standard opening up in the education sector, and encourage foreign universities of science and engineering to launch joint schools and programs in China. Furthermore, China welcomes more Canadian friends to experience the diverse and vibrant development of China and explore new opportunities for China-Canada cooperation.

During their recent meeting in Beijing, the two foreign ministers of China and Canada expressed their shared hope to further strengthen bilateral practical cooperation in various fields. While it comprehensively deepens reform and advances Chinese modernization, China, the second-largest trading partner of Canada for years, will undoubtedly provide more opportunities for Canada and all the other countries to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and achieve common development. With extensive shared interests and complementary advantages, China and Canada should uphold the spirit of mutual respect, seeking common ground while reserving differences, and win-win cooperation to use economic and trade cooperation as an important engine, and conduct dialogue and cooperation in various fields, to jointly promote healthy and stable development of China-Canada strategic partnership at all times.

H.E. Wang Di, Chinese Ambassador to Canada

For more information please visit: <http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/>

Photo 1: China is committed to building new engines for high-tech industrialization.

Photo 2: Installation site of turbine blades for China's offshore wind power project.



News

Tory fundraising on track to smash 2023 record as Liberal donations, ad spending tick up ‘slowly but surely’: politicians

Conservative pundit and digital ad tracker Cole Hogan says the Liberals may have finally begun to ‘open the tap’ on spending, but are nowhere close to election footing.

BY STUART BENSON

The Conservative Party raised more than \$20.5-million in the first half of 2024, outpacing the governing Liberals’ fundraising by more than \$13.6-million so far this year, and its own total by this point last year—a record-smashing four quarters for the official opposition—by more than \$4-million.

Yet, with nearly \$7-million in fundraising this year, and nearly \$3-million more in the bank at the end of 2023, the Liberals still seem to be holding their fire while the Conservatives and NDP fire shots across the bow with dueling cross-country ad campaigns launching this month



The Conservative Party has raised more than \$65-million since Pierre Poilievre, second left, became leader in September 2022, including more than \$20-million in the first half of 2024, which is \$9-million more than the parties of Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh combined. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, illustration by Neena Singhal

ahead of two important September byelections.

In the second quarter of 2024—covering April 1 to June 30—the Conservatives raised a total of \$9.83-million, averaging \$187 from 52,519 individual

contributions. While that total amounts to a more than \$865,000 decrease in fundraising, the party increased its individual contributions by nearly 1,500 compared to the first three months of this year. The Conservatives’ \$20.52-mil-

lion combined fundraising total for this year is also well on its way to surpassing last year’s record-shattering \$35.26-million total, as it had only raised \$16.27-million by the middle of 2023.

While the Tories still maintain a more than \$6-million lead on the governing Liberals, who raised \$3.77-million from 28,523 individual contributions, the Grits’ fundraising numbers are slowly ticking upward. Both the Liberals’ fundraising and contribution totals are slightly higher than their totals in Q1 2024, and higher than any other quarter in 2023 and 2022, with the exception of the fourth quarter of those years.

The Liberals were also the only party to improve both their fundraising and contribution totals. The NDP raised \$1.29-million last quarter from 14,063 individual contributions, a slight dip from the \$1.34-million from 14,699 contributions in the first quarter of 2024, for a total of \$2.64-million so far this year.

The Green Party of Canada had the fourth-highest fundraising total for the quarter, with \$376,076 from 4,210 individual contributions, followed by the Bloc Québécois with \$321,806 from 1,841 contributions. The People’s Party of Canada also had its worst fundraising results since its formation in 2021, raising \$140,057 from 1,850 contributions.

Liberals need to spend money to make money, say politicians

Former Liberal staffer Kait LaForce told *The Hill Times* that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) brand has been “struggling” in recent years, particularly since Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) took the reins of the official opposition in late 2022. This has discouraged support and donations, and negatively affected polling year over year, with the Conservatives now polling between 15 and 20 points ahead.

LaForce, now a senior consultant with Summa Strategies, contrasted those recent numbers to the peak of Liberal fundraising and support in the lead-up to the 2015 election, and the early years of the Liberals’ mandate—when the “Trudeau brand” was its strongest—and the year-by-year decrease since then.

Similarly, the Conservatives’ fundraising has surged since late 2022, riding on the momentum of Poilievre’s elevation to leader of the party.

“The Conservatives are noticeably putting a lot of effort into a refreshed Conservative brand, as well as elevating Poilievre’s individual brand,” LaForce said, adding that the party’s investment in the rebrand has presumably had a positive impact on the increased returns on support.

As part of that rebrand, the Conservatives spent \$3-million on ads in the summer of 2023 in an attempt to (re)introduce Poilievre to Canadians. That campaign amounted to nearly half of the party’s entire \$8.5-million advertising spend for that year, according to the party’s annual financial returns for 2023, which Elections Canada posted online in early July.

In comparison, the Liberals spent roughly \$381,000 on advertising in 2023, while the NDP spent only about \$42,000.

While the Liberals may have far less to spend on advertising than the Conservatives, it seems like “someone’s turned on the taps,” if only slightly, said GT&Co principal Cole Hogan.

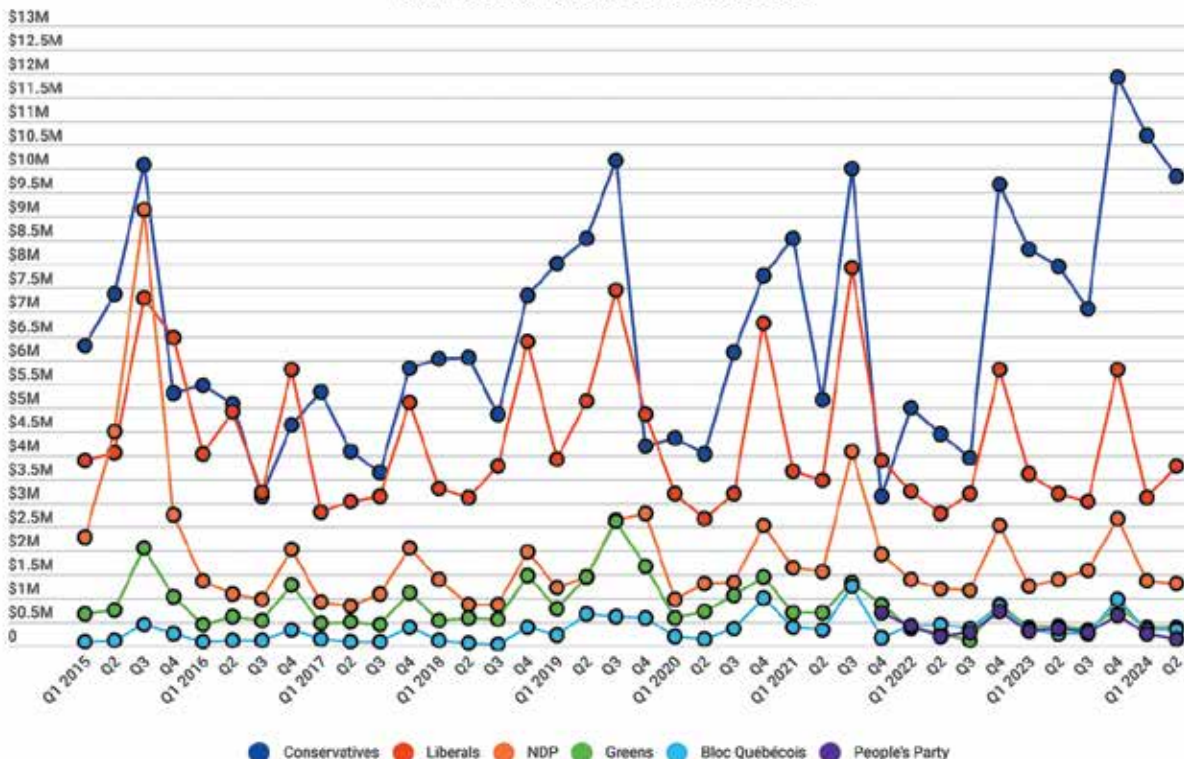
Hogan, who has worked on digital ads for Ontario Premier Doug Ford and ex-Alberta premier Jason Kenney, regularly tracks the federal parties’ advertising spending on Meta, one of the few social media platforms to publicize such data and make it available in Canada.

According to Meta’s Ad Library, in the 90 days before the fundraising numbers were released—from May 2 to July 30—the Conservative Party of Canada and Poilievre’s official pages spent a combined total of \$398,295.

In comparison, the Liberal Party and Trudeau’s pages had spent a combined \$78,825 on ads, followed by the New Democrats and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) with a combined total of \$51,639.

Quarterly fundraising, 2015 to present

Totals have been rounded to the nearest dollar.



Canada takes cautious approach to Venezuelan vote as U.S. backs Maduro's opponent

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is calling on the Liberal government to 'do everything in its power' to back the Venezuelan people.

BY NEIL MOSS

As suspicion grows over President Nicolás Maduro's claim of victory in Venezuela's July 28 election, the Canadian government is taking a more cautious approach fostering democratic forces after its unsuccessful attempt at championing the opposition in the past.

While the United States is declaring that Maduro didn't win the election, Canada has highlighted the concerns about the Venezuelan election and called for voting data to be released.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) signed on to a July 31 statement of G7 foreign ministers that called on Venezuela's election officials to publish detailed electoral results, and repeated the call in her own Aug. 4 press release.

In an Aug. 1 statement, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election."

Canada has yet to make a declaration that the election was won by González—a member of the Democratic Unitary Platform, which is led by María Corina Machado, who was barred from participating in the election by Caracas. But it has raised concerns that the available evidence shows that "results claimed by Maduro authorities of this election don't reflect the will of the Venezuelan people."

University of British Columbia professor Maxwell Cameron, an expert on Latin American politics, said Canada is taking a cautious approach to a very delicate moment, with mounting concerns over political repression and violence in Venezuela.

"Where [the situation] goes from here is a little hard to know," he said. "I think Canada is playing a bit of a wait-and-see game: let's see what happens in Caracas, let's

see how the opposition responds, let's see how the major players respond, and go from there."

Cameron said it is very clear that the election was fraudulent, and that it won't "pass muster" from the international community.

"You can use a moment like this to make a statement that causes a sort of splash and provokes a reaction or you can ... tread very carefully," he said.

"Canadians do themselves more of a service by trying not to be the pointy end of the spear," Cameron said, remarking the U.S.'s history of interventions in Latin America already rubs people the wrong way. "If Canada has a role here it would be a quieter role behind-the-scenes, particularly in the OAS [Organization of American States]."

As the crisis has been unfolding, Joly has held a series of phone calls with counterparts in Spain, Brazil, and Mexico to discuss the situation.

Cameron said Canada is placing the focus in the right place to get to the bottom of who won the election by advocating for voting data to be released.

"Let's see how all this plays out because you don't want to do anything that actually hinders the possibility that the change will come," he said, remarking that the current moment is critical as some of the Chavista base has been mobilizing against the results.

"This is the first time we're seeing a general cross-class coalition. For the first time, the opposition has played its cards well enough to command extraordinarily broad support," said Cameron, adding that defections from the government's traditional base of support could soon follow.

"If that's a possibility then I think it's incumbent on all the players to aim at that instead of escalating in a way that will actually produce the results that you don't want," he said.

In 2019, Canada recognized then-opposition leader Juan Guaidó—who founded the Democratic Unitary Platform—as interim president since he was the president of the National Assembly. The National Assembly was considered to be the last democratically elected institution after Venezuela's 2018 presidential election was condemned as "illegitimate." Canada had played a major role in the Lima Group, which it founded with 11—at the time—mostly right-of-centre-governed Latin American countries.

Canada also recognized Guaidó's representative in Canada, Orlando Viera-Blanco, as an ambassador.

