

Playing  
Trump's  
shell game  
p. 3

# A new middle-power alliance would give Canada leverage, and Canadians hope

► PAGE 11

## Is the media strategy the message?

What to make of the Tories' shift in press relations?

► PAGE 6

Tim  
Powers  
p. 5



# THE HILL TIMES

Party  
Central  
p. 14

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2224

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY MAY 21, 2025 \$5.00

### NEWS



Liberals Marianne Dandurand, left, Fares Al Soud, and Conservative Grant Jackson are all former staff who've been elected to sit in the House of Commons. Photographs courtesy of Facebook

## 'It makes a lot of things easier': ex-staffers turned MPs say Hill experience proving a boon

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Becoming a first-time MP can be a daunting experience, with a host of new rules to learn, staff to hire, offices to set up, and new colleagues to meet. And with Parliament making its fastest post-election return in three decades, former federal staffers elected to sit in the House of Commons for the first time say their prior Hill experience is helping to ease the transition.

"There are a lot of new MPs. When I went to the orientation sessions, I felt ... privileged to have [had] this experience in Ottawa [and] know how it

works," said Liberal Marianne Dandurand, who attended House of Commons-led orientation sessions in Ottawa the week of May 5. Dandurand was elected to represent her former boss' riding of Compton-Stanstead, Que., on April 28 with 45.6 per cent support.

"Having been there ... knowing mostly how it works, knowing what it looks like, the schedule of an MP—when you're going to be in the riding, when you're going to be in Ottawa—all of this, you have to learn it when you're a new MP. There's a lot of it that I know already, so it's an advantage. It makes a lot of

things easier," leaving more room for other new information, said Dandurand.

Dandurand has had an "eclectic career path." A former innkeeper, she went on to cover the eastern townships as a journalist for *La Tribune*. From there, she got into communications and marketing, and later joined a marketing research startup, Orange K, during which time she also began teaching communications and statistics courses at the Université de Sherbrooke. But then came COVID, which dried up business, and coincided with the end of her teaching contract.

It was good timing when, in the spring of 2021, then-Liberal MP Marie-Claude Bibeau went looking for communications help in her Compton-Stanstead constituency office. Dandurand took up the job, and was later part of Bibeau's 2021 re-election team—marking Dandurand's first time working a campaign. Post-election, Bibeau hired Dandurand as press secretary in her office as then-agriculture minister, later promoting her to director of communications. Dandurand later followed Bibeau to the national revenue portfolio as communications

Continued on page 13

### NEWS

## New housing minister's 'first-week jitters' on home values needs clarification, says policy expert Mike Moffatt

BY STUART BENSON

Prime Minister Mark Carney can't afford to allow first-week cabinet jitters to dilute his government's messaging on the housing crisis, says economist and progressive policy expert Mike Moffatt. But to truly address affordability, the government will have to admit that homeowners won't be able to keep all the value.

"The prime minister is willing to acknowledge that housing prices do need to fall, but the housing minister would not," said Moffatt, an associate professor of economics and public policy at Western University's Ivey Business School. "Overall, Canada now seems to have two parallel housing policies: one from the prime minister, and one from the housing minister."

Writing for *The Hub* in the immediate aftermath of the cabinet shuffle on May 13, Moffatt, an executive with the Smart Prosperity Institute and host of the *Missing Middle* podcast, described the selection of former Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson (Vancouver Fraserview-South Burnaby, B.C.) as Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) newest housing and infrastructure minister as a "high-risk, high-reward" decision.

However, in his first week, Robertson produced "far more risk than reward," Moffatt told *The Hill Times* in a May 15 interview.

Less than 24 hours after being named to the role, Robertson had already created the impression that he and Carney "are not on the same page" regarding how to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis, Moffatt said.

Continued on page 12

### NEWS

'Really, scared, anxious, and horrified': advocates decry lack of voice for Canadians with disabilities in cabinet

BY MARLO GLASS

As an "inadequate" Canada Disability Benefit is launched, advocates are decrying a lack of representation for people with disabilities in Prime Minister Mark Carney's cabinet.

"Our community is really, really, scared, anxious, and horrified," Donna Jodhan of Barrier Free Canada said in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "I can only personally plead with Carney—please think of us."

Jodhan says it comes as a particular shock after having a minister responsible for people with disabilities for nearly a decade, until Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) pre-election shuffle, which significantly pared down the cabinet he inherited from former prime minister Justin Trudeau.

A ministry for people with disabilities was first created by the Trudeau Liberals in 2015, with then-Liberal MP Carla Qualtrough holding the title in tandem with the sport portfolio.

Jodhan was among those who led the campaign for the Trudeau government to adopt the Accessible Canada Act in 2019. The act prohibits disability-based discrimination in the federal public service, Crown corporations, and all federally regulated organizations.

"I still thank prime minister Justin Trudeau for having taken the time and listened to us to appoint a special minister [in Qualtrough]. And she was special," she said.

Qualtrough has a vision impairment, is a three-time Paralympic medalist, and was a human rights lawyer before joining politics. She held several other cabinet positions including public service and procurement, and Treasury Board president, but was responsible for the

Continued on page 7



# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Close race expected for Cutest Pets on the Hill contest



Louis, top left, Leo, Darcy, Isey, bottom left, Noodle, and Peanut are just six of the 20 finalists vying for your votes in this year's Cutest Pets on the Hill contest. Photographs courtesy of the Canadian Animal Health Institute

Organizers expect it to be a close race in one of this year's most anticipated contests: the Cutest Pets on the Hill. Polls are open now for online voting until June 3.

"We absolutely expect a close race, and it will most definitely come down to the wire," Eleanor Hawthorn, communications manager for the Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI), told *Heard on the Hill* last week.

Having received 57 submissions from parliamentarians, staffers, recent election candidates, and press gallery members, a panel of judges narrowed the ballot to 10 finalists each in both the Cutest Dog and Cutest Cat categories.

With Elections Canada busy with a bunch of official recounts in the latest vote for humans on the Hill, HOH asked Hawthorn whether CAHI is prepared for either a tie or a recount.

"While we don't anticipate a tie, we would host a run-off byelection," she explained. "As for a recount, we respect our democracy and would take any recount requests seriously, and if warranted, a recount procedure would be properly followed and overseen by a bipartisan judge."

Meanwhile, it was no contest this year in the Other Pet category, as the lone contestant—Hiccup the Hamster—was acclaimed.

Turns out Hiccup belongs to the family of *The Hill Times*' editor Peter Mazereeuw. In his side hustle as Hiccup's director of communications, Mazereeuw said: "Hiccup ran because some pet needed to. Her acclamation is proof that the skeptics were wrong, and a hamster can win the 'Cutest Pets-Other' category if it is prepared to put in the work."

"Hiccup will make sure that lovers of 'other' pets won't be taken for granted on the Hill for the next year," said Mazereeuw.

Hawthorn says this is the first acclamation in the contest's three-year history, and that next year, CAHI aims to improve the diversity of the contestants.

"We want to encourage people to be fun and creative," she told HOH. "Whether it's a farm pet, a frequent visitor, or a salamander who dresses up, all other pets are welcome," said Hawthorn, recalling last year's Other Pet winner was a friendly mallard duck named Bernard who decided to call the Metropolitan Brasserie home, and then there was Phillippa, "a turkey finalist who made the roof at the British High Commission building home," said Hawthorn.

Canadians of all ages are encouraged to cast their votes online for the Hill's cutest cats and dogs until June 3 when polls close. The winners will be celebrated at a pet-friendly reception at Ottawa's Métropolitain Brasserie on June 4.

## Recount cements Liberal win in Milton East–Halton Hills South, Ont.

Elections Canada announced the results of its official recount in the Toronto-area riding of Milton East–Halton Hills South on May 15, confirming that Liberal candidate Kristina Tesser Derksen won with 32,178 votes over Conservative challenger Parm Gill who received 32,157—a difference of 21 votes. Tesser Derksen gained 48.3 per cent of the vote, versus Gill's 48.2 per cent.

"It is a profound honour to be elected as your MP. Let's get to work!" former municipal councillor Tesser Derksen posted



A recount confirmed on May 16 that Liberal Kristina Tesser Derksen won the riding of Milton East–Halton Hills South, Ont., by 21 votes. Photograph courtesy of the Liberal Party of Canada

on X just after midnight on May 16.

Meanwhile, the results of a judicial recount are still pending in Terra Nova–The Peninsulas, N.L. where Liberal candidate Anthony Germain was leading by 12 votes over Conservative rival Jonathan Rowe. A recount in Windsor–Tecumseh–Lakeshore, Ont., is scheduled for May 20. In that contest, Liberal incumbent Irek Kusmierczyk was trailing Conservative candidate Kathy Borrelli by 77 votes.

## 'Storyteller,' ex-NDP staffer Salloum launches a website

Former longtime NDP staffer Anthony Salloum has launched a website so he can download his thoughts after a long career in politics.

"I had been thinking about this for some time," he told HOH by email on May 15. "I was hoping to retire at the end of 2026, and this website was supposed to be my retirement project that provides a space to share my reflections and thoughts about my almost three decades in the party."

Until recently, Salloum had been the lobby co-ordinator for the NDP for the past 14 years. But with the party having lost recognized status and now no longer receiving funds for leadership offices, including a whip, Salloum's retirement plans got fast-tracked. Just last November, he marked 25 years of working at the House of Commons.



Now-former NDP staffer Anthony Salloum will be sharing his reflections on a long career in politics on his eponymous website. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"I've served this party for almost half its existence, so I've been witness to many positive, exciting—and not so positive or exciting—moments," Salloum explained, hoping his collected observations will yield some insight into last 30 years of the federal NDP's history. He calls this act of writing "cathartic." Salloum acknowledges the notion of launching a website in the world of

Substacks and other trendy platforms may seem old-fashioned, joking that he's not "cool enough for other 'trendy' platforms." But for him, the medium isn't the message; it's the weekly content he's creating that he hopes will resonate with readers.

"I have always been a storyteller, and this website allows me to put these stories in one place." Learn more at [anthonysalloum.ca](http://anthonysalloum.ca).

## A few updates from the Red Chamber

Both the Canadian Senators Group and the Progressive Senate Group each had an update to share last week.

