

‘Think about the role they have’: experts urge parties to rethink immigration priorities

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NEWS

Poilievre vows to renegotiate North American pact, but Trump’s repeated trade breaches imperil plan

BY NEIL MOSS

After United States President Donald Trump imposed auto tariffs last week, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre floated the idea of quickly renegotiating Canada’s North American trade deal, but some question whether the American leader would obey any agreement he signs.

While Canada managed to avoid having self-styled “reciprocal” tariffs imposed on its exports, the list of American levies placed on Ottawa continues to grow as 25-per-cent auto tariffs were enacted on April 3. Trump has already placed a 25-per-cent all-encompassing levy on non-Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)-compliant goods—which drops to 10 per cent for energy and potash—under the guise of addressing fentanyl crossing the American border, as well as a 25-per-cent tariff on Canadian steel and aluminum.

Speaking to supporters at a campaign stop in Kingston, Ont., Poilievre said he would “push hard to end the tariff madness.”

“On my first day on the job as prime minister, I will call the president and demand that we rapidly renegotiate the CUSMA agreement on a very tight timeline,” he said on April 3, echoing remarks he made in Toronto the

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NEWS

Conservatives’ tight grip on media access not living up to promise to be ‘most accessible and transparent campaign,’ say reporters

BY STUART BENSON

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre’s national campaign has attempted to keep a tight grip on the media’s access to its candidates—figuratively and literally—in the first two weeks of the election, answering a fraction of the questions fielded by his three main rivals, all while curating who will be allowed to ask questions and attempting to direct what can be asked.

But as frustrations grow at public events and press conferences, and as the relationship between Poilievre’s team and the journalists attempting to follow it becomes increasingly contentious, those reporters say the campaign is losing its hold on the situation. And as rallies grow larger and more chaotic, they could soon reach a boiling point.

In the past week, *The Hill Times* has spoken to nearly a dozen journalists from various outlets covering the four national leaders’ tours to get a sense of

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NEWS

Tories’ creative daily ad content bests Grits’ sophisticated distribution strategy, says digital marketing critic

BY STUART BENSON

With political advertising from the federal parties and their candidates blanketing Canadians’ social media, streaming platforms, TVs, and radios, online political marketing strategist Harneet Singh says the Liberals have impressed with an optimized and sophisticated distribution strategy and the requisite budget to back it up. Yet, while the Conservatives’ ad spending shrank in the first two weeks of the campaign, Canadians are still tuning in for their top-notch creativity, and diverse and economical daily content, he said.

“I’m impressed by the Liberals’ strategy. They’ve launched a ton of ads with tons of variations,” explained Singh, a managing principal at EOK Consults, noting that both the Liberals and Conservatives are using the artificial intelligence-generated A/B testing provided by Meta’s ad service, which varies the ad-copy based on the viewers location, demographic information, and interests.

“The Liberals have an impressive, sophisticated distribution strategy, but honestly, the Conservatives’ creativity is top

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Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre should play to his strengths and ‘talk more,’ says Tory pundit Dan Mader. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

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# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Comeback kids? Ex-MPs Brosseau and Aldag join the race at 11<sup>th</sup> hour



Former NDP MP Ruth Ellen Brosseau, left, pictured with Alexandre Boulerice, and ex-Liberal MP John Aldag each announced they are running in their former ridings in Quebec and British Columbia, respectively. Photographs courtesy of Facebook, Instagram

In the last days before nominations for the federal election closed on April 7, former NDP MP **Ruth Ellen Brosseau** and ex-Liberal MP **John Aldag** each announced they are running again in their old ridings, both against familiar incumbent challengers.

"I was interested in jumping into politics, but it took a bit of time to organize everything at the farm," Brosseau told *La Presse* in a French-language interview on April 6, the day she confirmed her latest run in the rural Quebec riding of Berthier-Maskinongé which she'd held from 2011-2019.

Since losing the 2019 election to the Bloc Québécois' **Yves Perron**, Brosseau has become a small-holding farmer. As this time of year is birthing season, the team of three farmers needed to find someone to replace her while she's out on the hustings.

NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** shared Brosseau's news on social

media later that day, calling her a star candidate on Radio-Canada's program *Tout le monde en parle*.

The party's current lone Quebec NDP MP **Alexandre Boulerice** was on hand for Brosseau's campaign launch at the small farm she runs with her partner in Yamachiche, Que.

Brosseau—who turns 41 two days before the federal election—was first elected in the **Jack Layton**-led "Orange Wave" of 2011, which saw the NDP form the official opposition with 59 seats. She was re-elected in 2015, but lost to Perron in 2019 by fewer than 2,000 votes. In a second rematch in 2021, she lost to him again by fewer than 1,000 votes.

Meanwhile, out in British Columbia, Aldag is set to face the Conservatives' **Tamara Jansen** for the third time on April 28.

He confirmed last Sunday he's on the ballot for the Liberals in Langley Township-Fraser

Heights, B.C. He posted a photo and statement on Instagram on April 6. "We're picking up steam!" he wrote.

Aldag's a bit of a comeback kid: first elected in the riding then-known as Cloverdale-Langley City in 2015, he lost to Jansen in 2019 by just shy of 1,400 votes. After a rematch in 2021, he defeated Jansen by 1,654 votes, and was the MP until he resigned his seat on May 31, 2024, to run in British Columbia's election on Oct. 19 under the provincial NDP banner.

He didn't win that contest, and Jansen claimed Aldag's former House of Commons seat in a Dec. 16, 2024, byelection, besting the Liberal candidate with 66.23 per cent of the vote. Jansen is running for re-election. Until last weekend, **Kyle Latchford** was the Liberal name on the ballot. According to X, he was looking forward to opening his campaign office on April 5.

## Two former PMs lend a hand in campaign

Two former prime ministers have come recently to lend a hand on the campaign trail.

In Montreal last week, former prime minister **Justin Trudeau** was out doorknocking in his old riding of Papineau, Que., which his former deputy chief of staff **Marjorie Michel** is looking to keep Liberal on April 28. She posted a video on Instagram of him with her out in the community.

Meanwhile, former prime minister **Stephen Harper** graced an Edmonton stage to offer his support to current Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** on April 7. This rally, which was anticipated to draw thousands of supporters, is the party's first big event in Alberta during this election campaign.



Marjorie Michel, left, and Justin Trudeau out doorknocking in Montreal. Screenshot courtesy of Instagram

## Ottawa hosts big right- and left-wing conferences this week



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, B.C. Conservative Leader John Rustad, and Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe will be at the Canada Strong and Free Network conference in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, and screenshot courtesy of X.

For the second year in a row, two big political conferences are overlapping in Ottawa this week.

Starting April 9, the conservative-leaning Canada Strong and Free Network (CSFN) and the left-wing Broadbent Institute are each hosting multi-day gatherings packed with keynote speeches, panels, and networking opportunities for their party faithful.

Based at the Westin Hotel, CSFN's conference features a long list of participants including current Canadian politicians like Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith**, Saskatchewan Premier **Scott Moe**, and British Columbia's Conservative Leader—and official opposition leader—**John Rustad**; former federal Conservative cabinet ministers **John Baird**, **Tony Clement**, and **Jason Kenney**—who's also a former Alberta premier—and a couple of former **Stephen Harper**-era PMO staffers including **Ian Brodie**, **Kory Teneycke**, and **Howard Anglin**.

There are a few retired national security types on the list, too, including former chief of defence staff **Rick Hillier**, ex-vice chief of defence staff **Mark Norman**, and retired RCMP assistant commissioner **Ches Parsons**.

And there's a contingent of Americans, notably **Chris LaCivita**, senior adviser to U.S. President **Donald Trump**'s successful 2024 presidential campaign, and three men who were part of Trump 1.0: ex-U.S. secretary of veterans affairs **Robert Wilkie**, former acting secretary of homeland security **Chad Wolf**, and

ex-trade representative **Robert Lighthizer**.

Plus, **Katalin Novak**, who was president of Hungary from 2022 to 2024, is also among the speakers scheduled to appear between April 9 and April 12.

Meanwhile, down at the City Centre Delta Hotel, what the Progress Summit's agenda lacks in influence and length, it makes up for by being female forward.

Toronto Mayor and former NDP MP **Olivia Chow** is the most senior Canadian politician on the roster. Also among the speakers are Canadian Labour Congress president **Bea Bruske**; **Linda Silas**, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions; and Canadian Medical Association president Dr. **Joss Reimer**.

And there are two Americans and one German on the Progress Summit's speaking agenda: **Beth Baltzan**, former counsellor for trade and investment in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative during the Biden administration; **Stacy Davis Gates**, president of the Chicago Teachers Union; and **Matthias Ecke**, a European MP representing the Social Democratic Party of Germany.

Of note, Canada's former chief trade negotiator **Steve Verheul** will join Baltzan for a discussion on "Trade, Politics and Power: What's Next for Canada and the U.S.?"

The Progress Summit runs from April 9-11.

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*The Hill Times*

## CDAI petition calls for leaders' debate on defence policy

The Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) Institute launched a petition on April 3 calling for Canadians to support its call for a special leaders' debate on national security and foreign policy. The petition is asking for the signatures of 10,000 Canadians, and already counts on support from former Conservative defence minister **Peter MacKay**; former Liberal defence minister **David Pratt**; two ex-chiefs of defence staff, **Ray Henault** and **Tom Lawson**; former commander of the Army **Marquis Hainse**; and former chief of personnel **Christine Whitecross**.

"The federal election is an opportunity to have a pressing and urgent debate on Canada's military preparedness. It is now incumbent on all federal political parties to set out their views," the CDAI said in a statement. Along with its petition, the institute launched an election resources platform for Canadians to track the five federal parties' commentary and electoral promises on defence and security issues.

The institute also recently announced a change in leadership, unveiling **Gaëlle Rivard Piché** as the new executive director of both the Confer-

ence of Defence Associations and the CDA Institute on April 3. Among her bonafides, Rivard Piché—who holds a PhD in international affairs from Carleton University—was "a long-time strategic analyst at Defence Research and Development Canada working variously with NORAD Headquarters in Colorado Springs, the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, and the Royal Canadian Navy," according to a press release.

She will begin in her new role, succeeding outgoing executive director **Youri Cormier** on June 2.

# Experts urge parties to rethink immigration priorities

For decades, Canada has positioned itself as a welcoming place for newcomers. The party that wins the federal election on April 28 will be tasked with restoring confidence in a system that many view as broken.

BY KATRYA BOLGER

As the federal election unfolds, experts are watching closely to see how party leaders plan to tackle Canada's immigration system.

For decades, Canada has positioned itself as a welcoming place for newcomers. But the Liberal Party has recently faced backlash for embracing record-high immigration levels without adequately planning for the integration of newcomers.

Under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, the government raised immigrant targets to address labour shortages and demographic changes. Annual targets for permanent residents nearly doubled during Trudeau's tenure, going from 250,000 newcomers in 2015 to 485,000 in 2024.

The Trudeau government also welcomed more temporary residents, such as foreign workers and international students, leading to a surge in those populations following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, public support for high levels of immigration fell to its lowest level in 25 years. A report released by Environics Institute last year found that roughly 60 per cent Canadians think that the country accepts too many immigrants, up from 25 per cent in 2023.

According to recent data presented by Abacus Data CEO David Coletto as part of the Max Bell School's 2025 annual Jack Layton Lecture at McGill University on April 3, 53 per cent of respondents said the immigration level is having a negative impact on crime in Canada, 62 per cent

said it's having a negative impact on health care, and 73 per cent said it's having a negative impact on housing, all of which were increases from the previous year.

A survey conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies in March found 58 per cent of respondents said Canada accepts too many immigrants. Despite that, most respondents agreed that the country remains a "nation of immigrants."

Much of the concern has focused on the pressure that rapid population growth places on housing availability and affordability.

The party that wins the federal election on April 28 will be tasked with restoring confidence in a system that many view as broken.

During his campaign, Liberal Prime Minister Mark Carney has called for a sustainable approach to immigration growth. He has voiced support for keeping the government's reduced immigration targets, which set the permanent resident cap at 395,000 in 2025—down from 500,000 people. Carney also plans to attract skilled workers through the Express Entry program, and by reforming the Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) Program.

When launching the campaign on March 23, Carney said he would keep his predecessor's caps in place "until we've expanded housing." He added: "Post-COVID, there was a surge in immigration ... and we have not lived up to the bargain with those people. There's not adequate housing [and] not everyone who came here for an education are getting an education they would expect."

Meanwhile, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is pushing for reduced overall immigration levels. He said his focus will be attracting highly skilled workers, prioritizing permanent residency pathways for TFWs, and tightening refugee vetting procedures.

