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Carney taps host of new MPs to 28-member cabinet, creates 10 secretaries of state



Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson, left, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson, and Health Minister Marjorie Michel arrive for the cabinet swearing-in ceremony at Rideau Hall on May 13. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

In a major shakeup, Prime Minister Mark Carney named 16 new faces to his 28-member cabinet, but kept a dozen Trudeau-era ministers in his lineup.

BY MARLO GLASS & ELEANOR WAND

Prime Minister Mark Carney unveiled his first post-election cabinet on May 13 with a stable of new MPs joining many veterans in a 28-person inner circle supported by 10 additional secretaries of state.

A major shakeup to the prime minister's top advisers was expected as he faces the task of departing from former prime minister Justin Trudeau's legacy. But, for a second time, many Trudeau-era heavyweights have remained in cabinet, including Industry Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.), Transport and Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.), and Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.). Most in this group—save for Freeland—took on entirely new portfolios or had some shifts to their roles, like Guilbeault and LeBlanc who had more added to their respective

plates. François-Philippe Champagne (Saint Maurice-Champlain, Que.), who stayed on as finance minister, also took on national revenue.

Carney (Nepean, Ont.) kept a dozen ministers from his first cabinet, named in March, and added 16 new names, with all but one brand new to cabinet responsibilities. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, N.S.), who previously served in Trudeau's cabinet as housing and immigration minister, will serve as the justice minister. He had previously announced he wouldn't run for re-election, but reversed course this spring.

The cabinet unveiling struck a robust economy-focused tone, with roles emphasizing economic development and Canada-U.S. trade, as well as international trade, with LeBlanc's role including "One Canadian Economy." The PMO press release following the swearing-in introduced Carney's

new cabinet as having a "strong mandate" to oversee "a new economic and security relationship with the United States," and to work to build a stronger economy. A longtime senior minister, LeBlanc has also been tasked with stick-handling Canada-U.S. trade, intergovernmental affairs, and serving as president of the King's Privy Council.

At a press conference following the cabinet shuffle, Carney emphasized his focus on developing a new economic and security relationship with the U.S., and strengthening this country's economy.

"We are at the start of an industrial transformation," he said, adding that the greatest "opportunity" for Canada is to reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

Carney said his government will grow an economy that "creates jobs, increases wages, and is resilient in the face of economic shock."

Carney said his cabinet is "purpose-built for this hinge moment in Canada's history," and will fast-track legislation for "nation-building investments," while also eliminating federal barriers to internal trade.

He highlighted other legislative priorities, including fighting "unfair" tariffs in place from U.S. President Donald Trump, continuing negotiations in the trade war, and reinforcing trade relationships with reliable partners.

The prime minister also struck an ambitious tone around housing affordability, saying his government would "create an entirely new Canadian housing industry" in modular and pre-fabricated homes, "using Canadian technology, Canadian skilled workers, and Canadian lumber."

Carney's pre-election "war cabinet" was a pared down version of his predecessor's, and he drew criticism for abandoning gender parity goals trumpeted by Trudeau. This time, there are a total of 38 members of Carney's ministry, with equal numbers of men and women. The ministers are responsible for large portfolios, while the more junior secretaries of state don't have the same budget powers as full ministers. Trudeau didn't assign secretaries of state to his cabinet, which grew steadily and was composed of 36 ministers by the time he resigned, and at one point held 40 members.

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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Former NDP MP Charlie Angus rules out leadership bid



Former longtime NDP MP Charlie Angus confirmed on May 11 that he's not looking to return to elected office or to attempt another leadership run. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Former seven-term NDP MP **Charlie Angus** has spelled it out in no uncertain terms: "I am not looking to return to elected office or to attempt another leadership run," he said in a May 11 statement posted on social media.

Angus said he remains "a committed New Democrat," but felt he needed to quell the "many messages asking if I am considering running to be NDP leader" since **Jagmeet Singh** resigned on election night.

Angus noted he'd "had the honour" of running in the party's last leadership contest in 2017, in which he placed second to Singh. But he's just not interested in running for leader again.

"My focus is to serve Canada and to build resistance to the fascist and anti-democratic threats facing our world," Angus said in his statement. "I will do whatever I can to bring people together from across this great nation. I

will work across political lines to resist the threats to our economy, values and democracy," he wrote.

Now on tour with his band Grievous Angels, Angus in his statement expressed condolences for his former NDP colleagues who lost their seats—Angus himself didn't run again in this election—to the "great staffers who have been laid off" and to the candidates and volunteers who "gave their all."

"The New Democratic Party must undertake a full and transparent audit of the decisions made that led to such a catastrophic loss," concluded Angus. "But that is an issue I will leave to the NDP grassroots."

On May 12, *The Globe and Mail* reported the NDP's national director **Lucy Watson** as saying "that the federal council would meet 'in the near future' to lay out a plan for a leadership race."



Charlie Angus, centre, greets supporters at the NDP leadership showcase in Hamilton, Ont., on Sept. 17, 2017. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade.

Bloc names its new House leadership team

Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves-François Blanchet** announced his new caucus leadership team at a May 7 press conference.

Christine Normandin will be House leader. **Alexis Deschênes**, who unseated former Liberal cabinet minister **Diane Lebouthillier** on April 28, will be the deputy House leader.

Three-term MP **Yves Perron** said on social media that he was "honoured" to be tapped as the party's whip, a responsibility he first took on back in December from **Claude DeBellefeuille**. He will be supported by **Marilène Gill** as deputy whip, a role she's held since 2019.

The Bloc caucus chair will be three-term **Martin Champoux**, with longtime veteran MP **Louis Plamondon** as his second in command.



The Bloc's new House leadership team includes party whip Yves Perron, left, House leader Christine Normandin, centre, and caucus chair Martin Champoux. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Cynthia Münster

Of note, none of the Bloc's 22 members of caucus are planning to attend the Throne Speech on May 27. Blanchet posted on X on May 8 that "we will bring

back to the House a bill ending the obligation for new MPs to take an oath to the king. Let us finally free ourselves from the monarchy."

Recount flips Terrebonne seat by one vote

Speaking of the Bloc Québécois caucus, its membership was reduced by one seat last week-end thanks to the unprecedented results of the official recount in Terrebonne, Que. Incumbent **Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné** lost the seat by a single vote, flipping the riding to the Liberals and MP-elect **Tatiana Auguste**. The Liberals now have 170 seats; the Bloc 22.

Three other official recounts are taking place. Out east in Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, N.L., Liberal candidate **Anthony Germain** was leading by 12 votes over Conservative rival **Jonathan Rowe** going into the recount. Previously known as Bonavista-Burin-Trinity, this constituency has been Liberal since 2015, and was held by then-Liberal MP

Churence Rodgers from 2017 until he chose not to reoffer this year.

The recount in the newly established riding of Milton East-Halton Hills South, Ont., began on May 13. There, Liberal candidate **Kristina Tesser** was leading former Conservative MP **Parm Gill** by 29 votes.

The recount in the renamed southern Ontario riding of Windsor-Tecumseh-Lake-shore—formerly just Windsor-Tecumseh—is anticipated to start on May 20. Conservative candidate **Kathy Borrelli** was leading two-term Liberal incumbent **Irek Kusmierczyk** by 77 votes, according to Elections Canada. Kusmierczyk and Borrelli previously battled for this seat in 2021, with Borrelli placing third to Kusmierczyk.



Liberal candidate Tatiana Auguste has been declared the winner of Terrebonne, Que., by one vote after an official recount on May 10. *Photograph courtesy of the Liberal Party of Canada*

Monsieur Blouin heads to Washington

Radio-Canada's **Louis Blouin** is trading one capital assignment for another. Calling it a "dream come true" on X last week, Blouin announced he will be leaving Ottawa this summer for Washington, D.C., as Radio-Canada's correspondent there alongside **Azeb Wolde-Giorghis**. Blouin will take over from **Frédéric Arnould** who, after four years

in D.C., is headed to Europe.

Succeeding Blouin in Ottawa as Radio-Canada's parliamentary bureau chief is **Daniel Thibeault**, erstwhile host of RCI's program *Ici Télé*. "You couldn't find a better captain," Blouin said of Thibeault in a four-part X post last week, praising Thibeault as being "experienced" and "well-connected."



Radio-Canada's Louis Blouin will leave Ottawa this summer for a new assignment in Washington, D.C. *Screenshot courtesy of YouTube*

Roy MacGregor named honorary Ottawa Riverkeeper

Globe and Mail feature writer and author **Roy MacGregor** has been named as the new honorary Ottawa Riverkeeper, the charity announced on May 8.

MacGregor will speak at the upcoming Riverkeeper Gala on May 21, taking place in a new location this year in Jacques-Cartier Park in Gatineau, Que.

MacGregor is the author of more than 50 books, including *A Life in the Bush*, *Northern Light*,

Canoe Country, and *Original Highways*.

In her September 2023 profile on MacGregor, *The Hill Times*' editor-in-chief **Kate Malloy** noted MacGregor "has always been drawn back to the forests, lakes, and rivers," based on his early years growing up in the bush in northern Ontario.

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COMMENT

Mark Carney and the disappearing pipeline



Prime Minister Mark Carney has repeatedly stated he's willing to adopt a new approach to energy development, combining increased conventional oil production with climate mitigation tactics, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The Alberta premier and Conservative leader's regular excoriations of Ottawa policy never seem to contain a reference to Trans Mountain.

Les Whittington



Need to Know

OTTAWA—If there was ever a pipeline that was not going to get built, it was the Northern Gateway project to construct an oil conduit near some of the most cherished, pristine forest and marine areas of British Columbia's north.

The possibility of oil spills from the 1,170-kilometre line to carry oilsands bitumen from Alberta to a tanker terminal on the Pacific stirred overwhelming opposition to the project. It brought people of all stripes together as no other issue ever had, local politicians said. Despite this, the Harper government gave Northern Gateway the go-ahead. But the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the approval in 2016, and then-prime minister Justin Trudeau put Enbridge's project out of its misery shortly thereafter.

TransCanada threw in the towel on its cross-Canada Energy East pipeline proposal the following year. While regulatory stipulations decreed by the Trudeau government played a role in the decision, it also resulted from a projected decline in oil production, fierce opposition from environmental groups in Quebec and elsewhere, and a drastic oil-price swoon that

made the project economically questionable. Another factor was what appeared to be the creation of a better alternative for shippers when United States President Donald Trump—temporarily, as it turned out—revived Keystone XL.

Out of all this, with the help of Alberta governments, the petroleum industry propaganda machine and federal Conservatives, arose the widely accepted myth that the Liberals were disadvantaging Albertans by peremptorily ruling out any and all pipeline development. Alluding to such allegedly unfulfilled opportunities, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, for instance, blames it all on the Liberals' "radical, net zero, keep-it-in-the-ground ideology."

Today there seems to be no limit to Albertans' frustration and resentment over lower oil prices, and the Liberals' attempts to prepare Canada for the inevitable transition away from fossil fuels to save humanity. Premier Danielle Smith is channelling the resulting separatist sentiment toward a possible independence referendum and demanding that Ottawa scrap the Constitution by forfeiting its role in national energy regulation.

Somewhere along the line in this evolving story was Ottawa's approval of the tripling of the Trans Mountain (TMX) pipeline from Alberta to a Vancouver port, and, after the owner was intimidated by the cost and hurdles involved, the purchase by the federal government in 2018 of the whole deal. At an eventual cost of \$34-billion, it became the most expensive infrastructure project in Canadian history. Since the Ottawa-owned TMX went into service last spring, it has transformed the prospects for Alberta's oil producers by opening up sales to Asia.

Smith sort of welcomed the advent of the expanded TMX last year while implicitly blaming Trudeau for the demise of other pipeline proposals: "I think a lot of people are thinking [about] what might have been, but at least this one got to mar-

ket." Since then, I can't find any evidence that Smith's regular excoriations of Ottawa policy have ever contained a reference to TMX. The same goes for Poilievre, who appears not to have heard of the completion of Canada's most costly infrastructure project. Listening to the Conservative leader repeatedly criticize Carney on this issue in the English-language leaders' debate, the NDP's Jagmeet Singh finally interjected: "They built a pipeline. I don't know what Pierre is complaining about."

It's a good question. Trudeau, who was unable in two elections to win another majority, never got an iota of credit in the West for alienating his environmental backers when he took the political risk of buying Alberta a pipeline. His beguiling 2015 notion that you could use a carbon tax to build "social licence" for oil and gas expansion ended up pleasing nobody.

Unsurprisingly, then, Poilievre, Smith, and Albertans in general are refusing

to take "yes" for an answer from Carney. While not abandoning the fight against global warming, he has repeatedly stated he's willing to adopt a new approach to energy development, combining increased conventional oil production with climate mitigation tactics. This means being open to pipelines, favouring a national energy corridor, and decisively streamlining approval of national infrastructure projects—all part of what he sees as a crucial, generational nation-building opportunity.

Trump's trade war has revived a national conversation on an east-west pipeline, but whether one will ever be built is another matter entirely. Given the enormous cost, the 10-year lead time, unpredictable petroleum demand, the need for provincial and Indigenous buy-in, and the question of whether Canada's producers can fill another pipeline after TMX's expansion, no company is rushing to sign up to construct a 4,500-km conduit touching six provinces. So it might come down as it did with TMX to whether Ottawa wants to pay the freight.

At least the newly elected prime minister may be able to ensure that Alberta and Saskatchewan actually hear his words when—as recommended by Carney—the first ministers get together to try to dampen down the fires of western alienation in Saskatoon on June 2.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

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NEWS

New Liberal MP-elect led group that denied Armenian genocide, but backs feds' recognition



Liberal MP-elect Sima Acan, left, with Prime Minister Mark Carney during the recent federal election campaign. Photograph courtesy of X/Sima Acan

Canada has officially recognized the Armenian genocide since 2006.

BY NEIL MOSS

The office of newly elected Liberal representative Sima Acan says she wasn't involved in a 2023 statement by a Turkish group for which she served as president that denied the Armenian genocide, and that Acan supports the government's official position.

Canada first officially recognized the systematic murder of up to 1.5 million Armenians in 1915 as a genocide in 2006, following parliamentary resolutions in 2002 and 2004.

The Canadian government is one of 34 countries to officially recognize the killings as genocide, joining others including the United States, France, Germany, and Italy. Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Pakistan deny a genocide took place.

On April 24, 2023, the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations (FCTA) released a statement in which it denies that the killings constitutes a genocide.

"We reject the labelling of the events of 1915 as 'genocide' and strongly recommend that legislators and key figures consider all the facts before participating in senseless ethnic tension instigated by the ultra-nationalist Armenians in Canada," the statement reads.

April 24 is Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.



Then-president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations Sima Acan, right, pictured with now-Innovation Minister Anita Anand in 2023. Photograph courtesy of X/Sima Acan

Acan, who is the first Turkish Canadian woman to run for federal office, served as president of the FCTA—an umbrella organization for various Turkish community groups across the country—from 2022 to 2024. She recently won election to the House of Commons as a Liberal in Oakville West, Ont., with 53.1 per cent of the vote.

Her parliamentary office told *The Hill Times* that Acan wasn't involved in the drafting of the 2023 statement.

"As chair of the executive board, [she] was unable to participate in the vote that preceded it," they said.

Asked if Acan accepts or rejects the Canadian government's recognition of the Armenian genocide, her office said: "Without hesitation, MP Acan stands with the Government of Canada's position."

On April 24, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) wrote on X that "the Armenian genocide will forever be one of the darkest chapters in human history."

The same day, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre released a statement commemorate the 110th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

"Though the world failed to heed the warnings at the time,

we now know that the Ottoman Empire launched a deliberate campaign aimed at ethnically cleansing and exterminating the Armenian people," he said.

Ahead of last month's federal election, the FCTA released a series of policy recommendations, which included a description of the killings as a "so-called genocide." Acan was no longer the group's president when those recommendations were released.

"Selective historical narratives and political biases have contributed to an increasingly discriminatory environment for Turkish and Azerbaijani Canadians. Canadian policies must reflect

the values of fairness, balance, the rule of law and protection for all communities—especially in the face of politically motivated accusations," the FCTA's policy document reads. "However, Canadian Turkish residents continue to face generalizations and stigmatization arising from contested historical claims, particularly around the events of 1915."

Acan can prove her words through action, says Armenian envoy

Armenian Ambassador to Canada Anahit Harutyunyan said Acan's former role as president of the FCTA during the period when the statement was released raises "important questions" about leadership and responsibility.

"I truly hope that as a Member of Parliament she will prove through her actions that she's fully in line with Canada's position—particularly that of the Liberal Party—in recognizing the Armenian genocide and standing against denial," Harutyunyan said.

"While we're all combatting denialism, she has a chance to prove that she's the one that stands with Canadian values," Harutyunyan said. "So, we'll see. Of course, we'll be watching very carefully."

The ambassador said that she will be reaching out to Acan.

"[The genocide is] a very sensitive and deeply painful chapter in our history," she said. "I would really want to give a chance to [Acan] to publicly state her position [on] what she thinks on the Armenian genocide, and to be clear on that."

Armenian National Committee of Canada executive director Sevag Belian said it is a "major concern" that any organization would deny the genocide.

"We certainly welcome the fact that Ms. Acan has now clarified her position," he said. "Our expectation is for every Member of Parliament without a doubt to be on the same page on this issue."

But Belian said there is no way of verifying whether Acan did or did not participate in the drafting of the 2023 statement.

He said that denialism paves the way for future acts to take place with impunity, remarking that was witnessed during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"There was a direct correlation between these events and the fact that Turkey, and countries like Azerbaijan, have continuously denied the genocide," he said.

"Had there been a full recognition of the full operation of the Armenian genocide there definitely would have been reconciliation and all other issues could have been solved diplomatically and amicably over the years."

He said that denialism has prevented that process of reconciliation.

"The Armenian genocide shouldn't be an Armenian issue. It shouldn't be a Turkish issue. It's an issue that belongs to history," Belian said. "We're proud that Canada is on the right side of that history."

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Armenian National Committee of Canada executive director Sevag Belian, left, pictured with Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury in 2019. Belian says the committee's expectation is for all MPs to be on 'the same page' about the Armenian genocide. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

‘Rock bottom’: former MPs reflect on election losses, and navigating ‘purgatory’ as they transition to life out of office

Two weeks after the election, at least 40 outgoing MPs are in the process of packing up their offices and saying goodbye to staff and colleagues, after years—or even decades—in office.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Former Liberal MP and cabinet minister Maryam Monsef still hasn’t opened all the boxes her staff packed up from offices after she lost her seat in 2021—a reality a new crop of former parliamentarians are now contending with after the recent election ended their bid to return to the House of Commons.

“It took me years to open some of the boxes [my team] had packed for me,” she told *The Hill Times*. “There’s still a few boxes that I’m in no hurry to open because I will open them when it’s time to go through that phase of the journey.”

This is a journey that at least 40 outgoing MPs started just two weeks ago, with many of them now in the process of clearing out their offices and emptying their secondary residences after failing to keep their seats—something that former MPs described to *The Hill Times* as a grieving process.

After representing Peterborough-Kawartha, Ont., for six years, Monsef lost to the Conservatives. Now that riding, under the new name Peterborough, has returned to the Liberal fold under rookie MP-elect Emma-Lee Harrison Hill.

Monsef called the moment she lost her seat “rock bottom,” a low that was only compounded by the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan that was occurring at the time, with the Afghan-Canadian politician feeling there was “nothing” she or her team could do to help following her election loss.

“I did spend a lot of time on the yoga mat and the prayer mat journaling,” she said, when asked about how she processed her loss. “I also had the privilege and the opportunity to take time and space and be away and process what had just happened and realign.”



Former MPs Maryam Monsef, left, Mike Morrice, Alistair MacGregor, and Nelly Shin speak about their experiences moving out of public office following their defeats this election for Morrice and MacGregor and in 2021 for Monsef and Shin. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

The timeline to vacate an office after an election loss is a short one. Outgoing MPs are given a 21-day closing period to vacate both their constituency office in their riding and their parliamentary office in Ottawa, set out by the House of Commons’ *Members By-Law*. For some, this means emptying an office of years—or even decades—of personal effects and files.

That’s something former NDP MP Alistair MacGregor is going through right now after losing his riding of Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, B.C., after almost a decade in office.

MacGregor called the results “numbing,” but said despite his loss he still feels like he’s working full time, facing the daunting task of clearing out years’ worth of work from his offices to make way for his successor.

“Even though I’m not the MP, I still feel like I’m quite busy with office stuff. It’s almost like this in-between part that I’m still stuck in—purgatory,” he joked.

MacGregor lost his British Columbia seat in one of the country’s tightest races, largely because of a progressive vote split between him and the Liberal candidate, which led to the election of Conservative Jeff Kibble, who took the riding by 4.6 percentage points and 3,505 votes.

“I truly left it all out there,” MacGregor said, speaking about his campaign. “Certainly, the next

day was hard, but you know, since then, I’ve actually found myself a little bit more at peace, and I think it’s because we realized ... our campaign succumbed to events that were beyond our control.”

Former Conservative MP Nelly Shin, who lost her Port Moody-Coquitlam, B.C., seat after two years in office to now-former NDP MP Bonita Zarrillo back in 2021, called the process “a really fast marathon.” This past election, the riding went Liberal with the Conservative candidate fewer than 2,000 votes behind.

“I did the grieving, but I really couldn’t dwell on it,” said Shin, when asked about the process of clearing out her offices. “So, it was kind of like a fast drive-through kind of grieving.”

Speaking about her loss, Shin said she had mixed feelings as she felt “an extra weight of responsibility” working as an MP during the pandemic—a responsibility that she felt relief at shedding following the loss of her seat, citing the workload.

“It was kind of a double-edged sword,” she told *The Hill Times*. “I put my all into it ... it was hard to have worked that hard ... But at the same time, a part of me was secretly relieved, because it’s like, finally, I’ll be able to sleep.”

After an MP loses their seat, they are entitled to support to help them transition out of office back into private life. For up to a year after they lose an election,

former MPs may access support of up to \$15,000 to help transition their career, finances, and/or receive additional education and training. They’re also entitled to four airline trips within Canada for the purposes of job interviews, accessing transition support, or selling their MP residence.