Nova Scotia Senator Tony Ince joined the CSG on May 13. Appointed to the Senate on March 7 by then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, Ince is a former provincial cabinet minister, and the first Black man to take a seat in the Red Chamber since 2017.

His membership brings the CSG up to 19 members—the second-largest group in the Senate.

Meanwhile, the 18-member PSG announced some leadership changes on May 14. Senator Brian Francis is now its leader, supported by Senator Judy White as deputy leader. Senator Amina Gerba is the new liaison, and Senator Tracy Muggli takes over as caucus chair.



Nova Scotia Senator Tony Ince has joined the Canadian Senators Group. Photograph courtesy of the Senate of Canada

## Welcome to *Hill Times*' new deputy editor, Tessie Sanci

Meet Tessie Sanci, the new deputy editor for *The Hill Times*' Monday edition. No stranger to Hill Times Publishing, Sanci has been the executive editor of *Hill Times Health* and *The Lobby Monitor* for many years, having first joined our Queen Street office in December 2017 to write for LM, and then not long after helped to midwife HTH in 2018.

Originally from Toronto, Sanci's transition from our online team to the Monday print edition follows the recent departure of Stephen Jeffery who has returned to his native Australia after six years in Ottawa (fun fact: Sanci and Jeffery worked together at LM in 2021).

[cleadlay@hilltimes.com](mailto:cleadlay@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*



## COMMENT

# Unchartable as ever: Canada's future still up in the air as Trump juggles his trade strategy



U.S. President Donald Trump seems to be entering into a more difficult phase in his unorthodox economic project, writes Les Whittington. *White House photograph by Daniel Torok*

## Quebec Anglos are a 'distinct society'

Recent court decisions have recognized that English-speaking Quebecers are a unique community, with our own important institutions, and we need more of this.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Canada needs some kind of breakthrough soon because the combination of existing tariffs and the uncertainty from Trump's tariff shell game has this country headed for a recession.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



**O**TTAWA—Just when American stock markets were regaining previous losses from United States President Donald Trump's destructive global trade war, he authored another zig-zag on May 16 with the warning that the White House would soon set unilateral tariff rates on—potentially—more than 100 countries.

Trump imposed so-called reciprocal tariffs on all these countries on April 2, then quickly reversed himself in the face of a market uproar, and put a 90-day pause on implementation of the protectionist measures to allow targeted nations to negotiate one-on-one deals with Washington.

However, last Friday, the president said his government doesn't have the capacity to handle all the negotiations, so his office would

just send letters to most of the countries telling them what the import taxes would be on each country. This flew in the face of the general conviction that Trump was moving to look for exit ramps for his six-month misadventure in Navarronomics (as in trade-obsessed White House adviser Peter Navarro).

What does the latest detour in the U.S. trade war mean? Nobody seems to know, and it's unlikely that Prime Minister Mark Carney got much in the way of enlightenment in his talk with U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance in Rome this past weekend. Carney summed it up on X as a "good conversation," an apparent step down from the usual euphemism: constructive.

Canada wasn't caught up in the global "reciprocal" tariff onslaught unveiled by Trump just after April Fool's Day. And there has been some reason to think that the White House has quietly come to understand that wrecking the Canada-U.S. trade relationship would hurt American companies and their workers, and drive up the cost of goods for American consumers. Exceptions in the U.S. tariff wall have been announced for various Canadian products.

And official discussions on finding a path to reconstruct Canada-U.S. relations on economic and security matters are said to be continuing, with Carney also having agreed with Trump on future direct talks between the two leaders.

For whatever it's worth, senior U.S. officials keep saying the whole point of the international economic bedlam unleashed by the president was to win bet-

ter deals from shell-shocked American trade partners. Newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra, for instance, seems to think it's just a question of Carney typing up a proposal for a new trade pact and firing it off to the White House.

This kind of thing might make sense in that Trump seems to be entering into a more difficult phase in his unorthodox economic project. With higher prices from tariffs about to start biting in the next few months, the president is pulling out all the stops to head off public complaints.

On May 17, for example, he called out Walmart for warning consumers that inflation will soon be undercutting the company's low-cost brand. "Walmart should STOP trying to blame Tariffs as the reason for raising prices throughout the chain," Trump raged on Truth Social. "Between Walmart and China they should, as is said, 'EAT THE TARIFFS,' and not charge valued customers ANYTHING."

With a U.S. president engaged in this kind of bizarre behaviour, American consumers in a funk, and questions about a possible recession still being debated in financial circles, the White House may indeed be looking to change the channel on trade.

Even if that's true, there doesn't seem to be an obvious way forward for Canada. Trump has ditched the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement despite having negotiated it himself, and instead of saying what kind of trade deal he wants from Ottawa, he keeps insisting he doesn't want to trade with Canadians at all. And he seems

to spend more time railing about Canada than any other country. He has lately taken to acknowledging that his obsession with his northern neighbours originates from him being a developer at heart—in other words, he can't help fantasizing about exploiting that massive piece of real estate just out of reach above the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel.

From any perspective, this is an odd business. While the president slams Canada almost every time he meets the media, he seems much more sanguine about Mexico, which ships three times as many cars to the U.S. as Canada, and is actually the source of America's fentanyl epidemic, as well as the migrants whose arrival in the U.S. was—in Trump's words—an invasion.

So, despite months of intense efforts to work with the White House on this, and Carney's relatively problem-free visit to the White House, it's not clear what would be the basis for a revitalized commercial partnership with Canada. For one thing, Canadians certainly don't want a new pact with Washington along the lines of the preliminary arrangement the British have settled for, which still includes 10-per-cent tariffs on most imports into the U.S.

But Canada needs some kind of breakthrough soon because the combination of existing tariffs on steel, aluminum, and other products, and the uncertainty from Trump's tariff shell game has this country headed—by all accounts—for a recession sooner than later.

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

**K**AMOURASKA, QUE.—I was on Montreal English radio recently doing my regular commentary, and we were discussing the new Pope, Leo XIV. I mentioned that two women had read the scripture at his first unofficial mass, which was a sign of a liberal papacy.

In referring to the gospel, I stumbled remembering the word in English, and said "l'évangile." This was probably because, living in a francophone village, I would use the word in conversation more than in English.

As sports fans everywhere know, the Office Québécois de la Langue Française (OQLF) insisted Montreal buses read "Allez Canadiens." This despite every supporter of the team of all mother tongues yelling "Go Habs Go!" at games. An embarrassed Minister of the French Language Jean-François Roberge backed off, saying "It's a unifying expression, rooted in our history."

It got me to thinking how often Quebecers of differing mother tongues cross over into the other language, speaking a language foreign to Canadians elsewhere. Of course, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have their own dialect, summarized in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English, but Anglo Quebecers might give them a run for the money.

This mixing of languages is not something new. When I was a reporter at the National Assembly in the late 1970s, it was the first time in my life I

Continued on page 4



# OPINION

## A step forward, but not far enough: Canada still needs a minister for older persons

With older adults soon to make up a quarter of our population, Canada needs focused and empowered leadership to prepare for the realities of a super-aged society.

Gabrielle Gallant  
& Kahir  
Lalji

Opinion



Against the odds, Prime Minister Mark Carney has secured a fourth term for the Liberal Party with an ambitious agenda in hand. Among the appointments in his newly appointed cabinet is Stephanie McLean, named secretary of state for seniors. The appointment of McLean—a former Alberta NDP MLA newly elected federally to represent Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke, B.C.—to this junior cabinet role is a step toward giving older Canadians greater visibility in federal policymaking.

But it is only a step. For years, experts and advocates have called for the creation of a full ministerial portfolio for older persons—one with the authority and resources to co-ordinate policy across departments and drive long-term, system-level change. This omission of a ministerial role dedicated to older persons is disappointing; not just for what it symbolizes, but also for what it delays. With older adults soon to make up a quarter of our population, Canada needs focused and empowered leadership to prepare for the realities of a super-aged society.

The challenges are well known: income insecurity, housing shortages, overburdened health and long-term care systems, and the need for more accessible communities. But without a dedicated ministerial voice at the cabinet table, these issues remain scattered across departments and too often fall through the cracks.

The absence of leadership does not reflect a lack of evidence. We know what needs to be done, and getting this right means moving beyond short-term fixes. It means designing systems, not just services, that reflect the dignity, diversity, and contributions of older people. It means embedding aging into how we plan our communities, structure our workforce, and shape our social programs. What's needed

now is bold leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and a fresh perspective on what it means to grow older in Canada.

Too often, aging is framed as a burden—something to manage, rather than an opportunity to lead. We treat aging as a siloed issue instead of what it really is: a central driver of economic, health, housing, and workforce policy.

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) and HelpAge Canada have laid out a clear set of policy actions that the federal government could take now to meaningfully improve the lives of older Canadians. These include improving the Guaranteed Income Supplement by allowing working low-income older adults to keep more of what they earn, modernizing the Canada Pension Plan by implementing the Pension Back Death Benefit, and investing in the community-based seniors serving (CBSS) sector—the network of local organizations that supports older adults to age in place with dignity.

The CBSS sector—made up of more than 8,000 community-based organizations—provides essential services for older Canadians and has long been undervalued, under-resourced, and under-recognized. Despite the critical work these groups do, the limited funding available is often project-based, leaving them in a state of chronic precarity. There is a real need for sustained,



Stephanie McLean, centre with Prime Minister Mark Carney and Governor General Mary Simon, was sworn in as secretary of state for seniors on May 13. That's a good first step, but there still needs to be a full ministerial portfolio for older persons, write Gabrielle Gallant and Kahir Lalji. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

dedicated support to ensure these organizations can continue helping older adults age in their communities—and according to NIA survey data, the overwhelming majority of Canadians do want to age in their own homes and communities.

Older Canadians face rising costs on fixed incomes. In fact, NIA research has found that one in four older adults in Canada have less than \$5,000 saved for their retirement. We know that older adults also struggle to find affordable, accessible housing. Many cannot access the care they need, and when they do, it often comes too late and at too high a cost.

These are not fringe concerns. They are core to how we ensure fairness and sustainability across generations. The aging of our population is a demographic certainty, not a policy footnote. Canada is one of the few high-income countries without a national aging strategy or ministerial port-

folio to co-ordinate action. This has real consequences.