Poilievre called for lower levels of immigration at a press conference last August after the Liberals announced changes to the immigration caps. More recently, he called for a lowering of those levels closer to those of the Harper era in an interview with *Juno News*.

"These out-of-touch Liberals inflated housing costs, drove up the cost of food, pushed two million people to food banks ... and ruined our immigration system," Poilievre said on March 23.

Mikal Skuterud, a professor of labour economics at the University of Waterloo, said that while much of the public debate has focused on immigration levels, the next government should prioritize the way immigrants are selected, and their potential long-term contributions to the economy. He said the Liberals leaned too heavily on temporary visa programs to fill labour shortages during the pandemic without providing clear pathways to permanent status.

According to Skuterud: "The government completely lost track of the system. They were admitting huge amounts of temporary residents on an explicit promise of a pathway to permanent residency ... But the number of permanent resident spots was capped."

Temporary immigration drastically increased during the pandemic as the federal government sought to support under-staffed sectors such as agriculture, health care, and hospitality. In 2019, the year before the pandemic broke out, the government issued 522,110 temporary resident permits for foreign workers and students. But by the end of 2023, that number rose to 1.6 million permits, marking a more than three-fold increase.

Critics say many temporary residents came to Canada with the expectation that their work experience or education would allow them to easily access permanent residency. However, changes in immigration policies and limited availability of permanent resident spots left many individuals stuck with temporary status.

Skuterud suggested this led to a growing number of migrants vying for limited citizenship opportunities.

"While the government was increasing the permanent resident numbers, they weren't increasing nearly as fast as the temporary permits," he said. "So there was an imbalance created, which was inevitably going to lead to people being lured here who cannot make that transition to citizenship."

He noted that the turbulence has been compounded by the fact that six different immigration ministers have served over the past decade. This high turnover has resulted in inconsistent approaches to immigration policy, causing confusion and uncertainty, Skuterud said.

To steady the country's immigration trajectory, Skuterud said the government should renew its focus on attracting highly skilled workers who can contribute to the economy's long-term growth—an approach he argued has been key to the past success of the system.

Beyond immigration's economic objectives, Gauri Sreenivasan, co-executive director of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), said she wants to see party leaders refrain from blaming migrants for issues such as the housing crisis.

"This election, the political parties should think about the role they have in shaping how people understand immigration, our humanitarian commitments, and refugee resettlement. It's about the policies, but it's also about how the issue is discussed on people's doorsteps and in party's platforms," she said.

She noted that the Liberals cut their refugee intake by 21 per cent last year—a move critics say was a result of widespread scapegoating of migrants. According to Statistics Canada data from last year, it's anticipated that there will be a 14.6-per-cent drop in refugee arrivals, from 131,250 to 112,050, between 2025 and 2026.

On April 3, the CCR, along with 200 other organizations, urged party leaders in an open letter to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, as these issues have grown increasingly divisive.

"At a time of significant political and economic insecurity and amidst a cost-of-living crisis that affects us all, refugees and migrants have been frequent targets," the letter says. "As the federal election approaches, we are writing to seek your commitment to reject this scapegoating and defend and strengthen one of Canada's best traditions: protecting refugees and welcoming newcomers."

Since United States President Donald Trump took office in January, his administration has implemented strict policies aimed at reducing immigration and tightening border security, leading advocates to suggest that Canada may need to step up its efforts to welcome more migrants.

As the crackdown on immigration in the U.S. continues, individuals could seek "safer havens" in Canada. For instance, in February, the Canada Border Services Agency recorded 126 asylum seekers crossing from the U.S.—the highest monthly total in the past year.

Given this, Canada must be vigilant in protecting its reputation as a migrant-friendly country, particularly as anti-immigrant sentiment rises in the U.S. and elsewhere, said Sreenivasan, noting, "We're not immune to that here in Canada."

To safeguard against these shifts, Sreenivasan urged the next government to consider amending the Canada-United States Safe Third Country Agreement. The agreement, which was implemented in 2004, requires asylum seekers to be directed to the first "safe" country they enter. However, many advocacy groups argue that the U.S. no longer meets the criteria of a "safe" country due to its increasingly harsh

immigration policies, such as the detention of asylum seekers and the separation of families.

Domestically, the next federal government will also have to face challenges over migrant rights, including concerns over Canada's detention system. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently criticized the country's immigration detention practices, noting that migrants with disabilities are disproportionately held in correctional facilities. The UN has called for an end to immigration detention on human rights grounds.

The report suggests Canada should "end the use of immigration detention by increasing community-based, independent alternatives that provide access to holistic supports, such as housing, health care, mental health services, legal representation, disability-related supports, and children's services."

Statistics Canada data indicates that between 2016 and 2021, Canada welcomed more than 1.3 million new immigrants, the highest number recorded in a Canadian census. This growth has led to newcomers making up 23 per cent of the population, the largest proportion since Confederation and the highest among G7 countries.

As the political climate seemingly grows more hostile toward migrants, Andrew Griffith, former director general of citizenship and multiculturalism at Immigration Canada, said he sees it as a chance for the country to reaffirm its leadership in migration.

"Canada could have an opportunity to attract highly skilled, internationally recognized experts because the political climate in the U.S. is so bad. The government could have the best and brightest and have a focused recruiting campaign for people that will no longer want to work in the U.S.," he said.

While the political parties have not yet released their full commitments on immigration, Griffith said he believes the end of the previous Liberal government signalled the start of a new era in immigration policy.

Recent policy announcements indicate that the number of immigrants entering Canada is expected to decline in the coming years, with progressively lower targets set for each year. According to Griffith, former Liberal immigration minister Marc Miller already took clear steps towards reducing immigration levels, marking the end of what he calls "an era of unbridled immigration."

Moving forward, Griffith said the key issue to watch in the election is which party will present a plan that effectively addresses the challenge of Canada's "absorptive capacity." This includes ensuring that immigration levels are aligned with the country's ability to manage the impact on housing, health care, and other crucial services.

In his view, Canada's commitment to immigration remains unchanged, but the system and its policies require reform. "It's about overhauling the immigration system—not just focusing on the immigrants themselves."

*The Hill Times*

# Key hands behind Pierre Poilievre's 2025 Conservative campaign

Carl Vallée is leading the Conservative campaign effort in Quebec, and Stephen Staley is overseeing tour organization from Ottawa. Both are former Harper-era staffers.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The Conservative Party's 2025 national campaign team backing Leader Pierre Poilievre includes plenty of familiar faces from conservative circles and the official opposition leader's office—a familiarity that former Conservative staffer Yaroslav Baran says should serve them well.

"It's a team that has worked together, they've worked well together, they've gelled together, and that's pretty vital under the pressure-cooker conditions of a general election campaign," said Baran, who worked in the Conservative Party's 2004, 2006, and 2008 war rooms, and is now co-founder of the Pendulum Group.

While the Tories may be down in the polls and facing calls for a campaign strategy pivot from some corners, in terms of the "mechanical executive of an election campaign," the Conservative effort is "going very well," according to Baran.

Based on media reports, not everyone agrees with that assessment.

Still, Baran said from what he's seen, he thinks the party is "running a tight ship," and "a highly disciplined operation."

"The tour is organized, the message is well crafted, the crowds are huge at the rallies," he said.

**Jenni Byrne** is back overseeing the Conservative Party's campaign as national director for the first time since 2015.

In 2019, then-leader Andrew Scheer tapped strategist Hamish Marshall to run his national campaign, and in 2021, then-leader Erin O'Toole named the party's former director of political operations, Fred DeLorey, to the role.

While the 2015 election ended in an upset for the Conservatives—with the Trudeau Liberals elected to form a majority government—Byrne was also national director of the Tories'



Jenni Byrne is back at the helm of the 2025 Conservative campaign. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

2011 campaign, which saw the Conservatives under Stephen Harper win a majority. Byrne was also deputy campaign director during the 2006 and 2008 elections, which both resulted in Conservative minorities.

Byrne knows Poilievre well, not just from their years spent fighting in the same political trenches—both were previously active with the Reform Party, and through the merger that created today's Conservative Party—but the two also previously dated for about a decade. She was a senior adviser for Poilievre's 2022 leadership campaign.

Byrne started working on the Hill in 1997 while a student at the University of Ottawa. By 2006, she was working in then-prime minister Harper's office, quickly becoming a senior adviser to the leader, and later head of issues management. After the 2008 election, she joined party headquarters as director of political operations—a role she filled until her return to the PMO in 2013 as deputy chief of staff.

Post-2015, Byrne joined Bayfield Strategy as vice-president of strategic communications, and in 2020, she launched her own public affairs firm, Jenni Byrne + Associates. In between, she was director of field operations for the Ontario Progressive Conservatives during the 2018 campaign that saw the party led by now-Premier Doug Ford upend the provincial Liberals' 15-year run in power.

Between 2018 and 2019,

Byrne was principal secretary to Ford as premier.

Supporting Byrne this campaign are other familiar faces from the Harper government years.

*The Hill Times* spoke with a number of sources on background to compile and confirm the following names.

**Carl Vallée** is leading the party's Quebec campaign with help from **Vincent Desmarais** and **Maxime Robert**.

Hailing from *la belle province*, Vallée worked in Harper's PMO between 2009 and March 2015. Starting as a communications intern straight out of university, by 2010, Vallée was a deputy press secretary, and was promoted to press secretary at the start of 2012. Since leaving the Hill, Vallée has been executive director of communications for the Canadian Olympic Committee, Quebec director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF), a partner with Hatley Strategy Advisors, and has been a managing director with Teneo since it acquired Hatley Strategy Advisors in 2020.

Desmarais joined Poilievre's official opposition leader's office (OLO) as a Quebec adviser almost one year ago. He previously spent almost four years working for Quebec Premier François Legault's Coalition Avenir Québec government, starting in 2019 as an intern in Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx's office, according to his LinkedIn profile. Desmarais has since been an adviser to Government House

Leader Simon Jolin-Barrette, and to Legault as premier.

Robert worked on the Hill between 2011 and 2015, starting as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-industry minister and minister of state for agriculture Christian Paradis. Robert joined Harper's PMO as an issues manager in 2013, but later returned to work for Paradis as then-inter-



Carl Vallée is leading the Quebec campaign effort. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

national development minister. He went on to work in then-public safety minister Steven Blaney's office, and was part of the Conservative Party's 2015 Quebec campaign team.

Robert has since been a director with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs in Quebec, and more recently a director with the non-profit Hope & Cope. He also worked for the Legault government between 2018 and 2019, among other past roles.

**Aaron Wudrick** is policy lead for the campaign. A former federal director of the CTF from 2014 to 2021, Wudrick joined Poilievre's OLO as director of policy last year. Before then, he'd been director of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute's domestic policy program. He's also a former general counsel and director with Campaign Research, and a past senior consultant with Temple Scott Associates, among other things.



Aaron Wudrick is tackling policy for the campaign. *Photograph courtesy of X*

Conservative incumbent and former Harper-era cabinet staffer Adam Chambers was reportedly working on the party's platform in the lead up to the election.

**Jwane Izzetpanah** is overseeing stakeholder relations work for the campaign. She's been manager of the same in the OLO since 2023, having originally joined the office that year as an event planner. Her CV includes time spent as an assistant to Ontario ISG Senator Tony Dean and then-Manitoba ISG senator Patricia Bovey.

Organizing Poilievre's tour from campaign headquarters in Ottawa is **Stephen Staley**, who worked in Harper's PMO between 2008 and 2011, and again between 2012 and 2015. Staley's past roles in the top office include more than two years as an advance, and roughly two years as Harper's executive assistant. After the 2015 election, Staley spent almost eight-and-a-half years working for Scotiabank, ending as vice-president of Canadian banking communications. He joined the public relations firm Oyster Group as a senior adviser last year.

Staley's father, lawyer **Robert Staley**, is currently a director of the Conservative Fund.

Among those on the road with Poilievre are **Sebastian Skamski**, who's overseeing media advance work, and press secretaries **Carson Bradley** and **Marion Ringuette**.

Skamski has been director of media relations to Poilievre in the OLO since the

Continued on page 5



An MP since 2004, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's national campaign team is stacked with faces he'll be familiar with since the Harper government days. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 4

end of 2022, after roughly five years working at Queen's Park, starting in 2017 as assistant to then-Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown's chief of staff. Skamski went on to work for then-Ontario infrastructure minister Monte McNaughton, as press secretary to then-treasury board president Peter Bethlenfalvy, and as communications director to then-government and consumer services minister Ross Romano and briefly for Romano's successor, then-public and business service delivery minister Kaled Rasheed. Over the summer of 2015, Skamski also interned in Harper's PMO.