If the MP is under the age of 55 or not entitled to a pension—which requires six years in office—they are also given a severance of 50 per cent of their “sessional allowance.” For the average MP, this works out to \$104,900, or half of their annual salary.

But many MPs find the transition out of office difficult to navigate—and for some, this can lead to severe struggles with mental health.

Former Liberal MP and health minister Mark Holland is among the more than five dozen MPs who opted against running for re-election. Holland—who represented Ajax-Pickering, Ont., between 2004-2011, and Ajax between 2015 until this election—notably spoke about his struggles after his 2011 defeat before a 2022 parliamentary committee.

After being unseated by former diplomat and Conservative MP Chris Alexander, Holland said the loss left him in a “really desperate spot,” revealing that his mental state became dark enough that he attempted suicide.

“I was told that I was toxic. The Conservatives hated me. No

organization would hire me. My marriage failed. ... My space with my children was not in a good place and most particularly my passion—the thing I believed so ardently in that was the purpose of my life—was in ashes at my feet,” he said in the speech, in which he discussed his and his mother’s suicide attempts.

After her defeat, Monsef founded ONWARD, a company that helps individuals and organizations with leadership and diversity, equity, and inclusion. She said many defeated MPs face difficulty adjusting after leaving office, and that she thinks more needs to be done to help MPs adjust.

“Some people, you know, end up divorcing ... Some people don’t have a career to turn to, so it can be a really painful time and a bleak time for some,” said Monsef, who held several ministerial portfolios including Women and Gender Equality, rural economic development, and international development under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau.

“These are people who’ve given their life to the country, and I think we would attract and retain more diverse people in politics if we had more supports for them to transition into and out in a more dignified and less turbulent way.”

But MacGregor emphasized that he’s thinking more about his team’s loss than his own. When an MP loses their seat, their staff are also out of a job—something MacGregor also experienced when he worked as a staffer before running for office.

“We did a lot of incredibly difficult work together, and they’ve got an amazing skill set, and now they’re unemployed,” he said.

Since 2019, MPs and terminated employees have been able to use the House’s Employee and Family Assistance Program, which provides counselling services on a range of topics from addiction to financial counselling, for a full year after employment.

Former Green MP Mike Morrice, who was unseated by Conservative MP Kelly DeRidder in Kitchener Centre, Ont., by fewer than 400 votes, expressed a similar sentiment after his loss brought his party’s caucus back down to one seat in Parliament. Morrice said he was focused on showing appreciation to his supporters and staff as well as closing down his offices, describing conversations as “pretty emotional [and] pretty uplifting.”

“We’ve been hosting debrief sessions and appreciation nights with different groups of volunteers,” he said. “We’ve all just been really focused on both the transition process, but also just the appreciation.”

Shin, who is now working on a novel but hasn’t ruled out returning to politics in the future, said those leaving office need to remember “they’re human first,” and to “give themselves a space to be restored,” saying MPs are “blessed with a platform,” and that that’s something to be grateful for.

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Editorial

Editorial

Will Team Carney find the right prescription for Trump?

From the time he secured the Liberal leadership in early March, Prime Minister Mark Carney has said he's looking to make an impact in his new role—and do it quickly.

With the election behind the country, and a seat earned in the House of Commons, Carney is continuing apace. Cabinet? Sworn in. Throne Speech? Probably close to having the ink dry just as rooms are being prepared for King Charles and Queen Camilla.

Another thing checked off the to-do list? Having that first in-person conversation with United States President Donald Trump. And despite the extremely high priority of those other domestic moves, this bilateral meeting was arguably one of Carney's most important tasks.

Carney generally received good reviews for his first Oval Office outing, but don't expect things to be seamless. An overall quick fix to the Canada-U.S. economic relationship isn't in the cards. That's not possible when you have a president who doesn't understand how tariffs work, that trade of goods and services isn't a subsidy, and who doesn't have a team around him who can point him in the right direction.

The president also proclaimed there's nothing Carney could say to get him to back down on tariffs, and that all he is looking for between the two countries is friendship.

Trump and former PM Justin Trudeau didn't get along, so if the president is feeling friendlier towards Carney, maybe that will help grease the wheels. But despite the personal animosity, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement was still hammered out. Everyone says Trump respects strength, but it took a lot of strong wills on the Canadian side to get that deal done, and he's still salty about it. So does he respect strength, or does he just like to get his way? Because the tide could very easily turn if Canada once again puts up a strong negotiating front—as it should.

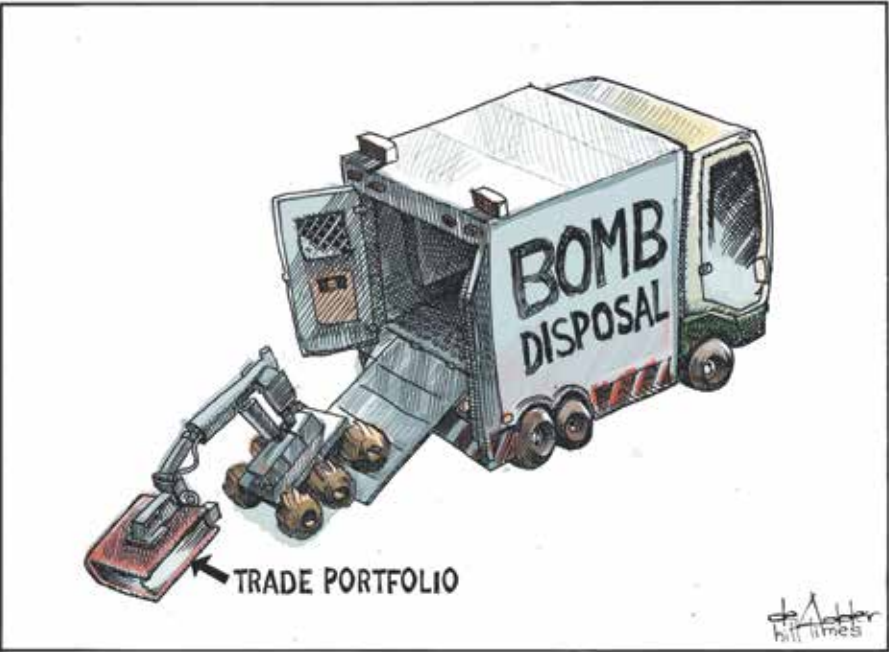
Despite the fanfare from both countries' leaders, the "deal" the United Kingdom struck with the U.S. last week doesn't offer much in the way of a rosy outlook for Canada.

A U.K. official told the Associated Press that talks were "built on the long-standing closeness between the two nations and, when in discussions with the Trump administration, the key was to be charming and know how to say 'no' nicely."

The U.K. seems to have secured the removal of tariffs on steel and aluminum, and a tariff reduction to 10 per cent for a quota of autos. Meanwhile, a baseline 10-per-cent tariff on the U.K.'s exports to the U.S. is still in place. In return, they're allowing more U.S. beef and ethanol into their market, and apparently making a big Boeing purchase.

That appears to be the benchmark right now. With the new team he's assembled, can Carney "do no harm" while giving Trump something he can put on his trophy shelf? That's the bare minimum, and eyes will be watching for him to achieve far greater things.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor

Trade barriers are undermining the purpose of foreign aid—and Canada's global role

As Canada continues its commitment to reducing global poverty through Official Development Assistance, we must take a closer look at how our own trade policies may be undercutting that progress—and missing valuable opportunities for Canada itself.

Official Development Assistance is intended to support long-term development in low-income countries by investing in education, health care, infrastructure, and economic growth. But many of these countries face high tariffs and restrictive trade rules when trying to export goods like coffee, textiles, and agricultural products to wealthier nations—including Canada. These barriers limit their ability to thrive economically, making aid less effective in the long run.

More importantly, aligning our aid and trade policies is not only a matter of compassion—it's a strategic necessity. As global conflicts, climate crises, and economic instability rise, strong international relationships are more important than ever. Fair trade fosters trust, strengthens diplomatic partnerships, and helps build resilient global supply chains that benefit Canadians directly.

This shift would also open new markets for Canadian businesses—from technology and clean energy, to sustainable agriculture and education services—by fostering economic growth in emerging regions. As these nations become more self-reliant, they also become stronger trading partners. A growing middle class abroad creates demand for Canadian goods and innovation, fuelling long-term economic growth at home. In a time of global uncertainty, building equitable economic ties is not just good development—it's smart economics.

Now—with a settled government in place—is the time to rethink how we can make our foreign aid smarter and more impactful by pairing it with fair, development-friendly trade policies. The result will be a stronger world, and a stronger Canada.

Sonia Kaila
Ambassador,
The Borgen Project
Surrey, B.C.

Redefining the Conservative Party's future: Trumpism vs. traditional conservatism

Today, the federal Conservative Party no longer stands at a crossroads of being torn between its traditional progressive conservative roots and the transformative wave of Trumpism. This internal division not only defines the party's identity, it has also shaped the broader political landscape of Canada.

Donald Trump's second election was more than a victory for Republicans—it was also a seismic shift in the Conservative Party of Canada's ideology. With its mix of economic nationalism, populism, and "Canada First" sound bites, Trumpism quickly became a dominant force in Canada. Traditional Canadian conservatism pillars have taken a back seat as the party pivoted toward far-right ideologies, conspiracy theories, and cultural grievances.

Leader Pierre Poilievre has fundamentally and systematically altered the federal party, jettisoning traditional conservatism and replacing it with those nationalist and populist elements.

Like the GOP, the Conservative Party of Canada's journey from traditional conservatism to Trumpism is complete, and highlights the tensions between tradition and transformation. These internal dynamics don't just define the party, but they also offer a lens through which to view the evolution of Canadian democracy. Whether you identify with Canada's version of the MAGA movement, establishment conservatism, or find yourself somewhere in between, the Conservatives' story is one to track in order to avoid the worst imaginable outcome.

William Perry
Victoria, B.C.

OPINION

The art of hedging a deal

Those trapped in rigid binaries risk becoming collateral damage in a conflict that transcends borders, ideologies, and even economics itself.

Wenran Jiang

Opinion



As Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, begins his tough negotiations with U.S. President Donald Trump, will he comply like his predecessor did in CUSMA, or resist to protect Canada's sovereignty, asks Wenran Jiang. *White House photograph by Gabriel B Kotico*

More than a month into President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" trade war against the world, the United States and China have managed a temporary truce. But the prospect of a protracted confrontation between the planet's two largest economies continues to cast a long shadow over the global economy while trapping many nations in difficult dilemmas: submit to U.S. demands, risk retaliation from China, or seek middle ground at the risk of displeasing both sides.

Washington's strategy pressures allies to restrict ties with Beijing as part of a tariff deal. Reports suggest the U.S. is urging Canada to curb trade

with China—a tactic echoing the "poison pill" tactics of Trump's first term. As he begins his tough negotiations with Trump, will Prime Minister Mark Carney comply again as his predecessor Justin Trudeau did in the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement, or resist to protect sovereignty? Meanwhile, Beijing has issued stark warnings to countries contemplating concessions, framing compliance as a hostile act. The U.S.-China trade war has metastasized into a global reckoning, forcing countries to weigh economic survival against strategic submission.

The fallout is evident. Nations reliant on Chinese rare earth minerals face supply chain disruptions, while exporters dependent on U.S. markets grapple with tar-

iffs. Yet Washington's assumption that allies can cleanly decouple from entrenched economic partnerships remains flawed. Japan's hybrid vehicle sector, reliant on Chinese rare earth magnets, faces new U.S. export controls. South Korea's semiconductor exports to China—an economic pillar—plummeted as Washington pressured Seoul to restrict tech transfers. These cases reveal Asia's hedging trend: nations cling to U.S. security alliances while quietly maintaining close ties to Chinese markets.

But U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific have shown surprising resolve under pressure. Japan and South Korea have defied White House demands to isolate Beijing, ramping up trilateral consultations with China and reviving

free trade talks. Australia, while cautiously rebuffing Chinese overtures for a united anti-U.S. front, has openly signalled it can pivot to other markets. These countries, despite their reliance on U.S. military alliances, recognize China as their largest trading partner—rendering outright alignment with Trump's crusade economically untenable.

Even the European Union, long divided over its China policy, finds itself in a bind. While Brussels has grown politically distant from Beijing in recent years, it now scrambles to mitigate Trump's tariffs, mirroring the United Kingdom's recent outreach. China remains the EU's top trading partner, and economic pragmatism is eclipsing political posturing.

Southeast Asia, caught in the eye of the storm, has perfected the art of strategic ambiguity. Nations embraced the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership—a China-led trade pact slashing tariffs—while joining the U.S.-backed Indo-Pacific Economic Framework's critical minerals initiative. While they practice "geopolitical diversification," most ASEAN states, including non-U.S. allies like Malaysia and Vietnam, have gravitated toward Beijing, underscored by Chinese President Xi Jinping's high-profile regional tour.

Neutrality is no easy path. But total capitulation risks economic suicide. Singapore and Vietnam

exemplify survival through calculated ambiguity: hedging bets, deepening regional ties, and resisting weaponization in great power rivalries. As blocs harden, winners will balance economic vitality with political autonomy in an age of perpetual crisis.

The trade war's true lesson is clear: in a multipolar world, flexibility—not fidelity—will define resilience. Smaller powers are learning that survival demands nuance, not absolutes. Those trapped in rigid binaries risk becoming collateral damage in a conflict that transcends borders, ideologies, and even economics itself.

With Trump's trade war and threat to reduce Canada to the 51st state, Carney's Liberal government faces its own test of hedging prowess. Ottawa, after following the U.S. to impose 100-per-cent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles last fall, now is facing Beijing's retaliation tariffs, potentially devastating Canada's canola, pork, and fishery industries.

To avoid a two-front trade war, the first steps toward navigating this perilous game may lie in studying how other U.S. allies—Japan, South Korea, Australia, the U.K., and EU—have balanced defiance with pragmatism. In a world where economic survival hinges on strategic balance, Canada's ability to walk the tightrope between two superpowers will determine its place in the new global order.

Wenran Jiang—the founding director of the China Institute, and MacTaggart Research Chair emeritus at the University of Alberta—is an adviser at the Institute for Peace & Diplomacy. *The Hill Times*

No, young Canadians haven't flocked to the Conservatives

This isn't about a sudden ideological turn. It's about the pressures shaping how young Canadians engage with politics.

Josh Marando

Opinion



Since the Liberals' narrow victory on April 28, a tidy narrative has taken hold: young voters abandoned the Liberals in droves and delivered a wave of support to Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives. It's a storyline that's convenient, dramatic, and entirely too simple.

Yes, the Conservatives made gains with voters under the age of

35, a demographic that has long leaned left and bolstered Liberal and NDP fortunes. But the idea that young Canadians swung decisively to the right misses the more nuanced reality. A deeper look at the data reveals a more fragmented and evolving political identity among young voters, not a decisive shift to the right.

One of the most widely cited proof points is the Student Vote, a national parallel election run in schools across the country. More than 850,000 students cast ballots, and the Conservatives emerged with a majority of seats and the largest share of the popular vote.

But while the Student Vote offers insight into how Conservative messaging is landing with younger Canadians, particularly on affordability, it's not a direct reflection of how voting-aged youth cast their ballots. Most participants are under 18, facing different economic realities than their peers in college, the workforce, or the rental market. It's a valuable civic exercise, but just one piece of a larger puzzle.

Public opinion polling provides clarity and a more nuanced picture. Yes, one much-cited Nanos poll from mid-April found the Conservatives leading among 18- to 34-year-olds with 49.3 per cent support, compared to 30 per cent for the Liberals. But other reputable surveys told a different story.

Abacus Data, in its final pre-election poll, showed the Liberals ahead among 18- to 29-year-olds with 46 per cent support, versus 32 per cent for the Conservatives. Among 30- to 44-year-olds, the race was closer: 40 per cent Conservative, 38 per cent Liberal. Ipsos, polling for Global News, found voters aged 18 to 34 evenly split: 38 per cent Liberal, 38 per cent Conservative, with the NDP drawing 15 per cent.

What these numbers point to is not a mass defection from the Liberals, but a much more competitive youth vote. The Conservatives outperformed past showings, certainly. But they didn't dominate. The Liberals remained

a major force among young voters, and the NDP continued to hold a meaningful share of the progressive base.

Some of this shift reflects growing frustration. After nearly a decade of Liberal government, many young Canadians—especially renters and first-time buyers—feel priced out and left behind. Affordability was the top concern for 18- to 34-year-olds, and while Poilievre's message clearly resonated with some, only a narrow plurality believed the Conservatives were best positioned to address it.

This isn't about a sudden ideological turn. It's about rent, groceries, debt, and stagnant wages. It's about the pressures shaping how young Canadians engage with politics. Many feel left behind and are increasingly skeptical of traditional parties, Liberal or otherwise.

That doesn't mean they've swung right. It means they're a coveted, but unpredictable, bloc. Progressive parties still collectively draw more than half of

youth support in most polls, with the NDP and Greens continuing to attract idealistic voters, especially in urban and campus-adjacent ridings. No party can take them for granted. And none can yet claim to have won them.

So what should we take from all this?

The story of this election isn't that young Canadians abandoned progressivism. It's that they're disillusioned, divided, and more open to political alternatives than they've been in years. In fact, the most important shift may be attitudinal, not ideological. There is a growing willingness to shop around, driven not by party loyalty or legacy, but by urgency on housing, affordability, and opportunity.

So, let's retire the myth of a youth Conservative wave. What we saw wasn't a generational shift to the right. It was a generational demand for something better. That's a challenge for all parties. But it's also an opportunity—if they're willing to listen.

Josh Marando (X: @joshmarando) is a Toronto-based public policy consultant with McMillan Vantage. He holds a master of public policy from the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, and advises companies on navigating government regulation, political risk, and long-term economic opportunity.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Carney sets the stage for consequential meeting with premiers after passing the Trump test

The prime minister must now prove that ‘experience’ is more than just a campaign slogan, and that he is prepared to unite a divided country in pursuit of shared prosperity.

Josie Sabatino

Beyond the Headlines



Prime Minister Mark Carney has been riding a wave of

early successes in the wake of last month’s federal election, when Canadians voted to keep the Liberal Party in power with a fourth consecutive mandate. From emerging unscathed after a high-stakes meeting at the White House with United States President Donald Trump to flipping the riding of Terrebonne, Que., by a single vote in a judicial recount last week, Carney couldn’t have asked for a better start to his tenure as prime minister.

Although formal talks for an updated trade deal have yet to be announced, and tariffs continue to weigh heavy on the Canadian economy, the existential threat once posed by the deterioration of the Canada-U.S. relationship in the wake of Trump’s inauguration appears—for the time being—to have been neutralized.

But in the Trump era of politics, nothing can or should be taken for granted when it

comes to dealing with the U.S. The Carney government has two consequential moments on the calendar that will provide clarity on whether early success can be turned into long-term, political stability for the country.

First, all eyes will be on King Charles when he delivers the Speech from the Throne in Parliament on May 27. The opening of the session will offer an early indication of how Carney intends to fulfill his platform commitment to “build a stronger Canada.” The speech, and subsequent tone set by the government, comes at a moment when Canada’s economy is showing signs of slowing. A new report from the Bank of Canada warns that a prolonged global trade conflict could lead to slower economic growth and higher unemployment over the medium to long term.

Carney’s election platform focused heavily on the need to

kickstart this country’s economy through large-scale building initiatives. While not a novel idea—his predecessor also attempted to pursue an ambitious infrastructure agenda—the scale and speed of the prime minister’s plan make it especially consequential. At the same time, the Liberal government must reconcile its goal of turning Canada into a conventional energy superpower, with the political challenge of promoting the benefits of oil, gas, and pipelines to a constituency where all roads run through Quebec.

Despite losing ground in the Greater Toronto Area and suburban Vancouver, the Liberals managed to secure a victory thanks to gains in Quebec, where they increased their seat count. While this may mean a fresh perspective around the cabinet table as Quebec contemplates the future of pipelines running through the province, it is sure to spark a divisive debate within the caucus more broadly.

Second, Carney will convene a meeting with the Council of the Federation in Saskatchewan on June 2. The face-to-face meeting with provincial and territorial leaders comes after Alberta Premier Danielle Smith recently introduced legislation to lower the threshold of signatures required for citizens to launch referendums on both constitutional and non-constitutional matters. As talk of western separation resurfaces amid fragmented regional election results, Alberta

appears set to intensify its advocacy for greater autonomy and local priorities.

Chief among the concerns from Alberta is a path forward to unlock natural resources given Carney refused during the campaign to roll back either Bill C-69, the Impact Assessment Act, or the cap on oil and gas emissions. While both Alberta and Saskatchewan will surely welcome a shift in tone from the new prime minister, it will take a serious evolution of the conversation around energy to de-escalate the anti-Ottawa sentiment that has been simmering in the West.

The same dynamics playing out within Carney’s own caucus around resource development are likely to be mirrored at the premiers’ meeting, where his challenge will be to find common ground among leaders whose only consistent agreement has often been that they have little in common. The prime minister must now prove that “experience” is more than just a campaign slogan, and that he is prepared to unite a divided country in pursuit of shared prosperity.

Josie Sabatino is a senior consultant at Summa Strategies. Prior to joining Summa, Sabatino spent nearly a decade as a Conservative political staffer, providing communications and issues management advice to Members of Parliament and the leader of the official opposition.

The Hill Times

Prime Minister Carney faces an uphill climb

The threats to Canada are many, and as numerous from the inside as from the outside.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—And now the hard part begins. The cross-Canada travel, the sheer adrenaline of campaigning, the hundreds of interviews, the cheers, and the parties now are all behind Prime Minister Mark Carney and his new cabinet. Looking back in history, there are few prime ministers who faced such a steep hill ahead.