Carney's stated vision for a strong and prosperous Canada is simply not possible without a thoughtful approach to the massive upcoming demographic shift that will redefine Canadian society. That begins with centring aging in our national policy agenda, applying a systems-level lens, and committing to meaningful investment in the programs and infrastructure older Canadians need to thrive.

This is not just about today's older adults or the wave of baby boomers who are already retiring. It is also about building a more resilient and inclusive future for everyone.

*Gabrielle Gallant is the director of policy at the National Institute on Ageing. Kahir Lalji is the CEO of HelpAge Canada, and vice-president of the International Longevity Centre Canada. The Hill Times*

# COMMENT

## Quebec Anglos are a 'distinct society'

Continued from page 3

was fully immersed in French. I was reporting in English, but French documents and debates dominated my day. I mentioned to friends I was beginning to lose my English. They were bilingual francophones from Ontario, and found this interesting. Soon after they composed a satirical newscast, written in Anglo Quebec English. It was titled "If you can understand this, then you have been assimilated."

It began: "Good morning. Well, it looks like the functionaries at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs might be back at work soon. If the credits are voted in the National Assembly this afternoon, the negotiators will fix the date for the functionaries to pronounce themselves on a new collective convention at their congress."

As I write this, my computer screen shows words underlined in red for expressions it doesn't recognize, but Anglo Quebecers would. It is what makes us a "distinct society," whether we live in Montreal, Knowlton, or Kamouraska. We say "dépanneur" instead of corner store, "guichet" instead of ATM, and use French acronyms like MRC, CLSC, and CEGEP for regional government, clinic, and community college.

And it goes the other way, too. When I began playing hockey in



Nationalist francophones often portray Anglo Quebecers as their adversaries for long ago slights, but we are much more allies than they may think, writes Andrew Caddell. *Unsplash photograph by Tim Marshall*

nearby La Pocatière a few years ago, I was astonished to hear teammates say "Next!" when they came to the bench. Or when the referee called "Ice!" instead of "dégagement refusé!"

While the language purists at the OQLF may insist on "hambourgeois" or "pâte," every Quebecer eats hamburgers and pasta. But we also delight in frites, poutine, and pouding chômeur because we have long been an integrated society. Most

longtime Quebec families like mine count Anglo and French ancestors. And it was both French and English Canadian "Patriotes" who rebelled against the British Crown in 1837.

Today, Quebec statistics show many marriages between people of differing language and cultural groups, with 95 per cent of us speaking French, and most immigrants living and working in French. The poem from which Hugh MacLennan's novel *Two Solitudes* takes its name reads, "Love consists of this: two solitudes that meet, protect and greet each other."

Nationalist francophones often portray Anglo Quebecers as their adversaries for long ago slights. In fact, we are much more allies than they may think. Recent court decisions have recognized we are a unique community, with our own important institutions. Even

Quebec Finance Minister Eric Girard recognized this recently when he told the National Assembly "the anglophone community is a significant asset. I would like them to feel that we appreciate them, and they are part of Quebec."

We need more of this. It is why many English-speaking Quebecers haven't left, in spite of the constant barrage of nationalist harangues and mean-spirited language laws. And then there are others like me who came back because we love living in Quebec. With every day that passes, there are small victories changing our society for the better. We will keep fighting for our rights because we believe ça va bien aller.

*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

# Sport portfolio a bright light during cabinet's growing pains

The feds have seen the opportunity global sports performances provide to advance the country's reputation, open doors for diplomacy and trade, and boost our global status.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—There was both fanfare and criticism when Prime Minister Mark Carney rolled out his second cabinet last week. In the early hours after the swearing in, the government pushed hard in noting 24 new faces in the cabinet, and argued

it was smaller than former prime minister Justin Trudeau's. They were quite cheeky in calling themselves Canada's new cabinet and new government, language eerily like Stephen Harper's 2006 public branding of his team.

However, it didn't take long for observers to recognize a lot of familiar Trudeau-era faces on Team Carney and in senior roles. Among them, Anita Anand at foreign affairs, Mélanie Joly at industry, Chrystia Freeland at transport and internal trade, François-Philippe Champagne back at finance, and Dominic LeBlanc as minister of everything. While Carney reasonably argued he needed experience at his cabinet table, it did not mute some opposition criticism that more of the Trudeau era should have been flushed.

And in the early hours of the new cabinet, the new ministers were making the rounds with the media and tripping over themselves in some kind of *Keystone Cops*-esque skit. Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson somehow mused that he doesn't think houses are too expensive;



If the prime minister and Secretary of State for Sport Adam van Koeverden lean in here, they could produce some big wins from which we'd all benefit, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Steven Guilbeault—minister of something called culture and identity—kept up his no-more-pipelines game face, directly contradicting his boss on whether Canada needs a new pipeline.

Then the secretary of state for the Canada Revenue Agency, the likeable Wayne Long, said his boss was going to run the government like a corporation—that landed with a thud. The secretary of state likely meant to say “effi-

ciently,” but oh well. Side note: he could make his own department more efficient by getting rid of all those extra auditors the government hired under Trudeau who do a great job of shaking down widowers and pensioners.

The best ministerial misstep was done by the minister of finance, who announced the government would have no budget to introduce in its first parliamentary sitting and might have a traditional economic statement in the fall. Without a compelling rationale for no budget to be presented, it looked like the Liberals had scored an own goal. Carney worked to correct that when he announced at a news conference in Rome—where he was attending the new Pope's inauguration mass—that a budget would be delivered in the fall when economic indicators may be clearer.

One thing the Carney government did for which it didn't get enough proper credit was bringing back a secretary for state for sport, and appointing one of Canada's foremost Olympians—Adam van Koeverden—to take on that key role. By now, it is well known that

Carney is a big advocate of sport and physical activity. Never has a single campaign had so many hockey analogies or messages, never mind references to running and the power of the Olympics.

At their core, Carney and van Koeverden recognize the power of sport for not only transforming our health, but also our lives. Both have also seen the opportunity global sports performances and engagements provide to advance the country's reputation, open doors for diplomacy and trade, and boost our global status. If—as the prime minister has argued—Canada needs to diversify economically, sport is a useful tool to drive that agenda.

Equally, with the world coming to Los Angeles in 2028 for the Summer Olympics, it's hard not to applaud a scenario where Canada looks to use that as a stage to have incredible athletic performances by our athletes. There's nothing like showing Americans in their backyard, with their leaders and the rest of the world watching, that we take a back seat to no one.

Canada's sport system has its challenges, but if the prime minister and his secretary of state lean in here they could produce some big wins from which we'd all benefit.

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

*The Hill Times*

CELEBRATING CANADA'S HIGHEST DISTINCTION IN THE PERFORMING ARTS



GOVERNOR GENERAL'S  
PERFORMING ARTS AWARDS  
PRESENTED BY RBC



20  
25



April Hubbard

Graham Greene

Patrick Huard

Sandra Laronde

Denis Gougeon

Jeremy Dutcher

Bob Ezrin

SATURDAY, JUNE 14—NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Tickets on sale now! [nac-cna.ca/ggawards](http://nac-cna.ca/ggawards)

PRESENTED BY



PRODUCED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



WITH THE SUPPORT OF



LEAD DONOR

Donald K. Johnson, O.C.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



COMMUNICATIONS PARTNER



NATIONAL PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS





## NEWS

# Don't mistake new Conservative media tone for policy shift, say Tory pundits



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's post-election press conferences on Parliament Hill have loosened up from the strict four-question limit he held to during the campaign. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The Conservatives may be more accessible after the election, but don't bank on them softening their stance on defunding the CBC, says communications strategist Dan Mader.

BY STUART BENSON

Despite a slate of Conservative MPs returning to the mainstream media airwaves and a less combative tone during interactions with reporters, Conservative communication strategists advise against reading too much into the shift in approach beyond it being a normal post-election recalibration.

Since Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre was elected to the role in the fall of 2022, the party has imposed a tight grip on both its caucus' ability to speak with the media, and journalists' ability to ask either individual MPs or Poilievre questions, all while maintaining an at-times overly aggressive and combative tone towards both their political opponents, and the media.

But since the party failed to form government on April 28,

there has been a proliferation of Conservative caucus appearances on various mainstream media news programs, and a marked shift in tone toward individual reporters.

Speaking with *The Hill Times* on background, parliamentary press gallery reporters almost unanimously noted a positive shift in tone from Conservative caucus members. However, the extent of the improvement varied depending on the individual reporters' previous relationships and the outlets they worked for.

While some described the difference as "night and day," others noted changes as simple as slightly more expedient and less-scripted responses to their requests for comment.

The most striking difference is the Conservative caucus' reappearance on the CBC's flagship political program *Power and Politics*, hosted by David Cochrane.

Before and during the election, Cochrane's note that no Conservative had been made available for that day's program became a familiar refrain for nearly three years. However, in the three weeks since the election, Cochrane has interviewed at least one Conservative per week, including two appearances by Conservative MP Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) on May 2, and again in studio on May 7, the day after his selection as interim opposition leader in the House of Commons. Most recently, Conservative MP Kyle Seeback (Dufferin-Caledon, Ont.)

was interviewed in studio on May 13 to provide his party's reaction to Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) newly named cabinet. On May 4, MP Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent-Akiawenhrahk, Que.) was also interviewed by the CBC's chief political correspondent Rosemary Barton on her weekly Sunday program.

In that time, Scheer also made two appearances on CTV's *Power Play*, hosted by Vassy Kapelos, on April 30 and May 6, alongside a May 13 appearance by Conservative MP John Brassard (Barrie-Innisfil, Ont.). However, unlike the CBC, Scheer and other caucus members had made previous appearances on Kapelos' program prior to the election.

For reporters on the Hill, there has also been a marked increase in access and receptivity to answering questions. Eight MPs stopped to answer questions on the way into the first post-election caucus meeting on May 6, and Scheer took an additional three questions on his way out after being chosen as interim leader.

On May 12, *The Hill Times* reported that the Tory caucus held "somewhat frank" discussions on what went right and wrong during the campaign. Some called for a candid post-mortem report, which should be shared with the party's rank-and-file members.

Conservative sources expressed increasing frustration with several perceived campaign errors, including Poilievre's aggressive communication style,

which reportedly did not connect with voters, and the concentration of authority within a small inner circle that they said had been dominated by Poilievre and his campaign director, Jenni Byrne.