Bradley joined the OLO as a press secretary for ethnic and regional media in 2023, and has previously worked as an assistant to Ontario Conservative MP Anna Roberts, then-BC Liberal MLA John Yap, and then-B.C. Conservative MP Kenny Chiu.

Ringuette also comes from the OLO where she's been working since at least 2023, previously as associate director of media relations and more recently as director of French communications and media relations. She's a former communications director to then-Ontario solicitor general

Sylvia Jones, but was fired after it was reported she'd donated \$100 to the 2021 "Freedom Convoy." Ringuette had been working at Queen's Park since at least 2018.

They're supported by a communications team in Ottawa that includes **Ben Woodfinden**, **Micah Green**, and **Nico Johnson**.

Woodfinden has been communications director in the OLO since October 2022, stepping away from the world of academia—he'd been working towards a PhD in political science at McGill, and was a

PhD fellow with the university's Research Group on Constitutional Studies—to work for the then-freshly minted Conservative leader.

Green was most recently manager of communications in the OLO, having originally joined the team as a communications co-ordinator at the end of 2022. Before then, he was manager of

public affairs for Switch Health. He's also previously interned and worked as a digital assistant at Conservative

Party headquarters, and worked on Peter MacKay's 2020 leadership campaign.

Johnson likewise comes from the OLO where he's been a communications researcher since the start of 2023. He spent 2022 working at Queen's Park as an assistant to Ontario Labour, Immigration, and Skills Development Minister David Piccini as both the MPP for Northumberland-Peterborough South, and later as minister.

**Sam Lilly**, who's been an OLO press secretary since 2021—starting under then-leader O'Toole—is also working to tackle general media requests and provide logistics support. A former director of surveillance and gaming compliance with PURE Canadian Gaming, Lilly ran as the federal Conservative candidate for Edmonton-Strathcona, Alta., in 2019, and subsequently spent

roughly a year and a half as an MP's assistant before joining the OLO.

**Matt Wolf**, a former deputy chief of staff and executive director of issues manager to then-Alberta premier Jason Kenney, is among those doing issues management and rapid response work for the 2025 campaign, alongside **Brian Bateson**.

Wolf previously worked in the United Conservative Party's (UCP) 2019 campaign war room, and Ford's 2018 election war room. He oversaw issues management for Kenney's successful UCP leadership campaign, and did rapid response work for the 2015 federal Conservative campaign. Between 2006 and 2010, he worked on the Hill for then-health minister Tony Clement, then-national defence minister Gordon O'Connor, then-foreign affairs minister Maxime Bernier, and as an issues adviser in Harper's PMO. Wolf briefly stepped in as communications director to then-agriculture minister Gerry Ritz before leaving the Hill to join the

Sun News Network as executive producer.

Bateson comes from the OLO where he's been director of issues management in recent years.

**Sébastien Togneri** is doing candidate support work from campaign headquarters in Ottawa.

The role is a logical fit for Togneri, who has many years' experience working for Conservative whips, dating back to then-chief government whip Jay Hill. Togneri's most recently been with the Conservative whip's office since 2018, starting as a committee co-ordinator to then-whip Mark Strahl and most recently as lobby co-ordinator to whip Kerry-Lyne Findlay. A former MP's assistant,

Togneri is also a former director of parliamentary affairs to Paradis as then-minister for public works and later natural resources, has worked for the BC Liberals and the UCP, and was part of the 2019 Conservative campaign's advance tour team, among other past jobs.

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*The Hill Times*



Matt Wolf is part of the 2025 Conservative campaign team.  
*Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Jwane Izzetpanah is doing stakeholder relations for the campaign.  
*Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Press secretary Carson Bradley is on the road with Poilievre.  
*Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Micah Green is doing campaign communications work from Ottawa.  
*Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*



Sébastien Togneri is doing candidate support work.  
*Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

FEDERAL ELECTION / MONDAY, APRIL 28


  
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## COMMENT

# The West wants out? That's not how this works

If you want to see how well breaking things up for the sake of it goes, take a look down south.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—On a personal level, Preston Manning is a good and decent person. He is friendly, insightful, and kind. While I came from the Progressive Conservative wing of the conservative movement, I did not view him as the great destroyer of that once-great party. If anything, I saw him as provocative and an idea disruptor.

All the ideas weren't my cup of tea, and sometimes the provocation was poorly timed; but unlike other leaders of the moment, his disruption was about helping people, not hurting them. It was disappointing to see his op-ed in *The Globe and Mail* April 2 where he wrote, "The next prime minister of Canada, if it remains Mark Carney, would then be identified in the history books, tragically and needlessly, as the last prime minister of a United Canada."

Manning went on to implore that "voters, particularly in Central and Atlantic Canada, need to recognize that a vote for the Carney Liberals is a vote for Western secession—a vote for the breakup of Canada as we know it." With greatest respect to Mr. Manning, sir, your perspective on this issue feels wrong-headed, and not helpful to the country as a whole at this time.

Yes, there is data as recently as this week from the Angus Reid Institute (ARI) which suggests as many as three in 10 people in Alberta and Saskatchewan say they'd like to leave if the Liberals form the government. However, the ARI also found the vast majority would vote "no" in a separation referendum in each western province.

Perhaps the most instructive finding in the ARI report is that western irritation is about perceived respect. Quoting from the document, "in both Alberta (24 per cent) and Saskatchewan (25 per cent) only one-quarter of residents feel their province is respected by the rest of country." While that sense of disrespect is palpable, there is a large prairie between that and fragmenting the country. Disrespect can be addressed—breaking up a country is another thing altogether.

As an Atlantic Canadian who lives in Central Canada, I feel that Manning's plea seems selfish, and ignores the reality of the human-to-human respect that our people continuously demonstrate to the West, and demonstrate as brethren in a nation. We have our regional grievances, too, around resources and respect, but we aren't threatening to pick up our toys and go home. Or whatever a perfectly governed respectful utopia looks like.



Preston Manning's forecast of national disharmony should the Liberals remain in office seems selfish, and ignores the reality of the human-to-human respect we demonstrate as a nation, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In fact, some of us—Newfoundland and Labrador—were once our own nation. While there is some glorious romanticism in that, it is hard to argue that we and Canada haven't been made better by that union. While we have our own abundance of natural resources, if we were to go back at it alone, we'd struggle and find ourselves near financial ruin without our ability to govern as we did in the 1930s. We have strains of nationalism or independence, but we aren't asking westerners to vote a certain way because candidate X or Z is a threat to national unity.

When the West was recently savaged by horrific wildfires over the last number of years, people from the East and elsewhere always responded to support our fellow Canadians. The oil industry in parts of Alberta exists because the work force in places like Fort McMurray has come from Atlantic Canada. We have all benefited from that kind of on-the-ground national unity.

If you want to see how well breaking things up for the sake of it and just blowing past existing historical alignments goes, take a look down south or check on your investments if you have them. I'm not sure anybody in Canada wants to take the hammer to ourselves, and follow the model United States President Donald Trump is employing with us.

Flagging the rise of the desire for western secession and calling on more to be done to address a sense of disrespect is one thing, but it is bridge too far to then argue electing Mark Carney—a Canadian born and raised in the North and West—will result in the end of Canada as we know it. Not getting a Conservative government will not break up Canada. Sorry, Mr. Manning, I think you are wrong on this one.

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

*The Hill Times*

## 2025 ELECTION

# A wrong is a wrong is a wrong: new CAQ bills attack minorities

Quebec's minority linguistic and cultural communities are now being bombarded with extreme nationalism in bills 84 and 94.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—There is no question that we are living in tumultuous times. We face economic warfare with our southern neighbour, the consequences of which could be serious hardships for Canadians. In the midst of all this, Canadians are going to the polls, with the real possibility of foreign interference by the countries we should most fear: China and Russia.

Given the turmoil in Canada and the world, the last thing we need is greater destabilization. And yet, this is what Quebec Premier François Legault proposes to do. The latest barrage of ethnocentrically based, crypto separatist legislation is a dagger to the heart of Canadian federalism. Having opposed the openly discriminatory bills 21 on secularism and 96 on language, Quebec's minority linguistic and cultural communities are now being bombarded with extreme nationalism in bills 84 and 94.

Bill 84 on "integration" rejects the Canadian Constitution as valid, seeks to establish French as the only "real" Quebec language, and demands adherence to an undefined "Quebec Culture" to integrate into Quebec society. In the words of the Quebec Community Groups Network's brief to the National Assembly, it's "no ordinary piece of legislation. Bill 84 [has] a status equal to that of the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms ... The effect is to pare back minority rights, not enhance them."

And now Bill 94 will bar anyone who has contact with students from wearing religious symbols, and students from doing the same if it involves covering their face. The legislation is an excessive response to media reports of controversial Islamic practices at an elementary school in Montreal. This sort of extremist legislation is not new for Legault's Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government. About a dozen groups—including the one I lead, the Task Force on Linguistic Policy—are fighting Bill 96 in court, and seeking to intervene in the Bill 21 appeal to the Supreme Court to fight the Quebec government's arbitrary

use of the Constitution's notwithstanding clause in both laws.

Past readers will be familiar with the objectives of these laws: Bill 21 prevents public servants wearing clothing connected with their faith, while Bill 96 allows illegal search and seizure, and limitations on English in municipalities, the courts, education, health care.

Bill 96 also defines who qualifies as an English-speaking Quebecer based on whether the majority of their schooling was in Canada. This excludes half a million English-speaking Quebecers from recognition as "historic anglophones," and thus prevents them from requesting government services in their mother tongue. Many are elderly or from visible minority communities who emigrated to Quebec as teenagers.

But in bills 84 and 94, we now see a double dosage of Quebec nationalism. While pundits argue these measures are a political ploy by Legault's CAQ to ward off

the ascendant Parti Québécois, there is no moral justification to this tactic. To paraphrase former MP and Quebec Liberal MNA Clifford Lincoln, a wrong is a wrong is a wrong.

Albert Einstein said, "Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind." In the last century, Canadians fought in three major wars against the threat posed by nationalism. Quebec nationalism has historically been described by its proponents as a bulwark against

assimilation by English Canada. However, from the civic nationalism of René Lévesque, who considered all Quebecers equal, we now have the Legault brand of ethnocentric nationalism, which seeks to exclude or categorize people according to their mother tongue, faith, or race.

In the past few weeks, we have responded to the existential threat of the United States with strong declarations of Canadian nationalism. But, in comparison to Quebec nationalism, it is an expression of pride, not exclusion; of many ethnicities, not one; of an envied and respected country, not a would-be 19<sup>th</sup> century nation-state where one culture dominates.

Legault should be told this is not the time for such narrow-minded legislation. His government should resist the siren song of parochialism. For if Canada is at risk, so is Quebec. At this crucial time, we need stability and maturity from leaders. It would be in Canada's interest for bills 84 and 94 to be withdrawn. They weaken our country in its time of need, and they are a shameful attack on Quebec's minorities.

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*



The last thing we need is greater destabilization, and yet, this is what Quebec Premier François Legault proposes to do, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## COMMENT

# Trump's chaos is imperialism in a transparent disguise

The economy no longer exists to raise standards of living; it is an arm of imperialism's hard power that isn't restricted to borders.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



CALGARY—United States President Donald Trump is mashing up the global order. I have a theory.

Last week, Trump imposed so-called "reciprocal" tariffs on American trading partners. His actions sent markets plunging, investment funds devaluing, and panic rising. There are no rules for the new global economic regime.

There is a contemptuous underestimation of Trump by the public that tends to think that the president is too stupid to understand the economic impact of his new regime. I, on the other hand, think the chaos is exactly the point.

So, why is he tanking the global economy? It's not about bringing American manufacturing back. It's about imperialism. If we look at Trump's actions through this lens, they start to follow a well-beaten path. Walk with me here.

First off, let's define imperialism: it is the extension and co-optation of power of one state over another. It encompasses using both hard—military and economic—and soft power—diplomatic and cultural. America was the dominant imperial state of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, replacing the British and French who lost much of their dominance after the Second World War. A branch of imperialism—neo-colonialism—continues until the present day, but that is a different branch of the same tree.

In 1950, the imperial—or terrific—boomerang, originally developed by French Martiniquais

author Aimé Césaire, espoused Europeans "tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples." In other words, Trump can unlawfully deport brown people to maximum-security facilities in El Salvador because the precedent had been set by then-president George W. Bush during the Iraq and Afghanistan war.

There are about 750 U.S. military bases in at least 80 countries worldwide. There is no continent, and almost no country that the American military and covert operations have not touched: Korea, Vietnam, Iran, Cuba, Chile, Democratic Republic of the Congo, I could go on. Africa and Latin America are great examples of America's economic power. For example, the term "banana republic" derived from the economic exploitation of the United Fruit Company in Central America, resorting to human rights abuses, land theft, labour exploitation, and participation in coups to dispose of leaders who threaten their economic dominance.