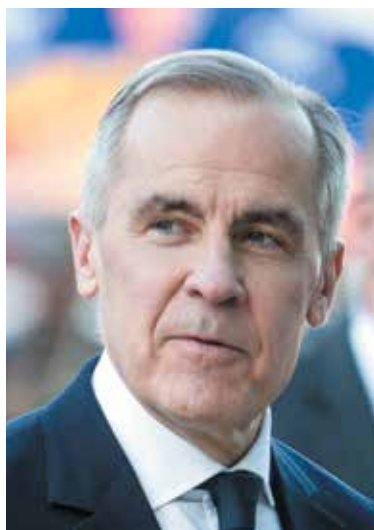
Aside from the issues facing wartime prime ministers Robert Borden and William Lyon Mackenzie King, and Great Depression leader R.B. Bennett, this is perhaps the most ominous period Canada has faced in a long while. The threats to Canada are many, and as numerous from the inside as from the outside. Calling for “Canada Strong” and “*Maitres*

Chez Nous (masters in our own house)” made a difference in returning the Liberals to power, but it is thin gruel compared to the reality.

The new prime minister appears to recognize this. On May 2, he told reporters: “I’m in politics to do big things, not to be something. Now that Canadians have honoured me with a mandate to bring about big changes quickly, I will work relentlessly to fulfil that trust.”

The most immediate threat comes from our neighbour and trading partner. United States President Donald Trump’s bloviation about Canada becoming the 51st state will subside, according to new American Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra, but one must look beyond the rhetoric.

Trump’s “art of the deal” strategy involves asking for much, and settling for enough. The U.S. has never acknowledged that Canada’s Arctic is our sovereign territory, including the Northwest Passage. It is not inconsistent with past American foreign policy to claim portions of our Arctic to protect its own interests, taking with it untold stores of our natural resources and access to the sea. With a skeletal military presence in the Arctic, Canada would find it difficult to secure its sovereignty in the face of American air power, ships, and submarines.



Prime Minister Mark Carney has a lengthy and complicated to-do list, and his immediate priorities should be to be to invest in defence abroad, and focus on northern sovereignty, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

We can then turn from perceived enemies to the actual kind. Russia is our Arctic neighbour, and China covets the territory. They both see the opening of the Northwest Passage as offering efficient sea routes for their products, and would lick their lips at an American takeover to gain access in deals with Trump.

Beyond our borders, Russia continues to fight in Ukraine, and China is sabre-rattling on Taiwan.

Within Canada, the country faces serious strains in the next few years, beginning with Quebec, where the Parti Québécois continues to dominate the polls over Premier François Legault’s nationalist Coalition Avenir Québec government. Carney may talk of “one economy, not 13,” but the PQ received unanimous support in the National Assembly rejecting that in April, with a resolution “reiterating Quebec’s right to watch out for its own interests ... notably economic ... according to its priorities.”

Then it’s Alberta’s turn, with Premier Danielle Smith lowering the bar for a future separation referendum, which she—in an imitation of former United Kingdom prime minister David Cameron on Brexit—says she will oppose. A close vote would have serious consequences for Canada’s economy.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the long-standing movement to leave Canada has been given impetus with offshore oil wealth. It is based on a long-term belief that the 1949 referendum to join Canada was rigged. One of the purported leaders told me he “hates Canadians.”

For Prime Minister Carney, this is a lengthy and compli-

cated to-do list. I would think his immediate priorities have to be to invest in defence abroad, and focus on northern sovereignty.

In light of tariffs, he has to invest in pipelines through Canadian territory, and open up foreign markets for our resources. In the short term, that may squeeze health and social programs, but this will be a test to see if our sovereignty and economy are priorities for Canadians.

To quell the calls for separatism, the government must first deal with the economic concerns, then call on Canadians’ patriotism, taking a page out of Pierre Trudeau’s playbook. At the 1984 Liberal convention, Trudeau-père said he succeeded by “going over the heads of the premiers. Over the heads of the multi-nationals. Over the heads of the super powers to ... the people of Canada.”

Being prime minister of Canada has always been a daunting job. For Carney, his time in office may prove to be even more challenging than most of his 23 predecessors.

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

COMMENT

Martial pride on parade

Trump's planned spectacle will look like amateur hour compared to what Russia, China, and North Korea routinely stage for their masses.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—It would seem that United States President Donald Trump is pushing ahead with plans to stage a massive military parade on June 14.

That date will mark the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the Continental Army. This military force was created to fight for liberty from British rule, and once independence was achieved, the Continental Army evolved into the modern American armed forces.

Putting that historical milestone aside, June 14 will also mark Trump's 79th birthday.

According to Pentagon planners, Trump's vision for a military spectacle will involve some 6,600 troops, and more than 150 combat vehicles. The logistics for this parade are challenging. The soldiers will be deployed to Washington, D.C., from all over the U.S.

There are makeshift plans to house these troops temporarily in government buildings within the capital region. Much of the firepower, vehicles, and weaponry on parade will be a demonstration of modern battlefield capability.

However, there is also a Pentagon plan to have soldiers in various period uniforms marching to represent past wars in which American soldiers were victorious—which I'm guessing will exclude Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Another challenge for the organizers is that of the weight of the larger combat vehicles. Nothing instils awe in onlookers like the rumbling, ground shaking roll-past of a 70-ton Abrams main battle tank. However, that sort of heavy traffic plays havoc with urban road surfaces.

This is not a hypothetical as that is exactly what happened when the U.S. army did just that when they staged a Victory Parade in Washington in 1991. That spectacle was to celebrate the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq's Saddam Hussein, otherwise referred to as Operation Desert Storm. Thus, the cost of this upcoming parade has to factor in the aftermath repair costs, as well. Not including soldiers' salaries and training interruptions, Trump's pending tribute is estimated to cost between \$45-million and \$91-million. Which, of course, Trump says is "a good investment."

Here is where the president and I disagree, and I think that his plan might actually backfire. Like the Canadian military, the U.S. armed forces have a weight problem. Statistically, 40 to 50 per cent of the U.S. military is overweight, with 20 per cent being considered obese. That is a reality.

Sure, parade planners could cherry-pick the best candidates, but you are still going to fall short of the mark. Real authoritarian dictatorships know how to parade martial prowess. On May 9, Russian President Vladimir Putin paraded nearly 10,000 troops and 150 combat vehicles on Red

Square honouring the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Both China and North Korea sent detachments to march in this parade.

For those who have never seen either a North Korean or Chinese mass military parade, I would advise you to check it out. The North Koreans employ a weird bone-shaking goose-step that looks like it would jar hips loose. The Chinese for their part have perfected martial uniformity on a scale that seems unfathomable.

What I fear is that Trump's planned spectacle will look like amateur hour compared to what Russia, China, and North Korea routinely stage for their masses. Trump is virtually handing international viewers a direct apple-to-apple comparison of U.S. military fitness, drill, and deportment against the super well-rehearsed Russian, Chinese, and North Korean showboats.

This is not to say that Canada could even hold a candle to what the U.S. are about to stage. We last mounted a little victory parade in Ottawa in November 2011.

If few remember that "spectacle," it is because it involved

merely 300 marching troops, and a flypast of a handful of aircraft.

The occasion was the recently concluded NATO-led coalition's victory over Libya. The parade cost taxpayers more than \$850,000—and, for the record, Canada was the only member state of the 19-nation coalition to stage such a victory lap.

I'm guessing the others realized that their powerful alliance—having taken more than 200 days to overthrow the leader of Libya—was really not such a crowning martial achievement. That NATO left Libya plunged into a violent anarchy which remains in effect to this day makes Canada's victory parade in 2011 all the more ironic.

The last major Canadian Armed Forces ceremonial display in Ottawa was the July 2, 2008, chief of the defence staff change of command. It was organized by then-outgoing CDS General Rick Hillier, who paraded nearly 1,000 troops from all three service branches, plus the Ceremonial Guard band. To cap off his illustrious career, Hillier climbed into a Leopard main battle tank and rode off the parade square.

I honestly do not believe that the CAF could mount a spectacle of that magnitude in 2025. Sad, but true.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION

Canada's clear leverage to lead on critical minerals

A fraction of the funding support provided to battery plants and car makers could unlock a short list of Canada's most advanced critical minerals projects.

Mark Selby

Opinion



The world is in a race to secure critical minerals, and Canada is uniquely positioned to lead. We have the resources, the expertise, and the regulatory foundation to deliver what our allies need. The discourse in the most recent Canadian election

has been encouraging, but if we are serious about being a global player, we must now match those words with focused investment by identifying a short list of eight to 10 high-potential mining projects, and acting decisively to fund high-quality Canadian mining projects into production.

In Europe, countries like France and Germany are making targeted investments directly into mining projects, providing equity, concessional financing, and offtake agreements to secure supply at the source. And during the past month alone, we saw the United States sign a minerals deal with Ukraine as well as sign an executive order to stockpile critical minerals from the ocean floor. Major economies are accelerating efforts to shore up critical mineral supply chains. Around the world, the U.S. is investing in Africa, unlocking tools under the Defense Production Act, and considering stockpiling key materials at fixed prices to encourage mineral development.

Why is the U.S. exploring all these options when Canada has some of the largest undeveloped

deposits in the world—including nickel, graphite, and rare earth elements? These Canadian projects are drill-proven deposits with commercial offtake potential, yet government funding support for these domestic projects has been minimal to date compared to investments in other regions around the world.

Worse, many of these promising Canadian projects remain stalled, not because they lack quality, but because they lack capital. Early-stage risk funding has helped get them started, but in today's challenging market, private investment is often insufficient to move them from resource stage to construction-ready development. When the market falls short in moments of national interest, that's when government must step in.

To date, Canada has rightly focused on building downstream infrastructure like battery plants and electric vehicle manufacturing hubs. These investments are important. But to fully capitalize on our mineral advantage, we must also invest upstream—at the mine, where the supply chain

begins and where Canada has a true strategic advantage versus other jurisdictions. Only then can we deliver a truly Canadian-made solution.

As we head into renewed trade discussions with the U.S., their need for critical minerals provides Canada a clear leverage point to align economic strategy with national security and climate objectives. The U.S. is actively seeking stable, long-term supply sources—and Canada is the closest, safest, and most reliable option. By negotiating offtake agreements with our allies in the U.S., Europe, Japan, and Korea, we can help anchor supply chains here at home while strengthening bilateral co-operation.

A fraction of the funding support provided to date to battery plants and car makers could unlock a short list of Canada's most advanced critical minerals projects and help meet a significant portion of Western demand for key materials. The economic impact would be substantial. In Ontario alone, mining contributed \$23.8-billion to GDP in 2023, with another \$8-billion in indirect economic activity—a 35 per cent year-over-year increase. Average compensation in mineral extraction is nearly \$150,000 annually, almost double the provincial average, creating

long-term careers in regions that need them most: northern Ontario, northern Quebec, and the territories.

The Timmins Nickel district and other advanced nickel projects in Canada, for example, have the potential to put the country back in a global leadership position in nickel supply to become a real alternative to Chinese-controlled "blood nickel" from Indonesia. Canada can also meet significant portions of western graphite and rare earth requirements. These are real, measurable opportunities. And regions like northeastern Ontario are ideally suited to support them, with renewable energy access, a skilled workforce, Indigenous partnerships, and decades of mining expertise. Recognizing these areas as strategic economic zones would strengthen Canada's domestic value chain while reinforcing our leadership role in the global energy transition.

Let's short list high-potential projects now. Let's provide the capital they need now. And let's remind our allies—and ourselves—that Canada can and should be at the forefront of the global critical minerals supply chain.

Mark Selby is the CEO of *Canada Nickel Company*.
The Hill Times

OPINION

Why Canada needs today's independent Senate



Today's Red Chamber is an essential guardrail against the takeover of our democracy by any one political party or ideological group, writes Sen. Stan Kutcher. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The Senate must not be a pale imitation of the House. Freeing it from political-party affiliations helps mitigate that risk.

ISG Senator
Stan Kutcher

Opinion



The conversations about the post-2016 independent Senate of Canada are ongoing, and at times vigorous. Yet, what the phrase “independent Senate” means has not been well described. It is thus time to help frame this discussion by directly addressing what independence in the Senate means, and why that is important. The start of the 45th Parliament is a good time to do so.

Today's Senate is—and indeed must be—an independent democratic institution that, working alongside other independent democratic institutions such as the House of Commons, and the Supreme Court of Canada, both guides the delivery of our democratic processes and protects those processes from attack. It must do both to fulfill its mandate. This has traditionally been what Senate “independence” was considered to be.



The Speaker's Parade enters the Senate Chamber on Feb. 6, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

However, there are additional criteria for independence, to which today's post-2016 Senate must be held accountable.

First, the Senate—and by extension, each Senator—must be free from following political party-demanded directions.

It is obvious that the Senate is a political institution. But that does not mean that its activities should be based on a model of party affiliation as its organizing principal. Party-affiliated politics is only one type of activity seen across the spectrum of undertakings that together comprise politics in our democracy. And, in the case of the Senate of Canada, freedom from the constraints and suppression that are inherent in political party affiliations and directions is a blessing, not a problem. Senators are free to

organize themselves internally, but not into politically defined groups that are linked to those that make up the House of Commons.

The Senate must not be a pale imitation of the House. Freeing it from political-party affiliations helps mitigate that risk.

The hallmark of this measure of independence is that no Senator should be compelled by any political party in their votes or committee work—in other words, they must not be “whipped.” Currently, of the 105 Senators, only a small number are under the direction of a political party. This is a significant and important change from its pre-2016 structure and operations, and this change must be maintained.

The importance of independence from political party

directives is well seen in what has recently happened in our neighbour to the south. There, the Senate and the House of Representatives are unable to work collaboratively or independently, precisely because they are beholden to political party directives that permeate both institutions. The guardrails of United States democracy are now being systematically eroded, in large part because their Senate is dependent on political party affiliations, not independent of them. We are well advised to not follow that path here.

The nuance in this independence is also the glue of interdependence which characterizes the relationship between the Canadian Senate and the House. The Senate deals with legislation received from the House

and must address the wishes of the Lower Chamber throughout the legislative process. The two Chambers are thus complementary, yet independent of each other. A Senate whose business is not encumbered by the political affiliations of the House can carry out this complementary role more honestly and appropriately.

Second, the Senate must not only be made up of groups that are independent of party affiliations, but each Senator must also be free to choose to which group within the Senate—if any—they wish to belong. Yes, this option has pre-existed current Senate reform, but it has now become an operational feature, and must be maintained. This freedom of intra-group affiliation helps preserve the independence of the Senate, and concurrently, the independence of each Senator. Senators can join a group. They can move from one group to another. Senators can choose to remain unaffiliated. Group membership comes with privileges and responsibilities, but these do not impinge on the rights of each Senator, and are not dictated by political parties. Groups can be formed or changed based on the preferences of Senators, in accordance with the rules of the Chamber.

The hallmark of this measure of independence is that group affiliation can assist in developing effective processes for discharging the work of the Senate without compromising an individual's independence.

Third, the post-2016 Senate must continue to have the ability to bring forth its own legislation, unrestricted by the direction of the House of Commons. This longstanding measure of independence translates into the Senate public bills. In some cases, these bills also pass the House of Commons, and become the law of the land. Every Senator has the right to advance a public bill, and a fair and equitable pathway for achieving a smooth process for these pieces of legislation is currently under consideration by Senators.

The key feature of this measure of independence is that individual Senators can identify areas of public interest that the House is not addressing, and use the Upper Chamber's legislative powers to bring these issues forward. As such, it plays an essential role in helping safeguard our democracy, address regional concerns, and support the constitutional rights of all Canadians.

So, there we have it. This is what a post-2016 independent Senate is, and how that independence works in the interests of Canadians. Today's Senate is a necessary institution in our democracy. As such it can work to advance the interests of all Canadians, and not just those of political parties. It is also an essential guardrail against the takeover of our democracy by any one political party or ideological group.

Canada is a stronger democracy with its current independent Senate.

The Hon. Dr. Stanley Kutcher is an Independent Senator for Nova Scotia.

The Hill Times

OPINION

Growing the Métis economy must be a national priority for the renewed government

The Métis played a crucial role in the founding of this country and its economy, yet too often we are treated as the forgotten people of Canada.

Victoria Pruden

Opinion



The Métis Nation helped build the Canadian economy. For hundreds of years—long before Confederation—Métis were at the heart of commerce, mobility, and nation-building. In the 1800s, Métis freighters ran the supply lines between Hudson Bay and

the Red River. Métis managed trading posts, built communities along trade routes, and kept Canada's earliest workforce fed through pemmican production. We played a crucial role in the founding of this country and its economy, yet too often we are treated as the forgotten people of Canada.

Our ancestors created vast trade networks stretching from the Great Lakes to the Rockies. They brokered relationships between First Nations and settlers, transported goods across thousands of kilometres, and established some of the earliest economies in the Prairies. Louis Riel's vision of a just, inclusive Canada was rooted in economic self-sufficiency and democratic governance. He led negotiations that resulted in the Manitoba Act—the only Indigenous-led legislation to bring a province into Confederation. Riel imagined a Canada where the Métis could govern themselves, educate their children, and thrive economically. That legacy lives on today in the resilience of Métis govern-

ments, and in the growth of Métis businesses.

Despite all this, Métis remain systematically excluded from federal policies, programs, and investments.

With the 2025 federal election behind us and Prime Minister Mark Carney's continuation in office, it's time to turn commitments into action. The Métis National Council promoted a focused set of priorities throughout this election, which was co-developed with our governing members and rooted in evidence-based policy. We look forward to working with our federal partners to turn commitments into action for Métis.

Growing the Métis economy must be a national priority. Despite driving prosperity in key sectors like construction, manufacturing, and energy, Métis businesses still face barriers such as limited access to capital, exclusion from procurement, and inadequate trade support. True reconciliation requires co-developing distinctions-based tools like tariff relief, investment supports,

and procurement reform that empower Métis communities to help build a resilient, inclusive economy.

Investing in the Métis economy means investing in Métis education. Since 2019, the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy has exceeded every target, supporting thousands of students. Growing demand requires long-term, sustainable funding to build momentum. The federal government must follow through on its 2022 commitment to co-develop a 10-year Sub-Accord on Métis primary and secondary education, an overdue step that is the foundation to the realization of both the Canada-Métis Nation Accord and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan.

Climate action needs the same urgency. Métis communities are already facing wildfires, floods, and threats to food security, livelihoods, and community safety. The Métis Nation Climate Leadership Agenda—co-developed with Métis governments and the federal government—offers a clear,

distinctions-based framework to address these challenges through investments in sustainable energy and infrastructure, emergency management, and nature stewardship. It also supports skills training for leadership in a low-carbon economy and seeks to understand the health impacts of a changing climate on Métis citizens. Métis governments are ready to lead from a place of strength, experience, and knowledge, yet we've received just 0.3 per cent of federal climate funding.

It is time to renew and strengthen our relationship with the Crown. Since 2017, the Canada-Métis Nation Accord and its Permanent Bilateral Mechanism (PBM) have served as a promising model for distinctions-based partnership. However, progress has stalled. With a new mandate, this federal government must renew the PBM, and advance Métis self-governance.

The Métis Nation is not seeking charity. We're asserting our rightful place as partners in shaping Canada's future. From historic trade routes to today's leadership in clean energy, education, and economic self-determination, we're charting a new path rooted in resilience, innovation, and nation-to-nation partnership.

If Canada is serious about reconciliation, it must be prepared to follow the paths Métis have long forged, building new routes to partnership, prosperity, and shared leadership.

Victoria Pruden is president of the Métis National Council.
The Hill Times

Rebuilding Canada's trade economy must include Africa

Kumaran Nadesan

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney promises to build the Canadian economy to make it more resilient. To do this, he is looking to increase trade with nations other than the United States, and to find new trade partners, which must include Africa.

On March 6, three days before Carney was named the new Liberal Party leader and 50 days before he won the federal election, the government announced its long-awaited Africa Strategy. A strategy that focuses on trade and security co-operation, yet absent from the announcement was funding.

To compare, Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy announced in 2022 came with a \$2.3-billion price tag. Why, then, is Canada not investing in Africa? Simply put, Africa is still not central to

Canada's geopolitical calculus. This, despite the continent being home to 1.5 billion people, the youngest population on Earth, and more than half the world's fastest-growing economies.

Meanwhile, other G7 nations are moving quickly and strategically.

Germany's Compact with Africa, launched under the G20, has catalyzed billions of dollars in private investment through risk-sharing tools and development finance. The United Kingdom's British International Investment is funding projects in fintech, green energy, and infrastructure. The U.S., through initiatives like Prosper Africa and the BUILD Act, is actively aligning foreign policy with economic interests, unlocking billions of dollars for American firms on the continent. France, for all its historical baggage, is doubling down on West Africa through a mixture of development support, trade missions, and military co-operation. Even China, though not a G7 member, now trades more with Africa than all G7 countries combined.

Ironically, some of Canada's provinces are already demonstrating a more intentional approach to Africa than Ottawa. Quebec has cultivated ties with Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Morocco, leveraging shared language and education linkages into tangible partnerships. Alberta's universities and agriculture sector have engaged Nigeria and Kenya in research and trade. Saskatchewan has explored fertilizer and food security collaborations. These subnational efforts prove there's appetite for and potential in Africa that Canadians can mutually benefit from.

At the federal level, Ottawa continues to punch below its weight.

This is an opportunity for Carney to signal a reset. His *Canada Strong* platform emphasized addressing skilled labour shortages, housing, and affordability, and boosting economic productivity. Africa can be part of the solution to all four of these domestic challenges we face, and the need to diversify our interests in the continent beyond the minerals and mining sector.

First, Africa is home to the world's youngest and fastest-growing labour force. Targeted skilled immigration agreements could help fill shortages in health care, trades, and green tech—sectors Carney has flagged as priorities.

Second, African firms are tackling housing crises in ways from which Canada can learn. Modular housing, public-private partnerships, and rapid-build urban solutions from Rwanda to Nigeria could inform Canadian policy—and present joint venture opportunities for our construction sector.

Third, Africa's tech economy is booming. Canada's fintech and AI firms could partner with counterparts in Kenya, Nigeria, and Egypt to co-develop scalable innovations—and tap into emerging markets hungry for digital infrastructure.

But to unlock this potential, Ottawa needs to put real money on the table.

FinDev Canada should launch a dedicated Africa investment facility. Export Development Canada should expand its risk tolerance for African markets, and

support small and medium-sized enterprises entering the continent. Global Affairs Canada must commit not just to aid, but also to building sustainable, two-way trade.