But, by 2023, Canada's effort proved to be unsuccessful as opposition support for Guaidó started to crater, and he was ousted as president of the National Assembly and interim president. At the same time, Canada also stopped recognizing Guaidó as the interim leader of Venezuela.

Cameron said despite the Lima Group initiative ultimately not succeeding, it doesn't mean that Canada can't play a constructive role in response to the current crisis.

But, he said what remains unclear is how engaged Canada wants to be in the region.

"You have to make an investment and be present in the capitals of the region. You have to show up and you have to be useful, and be able to do things," he said. "It takes a commitment to work with counterparts in the region."

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) has been hesitant to wade in to the international arena since becoming his party's leader in 2022, but did so to address the situation in Venezuela, releasing a rare statement on foreign policy in his name as opposed to that of Conservative foreign affairs critic Michael Chong (Wellington-Halton Hills, Ont.).

He called on the Canadian government not to recognize the re-election of Maduro.

"Conservatives are calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his minister of foreign affairs to not recognize the results of Sunday's sham election and demand that the Maduro Regime releases a full counting of votes and access to voting records at polling stations. Canada should only recognize a democratic vote if it is truly free and fair," Poilievre said in the July 29 statement.

He added that the government "must do everything in its power to support the people of Venezuela as they fight for freedom and real democracy in their country."

Anaïda Poilievre, a Venezuelan immigrant and the wife of the Conservative leader, published an op-ed in *The National Post* on Aug. 1 in support of the democratic opposition.

"This time, the resolve feels different. It's stronger, fiercer, and deeply rooted in a collective will to see justice served," she wrote. "Venezuelans, under the unyielding leadership of María Corina



Unlike her American counterpart, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly hasn't declared who won the July 28 Venezuelan election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Machado, have vowed to push forward *'hasta el final'*. They're not backing down, and the winds of change are blowing stronger than ever."

She remarked that for Maduro "the message is clear: your time is up."

Former Canadian diplomat Ben Rowsell, the last Canadian ambassador to Venezuela, said Canada should do whatever it can to support the democratic movement in Venezuela, but noted Ottawa's ability to do so is limited due to the shuttered embassy in Caracas.

He said it is time for the government to consider reopening the embassy.

"Democracy is a long haul. The struggle Venezuelans have before them to restore their democracy is going to take some time," he said. "So, Canada needs to be on the ground for the long haul to accompany Venezuelans through that process."

Rowsell said there is a need for Canada to listen to all players in Venezuela, including the democracy movement. He said that is quite difficult to do without a diplomatic presence on the ground.

"It's not impossible to speak to any particular actor, but to be able to get your own sense of what the situation is, and then to be able to calibrate a message that takes into consideration the positions of the full set of actors is impossible to do with any effectiveness or impact," he said. "The most important thing is to reopen that embassy [and] to send diplomats back in."

He said the role of the international community is to follow the lead of local actors and to support their aspirations, remarking that political pressure that will force change won't come from global actors, but from Venezuelans.

Since the U.S. has taken a stronger position declaring that

González won the election, the reasoning for Canada to take a more cautious approach is that it knows it will have to deal with the Maduro government regardless of whether the election was stolen, Rowsell said.

"The general approach in Canadian diplomacy is we recognize states and not governments. That formulation is very helpful when you're dealing with democracy and human rights issues because the Government of Canada does have to deal with dictatorships," he said.

St. Francis Xavier University professor Yvon Grenier, who has researched Canada's foreign policy in Venezuela, said Canada is likely to be lockstep with allies to form a coherent policy responding to the crisis in Venezuela.

"I don't expect the Canadian government to be very, very different from the policy of the United States, but ... also the European Union and including countries in Latin America, many of them have made clear that they thought the results [of the election] were not credible," he said.

Grenier said Canadian policy towards Venezuela may have a chance to be more successful now than when it was a major player in the Lima Group as there is a broader group of countries across the ideological spectrum who are speaking up to release the voting records.

"Today it would be more powerful than back then when it was seen as right-wing governments pushing against the progressive revolutionary leftist government of Nicolás Maduro," he said.

"Canada's voice will be less unique, but it has maybe more of a chance of being effective because I think there will be countries that will speak about what is happening," he said.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Opinion

We need to talk about breast cancer

Regardless of what is happening in the health-care system, breast cancer education is critical, and should be available for individuals both with and without a diagnosis.

Cathy Ammendolea

Opinion



It's no secret that the Canadian health-care system is undergoing a transformation. As we navigate these changes, there are a lot of mixed messages about what the result will be. On the one hand, we see significant investments into health infrastructure, recruiting, and primary care. Then, in the same news cycle, we see headlines about challenges in hospitals, workforce retention, and patient waitlists. These discussions are not new, but they are intensifying. As someone with the lived experience of breast cancer, I want to remind Canadians and policymakers that patients must be prioritized within these changes.

I admit, there are many priorities to balance, which can make knowing what to focus on a challenge. Regardless of what is happening in the health-care system, breast cancer education is critical. Education should be available for individuals both with and without a breast cancer diagnosis. To begin, it's important to recognize that there are different subtypes of breast cancer. In the fall of 2023, the Canadian Breast Cancer Network (CBCN) published our *TNBC Report*. This report revealed the relationship between a patient's psychosocial needs and breast cancer subtype, with a focus on the needs of those diagnosed with the triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) sub-type. One of the report's significant findings was that many Canadians are not aware there are different subtypes of breast cancer. For example, 70 per cent of people with TNBC had not heard the term before their diagnosis.

One reason TNBC may not be well known is because it is a rarer form of breast cancer. Estimates show that around 10 to 20 per cent of all breast cancer diagnoses are of the TNBC sub-type. To put TNBC into the Canadian context, an estimated 28,600 Canadian women received a breast cancer diag-

nosis in 2022. If we assume that 10 to 20 per cent received a TNBC diagnosis, it would mean that between 2,860 and 5,720 women in Canada received a TNBC diagnosis in 2022. That's an average of up to 15 women per day. TNBC is also a more aggressive sub-type of breast cancer that has fewer treatment options, and a high rate of coming back after treatment. In addition to this, TNBC is more likely to impact younger women, as well as Black and Hispanic women.

Canadians are aware of the risk of breast cancer, but understanding individual risk factors can be very challenging, especially when people don't know where to start.

For example, one factor that can increase a person's individual risk is if they have an inherited gene that carries the potential. This is known as hereditary breast cancer, and we know that roughly five to 10 per cent of breast cancer cases are hereditary. Two of the most well-known genes that increase a person's risk of developing breast cancer are mutations of the BRCA1 and/or BRCA2 genes, which increase the risk by 45 to 85 per cent. For those of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, one in 40 will have a BRCA1 or BRCA 2 mutation. This is compared with one in 400 people in the general population.

People may not know how to understand their risk of developing hereditary breast cancers, such as those associated with a BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation. To address this, CBCN recently created a factsheet that provides information on the role of genetic testing. Hereditary risk is just one of several risk factors for developing breast cancer. That's why everyone should speak with their health-care provider to understand their individual risk factors, and learn how to be more proactive about their health. For those who may not have a primary-care provider, provinces and non-profit groups can help fill these gaps.

In addition to equipping patients with the right information, we must ensure our health-care system is collecting the right data. There is room to improve Canada's demographic health information, particularly around race, ethnicity, and Indigenous identity. Advocates have been calling on health-care providers to collect this data for years, hoping to address inequalities. We saw the value of such data during the COVID-19 pandemic—public health officials were able to see gaps in protection, and promptly took action. Too much of the data we currently use is United States-based, and may not reflect the Canadian population. If provinces start collecting health data on race, ethnicity, and Indigenous identity, it will greatly improve our understanding of breast cancer in Canada. This call for the collection of race and ethnicity data is in line with the Canadian Cancer Society's and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer's Pan-Canadian Cancer Data Strategy.

Canada is going through many health-care challenges and changes. I want to remind Canadians of how important it is to prioritize patients, and those most at risk of becoming patients; their needs must be part of the ongoing conversation. In the breast cancer space, education and awareness remains a key element in supporting those who are diagnosed and preventing new diagnoses.

Cathy Ammendolea is the board chair with the Canadian Breast Cancer Network, Canada's leading patient-directed breast cancer health charity. Ammendolea also has the personal lived experience of having had a breast cancer diagnosis.

The Hill Times

Comment

'Bonjour-Hi' signs driving Quebec nationalists to distraction

In a west-end Montreal borough, the neatly stencilled bilingual greetings have popped up on sidewalks, boutiques, walls, and liquor stores.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Clearly, this little 'Bonjour-Hi' phrase—so commonly heard in shops across Montreal—has touched a nerve, writes Andrew Caddell. Photograph courtesy of 'The Artist' via Andrew Caddell

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—“They seek him here, they seek him there. They seek him everywhere. Is he in heaven? Or is he in hell? That damned elusive Pimpernel.”

In the latest chapter of the language wars in Quebec, a brave soul known only as “The Artist” has literally made his mark with the words “Bonjour-Hi!” accompanied by a smiley face. And like Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, he's eluded Montreal authorities at every turn, providing needed comic relief to the summer's increasingly heated politics of language.

In the west-end Montreal borough of Cote-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grace (CDN-NDG), the neatly stencilled bilingual greetings have popped up on sidewalks, boutiques, walls, and liquor stores. And as quickly as Montreal city workers can wash them away, they appear elsewhere. Meanwhile, years-old scatological graffiti in the borough is ignored.

Clearly, this little phrase—so commonly heard in shops across Montreal—has touched a nerve. The CDN-NDG borough of 170,000 people constitutes the largest non-francophone community in the province, but does not have official bilingual status. Hence the frantic race to wipe away the egregious two letters of what bureaucrats call “a language other than French.” Ah, yes, the language that dare not speak its name!

In one instance, the stencil was painted in front of a pet store. A drawing of a dog says “Woof!!” and beneath it, “Bonjour-Hi!!” On a Quebec liquor store (SAQ) wall, “Bonjour-Hi” appears as a rebuttal to the corporation's promise to prohibit the use of the phrase.

The stencils have attracted attention on social media, and even the French media picked it up. On Aug. 3, *La Presse* headlined with “Mysterious ‘Bonjour-Hi’ graffiti causes a stir.” The article breathlessly asks “Is this a snub? A marketing coup? A celebration of Montreal's bilingualism?”

The story continues: “Earlier this year, a report from the Office québécois de la langue française [OQLF] indicated that this form of greeting had been on the rise in retail outlets in recent years,” as if this was undesirable. Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante—who is fluent in English—declared “people don't feel more loved or welcomed if we add an English word

[to Bonjour],” which is counterintuitive. What better way for a merchant to determine the language of a client?

Through contacts, I tracked down “The Artist.” He said the reaction to the signs is wonderful. “There is a lot of anger [in the anglophone community] but we have to find ways of working together in a positive way. This celebrates the bilingual history of CDN-NDG with humour.”

In July, the Coalition Avenir Québec government of Premier François Legault tightened the screws on Quebec's 1.25 million English-speakers by imposing French predominance in bilingual hospitals. To be even more heavy-handed, it created directives on when English can be used in health care, and even laid out the prospects of certificates for English access to health care, based on whether citizens were educated in English in Canada. In addition to the nightmare of seeking school records to obtain the certificates, this measure would exclude half a million Anglo Quebecers who attended the majority of their school years outside of Canada.

These steps come two years after the passage of Bill 96, when the Legault government spent millions of dollars in advertising across North America to convince opinion leaders nothing would change for English-speakers with the passage of the new language law.

The artist was inspired to fight back in a way that mocked the government. In response to a spokesman for the SAQ who called the signs “vandalism,” he replied: “It is art, and it is not blowing up mailboxes (as the FLQ did in the past).” I agree—the signs elicit smiles, and make a laughing-stock of Quebec nationalists.