Many American corporations have recently used hard power to prostrate labour abroad. One could point to the history of slavery, indentured servitude, and present-day temporary status in western countries for labourers; however, that's only part of the picture. Tech corporations have been accused of benefitting from forced labour in China. American garment manufacturers have been responsible for sweat shops, child labour, and debt slavery. Transparentem, a philanthropic organization, released a report on labour conditions on cotton farms in India. They found that "Child labor and debt bondage are widespread, interrelated problems on cotton farms in India."

A *New York Times* investigation found that American child workers "were now spending late hours bent over hazardous machinery, in violation of child labor laws." Some of the products made with these practices were Chewy and Nature Valley granola bars, Lucky Charms cereal, and Cheetos. Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders rolled back child labour protection with the Youth Hiring Act of 2023. NPR explains that kids younger than 16 years old "don't have to get the Division of Labor's permission to be employed. The state also no longer has to verify the age of those under 16 before they take a job." Those aren't just migrant kids they're targeting, that's all kids that come from poor families. Florida is looking to weaken its own child labour laws.

Looks like a direct line from India to Arkansas—and possibly Florida—to me.

The new tariff regime is a regressive tax. I guess the administration must pay for Trump tax cuts that benefit the wealthy somehow. The idea of the new structure is to weaken countries for takeover, akin to Manifest Destiny. First, it reduces the return to labour and quality of life in other countries, and second, it provides the runway to annex the economies of other countries for more exploitative economic strategies. Let's look at making Canada the 51<sup>st</sup> state and annexing Greenland. While this may sound crazy, if you think about what the two regions have to offer, the ideas are less ridiculous. These are both countries with a significant Arctic imprint. Taking over these countries would provide control of the area for oil and gas development, mineral exploration, and allow the carving out of new global trade routes, made possible by climate change. This does not mean that American companies will profit, it means American companies with large cash reserves and sovereign wealth funds can take advantage of investment opportunities.

If you believe, as I do, that western countries are turning from democracies into oligarchies, this makes some sense. The economy no longer exists to raise standards of living; it is an arm of imperialism's hard power that isn't restricted to borders. Imperialism is as old as the Crusades—probably older—and has always been the base from which capitalism operates.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the *Bad+Bitchy* podcast.  
*The Hill Times*

## The world waits to see how long Trump's attack on the global economy can last

The president has brushed off political realities that would have sunk most political actors a hundred times over.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—It's unclear if United States economic policy will ever overcome last week's tariff rollout by President Donald Trump, a game show-styled cock-up that would be eternally hilarious if it weren't so damaging for most of the universe.

Some remote spots that no one ever knew of before—like the



Within days of U.S. President Donald Trump's April 2 announcement, most of the world was united in its criticism of his decision to wreck everyone's economy, including his own, writes Les Whittington. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

Sydney, whose 2,000 residents were smacked with 29-per-cent tariffs. Baffled, the local administrator said they don't charge import levies on anything.

"Nowhere on Earth is safe," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese remarked.

If there's another single act by an American leader that has ignited this level of international fury and opprobrium in the last 50 years, I certainly can't think of it. Within days, most of the world was united in its criticism of the U.S.'s decision to wreck everyone's economy, including its own.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, the batshit-crazy Wall Street billionaire who tries to do the good cop/bad cop routine all by himself, responded by saying everyone should just trust the president. "Let Donald Trump run the global economy. He knows what he's doing. He's been talking about it for 35 years," Lutnick told CNN in a reference

tiny Heard Island and McDonald Islands 1,700 kilometres off the coast of Antarctica inhabited only

by penguins, birds, and seals—are now famous for being hit with U.S. import tariffs.

Then there's Norfolk Island, a small Australian external territory 1,600 kilometres east of



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# Editorial

## Editorial

## Scrutinizing the other ballot questions

The election campaign is in its third week, and though things are far from over, the playing field has begun to level out.

A few months ago, what would have been a landslide Conservative majority win is now anyone's game with the departure of Justin Trudeau and the ascension of Mark Carney to the Prime Minister's Office having breathed new life into the Liberal Party. Then, there's the whole issue with our southern neighbour. United States President Donald Trump's return to the White House has been the defining feature of politics since his win last November, and of the Canadian campaign since it kicked off on March 23.

Abacus Data polling conducted March 24-26 asked respondents to pick the top two most important issues in deciding how they would vote. Of the 14 possible responses, "Reducing your cost of living" topped the charts at 47 per cent, closely followed by "Dealing with Donald Trump and the impact of his decisions" at 35 per cent.

When broken down by demographic, Trump becomes the No. 1 issue for baby boomers, while cost of living is more important for generation X, millennials, and generation Z. Right now, according to Abacus' data, gen-Xers and millennials are the two demographics with a slim plurality of support for Conservatives. However, older Canadians have a vastly more positive view of Carney than they do of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and 84 per cent of boomers say they are certain to vote this election, compared to 42 per cent of those in generation Z.

With public opinion never far from mind, addressing Canadian sover-

eignty, unity, and economic resilience were major themes as parties launched their campaigns, along with a raft of announcements about tax cuts.

And as the campaign rolls on—and Trump makes further moves that threaten to upend the Canadian economy—party leaders have responded in kind. Yes, they're also managing to squeeze in other platform topics here and there, but those with their eyes on the prize aren't straying too far.

And there's something quite unfortunate about that.

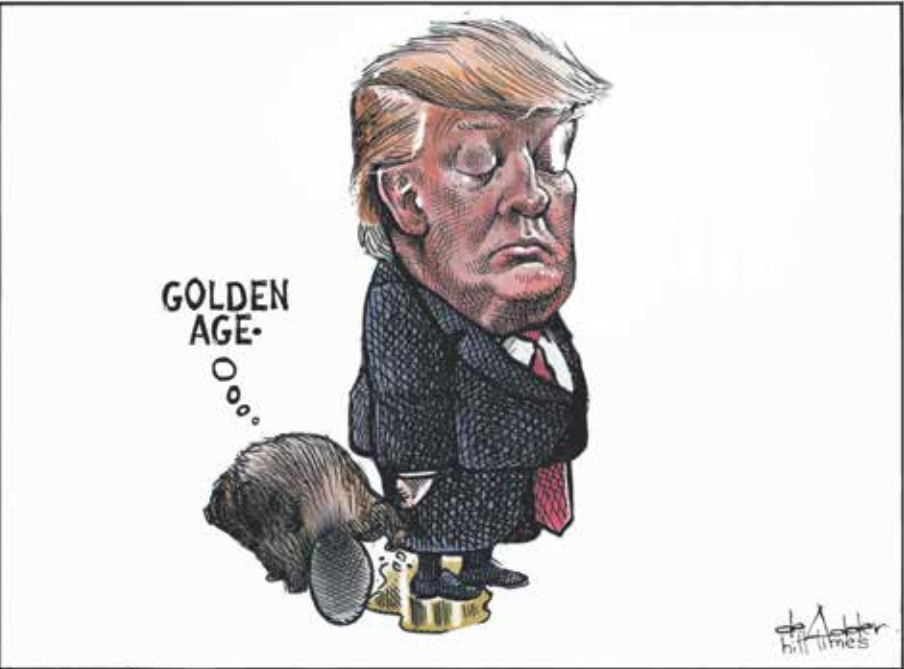
There's no minimizing the importance of the threat and change to the Canada-U.S. relationship. These aren't ordinary times, and this isn't an ordinary election.

But these aren't the only things that will affect people's lives. The same Abacus poll suggests that issues such as "achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples," "dealing with climate change and reducing carbon emissions," and "protecting public services like health care and education" may not be among voters' highest-ranked priorities when checking their ballots this month.

Where are the comprehensive environmental plans? Why are we working so hard to save this country if it's just going to burn down or flood?

Just because an issue may not necessarily drive turnout doesn't mean anyone should let parties skate by on those down-ballot issues without full scrutiny if and when they offer platform commitments simply because it doesn't fit the current campaign narrative of "Canada first" or "Canada strong."

*The Hill Times*



## Letters to the Editor

## Speak out against hate of all forms, says Toronto letter writer

It comes as no surprise to anyone that Canada champions diversity. The country has opened its vast land and generous heart to countless immigrants pursuing a better life, or in my case, a safer one.

I belong to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a heavily persecuted sect of Islam. My family and I immigrated to Canada in search of religious freedom and safety. However, what we found here was something much greater: we found a diverse community, each group with its own unique story, who, like us, had immigrated to Canada in search of a better life. And in this tight-knit community, we found the acceptance, safety, and sense of belonging we pursued.

Having escaped a country where members of my community are killed simply for the act of praying, I believed that here I could practice my faith freely without fear of harm. However, seeing the horrific incident in Ajax, Ont.—where a woman attempted to set another woman's hijab on

fire, allegedly simply because of her beliefs—was deeply unsettling. It is heartbreaking to see such hatred and fear manifest in a community that has been a safe haven for many. And for those of us who have fled religious persecution, this incident served as a painful reminder that hate can find us anywhere, shaking our sense of safety and belonging.

As we witness a rise in hate crimes across Canada, we must take a moment to reflect on the values of tolerance and inclusion that make this country so desirable. We cannot allow hatred to take root, and must speak out against hate in all its forms.

As we strive to build a society based on respect, understanding, and compassion, I am reminded of the wise words of the third Ahmadiyya Caliph, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, who perfectly captured the essence of true unity in his motto for the Ahmadiyya community: "Love for all, hatred for none."

**Wardah Faryal  
Toronto, Ont.**

## Elect leaders who put others' needs before their own: Vancouver reader

March 23 marked the start of the 2025 Canadian federal election. This is happening at a critical time for both Canada and the world.

There is no denying the political turbulence our country is facing due to the chaotic leadership of United States President Donald Trump, who has threatened Canada's sovereignty and cut global assistance through the United States Agency for International Development. His administration has shut down an agency that contributed more than 42 per cent of global health funding, putting decades of progress in combating extreme poverty and eliminating the world's deadliest diseases at risk.

As a country, Canada has played a key role in reducing child mortality by half in the past 25 years, eradicating poliomyelitis almost everywhere in the world, saving the lives of more than seven million children as the largest donor to vitamin A supplementation, and lifting more than one billion people out of extreme poverty since 2000.

We cannot stop now.

I know it can be overwhelming to make a choice in an election because of its potential to change the course of things, but in reality, it's quite simple. Would your leader of choice be willing to put the needs of our country and others before their own?

**Bernice Ko  
Vancouver, B.C.**

## COMMENT

# This isn't the 'Whisky War': in defence of Greenland and Denmark

We cannot sit back as the Trump administration bullies Denmark into submission with false claims of neglected defence.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



U.S. Vice-President JD Vance used Pituffik Space Base as a podium to espouse his negative views of the Danish government and Greenland during a March 28 visit to the country. Screenshot courtesy of ABC News

OTTAWA—Most Canadians are blissfully unaware that from 1973 until June 2022, Canada was locked in a territorial dispute with Denmark.

At stake was the claim that both nations placed on the remote, uninhabited Hans Island in Arctic waters. Sailors from the Royal Canadian Navy were the first to land on Hans Island and plant the Maple Leaf flag along with a note of welcome and a bottle of Canadian whisky.

In turn, the Royal Danish Navy sent in a landing party to remove the flag and presumably the whisky. Then the Danes left their own red-and-white national flag, along with a bottle of fine Danish schnapps.

The conflict was lightheartedly called "The Whisky War." On June 14, 2022, the two sides amicably agreed to a partition of the island wherein 60 per cent remains Danish, and Canada was ceded the remainder. No shots were fired,

there were no casualties, and nary an insult was hurled. That is the way two NATO allies should hash out solutions.

Which brings us to United States President Donald Trump's increasingly hostile threats to annex all of Greenland away from Denmark.

For the record, the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway first sent missionaries to colonize Greenland in 1721. It has been internationally recognized as Danish territory for more than three centuries.

Notwithstanding that simple fact, Trump hinted during his first term that the U.S. should look seriously at buying Greenland from Denmark. The Danish government had mocked his offer, and made it clear that the territory is not for sale.

Since his second inauguration this past January, Trump has more

than doubled down on making Greenland a U.S. protectorate. He recently told reporters that the use of military force to achieve that goal is still on the table.

To start laying the groundwork, U.S. Vice-President JD Vance and his wife Usha recently visited Greenland. The original plan had been to have the couple rub elbows with local Greenlanders in a show of friendly hospitality. However, when not a single Greenlander proved willing to host the photo-op, Vance and his wife instead landed at the U.S. Pituffik Space Base in northwest Greenland.