But this is not Ottawa's responsibility alone. African diplomatic missions in Canada must be more assertive in demanding partnership, not patronage. Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy was shaped in part by persistent lobbying from Indian, Japanese, and South Korean diplomats. African heads of mission should be equally vocal—proposing sectoral investment plans, convening bilateral trade forums, and ensuring their voices are heard in shaping Canada's engagement. The annual Africa Accelerating conferences hosted by the Canada-Africa Chamber of Business is a good starting point to more boldly move the corridor forward from optics to outcomes.

If Canada wants to be more than a polite observer in the 21st century global economy, we need to move quickly and boldly. Africa is not a charity case—it is a geopolitical and economic frontier. Canada's current approach risks missing that window with the world's youngest and most dynamic continent.

Africa is not waiting. Neither should we.

Kumaran Nadesan is the co-founder and deputy chairman of the 369 Global group of companies.
The Hill Times

NEWS

Bipartisan ‘cooler heads’ have vested interest in lowering the temperature on Alberta separatism: Calgary Liberal Hogan

Ottawa needs a ‘calm, thoughtful’ approach that recognizes Alberta’s contributions to Canada without giving the premier a reason to keep picking fights, says NDP MP Heather McPherson.

BY STUART BENSON

Politicians in Ottawa can’t fight fiery rhetoric with more of the same if they want to lower the heat on separatist talk in Alberta, says newly elected Liberal Corey Hogan.

Though the Conservatives have remained relatively mum on the issue since the April 28 election, with nearly one-quarter of its caucus in the province and soon its leader, the party should be just as interested in working to keep Canada united, said Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Alta.).

“We’re at a moment of maximum heated rhetoric, but we need to find a more reasoned and rational way to have these conversations with cooler heads,” said Hogan, who is one of his party’s two representatives in the province. “This rhetoric is not in anyone’s interest; it’s not in Alberta’s, and it’s not in the federal Conservatives’ to indulge in it either.”

Before the 45th general election’s final results were fully tabulated, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith re-ignited the debate over Alberta’s potential departure from the confederation.

On April 29, provincial Justice Minister Mickey Amery tabled Bill 54, which would amend Alberta’s Referendum Act to reduce the number of names required for a petition to initiate a referendum call. It would also allow more time to gather those 177,00 signatures, from 90 to 120 days.

In a livestream address on May 5, Smith said her government would not initiate a referendum ballot itself. Still, if a “citizen-led” petition were to garner the required signatures, her government would respect the democratic process and include that question on the 2026 provincial referendum ballot.

On May 12, a separatist group called the Alberta Prosperity Project presented a question



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith says she wants Ottawa’s help to quell the separatism debate, but won’t stand in the way of a ‘citizen-led’ referendum. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

on independence it hopes will become a referendum ballot question this year: “Do you agree that the province shall become a sovereign country and cease to be a province of Canada?”

Smith said she wants a sovereign Alberta within a united Canada, but Ottawa needs to listen to those unhappy with the prospect of a fourth Liberal government.

“The vast majority of these individuals are not fringe voices to be marginalized or vilified. They are loyal Albertans,” Smith said. “They are, quite literally, our friends and neighbours who’ve just had enough of having their livelihoods and prosperity attacked by a hostile federal government.”

Despite the Liberal discontent in the province and the “top-line election results,” Hogan noted that not everyone shares that anger. Despite winning a fraction of the seats, the Grits’ vote share in the province increased to 28 per cent—the highest it has been since 1968, when it received 35.7 per cent of the vote in Alberta.

“Almost 30 per cent doesn’t sound like a lot in other provinces, I suspect, but that’s pretty big here. And in the city I represent, nearly one in three voted for the Liberals,” Hogan explained.

Hogan won his seat with 48.09 per cent of the vote, defeating the Conservative candidate Jeremy Nixon by just 1,240 votes. The riding was previously held by former Conservative Len Webber, who announced he would not be running for re-election on March 22, the day before the campaign began.



Liberal MP-elect Corey Hogan says Ottawa needs to resist ‘taking the bait’ by responding with equally heated rhetoric back at Premier Danielle Smith. *Photograph courtesy of Corey Hogan*

Of the 37 federal ridings in Alberta, 34 were won by the Conservatives. The remaining three were won by returning NDP MP Heather McPherson in Edmonton Strathcona, Hogan, and Liberal Eleanor Olszewski in Edmonton Centre.

Of the province’s winning Conservatives, only MP Greg McLean’s (Calgary Centre, Alta.) office responded to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment, but politely declined.

Hogan said that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and his party should be willing to push back on the separatist rhetoric.



NDP strategist Cheryl Oates says the federal government’s main role should be providing the facts Albertans need to make an educated decision. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Less than a week after being re-elected, Conservative Damien Kurek announced he would be resigning the Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., seat to allow Poilievre to run and re-take a seat in Parliament following his loss in the Ontario riding of Carleton. Poilievre had held that seat since 2004, but was defeated by Liberal Bruce Fanjoy on April 28 by more than 4,500 votes.

“Mr. Poilievre is seeking to represent an Alberta riding, and one day be the prime minister of Canada. It’s in his and his party’s interest not to indulge the separatist rhetoric,” Hogan said.

However, before politicians in Ottawa “start running pell-mell” to respond to the threat of separation, Hogan advised they take a closer look at the actual extent of the sentiment and consider whether it’s as alarming as its proponents in Alberta are portraying it to be.

While Hogan said there’s no question the rhetoric and platforming of separatist voices has entered the mainstream in a way he has never seen before, he isn’t convinced it has become a mainstream view of the majority of Albertans.

“I haven’t seen anything that makes me think separatism is a bigger problem in Alberta than it was a few years ago,” Hogan explained. “If anything, it feels like perhaps it’s receded a bit.”

Recent polling from Nanos Research and Angus Reid found that 29 to 36 per cent of Albertans say they would vote to separate in a hypothetical referendum, respectively. However, the latter poll found that those figures dropped to an even smaller minority of those who say they would “definitely” vote to leave, 19 per cent, while 52 per cent said they would “definitely” vote to stay.

Of those leaning towards separation, Angus Reid found that a majority said they would be willing to change their minds if the federal government were to build an east-to-west pipeline, remove the emissions caps on oil and gas production, and repeal the Impact Assessment Act, Bill C-69.

In an interview with CTV’s Vassy Kapelos on May 7, Smith said she would “respect the outcome” of a referendum vote, but does not support separation from Canada.

“I will respect the outcome of citizen-initiated referenda, and that’s why it’s my job to make sure it doesn’t get to that point,” Smith told Kapelos, adding that she would be working to “bring the temperature down” to ensure Albertans did not vote in favour.

“We’ve got 30 to 40 per cent of Albertans polled saying that they are dissatisfied with the country to the point where they would consider [leaving],” Smith continued. “My job is to try to bring those numbers down.”

To do so, Smith said that addressing Albertans’ “genuine concerns” would require “not demonizing people and acknowledging the feelings that they have [are rooted] in the way Alberta has been treated for the last 10 years by the Liberals.”

“I’m being very direct with the prime minister,” Smith continued. “If we can solve some of these things ... we can bring the temperature down.”

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, NDP MP McPherson said she doesn’t believe Smith has a genuine interest in lowering the temperature, as the heat helps deflect from her own political “scandals,” including allegations of political interference in the provincial health-care system.

“Premier Smith is just trying to change the channel on all of the things that are making her life difficult,” McPherson said. “It’s

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HEALTH



What's the prescription for the federal government to help shore up Canada's ailing health system?

HEALTH Policy Briefing

Health sector looks to pharmacare and more to help address financial hit of U.S. trade war

Prior to the April 28 federal election, Ottawa secured pharmacare agreements with four jurisdictions: British Columbia, Manitoba, the Yukon, and Prince Edward Island.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

A trade war with the United States has the potential to drive up the costs associated with medications and medical equipment, and health-care sector representatives are looking to the recently elected Liberal minority government to take action, with finalizing national pharmacare as one possible option to reduce costs for Canadians.

"We are looking for what could be risks to our public health-care system in these negotiations [with the U.S.], whether it be through tariffs preventing us from getting medical equipment imported, driving up the cost of medical equipment and other supplies, [or] whether it could be about access to pharmaceuticals. There could be a whole host of areas that could be impacting health care in these negotiations," said Steven Staples, national director of policy and advocacy for the Canadian Health Coalition. "[The U.S. is] a major supplier of drugs and supplies, and the tariff regime is increasing costs on all kinds of goods. Health care won't be exempt from that."

About 16 per cent of Canada's drug supply is imported from the U.S., and the inclusion of medications and pharmaceutical ingredients in Canada's counter-tariffs could pose a risk to patient care and affordability, according to the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in an April 16 press statement. The CMA also reported that almost 90 per cent of physicians say they are worried about how changes to cross-border trade will affect their patients, according to a survey conducted by the organization between Feb. 10 and 13.

Staples told *The Hill Times* that he is "cautiously optimis-



Prime Minister Mark Carney made a commitment to 'protect the programs that save families thousands of dollars per year, including pharmacare,' during a May 2 press conference in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Steven Staples, national director of policy and advocacy for the Canadian Health Coalition, says it's essential for pharmacare be rolled out in all regions 'as soon as possible, especially for all these workers that are going to be losing private benefits.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

tic" about Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) and his administration in its early days. The Liberals are—for the most part—moving forward on the agenda laid out by the previous Trudeau government, such as by continuing commitments towards pharmacare and dental care, according to Staples.

In Carney's first post-election press conference on May 2, he made a commitment to "protect the programs that save families thousands of dollars per year, including pharmacare."

In a May 1 post on X, Carney announced an expansion of the Canadian Dental Care Plan,



As the situation with the U.S. evolves, it will be 'important that Canada develops a cohesive and co-ordinated response to protect the health-care system,' says HealthCareCAN president and CEO Michelle McLean. *Photograph courtesy of HealthCareCAN*

allowing Canadians aged 55 to 64 to apply, and that in the coming weeks applications would be open to Canadians aged 18 to 54.

Staples argued that during an economic downturn, the need will increase for a national pharmacare program intended to help manage the cost of prescription drugs.

The Pharmacare Act came into force after receiving royal assent on Oct. 10, 2024. Prior to the campaign period leading up to the April 28 federal election, Ottawa secured agreements with four jurisdictions: British Columbia, Manitoba, the Yukon, and Prince Edward Island. The next federal health minister will need



Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions president Linda Silas says her group is asking the feds for a 'patient guarantee that would connect to the dollars that they send to the province and territories.' *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

to negotiate agreements with all the remaining provinces and territories to determine how a national pharmacare plan will be implemented.

"This directly connects with the economic precarity and the layoffs that we're seeing right now, and we think it's essential that pharmacare be rolled out with new provinces and territories as soon as possible, especially for all these workers that are going to be losing private benefits," said Staples. The Carney government will "play an essential role, particularly the health minister. [Former health minister] Mark Holland did a great job at

negotiating those deals. He championed the program. He really did the work to go to the provinces to get them to sign on, and we hope that the next minister will share the same enthusiasm and commitment to rolling that program out, and not let it just die on the vine."

Critics of a universal, single-payer model for a pharmacare system in Canada include Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC). On Nov. 15, 2024, IMC argued in a press release that a "one-size-fits-all approach" to pharmacare could limit Canadians' ability to access new, cutting-edge drugs, or even lose access to more comprehensive treatment options.

Liam MacDonald, director of policy and government relations with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, argued in a Feb. 12 op-ed in *The Hill Times* that all provinces already have public drug plans for most people not covered by private plans, and that some have already achieved universal coverage through this public-private mix.

"Replacing existing provincial and private insurance would come at a massive cost to taxpayers, and would leave many with access to fewer drugs. Even the most expansive provincial public drug plan covers only about half of what is available on a typical private drug plan," MacDonald wrote in the op-ed, adding that the priority should instead be to find ways to address slow drug-approval timelines.

Michelle McLean, president and CEO of HealthCareCAN, called the current trade uncertainty between Canada and the U.S. "a very concerning development that affects Canada's health-care system," in a statement emailed to *The Hill Times* on May 9.

Medical supplies, laboratory equipment and infrastructure, devices, and medications should be exempted from any trade sanctions, McLean said, adding that HealthCareCAN will be working closely with member organizations to emphasize to policymakers the importance of protecting Canadian health care from trade-related disruptions.

"As this situation continues to evolve, it will be very important that Canada develops a cohesive and co-ordinated response to protect the health-care system. While that is true concerning the health-care supply chain, such an approach is also vital to bringing about the type of concrete action required to shore up health care and health research across the country," said McLean.

McLean's statement said HealthCareCAN is collaborating with its members on a national approach to make Canada a destination for health-care professionals, researchers, and personnel, which includes repatriating Canadian workers and researchers.

"We are very eager to work with the new federal government to find ways to support this effort as well as collaborating to implement policy ideas put forward during the recent election to strengthen the health-care system and ensure Canada is a world-

Let's fix what's broken, without breaking what's working

Ensuring Pharmacare delivers fair access for all and innovation

By Dr. Bettina Hamelin
President, Innovative Medicines Canada



No one should ever have to choose between buying groceries for their family and filling their prescription. That's the promise at the heart of Canada's Pharmacare Act, which aims to give all Canadians access to essential medications.

It's an ambitious goal, but if we don't work together now to make a few changes, the

pharmacare plan could come with unintended side effects for Canadians—ones that would restrict access to new, innovative drugs and treatment choices.

The main reason is in the program's structure. The federal government is moving ahead with a single-payer system for prescription drugs, starting with diabetes medications and contraceptives. The problem is, 97.2 per cent of Canadians already have some form of drug coverage. Moreover, approximately 24 million Canadians have employer-sponsored plans that often give them quicker, broader access to innovative treatments than public programs do.

If those private plans are replaced or scaled back to match a more limited national list of approved drugs under Pharmacare, millions of Canadians could have fewer treatment options and longer wait times for new therapies.

As the president of Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC), I've seen heartbreaking consequences for Canadians who are forced to wait for drugs that are already improving outcomes for patients in other countries. Canadians already wait longer than anyone in the G7 for access to new drugs.

Consider this: Once Health Canada approves a medication, it takes an average of 736 days for patients on public plans to receive it, due to a longer process for drug approval. Compare that to just 226 days for those on private plans. For someone living with ALS or an aggressive cancer, those extra months aren't just numbers on a spreadsheet—they're lost chances.

So how can we structure and build on the new pharmacare plan to ensure no one falls through the cracks? At IMC, we propose

that instead of replacing systems that are already serving most Canadians well, we focus on building up systems that aren't working for Canadians in need.

This is what Prince Edward Island did in 2021, when the province partnered with the federal government to reduce out-of-pocket drug costs and improve access through a tailored agreement. This "fill-in-the-gaps" approach focused resources where they were needed most—and it worked. It's a model we can replicate across the country.

A major concern I have is that a national list of approved medications will ultimately restrict access to cutting-edge therapies in the name of cost control. Newer or niche drugs will likely be excluded from the list early on. This might not be because they don't work, but because they're more expensive. Up to 1,400 drugs could be excluded compared to current plans, according to a 2023 Parliamentary Budget Office report. By allowing those with private insurance to keep their coverage while helping those without, the plan could provide a broader list of approved drugs, making it more cost-effective.

IMC's member companies discover, develop, and deliver medications. Collectively, we have a vast amount of unique knowledge that would be invaluable to Canada's pharmacare plan as it is structured and rolled out. Leaving pharmaceutical companies out of the discussion is a missed opportunity. We have insights on global pricing, innovation pipelines, and regulatory strategies that could help make pharmacare stronger and smarter. We can explain how to:

- Expand fast-track reviews for high-priority treatments
- Work with trusted international regulators to speed up approvals and access
- Use real-world data to support quicker, evidence-based decisions
- Modernize Health Canada's infrastructure so it can keep pace with innovation

Pharmacare doesn't have to mean choosing between access for all or innovation. We can have both if we design the system thoughtfully.

We deserve no less.

HEALTH Policy Briefing

What can the federal government do to prepare Canada for the next health crisis?

In a globalized world, pandemics are a national security concern, and being prepared to launch a robust response is essential for the health of a nation.

Michelle Cohen

Opinion



“I’m not doing this again,” an American physician wrote online the other day. Watching the ripple of anxiety in his local health system as measles cases rose was “triggering some feelings” of resentment from 2020—feelings intensified by the more recent gutting of public health.

Last month, a *Journal of the American Medical Association* study suggested measles could become endemic in the United States based on current MMR vaccination rates. Another 10-per-cent

decline in vaccination is modelled to result in 11 million measles cases over the next 25 years. Meanwhile, U.S. Health Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. openly lies that the MMR vaccine “contains a lot of aborted fetus debris.” In response to the physician’s post, another wrote: “None of us are doing this again. They can keep their clapping.”

There’s abundant reason for the American health workforce to feel stressed, something the Canadian medical establishment as well as new Prime Minister Mark Carney have latched onto, making appeals to doctors in the U.S. who are thinking of escaping north. But how do we expect the Canadian health-care system to fare when the inevitable next outbreak hits? Whether it’s the impact of living next door to a measles-endemic country, or another novel zoonotic virus that goes global, our public health institutions and health workforce aren’t ready to face another crisis. But in a globalized world, pandemics are a national security concern, and being prepared to launch a robust response is essential for the health of a nation.

So, the re-elected Liberal government should closely follow as measles cases rise in Alberta and Ontario. Ottawa’s challenge is that Canada is a decentralized federation where management

of health care primarily falls to provincial and territorial governments. In addition, regional governments tend to be the ones writing legislation on sick leave and policies on disease mitigation in schools and long-term care. But it would be a mistake to shrug off responsibility for strengthening Canada’s public health defences as a lower government’s job. There are three areas which are important for Ottawa to address.

Health workforce

The Liberals’ election pledge of a “health-care hero” tax credit for personal support workers (PSWs) is a reasonable start. However, this doesn’t address the precarity of PSW labour, nor how that increases disease spread during an outbreak. One option would be for the federal government to create a task force establishing national standards in training and regulation of PSWs, as well as wages and workplace protections.

Health-care workers comprised roughly 10 per cent of all COVID cases in 2020, and unsurprisingly, this group has a higher burden of long COVID than the general population. The workers most exposed to COVID-19 risk tend to be in highly feminized and often racialized health professions, which should inform the federal

government’s broader approach to policies affecting women, particularly in racialized and migrant communities. Strengthening the health of this workforce helps all of us and mitigates the spread of disease during a crisis.

Public health

A 2021 *Canadian Medical Association Journal* commentary co-authored by former federal health minister Jane Philpott called for the creation of a Canadian Immunization Services entity modelled on Canadian Blood Services. The current pasted-together system of 13 different vaccination schedules and tracking databases is inefficient in an emergency since Canadians frequently move across domestic borders. Similarly, federal investment in national testing and contact tracing programs would help public health agencies respond nimbly to an outbreak.

Disinformation

The government should understand both the profitability of health disinformation, and the strong ties between Canadian and American snake-oil sellers. For example, MAGA-connected supplement maker The Wellness Company was founded by British Columbian entrepreneur Foster

Coulson. Having left his multimillion-dollar family business, Coulson now seeks to create a “parallel economy,” and it appears to be one where fringe, anti-science views and extremist politics can flourish. This tinderbox of populist hostility could ignite during any public health emergency.

The approach to health disinformation must be proactive. This means building trust with the public, supporting high quality research, teaching health and media literacy, and communicating important scientific information. It’s also necessary to understand how wellness-oriented private health clinics play a role in disseminating anti-science propaganda. Ottawa has a clear duty to protect public health care in Canada, so by acting against the creep of privatization, it can also stymie the growth of health disinformation.

There’s no way to perfectly plan for an uncertain future, but another major health emergency is likely—and clapping won’t help. Canada’s new federal government must bolster our health institutions and workforce in preparation for what’s to come.

Dr. Michelle Cohen is a family physician in Brighton, Ont., and an assistant professor in the department of family medicine at Queen’s University.

The Hill Times

Canadian research community must not bend the knee to President Trump

Domestic leaders should reject any suggestion that an executive order from a U.S. president can justify abandoning our fundamental commitments to equality, justice, and evidence-based law and policy.

Jocelyn Downie & Françoise Baylis

Opinion



Canadian institutions complying with U.S. President Donald Trump’s Day 1 executive order is a serious mistake that sets a very bad precedent, write Jocelyn Downie and Françoise Baylis. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

within the country’s Clinical Trials Network—which includes the Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG)—“to modify the language in their protocol and informed consent documents.”

On April 7, the CCTG issued a memo to Canadian Research Ethics Boards, Qualified Investigators, and others notifying them of pending changes—within the next one to two months—to six trial protocols to ensure compliance with Trump’s executive order. By way of example, the memo indicated that the word “gender” would be replaced with the word “sex.” As well, such terms as “intersex” and “gender assigned at birth” would be removed.

This decision by the CCTG is a serious mistake that sets a very bad precedent. The potential for such changes to harm science and patients are many and varied. Here are just two examples.

First, there is serious harm to science in embracing “untruths.” Sex and gender are not interchangeable terms. Sex refers to biological attributes whereas gender refers to “socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities.” As well, some people are born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male and female; they are usually identified as intersex. To deny these facts is to undermine knowledge production and trust in science. To do so at the behest

On Jan. 20, United States President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 14168:

Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restor-

ing Biological Truth to the Federal Government. In response, the

U.S. National Cancer Institute directed all research groups

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Policy Briefing **HEALTH**

Canadian research community must not bend the knee to President Trump

Continued from **page 18**

of a foreign political leader is to undermine sovereignty.

Second, there is serious harm to patient populations in excluding them from research participation. All Canadians—including those who are gender-diverse or intersex—are entitled to safe and effective health care, ideally based on robust data from clinical trials. The exclusion of such persons from clinical trial participation is discriminatory and stigmatizing. It also denies members of these communities the potential benefits of health research, as researchers cannot ask and answer questions specific to their health needs.

Pre-empting these harms requires a rapid, concerted response. The Canadian research community and domestic governments must stand up for truth, justice, and equality. Together, they must forcefully defend our values, the health of all Canadians, and the country's sovereignty.

Most immediately, institutional Research Ethics Boards (REBs) should reject all proposed modifications to CCTG trial protocols introduced to comply with the executive order. Indeed, this is required of REBs for their institutions to comply with the Government of Canada's *Agreement on the Administration of*

Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions. This agreement stipulates in section 4.3 that "The institution shall, for all research involving humans carried out under its auspices" comply with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS2*.