I think “The Artist” should offer his stencils to the public to allow everyone to join in. Then someone could paint a “Bonjour-Hi” on the sidewalk in front of Legault's downtown office, or at the OQLF. Many fair-minded Quebecers would be happy to hold the can of spray paint.

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



Immigration Minister Marc Miller. The U.S. has taken a step towards a consistent application of its immigration laws concerning human rights violations against Palestinians, making it crucial for Canada to also critically examine its own legal enforcement, write Washim Ahmed and Taha Ghayyur. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Will Canada apply its immigration policy fairly in the face of the Gaza conflict?

Our nation faces a difficult test with the Gaza crisis, challenging us to confront the systemic biases embedded within our governmental institutions.

Washim Ahmed
& Taha Ghayyur

Opinion



One of the most sacrosanct foundations of democracies is that they are based on the rule of law, which mandates one set of laws enforceable on all individuals—including the government itself. The notion that the law simply does not apply to an individual, or groups of individuals, is more commonly associated with corrupt dictatorships than democracies.

Yet, in 2024 in Canada, whether the rule of law is supreme is an open question. Canada has specific laws governing who is considered admissible to the country, proscribing Canadians from joining foreign militaries, and preventing illegal support for armed forces of another country by Canadian charities. Each one of those laws has been applied in regard to some groups, and consistently violated and disregarded with others.

The American State Department recently issued an unexpected decision regarding Elor Azaria, a former sergeant in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) convicted of extrajudicially killing a Palestinian in the West Bank. The decision bars Azaria, as well as his immediate family members, from entering the United States. The statement declared, “We are designating Elor Azaria ... pursuant to Section 7031(c) for his involvement in a gross violation of human rights ...”

This decision marks a significant turning point for those implicated in war crimes in Gaza under U.S. jurisdiction, and it also raises a crucial question about the repercussions of the Gaza conflict on the enforcement of Canada’s laws.

How will the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) handle the Income Tax Act implications for charities that fund the IDF? The CRA recently revoked the Jewish National Fund’s charitable status for directing donations towards IDF infrastructure. This raises questions about other charities that have publicly raised funds for the IDF and illegal settlements. Similarly, how will the Royal Canadian Mounted Police address provisions of the Criminal Code and Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act regarding Canadians who have joined the IDF?

Additionally, Section 34(1) of Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) bars entry to individuals involved in violence, terrorism, or membership in related organizations. Sections 35(1) and 35.1(1) further prohibit entry to anyone implicated in human or international rights violations, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, senior officials in governments guilty of gross human rights violations, and those under international sanctions. These provisions—mirroring the American laws that barred Azaria—were broadly designed by Parliament to safeguard national security. They granted discretionary power to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers and immigration officials, but also acknowledged the potential to inadvertently affect innocent and non-threatening individuals who are meant to be treated as exceptions.

If applied universally, these principles could restrict figures in the vein of Nelson Mandela, or even historical members of the U.S. Democratic Party due to their support of slavery. However, in practice, the CBSA has often used these provisions selectively, particularly to unjustly target and deport refugees from Muslim countries, with decisions frequently influenced by the personal biases of individual officers. This same bias has also led to the oversight of individuals who should rightfully be captured by the law.

Despite well-documented instances of systemic violence against Muslims and other

minorities by members of India’s Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Canada has not taken a similar stance against them. The RSS, a right-wing Hindu nationalist group, and the BJP, India’s ruling party, have been linked to numerous violent acts, including riots and targeted attacks on religious minorities. From 2013 to 2023, Indian immigration to Canada increased by 326 per cent, with 18.6 per cent of recent immigrants coming from India. Yet, Canada has not pursued cases of inadmissibility against individuals from these groups, raising questions about the consistency and fairness of its immigration policies.

The ongoing Gaza conflict has led to investigations by the International Criminal Court into alleged war crimes by Israel, including the targeted killing of civilians, willful suffering, and the use of starvation as

a warfare tactic—all human rights violations. Additionally, the International Court of Justice has declared that Israel’s occupation and settlement expansions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are illegal, and that there is an imminent risk of genocide. Under Canada’s Immigration Act, involvement with groups linked to these illegal settlements or with the IDF, amidst allegations of war crimes or possible genocide, could make individuals inadmissible to Canada—a measure affecting a significant portion of Israel’s population.

Our laws must be consistently applied, holding individuals accountable for human rights violations, war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, irrespective of their nationality, the geopolitical context of their actions, or the political stance of the government of the day. To ensure the proper application of the law and to enable the CBSA to effectively perform its duties, a suspension of visa exemptions for travellers from Israel is necessary.

As the U.S. has taken a step towards a consistent application of its immigration laws concerning human rights violations against Palestinians, it is crucial for Canada to critically examine its own legal enforcement, and ensure that it upholds fairness and impartiality in every instance. Our nation faces a difficult test with the Gaza crisis, challenging us to confront the systemic biases embedded within our governmental institutions. Our standing as a democratic nation founded on the rule of law demands nothing less.

Washim Ahmed is a refugee and human rights lawyer, and a co-founder of OWS Law. Taha Ghayyur is the executive director of Justice for All Canada, a non-profit human rights and advocacy organization dedicated to preventing genocide.

The Hill Times

THE HILL TIMES

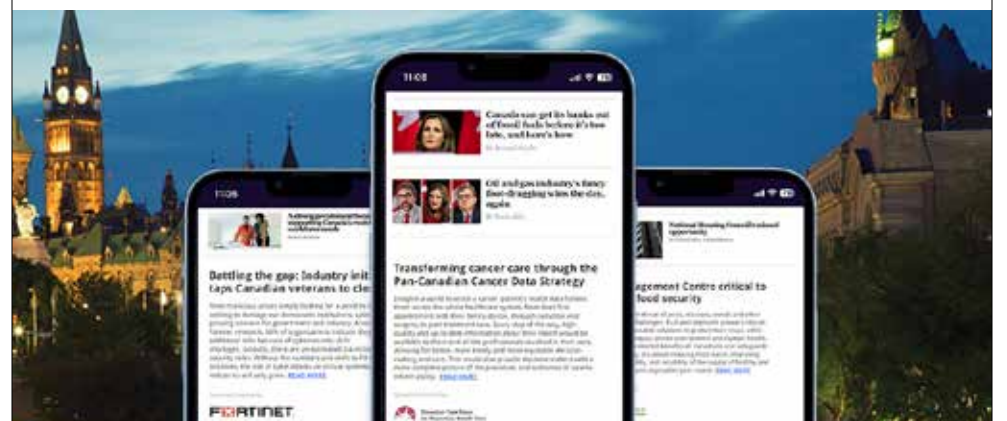
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Editorial

Everyone loses in political point-scoring

The fallout is continuing from a shameful display of partisan sniping that led a pair of House committee witnesses to turn their backs on bickering MPs.

On July 31, the Status of Women Committee held a summer meeting to discuss the all-too-frequent spate of violence against women. After the three witnesses—advocates Cait Alexander, Megan Walker, and Peel deputy police chief Nick Milinovich—gave their opening statements, and one round of questions from Conservative MP Michelle Ferreri, the meeting took an unfortunate turn as Liberal Anita Vandenbeld tried to switch gears to an abortion-related motion the group had previously tabled.

As the Canadian Press and Global News have recently reported, the witnesses who left in frustration as the meeting was derailed from what they were there to talk about—and their family members—are rightfully cheesed, but are also not particularly supportive of their experience being used as political fodder.

“You used Cait as a victim to score points for your political gain, to make it look like the Conservatives were using Cait,” Carolyn Alexander wrote about her daughter in a letter to MPs.

As CP reported: “In her letter, Alexander also chided the Conservatives, and asked if the purpose of the meeting was a political ploy at the expense of her

daughter to show how the Liberals and NDP would react.”

“I do not have a partisan agenda. I am very irritated that this has been turned into a conversation about that when it shouldn’t be,” Cait Alexander told Global. “Our trauma will not be used for political agendas.”

This is far from the first time committee witnesses have been left hanging or disrespected while political shenanigans play out. More than two years ago, *The Hill Times* reported that parliamentarians were weighing the prospect of providing witnesses with mental health support, and MPs with training on how to deal with sensitive topics. Those ideas should be revisited.

While politicians play games, and call each other “wacko” and “weird,” real lives are being affected—sometimes by the politicians themselves, but more often by those who want to follow in their image, try to curry favour, or just want an excuse to act out their internal toxicity.

It’s playing out in real time in the United Kingdom, as far-right rioters—fuelled by hate, racism, and disinformation about a tragic July 29 mass stabbing that killed three children—menace racialized communities, particularly Muslims and asylum seekers.

This is the natural progression of behaving as though politics is a game to be won at all costs—everyone loses.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

After too long looking inward, incumbents have reason to be wary of voters: Alberta reader

Being an incumbent in a political arena was once a sacred position during an election. Recent elections in places like France, India, and the United Kingdom have turned that around.

Incumbents—especially long-term politicians—are often seen as inconsequential, and in an atmosphere of “change,” that puts them in a much more precarious position.

Nationally, our prime minister looks tired after nine years at the helm, and the leader of the official opposition appears to be a mere quoter of old bumper stickers after 20 years in Ottawa. The leader of the NDP has accomplished many of his goals without acquiring the credits. The Green Party may have peaked. After numerous years, many Members of Parliament have yet to be known even to their constituents. The desire for change is looking at each one, and hoping for someone better.

Provincially in Alberta, the incumbents are all appearing self-absorbed, each looking after their base and/or pet projects. The governing party appears to be focused on its base, donors, and its idea of conservatism. The opposition seems to be preaching the same speeches to the converted, appealing to the estranged and maligned minority groups.

Municipally, in Red Deer, the incumbents are focusing on issues that were around 30 years ago, or are of their own makings. Downtown, Riverlands, homelessness, the cultural centre, 50-metre pools, stagnant population, aging population, high unemployment, high crime severity index (third highest in Canada), poor air quality between wildfires (CBC reported it as the worst in Canada), and debt. The Westerner Park, the golf club, and the rodeo all required emergency action, debt-relief restructuring, etc.

I once read that “we can afford to feed all of the poor, but we cannot afford to appease the rich.” How about “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”? Perhaps we could think about the American quote, “Of the people, by the people, for the people.”

Apparently, incumbents seem to have become less about the people they serve, and more about serving an ideology, or a base, or a personal project.

Like in other countries, the talk around Canada’s kitchen tables—and ultimately the voting booth—may not be kind to incumbents.

It may just be something to consider.

Garfield Marks
Red Deer, Alta.

Polio in Gaza adds a deadly layer to conflict, says letter writer

Casualties of war are not just from bullets and bombs. Disease is a major—but overlooked—killer. The World Health Organization raised the alarm that the highly infectious polio virus is in Gaza’s wastewater. The timing couldn’t be worse.

First, polio vaccination coverage in Palestine dropped significantly since the conflict started. And health infrastructure is in tatters with 16 out of 36 hospitals partially functional, medical supplies not reaching the people, and medical workers facing extreme danger.

Along with poor water quality and sanitation, the risk of deadly diseases rises exponentially, further endangering the lives of children stuck in the crosshairs.

Canada must advocate for a ceasefire for a vaccination campaign. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must also answer the call to invest \$150-million in the Global



Canada must advocate for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war for a vaccination campaign, writes Denise MacDonald. Photograph courtesy of Pexels

Polio Eradication Initiative, and \$720-million in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to help ensure children everywhere are immunized and protected.

Denise MacDonald
Gatineau, Que.



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It's not about one day—it's about the next 10 years and beyond

Rather than fighting to be treated with basic respect, we could be collaborating on building the public service of tomorrow.