"Our message to Denmark is very simple: You have not done a good job by the people of Greenland," Vance told the media entourage that had flown in with him. "You have underinvested in the security architecture of this

incredible, beautiful landmass and its incredible people."

Predictably, Vance crapping on the Danish government from the confines of a U.S. military base on their own soil drew strong rebukes from the Danish political leadership.

It also drew a harsh rebuttal from the former U.S. ambassador to Denmark, Rufus Gifford. "I don't know what Vance is talking about," Gifford said in a video post, before noting that Denmark spends 2.4 per cent of its gross domestic product on defence—higher than the NATO goal of two per cent of GDP—and that Danish soldiers had fought and died alongside American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Almost coincidental with Vance's departure from Pituffik, Trump took to social media to post a propaganda video titled *America Stands with Greenland*. This slick clip tugs at viewers' heartstrings with a romanticized Second World War tale of four U.S. army chaplains giving up their own life-jackets to allow fellow soldiers to save themselves after their troop ship was torpedoed and sunk. At the time, that ship was headed to Greenland, and according to the propaganda spin, they were to protect Greenlanders from "the Nazis."

Of course, the primary interest the U.S. had in Greenland at the time was the cryolite mine at Ivigtut. This vital mineral is a key component in aluminum, and as such it was a huge boom to the U.S. war machine.

The Nazis did no more than establish a couple of clandestine weather stations on remote areas of Greenland's east coast. The

U.S. did not defend Greenland from Adolf Hitler. It was never under attack. But I digress.

Fast forwarding to the present, *America Stands with Greenland* points out that Russia and China pose a clear and present danger to the good people of Greenland. That may seem a stretch of the imagination considering Russia has been battling for more than three years to annex a portion of eastern Ukraine, and China is still rattling sabres with neighbouring Taiwan.

However, rest assured folks that Greenland will not have to fight off China and Russia alone. Denmark is a NATO member, and Greenland is Danish territory. Any attack on Greenland would automatically trigger a military response from all 32 NATO member states, including Canada and the U.S.

Those who closely follow the affairs of the Royal Canadian Air Force will know that our service members recently participated in NORAD training exercise Noble Defender, which included the U.S. base at Pituffik. Yes, the same one Vance just used as a podium to espouse his negative views of the Danish government and Greenland.

Trump is also threatening to make Canada his 51<sup>st</sup> state. Thus, we cannot simply sit back as the Trump administration bullies Denmark into submission with false claims of neglected defence.

When the U.S. was attacked by terrorists on 9/11, Canada and Denmark pledged to defend our closest ally. Both of our countries have spilled blood alongside American comrades in Iraq and Afghanistan as a result of those pledges.

Let's get back to exchanging bottles of booze, and start treating allies like allies again.

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

The Hill Times

## The world waits to see how long Trump's attack on the global economy can last

Continued from page 7

to the president's long-standing obsession with fringe economic trade theory.

The president's global tariff wave, scheduled to take effect this week, sent the world economy spiralling toward a recession marked by the worst stock market crash since the COVID-19 pandemic. Trump managed to prompt a \$9.5-trillion sell-off in global markets in a few days.

Political leaders, executives, and other observers outdid each other in their descriptions of the inanity of Trump's policy. "This is an attack on a trade order that has created

prosperity all over the globe, a trade order that is essentially the result of American efforts," said German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

"There has certainly been no piece of trade policy in my lifetime that is at this level of stupidity, right?" Rob Gillezeau, an assistant professor of economic policy at the University of Toronto, told *Toronto Star* columnist Bruce Arthur. "It's not grounded in anything intelligent."

Jared Bernstein, former chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said: "I can't remember seeing an issue that was so vastly unpopular. You would be very hard-pressed to

find anyone who thinks this is a good idea."

"There's an emerging reality here," Democratic Senator Peter Welch told CBC TV, "and that is that President Trump literally does not know what he's doing."

Trump, who spent the weekend playing golf while the rest of the globe's residents saw their savings and prospects implode, has gone from claiming his protectionist policies would not cause inflation or hurt Americans to admitting they need to "hang tough" and take their "medicine"—in other words, accept the pain of his fantasy of making the U.S. a manufacturing paradise someday.

This is a good idea, assuming Americans are willing to accept stagflation and job losses while forfeiting their indefatigable demand for low-cost consumer products such as shoes, clothes, food, and electronics, and pay thousands of dollars more for a house or car. Or assuming they will wait years for an iffy on-shoring of manufacturing to the U.S. that—should it happen—would provide a negligible number of grinding factory jobs in an economy increasingly driven by more worker-friendly, often better-paying tech and service industries.

U.S. political opposition, which seemed like a lost cause after Trump's re-election, is now taking on a bit of life, with renewed Democratic energy, public protests, an attempt to take back the U.S. Congress' prerogative on trade, and even some criticism of Trumpenomics from Republicans.

As of April 7, despite the overwhelmingly negative reaction to the tariffs, Trump was claiming there would be no retreat, and was, in fact, threatening to greatly escalate the U.S.'s trade dispute

with China. However, the president—as usual—was being completely ambiguous about whether he wants to use the tariffs to start widespread trade negotiations.

While he was at it this past Monday, Trump renewed his tough stance on Canada, coming up with a fresh line on why he is trying to demolish the continental free-deal—which Americans call the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA)—that he negotiated.

"We went to the USMCA, which was much better" than NAFTA, he told reporters. "The problem is they cheat. They cheat like crazy. Canada cheats, Mexico cheats." That all has to be rebalanced, Trump added.

The president has of course brushed off political realities that would have sunk most political actors a hundred times over. But millions of people around the globe will be watching to see if he can survive this misguided trade war on the rest of humanity.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

# OPINION

# 2025 ELECTION

## Renewed resolve: commit to DEI principles to advance health equity

Education and research institutions must take a strong stand against anti-Black racism, and work tirelessly to eliminate its effects on Canadians.

Nnamdi Ndubuka  
& Julie Sobowale

Opinion



The recent trend of institutions pulling back from diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives is deeply concerning. We must steadfastly support programs that enhance positive health-care outcomes for all Canadians. The Black Physicians of Canada calls on all federal and provincial parties to unequivocally commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles in health care.

Fostering inclusive practices and adhering to evidence-based research in our educational and health-care institutions is essential for effectively meeting the diverse needs of Canadians. Now is the time to critically examine our commitment to supporting Black Canadians in their fight for justice and equity for everyone.

Investing in DEI programs is not just beneficial, it is also vital for Canadian communities. Implementing these initiatives expands access to health-care services, ensures culturally sensitive care for diverse populations, and reduces health-care costs by focusing on preventative measures. Evidence shows that Black physicians are three times more likely to serve in underserved communities, highlighting the critical need for a diverse health-care workforce.

The Black population experiences significantly higher rates of mortality and morbidity compared to the general population. This disparity is exacerbated by lower socio-economic status, limited access to post-secondary education, higher unemployment rates, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and underrepresentation in higher education. Research indicates that Black patients are more likely to feel comfortable with Black doctors, and are more inclined to adhere to preventive measures recommended by them, including accepting vaccines as was seen during COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving improved health and economic outcomes for Black Canadians.

Black Canadians have faced systemic exclusion from this country's institutions for centuries. The health-care system is no exception. Black individuals have been purposefully left out of medical education, beneficial research, and leadership

roles, dating back to the era of slavery and colonization. The exclusion of Black Canadians from medical institutions like Queen's University for 100 years is a shameful part of our country's history that has had devastating consequences and continuing underrepresentation to date. For generations, prominent Canadian schools deliberately barred Black students from accessing medical education and training through discriminatory policies and outright bans. This systemic anti-Black racism robbed countless individuals and communities of access to health-care leadership and decision-making power.

Statistics Canada reveals a critical issue: although the Black population makes up 4.5 per cent of Canada, only 1.5 per cent of physicians are Black. This stark underrepresentation highlights the need for action and change. A survey conducted by the Saskatchewan Medical Association and College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan found that 46 per cent of physicians and medical learners have encountered racism during their medical careers. Among those, 36 per cent identified as Black, showcasing the challenges faced. The impact of these experiences is profound; 87 per cent reported emotional distress, and 40 per cent reported physical effects.

To overcome these deep-rooted inequalities, we must uplift the voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of Black Canadians. We need to listen to their stories and champion their calls for restorative justice. By taking bold steps to dismantle systemic racism, we can pave the way for a brighter and more inclusive future for all in the medical community. Together, we can work towards meaningful change that truly reflects compassion and understanding.

Education and research institutions must take a strong stand against anti-Black racism, and work tirelessly to eliminate its effects on Canadians. This commitment is essential and should be reflected in DEI initiatives and programs. We must be relentless in our efforts to improve health-care outcomes and overall well-being for all Canadians. It is time to act decisively and make meaningful progress in these areas. Let's commit to this essential journey of progress together.

*Dr. Nnamdi Ndubuka is a public health physician and associate professor at the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. As president of the Black Physicians of Canada, he advocates for social determinants of health, anti-Black racism awareness, and promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion in health care.*

*Julie Sobowale is the executive director of Black Physicians of Canada. She is a lawyer and journalist, specializing in legal coverage about technology, education and access to justice. She is the former director of communications for the Law Society of Saskatchewan.*

The Hill Times

## UN disability rights report on assisted-dying regime deserves a fair hearing

Canadians deserve to know that our political party leaders will take seriously the report calling for reforms to the medical assistance in dying regime as we head to the polls.

Catherine Frazee

Opinion



An international body of independent human rights experts has called for sweeping reforms to Canada's medical assistance in dying (MAID) regime. This could mean the end of a Criminal Code provision currently exempting medical practitioners from prosecution for ending the lives of non-dying persons—that is, if our elected officials accept the findings of the report and reform our deeply flawed MAID legislation.

Canadians deserve to know that our political party leaders will take this report seriously as we head to the polls.

A vital and far-reaching report was issued in late March by the United Nations expert committee reviewing Canada's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD is an international human rights treaty now formally ratified by 190 nations of the world, including Canada, who agree to uphold its provisions in domestic law and practice.

Although UN treaties are not legally binding, they underpin all of our constitutional and domestic human rights laws. They are also—it must be said—a core expression of a nation's commitment, in the case of the CRPD, to adhere to principles of equality, non-discrimination, accessibility, and the inclusion of people with disabilities as a matter of right, in every sphere of Canadian life.

Canadians should be proud that we played an exemplary role in the multilateral negotiations that culminated in the adoption of the CRPD in 2006. And as in many realms of international human rights diplomacy, Canada and Canadians are respected for our integrity and leadership. In this context, the recent CRPD Committee report represents a watershed moment.

Following a years-long process of bilateral review and multiple hours of in-person hearings with Canadian government delegations, the CRPD Committee thoroughly considered the actions Canada has taken to bring itself into compliance with the Convention. While the group offered kudos on some grounds, there were many critically important areas flagged for critique.

Most significantly, the CRPD Committee's Concluding Observations were unequivocal in calling for Canada to repeal Track 2 MAID and halt further expansion of the assisted-dying regime, including the

scheduled 2027 inclusion of mental illness as a basis for MAID.

The committee specifically challenged Canada's failure to appeal the 2019 Truchon decision, the Quebec case that unilaterally expanded MAID as a "health-care option" for non-dying persons with disabilities. Its members expressed "extreme concern" that the expanded eligibility criteria introduced in 2021 to remove the end-of-life requirement for MAID was premised on the false notion that when people with disabilities are suffering, death is a valid remedy.

Citing evidence from the Ontario Coroner's Office and other national data that point to discriminatory trends in Track 2 deaths, the committee called for bold federal, provincial, and territorial action to reverse "systemic failures" that threaten the lives and well-being of people with disabilities, and give rise to much of the suffering for which MAID is the available "remedy."

Disability rights organizations across the country have been clear and consistent in their unanimous opposition to Track 2 MAID. The CRPD Committee has now validated that opposition, concluding that the expansion of MAID to non-dying persons violates Canada's commitments under Article 10 of the CRPD and jeopardizes the lives and dignity of disabled people in the country.

Unfortunately, this important report appears in the midst of a high-stakes federal election, and consequently is unlikely to get the attention and serious reflection that it deserves. But there is also an opportunity here, provided that our political leaders refrain from adopting a hasty response to this comprehensive report during a heated campaign.

Our political party leaders and our elected representatives must reaffirm their commitment to honour Canada's international obligations and undertake to give this issue the careful deliberation it warrants in the weeks following the election.

There will most definitely be an opportunity for our government to take the CRPD Committee's report to heart and change course with respect to Canada's MAID regime. That opportunity comes in the form of a constitutional challenge launched in September 2024 by a coalition of national disability rights organizations. This landmark case is currently working its way through the courts.