Additionally, sources raised concerns about the campaign's decision to restrict media access for caucus members and candidates, despite the presence of experienced and articulate MPs serving as the party's official critics.

While Poilievre only answered four questions in his May 6 pre-caucus scrum, there were already signs he was attempting a less combative tone toward the assembled reporters and his Liberal opponents, wishing Carney a "positive meeting" with U.S. President Donald Trump during the prime minister's official visit to the White House.

Poilievre said that while the election result had been "disappointing," there was also "a lot to be thankful for," pointing to his party's increased total seats and vote share.

When he responded to the cabinet shuffle on May 13 from the West Block foyer, Poilievre answered six questions. He took another five during his press conference outside of Parliament on May 15, during which Poilievre also ignored the first attempt to end the conference via a shouted "last question" by Sarah Fischer, the party's communications director, who helmed both press conferences. Poilievre's previous press conductor, then-media relations director Sebastian Skamski, left that role on May 12. Ben Woodfinden, Poilievre's former director of communications, also announced his departure in early May.

Loyalist Public Affairs' Dan Mader said that while the party's campaign strategy would naturally be re-evaluated—a practice he would have advised regardless of the election outcome—he advised against reading too deeply into the Conservatives' new tone and receptiveness to journalists.

Before the election, the Conservatives had devised and successfully executed their strategy, which Mader said helped lead to the January departure of then-prime minister Justin Trudeau. However, once Conservatives achieved that goal and a significant polling lead, they aimed to maintain it and "reduce risk," said Mader, who led the Conservatives' policy and platform creation and speechwriting for the 2021 election.

"They had won all of the arguments they wanted to win, and didn't want to risk losing focus," Mader explained. "That resulted in fewer Conservatives speaking to the media or going on TV where they saw limited upside."

But win or lose, there are always lessons to be learned, and strategies that could have been better, Mader said.

Regarding media strategy, Mader said the decision to restrict individual MPs from appearing in the media, the lack of high-profile candidate recruitment, and the decision to bar journalists from

travelling with the campaign will most likely be re-evaluated.

"For a year and a half, we had a campaign team that was in risk-avoidance mode, and as part of their review, they had to think about whether that was the right choice and if they missed opportunities," Mader said, pointing to the underuse of effective communicators and campaigners like newly re-elected MP Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville-Oshawa North, Ont.), whose election night interview with the CBC has already been viewed nearly 44,000 times on YouTube alone as of publishing deadline.

However, Mader said the party will need to consider whether the virality and combativeness of the interview—in which Jivani accused Ontario Premier Doug Ford of being a "hype man for the Liberal Party" and an "opportunist" unwilling to "stay out of our business" during the election—was helpful.

Yaroslav Baran, co-founder of Pendulum Group and a former Conservative Party campaign communications director during Poilievre's leadership campaign, told *The Hill Times* that even without those reviews, message discipline is always less acute in the wake of an election, regardless of outcome.

"There's an ability to loosen the reins a little bit because it's not absolutely 1,000-per-cent imperative that only the day's message is delivered, whether it's building houses or stopping crime or whatever else," Baran said. "It's always much less deliberate in the immediate aftermath when we already know who won."

However, despite lifting the prohibition against allowing Conservatives to appear on the nation's public broadcaster, Baran said it was "too early to read too much" into whether that would signal a change in policy regarding the CBC's public funding.

Mader agreed that he doesn't expect any "major shift" in the Conservatives' opposition to the CBC's funding model.

"The CBC is receiving well over \$1-billion of taxpayer funding every year, but they're using that to reach an audience, particularly an older audience, that the Conservatives want to win back," Mader explained. "You have to fish where the fish are, and sometimes that means you go on a television show you don't like because they're reaching an audience you need."

"We're post-election and they're back into opposition mode, so they have to get back out there and win the argument again," Mader continued. "They had won the arguments against Trudeau, but now we have a new prime minister, so they have to be out there debating and making their case where the voters they need will hear them."

Neither Scheer nor Jivani responded to *The Hill Times'* requests for comment, nor did the party respond to questions about whether it would change its policy promise to defund the CBC should the Conservatives form government.

sbenson@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



# ‘Really, scared, anxious, and horrified’: advocates decry lack of voice for Canadians with disabilities in cabinet

The gap comes at a crucial time for advocates, as a new disability benefit program is being criticized for not fulfilling its stated goal of lifting hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty.

Continued from page 1

accessibility file for much of her time in politics, including from 2015 to August 2017, and July 2018 to July 2023, when then-MP Kamal Khera took on the portfolio, which she kept until Carney named his first cabinet in March. Khera failed her re-election bid, while Qualtrough opted out of running again and was thereafter shuffled out of cabinet in the dying days of the Trudeau era.

Jodhan says she would like to see Carney listen to the community and add a minister responsible for people with disabilities as soon as possible, noting that disability advocacy wasn't mentioned during the election.

“We’re contributing members to society, not just charity hand-outs,” she said. “What is he really thinking about people with disabilities? How does he view us?”

*The Hill Times* asked the Prime Minister’s Office about what led to the decision to opt against including a minister responsible for disability advocacy, but the office did not immediately respond with comment.

The gap comes at a crucial time for disability advocates, as a new benefit program is being criticized for not fulfilling its stated goal of lifting hundreds of thousands of Canadians with disabilities out of poverty.

Former Green Party MP Mike Morrice, who was among the vocal opponents of the government’s “inadequate” approach last Parliament, said there should be a minister focused on the file. Morrice lost his Kitchener Centre, Ont., seat in the April 28 election to Conservative Kelly DeRidder



Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu will oversee Employment and Social Development Canada in her role, but without a dedicated minister for disability advocacy, some are concerned their voices won't be heard. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

by a margin of less than one percentage point.

“It’ll be more difficult for the disability community to have their voice heard at the table if there’s no minister responsible for delivering on the promises this government made,” said Morrice, who was his party’s lead critic as the Canada Disability Benefit legislation was being developed.

The Canada Disability Benefit opened for applications on May 15, with payments starting July 1.

“The Liberal government, in the last Parliament, said it would lift hundreds of thousands of working-age folks with disabilities out of poverty,” Morrice said.

The benefit is only available to those who receive the existing Disability Tax Credit, and requires doctors to fill out a lengthy assessment form. What’s more, the benefit is only up to \$200 a month, depending on household income.

“I asked the minister [Khera] at committee, how many people will that lift out of poverty? The number they came up with was about 25,000,” Morrice said, adding that there are 1.6 million people with disabilities in Canada, and 40 per cent of people living in poverty have disabilities.

“It’s completely inadequate until it meets—at the very least—the commitment the government made, and should listen to folks with disabilities who have been

trying to have their voices heard for many years,” Morrice said, adding that it was the disability community and their advocacy that led to the benefit getting passed in the first place.

Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay–Superior North, Ont.) oversees Employment and Social Development Canada, which handles the disability benefit. Her office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Michael Prince, a professor of social policy at the University of Victoria, saw firsthand the impact of a dedicated minister when he sat on advisory groups for several different ministers responsible for disability advocacy.

He publicly resigned in April 2024 in protest over the federal budget, and the “hugely inadequate” Canada Disability Benefit.

The advisory group played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic in telling the government how the public health crisis was impacting Canadians with disabilities, he said.

“It was quite clear to us that if you did not have a minister at the table [at] cabinet committees—or at the full cabinet, or in conversations with the Prime Minister’s Office and other key decision makers—those issues would not have been brought up,” Prince said. “Or they would have been brought up as an after-thought, way down the road, with

some potentially really harmful consequences.”

Prince said disability rights were de-emphasized in Carney’s pre-election cabinet, and that he had hoped “there would be recognition that it was an oversight,” adding that even “farming it off to a junior minister” or secretary of state would be a downgrade.

Prince noted Carney prioritized a “laser focus” on the economy, productivity, and labour, in light of the trade war with United States President Donald Trump, and said Carney’s government was tilting back to the centre.

“Any good Liberal government should never abandon those who are most vulnerable,” Prince said. “It’s the test of a real caring society.”

But, in a country where more than 25 per cent of adults self-identify as having disabilities, that leaves out “a significant segment of the population,” Prince said.

Without a dedicated minister, “I’m at a loss to say, what are the government’s thoughts on disability,” he said, noting the Trudeau government developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in 2022, with rolling objectives planned until 2027.

Prince noted Morrice, who advocated for people with disabilities while on Parliament Hill, lost his seat in the most recent federal election, along with fellow advocates, including former NDP

MPs Bonita Zarrillo, who lost in Port Moody—Coquitlam, B.C.; and Peter Julian, who was not re-elected in his longtime seat in New Westminster—Burnaby, B.C. Zarrillo was the party’s critic on disability inclusion, infrastructure, and communities.

“To have those voices gone, plus no minister, really makes the disability community incredibly anxious and vulnerable about what could happen,” Prince said.

Carney faced criticism in his initial cabinet for a lack of ministers focused on women and gender equality, labour, and disabilities. He course-corrected on two fronts: Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont.) was named minister of women and gender equality, and John Zerucelli (Etobicoke North, Ont.) was named secretary of state for labour.

NDP MP Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.) released a statement following the May 13 cabinet shuffle saying she is particularly pleased about the reinstatement of a minister of women and gender equality.

But Gazan said she is “disappointed and concerned” by the failure to appoint ministers devoted to seniors; diversity, equity, and inclusion; disability; youth; and labour.

“The Liberals must stop embracing this non-inclusionary and anti-labour agenda, shown in their abandonment of seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and workers among cabinet appointments,” she said. “I remain committed to working with parliamentarians across party lines to ensure that these groups do not remain underrepresented.”

Carney’s cabinet lacking emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives was noted by a federal public service union spokesperson, who spoke on background.

“We see there is a lack of portfolios to address systemic barriers to equity groups,” the spokesperson said.

Morrice said disability communities and allies across the country will need to put pressure on all parliamentarians.

“It’s going to make it that much more difficult for their voices to be heard, at a time where everything is more expensive,” he said, citing tariffs, the trade war, and the ongoing housing crisis.

“It’s just that much more difficult for the disability community to have their voices heard by this government,” Morrice said.

Though other portfolios touch on disability rights—like seniors, children, labour, or Indigenous services—none can offer proper representation, Prince said.