Sharon DeSousa

Opinion



Treasury Board President Anita Anand and the rest of government must work with us to create the public service of the future, writes Sharon DeSousa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

We are at a pivotal moment in shaping the future of this country. The shift towards remote work has ignited a potential revolution in Canada's workforce and public service. But if the government doesn't change its short-sighted approach, we're in danger of missing this golden opportunity.

The question in front of us isn't just about where we work, but how we work, why we work, and what we're working towards. We need to ask ourselves: what

do we want this country to look like 10 years from now? And what kind of public service will make that vision a reality?

Canada's public service workers have a global reputation for excellence. The United Kingdom-based Institute for Government has consistently ranked our public service among the world's most effective. This is thanks in large part to the dedication, competence, and vision of thousands of workers across the country—workers who take immense pride in serving Canadians.

Unfortunately, instead of harnessing the collective wisdom and experience of our public service workforce, the government is

making unilateral decisions and failing to engage with us around the future of our public service. This actively undermines our ability to deliver the kinds of services and programs that are envied around the world. Public service workers—and the people and businesses we serve—deserve better.

Rather than fighting to be treated with basic respect, we could be collaborating on building the public service of tomorrow. One that seamlessly integrates cutting-edge technology while maintaining the human touch that Canadians value. One that is a leader in innovation—not just in Canada, but also on the global stage.

To build a better future, we need forward-thinking policies, and a team effort. The government should be working with us on things like reducing costly outsourcing, enhancing service delivery, and creating a motivated, diverse workforce made up of talented workers from every corner of our vast country.

We need to invest in continuous learning and the development of our workforce, ensuring they are equipped to navigate the challenges of an AI-driven world. We must reimagine our organizational structures to be more agile and able to respond to changing needs. And, critically, we need to foster a culture that values and empowers our public service, recognizing that their well-being and motivation are key to delivering excellent services and programs.

Remote work also creates new economic and social opportunities. The think tank l'Institut de recherche et d'information socioéconomiques reports that for every dollar spent in the public sector, as much as \$1.28 is injected into our economy. Just think about the benefits this could bring to cash-strapped smaller or remote and Indigenous communities.

Workers spread out across the country will also make our public service more inclusive and accessible. This means a public service that's more representative of Canada's diverse population.

Canadians are ready to embrace a new future of work. Seven in 10 people say they're in favour of employees having the flexibility to work from home, according to a recent Abacus poll.

Forcing employees into a random office one more day a week to spend their time in Zoom meetings won't prepare our workplaces for coming technological advances. It won't help transform buildings into much-needed affordable housing. And it won't build the Canada of the future.

The outlook for Canada's public service is bright. But reaching our potential requires a genuine partnership between the government and its employees. We are ready to bring our expertise, our dedication, and our innovative ideas to the table. We challenge the government to match our commitment, stop imposing arbitrary edicts, and start engaging in meaningful dialogue.

Let's choose the kind of change that brings the most benefits to our people and communities. Together, we can forge a public service that not only meets the needs of today, but leads the way into tomorrow.

Sharon DeSousa is the national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

The Hill Times

Comment

Netanyahu's game

What Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing at the moment is systematically crossing the 'red line' laid down by Israel's most dangerous enemies: Iran, and its proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Democrats in the United States and most people who are paying attention elsewhere in the world were greatly relieved when President Joe Biden quit his re-election

campaign two weeks ago and let Vice-President Kamala Harris run instead. They don't really know much about her, but they know she is not Donald Trump.

Harris now has a good chance of overtaking Trump in the presidential race, but only so long as the U.S. does not get dragged into a big war in the Middle East. However, she is not in charge of U.S. foreign policy. Biden is still running that, and he still seems incapable of saying no to Israel no matter what it does.

What Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing at the moment is systematically crossing the "red lines" laid down by Israel's most dangerous enemies: Iran, and its proxy in Lebanon, Hezbollah.

In conventional military terms, that doesn't make sense. The Israel Defense Forces are already heavily engaged in fighting Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Israeli troops are tired, and the economy is suffering from the repeated call-ups of reservists. The army doesn't want to open up another front.

Hezbollah and the Israeli army have been involved in a low-intensity exchange of rockets and artillery fire across

Israel's northern border ever since Hamas' attack on Israel last October. However, the targets on both sides were limited to the first 20 kilometres beyond the border, where most civilians have been evacuated. No attacks on Beirut, no attacks on Tel Aviv.

Iran—with 90 million people and an Islamist government—could be an existential threat to Israel if it had nuclear weapons, but it has deliberately stopped just short of that technology. It supports various Arab members of the "Axis of Resistance" with money and weapons, but it avoids direct clashes with Israel, and the two do not have a common border.

So, it is obviously in Israel's interest to maintain the status quo with Hezbollah and Iran—and yet, Netanyahu has begun trying to undermine it.

His first initiative was a missile strike four months ago that killed two Iranian generals, and five other officers who were visiting Iran's embassy in Syria. Israel often "deniably" assassinates Iranian officers, officials, and scientists, but this was a direct challenge that was certain to evoke an Iranian military response.

Neither Teheran nor Washington wanted to get drawn into a war, however, so they co-ordinated a charade in which Iran launched 300 missiles and drones against Israel but all of them were shot down or missed their targets. Honour was satisfied, Netanyahu was thwarted, and nobody died.

But then, in July, Biden pulled out of the presidential race, Harris became the candidate, and the prospect of a less blindly supportive U.S. ally loomed on the horizon. How best to ensure that Harris doesn't win, and Netanyahu's friend Trump becomes president instead? Drag the U.S. into a war with Iran before the election.

A pretext for that soon presented itself in the form of a random Hezbollah missile in the usual tit-for-tat along the Israeli-Lebanese border that killed a dozen young Druze who were playing football. It wasn't unusual, and it probably wasn't even deliberately targeted at the football field, but it gave Netanyahu the excuse he needed.

On the night of July 30, Israeli missiles flew to Beirut—Hezbollah's red line—to kill Fuad Shukr, Hezbollah's second-in-command. Only hours later, an Israeli missile or bomb (accounts vary) killed Hamas's political head, Ismail Haniyeh—and it killed him in Tehran, to ensure that Iran also felt obliged to retaliate.

To people unfamiliar with the way the game is played in the Middle East, this account may sound paranoid, or even specifically anti-Israeli. It is not. I offer in defence the analysis by Alon Pinkas in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* on Aug. 1.

"Israel could have killed Haniyeh anywhere in the Middle East, yet deliberately chose to do so in Tehran during the inauguration of the new president ... Israel left Tehran no alternative but to retaliate."

"Who has no interest in such an escalation? The United States, whose makeshift Middle East policy will now have to be revisited, and Iran, which clearly prefers attrition and low intensity."

"Who does have a vested interest in an expanded war? Mr. Netanyahu. Which is why the conventional wisdom in Washington over the last 36 hours is that Israel carried out the Haniyeh assassination deliberately in Iran and intentionally on that day."

And what is dear old Biden doing? He's sending another aircraft carrier to the eastern Mediterranean to "defend Israel"—and maybe fight Iran—when he should be using the leverage of the \$6.5-billion of extra military aid Washington has sent Israel since last October to force a ceasefire in Gaza.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World's Climate Engineers*.

The Hill Times

Comment

Let's get creative: CAF can't keep picking up emergency response shortfall

Given the reality of climate change, the demand for federal disaster assistance will only increase. The answer cannot always be 'send in the military.'

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—As Canada watched in horror last month, Alberta's landmark town of Jasper was engulfed in a wildfire, and the federal government announced that the Canadian Army would provide disaster assistance.

In this instance, some 75 members of the Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry deployed to help residents of Jasper safely return to the remnants of their charred town.

Over the past few years, the sight of Canadian military personnel assisting citizens in the wake of disasters has become all too commonplace. Forest fires in Alberta? Send in the military. Flooding in Quebec? Send in the military. Massive blizzard in Newfoundland? Send in the military. Pandemic stricken long-term care facilities in Ontario? Send in the military. Power lines downed by a hurricane in Nova Scotia? Send in the military.

The image of uniformed military personnel on site with specialized equipment is reassuring to civilians, and to be honest, it is a great public relations exercise for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

However, what the average layperson fails to grasp is that this is not the primary task for what is supposed to be a

combat-capable Armed Forces. Every unscheduled deployment interrupts the scheduled training and professional development necessary to keep our military formations sustained.

Now, it is no secret that the CAF is woefully understrength at present due to a crisis in both retention and recruitment. At last count, there were 16,500 vacancies in an authorized regular and reserve joint strength of 105,000. The recruitment shortfall is not due to citizens not being willing to volunteer. Last year, some 70,080 individuals signed up at the recruiting centres, but only 4,301 could be processed and sent to basic training.

The reason for this is two-fold as the bureaucratic process is backlogged, and—due to the shortfall in personnel—trainers are in short supply as well.

Again, for those not familiar with a modern military, soldiers do not simply go through entry-level training and become combat capable. At all levels, personnel

receive advanced weapons training, leadership training, trades training, and—when money and ammunition stocks permit—actual formation-level training exercises.

Pulling a unit out of that rotation for unscheduled disaster relief operations throws a monkey wrench into the works. And when you are dealing with a profession that involves the use of lethal force, there should not be a cutting of corners.

Recently retired chief of defence staff General Wayne Eyre understood all too well the impact that Operation Lentus has been having on the state of readiness of the CAF. Operation Lentus was initiated in 2010, and is the blanket term for any domestic deployment of the CAF as aid to the civil powers.

In an April 23 virtual town hall video conference with the senior leadership of the CAF, Eyre stated: "I made it quite clear to other departments that our capacity to do what we did last year is not the same, especially with reduced readiness [and], increased deployments to Latvia. We're not going to have the same forces available ... for the scale and duration of response." This year, the CAF commitment to the forward-deployed battle group in Latvia as part of NATO's Operation Reassurance is set to grow from the current 800 personnel to roughly 2,200 Canadian troops.

As the overall force numbers continue to decline, and the

fixed commitments continue to grow, something will eventually break. Given the reality of climate change, the demand for federal disaster assistance will only increase. The answer cannot always be "send in the military." They are a spent force.

Why not implement a limited form of national service and create a manpower pool nationwide that could be called upon in an emergency? There is already in existence Team Rubicon, which is a volunteer force of mostly retired military personnel.

Why not build heavily upon this organization as the foundation, with a registry of community-minded Canadian citizens willing to deploy when needed?

While we are being creative, why not purchase 24 Canadian-built CL-415 water bombers and create a full squadron of firefighters based on retired Royal Canadian Air Force aircrew?

For those Colonel Blimps still fretting about Canada not spending the full two per cent of gross domestic product on national defence, we can add the cost of these organizations to the defence budget. Defending Canada's natural resources in the face of extreme weather conditions brought on by climate change is more patriotic than militarily occupying a hostile third-world country.

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

The Hill Times

Opinion

Re-establishing the RCMP on Parliament Hill: a necessity for security and efficiency

A dedicated RCMP detachment would protect the Parliamentary Precinct, ensure public safety, and reinforce the symbolic and physical heart of Canada.

Brian Sauvé

Opinion



The recent assassination attempt on a United States presidential candidate and arrests in Canada have highlighted the risks faced by our Members of Parliament and Senators. The need for enhanced protective services for elected officials is more critical than ever, both on Parliament Hill and in their constituencies.

Reports of threats and harassment against parliamentarians have surged. In 2019, the Hill's sergeant-at-arms had eight open cases involving threats against parliamentarians; last year, there were 530. MPs have announced they are stepping down due to harassment, vandalism of their constituency offices, and a pervasive feeling of insecurity at work. Recently, there have been various threats against the prime minister. This situation underscores the urgent need for a more robust security framework on Parliament Hill.