Disability rights defenders in Canada will be watching.

An issue of such profound consequence to the dignity and equality of Canadians with disabilities must not be reduced to partisan politics. Let's accord Canadians with disabilities the respect of a fully deliberative and Charter-affirming response to the CRPD Committee's urgent recommendations. And let's encourage all of our elected officials to honour Canada's proud tradition of human rights leadership.

*Catherine Frazee is an officer of the Order of Canada, and professor emerita at Toronto Metropolitan University, School of Disability Studies.*

The Hill Times

# Conservatives’ tight grip on media access not living up to promise to be ‘most accessible and transparent campaign,’ say reporters

The Conservative leader took 65 questions in broadcast press conferences during the first two weeks of the campaign, compared to the 148 fielded by the Liberal leader, 163 by the Bloc leader, and 208 by the NDP leader.

Continued from [page 1](#)

how much or how little access they are genuinely receiving, and what strategies those campaigns are employing to not only manage their message, but also the messengers in the media.

While experiences vary from reporter to reporter, depending on which campaign they have been assigned, which outlet they work for, or even in which region of the country the leader stops, the Conservative campaign in particular is failing its promise of being one of “the most accessible and transparent campaigns in recent memory.”







Following his April 2 keynote address at a ‘Baystreet Coffee’ event in Toronto, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, centre, and wife Anaida, right, sat down with Ben Mulroney for a radio interview. Screenshot courtesy of YouTube

Speaking with *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis out of fear of retaliation from the campaign, journalists covering the Poilievre campaign say that being barred from the tour’s official bus and plane was only the beginning of the obstacles encountered in trying to hold the candidate to account.

Of the 65 questions Poilievre has fielded at his daily broadcasted press conferences from March 23 through April 6, he has made particular effort to ensure



Liberal Leader Mark Carney holds a press conference in Winnipeg, Man., on April 1, where he answered a total of nine questions, including follow-ups. Local candidates, including incumbent Ben Carr, bottom, scrum with local and national reporters whose questions had not been answered. Photographs courtesy of the Liberal Campaign

Daily press conference questions				
Party Leaders	 Pierre Poilievre	 Mark Carney	 Jagmeet Singh	 Yves-François Blanchet
March 23	5	12	14	10
March 24	4	15	18	8
March 25	4	14	14	8
March 26	7	22	22	17
March 27	4	15	9	14
March 28	5	18	16	16
March 29	4	0	13	10
March 30	4	0	10	13
March 31	4	9	12	10
April 1	4	9	9	15
April 2	4	0	18	9
April 3	4	10	15	10
April 4	4	15	11	8
April 5	4	9	17	9
April 6	4	0	10	6
Total	65	148	208	163
Daily Average	4	10	14	11

an “equitable balance” between national and local, independent, or minority-community-focused outlets, offering a total of 25 questions to those reporters and, on some days, three or all four of the available questions.

Global News—including its national and local affiliate reporters—was given the most questions of any single outlet, five, across those two weeks, followed by Radio-Canada, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Toronto Sun* with four each. Additionally, the three questions *The Sun*’s Brian Lilley asked are equal to the total number of questions given to each of

CTV News, *The Canadian Press*, *FrancoPresse*, and the CBC, the latter of whom has not been given a question since March 27.

In comparison, Liberal Prime Minister Mark Carney has been asked just shy of 150 questions—the third highest total of the four major parties—and typically allocates 15 to 20 minutes at the end of each press conference for one question and one follow-up from as many reporters as that time allows. This total includes the questions Carney has taken while he has “paused” his campaign, and returned to Ottawa to address tariffs imposed by the United States

in his capacity as prime minister. Additionally, following the press conferences on the road, local Liberal candidates and a campaign staffer are made available to speak with reporters, prioritizing questions from local outlets who may not have gotten their question answered by Carney.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh has fielded 208 questions during the March 23 to April 6 time-frame, while Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet has taken 163 questions.

In a statement, Liberal campaign spokesperson Jenna Ghassabeh said the Liberals are “committed to ensuring robust media access and transparency,” noting that unlike Poilievre’s campaign, Carney’s has a full media delegation allowed to travel with them.

However, while journalists are still allowed on the Liberal campaign bus and plane, they told *The Hill Times* that Carney has not been made available for smaller scrums on the plane, nor does he come by for “chit-chat.” Additionally, those journalists said Carney has primarily been driving in a separate vehicle from the campaign bus during long stretches of travel.

Ahead of the start of the campaign, the Conservative national campaign director Jenni Byrne informed journalists they would not be allowed on board party buses and planes with Poilievre, who is running for re-election in Carleton, Ont., while covering his national campaign.

Byrne, a key adviser since Poilievre’s bid for party leadership in 2022, wrote in an email to the press gallery on March 18 that, as travel costs have “risen considerably,” so has “the capacity for digital and remote access at public events.”

Byrne wrote that the campaign would provide two to three days’ advance notice on event locations, conferencing, and logistical services for media availability to ensure “an equitable balance” between local and national media.

However, reporters who have covered Poilievre’s rallies—or failed to keep up with the fast-paced and long-distance tour—have found that most of those promises have not met expectations.

While the campaign pre-selects who will be allowed to ask a question and has continued the party’s practice of physically holding the microphone—turning it off immediately after a reporter’s question—there have been increasing reports of the campaign attempting to find out what will be asked and suggesting an alternative question, with the reporter losing their question when they do not comply.

In the past week, several outlets, including the CBC, *Politico*, and several independent journalists, have publicly reported or spoken out about the campaign’s treatment of the journalists covering Poilievre’s public events, including rallies and campaign stops in local communities.

Both *The Globe* and CBC’s Evan Dyer have reported instances of the campaign pressuring them to change what questions they

# Poilievre vows to renegotiate North American pact, but Trump's repeated trade breaches imperil plan

While Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has pledged to renegotiate CUSMA, Liberal Leader Mark Carney has vowed to negotiate an economic and security partnership with the Trump administration.

Continued from page 1

previous day. "That will allow us to find certainty."

Poilievre said that he would propose to suspend tariffs and counter tariffs during the negotiations, but noted that he wouldn't lift Canada's retaliatory levies if the U.S. tariffs remain in place.

"The argument to President Trump will be this: 'Put aside the uncertainty, the job loss, and stock market crashes on both sides of the border, pause the tariffs until we can hammer out a deal,'" he said, remarking that a future pact will have to be in the Canadian interest.

Independent Senator Hassan Yussuff (Ontario), a member of the prime minister's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations, said that renegotiating the deal is the wrong approach.

"I don't think we should renegotiate CUSMA. Certainly, we'd have to convince Canadians [if we did so] that there is something wrong with the agreement. There is not a single argument that can be made about what is wrong with the agreement based on how this agreement has served both countries since its renegotiation," he said.

Yussuff said that Trump has unilaterally violated the deal, and shouldn't be allowed to get away with failing to adhere to the pact.

"A review of the agreement—certainly—but to renegotiate the entire agreement is absolutely crazy, and is a lack of understanding of the negotiating process," he said.

CUSMA calls for a mandated review of the trade deal in 2026, at which time the three partner countries will have to decide whether to continue on with the agreement. If one country decides to withdraw, it starts a series of annual reviews for 10 years until CUSMA ceases in 2036, unless the opposing country changes its course.



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has called for a quick renegotiation of Canada's North American trade pact. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

## Yussuff wants to know what is wrong with the CUSMA

"If we are saying that we are going to renegotiate, does this suggest that this was not a good agreement [and] that there were many elements of it that didn't serve Canada's interest and [that of] the United States and Mexico? I think all three countries have a strong argument that the agreement is foundational to the relationship of trade between the three countries. So I don't understand the logic of Poilievre of saying we need to renegotiate the agreement," Yussuff said.

"Tell me what part of it that he would argue is fundamentally flawed in such a way that we would need to renegotiate it," he said.

Yussuff said a review could look at elements of CUSMA that could be improved rather than opening up the entire pact during a renegotiation.

He remarked that there is no guarantee that Trump won't violate any subsequent agreement he makes in the future.

"What is clear, and it has to be repeated over and over: the United States is not a reliable trading partner anymore," he said.

He said if Canada moves towards a CUSMA review, it has to be done with "eyes open" as Trump can immediately violate what is agreed to during the review period.

Poilievre acknowledged that dealing with Trump brings little certainty.

"There's no guarantee with Trump. As we are learning, nobody in Canada can control Donald Trump," he said on April 3. "Any commitment that we make that America wants to happen on defence or co-operation or market access can and will be instantaneously withdrawn if he violates any part of the agreement. We



Prime Minister Mark Carney has vowed to negotiate an economic and security partnership with the U.S. if he stays in power. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

will only uphold outside of the bargain as long as he upholds his side of the bargain. That's how we create the leverage to protect against a president that changes his mind and breaks his word."

Prime Minister Mark Carney said that—if the Liberals continue to govern after the election—he would seek to negotiate an economic and security partnership with the U.S. The Liberal leader has offered scant details of what that partnership would include.

He said the Trump administration's breaches of CUSMA have led to the need for talks on the partnership.

"There have been so many of these violations that there is a need to have a renegotiation and a reaffirmation of which elements of the commercial relationship—the trading relationship—stand," he told reporters on April 3.

Enacting auto tariffs is a violation of a CUSMA side letter on auto exports to which the previous Trump administration had agreed in 2018. That is on top of a breach of a CUSMA side letter on enacting future measures, as well as a 2019 agreement on steel and aluminum tariffs, as previously reported by *The Hill Times*.

Yussuff said the starting point for any Canada-U.S. partnership

will be how Ottawa can ensure that Trump adheres to it.

"In absence of that, I think the prime minister is in a very, very difficult spot to get Canadians to commit that we can trust this president and his administration," he said.

## 'Renegotiation would mean having to make concessions'

Carlo Dade, director of international policy at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, said that Canada can't have any confidence the U.S. administration would live up to any agreement it makes.

"The only confidence we have is that we can't have confidence," he said in an email. "We will not get that confidence or certainty until the American public fully absorbs the object lesson of how wrong the current approach is. If and until that happens, I'd be loath to renegotiate because renegotiation would mean having to make concessions."

Former trade negotiator Deanna Horton said it is unrealistic to seek a renegotiation as it would require the other two parties to CUSMA to also be on board.

"Frankly, I don't know whether it would be beneficial to do it at this stage of the game anyway, unless this is what the U.S. is insistent on, in which case Canada and Mexico would be requested to agree to that," she said.

Horton said she is hoping that the U.S. Congress will increasingly assert its jurisdiction over trade, which she remarked would give any review or renegotiation more credibility.

She said that from Canada's perspective, it is best to hold off until there is a better sense of the landscape going forward, which would include any potential shift in the mood in Congress after hearing from their constituents.

Queen's University emeritus professor Robert Wolfe, a former Canadian trade official, said there is an open question about whether the American administration would adhere to a renegotiated CUSMA.

He said that Canada is in a "paradox" with the U.S. violating the agreement to which it had previously agreed, and that as the smaller partner, the hand Canada can play is limited.

"We're in a world where if the Americans want to talk, we have to talk," he said.

Wolfe said there is a need for an exploratory phase as Canada heads towards the review of CUSMA to grasp what changes the U.S. would be seeking.

"That helps you get to a place where you see the contours of what might be on the table, and then you might be in a position to actually make offers," he said.

"It's an issue in any negotiations that your negotiating partner will just pocket any offer that you make without reciprocating," he said. "Canada would want to be very cautious about that."

International trade lawyer Lawrence Herman said that it remains unclear if the U.S. would respect the review provision in CUSMA for 2026, or if it would want to begin talks before then.

"We don't know whether the U.S. still believes that there is merit in a three-party trade agreement," he said. "Indications would suggest that they do not have any use for CUSMA as a long-term deal."

Herman said there can't be much faith attached to Trump's signature.

"Mr. Trump has violated the CUSMA directly and breached every precept of the [World Trade Organization] agreement and its underpinnings," he said. "I wouldn't put much faith in the American signature."

But he said that if the U.S. wants to renegotiate CUSMA, Canada would likely concede to talks despite the apprehension over the Trump administration following what it negotiates.

"The big worry is whether a renegotiation of CUSMA is a valid and true renegotiation, or whether it is a question of responding to dictat by the American side saying, 'You accept these positions or we'll put up tariffs again.' That's a big concern from the Canadian point of view," Herman said.

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# Tories’ creative daily ad content bests Grits’ sophisticated distribution strategy, says digital marketing critic

While the Conservatives are flooding the airwaves with an array of innovative digital advertising, the Liberals’ ads remain ‘plain, straightforward, and boring,’ says Tory pundit Jordan Paquet—but that could be just the way they want it.