“It’s going to leave out hundreds of thousands, if not millions” of people, he said. “We’ve learned over the history of politics and society, you need those voices at the table. I think the feminist movement made that very clear 50 years ago. Other groups have made similar kinds of calls for wanting to be seen and represented within a key political institution in our country: the cabinet.”

[mglass@hilltimes.com](mailto:mglass@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*





Editor: Kate Malloy  
Managing Editor: Charelle Evelyn  
Digital Editor: Samantha Wright Allen  
Executive Editor: Peter Mazereeuw  
Deputy Editors: Laura Ryckewaert, Tessie Sanci  
Deputy Digital Editor: Marlo Glass  
Assistant Deputy Editor: Abbas Rana  
Publishers: Anne Marie Creskey, Jim Creskey, Leslie Dickson, Ross Dickson  
General Manager, CFO: Andrew Morrow

- EDITORIAL**  
**NEWS REPORTERS**  
Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Riddhi Kachhela, Irem Koca, Neil Moss, and Eleanor Wand  
**ENGAGEMENT EDITOR**  
Christina Leadlay  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Sam Garcia, Andrew Meade, and Cynthia Münster  
**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST**  
Michael de Adder  
**COLUMNISTS**  
Andrew Caddell, John Chenier, Sheila Copps, David Crane, Jim Creskey, Gwynne Dyer, Matt Gurney, Michael Harris, Erica Ifill, Joe Jordan, Rose LeMay, Alex Marland, Arthur Milnes, Tim Powers, Susan Riley, Ken Rubin, Josie Sabatino, Bhagwant Sandhu, Evan Sotiropoulos, Scott Taylor, Lori Turnbull, Nelson Wiseman, and Les Whittington
- ADVERTISING**  
**VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND MULTIMEDIA SALES**  
Steve MacDonald  
**DIRECTORS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**  
Ulle Baum, Craig Caldbick, Erveina Gosalci, and Martin Reaume
- DIGITAL AND DESIGN**  
**CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER**  
David Little  
**SENIOR WEB DEVELOPER**  
Nick Vakulenko  
**DIGITAL AND PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Joey Sabourin  
**SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Neena Singhal  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Naomi Wildeboer
- ADMINISTRATION**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**  
Tracey Wale
- SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
**MARKETING DIRECTOR**  
Chris Rivoire  
**LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER**  
Melanie Grant  
**OFFICE AND CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
Irma Guarneros  
**SALES CONSULTANT**  
Puran Guram

**DELIVERY INQUIRIES**  
circulation@hilltimes.com  
613-688-8821

Published every Monday and Wednesday by Hill Times Publishing Inc.

246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4  
(613) 232-5952  
Fax (613) 232-9055  
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926  
www.hilltimes.com

Please send letters to the editor to the above street address or e-mail to news@hilltimes.com. Deadline is Wednesday at noon, Ottawa time, for the Monday edition and Friday at noon for the Wednesday edition. Please include your full name, address and daytime phone number. The Hill Times reserves the right to edit letters. Letters do not reflect the views of The Hill Times. Thank you.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926  
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: CIRCULATION DEPT.  
246 Queen Street Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E4



# Editorial

## Editorial

### Will Carney be the change he wants to see in government?

Prime Minister Mark Carney says he wants change, and that he was elected with a mandate to deliver it. “More Canadians voted for a political party—the Liberal Party—than ever before. ... And we ran on a very clear platform of change. More Canadians chose that platform of change than anybody else’s. So, we have a clear mandate,” Carney told CTV’s Vassy Kapelos last week.

If he delivers on that platform, Canadians will see the effects in the way the country works as a federation—through his goal of “one Canadian economy, instead of 13”—and ultimately in their wallets, he said.

Another place to look for results may seem like inside-the-bubble navel gazing, but it could have real ramifications on how this Carney government delivers on its agenda.

Pollster Darrell Bricker recently told *The Hill Times* that a key question is whether Carney will continue the trend of centralizing things through a tightly controlled Prime Minister’s Office.

“To me, that’s more important than the actual people,” said Bricker. “When you take a look at the last government, cabinet ministers were basically there to take fire, and they were spokespeople for the government. They weren’t really overseeing big policy developments or big policy decisions. That was all being run by the Prime Minister’s Office. The combination of the prime minister, whoever the clerk of the Privy Council ends up being, and the staff around the prime minister take on a disproportionate role. So how much

is that front bench going to really do that? That’s the question.”

The messaging coming from cabinet before and after their very first meeting on May 14 was scattered and messy, which is its own problem. Politicians should be allowed to speak their minds as much as possible when it comes to cabinet ministers (which does have limits), and not always have to be perfectly “on message” by robotically spouting talking points.

But to deliver change, there should be an understanding of what that change is, and the desired outcome.

Carney said that he’s bringing to the table decades of experience in bringing people together to achieve results. In speaking with Kapelos, he seemed to take umbrage to the implication that keeping on top ministers who served in senior cabinet positions under then-PM Justin Trudeau is antithetical to his change agenda.

“We are used to hearing from them, justifying and explaining the decision that Justin Trudeau made. And now we’re going to hear from them again,” Kapelos said.

“Well, first off, now you’re hearing from me. I’m a new prime minister. I’m the 24<sup>th</sup> prime minister of Canada,” Carney replied, also highlighting other brand-new MPs that he’s elevated to the front bench.

Like any new prime minister, Carney has a lot to prove. And if he’s serious about putting his own stamp on things, then moving away from the trend of PMO omniscience would be a good place to start.

*The Hill Times*



## Letters to the Editor

### Worrying absence of Palestinian voices in media coverage: U.S. letter writer

Israel has not allowed lifesaving aid to enter Gaza since March 2, yet it seems that the resulting suffering is rarely presented in depth in mainstream media, and that coverage seldom includes interviews with Palestinians.

Let’s heed the words of Canadian physician Dr. James Orbinski, former president of the humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders:

“The genocide [in Rwanda] was a collective act. What made it possible, what made that final political crime possible, was the absence, the erasure, of seeing the other. Of knowing, of feeling, of being with the other. And when that’s removed, then politics can become genocidal.”

**Terry Hansen**  
Milwaukee, Wis.

### Put the blame for terrorism where it belongs, says Ontario reader

Re: “India and Israel on parallel tracks,” (*The Hill Times*, May 8).

A recent column by Gwynne Dyer remarking on the Hamas-Israel and the Pakistan-India conflicts states that “the root cause of all this looming tragedy was the British empire.”

At some point, blaming long-dead British bureaucrats for modern violence is wrong because it also lets entirely off the hook the actual perpetrators of this violence.

It is not a coincidence that both India and Israel are liberal democratic states surrounded by despotic regimes. Both India and Israel—Hindu and Jewish, respectively—were attacked by groups professing extremist Islamist ideologies.

Why is it so difficult for some commentators to recognize the obvious reality, that the extremists who massacred Indians on April 22, and who massacred Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023, did so because of their fanatical worldviews?

**Donna Broslaw**  
Vaughan, Ont.

### A home for all

Everyone needs a safe, decent, affordable place to call home.

But for too long, our housing system has felt like an unfair game rigged against us all. Rents are skyrocketing. Mortgage rates are unpredictable. Buying a home is beyond reach. In our own community, there just isn’t enough housing for it to be affordable for all.

And our community isn’t alone—Canada has a housing crisis. Now, in the face of United States President Donald Trump’s trade war, it’s more important than ever that we work together to protect all of us.

The Housing Canada Coalition is made up of leading housing organizations from across the housing continuum, and has built a 10-point plan to create a housing safety net and build a better system that works for everyone. The solutions are urgent and can really make a difference in this crisis.

Together, we can end the unfair housing game, and build a fair, resilient housing system in Canada that works for everyone.

**Julia Dundas**  
Ottawa, Ont.



## COMMENT



David McGuinty brings a modicum of cabinet experience and a modicum of intelligence awareness to his new defence portfolio, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

# New defence minister, same old woes

Defence Minister David McGuinty is going to need a lot of support from Carney's Liberal government to truly right the CAF ship.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—On April 28, Canadians went to the polls to cast their votes in the federal election. When the dust had settled and the ballots were tallied, Prime Minister Mark Carney emerged victorious, albeit with yet another Liberal minority government.

However, Carney's stunning victory marks one of the most outstanding political comebacks in Canadian history. Just weeks earlier, oddsmakers had Pierre Poilievre's Conservative Party enjoying a commanding 27-point lead over the seemingly hapless Liberals.

Then came the one-two punch of Carney replacing Justin Trudeau and United States President Donald Trump threatening to annex Canada through economic measures. This was not an idle threat, as Trump declared April 2 to be "Liberation Day" by levying whopping tariffs on nearly every

country on the planet—though, curiously, not on Canada.

On the topic of annexation, Trump pointedly criticized Canada for our lack of defence spending, and our reliance on the U.S. for our sovereignty protection. This coming from the very individual threatening us with annexation is rich.

However, the majority of Canadians polled felt that among all the political party leaders, Carney, the banker, was temperamentally the best suited to defend Canada's trade interests against Trump's policies.

Thus, the whiplash reversal of popular support back to the Liberals.

On the defence file, Carney made campaign promises to appease many of Trump's primary concerns. Not the least of which is to see Canada spend the NATO target of two per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on national defence sooner rather than later. Canada presently spends only 1.3 per cent of GDP on defence.

With promises of defence reforms, military analysts were closely watching the May 13 announcement of Carney's new cabinet. Notably, former incumbent minister of national defence Bill Blair was turfed from Carney's cabinet altogether.

His successor, David McGuinty, has served as a Member of Parliament since 2004. Although he has toiled as a backbench MP for more than two decades, McGuinty was only promoted to cabinet as public safety minister last December.

An environmental lawyer by profession, McGuinty's resumé does not mention any military service. From 2017 to 2024, McGuinty was the first chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, a group that oversees Canada's intelligence services.

Thus McGuinty brings a modicum of cabinet experience and a modicum of intelligence awareness to his new defence portfolio.

Given the magnitude of the problems currently plaguing the Defence Department, to paraphrase that famous line from the Hollywood movie *Jaws*, "I think he is going to need a bigger boat."