Currently, the Parliamentary Protective Service (PPS) handles physical security on Parliament Hill, but lacks the authority to enforce the law, as its members do not hold peace officer status. This limitation necessitates the frequent involvement of local police services, diverting them from their core policing duties. The 2022 Convoy protests highlighted the challenges of jurisdictional fragmentation and intelligence gaps, which led to an inadequate public safety response.

The RCMP is uniquely positioned to address these challenges. As Canada's largest and most well-equipped police service, the RCMP

already provides close protection for senior government officials, including the prime minister and cabinet ministers. The federal government has authorized more than 150 RCMP officers to be stationed in Ottawa by September 2024 to bolster VIP and protective security on Parliament Hill. These officers would be even more effective if the RCMP were re-established as the police of jurisdiction for the Parliamentary Precinct.

Re-establishing the RCMP in this role would streamline intelligence-sharing and operational co-ordination, enhancing overall security. The RCMP's national mandate and extensive network with other police agencies allow it to efficiently co-ordinate responses to threats, ensuring a more seamless and rapid deployment of resources. Furthermore, the RCMP's experience and training make its members ideally suited to handle the unique security needs of Parliament Hill.

The Public Order Emergency Commission criticized the existing security framework's inability to deploy adequate police resources promptly during the Convoy protests. This failure underscores the necessity of having dedicated RCMP members manage security on Parliament Hill.

A dedicated RCMP detachment—comprising 200 to 300 officers—would protect the Parliamentary Precinct, ensure public safety, and reinforce the symbolic and physical heart of Canada.

Moreover, the RCMP's ability to operate independently of other police agencies would alleviate the burden on local police services, allowing them to focus on their primary responsibilities. For example, the Convoy protest cost the City of Ottawa more than \$55-million, which the federal government reimbursed. The 2024 federal budget allocated another \$50-million to enhance security around Parliament Hill. The Ontario government also provided a portion of an allocated \$48-million to support the City of Ottawa for national protests, events, and public safety. The House Board of Internal Economy estimated PPS would cost \$104.5-million, with additional RCMP protection for parliamentarians costing \$3.4-million, and off-site security costing \$7.7-million, totaling more than \$115-million for 2024-25. This represents just a portion of the significant cost to having a fragmented policing model for Parliament Hill. If the RCMP were designated the protective

responsibilities for the Parliamentary Precinct, interagency communications would improve and redundancies would be reduced, achieving both resource and cost efficiencies while ensuring the utmost security.

The RCMP has seen a surge in applications, with more than 17,500 in 2023-24 alone, indicating a readiness to expand its jurisdiction and responsibilities. This growth, coupled with the RCMP's existing infrastructure and experience, positions it as the most capable agency to assume jurisdiction over Parliament Hill.

Re-establishing the RCMP as the police of jurisdiction for Parliament Hill would send a strong message that Canada is committed to taking political threats seriously. It would ensure that MPs, Senators, and all Canadians can work and live without fear for their safety. The time has come to prioritize the security of our nation's leaders by entrusting this critical responsibility to the RCMP, Canada's most experienced and capable police service.

Brian Sauvé is president and CEO of the *National Police Federation*.

The Hill Times

All aboard: Tory MP Reid wants to change how House rules can be amended

While MPs unanimously voted to send Motion 109 to committee for review, the proposed changes face potential opposition further down the legislative road.

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M-109 is about ensuring “that no future government would be able to amend the Standing Orders without the consent of all recognized parties,” stated Reid last April during the first hour of second-reading debate.

Disallowing the use of time allocation and closure motions on debate on proposed changes to the Standing Orders (SOs)—the rules which govern daily business in the Commons—as called for in his motion would curb the government’s ability to “unilaterally terminate debate and force a vote,” he argued. And without the ability to limit debate, it would, “in practice,” help foster all-party consensus when it comes to amending the House rulebook, said Reid.

“The precise mechanism by which MPs prevent the debate from coming to a conclusion over the motion to change the SOs is to drag out the vote by speaking at length—in essence, by filibustering. But that is very difficult to do in a Commons debate where there are clear limits on the length of speeches. A party with a caucus large enough to qualify for party status could keep such a debate going more or less endlessly. But a single MP could not do so,” explained Reid in a July 31 email to *The Hill Times*, highlighting that M-109 isn’t about requiring unanimous consent, but rather reining in the ability of the government of the day to strong arm changes through the Chamber.

As Reid explained in April, the Standing Orders “are the de facto constitution of the House of Commons. They are the rules of the game, so to speak.” But, on “several occasions over the course of the past century or so, governments have changed the rules unilaterally”—including, he noted, to “force a vote on the adoption of Standing Order 78,” which introduced time allocation, back in 1969.

While closure motions can be used to end debate full stop, time allocation can be used to limit debate on a matter to a specified number of hours or days.

Last year, with the support of the NDP, the Trudeau government passed a closure motion to end debate on proposed changes to enable the House to continue operating as a hybrid Chamber—including continuing use of remote electronic voting—through the rest of this Parliament (and one year into the next) a week after the amendments were tabled.

At the time, Reid had protested that while he wasn’t against a hybrid Parliament or the voting app, he was “really against the removal of the consensus requirement for changes to the Standing Orders.”

Reid tabled M-109 last February when his turn in the order of precedence for private member’s business came up. But in his recent email, the eight-term MP said the idea that “it ought not be possible for one party to unilaterally change the Standing Orders, as is presently possible any time there is a majority government,” is one that’s been on his mind “for years.”

Along with addressing the use of closure or time allocation, M-109 proposes adding new sections to the rulebook so that debate on an opposition or private member’s motion proposing changes to the Standing Orders ends with a vote on whether to send the proposal to PROC for study, with the committee to be given 75 sitting days to report back to the House.

The motion included similar stipulations for its own consideration.

M-109 heard cross-party support during second-reading debate, with Conservative, Liberal, NDP, and Bloc Québécois MPs speaking in favour of sending it to committee for review.

During debate on June 12, Liberal MP Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Ont.) called M-109 a “reasonable” proposal. Highlighting that the motion asks PROC to study “the changes that can be made,” he said he thinks “we could better serve Canadians and indeed the way this House functions by supporting” it, adding he believes House procedures “should require unanimous consent in order to be changed.”

“I think that it is really important that PROC look at this issue,” said Gerretsen, a member of the

committee. “I look forward to inviting experts ... to hear some of the best practices on how we could move forward in a way that tries to take some of the partisanship out of the procedures.”

Gerretsen, along with a majority of current PROC members, did not respond to *The Hill Times’* most recent interview requests related to M-109.

NDP House Leader Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) similarly expressed his caucus’ support for the motion’s preamble—

which, among other things, stresses that all MPs, “not the government nor a subset of members, should be the final authority” on changing House rules—as well as “the principle” of the actual SO amendments it proposes, and “the idea of referring” it to PROC “for a more in-depth study.”

In speaking to M-109, Liberal and NDP MPs made a point of noting that, while Conservative and Bloc members voted against the Standing Order changes that enabled remote voting, they’ve made ready use of the new option.

Such comments prompted Bloc MP Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, Que.) to accuse members from both parties of “failing to see the forest for the trees precisely because, if we had had the opportunity to debate

these [hybrid] procedural amendments, we might have reached a consensus focused exclusively on voting through the app, and not necessarily on the broader issue of the virtual Parliament.”

M-109 “seeks to correct the government’s ability to become a sort of tyranny of the majority when it comes to changing rules as critical as the ones that govern us” in the House, said Normandin in stating her support.

Speaking with *The Hill Times* last week, Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.) said Reid’s motion “reflects what has become a convention: that the Standing Orders ought not be changed absent a consensus.”

“It is a consensus, unfortunately, that has been repeatedly disrespected by the Liberal government, and so in that regard, the motion is timely,” he said, adding that regardless of such actions by the current government, he thinks “it makes sense to effectively codify the convention.”

But the cross-party support for sending M-109 to committee may not last when it comes to actually enacting the changes as currently proposed.

Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.), parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, was among

the 325 MPs who voted in favour of passing M-109 at second reading (none voted against), but in a recent interview he told *The Hill Times* that while he’s in favour of the principle behind Reid’s proposal, he’s concerned it’s politically motivated and could hamper the House’s ability to modernize.

Lamoureux said his second-reading support for the motion “definitely” doesn’t mean he’ll necessarily support it at third reading in its current form.

“Everything depends in terms of what the final product looks like,” he said, adding “whatever is coming through,” he needs to weigh both the potential short-term and long-term impacts.

Lamoureux said his decades of experience as an elected official have taught him that “time allocation, unfortunately, is a necessary tool.”

Until there’s a “healthier environment” in the House and MPs are guided by “the mentality of being a parliamentarian first” and partisan second when it comes to amending the Standing Orders, he said doesn’t foresee substantive changes “actually happening—not in the way in which you’re going to get that consensus.”

“The political will has got to be there from the House leadership teams of all political entities, and I have not detected that since I’ve been elected as a Member of Parliament,” said Lamoureux, who’s been an MP since 2003, stressing he’s “not pointing to any party” in particular. “There’s always the low-hanging fruit, and they’ll be open to doing something of that nature,” but when it comes to substantive reforms, “I don’t see the will.”

“At the end of the day—in the ideal situation—changes [to the SOs] would be done through a consensus, but you can only achieve a consensus if everyone’s prepared to work towards” it, he said.

“If an opposition [party] is determined to make something political, under that formula [proposed in M-109], we wouldn’t have the voting app,” said Lamoureux.

“I’m not going to buy into a political stunt, and this seems to be more of a political stunt.”

Despite such concerns, Lamoureux said “anything” that “allows for debate and discussion about the [Standing Orders] is healthy, and as such, he supported sending M-109 to PROC because it “gets more parliamentarians talking about real changes.”

In an emailed statement, Government House Leader Karina Gould’s (Burlington, Ont.) communications director, Mark Kennedy, said M-109 is “an important matter that is worthy of thorough examination by” PROC, and that “[w]e support the work of committee members as they examine the Standing Orders.”

Passed at second reading on June 19, PROC has until late February 2025 to study M-109 and report back to the House.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Conservative MP Scott Reid tabled M-109 in the House in February, but says the idea behind the motion has been on his mind ‘for years.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

‘The trust has been broken’: accountability for racism in PCO requires resignations, says Black Class Action lead Thompson

The Privy Council Office can’t be relied on to get its own affairs in order after a damning internal report detailing a culture of racism and workplace discrimination, says a coalition of federal employees and civil society groups.

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dian Labour Congress, more than 100 people marched from Ottawa’s Human Rights Memorial to the Privy Council Office (PCO) on Aug. 1, demanding action from the federal government following the release of a damning internal report documenting a culture of discrimination faced by its Black and racialized employees.

The report—released on July 29 by the Coalition Against Workplace Discrimination, which obtained the document through an access to information request—said that Black, racialized, and Indigenous employees experienced “racial stereotyping, microaggressions, and verbal violence,” and a workplace culture where that behaviour is “regularly practiced and normalized, including at the executive level.”

The report also found that PCO’s culture discouraged reporting and that “effective accountability mechanisms are currently non-existent.”

Rachel Zellars, an associate professor at St. Mary’s University, produced the report following interviews she conducted with 58 employees from November 2021 to May 2022 as part of the PCO’s “Your Voice Matters” Safe Space Initiative, and her work as the inaugural Jocelyne Bourgon Visiting Scholar for the Canada School of Public Service.

Zellars said she conducted 13 interviews with racialized employees and eight with Black employees, the latter accounting for half of the total Black employees in the PCO at the time.

Those employees shared experiences of their managers and supervisors using the N-word “comfortably” in their presence, and expressing surprise and ignorance when informed it was



Thompson, right, and Canadian Union of Postal Workers president Jan Simpson, who became the first Black woman to lead a national union in Canada last year. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

a pejorative term, as well as Islamophobic remarks and “feigned innocence” when white employees were promoted over them.