Continued from page 1

notch,” Singh said. “The Liberals are winning in distribution and spending, but the Conservatives’ ads are authentic, inspiring, and cinematic.”

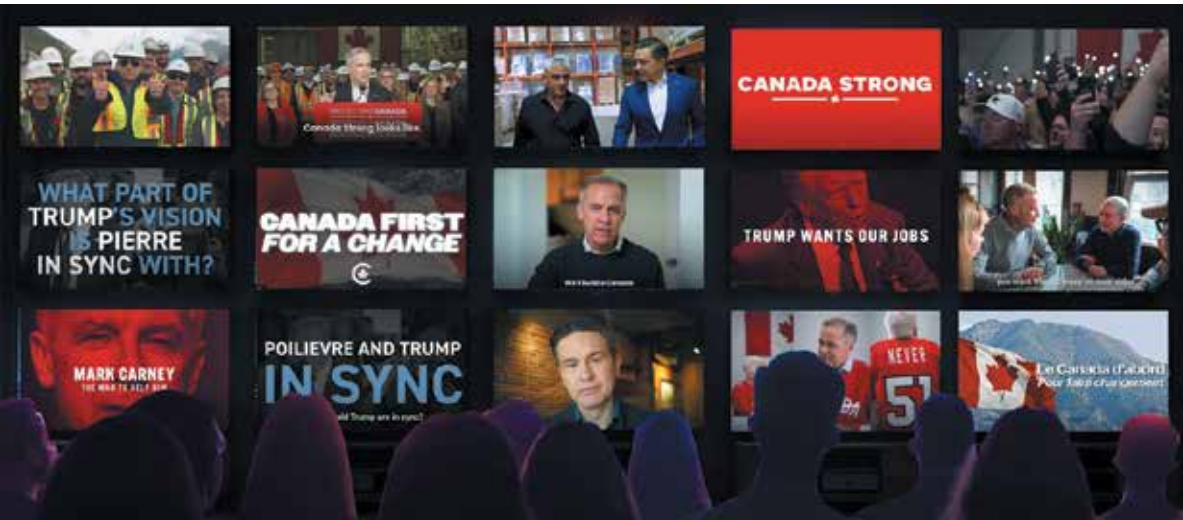
As of April 4, the five main parties—including the NDP, Bloc Québécois, and Green Party—have spent a combined \$2.4-million on Facebook and Instagram advertising, according to Meta’s Ad Library, with the Liberals in the lead with \$1.3-million spent since March 23, followed by the Conservatives with \$1.04-million. The remaining three parties have totals in the \$19,000-25,000 range.

However, Singh noted that the campaigns have been using Meta platforms—as well as X and their respective YouTube channels—as testing grounds, and transferring what works best to run ads elsewhere online, as well as on platforms offered by Bell or Rogers Media for television and radio spots.

Singh said many of his favourite ads the parties have produced and posted online are the same ones they have transferred to television and radio, including the Liberals’ introductory *Who is Mark Carney* ad, and the more recent affordable housing spot from March 31.

However, while the Liberals’ ads get full marks for professionalism and production value, those more traditional ready-for-TV spots have less impact than the varied and innovative content the Conservatives create daily, strategists say.

Within that steady stream of political messaging and digital



In the first two weeks of the campaign, the Liberals have implemented a ‘sophisticated’ distribution and targeting strategy, but the Conservatives have the edge on creativity, innovation, and diversity of style, say online political-communications experts. Screenshots courtesy of YouTube, and The Hill Times illustration by Joey Sabourin

content from the Conservatives, Singh noted at least four distinct categories, including the more traditional spots; longer-form “mini-docs” like *Carney in the coal mine*; or the “daily appeals” highlighting the previous days’ talking points and announcements on things like John A. Macdonald, the Ring of Fire, cutting income taxes or the Tax Free Savings Account top-up.

The final category is the more “gonzo-style” quick-hits, featur-

ing a single camera following Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre as he door-knocks or speaks with stakeholders at a campaign stop. While those may not seem like traditional paid advertising content, Singh told *The Hill Times* he has seen both those and the video of rally-goers singing *O Canada* with their phones held aloft placed as paid online ads.

Hunter Knifton, a consultant and data scientist with Crestview

Strategy, said that while the Conservatives are far outperforming the Liberals in terms of variation and output, the kind of content gaining the most traction was unsurprising.

“All of the top Conservative ads are the ones going at [Prime Minister Mark] Carney to attack him,” Knifton explained, noting that the most-viewed videos on both the Conservatives’ Meta Ad Library and YouTube channel were those taking direct aim at

the Liberal leader, his party, or his predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

Sorted by impressions, two of the most popular ads on the Conservatives’ page include a Punjabi-language version of the *If Carney Wins, Canada Loses* ad, and a more recent ad placed on April 5 attacking Liberals for rising antisemitism and funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, more commonly known as UNRWA.

Alternatively, Knifton said the Liberals’ most popular ads have been the positive, policy-focused spots, including the modular housing ad featuring Carney speaking directly into a camera at a kitchen table.

“I think that difference in tone and what’s working for the campaigns can probably explain a lot of the recent shifts in polling,” said Knifton, who served as data director and deputy director of communications for now-Housing Minister Nathaniel Erskine-Smith’s 2023 Ontario Liberal Party leadership campaign. “I think Canadians right now are looking for positive messaging, positive campaigning, and positive representation of Canada.”

While Carney’s campaign has been leaning towards that positivity because digital metrics and polling have rewarded that kind of content and messaging, the Conservatives may be misreading the public sentiment based on the feedback from their pre-existing audience, Knifton said.

Former Conservative PMO staffer Jordan Paquet said that while the Conservatives will always have a knack for the aggressive and critical, it would be a mistake to discount the effectiveness and reception of the more detailed, longer-form videos.

Paquet, now a vice-president with Bluesky Strategy Group, said the perceived wisdom in political advertising is that short, 15-to-30-second clips are the best way to capture voters’ attention, and get a message out. However, Poilievre has been priming those voters for longer-form content, Paquet said, pointing to the previous *Housing Hell* and *Debt-nation* mini-docs, among several others.

“It’s really innovative, but they’ve also laid the groundwork for it over the past two years,” Paquet said, noting the increased familiarity with the format has made voters more willing to take the extra time.

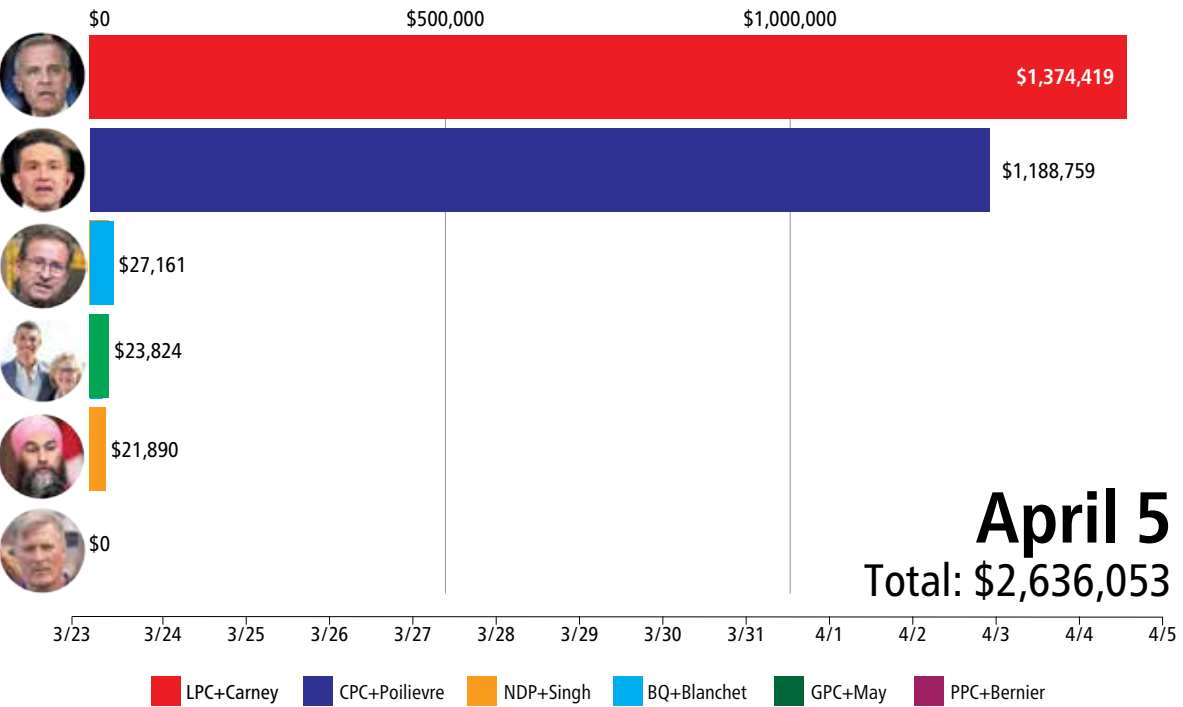
In contrast, Paquet said the Liberal ads seem “plain, straightforward,” and in most cases, “boring,” but noted he neither intends that as an insult, nor believes the campaign would take it that way.

“I think that’s how they want it,” Paquet said, noting that the rest of the campaign seems to be designed in the same fashion.

“They’re running a front-runner campaign, so they don’t want to put Carney out there too much or in an ad that’s too flashy,” Paquet explained. “They’re just trying to put his face out there and a little bit of his résumé, but not much else.”

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## Daily Meta Campaign Spending by Parties and Leaders



Source: Meta Ad Library  
Last updated: April 8 with data as of April 5

# OPINION

## Modernizing EI: an imperative in this era of uncertainty

If Canada wants to modernize employment insurance, it must restore a regular social dialogue with the contributors.

Diane Bellemare

Opinion



As Canada navigates a period of increasing economic turbulence accentuated by trade tensions with the United States, reforming employment insurance has become unavoidable. Major reforms are essential to meet contemporary needs, and meeting this challenge requires intensifying social dialogue in governance of the program. The recent temporary adjustments to employment insurance (EI) are welcome, but are far from the needed changes.

### A system out of step with the reality of the labour market

Established in 1940 to provide financial security for workers facing involuntary unemployment, and to stabilize the economy across Canada, this program was reformed in 1996 and broadened to include measures improving employability through labour market agreements with the provinces. Over the past 30 years, the economic context has changed profoundly. Artificial intelligence is transforming work, labour shortages are being exacerbated by an aging population, and uncertainties related to trade wars are undermining jobs. Enterprises and workers need to adapt accordingly. However, EI has failed to address the labour market's needs in terms of training and skills for those at risk of losing their jobs.

A recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report, *Steering through Uncertainty*, published this past March, estimates that better alignment between the supply and demand for skills could increase Canada's productivity by eight to 10 per cent. Yet, instead of being a strategic tool for achieving this, EI has become a minimalist social program for income support that is unable to fully fulfill its economic role.

### Centralized governance and unfair practices

Once managed through a tripartite agency at arm's length from political influence, EI is now under the exclusive control of the federal government, which makes unilateral decisions. Representatives of businesses and workers who are directly affected have been relegated to a consultative role with no real power to influence decision-making.

At the same time, the financing of the program relies exclusively on contributions from employers and employees since the federal government disengaged in 1990.

And in the period of 1996-2009, surpluses accumulated in the EI account were used to finance the federal deficit. Additionally, the funding mechanism is regressive, and penalizes small and medium-sized enterprises and low-wage workers.

Those situations raise questions of fairness, and contradict the principle of "no taxation without representation."

### An imbalance between economic role and social mission

Over the years, EI has been expanded to include benefits not directly related to the labour market, such as sick, parental, or compassionate leave. While these measures meet indisputable social needs, they have diluted EI's primary mission—to protect workers against unemployment and support their adaptation to new economic realities—and have increased the cost of the regime.

In several European countries, Australia, and Quebec—for parental leave—these benefits are managed through distinct systems, allowing unemployment insurance to concentrate on its labour market mission. A Canadian reform could draw inspiration from these models to better balance the program's objectives and clearly delineate its purposes.

### The urgency of restoring social dialogue

The gradual erosion of social dialogue is one of the major causes of EI's current shortcomings. In countries such as Germany, France, or the Scandinavian nations, the management of unemployment insurance relies on regular and ongoing dialogue between the state and representatives of employers and employees. This social dialogue enables more effective adaptation to labour market needs.

The millions of dollars recently spent on consultations for reforming EI by the Department of Employment did not result in even a draft white paper. If Canada wants to modernize EI, it must restore a regular social dialogue with the contributors. A concerted reform could transform EI into a genuine lever for economic transition, ensuring effective protection for workers while better responding to the challenges of the labour market.