Here is a short summary of the challenges facing our new minister: there is a chronic shortage of personnel due to recruiting and training failing to keep pace with those personnel taking release from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and weaponry, equipment, vehicle fleets, and warships are aging out and often unserviceable. There is no easy fix, as the existing shortcomings only serve to exacerbate the other shortcomings.

Rapidly increasing the flow of recruits through training depots requires taking experienced soldiers from their operational units to serve as trainers.

In turn, this adds to the staffing woes in those already-stretched formations. This results in an increased frequency of field deployments and sea time for the remaining trained personnel. This leads to a drop in morale, and more releases. A vicious circle.

One of the major reasons for the high unserviceability rate of equipment, vehicles, and weapon platforms is a combination of a lack of trained specialists to fix them, and a lack of spare parts in the system. Without equipment, weapons, or vehicles, training is not possible.

For instance, the Royal Canadian Navy currently has a shortage of trained submariners. As a result, only one of Canada's four Victoria-class submarines has been at sea over the past two years. You cannot put to sea with untrained submariners, and you cannot train a submariner unless you put to sea. A vicious circle.

In terms of procurement of new equipment, the system is all but completely broken. The long lead times for many of the major equipment replacement projects also mean that the aging and obsolete platforms currently in service will suck up boatloads of cash just to keep these relics operable until they can eventually be replaced.

Carney has called for a pay increase for military personnel, and a rapid push to furnish CAF members with decent, affordable housing. It would be a smart start, but McGuinty is going to need a lot of support from the Liberal government to truly right the CAF ship.

He will need a proverbial big broom, because in the prophetic words of Marty Huggins in the comedy movie *The Campaign*: "It's a mess. It's a real mess."

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

*The Hill Times*

## OPINION

## A public alternative to social media

It is increasingly clear that private social media companies' values do not align with maintaining a vibrant information ecosystem.

Heidi Tworek & Alicia Wanless



Opinion

As United States President Donald Trump continued to threaten our sovereignty over the past few months, some Canadians called for a ban on American social media. A better alternative would be to replace those platforms with social media created in the public interest. History shows us that this is feasible. The present shows us that this is urgent.

The state dealt very differently with new technologies in the past. When spoken radio emerged in the 1920s, countries like the United Kingdom decided to create an independent public corporation in the form of the BBC. Baron John Reith, the first general manager of the BBC, hoped that radio would help to heal the trauma of the First World War, and bridge class divides.

Meanwhile, in Canada, fears started to grow that American commercial radio might dominate the airwaves. This was one reason why the Aird Commission on public broadcasting in 1929 suggested that Canada needed its own publicly funded radio system. In the 1930s, Canada moved from a private system towards creating the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

This history shows two things. First, regulators ultimately shape whether or not private companies dominate a new communications technology. Regulators might even pursue a public option for somewhat high-minded reasons. Second, it is possible to change course after allowing private and foreign companies to control a new communications space.

Now is the time to apply those historical lessons to social media in Canada. Alongside the political turmoil emanating from south of the border, it is increasingly clear that private social media companies' values do not align with maintaining a vibrant information ecosystem.

Continued on page 11



# OPINION

## Imagination is the missing ingredient in Canadian AI policy and adoption

We need to quickly shed the mindset that either romanticizes or demonizes AI in favour of one that accepts its increasingly transformative practical utility.

Andrew Forde

Opinion



It's become standard operating wisdom over the past couple of months that the Canadian economy is in dire need of a reset. The Trump administration's trade war has created new economic and political uncertainty, which has in turn laid bare our growing productivity crisis. The root cause of much of this? A persistent failure of imagination.

The reset we need will be hard. But, reimagining the future always is.

Canadian imagination needs to be courageous when it comes to artificial intelligence. We need to quickly shed the mindset that either romanticizes or demonizes it in favour of one that accepts its increasingly transformative practical utility.

Most Canadians recognize that AI has the power to radically reshape our society and our economy, but they don't trust it. According to new research by KPMG International and the University of Melbourne, only a third (34 per cent) of Canadians are willing to rely on information provided by an AI system. And less than half (46 per cent) believe the risks of AI outweigh the benefits. The rest of the world puts more trust in AI, with nearly half (46 per cent) willing to trust it, and only a third (32 per cent) worried that the risks outweigh the benefits.

Canadians need to be shown its potential and how to control it. This will take a shift in public posture: from the protective reflex to the imaginative impulse. From "don't be the problem" to "build what the world needs

next." Remember that Canada was an early leader in AI. We built institutes, funded researchers, and exported talent. But our policy imagination has not kept pace; we have been unprepared for the speed of change unfolding all around us. Consequently, the country's innovators remain unsure of the rules and unclear on the ambition. If our AI innovators are uncertain, it's no wonder Canadians at large are, too.

Instead of seeking growth through AI, we have chosen a policy of minimizing risk and maximizing predictability. That serves us well in traditional regulatory regimes like banking and health care. It will not serve us in an era defined by autonomous systems governed by algorithms whose influence and impact are only accelerating—raising the odds of new forms of contagion, financial and otherwise. Make no mistake, AI sovereignty is critical in the world unfolding around us—Canada needs to move now to control its future.

We must lean back into our competitive advantages. That will take leadership willing to act despite uncertainty; policymakers who understand that governance is a steering wheel, not a

brake; and institutions that treat AI not as a threat to manage, but as a field to shape.

How? With open-source Canadian AI models trained on data that is reflective of our people, one of the most diverse populations in the world. With institutions reimagined as data stewards and algorithmic ethics leaders. Above all, with a public-private AI network tied directly to our most-pressing challenges: reorienting our economy, boosting productivity, building new infrastructure and housing, strengthening our climate resilience, and expanding health-care access.

To begin this much-needed economic reset, I propose three near-term actions for policymakers:

**1. Make AI transparency a regulatory baseline.** If an organization cannot articulate how an AI model produced its output, it should not be deployed. This should be table stakes, not a premium feature.

**2. Create cross-jurisdictional AI sandboxes.** Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union should establish joint testing environments for cross-border AI, allowing

for iterative experimentation without triggering fragmented regulatory penalties.

**3. Recognize ethical AI governance as a form of systemic risk mitigation.** Just as climate risk is now being priced into stress tests, so should algorithmic risk. Firms with weak AI governance should be required to hold more capital.

With AI, a risk-averse approach actually increases risk. Only by building at the edge do we discover what our principles truly stand on, so that we can refine them with integrity. Ambition is not the enemy of ethics; it is its ally. This is the kind of ethic Canada must now embody: not moral caution, but moral leadership.

The alternative? We surrender the field to others, in turn surrendering our AI sovereignty. We subsequently become mere consumers of AI, not shapers; our economy dependent on platforms we didn't build, our health-care and defence systems running on black-box diagnostics developed abroad, and our institutions adapting reactively to tools made for other contexts. We become a digital 51<sup>st</sup> state—or worse.

*Dr. Andrew Forde is a management consulting partner at KPMG in Canada's technology strategy and AI-led digital transformation practice. He is also an adjunct professor of applied science and engineering at the University of Toronto.*

*The Hill Times*

## There's no building without belonging

If the country can do a better job converting skilled immigrants into patriotic Canadians, our chances of building a successful economy improve significantly.

Daniel Bernhard

Opinion



Prime Minister Mark Carney's audacious vision to build, build, build is long overdue, but crippling talent shortages in the skilled trades mean the ramp up will be slow, slow, slow.

All those pipelines and prefabricated homes we were promised won't build themselves, and last I checked, ChatGPT still can't weld.

Our chronic blue-collar talent deficits are well-understood, despite our manifest failure to address them. But there's another, less-heralded ingredient that could power productivity and prosperity



If productivity is a form of patriotism, then each of us can do a great service to Canada by helping our families and our neighbours rekindle their love affair with the country, and devote themselves to success, writes Daniel Bernhard. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia.*

at this vital moment for Canada: patriotism.

But before we go there, let's recap the key facts.

Depending on who you ask, there are currently 64,000 vacant jobs across the skilled trades, with 700,000 further workers set to retire by 2030. The Liberal campaign promise to cover apprenticeship costs for new tradespeople will take years to bear fruit, and may not work at all. What's certain is that the problem will get worse before it gets better—retirements will majorly outpace recruitment for the foreseeable future. And even if the number of new trainees surpasses expectations, it will take years before these green journey people match the productivity of the seasoned pros they're replacing.

Experienced immigrants are the obvious remedy for Canada's blue-collar workforce gap. Whether it's the Istanbul airport

train (the first leg opened just six years after tender; by comparison, Toronto's Eglinton Crosstown line is 40 per cent shorter, and is still not complete—13 years after it was announced), Swedish housing factories (which produce 90 per cent of Sweden's housing), or just about anything going up in China, Riyadh, or Dubai, the world is full of exceptional construction accomplishments that have been built faster, cheaper, and better than we can currently do here. Canada can only gain from recruiting the talent behind those projects to play for our team.

Steep reductions in immigration levels, bureaucratic bias for white-collar immigrants, and a hyper-complex and ever-expanding patchwork of immigration programs needlessly exacerbate our workforce weaknesses. Still, these are relatively easy problems. Simple adjustments to selection policies could generate a blue-col-

lar immigration boom in mere months.

But recruiting talented immigrants does little good if we can't retain them. According to Statistics Canada data, analyzed by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) and the Conference Board of Canada, our immigrant retention rates are declining, with the most skilled immigrants most likely to leave. And among those who stay, the uptake of Canadian citizenship declined by about 40 per cent between 2001 and 2021. Frustrated economic expectations are a major cause of the skilled immigrant exodus and the plummeting market value of becoming Canadian, but forthcoming research by the ICC shows that the main reasons immigrants stay in Canada are actually personal; safety, acceptance, diversity, community, and fairness are what make Canada sticky to the talent we so desperately need to retain. Our unique natural beauty is also a factor.

If the country can do a better job converting skilled immigrants into patriotic Canadians who are pumped to play for our team, our chances of building a successful economy would improve significantly.

I define belonging as the feeling that "this is my place, and these are my people." The Liberal campaign promise to institute a Canada Strong Pass that grants youth free access to Canadian cultural

experiences is a nod to the power of belonging in today's atomized, online world. The idea mimics the ICC's Canoo Pass, which provided 450,000 free culture, nature, and sport experiences for new permanent residents in 2024 alone. Both initiatives emanate from the understanding that people who love Canada are far more likely to devote themselves to its success, beginning with keeping themselves and their talents in the country.