In contrast, white employees had worked at PCO for longer periods, and were clustered in higher-level positions than Black, racialized, and Indigenous employees. Those white employees also detailed experiences and career-advancing opportunities “in stark variance” to their non-white colleagues.

The Safe Space Initiative was launched following a Call to Action by former clerk Ian Shugart in January 2021. The call urged public service leaders to take action to remove systemic racism from Canada’s institutions.

According to the 2022 Public Service Employee Survey results for the PCO, seven per cent of the 710 employees who responded said they had been the victim of on-the-job discrimination in the previous 12 months. Of the 35 respondents who identified as Black, 12 per cent said they had been the victim of discrimination. Ten per cent of the 145 racialized, non-Indigenous respondents indicated they had been the victim of discrimination, and five per cent of non-racialized, non-Indigenous employees did as well.

Of those who said they had been the victim of discrimination, 31 per cent said it had been targeted at their national or ethnic origin, followed by age-based discrimination at 30 per cent. Twenty-nine per cent said the discrimination they faced was based on their racial identity, 25 per cent said it was due to sexism, and 23 per cent said the discrimination was based on skin colour.

The vast majority of those employees who said they experienced discrimination—75 per cent—said the source had been a supervisor or manager, followed by 19 per cent who said it came from co-workers, 18 per cent who said em-

ployees from other departments, and three per cent who indicated they had been discriminated against by their subordinates.

Nearly half of the employees—47 per cent—who said they had been the victims of discrimination said they had taken no action in response due to fear of reprisals or expectations that doing so would be futile.

In an interview with *The Hill Times* following the Aug. 1 march, Black Class Action Secretariat CEO Nicholas Marcus Thompson questioned how the government can be trusted to implement any measures regarding the International Decade for People of African Descent, or even lead its own call to action to address anti-racism in the public service when the leadership responsible for doing so are themselves perpetrators.

During this year’s official Government of Canada Black History Month reception on Feb. 7 at the Canadian Museum of History, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced that Canada would extend its recognition of the decade until 2028, giving Canada the “full 10 years.” Trudeau’s government officially recognized the UN General Assembly 2015 proclamation of the decade in January 2018.

Since 2019, the federal government has announced several measures and investments attributed to Canada’s recognition of the decade, including \$200-million over five years for the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, \$265-million over four years to the Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP), \$200-million to establish the Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund, and the development of Canada’s Black Justice Strategy to address anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination in the criminal justice system. The strategy “aims to help ensure that Black people have access to equal treatment before and under the law in Canada.”

Thompson noted that the PCO’s response to the report did not include an acceptance of responsibility or an apology.

“No apology for the pain they’ve caused their employees ... for the microaggressions or the use of the N-word,” Thompson said. “The first step should be an apology.”

In response to the coalition’s publication of the report, the PCO issued a similar statement to the one it sent to *The Hill Times*, highlighting the steps its senior management team has taken to “reinforce” its commitment to Shugart’s call to action, and pointing to the increases in representation within its workforce and executive since 2020.

Between March 2020 and 2024, the PCO says that of its 1,200 employees, Black representation increased from 3.4 per cent (29 employees) to 5.8 per cent (66 employees). It also noted an increase from 2.7 per cent to 2.9 per cent for Indigenous employees, 16.5 per cent to 23.9 per cent for racialized employees, and an increase in women employees from 53.9 per cent to 57.8 per cent.

Within the executive, PCO says it has increased its representation in all those categories as well, but did not provide the underlying number of employees those percentages are based on, which Thompson said helps mask the reality of the situation.

“They rely on percentages when it suits them because they could say they had a 50 per cent increase, but that could just represent one more employee if they only had two before,” Thompson explained. “We want to see representation increase, but it must be done proportionately.”

As for the steps the PCO says it has taken in its response, Thompson said many of those were performative “events,” and lack the depth required to comprehensively tackle the systemic issues identified in Zellars’ report and Shugart’s call to action.

However, Thompson said the “trust has been broken,” and the coalition no longer believes the PCO can “fix itself.”

“If we want to see accountability, we need resignations,” Thompson said.

Alongside its reiteration of the long-standing calls for the creation of a Black Equity Commissioner and the settlement of the class-action lawsuit filed against the federal public service in December 2020, the coalition is also calling for the resignations of deputy clerk Natalie Drouin, who was responsible for the discrimination file since 2021, and Matthew Shea,

assistant secretary to the cabinet, ministerial services and corporate affairs, and the head of PCO corporate services since 2017.

“The PCO can’t fix itself on this issue, so we need an arm’s-length commissioner to audit and direct it,” Thompson said, suggesting that one of the reasons so little action had been taken on Zellars’ report was because it had been “optional.”

Thompson also noted that while the government has created commissioners or special envoys to tackle issues of antisemitism, Islamophobia, or anti-LGBTQ2S+ hate, there is “no such thing” to address anti-Black discrimination.

“We’ve been needing specialized solutions to addressing anti-Black discrimination, recognizing that it’s unique from all other forms of racism and discrimination,” Thompson said, adding that the federal Anti-Racism Secretariat does not even have a mandate to investigate the public service.

“It’s an outward-facing secretariat,” Thompson said. “It has no mandate to investigate, audit, or examine any forms of discrimination in the public service.”

Thompson said that the Black Equity Commissioner would also need structural support, including the creation of a new Department of African Canadian Affairs to function similarly to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and the changes to the Employment Equity Act suggested by the federal task force earlier this year.

Last December, the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force presented its findings to then-labour minister Seamus O’Regan (St. John’s South-Mount Pearl, Nfld.), recommending that Black and LGBTQ employees should be recognized as separate groups under the Employment Equity Act, instead of falling under the label of “visible minority.”

When it was implemented in 1986, the Employment Equity Act was intended to dismantle barriers to employment for minority communities. The four groups the act recognized as facing those barriers are women, Indigenous people, people living with disabilities, and visible minorities.

Speaking with reporters on Dec. 11, 2023, O’Regan said he was personally “delighted” by the recommendation, and the government has said it “broadly supports” it, according to reporting by CBC News.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, the office of current Labour Minister Steve MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) said his predecessor’s initial commitments are only the “first steps” in the government’s work to transform Canada’s approach to employment equity.

“We look forward to tabling government legislation that is comprehensive of the needs of marginalized communities across Canada, and knocks down the barriers that prevent people from achieving their full potential in the workplace,” the statement reads.

Consultations on the Equity Act Review Task Force report will continue until Aug. 30.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Another privilege battle brewing as feds refuse to give House unredacted green fund docs

Twenty-one governmental departments and agencies responded to a June 10 order for documents by redacting or withholding information, while 10 entities submitted unredacted documents.

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concerning communications about a now-shuttered clean-technology fund despite being ordered to do so by the Chamber.

In a July 17 letter to House Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.), House of Commons law clerk and parliamentary counsel Michel Bédard noted that 21 government departments and entities responded to a House order for documents by submitting records that included redactions or had withheld information, adding it was done by “purportedly relying on the Access to Information Act and/or Privacy Act.”

On June 10, the House passed a motion by Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) which included an order for “all files, documents, briefing notes, memoranda, emails, or any other correspondence exchanged among government officials regarding SDTC [Sustainable Development Technology Canada]” within 30 days.

The Liberal government closed SDTC in June after a scathing report by Auditor General Karen Hogan that found a number of contracts were awarded to firms that were not eligible. The arms-length fund’s \$1-billion purse has since been transferred to the National Research Council of Canada. In a July 24 report, the conflict of interest and ethics commissioner found that the former chair of the SDTC, Annette Verschuren, didn’t comply with the Conflict of Interest Act as she didn’t recuse herself from decisions to which she had business ties.

The House vote passed 174-148, with all parties voting in favour except for the Liberal Party.

In his letter to Fergus, Bédard said the order is “an exercise of the House of Commons’ power to send for documents.”



Parliamentary law clerk Michel Bédard said in a recent letter to the House Speaker that government institutions were improperly applying access-to-information and privacy law restrictions to a June 10 production order from the Chamber. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“The power to send for documents is absolute and unfettered. It is a constitutional parliamentary privilege not limited by statute,” the letter reads. “As such, the House is not constrained by statutory obligations contained in legislation such as the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. I also note that the order did not contemplate that redactions be made to documents or that information be withheld.”

The executive branch and the House have increasingly clashed over the power of the Commons to order documents from the government, including during the Winnipeg lab affair in 2021 when the House ordered the government to turn over documents related to the firing of two scientists from the National Microbiology Laboratory. After the government refused to provide the documents, the House reprimanded then-Public Health Agency of Canada president Iain Stewart during a call to bar.

The Liberal government applied to the Federal Court to stop the release of the documents; then-House Speaker and Liberal MP Anthony Rota (Nipissing-Timiskaming, Ont.) proclaimed he would defend the House’s powers, but the case was discontinued following the 2021 election. An agreement has since been made to have a group of parliamentarians and experts review the documents.

A similar skirmish between the federal government and the House of Commons occurred in 2010 and 2011 when the then-Conservative government refused to release documents ordered by the House regarding the Afghan detainees’ scandal.

Both cases were viewed as breaches of parliamentary privilege by the House Speaker at the time.

In response to the June 10 order, the government is seemingly

taking a competing legal interpretation over the limits of the House to order documents.

A spokesperson for the Privy Council Office—which was one of the 21 entities that provided a redacted response or withheld information—told *The Hill Times* that the government has been “consistent in its approach to providing information to parliamentarians,” arguing that it is complying with the House’s motion.

“A review of the documents was conducted with the goal of providing as much information as possible, balancing the exercise of the privileges of the House of Commons with the interests and information that are protected by law and the Constitution,” PCO spokesperson Daniel Savoie said.

“As a result, certain records were redacted or withheld in order to meet legal obligations to protect personal information, confidential business information, and solicitor-client privilege, and to protect cabinet confidences,” Savoie added.

The Hill Times asked the PCO to clarify if the legal obligations being cited were the Privacy and Access to Information acts.

PCO spokesperson Pierre-Alain Bujold confirmed they were.

“PCO applied the Privacy Act and was guided by the principles of the Access to Information Act in determining what information could be disclosed. PCO protected personal information, confidential business information, solicitor-client privileged information, and protected Cabinet confidences,” he said.

In his letter to the Speaker, Bédard highlighted that the two statutes don’t constrain the House’s powers to order documents.

The Hill Times asked the 20 other departments and entities why they didn’t provide unredacted information in response to the House’s order. Fifteen responded to a request for comment and six

did not. Four of those six directed this newspaper to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development as they are under its purview.

The great majority mostly replicated the PCO’s response, including ISED and 12 others citing the balance between the privileges of Parliament and the information that is protected by law. Nine cited “legal obligations” to protect personal information, confidential business information, solicitor-client privilege, and/or cabinet confidences. Asked if the Privacy and Access to Information acts were the statutes being referred to, four departments and agencies responded confirming that the Privacy Act was being applied, and that the principles of the Access to Information Act were being followed in restricting the release of information.

A spokesperson for the Canada School of Public Service confirmed that it initially had withheld information from the House of Commons in accordance with the Access to Information and Privacy acts, but said it will make changes to its response to the order after being contacted by *The Hill Times*.

“We have now examined our approach and we will re-deposit the documents in their entirety with the law clerk and parliamentary counsel,” the spokesperson said. “Thank you for bringing this to our attention.”

In response to the order, Communications Security Establishment chief Caroline Xavier told Bédard in a letter that it was unable to provide the requested information, citing a provision of the Access to Information Act that exempts information that could be injurious to Canada’s international affairs or its defence.

“The disclosure of any information pertaining to contracts and service agreements with the named organization could com-

promise the defence of Canada and the detection, prevention, or suppression of subversive or hostile activities. If disclosed, this information would provide hostile actors with information regarding which Government of Canada organizations are protected by the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (Cyber Centre) and those that are not, leading to possible compromises of our IT infrastructure,” Xavier wrote.