### A major electoral issue

In a context of trade wars and rapid technological transformation, party leaders must take a clear stance on their intention to reform EI. The question for them is straightforward: if you become prime minister, will you re-establish a genuine social dialogue with employers and labour? I am also asking them if they will commit to creating a tripartite task force to produce a white paper for a larger consultation on this subject so that EI can be reformed to fulfill its original economic and social role, which is "to improve the performance of the labour market for Canadians and Canada."

*The Hon. Diane Bellemare, PhD, is an economist and former Quebec senator. The Hill Times*

# NEWS

# 2025 ELECTION

## Conservatives' tight grip on media access not living up to promise to be 'most accessible and transparent campaign,' say reporters



Journalists covering Poilievre's press conference in Toronto on April 2 huddle to strategize what questions they will use and which four reporters allowed a question will ask them. Screenshot courtesy of CPAC

Continued from page 11

would ask and withholding their opportunities when they did not comply.

Poilievre's campaign did not respond to *The Hill Times*' request for comment by publication deadline.

During the April 6 episode of *The Herle Burley* podcast, independent journalist Justin Ling confirmed he had witnessed the incident with the CBC at Poilievre's press conference in Trois-Rivières, Que., and added a third instance, alleging that during his stop in Kingston, Ont., Poilievre had attempted to get the local *Kingstonist* reporter to ask a question about the potential reinstallation of a John A. Macdonald statue rather than his planned question on tariffs impacting the city.

The reporter ultimately asked a question about Macdonald's statue, while framing it in the context of how that would impact efforts at truth and reconciliation, but only after first asking his pre-planned question.

*Kingstonist* reporter Bill Hutchins told *The Hill Times* that during his coverage of the rally the night before, he had requested a one-on-one interview with Poilievre, and had informed the team the Macdonald statue would be one of several topics he hoped to ask about. When he was informed there wouldn't be time for an interview prior to the press conference the following day, Hutchins said Poilievre's team had attempted to "steer" him towards only asking that question, but he had decided against it at the last moment.

Ling compared the behaviour of the campaign to a "tin-pot dictator with his little flying press monkeys," and forecasted "a more serious blow-up between the media and the Conservative press team in the coming days."

As the campaign attempts to exert ever-tighter control over the media covering it, those journalists say they have only redoubled their efforts to work together to hold Poilievre accountable. While huddles are a feature of most press conferences outside of the election, they are generally used to decide who is asking what and in what order. For covering Poilievre, it is an exercise in rationing.

One reporter said that while most journalists view each other as teammates,

strategizing and trading questions depending on who gets one, not everyone seems to be on the same side.

Several reporters confirmed that outlets like the *Toronto Sun*, *The Western Standard*, Rebel News, and True North do not participate in those pre-scrum strategy huddles.

Greg MacEachern, a former Liberal ministerial staffer and founding principal at KAN Strategies, has been vocal about what he views as the Poilievre campaign's disrespect of journalists long before the election. However, he said those journalists must also start sticking up for themselves.

Still, Poilievre's strategy of limiting media access is far more suited to a campaign with a 20-point lead rather than a two-party horse race, MacEachern said.

"When you're up 20-25 points, you can do pretty much whatever you want, but this isn't a strategy that will increase your potential available vote," MacEachern said. "But if you're trying to say you're the best person to stand up to [U.S. President Donald] Trump but you're afraid of the national media, it's a pretty contrary message."

Former Conservative campaign staffer Dan Mader, who led the development of the party's 2021 campaign platform and oversaw policy and speechwriting during the election, said that while the Poilievre campaign is maintaining the same message discipline that has led them to historic levels of support, Poilievre can't give up any advantage when Carney is making the most his, particularly the office of prime minister.

"Carney has the incumbent advantage, and is going to use it as much as they can," Mader said. "So my advice to Poilievre is that his advantage is he's more comfortable and sure in his message ... he should talk to the media more and answer more questions because he's good at it."

However, Mader, a founding partner with Loyalist Public Affairs, said the Conservative campaign should resist changing its strategy simply because it upsets the media and pundits.

"They are gaining support ... polls are showing that they may have started to close the gap, so they need to keep pushing their message and not dilute it by answering every question under the sun."

*sbenson@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*



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

## Mayor Olivia Chow, Premier Danielle Smith among top guests at competing Progress Summit, Canada Strong and Free Network events starting April 9



Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow, left, will attend the Broadbent Institute's Progress Summit on April 9, while Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, right, will have a keynote during the Canada Strong and Free Network Conference on April 10. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—FRIDAY, APRIL 11

**2025 Progress Summit**—The Broadbent Institute hosts the 2025 Progress Summit, Canada's largest annual progressive politics conference. Among the participants are Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow; Steve Verheul, former assistant deputy minister, Global Affairs Canada; Bea Bruske, president, Canadian Labour Congress; and Matthias Ecke, European MP, Social Democratic Party of Germany. Wednesday, April 9, to Friday, April 11, at the City Centre Delta, 101 Lyon St. N., Ottawa. Details: [broadbentinstitute.ca](http://broadbentinstitute.ca).

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9—SATURDAY, APRIL 12

**CSFN 25 Conference**—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its annual conference in Ottawa. This year's theme is "From Ideas to Action." Participants include Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, B.C. Conservative Leader John Rustad, former chief of defence staff Rick Hillier, former cabinet minister Tony Clement, strategists Kory Teneycke and Ginny Roth, and former U.S. trade rep Robert Lighthizer. Wednesday, April 9, to Saturday, April 12, at the Westin Hotel Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: [canadastrongandfree.network](http://canadastrongandfree.network).

### THURSDAY, APRIL 10

**Webinar: 'Economists Talk Canada-U.S. Relations'**—The Pearson Centre hosts a webinar: "Economists Talk About Canada—U.S. Relations." A panel of leading economists will explore the impact of recent U.S. policy changes on Canada, analyze their broader effects on the North American and global economies, and share strategic insights on how Canada can respond. Thursday, April 10, at 4 p.m. ET happening online. Contact [thepearsoncentre.ca](http://thepearsoncentre.ca).

### FRIDAY, APRIL 11

**Lecture: 'The (Homegrown) Politics of Backlash in Canada'**—

Carleton University hosts the annual Vickers-Verduyn Lecture featuring Dr. Debra Thompson, Canada Research Chair in Racial Inequality in Democratic Societies at McGill University, who will speak on "From Black Lives Matter to the War on Woke: The (Homegrown) Politics of Backlash in Canada." She will explore the collapse of old political norms, the uncertainty of emerging alternatives, the influence of U.S. culture wars, and whether Canadian democracy can withstand the challenges ahead. Friday, April 11, at 4 p.m. ET at Carleton University, 1811 Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: [carleton.ca](http://carleton.ca).

**Off the Pages: A Celebration of Banned Books**—This annual event features local authors reading from their favourite banned books. This year's guest authors are Charlotte Gray, Dr. Monia Mazigh, Suyi Davies Okungbowa, and Dancia Kendra Susilo. A fundraiser for local adult and family literacy organization Alternative Learning Styles and Outlooks, the evening includes live music, food, drinks, and a silent auction. Friday, April 11, 6:30 p.m. ET, at Heartwood House, 404 McArthur Ave., Ottawa. Details and tickets at: [also-ottawa.org/events](http://also-ottawa.org/events).

### TUESDAY, APRIL 15

**Conference: 'Liberal Democracy in the Rearview Mirror?'**—Massey College, Section 1, and the Canadian International Council host a day-long conference on "Liberal Democracy in the Rearview Mirror?" exploring the state of and prospects for liberal constitutionalism at home and in the world. Participants include former German ambassador to Canada Sabine Sparwasser, Canadian political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon, and Sabreena Delhon, CEO of the Samara Centre for Democracy, among others. Tuesday, April 15, at 8:30 a.m. ET, at 4 Devonshire Place, Toronto. Details: [masseycollege.ca](http://masseycollege.ca).

**2025 Canada Votes**—The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade hosts "2025 Canada Votes," a chance for its

members to hear from local senior candidates of the major federal parties as they present their parties' positions on the important economic and business issues facing Canada. Thursday, April 15, at 7:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 W Georgia St., Vancouver. Details: [boardoftrade.com](http://boardoftrade.com).

**AMA: 'Election 2025 Countdown'**—Ipsos hosts an interactive "Ask Me Anything" live webinar examining the current popular vote and the public opinion trends impacting key election issues featuring Darrell Bricker, Global CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs; and Sean Simpson, Ipsos' senior vice-president. Tuesday, April 15, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: [ipsos.com](http://ipsos.com).

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

**Panel: 'Canada in a Changing World Order'**—Former Quebec premier Jean Charest, former Conservative cabinet minister John Baird, and former Canadian ambassadors Louise Blais and Marc-André Blanchard will take part in a panel discussion, "Canada's risks and opportunities in a changing world order," hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, April 16, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal, 1201 Blvd René-Lévesque W. Details: [corim.qc.ca](http://corim.qc.ca).

**Federal Candidate Meet and Greet 2025**—The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce hosts a "Federal Candidate Meet and Greet 2025," an opportunity for members to connect directly with federal candidates from across Edmonton and the surrounding region. Wednesday, April 16, at 9 a.m. MT at the World Trade Centre, sixth floor, 9990 Jasper Ave., #600, Edmonton. Details: [business.edmontonchamber.com](http://business.edmontonchamber.com).

### TUESDAY, APRIL 22

**Mayor's Breakfast**—David Coletto, founder, chair, and CEO of Abacus Data, is the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, the *Ottawa Business Journal*, and the Ottawa Board of

Trade. Tuesday, April 22, at 7 a.m. ET Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: [business.ottawabot.ca](http://business.ottawabot.ca).

**Rose LeMay's Book Launch**—The *Hill Times'* columnist Rose LeMay will discuss her new book, *Ally is a Verb: A Guide to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, at a private book launch hosted by Deloitte and Catalyst Canada. Space is limited. Tuesday, April 22, at 4:30 p.m. at Deloitte Greenhouse, Bayview Yards Innovation Centre, Suite E200, 7 Bayview Station Rd., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

**Bruce Heyman to Deliver Remarks**—Former U.S. ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman, now CEO of Power Sustainable, will deliver remarks on the environment at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, April 23, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced in Montreal. Details: [corim.qc.ca](http://corim.qc.ca).

**Panel: 'Charting Canada's Arctic Future'**—Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, will take part in a panel discussion, "Charting Canada's Arctic Future," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Other participants include Sean Boyd (Agnico Eagle), Heather Exner Poirot (Macdonald-Laurier Institute), and Jessica Shadian (Arctic360). Wednesday, April 23, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: [canadianclub.org](http://canadianclub.org).

### THURSDAY, APRIL 24

**Canada Growth Summit 2025**—The Public Policy Forum hosts the Canada Growth Summit 2025 on the theme "Unleashing Canada's potential in turbulent times." Participants include Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford, former Conservative cabinet minister Lisa Raitt, former ambassadors Louise Blais and Marc-André Blanchard, and former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul, among others. Thursday, April 24, at 7:30 a.m. at the Fairmont Royal

York, 100 Front St. W., Toronto. Details: [ppforum.ca](http://ppforum.ca).

### FRIDAY, APRIL 25

**'An Inclusive Parliament?'**—The Canadian Study of Parliament Group hosts "An Inclusive Parliament?" exploring equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in legislative spaces, from the experiences of legislators themselves to public engagement and staff participation behind the scenes. Friday, April 25, at 9 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

**The Walrus Talks: Tariffs**—The Walrus Talks@Home presents a webinar on "Tariffs: Discussing What the U.S. Trade War Means for Canada, Both Now and in the Future." Speakers to be announced. Friday, April 25, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: [thewalrus.ca](http://thewalrus.ca).

**Superintendent of Financial Institutions to Deliver Remarks**—Peter Routledge, head of the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, will speak at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Friday, April 25, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: [cdhowe.org](http://cdhowe.org).

### FRIDAY, APRIL 25—SUNDAY, APRIL 27

**IMF and World Bank Ministerial Meetings**—The 2025 Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund will take place from Friday, April 25, to Sunday, April 27, in Washington, D.C. Details: [worldbank.org](http://worldbank.org).

### MONDAY, APRIL 28

**Federal Election Day**—Canadians from coast to coast to coast will head to the polls to vote in the snap election called by Prime Minister Mark Carney on March 23.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

**CANIC 2025**—The Canadian Military Intelligence Association hosts CANIC 2025, the Canadian Intelligence Conference. Participants include Nathalie Drouin, national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, and her predecessor Richard Fadden, among others. Wednesday, April 30, at 7:30 a.m. ET, Ottawa Conference and Event Centre, 200 Coventry Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

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