The Application section of Article 4.1 of the TCPS2, which is explicitly based on the principle of justice: "imposes a duty on researchers not to exclude individuals or groups from [research] participation for reasons that are unrelated to the research. This duty is explicitly stated because groups have been inappropriately excluded from participation in research on the basis of attributes such as gender, race, ethnicity, age and disability."

In anticipation of this executive order being taken to apply beyond the CCTG tri-

als—which do not appear to be funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)—CIHR should issue a statement to remind researchers and REBs that for

all research it funds, it "expects" the integration of sex and gender into research "designs, methods and analyses and interpretation of findings when appropriate." CIHR explains this expectation as follows: "For research to be ethical, it must account for biological (sex) and social (gender) differences between women, men, boys, girls and gender-diverse people. Research has identified huge sex differences in the gravity, frequency, symptoms and age of onset of various diseases."

In support of REBs, the federal and provincial/territorial governments should issue a public statement reiterating the values that must guide all research involving humans in Canada, and rejecting any suggestion that an

executive order from an American president can justify abandoning our fundamental constitutional commitment to equality and justice, and our fundamental governance commitment to evidence-based law and policy.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has promised to respond to the Trump tariffs with purpose and force. He must now do the same for the Canadian research community by vigorously defending Canadian research and the health of citizens.

Jocelyn Downie is a professor emeritus in the faculties of law and medicine at Dalhousie University. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, and a member of the Order of Canada. She has published extensively on assisted dying and was a member of the legal team in Carter v. Canada, and has served as a member of multiple independent expert panels.

Françoise Baylis is distinguished research professor emerita at Dalhousie University. She is an elected fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and of the International Science Council, as well as a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Nova Scotia. She is president-elect of the Royal Society of Canada, and a member of the governing board of the International Science Council.

The Hill Times

“
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BASED ON ROBUST DATA
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HEALTH Policy Briefing

Volunteering should be at the forefront of veteran policy in Canada



Volunteering is about giving back to the community, which strongly aligns to the sense of duty and service that military members develop during their careers, writes Alyson Mahar. *Pexels photograph by Kampus Production*

Policy recommendations: bridging the gap in Canada

A report prepared for the True Patriot Love Foundation and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research reviewed more than a dozen international studies focused on veterans and volunteerism. Despite evidence that shows volunteering is beneficial for individuals and society, Canada lacks a comprehensive framework for leveraging it as a tool to support veterans.

Questions about volunteer preferences, patterns, and motivations among Canadian veterans remain unanswered. What types of volunteer opportunities align best with veterans' values? How do age, gender, sexual orientation, employment status, family structure, race, and geography affect veterans' MCT experiences, health and well-being? Answers to these questions are key for the creation of inclusive programs that truly support veterans, and help them thrive in their communities.

Governments, policymakers, and organizations that support veterans are advised to take the following steps to address this gap:

1. Canadian veteran volunteerism policy and programing must be guided by Canadian-specific research. This includes adding questions related to benefits, impact, and barriers to national surveys, leveraging existing Statistics Canada datasets and conducting targeted studies with veterans and their families.

2. Organizations serving veterans should integrate formal program evaluations and needs assessments to align volunteer opportunities with veterans' goals, values, and diversity. Factors such as age, gender, family structure, race, geographical location, and other identities should be considered to optimize programming.

3. Policymakers, veteran-advocacy groups, and researchers should collaborate to make volunteerism a cornerstone of MCT support. Engaging diverse stakeholders will ensure comprehensive, impactful programs. By bridging the gap between military service and civilian life, volunteerism could redefine what it means to serve, and help veterans find new ways to thrive.

For Canada's policymakers, this is a call to action.

We must ensure that volunteerism becomes a critical and well-supported component of veterans policy, not just as a benefit for those who served, but also as a contribution to the collective well-being of our nation. The question is not whether we should act, but how quickly we can.

Alyson Mahar is an epidemiologist and health services researcher at Queen's University. She is an assistant professor in the School of Nursing. She is co-lead of the veteran volunteerism report with Dr. Christina Godfrey and other colleagues at Queen's University.

The Hill Times

Well-designed volunteer opportunities can foster a sense of connection, and offer a meaningful outlet for veterans to apply their unique skills and values in civilian settings.

Alyson Mahar

Opinion

The shift from military to civilian life, known as the military-to-civilian transition, is a pivotal time for veterans, marked by major life changes. Leaving behind the structure, identity, purpose, and social bonds of military life can often feel overwhelming and has been described as "culture shock." Often with military-to-civilian

transition (MCT) culture shock, experiences of loneliness and social isolation occur. These experiences have been shown to negatively impact health and well-being.

Studies on volunteerism—centered on the drive to help others and build stronger communities—suggest that volunteering may be a valuable way to help veterans overcome MCT challenges, and contribute to the collective well-being of our nation. While the benefits of volunteerism have been explored in other countries, Canada has yet to pursue research or robust policy in this important area—leaving a noticeable gap.

As the number of Canadian veterans steadily increases, more will face difficulties as they reintegrate into society; certainly, many will be interested in new and different paid and unpaid civilian opportunities to leverage their strengths and interests. Now is the time for Canadian policymakers and organizations supporting veterans to take action.

Veteran volunteer programs in this country should be guided by Canadian-specific research. Volunteer programs should include evaluations and assessments reflective of Canadian

veterans' goals, values, and diversity; and policymakers, veteran-advocacy groups, and researchers should collaborate to make volunteerism a cornerstone of MCT support.

Transitioning to civilian life

Military service is an unparalleled career path. It is characterized by a distinct culture of uniformity, discipline, social norms, and shared values. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces operate within a tightly knit community, and many basic life necessities such as housing and health care are provided within this system. When veterans leave this structured environment, they must adapt to a civilian world that often lacks the same level of cohesion and support.

Although each veteran's MCT experience is unique, it has important implications for health and well-being. In this country, almost one in every four Canadian veterans report MCT difficulty. Common difficulties include loneliness and social isolation, which negatively impact health and well-being. For veterans navigating depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other chronic conditions, the effect is even more pronounced.

Finding belonging and purpose: looking at the evidence

Volunteering is not just a benefit for veterans who may be experiencing challenges, but it is also an important contribution to the collective well-being of our nation. Volunteering is about giving back to the community, which strongly aligns to the sense of duty and service that military members develop during their careers. That's why many veterans find volunteering especially meaningful.

Well-designed volunteer opportunities can foster a sense of connection, and offer a renewed sense of purpose and a meaningful outlet for veterans to apply their unique skills and values in civilian settings. In the United States, research has shown that volunteering helps mitigate identity loss at the close of a military career by creating new opportunities to serve and lead.

Volunteering has also shown that veterans can overcome social isolation by connecting with their communities, creating a renewed sense of belonging. Among older adults, volunteering has been linked to reduced mortality and lower rates of depression, highlighting its potential long-term benefits.

Policy Briefing **HEALTH**

Move from patchwork to progress to unlock the full potential of Canada's national framework for diabetes

Canada needs political will, targeted investment, and a commitment to three fundamental priorities: alignment, accessibility, and affordability.

Glenn Thibeault

Opinion



More than four million Canadians live with diabetes—with many more undiagnosed—and that number continues to climb. This chronic condition affects almost every family, and stretches our health-care system in ways that are both urgent and preventable.

While the federal government took a promising first step by implementing the *Framework for Diabetes in Canada* in October 2022, the work is far from over. What Canada needs now is political will, targeted investment, and a commitment to three fundamental priorities: alignment, accessibility, and affordability.

Without strategic alignment between federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the promise of the national framework remains aspirational. Accessibility to timely care, medications, and life-saving devices remains uneven across jurisdictions. And with inflation and international pharmaceutical tariffs looming, affordability is becoming an even more precarious reality for Canadians who rely on critical diabetes supports.

If we are serious about reducing emergency room visits, preventing amputations, improving quality of life, and managing the financial burden of diabetes on our health system, we need a comprehensive approach rooted in these three priorities.

The federal government has a strong role to play.

Aligning systems, standards, and support

Health care may be a provincial jurisdiction, but chronic disease management requires consistency nationally. Diabetes doesn't respect provincial borders, and neither should our response.

The *Framework for Diabetes in Canada* outlines a strong foundation, but implementation has been uneven and under-resourced.



Accessibility to timely care, medications, and life-saving devices remains uneven across jurisdictions, writes Glenn Thibeault. *Unsplash photograph by isens usa*

For example, access to medications and continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) differs vastly between Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and northern Ontario. Some provinces have signed bilateral agreements under the new pharmacare initiative that expands access and affordability, while many other regions are still waiting for similar agreements.

This patchwork approach leaves too many Canadians behind.

What we need is federal leadership that goes beyond co-ordination toward action, including meaningful funding to incentivize provinces and territories to implement the framework fully and consistently. It also means building mechanisms to share best practices and evaluate outcomes so that a person in rural Newfoundland and Labrador receives the same standard of care as someone in downtown Toronto.

Improving accessibility to medications, devices, and care

Accessibility to medications and life-saving technologies is another critical piece of the puzzle. CGMs, insulin pumps, and personalized medications are more than conveniences—they are life-changing for people living with diabetes. They help prevent complications, reduce hospital visits, and empower individuals to manage their conditions with dignity and control.

The recently announced national pharmacare program has the potential to dramatically improve access to medications, particularly for those without private insurance. However, the preliminary formulary does not

yet reflect the reality of living with diabetes. A one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient. The federal list must include a broader range of medications and devices to accommodate individualized care plans developed between patients and their health-care providers.

Some provinces are moving in the right direction—Manitoba's agreement added 18 additional medications to the federal background list, for instance—but this is not yet standard. Without inclusive formularies, patients are forced to ration medications or rely on less effective alternatives, jeopardizing their long-term health and adding stress to an already overwhelmed health system.

Another critical area to address is the structure of the federal diabetes device fund, which was announced alongside pharmacare agreements. While welcome, the funding is time-limited and unclear in scope. What happens after four years, when the money runs out?

Without sustained investment, we risk pulling the rug out from families who depend on these devices for day-to-day survival.

Prioritizing affordability in an uncertain global market

Affordability must be a guiding principle across all diabetes policies. Rising inflation, shifting pharmaceutical markets, and international trade dynamics threaten access to affordable medications for millions of Canadians.

Consider the potential impact of pharmaceutical tariffs. Many essential diabetes medications

and devices—such as Ozempic, insulin pumps, and test strips—are either manufactured in or processed through the United States. With growing uncertainty around American policies, including the possible rollback of insulin price caps under this U.S. administration, people living in Canada may face steep price increases and reduced availability.

Generic drugs may offer long-term relief—Canada could approve generic Ozempic alternatives by 2026—but immediate protections are still necessary. The federal government must act now to shield Canadians from the fallout of global pharmaceutical disruptions.

When people can't afford their medications, they don't take them. They cut doses, delay refills, or go without entirely. The results are predictable: hospitalizations, amputations, complications, and premature death.

A call for leadership

It is encouraging that the federal government has shown initiative by launching the diabetes framework and pharmacare program. But implementation without alignment, access without equity, and affordability without sustainability are not enough.

The costs of inaction, both financial and human, are far too high. Canada has the tools. It now needs the political will to finish the job.

Glenn Thibeault is the executive director of government affairs, advocacy, and policy for Diabetes Canada. He is also a former MP, national caucus chair, MPP, and minister of energy in Ontario.

The Hill Times

From momentum to leadership: securing Canada's biotech future

To lead in this space, Canada needs a globally competitive investment climate, and a best-in-class regulatory system.

Wendy Zatylny

Opinion



In the four months since returning to the life sciences sector, I have had the opportunity to connect with many people across the ecosystem: members, investors, and partners alike. What has stood out in every conversation is a shared passion and deep commitment to both a healthier population, and a stronger economy.

There is a quiet urgency that drives Canada's biotechnology sector. Behind the headlines about record investments and global partnerships is a deeply human mission. Our innovators are turning world-class science into treatments that will change—and save—lives, and help build a strong and thriving Canada.

The other thing that has stood out? Over the past few years, Canada has built valuable momentum in this sector. And we can't afford to lose it.

Momentum is building, but not guaranteed

Turning scientific breakthroughs into real-world solutions requires more than discovery. It demands the right environment, one that rewards investment and accelerates access to innovative treatments. To lead, Canada needs two things: a globally competitive investment climate, and a best-in-class regulatory system. Without these two critical components, the breakthroughs developed here will be scaled elsewhere.

Over the last five years, biotechnology has stepped into the spotlight as a critical component of public health, economic growth, and our ability to respond to future health challenges. The

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HEALTH Policy Briefing

The Liberals' new health-care agenda should include specialist workforce planning

Asking doctors to 'come home' without addressing why they leave implies physicians are to blame, and overlooks systemic barriers like poor job opportunities for specialists.

Abrar Ahmed

Opinion



The creation of Health Workforce Canada is a good first step. Next, affected specialties like surgeons must be represented, writes Abrar Ahmed. *Unsplash photograph by National Cancer Institute*

I got into Western University's medical school on May 11, 2021. The acceptance was exhilarating and symbolized years of sacrifice realized. I grew up in a low-income community, and was now going to be the first doctor in my family.

However, reality hit quickly: I was going to be a doctor in a country with a desperate need for them. That's why it's concerning that several physicians move to the United States. Now, as I prepare for residency applications, my concern has only grown. Prime Minister Mark Carney correctly identified this issue during an April 21 stop at the University of Prince Edward Island, saying it was time for Canadian doctors to come home from

the U.S. However, asking doctors to "come home" without addressing why they leave implies physicians are to blame. It overlooks systemic barriers such as poor job opportunities for specialists.

A study found that 20 per cent of specialists trained in Canada were unemployed in their field. This mirrors earlier data: in 2012, one in six specialists were unemployed; a 2025 study found 26 per cent of neurosurgery residents faced the same fate. Between 2015 and 2020, 127 orthopedic surgery graduates couldn't find full-time positions. It's not just surgery; demand for radiation oncologists is expected to exceed supply after 2026 as cancer cases rise with our aging population.

The impact on patients, primary care physicians (PCPs), specialists, and the country is staggering. Wait times to see specialists are unbearable—orthopedic referrals take a median of 44.3 weeks, neurosurgery a median of 43.5 weeks. These delays worsen patient outcomes, burden PCPs who manage complex cases meant for specialists, cause patient frustrations, and prevent PCPs from taking new patients. This contributes to PCP burnout. For residents, years of training followed by unemployment can be deeply demoralizing. It's also a poor use of public funds when training investments are lost abroad.

One root of the problem is resources. Surgical specialties, for example, are resource intensive. Surgeons need operating-room time, support from anesthesiologists, nurses, and IV fluids. Proposed solutions such as reducing specialty residency spots or pushing medical students inclined towards pursuing specialist fields into primary care may curb unemployment, but won't address patient needs or wait times. It's a Band-Aid solution at best. Also, should we not let young trainees—who work hard to get into medical school—dream, and pursue the field of their choice?

The solution isn't an easy, quick fix. It can begin by tying specialist job funding decisions to public health data projections of population needs. This would help account for the aging population's increasing orthopedic needs, and benefit from the dual national and provincial legislative involvement we have in Canada to determine regional needs. The creation of Health Workforce Canada is a good first step. Next, affected specialties like surgeons must be represented, and health regulators—who may have access to real-time data—should be included in workforce planning. Different associations have called for federal investment in robust health data infrastructure to address information gaps. In doing so, we may collect national workforce data pertaining to the needs of the population that can ultimately support physician hiring processes.

Another potential reform is rethinking physician hiring. Currently, they're contracted, not employed, by hospitals. Moving to an employer-employee model might promote hiring, as suggested by a *New England Journal of Medicine* study. Though it could reduce incomes, it may offer benefits young physicians increasingly value: job security, insurance, and work-life balance. But such a shift requires policy reform, including updates to laws like Ontario's Public Hospitals Act.

With Carney now elected, we have a chance to rethink how our health system serves doctors and patients alike—and build a future where Canadian-trained physicians stay, and patients don't have to wait.

Abrar Ahmed is a medical student at Western University.
The Hill Times

From momentum to leadership: securing Canada's biotech future

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pandemic highlighted the importance of homegrown innovation, not just in developing health solutions, but also in ensuring Canada can produce, scale, and deliver them when it matters most.

In recent years, both federal and provincial governments developed and implemented life sciences and biomanufacturing strategies designed to accelerate the creation and scaling up of biotech companies and biomanufacturing facilities across the country. The strategies and their corresponding investments have significantly strengthened Canada's biotechnology sector and its ability to compete on the global stage. Combined with the influx of private investment capital, Canada's biotech sector is experiencing a generational moment as companies have signed partnerships with global pharma companies and other investors totalling more than \$30-billion since 2019.

A thriving ecosystem across Canada

This level of investment activity reflects growing global confidence in what's being built in Canada: companies with world-class science, top talent, and the potential to scale and become anchor companies. Across every region of the country, a thriving biotech ecosystem is generating economic value, strengthening our health-care system, and contributing to Canada's national economic security. But sustaining this momentum will depend on deliberate choices, particularly in how we invest in the sector and modernize the systems that support it.

The two things that will decide Canada's biotech future

The world's leading economies are investing heavily in their

domestic life sciences sectors as they, too, understand the vital role biotechnology innovation is playing globally. To protect Canada's competitive position and capitalize on the momentum already underway, we must commit to two things: sustained investment and regulatory modernization.

First, Canada must ensure there is sufficient venture capital available to help biotech companies grow and compete globally. Strategic public investment, when paired with private capital—a 2:1 match—would generate \$1-billion in capital for companies to scale operations, sending a strong signal to the market, and unlocking long-term value for the economy and health-care system.

Second, Canada needs targeted, non-dilutive funding—capital that doesn't require companies to give up equity—to support the growth of early-stage companies. Without that support, many promising biotech companies strug-

gle to grow or are forced to go elsewhere as other countries offer better incentives. Investing in this critical stage is how we turn scientific discovery into commercial success in Canada.

Canada must pursue a bold vision for a best-in-class regulatory system, one that builds capacity, protects the health-care system, supports innovation, and attracts clinical trials. Health Canada must be empowered to deliver timely reviews, meet global performance benchmarks, and realize its commitment to regulatory modernization. This will ensure faster access to new therapies for Canadians, attracting the companies, partnerships, and innovations that will define the future of global health.

What comes next will define our future

Canada must capitalize on the investments made to date

to remain competitive in a fast-changing global landscape. Today's geopolitical uncertainty will affect all components of the Canadian life sciences sector today, and in years to come. This is not the time to slow down, undermine progress made, or hinder the sector's global competitiveness. We need to strengthen the sector and further enhance Canada's competitiveness as a biotech nation.

This is about delivering for patients while securing Canada's health and economic future. If we fail to act, we risk losing not only momentum, but also the opportunity to bring life-changing innovations to the people who need them most, and to build a globally competitive sector that strengthens the Canadian economy for the long term.

The world is watching.

Wendy Zatylny became president and CEO of BIOTEC Canada in January 2025. As the head of the organization, she serves as the lead voice for Canada's biotechnology sector, advancing its interests with government, regulators, international stakeholders, media, and the public.

The Hill Times

Don't let Canada become the 51st state: why keeping health care public is critical for our sovereignty

Renewing publicly funded health care that is accessible for all is vital in these times.

Farah Shroff

Opinion



I held his hand as he slipped away. “Jose” was just 25 years old, healthy, and full of promise—until a traumatic brain injury, one that was fully treatable, ended his life. The reason? He couldn’t afford care. A for-profit health-care system failed him. Poverty sealed his fate.

These stories are not rare in countries without universal health coverage. But increasingly, Canadians are asking: could this become our reality?

Sadly, we are already moving in that direction. While roughly 30 per cent of Canadian health care has been delivered by private entities for many years, we are facing a serious risk of losing medicare in some parts of the country already.

In Alberta and Ontario, for example, governments are privatizing surgeries, diagnostics, and other vital services. New legislation paves the way for deeper Americanization of health care. The playbook is familiar: defund the public system, declare it broken, then point to private businesses as the solution.

Is Canadian health care without problems? Certainly not. But it is not broken. We are fortunate to have highly skilled, caring providers, up-to-date infrastructure, and excellent researchers. Renewing publicly funded health care that is accessible for all is vital in these times.

One path forward is to redistribute our resources. Health care spans health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. But our system is lopsided, focused almost entirely on treatment, making our system more like a sick-care system rather than a health-care system. This approach is costly and reactive.

There are proven ways to shift this. Good housing, clean air, robust education, and—possibly most importantly—income and social status equity all reduce the need for medical treatment. Wrap-around housing support for people with addictions, for instance, improves long-term outcomes and cuts costs. Nutrition programs in schools do the same, boosting both health and academic success—reducing the need for health-care services in the future.

Emerging models like functional medicine offer a promising synthesis of western medicine, and mind-body systems. This field prioritizes root causes of illness, combining evidence-based science with attention to mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Studies of “Blue Zones”—places where people live the longest, healthiest lives—show that health care alone doesn’t deliver health. What matters are simple, daily practices: nutritious food, physical activity, sleep, socializing, and stress reduction. Yet our public system, on the whole, isn’t yet supporting people to cultivate these practices for sustained well-being.

Canada could be leading the world in integrative, preventive care. Combined with the above approaches, practices such as yoga, traditional Chinese medicine, and nature-based therapies like forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*) improve mental and physical health while being low-risk, cost-effective, and supported by a growing body of research.

Yoga, for example, has shown to benefit a wide range of conditions: depression, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer recovery. As a longtime yoga teacher, I’ve seen myriad transformations. One student told me his marriage improved as he was calmer and kinder in interactions. Another said her stressful job became bearable thanks to new tools for breathing and relaxation.

These practices have become trendy for those with means, yet providing access through our public system would give everyone these benefits.

At its heart, this is a question of sovereignty and values. Do we believe that good health is a right for all, or a commodity?

For the past few years, I have been going back and forth to the United States. Every time I get across the border, I find myself whispering, “Ah, health care.” Millions of Canadians feel similarly—public health care gives us peace of mind.