Carleton University professor Philippe Lagassé, an expert on Parliament and the executive’s power in the Westminster system, said the refusal to provide unredacted documents is likely an attempt to impede the work of the House.

“Basically, I think the government is trying to obstruct for the sake of obstruction,” he said. “It knows that it would need to comply with the production of documents, but it’s using various excuses.”

Lagassé said that the more House orders are being refused, the weaker it makes Parliament.

“The government knows that the courts would likely find in the House’s favour, but it can delay and avoid, which undermines the House’s powers in practice,” he added.

Mathieu Gravel, director of outreach and media relations in the House Speaker’s Office, said an MP could raise a question of privilege when the House returns in the fall if they believe there has been a breach with respect to these documents.

“If the Speaker rules that there is indeed a prima facie case of privilege, the House can adopt a motion to refer the matter to a committee for further study or adopt any other motion it determines appropriate in the circumstances,” he said, remarking that the Speaker wouldn’t comment if the matter could constitute a breach of parliamentary privilege.

Ten government departments and entities did provide the law clerk with unredacted documents in response to the order. Six others said they didn’t have documents relevant to the order. The Public Sector Pension Investment Board notified Bédard that it isn’t bound by the order as it is not a government institution. Six government departments noted they needed more time to fully comply with the order, one of which has since submitted the documents.

The order also sought documents for SDTC and the auditor general. SDTC deposited most documents ordered by the House, but was still compiling requested documents related to a provision of the order for correspondence between SDTC directors and management.

Hogan wrote to House of Commons clerk Eric Janse on July 10 explaining that the records possessed by the Office of the Auditor General are the property of either the government or SDTC. She also noted that the order to produce the audit file would “compromise” her independence and would discourage government departments and agencies from providing information in the future.

The order calls on Bédard to provide any documents he received to the RCMP.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

News

Tory fundraising on track to smash 2023 record as Liberal donations, ad spending tick up ‘slowly but surely’: politicians

Continued from page 4

However, in the past month, the Liberals have begun increasing that spending week-over-week.

Despite the Liberals' combined ad buy of \$10,618 from July 20-26 amounting to less than half of the Conservatives' combined \$25,852, it represents a nearly 50 per cent increase from the just over \$7,000 it spent a week before, which was itself a 105 per cent increase from the \$3,500 paid in the previous seven-day period.

While websites like Google, YouTube, and X don't offer the same level of transparency as Meta, Hogan said that if parties are allocating a certain amount on one platform, if they're smart, they will be spending something "at least parallel" on the rest.

Hogan said the Liberals' ad spending is "ticking up slowly but surely" and that he would be watching for any rapid week-to-week jumps as an indication of an imminent election. However, in his view, neither the Liberals' spending nor fundraising totals foretell a writ-drop any time soon.

Yet, even with a lower total than the Conservatives' "unprecedented" fundraising success since Poilievre became leader, Hogan said the Liberals still have the cash to spend. According to the Liberals' annual return, it had \$2.8-million on hand to finish 2023.

"They have the money to do it, so it escapes me why they are holding fire," Hogan said, adding that he doesn't buy the explanation that the lack of spending is due to a principled stance against negative attack ads.

"There's got to be a back room where they're polling reactions or focus-grouping how people feel about Poilievre and what his negatives are," Hogan said, adding that if that is true, he can't understand why not a single ad has materialized from those efforts.

"The only thing that I can assume is that they've done the focus grouping, and nothing strong has come up, so they're not confident enough to pool their money behind it," Hogan said.

Conservatives' attack ads show the NDP is on the radar, says Richer

While the Liberals have yet to decide on a course of action to stunt Poilievre's momentum and how much to spend on it, the Conservatives are expanding their lines of attack.

The Tories launched a new cross-country ad campaign focused not on Trudeau, but "sellout Singh," as the 30-second ad

released on July 30 dubs the NDP leader.

The ad features an image of Singh on the cover of a fictitious "luxury pensioner monthly," accusing him of signing the confidence-and-supply agreement with the Liberals in March 2022 to delay the election until he qualifies for his pension.

Singh, who was elected to the House of Commons in a 2019 byelection, will qualify for his pension on Feb. 25, 2025.

A second ad, released on July 31, reiterates that same line of attack, slightly varying from the previous ad's "[Singh] gets his pension, you pay the price" to "he gets his pension. Trudeau gets power."

Mélanie Richer, who previously served as Singh's director of communications, told *The Hill Times* that despite the personal attack, she views it as a good sign for the NDP.

"When a party that says it's going after the prime minister and his government spends time and money attacking you personally, that just means that you're on their radar, and that's where the party wants to be," Richer said, now with Earncliffe Strategies. "For the party, this says the Conservatives know the choice in the next election will be between themselves and the NDP, and we welcome that."

Unlike the Liberals, however, Richer noted that the Conservative ads follow the NDP's own series of ads to launch the party's "Change the Rules tour," which the New Democrats say is their largest pre-election ad buy since 2015.

Richer said that while the party is adept at making every dollar count—having personally worked in elections in which the party had no money and still "made it work"—with the party now officially debt-free and with possibly a year and change to raise more money, she feels the NDP is well positioned to challenge both the Liberals and Conservatives when the time comes.

In the meantime, Richer said she has been told by the party that even more ad spending is forthcoming ahead of the Sept. 16 byelections in Elmwood-Transcona, Man., and LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que.

As for the actual content of the Conservatives' broadside on Singh, Richer said going for a personal jab suggests that it was the only available line of attack.

"They can't attack his record because they know people actually quite like the things [Singh] has gotten done, and the Conservatives have nothing to show for themselves," Richer said. "They may think their ad is super cutting-edge, but I think it just validates what Singh is doing."

sbenson@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times

Feature

A Bastille Day for the books

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Geneviève Quenum-Miraillet, left, and her husband French Ambassador Michel Miraillet hosted guests at the French Embassy for a Bastille Day reception on July 14.



Sylvie Bragard, Union des Français de l'étranger Ottawa-Gatineau president, left, and Hélène Cayer, of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation.



South African High Commissioner Rieaz Shaik, left, and his wife Erin Tansey.



Belgian Ambassador Patrick Van Gheel, left, and Swedish Ambassador Signe Burgstaller.



Hundreds of guests attended the summer reception.



Former governor general David Johnston, right, and his wife Sharon Johnston.



Former Canadian ambassador Gabriel Lessard, left, and his wife Corinne Paolillo-Lessard.

Canada, Korea share a dialogue

CKS photographs by Grant Pacey



Conservative MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Canada-Korea Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group co-chair, left; and South Korean Ambassador Woongsoon Lim attend the 10th Annual Canada-Korea Dialogue Series on the Hill in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building on June 4.



Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada president Jeff Nankivell, left; Sara Wilshaw, chief trade commissioner and Global Affairs Canada assistant deputy minister; Canada-Korea Society president Young-Hae Lee; Liberal MP Rob Oliphant; and Lim.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Treasury Board President Anand names new labour relations director

Plus, Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault is down a deputy policy director, and Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu has a new adviser on board.

Treasury Board President **Anita Anand** has hired a new director of labour relations for her office following **Éloge Butera**'s recent departure.



Éloge Butera has left Minister Anand's office. *The Hill Times* photograph by Laura Ryckewaert

Butera made his exit in mid-July after almost one year on the job, which he first took on in September 2023, starting shortly after Anand was tapped to lead the central portfolio as part of that summer's cabinet shuffle. Butera got his start on the Hill back in 2012 as an assistant to then-Quebec Liberal MP **Irwin Cotler**.

A survivor of the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda, Butera went on to work for then-Quebec Liberal Senator **Roméo Dallaire**. After an almost four-year run as a senior policy adviser to then-public safety minister **Ralph Goodale**, Butera was tapped by Dallaire to set up the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security's Africa Centre of Excellence in Rwanda—work that kept Butera occupied until the start of 2021, when he returned to Ottawa to become a senior policy adviser to Anand as then-public services and procurement minister. After that year's election, Butera joined Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly**'s team, starting as a senior adviser and working his way up to deputy director of policy, and briefly acting policy director before leaving to take on his most recent role for Anand.

Stay tuned for an update on where Butera has landed.

Anand has since lured **Melissa George** back to Parliament Hill to take over as her new labour relations lead.

George previously worked for Anand during her time as national defence minister, starting as a policy adviser in January 2022. She was later promoted to "senior" status, and stuck with the office until Anand was shuffled into her current post in 2023, at which point George bade

farewell to the Hill. She's since been busy as a senior consultant with Navigator in Toronto.

A former associate business ethics consultant with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board in Toronto, George first came to the Hill at the end of May 2020 to join Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office as a human resources adviser—a role she held for more than a year and a half before exiting to work for Anand. George has a background in law, having earned a juris doctor degree from York University; she subsequently worked as a student-at-law with Sitar & Milczarek: Criminal Trials and Appeals in Calgary, having earlier been a summer student with Adele Monaco Criminal Lawyer in Toronto.

Monique Lugli is chief of staff to the Treasury Board president.

Staff changes for ministers Boissonnault, Hajdu

Employment, Workforce Development, and Official Languages Minister **Randy Boissonnault** is down one senior staffer following deputy director of policy **Riley Schnurr**'s exit as of July 14.



Riley Schnurr, right, with his now-former boss Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Schnurr—who previously supported Boissonnault in his capacity as then-special adviser to the prime minister on LGBTQ2 issues—had been working for Boissonnault as a minister since shortly after the 2021 federal election. Beginning as a senior policy adviser in Boissonnault's office as then-tourism and associate finance minister, Schnurr was promoted to deputy director status in 2023 after following his boss to the employment portfolio in the wake of that summer's cabinet shuffle.

Schnurr spoke to his decision to leave Boissonnault's office—and the Hill—in a recent LinkedIn post marking the end of his "5[ish] productive, exacting, and thoroughly enjoyable years on Parliament Hill."

"In 2018, right out of grad school, Randy Boissonnault took a chance on me and brought me back to Ottawa for my first real foray into the world of politics and policy. We jumped right into hard and long hours endeavouring to deliver for Canadians. It has been one of the greatest pleasures hitching my wagon to that endeavour through to today," wrote Schnurr.

A former junior policy officer with Natural Resources Canada, before pursuing a master's degree in resource and environmental management at Dalhousie University, Schnurr briefly worked as an assistant to now-Government House Leader **Karina Gould** as the MP for Burlington, Ont.

On the Hill, Schnurr has also previously worked in the Liberal research bureau as a special assistant for LGBTQ2 outreach (through which he also supported Boissonnault in his capacity as the PM's special adviser), and as a policy and West and North regional affairs adviser to then-diversity, inclusion, and youth minister **Bardish Chagger**.

Schnurr has already started in a new role as director of the office of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society's chief executive officer.

Nadia Kadri remains director of policy to Boissonnault.

While Schnurr has yet to be replaced in Boissonnault's shop, there is one recent hire to note: **Cameron Macdonald** started on the job as operations assistant and executive assistant to the minister's chief of staff, **Elliott Lockington**, at the beginning of July.

Macdonald was previously working for Boissonnault as the MP for Edmonton Centre, Alta., and holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Alberta.

Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu**, who's also the minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor), recently brought **Alex Filbey** on board as a new adviser for FedNor policy and Ontario regional affairs.

Filbey started on the job on June 17, and previously worked for Kitchener-Conestoga, Ont., Liberal MP **Tim Louis** as a Liberal Summer Leadership Program (SLP) intern. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Guelph University.

Previously, **Kaitlyn Wendland** was a senior adviser for FedNor policy and Ontario regional affairs. She left the Hill in June, and is now a client services co-ordinator for the Town of Arnprior.