Before we get to building, we'd do well to grow belonging. If productivity is a form of patriotism, then each of us can do a great service to Canada by helping our families and our neighbours rekindle their love affair with the country, and devote themselves to success. And that's especially true of skilled immigrants, who were hand-selected for their specific ability to address Canada's most pressing needs.

In this rough new world order, where competition has displaced collaboration, it's each nation for itself. Canada has benefitted immensely from saying "yes" when global talent offers to play for our team. If we can retain this talent, we can win. If not, we'll see them again soon, giving their all for an opposing team.

From here on out, it's belonging or bust.

*Daniel Bernhard is CEO of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship.*  
*The Hill Times*



## OPINION

# A new middle-power alliance would give Canada leverage, and Canadians hope

America's global trade war can only succeed against a divided opposition.

Jon Shell

Opinion



Following United States President Donald Trump's first threats to annex Canada, there was a country-wide energy to forge a new and more independent path, with political rhetoric to match. But with Trump's "51st state" bluster diminishing, Prime Minister Mark Carney's drama-free visit to the White House, and a stay-the-course cabinet, Canadian business leaders seem eager to settle for the best "new new NAFTA" we can get.

This tendency toward the status quo is exactly what fuels Canada's self-loathing: we're not entrepreneurial enough, don't take enough risks, don't invest in our potential. Instead of charting

ambitious—but uncertain—territory, we defer to the corporate lobbyist on our shoulder whispering "be practical."

Playing it safe is both the wrong short-term tactic, and the wrong long-term strategy. Sure, Canada could probably get a new deal if we don't anger the president, but it would undoubtedly be a downgrade—just as the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement is worse than NAFTA—because, as U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance likes to say, we don't have the cards. We'd remain an underperforming "branch-plant economy," selling our innovations and resources south for pennies on the dollar. And it would leave us exposed to the same risks of military and economic dependency currently on stark display.

Instead, Canada should lead the world's middle powers in a collective and overdue weaning from American primacy by establishing a grand new security and economic alliance. Ten countries—Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, Japan, South Korea, and the Netherlands, or the "Core 10"—would amount to about the same GDP as the U.S.,

with significant natural resources and about 600 million wealthy residents with massive buying power. From Robert Reich to *The Economist*, versions of this idea have been proposed, all with the objective of creating leverage against American economic aggression.

While each potential grouping of countries would have its complexities, even one formal meeting to discuss a new alliance would be enough to demonstrate that a break from U.S. dominance is possible. Announcing new multilateral partnerships in areas of American interest such as military procurement, pharmaceutical development, cloud infrastructure, or resource refinement would solidify the group's potential.

It is clear that Trump fears this possibility.

Carney's visit to France and the U.K. in March prompted Trump to threaten "large-scale tariffs, far greater than currently planned" if the European Union were to work with Canada to "do economic harm to the U.S.A." His reaction proves the idea's merit—America's global trade war can only succeed against a divided opposition.

A new alliance is also the right long-term strategy. While the U.S.-led western countries had a long and successful run after the Second World War, we are all now facing similar crises, including decreasing housing affordability, increasing inequality, and repeated failures to address climate change. As a result, belief in democracy, capitalism, and global institutions are in steady, long-term decline, along with global comfort with American leadership.

Part of the issue is that, in many ways, America has become an outlier among its allies. On issues like health care, taxation, social security, and climate, and on critical social metrics like inequality, life expectancy, and gun violence, the middle powers of the Core 10 are both highly aligned and diverging further and further from the U.S. Common ground to solve our collective challenges will remain elusive with America at the table.

A middle power alliance, however, built on security and economic commitments patterned after NATO, would constitute an ambitious, creative, and credible third power centre alongside

the U.S. and China. Unshackled from American dominance, these countries so aligned in values and approaches could develop innovative new solutions to our common crises. Rather than trying to salvage a collapsing world order in which so many have lost faith, Canada and its Core 10 allies could build the next great era of democratic progress.

The U.S. will always be Canada's largest trading partner, and so a new deal is necessary. But we should resist the temptation to choose short-term comfort and certainty. By finally stepping into a more entrepreneurial and ambitious leadership role, not only can we improve our own hand in trade negotiations with America, but we can spark energy and enthusiasm for a new and better global superpower.

*Jon Shell is an entrepreneur, an advocate for a more fair and balanced economy, and chair of Social Capital Partners, a policy non-profit dedicated to tackling wealth concentration and broadening access to wealth, ownership, and economic security for working people in Canada. Learn more at [socialcapitalpartners.ca](https://socialcapitalpartners.ca).*

*The Hill Times*

# A public alternative to social media



History has shown it is possible to change course after allowing private and foreign companies to control a new communications space, write Heidi Tworek and Alicia Wanless. *Unsplash photograph by Berke Citak*

because they share an originator in Jack Dorsey. However, that lesson could inform the creation of a public social media platform.

It won't be enough to build a new platform and hope users come. A public social media platform will have to offer a comparable—if not superior—user experience to existing ones to encourage migration. This will be the case across the board, particularly for older Canadians who initially struggled to use a platform like Facebook, but now feel comfortable doing so. Key features include a range of ways to connect with others and share images, video, and text via posts and private messengers. Users should also be able to migrate their data seamlessly from existing platforms.

Unlike the black box of existing platforms, a public platform can be designed with transparency in mind. This would build trust and allow researchers to examine how such digital media impact information ecosystems.

Between threats to Canadian sovereignty from the Trump administration and decreasing satisfaction with platforms like Facebook, there is an opportunity to offer alternatives. Taking a page from Bluesky, such an initiative could capitalize on the brain drain expected from the

U.S. as highly skilled people seek greener pastures.

Canada doesn't need to pursue this alone. One major benefit of earlier social media was connecting people across borders. To keep that spirit alive, Canada could partner with like-minded democracies. The solution would have to be flexible and decentralized to store user data locally, and adhere to local privacy laws. Bluesky shows that this is possible with surprisingly little investment.

Regulation remains an important avenue to address the problems of social media. But the last few months underscore that regulation alone may be insufficient. In fact, building a public alternative may be faster than regulating what currently exists. We look forward to seeing you on CanSky soon.

*Dr. Heidi Tworek is a Canada Research Chair and professor of international history and public policy at the University of British Columbia. She directs the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions. Alicia Wanless is a senior fellow in technology and international affairs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the director of Carnegie's Information Environment Project.*

*The Hill Times*

Continued from page 9

To give one example: after the Online News Act passed in June 2023, Meta banned all news posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads for users in Canada that August. A year later, Canadians were consuming less news online, to the tune of approximately 11 million

fewer views per day. Possibly even more importantly, 78 per cent of Canadians did not even know that this was happening. Nearly two years after the ban, the Media Ecosystem Observatory concluded that the ban is "especially harming smaller and local outlets."

So how might we create a public version of social media?

Bluesky is proof that there is still a market for new social media platforms. Using just over \$30-million, Bluesky has more than 35 million users after opening the platform to the public in February 2024. Part of the platform's success rests in its familiarity—for users fleeing the toxicity of Twitter (now X), Bluesky is easy to use, partly



## NEWS

# New housing minister's 'first-week jitters' on home values needs clarification, says policy expert Mike Moffatt



Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson told reporters housing prices do not need to go down before listing all the ways his government would reduce prices on May 14, less than 24 hours after the prime minister said it was 'very clear' what his government's policy is. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

'It's about ensuring everyone has options they can afford': new housing minister's office says that 'overall' housing prices will need to decline, but not individual home values.

Continued from page 1

During a post-shuffle press conference at Rideau Hall on May 13, Carney was asked whether his decision to select Robertson as housing minister signals that he does not believe housing prices need to fall, given the nearly 200-per-cent increase in housing prices during Robertson's time as the mayor of Vancouver.

"You would be very hard pressed to come to that conclusion," Carney responded, pointing to his past statements and his government's priorities.

"We have a strong view on housing, a very clear policy ... developed with a number of members of the team, including with Mr. Robertson, and I'm thrilled that he's in the new role," Carney told reporters, noting

that Robertson has the "type of experience that we need to tackle some aspects of this problem," like reducing municipal costs and regulations.

"Ultimately," Carney continued, the housing crisis will be solved with an "aggressive" objective to double the construction of new homes in Canada.

However, as he entered his first official cabinet meeting the next morning, Robertson gave journalists and Canadians the impression he had reached a slightly different conclusion.

"No," Robertson told reporters when asked if he believes "housing prices need to go down."

"I think we need to deliver more supply [and] make sure the market is stable," Robertson continued. "It's a huge part of our economy. We need to be delivering more affordable housing."

Later in the evening, Robertson attempted damage control. Just after 10 p.m., Robertson took to the social media platform X, and attempted to reframe the question he thought he was answering as whether he believed in "reducing the price of a family's current home, which for most Canadians, is their most valuable asset."

When questioned about how he plans to make homes more affordable without reducing the price of a pre-existing family home, Robertson said the solution would be to "build more homes at scale."



Housing policy expert Mike Moffatt says the government needs to be honest with homeowners that making housing more affordable includes the homes they already own. *Photograph courtesy of Mike Moffatt*

During a May 18 press conference in Rome, Italy, where he had travelled to attend the inaugural mass of Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican, Carney said housing affordability is not a simple "yes or no" question.

"It'd be lovely if we could always get very simple, yes, no ... up, down [answers] to the economy, but we're talking about time horizons," Carney told reporters when challenged to give his answer on the issue.

"The core issue for younger Canadians—for all Canadians—is that the level of house prices goes down relative to their incomes, so the affordability goes up," he continued, pointing to measures his government would take to cut costs on new home construction,

including cutting the GST on new homes under \$1-million, halving development charges, and scaling up a more efficient domestic construction industry.

"All of those factors are going to help to improve affordability," Carney said. "The exact level of house prices, of course, is going to be a function of a variety of factors, including where incomes grow, but the key is that we're building new homes, and the purchase of new homes becomes less expensive. Absolutely, without question."

Moffatt said Robertson's answers on what to do about housing prices have been confusing and contradictory since becoming minister. He noted that while the original answer began

with a "no," the rest of Robertson's reply contained numerous supply measures that would cause overall prices to go down.