We are a country of hockey lovers and health-care defenders. These two things—sport and health care—define us. Let’s keep our elbows up to defend our right to care, as we are defending our very existence.

Dr. Farah M.C. Shroff is a Harvard-educated public health expert. She is the founder of the global non-profit *Health Together*; lead consultant at Darya; a faculty member in the University of British Columbia’s department of family practice; principal investigator of a project with Harvard faculty members on green collective well-being practices; and the founder of *Stretchy*, a social venture focused on fertility planning.

The Hill Times

As other countries cut public health funding, Canada can lead in lung health

Canada should support a landmark WHO resolution addressing the alarming rise in both communicable and non-communicable respiratory diseases.

Jessica Buckley & Jeffrey Beach

Opinion



Canadian lung charities have solutions worth sharing, but what’s missing is a clear commitment to making lung health a priority at home, write Jessica Buckley and Jeffrey Beach. *Unsplash photograph by Robina Weermeijer*

As leaders of two of Canada’s top lung health charities, we are calling on our federal government to seize a pivotal opportunity: taking the lead in supporting a landmark World Health Organization resolution, *Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach*. With millions of lives at stake worldwide and at home, this resolution isn’t just another item on the global health agenda. It’s a chance for Canada to stand up for smarter, more equitable, and more effective lung health care, and to help set a new worldwide standard for how we tackle one of humanity’s most pressing health challenges.

The World Health Organization (WHO) resolution addresses the alarming rise in both communicable and non-communicable respiratory diseases. It outlines a comprehensive global action plan emphasizing prevention, early diagnosis, equitable access to treatment, long-term care, and investment in the health-care workforce and patient-centred research. Critically, it recognizes the role of air pollution and climate change in driving respiratory illness.

This resolution is not a symbolic gesture; it’s an ambitious, overdue response to a growing crisis. And yet, despite our reputation for health-care innovation and global citizenship, Canada has not yet publicly indicated its support for this motion.

Our hesitancy to act isn’t due to lack of expertise. In fact, Canada has a proud history of driving global advancements in lung health. We were pioneers in implementing Primary Care Networks that bring respiratory care closer to home. Canada is one of the few countries whose provinces are investing in organized lung cancer screening, positioning the nation at the forefront of efforts to reduce mortality through evidence-based, structured care. Canadian lung health charities already collaborate at the national level, and we collaborate globally through the Global Airways and Allergies Patient Platform that provides support and resources to new lung health organizations across the world. In other words, we’ve done the groundwork. We have solutions worth sharing. What’s missing is a clear commitment to making lung health a priority at home—and using that foundation to engage globally and contribute as a leader.

We should be particularly motivated to act, considering the state of lung health

within our borders. Canada ranks 11th in the world for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease burden and care. Our air quality is under increasing threat from climate-related events like wildfires, which now regularly blanket entire regions in smoke. Heat waves—which disproportionately affect people with chronic lung disease—are becoming more frequent, and more deadly.

These are not distant, theoretical threats. They are here now, worsening by the year. And they demand co-ordinated, cross-border solutions—the very kind this WHO resolution would support.

This isn’t about assigning blame. Canada’s provincial and federal governments have proven they can act decisively in a health crisis, as we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic. But leadership on the world stage requires more than emergency response. It requires sustained attention, bold vision, and the courage to step forward.

And right now, Canada has a chance to lead.

As other countries face cuts to public health and science funding, Canada is well positioned to fill the void. Our researchers, clinicians, and policy thinkers have already contributed significantly to the advancement of lung health. By aligning with this resolution, Canada could amplify its impact and help shape a global framework for respiratory health—one that prioritizes prevention, equity, and climate resilience.

This isn’t just about lungs. It’s about public health systems that can withstand environmental and epidemiological shocks. It’s about ensuring the most vulnerable—children, seniors, low-income communities—aren’t left to suffer from preventable illness. It’s about preparing now instead of reacting later.

This country has the tools. We have the talent. We have the standing. What’s needed now is for Canada to support this resolution, take part in the global dialogue, and lend its voice to a healthier, more equitable future.

The people most affected by lung disease—in Canada and beyond—deserve thoughtful leadership, forward-looking decision-making, and a lasting commitment to care.

It’s time for Canada to take a deep breath, and step forward.

Jessica Buckley is president and CEO of the Lung Health Foundation. Jeffrey Beach is the president and CEO of Asthma Canada.

The Hill Times

HEALTH Policy Briefing

Canada's survival depends not just on international trade, but also on social infrastructure

It's time to invest in social prescribing, and build stronger communities that can weather the winds of global change.

Kate Mulligan

Opinion



Over the course of the recent election campaign, the focus on made-in-Canada solutions slowly turned from international trade and buying Canadian to local concerns like housing, health care, aging, and income. Canadians know our resilience and our sovereignty hinge not only on the strength of our international trade, but also on the resilience of our local communities, and that we must invest in vibrant, connected, local solutions to help us withstand the unpredictable winds of global change.

So, when Prime Minister Mark Carney promised \$4-billion for "community health-care infrastructure" during the campaign, Canada gained a huge opportunity. Carney may have been thinking more about clinical care than libraries, parks, small businesses, and community centres, but this promised investment is an invitation to expand our vision of what community health truly means. That's because—beyond hospitals and clinics—true health and well-being is built in the shared spaces and community programs in our local neighbourhoods: the social infrastructure that knits us together and forms the backbone of our collective resilience.

The evidence shows communities with robust social infrastructure consistently outperform those without, particularly in times of stress. Neighbourhood people, places, and programs are not just "nice to have"—they are our first line of defence in times of crisis, whether we're facing economic uncertainty, severe weather, public health emergencies, or social isolation. They foster belonging, well-being, and resilience.

But despite their proven impact, neighbourhood supports remain underfunded and disconnected from our health systems. Outdated models of what makes a health-care system play a role; Canada's frazzled approach to primary care, for example, falls far short of the World Health Organization's standard: a primary health-care system that empowers people, integrates clinical and social care alongside public health, and addresses the broader determinants of health through multisectoral partnerships. Even new calls for research into more resilient and equitable health systems rely on outdated definitions that

take for granted community contributions—such as the work of unpaid caregivers and community organizations—without which we wouldn't have a health system at all.

There are solutions. The not-for-profit Health Standards Organization, for example, is taking a broader view of community health while updating the Primary Health Care Services National Standard of Canada, opening the door for community participation and connection. Everyday Canadians will have a chance to provide their input into the new standard this summer. And across Canada, local communities are taking up social prescribing, a bridge between health care and community services that empowers people with health-related social needs—like food insecurity or loneliness—to connect with local supports that address the root causes of their challenges. Social prescribing improves health, strengthens communities, eases pressure on health-care providers, and fosters a sense of meaning and belonging for all involved. It's also cost-effective: research by KPMG Canada shows a return of \$4.43 for every dollar invested, thanks to reduced health-care costs and increased social and economic participation in Canadian communities.

With just 2.5 per cent of the community health-care infrastructure funding promised by Carney, we can launch social prescribing in every Canadian community, connecting our social infrastructure with our health-care system through simple referrals, health-promoting prescriptions, and places. With a little more, we could invest enough to make social prescribing a core part of primary health-care services across the country. We could boost local economies by hiring community health workers and linking health and social services with small businesses like art studios, cafés, and gyms. We could make sure our electronic health records document the impacts on our health experiences, health outcomes, our health services, and identify areas of high demand to ensure our investments go where they are most needed and most effective.

These are tough times for Canadian communities that face mounting challenges: climate change, polarization, global instability, and public health emergencies. But our sovereignty and self-reliance will not be secured by trade alone. With social prescribing and social infrastructure, the federal government can empower communities, drive local economies, and build a future where people and places are at the heart of policy. Let's seize this moment to invest in the social infrastructure that will carry Canada forward—together.

Dr. Kate Mulligan is the founder and scientific director of the Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing, and an assistant professor in social and behavioural health sciences at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

The Hill Times

AI in health care is running—but where's it headed?

What Canada needs is a federal AI-in-health strategy that is aligned with our health-care values, policy priorities, and regulatory environment.

Samira Abbasgholizadeh-Rahimi

Opinion



As artificial intelligence continues to transform health care worldwide, Canada finds itself at a critical crossroads. Despite this country's global reputation for excellence in both publicly funded health-care and AI research, we are lagging when it comes to implementation. Evidence from both practical experience and research confirms this trend. For instance, a recent study examining how Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries prepare for and assess AI in health care places Canada among the two lowest ranked of 10 nations in terms of AI maturity.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Canada spends approximately \$372-billion annually on health care—representing more than 13 per cent of its GDP in 2024. According to a 2024 McKinsey report, full-scale adoption of AI in health care could reduce net costs by 4.5 per cent to eight per cent annually, translating into potential savings of \$14-billion to \$26-billion per year. These savings could be realized without compromising the quality of care or access to services. So, what is holding us back from harnessing the full potential of advanced technologies like AI to build a more efficient, equitable, and resilient health-care system?

One key barrier is the absence of a comprehensive, nationally co-ordinated AI-in-health strategy. While countries like the United Kingdom and the United States have launched comprehensive strategies, Canada lacks a coherent, national roadmap. This fragmented approach increases the risk of duplicated efforts, inefficiencies, and uneven access to AI-driven health-care innovations across provinces and territories. What Canada needs is a federal AI-in-health strategy that is aligned with our health-care values, policy priorities, and regulatory environment. Institutions like Health Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health could play an important co-ordinating role—setting evidence-based benchmarks for efficacy, safety, and equity.

The other barrier lies in Canada's fragmented regulatory landscape—particularly around data access and privacy. AI depends on vast quantities of health data, yet our current privacy frameworks are ill-suited for dynamic, AI systems. The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and provincial acts often lack clarity on how AI-driven data flows should be governed in health care. The government must

develop a pan-Canadian framework for AI and data governance in health care—one that not only upholds patients' rights to data ownership, control, access, and possession, but also facilitates access to information for the development and effective implementation of AI technologies in clinical practice.

Furthermore, AI holds immense promise, from faster diagnostics and personalized treatments to more efficient care delivery. But this technological shift also carries risks—particularly the potential to reinforce or deepen existing health inequities if implemented without deliberate and inclusive safeguards. In a country that prides itself on universal health care and diversity, we must ask ourselves: are we prepared to integrate AI in a way that is responsible and equitable?

AI is not neutral. When trained on historically biased, low-quality health data, it could perpetuate the existing systemic biases and disproportionately affect marginalized populations. There are outlines such as the EDAl framework which offers a model for equity-by-design: embedding representative data, inclusive algorithm development, and continuous bias audits at every stage of the AI lifecycle in health care. National standards grounded in these principles are urgently needed to avoid algorithmic harm and instead use AI to narrow Canada's current health-care system gaps.

Moreover, to facilitate implementation of AI technologies in clinical practice, Health Canada needs to expand its regulatory capacity to adapt to the AI era. It could follow elements of the European Union's AI Act—creating a proactive, tiered regulatory model that considers risk level of AI systems, ensuring real-world performance monitoring, mandating explainability, and maintaining human oversight.

Another challenge in adopting AI in Canadian health care is the workforce and public's readiness and digital literacy. AI is only as effective as the people who use it, yet clinicians and patients today face a flood of emerging tools—often without proper training, integration, or context. The result is confusion, misuse, and in some cases, outright rejection. The curriculum frameworks such as "AI in Family Medicine Education" are building the foundation for an AI-literate clinical workforce. But this effort must go national.

Canada needs strategic investment in AI curricula—integrated into medical and health professional education at all levels. Similarly for the public, we must invest in improving digital literacy in citizens and citizen engagement mechanisms—including public deliberation forums, and transparency tools that explain how AI decisions are made. Government at all levels should fund public education initiatives that demystify AI in health. AI can revolutionize health care in Canada—but only if we build the right foundations now.

Samira Abbasgholizadeh-Rahimi, PhD, is the Canada Research Chair (Tier II) in AI and Advanced Digital Primary Health Care. She is also co-director of McGill's Collaborative for AI and Society, and an assistant professor in the department of family medicine, faculty of medicine and health sciences, at McGill University, and Mila-Quebec AI Institute.

The Hill Times

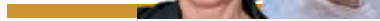
Policy Briefing **HEALTH**

A time for action: supporting Indigenous access to naturopathic medicine

Naturopathic care offers a proven approach to addressing health-care crises disproportionately affecting Indigenous people.

Gemma Beierback & Jenny Gardipy

Opinion



A decade has passed since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued its report and 94 Calls to Action, seven of which address significant Indigenous health-care disparities.

And while 10 years have passed, many of these disparities remain, and the need to address them is urgent.

Naturopathic medicine offers a uniquely responsive approach to

fulfilling several of the Commission's Calls to Action by providing available, effective, and modernized health care to Indigenous people. However, despite growing evidence supporting its effectiveness, persistent funding gaps and restrictive policies continue to prevent access.

Last year, we saw an important step forward when the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) brought First Nations leaders and their proxies together, passing a resolution calling on the Government of Canada to include naturopathic medicine and allied health services in the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program, a publicly funded health-care system meant to provide coverage for Status First Nations.

The AFN is a national advocacy organization representing First Nations peoples across more than 634 First Nations in Canada, and resolutions like these are an important part of how it advances reconciliation principles.

Since 2014, the AFN has partnered with Indigenous Services Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch to review and improve the NIHB program, help community members navigate

the complex benefits process, and advocate for expanded coverage.

The addition of naturopathic medicine to the NIHB program is not outside the realm of good policy. It would mirror a Veterans Affairs Canada's 2022 initiative that covers naturopathic doctor consultations and assessments. That program provides the blueprint for expanding access through the NIHB, and the publicly funded health-care system more broadly.

Naturopathic care offers a proven approach to addressing health-care crises disproportionately affecting Indigenous people.

Take the heart disease crisis. Heart and Stroke reports Indigenous people experience heart disease rates 50 per cent higher than the general population, and are twice as likely to die from stroke. But there's hope. Research suggests naturopathic medicine can play a key role in turning the tide. A 2013 *Canadian Medical Association Journal* clinical trial found naturopathic care led to a significantly reduced 10-year cardiovascular risk and metabolic syndrome incidence. Furthermore, a 2014 study in the *Journal of Occu-*

pational and Environmental Medicine found a naturopathic approach to medicine not only reduces cardiovascular disease risk, but also generates societal and employer cost savings.

Further, the federal government reports First Nations on reserve have a rate of diabetes three to five times higher than that of other Canadians—starkly underscoring the need for innovative solutions. In 2024, the World Naturopathic Federation published *Naturopathic workforce and type 2 diabetes*, a whitepaper highlighting strong evidence, across multiple studies, of how naturopathic care improves Type 2 diabetes outcomes.

Naturopathic medicine can be transformative for Indigenous patients. Naturopathic doctors are a key part of a holistic, modern health-care system, providing evidence-based, cost-saving, and lifesaving care that intentionally holds space for traditional knowledge. Naturopathic medicine is also synergistic with traditional plant medicines recognized within communities and considered an effective way to stay healthy and prevent diseases.

Research from Dr. Jessica Carfagnini, ND, exploring the

perspectives of Indigenous patients in Thunder Bay, Ont., puts this into sharp focus. Participants described naturopathic care as empowering and holistic, providing relief from pain and anxiety while respecting traditional knowledge. They appreciated the safe space and patient-centred care approach of naturopathic doctors, who collaborate with other health-care providers.

The key barrier is access. Naturopathic care is only accessible via extended health-care benefits, underscoring the need for increased availability of naturopathic medicine for community members navigating a range of health challenges.

The time has come to ensure access to naturopathic doctors is not contingent on employer benefits or financial ability; health-care equity demands it. We can no longer afford not to close these health-care gaps for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Gemma Beierback, CAE, is CEO of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors. Jenny Gardipy is a senior policy analyst at the Assembly of First Nations. *The Hill Times*

No more silence: it's time for federal leadership on health workforce planning

Ivy Bourgeault

Opinion



During the most recent federal election campaign, the silence around health care in the political conversation was disheartening. It was also dangerous.

We are facing a national health workforce crisis, and without strong federal leadership, patient safety will continue to erode, especially in primary care, long-term care, and mental health care.

Some claim that health care is solely a provincial and territorial responsibility. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that the federal government has a crucial role in our health-care system: from vaccine procurement to public health leadership, and through its direct provision of care to Indigenous communities, members of the military, and incarcerated populations.

The federal government cannot and must not shirk its responsibility.

The truth is that fixing the health workforce crisis requires action across all levels of government, and Canadians deserve to hear what our federal leaders plan to do about it. That was true before the election, and remains true now that the campaign is over.

Let's start with primary care. It is mathematically impossible to meet the need for primary care for all Canadians with family physicians alone. Family doctors are necessary—but not sufficient.

Primary care is best when delivered by a full team of health professionals, including nurse practitioners, pharmacists, registered and licensed practical nurses, and many other primary care providers. We will need all of these providers to ensure greater access. We have trained these professionals at great public expense, yet we constrain their practice through outdated regulations and underfunded team-based models.

Federal action could make a difference.

A recent reinterpretation of the Canada Health Act confirms that "medically necessary" services can be delivered by health practitioners other than physicians. This opens the door to expanded models of interprofes-

sional care—in which the federal government can support their development and implementation, particularly in underserved rural and remote areas.

The federal government can also be more assertive at addressing the increasing privatization of care through for-profit agencies. One practical tool is to claw back federal transfers that fund these agencies, which have driven up costs and drained resources from the public system.

Another federal lever is support for education and training.

Canada needs more health professionals, and the federal government can act immediately by expanding tuition supports, targeted scholarships, and student loan forgiveness, especially for students from Indigenous, rural, and remote communities. Rather than trying to lure health workers from cities into remote areas, we should build local health workforces from the ground up.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Yet Call to Action 23, which calls for increasing the number of Indigenous health-care workers, remains largely unmet.

There's no excuse. Indigenous health workers are critical to improving outcomes and trust in health-care systems, particularly in communities that have been systematically underserved.

When the federal government talks about investments in infrastructure, we also need to rethink what we mean by "nation-building projects." It's time to invest not just in roads and bridges, but also in the care infrastructure provided by health workers—the backbone of our health-care system.

Investing in the care infrastructure—which constitutes nine per cent of Canada's GDP—is an investment into our economy, our communities, and our future. Care work, overwhelmingly performed by women, remains undervalued. True economic growth is inclusive of all sectors, and it is time for federal leaders to recognize that.

Sustained federal investments into the health workforce data infrastructure is also needed for more effective and equitable health workforce planning and a nationally co-ordinated strategy. Organizations across the country have pushed for this for years. Yet Canada remains far behind international standards when it

comes to robust planning, support for training, and deploying its health-care workforce efficiently and equitably.

Yes, fixing this crisis will cost money. But doing nothing costs far more.

We currently operate one of the most expensive and inefficient health-care systems in the developed world. Strategic investment in health workforce planning is not just a health policy issue—it's an economic productivity issue.

Ultimately, patient safety is directly linked to the strength and sustainability of our health workforce—the cornerstone of our health-care system. Burnout, short-staffing, excessive workloads, and poor mental health among workers are not just workforce issues; they are patient-safety issues.

A stronger, better-supported health workforce means better health outcomes, a more resilient economy, and a healthier, more equitable Canada.

Dr. Ivy Bourgeault is a professor in the School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies at the University of Ottawa, and leads the Canadian Health Workforce Network.

The Hill Times

HEALTH Policy Briefing

We can't afford to wait on AI's benefits in health care

Some of AI's greatest potential lies not at the bedside, but behind the scenes in the operations that keep the health-care system running.

Hossein Abouee Mehrizi

Opinion



Artificial intelligence has the potential to transform health care in Canada. From accelerating diagnoses to improving hospital operations, AI offers practical solutions to some of the system's most urgent challenges, including long wait times and human resources shortages. If adopted effectively, AI could help build a more efficient, responsive, and patient-centred health-care system.

The technology is already showing promise in clinical care. In radiology, for example, AI algorithms can analyze X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans to detect early signs of serious conditions such as cancer or diabetic retinopathy. This can enable earlier interventions, better patient outcomes, and lower treatment costs. AI is also advancing personalized medicine by allowing clinicians to analyze vast amounts of data—including genetic information—to identify the most effective therapies for individual patients.



Inside hospitals, AI can forecast recovery times and support better discharge planning—ensuring patients are released appropriately and beds are freed up for new admissions, writes Hossein Abouee Mehrizi. *Pexels photograph by RDNE Stock project*

Some of AI's greatest potential, however, lies not at the bedside, but behind the scenes in the operations that keep the health-care system running. Predictive tools can help hospitals manage patient admissions and staff scheduling more effectively, ensuring the right resources are available at the right time. Automating administrative tasks like medical documentation can reduce workloads and minimize errors. In one of our research collaborations, we found that the time spent on documentation and indirect tasks for some services exceeded the time spent on direct patient care—highlighting a clear opportunity for AI to improve efficiency.

Our research has also identified several ways AI can directly enhance system performance.

For instance, delivering virtual care to the right patients has been shown to reduce appointment cancellations and improve overall service efficiency—both critical for cutting wait times. We also found that lead time—the interval between booking and attending an appointment—is a strong predictor of cancellations and no-shows. By using AI to forecast cancellation risks and adjust scheduling accordingly, providers can improve appointment efficiency and system throughput.

AI could also help address one of Canada's most persistent health-care problems: overcrowded emergency departments, and hospital bottlenecks. Remote monitoring tools powered by AI can enable clinicians to track patients at home, identifying health concerns before they

escalate into emergencies. Inside hospitals, AI can forecast recovery times and support better discharge planning—ensuring patients are released appropriately and beds are freed up for new admissions.

Operating rooms (ORs) are another area where AI can make a measurable difference. Since many surgeries depend on the availability of post-operative recovery beds, AI can help align surgical schedules with bed capacity. Our research shows that incorporating accurate demand forecasting into hospital operations can significantly increase OR utilization, reduce surgical delays, and help address growing surgical backlogs.

Beyond individual hospitals, AI has the potential to transform the broader health-care system. It

could reshape how care is co-ordinated across provinces and regions. Our analysis of data from the Medical Imaging Repository found that centralized scheduling among hospitals within the same geographic area can reduce wait times for services like MRIs, and increase the percentage of patients receiving care within established targets. Instead of each hospital managing its own queue, an AI-powered system could dynamically route patients to the facilities best equipped to meet their needs—based on real-time availability, clinical urgency, and location.