Wendland had been working for Hajdu since the fall of 2022, beginning as an assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, who at the time was Liberal MP **Vance Badawey**. She'd previously been an assistant to Badawey as the MP for Niagara Centre, Ont.

On June 28, **Anika Kale** officially joined Hajdu's team as a policy adviser. Most recently an employee communications specialist with utility company FortisBC, Kale has worked as an analyst with Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada as part of a co-op placement. According to her LinkedIn profile, she also previously worked—largely concurrently—as an assistant executive officer with the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies, and as a research analyst with the Canadian Centre for Identity-based Conflict.

This isn't Kale's first political job. Back in 2021, she spent roughly six months as a regional affairs adviser for British Columbia, the West, and North to then-public safety minister **Bill Blair**. In 2019, she was an SLP intern in then-defence minister **Harjit Sajjan**'s office, having spent the summer prior as an SLP intern to then-B.C. Liberal MP **Gordie Hogg**.



Anika Kale has joined the Indigenous services minister's office. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Not long after Kale started, policy adviser **Javin Ames-Sinclair** bade Hajdu's team farewell. Ames-Sinclair is bound for McGill University where he's set to study law starting this fall. (That brings the tally of ministerial staff who left the Hill in July to study law at the prime minister's alma mater, McGill, up to three—reported by **Hill Climbers**, at least. The other two are **Diana Ebadi**, former press secretary to Blair as defence minister, and **Chris Aoun**, former press secretary to Health Minister **Mark Holland**. "If you work on the Hill, go to McGill," apparently.)



Javin Ames-Sinclair has left to study law at McGill University. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

"Leaving Ottawa and Parliament Hill is extremely hard as I've made such amazing friends and memories along the way, and am proud of the work I do and continue to do to support Indigenous communities," wrote Ames-Sinclair in a recent LinkedIn post. "However, going to law school has always been a dream of mine and to be selected as one of the 180 [students] is an enormous honour and I am ready to begin this new chapter of my life."

A former intern with the ministers' regional office in Regina—one of 16 such offices across Canada which support all of cabinet—Ames-Sinclair subsequently landed his first job on the Hill in the fall of 2021 when he was hired to the Liberal research bureau as an Indigenous outreach adviser. He's since also been a special assistant for operations and scheduling to then-families minister Gould, and a West and North regional affairs adviser to Rural Economic Development Minister **Gudie Hutchings**.

Jordano Nudo is director of policy to Hajdu, whose office is currently run by acting chief of staff **Randi Anderson**.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Feature

Parliamentary Calendar

The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

Black parliamentarians congregate in Ottawa Aug. 7-9



Liberal MP and Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians co-chair Michael Coteau holds a press conference in Ottawa on Aug. 11, 2023, after a two-day summit. The event returns to Parliament Hill Aug. 7-9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

FRIDAY, JULY 26—SUNDAY, AUG. 11

Summer Olympics—Cheer for Team Canada as they take part in the XXXIII Olympic Summer Games in Paris, France, from Friday, July 26, to Sunday, Aug. 11. Details: olympics.com.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 7

House Not Sitting—The House is on its summer break. It 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 to Dec. 17.

Royal St. John's Regatta—Keep an eye out for federal politicians at the annual Royal St. John's Regatta. Wednesday, Aug. 7, in St. John's, N.L. Details: stjohnsregatta.ca.

Minister Anand to Attend Fund-raiser—Treasury Board President Anita Anand will join Liberal MP Kody Blois for a fundraising event filled with conversation and refreshments. Wednesday, Aug. 7, at 5 p.m. AT at Maritime Express Cider Co., 325 Main St., Kentville, N.S. Details: liberal.ca.

Wonderful Wednesday with Minister Blair—Defence Minister Bill Blair will take part in a "Wonderful Wednesday" meet-and-greet event for registered Liberals, volunteers, donors, and members. Wednesday, Aug. 7 at 6 p.m. PT at the Regal Beagle Pub, 2283 Broadway W., Vancouver, B.C.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 7—FRIDAY, AUG. 9

Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians—The Canadian Congress of Black Parliamentarians will meet in Ottawa from Wednesday, Aug. 7 to Friday, Aug. 9. Black politicians from all spheres—federal, provincial, municipal, and school boards—and all parties will convene once again at the Parliament of Canada to discuss and network on Black issues in Canada. For details, contact the office of Liberal MP Michael Coteau.

THURSDAY, AUG. 8

Info Sessions on FNCFS Draft Settlement Deal—The second in a four-part series of online info sessions on the Draft Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services hosted by the Assembly of First Nations. Today's session is on

"Chapter #2: Protection Funding in the Draft Agreement." Thursday, Aug. 8 at 11 a.m. ET, happening online: afn.ca.

MONDAY, AUG. 12

Ministers Champagne and MacKinnon to Attend Fundraiser—Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne will join Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon at a fundraising event for the Gatineau Federal Liberal Association. Monday, Aug. 12, at 9 a.m. ET at Club de golf Rivermead, 150 ch. Rivermead, Gatineau, Que. Details: liberal.ca.

SATURDAY, AUG. 17—SUNDAY, AUG. 25

Capital Pride—Ottawa's annual Pride festival kicks off on Saturday, Aug. 17 with a theme of "Listen. Learn. Act." The two weeks of festivities include the Capital Pride Pageant (Aug. 17), family picnic (Aug. 18), flag raising at City Hall (Aug. 19), panels, showcases, stage shows, and will conclude with the Pride Parade that will wind its way through downtown streets on Sunday, Aug. 25. For details, visit: capitalpride.ca.

MONDAY, AUG. 19—THURSDAY, AUG. 22

U.S. Democratic National Convention—The U.S. Democratic National Convention will take place in Chicago, Ill., Monday, Aug. 19 to Thursday, Aug. 22. Details: chicago2024.com.

TUESDAY, AUG. 20

Senator Jaffer's Retirement—Today is British Columbia ISG Senator Mobina Jaffer's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

THURSDAY, AUG. 22

Info Sessions on FNCFS Draft Settlement Deal—The third in a four-part series of online info sessions on the Draft Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services hosted by the Assembly of First Nations. Today's session is on "Chapter #3: Prevention in the Draft Agreement." Thursday, Aug. 22 at 11 a.m. ET happening online: afn.ca.

SUNDAY, AUG. 25

Victoria Forum—The 2024 Victoria Forum will take place from Aug. 25 to 27 under the theme "Building Trust for a Shared Future." Co-hosted by the University of Victoria and the Senate of Canada, the Victoria Forum 2024 will be held on the traditional territory of the ʔəḱʷəŋən peoples, and

set against the beautiful backdrop of Victoria, B.C. Details: victoriaforum.ca/victoria-forum-2024/

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4

Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate. Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 10 a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 5

Info Sessions on FNCFS Draft Settlement Deal—The last in a four-part series of online info sessions on the Draft Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services hosted by the Assembly of First Nations. Today's session is on "Chapter #4: Governance and Accountability." Thursday, Sept. 5 at 11 a.m. ET happening online: afn.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10

Breakfast with Conservative MP Barrett—Grenville Futures, the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce and the South Grenville Chamber of Commerce host a breakfast with Conservative MP Michael Barrett and Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP Steve Clark. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Prescott Golf Club, 900 Boundary St., Prescott, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver remarks to the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 8:25 a.m. ET, in London, U.K. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11

Canada Fintech Forum—Finance Montréal hosts the 11th edition of the Canada Fintech Forum, the largest fintech event in Canada. Quebec's Finance Minister Eric Girard is among the speakers. The latest edition of the Quebec Fintech Report will also be unveiled. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Wednesday, Sept. 11 at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montreal. Details online: forumfintechcanada.com.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

UN General Assembly—The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly opens today in New York City with a high-level General Debate. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Tuesday, Sept. 24.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12

Privy Council Clerk Hannaford to Deliver Remarks—John Hannaford, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet, will deliver remarks at a roundtable lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Sept. 12, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details online: cdhowe.org.

MONDAY, SEPT. 16

House Resumes Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 16.

Two Federal Byelections—Federal byelections will be held on Monday, Sept. 16, in the electoral districts of Elmwood—Transcona (Man.) and LaSalle—Émard—Verdun (Que.) to fill vacancies in the House of Commons.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17

Mining Association President to Deliver Remarks—Pierre Gratton, president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada, will deliver his annual address to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 11:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Pacific Rim, 1038 Canada Pl., Vancouver. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23

Space Canada's Annual Parliamentary Reception—Brian Gallant hosts Space Canada's third Annual Parliamentary Reception featuring networking with leaders of Canada's emerging space ecosystem, food and drinks, several space-related interactive displays, and a special guest speaker. Monday, Sept. 23, 5-7 p.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Details and RSVP to: RSVP@space-canada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a hybrid event, "The Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide." Participants include Ian Scott, former CRTC chair; Bill Murdoch, executive director of Clear Sky Connections; and Elisha Ram, senior assistant deputy minister at Employment and Social Development Canada's Income Security and Social Development Branch. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 12 p.m. ET. Impact Hub Ottawa, 123 Slater St., 7th floor, and online. Details: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

CUTA 2024 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2024 Policy Forum in Ottawa. Some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts will discuss the industry's future and the role of federal public transit policy. This year's event will focus on affordability, regional coordination and integration, and transit's role in addressing Canada's productivity gap. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at the Hilton Garden Inn Ottawa Downtown, 361 Queen St. Details via Eventbrite.

VIA Rail President to Deliver Remarks—Mario Pélouquin, president and CEO of VIA Rail, will deliver remarks titled "At the Heart of Canada's Passenger Journey: VIA Rail's 2030 Vision" hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 7:30 a.m. PT at the Vancouver Club, 915 W. Hastings St., Vancouver, B.C. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—The fourth annual National

Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, is today, honouring the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2—FRIDAY, OCT. 4

IPAC Annual Conference—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada will hold its annual conference on the themes of climate change, AI, housing, and Indigenous topics, addressing the essential role of public administration amid changing realities. Wednesday, Oct. 2, to Friday, Oct. 4 in Winnipeg, Man. Details: ipac.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 4—SATURDAY, OCT. 5

The Francophonie Summit—The Francophonie Summit will take place on Friday, Oct. 4, to Saturday, Oct. 5, in Villers-Cotterêts and Paris, France. Details: francophonie.org.

SATURDAY, OCT. 5

Camp Parliament for Girls—It's all fun and civics at Camp Parliament for Girls Ottawa 2024. Girls aged 8-17 years will study Canada's parliamentary system of government, form political parties, create a campaign platform to stand for office, vote in an election, and form a government to pass a law. Each student will serve as an MP. Saturday, Oct. 5, at 8 a.m. at 350 Dalhousie St. Details via Eventbrite.

SUNDAY, OCT. 6—FRIDAY, OCT. 11

ASEAN Summit—The ASEAN Summit will take place in Vientiane, Laos, from Sunday, Oct. 6, to Friday, Oct. 11.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9

Roundtable Lunch with U.S. Ambassador Cohen—U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen will take part in a roundtable lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, Oct. 9, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.



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Large friendly cooperative household in the Glebe looking for new housemate. Sept. 1 or sooner. Four of us looking for two more in spacious house. Rent is \$925 or \$950. Includes utilities and high-speed internet. 30 minute walk to Parliament Hill. Should enjoy cooperative living and sharing. The current household is a balance of gender and generations. No pets please. We share food and household expenses, chores, and kindnesses. We are politically progressive and try to be environmentally responsible. Looking for person of similar interests, with interesting tales to tell. The house has a large kitchen, 3 living rooms, 6 bedrooms, 2 and 1/2 bathrooms, office space, basement with laundry and a big backyard with vegetable and flower garden. Enquiries to Kate or Dan dharaa@googlemail.com.