However, implementing AI at this scale comes with significant challenges. Many Canadian health-care institutions face challenges when it comes to integrating new technologies with existing systems. Integrating AI tools into these systems requires careful planning, technical expertise, and investment in both infrastructure and training. Additionally, regulatory hurdles must be navigated. AI tools must meet strict safety, ethical, and privacy standards. Given the reliance on sensitive patient data, ensuring robust data security and safeguarding patient privacy are paramount concerns in implementing AI solutions.

Yet despite these obstacles, the potential benefits are immense. With strategic planning, strong collaboration between health-care providers and technology developers, and a commitment to ethical implementation, AI could become one of the most powerful tools for modernizing Canadian health care. The need is urgent—and the opportunity is now. We can't afford to wait.

Hossein Abouee Mehrizi is a professor of management science, and a former Canada Research Chair in Healthcare Analytics at the University of Waterloo. His research is focused on how data and AI can be used to improve efficiency in the health-care sector.

The Hill Times

Let's reinvent our health system—and put rehabilitation at the centre

Rehabilitation is not a luxury. It is the bridge between medical intervention and meaningful participation in life.

Aliki Thomas

Opinion



I have great hope for our publicly funded health-care system. This may seem a strange time for hope, when so many Canadians are not able to access the care they need, when they need it most. But this moment—in the wake of a federal election—might finally prompt the bold, necessary transformation our health-care system so desperately needs. It is also a chance for our governments to, for once, hear us—to listen to the voices of patients, providers, and communities calling for meaningful, lasting change.

I also have heartbreak because prominent pundits, who have

similarly been calling for the overhaul of our health system, continue to overlook one of its core and fundamental components: rehabilitation. Almost every Canadian and their family members will require rehabilitation at some point in their lifetimes.

I have worked in the rehabilitation field with my colleagues for decades—a field that is often seen as peripheral to health care. It is hard not to feel the weight of years spent advocating for change that has too often been ignored, delayed, or dismissed.

If we are serious about rebuilding our health system—not

just patching holes, but also truly reimagining a health system fit for the 21st century—we must recognize that rehabilitation is central to care. A society that values justice, equity, and participation must treat rehabilitation not as a privilege, but as a fundamental right.

Rehabilitation is the practice of helping an individual—who may be living with or at risk of disability, illness or injury, frailty or chronic disease—thrive and achieve optimal functioning and independence, which would allow them to participate in their communities. This may mean modifying their social or physical

environments, such as providing assistive technologies and devices, helping them return to work or school, offering physical exercises, teaching adaptive techniques for daily living, and providing education toward self-management and maximal independence.

Canada is in the midst of a rehabilitation crisis—one largely invisible to the public, but deeply felt by millions of people living with injury, illness, and chronic conditions. Our ability to deliver timely, evidence-based rehabilitation at the right intensity by the right professionals has all but collapsed.

Services that once supported people to regain independence, return to work, or re-engage in the routines that give life meaning have been quietly offloaded to the private sector. What should be core to a just and effective health-

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Let's reinvent our health system—and put rehabilitation at the centre



What should be core to a just and effective health-care system is now treated as a luxury—accessible only to those who can afford it, writes Aliki Thomas. *Pexels photograph by Kampus Production*

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care system is now treated as a luxury—accessible only to those who can afford it.

Importantly, let us not forget what these systemic failures look like in real life: countless children with autism languishing on waitlists without access to vital services; their parents losing their jobs due to repeated absences while trying to navigate fragmented care; older adults who once contributed tirelessly to society now living in isolation and despair; and millions living with arthritis, stroke, or depression, waiting months or years for a tailored rehabilitation plan that could radically improve their quality of life.

These are not outliers—they are everyday stories. Canadians deserve better.

Rehabilitation is not a luxury. It is prevention. It is recovery. It is adaptation. It is the bridge between medical intervention and meaningful participation in life. It is the difference between someone living with dignity in their community or deteriorating in a hospital bed.

Crucially, rehabilitation is not just a follow-up service. It is a transformative approach to care that anticipates, mitigates, and responds to threats to function, identity, and well-being. It plays a vital role in preventing decline, reducing complications, and enabling meaningful participation—especially in the context of high-burden, high-cost conditions like stroke, musculoskeletal conditions including back

pain and arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness.

When rehabilitation is delayed or denied, we don't just compromise individual outcomes, but we also increase health-care costs, overwhelm emergency departments, and deepen long-standing inequities.

Rehabilitation matters now more than ever. Our population is ageing. Chronic illness is on the rise. Yet access to rehabilitation continues to shrink. People are falling through the cracks—not because we lack evidence or solutions, but because we've failed to act.

Some of the most powerful, accessible, and scalable solutions—like rehabilitation—are not hidden, but overlooked. They exist not at the margins, but at the heart of what people need to live well.

The mandate for our government offers a chance to fix what's broken. But only if we confront the depth of the crisis, listen to those on the front lines—patients, clinicians, researchers, and advocates—and finally invest in care that enables people not just to survive, but to truly live.

If decision-makers won't hear us now, when will they?

Aliki Thomas, PhD, OT(C) is an associate professor in the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at McGill University, and a Canada Research Chair in Education, Practice and Policy for Evidence-Based Health Care.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **HEALTH**

Health sector looks to pharmacare and more to help address financial hit of U.S. trade war

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leader in health research," said McLean in the statement.

Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), told *The Hill Times* that the current tariff war with the U.S. is giving her flashbacks to the days of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in higher costs and shortages of items such as personal protective equipment.

To help the health-care sector, Canada needs a patient safety guarantee from the federal government, Silas said. The CFNU is advocating for a Patient Bill of Rights, or a legal tool intended to address unsafe working conditions, and to ensure everyone has access to needed care.

"What we're asking [of the federal government] is to have this patient guarantee that would connect to the dollars that they send to the provinces and territories. Within that patient guarantee it would say you must guarantee patients you will have the appropriate nurse-patient ratio, that health-care workers will not be working more than 13 hours due to safety issues, and that long-term care will be properly funded and taken care of," said Silas. "What we want to remind the prime minister ... is that our public health-care system is a security blanket that not only people living in Canada hold dear, but it's also a financial benefit to any company opening or working in Canada, and we just need to keep it stable and strong. It has to become a higher priority."

Ian Culbert, executive director at the Canadian Public Health Association, told

The Hill Times that his organization is looking at the possible determinants to health as a result of instability from the current trade war.

"Uncertainty is a huge driver of anxiety," said Culbert. "Overall, when you look at the impact the tariffs are having already directly on workers, that threat to their livelihood is real, [and] that causes high levels of stress and is a significant predictor of poor health moving forward."

Culbert argued that health care didn't emerge as a priority during the recent federal election, and that he wants to see the federal government play a leadership role "in strengthening public health systems across the country."

"I'm not referring to publicly funded health-care systems, but rather those systems that keep people healthy—that make sure the air we breathe is clean, the food that we eat is safe and we have clean drinking water, among the multitude of things that public health professionals do across the country to keep people healthy," he said. "We have a great deal of interest in public health during the emergency, and then it disappears afterwards, and then we're shocked when we're not prepared for the next public health emergency."

"With the evolution of [avian influenza] H5N1 ... and the decimation of public health systems in the United States under the [Donald] Trump government, we should be doubling down on our investments in all of the systems that protect the health and well-being of Canadians," Culbert added.

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The Hill Times

Canada prescription drugs statistics



Image courtesy pixabay.com

- For many Canadians, prescription medications are essential in the management of many health issues and chronic conditions. In 2021, more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of Canadians reported taking or being prescribed medication in the last 12 months.
- Medication use tended to vary in the same way as provincial patterns in prescription coverage. The three provinces with the highest percentages of residents without prescription insurance coverage—British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and Ontario—were also the provinces with the lowest percentages of medication use (63 per cent to 67 per cent, compared with the highest percentages of 75 per cent for Newfoundland and Labrador, and 73 per cent for New Brunswick).
- According to the 2021 Survey on Access to Health Care and Pharmaceuticals During the Pandemic, just over one in five (21 per cent) Canadians reported not having insurance to cover any of the cost of prescription medication in the past 12 months.
- The proportion of the population without prescription insurance coverage was similar for men (21 per cent) and women (20 per cent), and across age groups up to 64 years. For adults aged 65 years and over, a higher percentage (25 per cent) reported not having prescription insurance compared to adults aged 25 to 64 years (18 per cent).
- Overall, the share of Canadians reporting no prescription coverage varied considerably across the provinces, ranging from a high of 26 per cent in B.C. to a low of 14 per cent in Nova Scotia.
- The situation for seniors was similar; the highest percentages reporting no prescription coverage were among seniors living in B.C. (33 per cent) and Manitoba (33 per cent), and lowest among seniors in Alberta (nine per cent) and Nova Scotia (11 per cent).

—Source: Statistics Canada data released on Dec. 5, 2022

HEALTH Policy Briefing

Canada leads the future of diabetes care by listening to those with lived experience

The conversation about diabetes must extend beyond pharmaceutical breakthroughs and into questions of affordability, access, and social support.

Rachel
Reeve

Opinion



When health practitioners talk about diabetes, the focus is often on blood sugar levels, diet plans, testing tools, and medications. But behind these conversations are decades of evidence-based research, groundbreaking scientific discoveries, and—most importantly—the voices of those living with the disease every day.

Canada has been at the heart of these discoveries. We are, after all, the country that gave the world insulin. However, our contributions don't stop there. Canadian researchers have been

at the forefront of islet cell transplants, stem cell research, and the development of life-changing pharmaceutical interventions.

But it's not researchers alone. Diabetes research in Canada is being shaped by the voices of those living with diabetes every day. Research questions that prioritize the needs and realities of people with diabetes, rather than focusing solely on theoretical outcomes are what make Canada a leader in diabetes research.

In conversations with researchers and patients alike, the message is clear: science matters, but so does the human experience. We've made important strides in moving research beyond the lab and into the lived experiences of those who manage diabetes in their everyday lives.

What does this mean in practical terms?

For too long, people with diabetes have been stigmatized, reduced to stereotypes about personal responsibility and poor choices. The reality is far more complex. Genetics, biological mechanisms, and social determinants of health play huge roles—and ignoring them isn't just misguided, it's harmful.

Consider the increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes in younger Indigenous populations, influ-

enced by epigenetic risk factors and systemic inequities arising from centuries of colonization. Understanding these nuances—and investing in research that explores them—is key to better management, prevention, and eventually, cures.

One area where research and lived experience are intersecting in exciting ways is in the use of GLP-1 agonists—drugs like Ozempic—which are changing not just how we manage diabetes, but also how we understand the biological roots of obesity and cancer.

Terminology also matters. The shift from calling it “juvenile diabetes” to “Type 1 diabetes” acknowledges that this autoimmune condition can affect people of all ages, not just children. And understanding the difference between Type 1 (immunologic) and Type 2 diabetes (metabolic) is crucial for clear, productive conversations around management and treatment.

Even the way we look at obesity has changed with research. Long considered a symptom of other conditions, obesity is recognized today as a health condition on its own, leading to new approaches and interventions.

We also cannot underestimate the incidence and prevalence of diabetes or underplay its role

as a risk factor for other conditions. Four million Canadians are diagnosed with diabetes, and another one million Canadians are estimated to live with undiagnosed diabetes.

When untreated or inadequately managed, the disease causes heart attacks, strokes, vision loss, and kidney failure—all chronic conditions that also lead to increased health-care costs in the long term.

Managing diabetes is also expensive for patients—as much as \$10,000 to \$18,000 out of pocket every year. For low-income Canadians, access to healthy food, medications, and health-care resources can be out of reach.

The conversation about diabetes must extend beyond pharmaceutical breakthroughs and into questions of affordability, access, and social support. Addressing social determinants of health, such as income, food security, and education, is just as vital as developing the next miracle drug.

We must also recognize that the cost of living with diabetes doesn't only come in dollars—it comes in time, mental energy, and emotional weight. The daily calculations, the constant vigilance, and the societal judgment can be exhausting.

That's why research that includes patient voices, and acknowledges the human toll is so critical. The research emerging from Canadian labs is not just about molecules and mechanisms, it's also about giving people longer, healthier, and a better quality of life.

Research matters. How we communicate results matters. Diabetes research must continue to inform practice and support greater understanding across multiple levels: people with diabetes and their families, health-care practitioners, and society at large.

Canada's story in diabetes research is one of scientific excellence and quiet humility. It's time to champion the groundbreaking work happening here, from our labs to our communities. And it's time to challenge stereotypes, listen to those living with diabetes, and ensure that science and society move forward together.

It's time to support research and treatments with more than just words. Because when it comes to diabetes, Canada has a lot to be proud of—and even more to fight for.

Rachel Reeve, PhD, is the executive director, research and science, at Diabetes Canada.
The Hill Times

It's time to bring Canada's medical system into the 21st century

The first issue we should tackle is our out-of-date approach to digital health.

Liam
MacDonald

Opinion



Access to health care is top of mind for many Canadians; understandably so, considering that one in five Canadians do not have a family doctor, and wait times in emergency rooms are unbearably long—only 10 per cent of Ontario hospitals meet provincial targets for average emergency room wait times, according to 2024 data. We are not living up to the promise of accessible health care laid out in the Canada Health Act.

Regrettably, Canadians are growing pessimistic about

policymakers' ability to solve this problem, which is complex, involves numerous stakeholders who sometimes have competing interests, and cuts across multiple levels of government. It's a recipe for inertia, and Canadians know it.

Yet, thanks to the ongoing trade uncertainty, there's been an unprecedented desire and willingness from Canadians to work together, and make our economy more resilient. A window of opportunity has opened to address issues we've allowed to persist. The first one we should tackle is our out-of-date approach to digital health.

In most other developed countries, it is commonplace for medical records to be stored electronically. This makes it easy for patients to access their medical records and for these records to be shared with other medical professionals. In 2025, nothing about this seems revolutionary—because it isn't—but it is an example of low-hanging fruit we've ignored.

Currently, many Canadian hospitals still store patient

records physically. If a patient treated at one hospital ends up in treatment at another, records will need to be manually transferred, resulting in lost time when rapid diagnosis and treatment is often critical.

If records do happen to be stored digitally, they are locked in electronic medical records systems (EMRS) that are not designed for interoperability. In other words, these systems cannot communicate with one another outside of the same hospital, and any information stored within them is hardly more accessible than if it were physically stored.

In 2022, the federal government published the final report of its Pan-Canadian Health Data Strategy. The report lays out some core principles for building a connected health data system, such as the need for common data standards and secure data management. Canada Health Infoway, a federally funded not-for-profit, has been convening federal and provincial stakeholders around its Interoperability Roadmap, fleshing out important technical

details around harmonizing our health data systems.

Building an integrated health data system requires harmonized standards and regulations, an area where the federal government should take a leading role. Bill C-72, the Connected Care for Canadians Act, tabled last fall, would have been a welcome first step by preventing data blocking, which is the practice of preventing access to electronic health information locked within an EMRS or other health information technologies. Unfortunately, Parliament was dissolved before the bill was adopted.

The vision is there—what's missing is the willingness to act.

The benefits of unlocking greater access to health data are clear: medical practitioners across different medical establishments will be better able to track patient health, provide more accurate diagnoses faster, and monitor outcomes. Better collection and sharing of data can also unlock insights into how medical resources are deployed and drive system-wide efficiencies.

A common vision for data privacy standards and an integrated health data system, which are not fragmented across provincial lines, will make vast quantities of real-world medical data available to researchers, driving the development of next-generation treatments. Canada is already a medical research powerhouse—a pan-Canadian health data ecosystem will cement this advantage by attracting more private sector investment.

We can observe the success of the European Union's model with common data privacy regulations and their Health Data Space, allowing for the use and exchange of electronic health data across the entire EU. Let this serve as inspiration for Canada. Measures that will improve our research and development capacity are especially strategic when policies south of the border are pushing scientists and capital elsewhere.

A modern health data system is not a silver-bullet solution to our health-care challenges, but it is an important—and low cost—piece of the puzzle. And it's the first step in bringing Canada's medical system into the 21st century.

Liam MacDonald is director of policy and government relations at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The Hill Times

Canada can't survive without alliances—and friendship isn't free, says former CSIS head Fadden

This country talks a good game about things like meeting the NATO target, but is 'not so good at providing a benefit to the other members of those alliances,' former CSIS director Richard Fadden told a panel audience.

BY MARLO GLASS

Canada's former intelligence chief says the country can't survive on its own, and must be realistic about what it brings to partnerships—and how much those alliances cost.

"Acting alone, we're likely to be overwhelmed by the United States. So I start as a given: we cannot expect to survive without alliances," said Fadden, speaking at a May 12 conference about foreign policy, diplomacy, and Canada's alliances, hosted by the University of Ottawa and the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association.

"I think a lot of people from outside of Canada would agree we've been rather good at talking about our obligations and alliances over the course of the last little while, but not so good at providing a benefit

to the other members of those alliances," said Fadden, who was then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's national security adviser from 2015-2016, deputy minister of national defence from 2013-2015, and the director of Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) from 2009-2013.

Trudeau faced criticism for not adequately funding Canada's defence apparatus, despite all 32 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreeing to spend two per cent of their nation's GDP on defence. By the end of Trudeau's tenure, Canada was spending less than 1.5 per cent of GDP on the Department of National Defence.

A defence policy update published in late 2024 predicted

funding wouldn't hit the two per cent mark until 2032. During the election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) committed to hitting that target by 2030. In mid-March, Carney also announced more than \$6-billion in funding for a system that detects early warning radar coverage for threats in the Arctic, along with other spending to boost the military's presence in the North.

While Canada navigates its new reality with the U.S.—amidst a trade war and President Donald Trump's stance that Canada has been subsidized by America and would be better off as a 51st state—Canada needs to remember that friendship isn't free, Fadden said.

"When we sort out which alliances we want to promote,

and which alliances we consider reliable, there's a cost to pay for this," Fadden said.

Canada is the only country facing such pressure from the U.S. while also living next door, he said. And although this country may be scanning the global stage for new dance partners, "we have to articulate the benefit, we have to articulate the national interest," Fadden said. "And it cannot simply be to irritate the Americans."

Seeking new alliances would be pointless unless Canada has a plan in place to protect its economic and political sovereignty, he said.

"I think the key, though, is that we have to accept that if we're going to have an alliance with anybody, it has to be for the mutual benefit of everybody."

Trump's threats to Canada's sovereignty are "something we can't unhear," but North America is still our shared home, said Martin Loken, a former Canadian diplomat in the U.S.

He said there have been "fantasies of pulling up the drawbridge" and joining the European Union, but such a move isn't realistic given Canada's geographic proximity to the U.S.

"We certainly can't afford, either, to wallow in this sense of betrayal and out [of] some imaginary vision of a perfect kind of rainbows-and-unicorn relationship with the U.S.," Loken said. "It never was that way."

"There's tons of room to work between these extremes," said Loken. "There's lots of open ice."

Boosting defence spending, with an emphasis on the Arctic, isn't just a move to appease Trump as previous U.S. administrations have also urged Canada to invest more, Loken said.

"So it's time to do it, and do it quickly," he said.

Fadden and Loken both said it's also not realistic to put the U.S. in the same category as other global adversaries, like China or Russia.

"We can be really irritated by them [the Americans], but we can't do that," Fadden said. "And yes, the U.S. is trying to change how the world is governed. But we continue to have strategic adversaries."

Fadden added Canada could look beyond formal allies like NATO, the Five Eyes, and the G7 to establish other channels for intelligence sharing.

He pointed to when then-prime minister Jean Chrétien refused to join the U.S. in invading Iraq in 2003. At the time—with cross-border relations under strain—there were concerns that Canada wouldn't share threat information with its U.S. counterparts.

"The director of the CIA actually asked me directly: if we had threat information, would we share it with the United States, despite the fact that we were pissed off with each other?" Fadden said. "And I said, 'without any reservation whatsoever,' knowing my political masters would agree absolutely."

While "higher-level alliances" can be the work of presidents, prime ministers, and kings, "there's a whole bunch of things that can be done effectively beneath that level," he said.

Fadden said Carney needs to signal the importance of national security, trade, foreign policy, and defence policy, which can be done in part by boosting funding to border security, police, and Canada's security apparatus like CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment.

"Mr. Trudeau, I think it's fair to say, was not particularly interested in these things," Fadden said in a short interview with *The Hill Times*. "[Former prime minister Stephen] Harper, somewhat more, but still not a great deal."

If the prime minister does not view it as a priority, "that permeates the entire public service," Fadden said.

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Prime Minister Mark Carney has promised to hit NATO's defence spending target of two per cent of GDP by 2030. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Speaking on a May 12 panel, from left: Rob McRae, former Canadian ambassador to NATO; Richard Fadden, former national security adviser to the prime minister; and Martin Loken, former Canadian diplomat to the United States. *The Hill Times* photograph by Marlo Glass



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, meets with U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on May 6. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House

NEWS

Carney taps host of new MPs to 28-member cabinet, creates 10 secretaries of state

In a major shakeup, Prime Minister Mark Carney named 16 new faces to his 28-member cabinet, but kept a dozen Trudeau-era ministers in his lineup.

Continued from page 1

More than half of Carney's cabinet ministers come from Quebec and Ontario, with 18 of 28 hailing from these two provinces. Three ministers are from Ontario's Brampton region, which was something of a battleground on election night.

Nova Scotia and British Columbia each have two ministers, while Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories each have one. Hill watchers surmised that the cabinet should have multiple ministers hailing from Western Canada, amid rumblings of Alberta separatism and a newly rejuvenated Liberal presence in Saskatchewan.

New faces in cabinet

Among the new faces in Carney's cabinet are Tim Hodgson (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.), a business executive who previously worked alongside Carney at the Bank of Canada. He will serve as the minister of natural resources and energy, replacing Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver-Capilano, B.C.), who was shuffled out of cabinet.

Rebecca Chartrand (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, Man.) was named northern and Arctic affairs minister, and is also responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. Chartrand, an Indigenous woman from Winnipeg, flipped a northern Manitoba riding that had been an NDP stronghold for decades.

Eleanor Olszewski, newly elected to Edmonton Centre, Alta., was tapped to be minister of emergency management and commu-



Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks to reporters outside of Rideau Hall after the swearing-in ceremony. The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

nity resilience, as well as minister responsible for the Prairies Economic Development Canada. Putting an Alberta MP in cabinet was seen as something of an olive branch amid signals of increased interest around Alberta separation.

Evan Solomon (Toronto Centre, Ont.), former political journalist, was chosen to lead a portfolio that includes artificial intelligence and digital innovation, as well as the minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Former Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson (Vancouver-Fraserview—South Burnaby, B.C.) is now housing minister, taking over for Nate Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.), who is no longer in cabinet.

This cabinet shuffle also heralds the return of a ministry of women and gender equality, something Carney faced criticism for dropping in his first cabinet. Not only is Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont.) reviving the portfolio of women and gender equality, she is the lone minister pulling double duty as a secretary of state for small business and tourism. Valdez was most recently chief government whip, and before that minister of small business.

It's also the first time a cabinet portfolio has been dedicated to artificial intelligence. Newly elected Mandy Gull-Masty (Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, Que.) was named minister of Indigenous services, marking the first time an Indigenous person has held the title. She was previously head of the Grand Council of the Crees.

Carney was also criticized in his initial cabinet makeup for folding the labour ministry into other portfolios. Labour is still not its own standalone ministry, but is the responsibility of secretary of state John Zerucelli (Etobicoke North, Ont.).

Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Ont.) is now minister of environment and climate change, with former minister Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.) shuffled out of cabinet.

Another former minister who was shuffled from cabinet was Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Dieppe, N.B.), formerly president of the Treasury Board, a portfolio picked up by Shafqat Ali (Brampton—Chinguacousy Park, Ont.). Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.), formerly national defence minister, was also shuffled out of cabinet after having served as a minister since 2018.

Many stalwart ministers have a change in roles, including Joly, who was formerly tasked with foreign affairs and now takes on industry, renamed by Carney after Trudeau shifted the portfolio name to innovation. She is also responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.

LeBlanc, meanwhile, is now the president of the King's Privy Council and minister responsible for Canada-U.S. trade, and international affairs. He was formerly minister of international trade and intergovernmental affairs.

David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.), who was first promoted to cabinet under Trudeau in December 2024 as public safety minister, no longer has that role or the emergency preparedness portfolio handed to him in Carney's March shuffle, and is now responsible for national defence.

Freeland, meanwhile, remains in the role she took on in Carney's first cabinet in March overseeing transport and internal trade. Freeland resigned from her role as Trudeau's finance minister back in December just moments before a fall economic update in Parliament, citing differences in how to respond to United

States President Donald Trump's impending tariffs.

Members of the House of Commons are currently paid a base salary of \$209,800 per year, with ministers paid an additional \$99,900, plus a \$2,000 car allowance. Secretaries of state receive an additional \$74,700 per year.

The Rideau Hall ceremony on May 13 brought out many Canadian political heavyweights, including former prime minister Jean Chrétien; Liberal campaign director Andrew Bevan; and former governors general David Johnston, Michaëlle Jean, and Adrienne Clarkson. Former PCO clerk Janice Charette was also in attendance as was Gerry Butts, who was involved in Carney's campaign and who previously served as Trudeau's principal secretary. Carney's wife Diana was also present alongside at least two of their daughters. His outgoing chief of staff and former MP Marco Mendicino was also in the room.

Rookie MPs make up half of secretaries of state

Half of the secretaries of state are rookie MPs, with one Trudeau-era cabinet minister in the mix with Ruby Sahota. She returned to Parliament for a fourth term, winning her riding of Brampton North-Caledon, Ont., by 742 votes this election, and was given a secretary of state position for "combatting crime."

A mix of 10 newly-elected MPs and first-time cabinet members are set to serve as secretaries of state, a role absent in Carney's predecessor's cabinet. The prime minister said the secretaries would "provide dedicated leadership on key issues and priorities within their minister's portfolio."

Wayne Long (Saint John-Kennebecasis, N.B.), a longtime Liberal caucus member who was among the first MPs to call for Trudeau's resignation, was tapped as secretary of state overseeing the Canada Revenue Agency and financial institutions.

First-time MPs serving as secretary of state include Buckley Belanger (Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River, Sask.) and Nathalie Provost (Château-guay-Les Jardins-de-Napierville, Que.). Belanger, who has taken on the portfolio of rural development, is the sole Liberal MP representing Saskatchewan.

The Liberals lost their footing in that province after longtime MP Ralph Goodale lost his seat in Regina-Wascana, Sask., in 2019.

Provost, a gun control advocate and survivor of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre, who won her riding with 45 per cent of the vote, takes on the role of secretary of state for nature.

Another notable face is Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna, B.C.), who has been given the defence procurement portfolio. Fuhr made his way back into the House of Commons off the heels of a 2019 defeat, where he was unseated by first-time Conservative MP Tracey Gray, whom he narrowly bested by 1,000 seats this time around.

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Carney puts his stamp on cabinet

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Prime Minister Mark Carney, front centre, poses for a photo with Governor General Mary Simon and the members of his core cabinet and team of ministers of state at Rideau Hall on May 13.



New Alberta MP Eleanor Olszewski takes her oath as minister of emergency management and community resilience and minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada.



Dominic LeBlanc, front left, was sworn in with the lengthy title of president of the King's Privy Council and minister responsible for Canada-U.S. trade, intergovernmental affairs and one Canadian economy. He's joined by cabinet colleagues Industry Minister Mélanie Joly, Finance and National Revenue Minister François-Philippe Champagne, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu, Canadian Identity and Culture and Official Languages Minister Steven Guilbeault, and Justice Minister Sean Fraser.



Former governor general Adrienne Clarkson, left, and her husband John Ralston Saul take their seats for the ceremony.



Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree, left, Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson, Transport and Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland, Secretary of State for Seniors Stephanie McLean, and Secretary of State for Sport Adam van Koeverden make their way to Rideau Hall.



Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty is among the new faces in both the Liberal caucus and at the cabinet table.



Former senior PMO staffer and new Quebec MP Marjorie Michel is sworn in as health minister.



Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali, left, Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai, Hajdu, Joly, and Secretary of State for Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions Wayne Long make their way up the drive.



Freshly minted Secretary of State for Rural Development Buckley Belanger, right, is congratulated by his new cabinet colleagues.

Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



Botswana's new Canadian envoy is hoping for a state visit by the end of the year

In a wide-ranging interview, new Motswana High Commissioner Mpho Churchill Mophuting talks about a deeper relationship with Canada, Ottawa's Africa strategy, and peacekeeping.

Botswana's new envoy to Canada is hoping for a state visit to boost ties, which **Mpho Churchill Mophuting** says are not as strong as he'd like to see.

Mophuting is a resident Motswana ambassador to the United States, and presented his letter of credence to Governor General **Mary Simon** on April 29 as his country's newest high commissioner in Canada.

While he said the Canada-Botswana relationship is "good," he remarked that it can go to the "next level."

"My visitation to Canada really kind of invigorated me to start aspiring to have even more detailed engagement with Canada, especially [with] issues like economic relationship, business, and looking for further investment," he told *The Hill Times* during a May 7 phone interview.

Mophuting said that he would soon like to see Botswana's President **Duma Boko** make a formal trip to Canada.

He said that a visit was in the works, but was delayed due to the timing of the election.

"I'll make a follow-up to ensure that as soon as possible that engagement is actually done," he said, remarking that he is "hopeful and optimistic" that a visit can happen this year.

"It's definitely a priority on my table," he said. "We have more than six months [until the end of the year], I think that is doable."

Canada's diplomatic presence in Botswana is conducted through its mission in Zimbabwe's capital of Harare—more than 1,000 kilometres from Gaborone.

Mophuting said the distance isn't a "stumbling block" to boosting ties, remarking that is especially true with the proximity of Ottawa to Washington, D.C.

"Sometimes when you have a passion to take the relationship to the next level, and also the support of the political leadership—particularly the new leadership—I think they are much determined to grow the relationship between Canada and Botswana to the next level," he said.

He said that opening a diplomatic mission in Ottawa is a priority for him.

Mophuting started his American posting in September 2024. He previously served in Botswana's Ministry of Defence for 35 years, rising to the rank of major general, and serving as the deputy commander of the Botswana Defence Force.

Prior to his appointment as deputy commander, he was charged with leading Botswana's COVID-19 National Emergency Operations Centre in March 2020—a position he remained in for a year.



The new high commissioner of Botswana, Mpho Churchill Mophuting, left, presented his letter of credence to Governor General Mary Simon on April 29. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Canada's Africa strategy 'very welcome'

Mophuting said that Canada's release of an African strategy is "very welcome" by Botswana.

"When you start seeing a country having a strategy of engaging with either another country or a continent—in this particular case, Canada's strategy with Africa—that shows that Africa is a priority now with Canada," he said.

Canada released the strategy after much delay on March 6, but included no new funds for engagement with the continent.

"It's a win-win situation in terms of trying to engage the rest of Africa," Mophuting said. "Not necessarily for Canada to go there and extract, but in terms of how we work best as Canadians and the rest of the African continent in ensuring that we all win, [and] we all benefit."

The high commissioner said the current moment is an "important era" for Canada's engagement with Africa, remarking that Canada has a deep history on the continent, spotlighting its role in United Nations peacekeeping.

"Nobody can doubt the credentials of Canada," he said.

He said that Botswana sent many of its cadet officers to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Kingston, Ont., and that he also visited the facility as a senior officer.

"We are involved a lot in terms of peacekeeping with Canada," he said.

Canada's involvement in UN peacekeeping has taken on a much-reduced role over the last decade. According to UN numbers, Canada has 26 peacekeepers deployed, as of Feb. 28.

Mophuting said a greater focus on diplomacy is welcome.

"The Canadian model, as well as the Canadian experience and the knowledge, can be of great assistance—both military diplomacy and general diplomacy," he said.

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NEWS

Bipartisan 'cooler heads' have vested interest in lowering the temperature on Alberta separatism: Calgary Liberal Hogan

Continued from page 14

dangerous and not what the majority of Albertans want."

McPherson said that Ottawa needs a "calm, thoughtful approach" that recognizes Alberta's contributions to Canada's economy, and a path forward that will require the federal government to "step up."

"I'm incredibly proud of how hard Albertans have worked to support Canada over the years, and now it's time for Canada to also provide some support for Alberta," McPherson said, adding that this will need to include conversations on energy regulations and building a national grid.

"Alberta is a huge part of Canada's economy. It needs to be protected, respected, and allowed to thrive and grow," McPherson said, but noted it was far too early to tell whether there is any sign of improvement in the relationship since the election.

"I certainly hope Albertans don't lose out because Premier Smith is more interested in picking fights than getting things done," McPherson said. "I hope [Prime Minister Mark] Carney proves himself to be able to negotiate that relationship better, but it's too early to tell."

Hogan said that if Smith truly believes in keeping Canada united, she shouldn't be willing to risk "something so precious" just to gain the upper hand in negotiations with the federal government.

"I hope the premier and those around her will say 'we're dead-set against separation, and we won't facilitate a vote or changing the rules to make it easier for someone else,'" Hogan said. "Every minute we're discussing this is a minute we're not making life better for Albertans and Canadians."

As for what the Liberal government can do to address the feelings of alienation and discontent in the province, Hogan said that while a more calm and mature conversation would be more helpful, actions speak louder than words.

"We can't match the rhetoric, so the government should be taking action," Hogan said, noting that the Liberals have already begun to do so, pointing to the removal of the consumer carbon price, and campaign commitments on accelerated approval processes for oil and gas production and energy corridors.

"I think the distance between the positions of the provincial government and the federal government is not as big as we sometimes pretend it is," Hogan explained. "Interests will sometimes diverge, and interests will sometimes converge, but we need to find a more rational and constructive way to have these conversations."

"Liberals can't take every piece of bait or respond to everything," Hogan said. "We need to turn the other cheek a bit so

we can stay focused on the underlying issues and how the federal government can improve life for Albertans."

Feds' role is to provide the facts so Albertans can make an educated choice: Oates

NDP strategist Cheryl Oates, a principal with public affairs firm GT and former Alberta premier Rachel Notley's executive director of communications from 2015 to 2019, told *The Hill Times* she believes the conversations between Alberta and Ottawa have already cooled, despite what the referendum talk may suggest.

"Prime Minister Carney and Premier Smith have already met, and the tone is much lower than the rhetoric she used on Justin Trudeau," Oates explained. "That's a positive step forward, but to rebuild the relationship and tamp down on some of the frustration, Carney needs to acknowledge why Albertans have felt left out and overlooked."

Oates said that while it would be dangerous to dismiss those sentiments, whether they were a minority or majority view, the main reason Smith entertained them in the first place was to protect her political future.

In the May 8 Angus Reid survey, 65 per cent of those who voted for the governing United Conservative Party in Alberta's last provincial election said they would vote to leave, split halfway between "definite" and "leaning."

"If the UCP lost 65 per cent of its support to another party, [Smith's] election fortunes would be devastated," Oates explained. "So this is in Smith's best interests, not Alberta's."

As for what the federal government can do to respond without inflaming the issue, Oates said it should employ a similar tactic as it did when it was suggested that Alberta should leave the Canada Pension Plan and create its own.

"When the federal government stepped in, all it had to do was present the factual information," Oates said. "They said 'here are the numbers and the implications,' and that killed the conversation because it wasn't as rosy a picture as it had been portrayed."

Similarly, Oates said the federal government can be most effective by providing the facts the rhetoric has been lacking, including how much of Canada's debt Alberta would be saddled with, how it would access tidewater, how its 40 per cent of interprovincial trade would be affected, or even what currency an independent Alberta would use.

"At some point, someone who holds those facts and can be an authority needs to step in and share them so we can have an informed conversation," Oates said.

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Parliamentary Calendar

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

Kovaliv, Lametti, Haley taking part in Chamber's B7 Summit May 14-16 in Ottawa



Ukrainian Ambassador Yuliya Kovaliv, left, former Liberal minister David Lametti, and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley are among the panellists taking part in the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's B7 Summit May 14-16 in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, and courtesy of the U.S. State Department

further improvements in medium-term resilience. Monday, May 26, at 8 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th Floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register: cabe.ca.

Webinar: 'Canada and the EU in a Shifting World Order'—Ailish Campbell, Canada's Ambassador to the European Union, will deliver remarks on "Navigating Global Change: Canada and the EU in a Shifting World Order," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Monday, May 26, at 10 a.m. ET happening online: cdhowe.org.

MONDAY, MAY 26—TUESDAY, MAY 27

King Charles to Visit Canada—King Charles and his wife Camilla will undertake a visit to Canada from Monday, May 26, to Tuesday, May 27.

TUESDAY, MAY 27

Speech from the Throne—King Charles will deliver the speech from the throne to officially open the 45th Parliament.

Lunch: 'Investing in Canada's Defence Industrial Base'—The Canadian Club of Toronto hosts a lunch event, "Security and Prosperity: A Business Case for Investing in Canada's Defence Industrial Base." Participants include Unifor national president Lana Payne, Business Council of Canada president and CEO Goldy Hyder, former Canadian ambassador Louise Blais, OMERS president and CEO Blake Hutcheson, Bombardier Inc.'s president and CEO Éric Martel, and ATCO Ltd.'s president and CEO Nancy Southern. Tuesday, May 27, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: canadianclub.org.

House-warming at the Met—Earncliffe Strategies, POLITICO, and Métropolitain Brasserie co-host the "House-warming" bash to ring in the new session of Parliament following the pomp and circumstance of the throne speech delivered by King Charles III. Tuesday, May 27, at Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28

Panel: 'The Arctic'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion, "The Arctic: Four Leaders, Four Perspectives," featuring Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai; Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Lt.-Gen. Steve Boivin, Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command; and Sean Boyd, board chair, Agnico Eagle Mines. Wednesday, May 28, at 12 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details online.

TUESDAY, MAY 13—THURSDAY, MAY 15

Sustainable Finance Summit—The Sustainable Finance Summit is scheduled to take place in Montreal from Tuesday, May 13, to Thursday, May 14. This year's theme is "Aligning Finance with Planetary Boundaries." Details: sommets-financedurable.com.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

Senator Plett's Retirement—Today is Manitoba Conservative Senator Donald Plett's 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

Lunch: 'AI Sovereignty in a Shifting Global Order'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a lunch event, "Canada at a Crossroads: AI Sovereignty in a Shifting Global Order" featuring Erin Kelly, co-founder and CEO of Advanced Symbolics, AskPolly; and Niraj Bhargava, co-founder and CEO of NuEnergy.ai. Wednesday, May 14, at 12 p.m. ET at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Navigating Geopolitical Crossroads with Michael Kovrig—The Canadian International Council's National Capital Branch hosts "Diplomacy in the Age of Uncertainty: Navigating Geopolitical Crossroads with Michael Kovrig." Pendulum Geopolitical Advisory co-founder Jonathan Berkshire Miller will sit down with Kovrig, CEO of Kovrig Group and former Canadian diplomat who was one of the 'Two Michaels' wrongfully imprisoned in China for more than 1,000 days, to discuss China-U.S. strategic rivalry, Canada's own fraught relationship with China, and the broader geopolitical agenda. Wednesday, May 14, at 5:30 p.m. at The Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St., Ottawa. Details: thecic.org.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14—FRIDAY, MAY 16

B7 Summit—The Canadian Chamber of Commerce hosts the B7 Summit, where business helps to develop economic policy proposals for G7 leaders. The opening night gala at the Canadian Museum of History will be followed by two days of panel discussions. Participants include former Liberal cabinet minister David Lametti, French Ambassador Michel Miraillet, and Italian Ambassador Alessandro Cattaneo. *The Toronto Star* reports U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra will also be taking part. Wednesday, May 14, to Friday, May 16, at the National Arts

Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: chamber.ca.

FRIDAY, MAY 16

Launch of David A. Robertson's New Book—Library and Archives Canada and the Ottawa International Writers' Festival host the launch of 52 *Ways to Reconcile: How to Walk with Indigenous Peoples on the Path to Healing* by David A. Robertson who will be on hand to discuss the book. Friday, May 16, at 6 p.m. ET, at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Register: writersfestival.org.

TUESDAY, MAY 20

Webinar: 'Elections in Troubled Times'—McGill University hosts a webinar, "Elections in Troubled Times: The 2025 Canadian Election in Historical Perspective Webinar," featuring four authors—Patrice Dutil, Barbara Messamore, David MacKenzie, and Tom Flanagan—who've recently written books on the 1867, 1921, 1945, and 1993 elections. What are the parallels? How were things different? Tuesday, May 20, at 4 p.m. ET happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

2025 Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture—The Broadbent Institute and Toronto Metropolitan University host this year's Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture featuring economics and politics commentator Grace Blakeley, author of *Culture Capitalism: Corporate Crimes, Backdoor Bailouts and the Death of Freedom*. Tuesday, May 20, at 6 p.m. ET at Toronto Metropolitan University's Sears Atrium, 245 Church St. Details: broadbentinstitute.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21

Trade Conference 2025—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts its Trade Conference 2025, a full-day conversation on trade in Canada's major economic sectors. What have the country's trade diversification efforts looked like? What direction should our prime minister and Parliament take? Wednesday, May 21, at 9 a.m. ET at 150 Elgin, 18th floor, Ottawa. Details: cgai.ca.

Minister Freeland to Take Part in Auto Industry Panel—Minister of Transport and Internal Trade Chrystia Freeland will take part in a panel discussion, "Outlook on the Canadian Auto Industry: Navigating a New Era of U.S. Tariffs," hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Other participants include Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association; and Rob Wildeboer, executive chair, Martinrea International Inc.

Wednesday, May 21, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Panel: 'Reducing Housing Burdens'—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a panel discussion, "A better plan: Untangling jurisdictional webs and reducing housing burdens," exploring the complexity of federal and provincial jurisdictions and their impact on urban development. Wednesday, May 21, at 12 p.m. ET. happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

Andrew Coyne's Book Launch—The launch of *Globe and Mail* columnist Andrew Coyne's new book, *The Crisis of Canadian Democracy*, will take place today. Wednesday, May 21, at the Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Ottawa Riverkeeper Gala—The Ottawa Riverkeeper hosts its annual gala, this year at a new venue. As always, the evening will feature musical performances, fine cuisine, premium beverages, spectacular auction items, and a killer dance floor. Proceeds go to helping protect the health of the Ottawa River and its many lakes and tributaries. Wednesday, May 21, at 6 p.m. ET in Jacques-Cartier Park, rue Laurier, Gatineau. Details: riverkeeper-gala.com.

THURSDAY, MAY 22

Yves Giroux to Deliver Remarks—Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux will deliver remarks at a virtual event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, May 22, at 12:30 p.m. ET happening online: cdhowe.org.com.

Webinar: 'What is Canadian Secularism?'—The Royal Society of Canada hosts a bilingual webinar, "What is Canadian Secularism?" Experts in religious studies, anthropology, political science, and law to explore the different understandings of secularism at play in Canada, and various frameworks that can help us better understand the contemporary politics of religious difference in Canada. Thursday, May 22, at 1 p.m. happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Allies in Exile'—Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communications hosts "Allies in Exile: The concept of a Press Club in Exile for Women Journalists." Project lead Farida Nekzad will lead the discussion exploring the concept of creating a press club in exile for women journalists. Thursday, May 22, at 5 p.m. ET at Richcraft Hall, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Shaping the 2025 G7 Summit'—The Bill Graham Centre for

Contemporary International History hosts a panel discussion, "Shaping the 2025 G7 Summit: Canada's Leadership in a New Era of Global Governance," featuring John Kirton, director of the G7 Research Group, and Ella Kokotsis, director, Climate Finance, Global Governance Program. Thursday, May 22, at 6 p.m. ET at Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Ave., Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

MONDAY, MAY 26

Parliament Returns—Parliamentarians are set to return to the Hill today.

Launch of OECD Economic Survey of Canada—OECD Chief Economist Álvaro Pereira will present the findings of the group's Economic Survey of Canada, exploring the macroeconomic outlook and policy challenges, balancing short-term support with

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