"Obviously, he's a rookie who had been in that role less than 24 hours, so I think the charitable view would be that this is kind of first-day jitters," Moffatt said, noting that the short timeframe from his swearing in would have given little time to memorize talking points.

"I would like to see him clarify because until then there certainly does seem to be a pretty big misalignment between the Robertson's talking points and the prime minister's," Moffatt said.

Robertson's office told *The Hill Times* that "overall housing prices" would need to come down across the country to solve the housing crisis.

"It's not about reducing the value of an individual home—it's about ensuring everyone in this country has good housing options they can afford," wrote press secretary Sofia Ouslis. "We will get more homes built by cutting taxes and fees on the construction of new housing, removing municipal roadblocks ... and by getting the federal government back into the business of building affordable homes at a scale not seen since after the Second World War."

However, Moffatt also noted that Robertson had further muddled the waters on his government's "very clear" platform promises to lower housing costs, particularly development charges.

During a May 13 interview with the CBC's David Cochrane on *Power and Politics*, Robertson was asked about increasing development charges as Vancouver mayor. He defended these charges as "cost recovery" for municipalities to invest in infrastructure, and a way for those cities to "rebalance" their budgets.

"When market housing is selling at those rates, we may as well take some of that back into the public purse," Robertson said. "Developers are making money ... just got to make sure that the [government] isn't giving everything away."

Moffatt said he understands the tightrope Liberals are attempting to walk: balancing owners whose home values are their retirement plans, and those hoping to buy their first home. However, he said it would be better for everyone if the government were more explicit about those competing interests rather than pretending the conflict doesn't exist.

"I understand the concerns of existing homeowners, but we need the cost of constructing new homes to fall, and that means some existing homes will fall in value, too," Moffatt explained, noting that even if housing prices just remained flat, it would take up to 50 years for middle-class wages to catch up.

"The more important thing is for the cost of building new homes to go down, but we need to say both," Moffatt said. "Otherwise, it just looks disingenuous or incoherent at best."

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



# ‘It makes a lot of things easier’: ex-staffers turned MPs say Hill experience proving a boon

More than 100 first-time MPs were elected on April 28, and are now readying for Parliament’s fastest post-election return since 1988.

Continued from page 1

director, becoming chief of staff roughly one year later—her most recent role.

Dandurand is one of more than 100 first-time MPs taking seats in the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament. With 28 days between the election and the first day of the new Parliament on May 26, this year marks the fastest return to business post-election since 1988 when MPs had just 21 days to get situated before diving into business.

One of the youngest MPs elected this year, Liberal Fares Al Soud, 25, has likewise crossed the staffer-MP divide and has been elected in a riding previously represented by his one-time boss.

A Palestinian Canadian, Al Soud won the race to succeed Omar Alghabra in Mississauga Centre, Ont., with roughly 53.9 per cent of the vote.

Al Soud’s time on the Hill similarly began in 2021, in his case with a summer internship in Alghabra’s office as then-transport minister. Still working towards an undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), Al Soud joined Alghabra’s office part time at the start of 2022—while also juggling work for the Canadian Red Cross—shifting to full-time hours over the summers, including in 2023, the year he graduated. In Alghabra’s transport office, Al Soud had largely been an operations assistant, but also tackled issues management work. He went on to work as a tour and planning assistant in then-prime minister Justin Trudeau’s office, and as policy adviser to then-fisheries minister Diane Lebovitch, spending his final weeks as a staffer as acting director of policy to the minister.

Having clocked experience in a range of roles, Al Soud said he definitely feels more prepared stepping into the job of MP.

“I’ve had a lot of fortune in terms of the things that I’ve been able to do across the Hill in these few years, and so now walking into the House getting ready for the session, I know that I’m ready. I know that I’ll be better situated than most [rookies], and I’m very grateful for that,” he told *The Hill*



Now-Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu, left, with Fares Al Soud, Liberal MPs Parm Bains and Iqra Khalid, and former MP Omar Alghabra. Photograph courtesy of X

*Times*. That includes remembering to check his personal parliamentary email address—something he recalls frequently reminding his former bosses to do.

Conservative Grant Jackson, who was elected to succeed his former boss Larry Maguire in Brandon-Souris, Man., with roughly 62.2 per cent support, has more recent political experience as a member of Manitoba’s legislative assembly to lean on in stepping into the role of MP, but said his time working federally is nonetheless a boon amid the “whirlwind” of new information coming his way.

“It certainly helps a little bit, although I will say, when I worked here, of course, we were still in Centre Block, so West Block remains a bit of a maze to me,” said Jackson, who was in town last week for his orientation. “But certainly in terms of the process, in terms of the services that are available like the Library [of Parliament], what they do, how they can support MPs’ offices, all those types of things are not new to me, just more of a refresher because I have been gone from the federal side for six or so years now.”

Jackson worked for Maguire for a little more than five years in all between 2014 and 2019, largely while also studying history—with a minor in geography—at Brandon University. He spent his summers working in Maguire’s Hill office in Ottawa, returning to work in the riding during the school year. Jackson went on to work provincially, including as a



Grant Jackson was most recently a Manitoba MLA. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

special assistant to then-Progressive Conservative justice minister Cliff Cullen, up until 2023, when he ran and was elected as the MLA for Spruce Woods.

Now back on the Hill, Jackson returns to a few “familiar faces,” including now-Conservative MP Branden Leslie, who worked in various roles federally between 2010 and 2019, including as an MP’s assistant and as a cabinet staffer, and has represented Portage-Lisgar, Man., federally since a 2023 byelection. “[We] were staff at the same time,” said Jackson of Leslie. “There’s lots of people working for MPs who I worked with or worked at the same time [as], so yeah, it has been a bit of a reunion coming back with lots of familiar faces, which has been very nice.”

## Making the leap

Dandurand began considering making the leap to seek elected office last fall. Bibeau announced her decision not to seek re-election federally and instead run for mayor of Sherbrooke, Que., in October, after which Dandurand said people began reaching out to suggest she run given her knowledge of the riding and its challenges, both from working for Bibeau and from working in the region since her days at *La Tribune*. (Dandurand herself was born and raised in the neighbouring riding of Brome-Missisquoi, Que.)

By the end of the year, she’d made up her mind and applied for nomination. At the time, the Liberals were dragging in the polls, and expectations of victory were scant. As a result, Dandurand said she saw this year’s election as a chance to lay some groundwork and “get ready for the next one.”

Dandurand was acclaimed as a Liberal candidate on March 9—the same day now-Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) was elected to take over the party helm.

She left her job as Bibeau’s chief of staff to start campaigning right away. With a new leader and new threats to the Canada-United States relationship emerging courtesy of U.S. President Donald Trump, Dandurand said she felt the winds shift. “I felt it during the campaign, and it was very good energy around the Liberals.”

Unsurprisingly, she said she’s “very happy about how it turned out.”

“It’s an immense privilege to get to be a Member of Parliament, to get to be the voice of the people in my riding,” said Dandurand.

Al Soud said his career to date has been a series of “beautiful coincidence[s].” He voted for the first time in 2019, and was subsequently invited to join Alghabra’s riding-level youth council, which led to his internship, and later his job. The idea of running for office had been in the back of his mind for a while.

“You don’t necessarily walk into these things assuming it’s going to happen, but you kind of find yourself in positions where you realize it’s possible,” said Al Soud.

While born in Montreal, Al Soud lived on the boundary between Mississauga Centre and Mississauga-Erin Mills while studying at UTM. After Alghabra announced he wouldn’t seek re-election in 2023, Al Soud said he “started really thinking about the future of the riding.” After many conversations with people in the constituency and beyond, he decided to put his name forward.

Al Soud offered lots of praise for his campaign team, which included a number of his former colleagues, among them Riya Khanna, who had worked alongside him as an outreach adviser in the PMO; Piraveenth Srekanthen; and Erika McCallion, an experienced Liberal organizer and granddaughter of Mississauga’s longtime former mayor, the late Hazel McCallion, who together co-managed Al Soud’s campaign. Also lending a hand were former cabinet colleagues Waleed Saleem, Varisha Naeem, Salam Samara, and Hadeel Aziz, among others.

“It’s a very, very interesting dynamic, and an interesting change,” said Al Soud of finding himself on the other side of the desk. “The most interesting part is the expectations placed on the candidate,” which is a lot more about connecting with people and hitting the pavement, rather than planning in political backrooms, he said. “It was a very welcome shift, but also one that felt a bit strange at times.”

Al Soud said as an MP, he wants to maintain a strong presence in his riding—and continue sharing his personal number with “everyone” he meets.

“I want them to get tired of seeing me at events,” he said.

Speaking to *The Hill Times* between May 9 and 14, Dandurand, Al Soud, and Jackson all said they had yet to be assigned Hill offices, and of the three, only Jackson said he’d decided on staff—bringing on two of his recent provincial-level riding staff, and keeping on one of Maguire’s former aides—at the time of the interview. All three had also yet to be officially sworn in.

“Political staff are so critical to the function of this place ... I learned so much during my time [here], and now I’m privileged to be back here in this role and look forward to continuing to do good work on behalf of the people of Brandon-Souris,” said Jackson.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



# Party Central



By Stuart Benson

## Matthew Perry's legacy returns to his roots to build a home for recovery

**M**atthew Perry's heart was always in Ottawa, but now the roots of his legacy will one day provide the shade and sanctuary from addiction of which he always dreamed.

Friends, family, and plenty of the city's socialites gathered on the grounds of The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre on May 15 for a ground-breaking and tree-planting ceremony to mark the future site of the Matthew Perry House.

Officially launched last fall, the Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada (MPFC) was founded by Perry's sister **Caitlin Morrison** following his October 2023 drug-related death to honour his legacy and work to help others struggling with addiction, combat stigma, and support recovery. The foundation will also support a series of recovery homes nationwide to provide wrap-around services for residents, serving roughly 160 people through recovery. Residents would already have completed a treatment program by the time they arrive.

The first of the Matthew Perry Houses was announced at an exclusive reception last October, and construction is slated to begin on The Royal's campus in 2026.

Foundation CEO Morrison had her father, *Dateline NBC's* **Keith Morrison**, and Perry's mother, **Suzanne Perry**, to help break ground on the site. However, for Caitlin, truly honouring the moment required more than just "digging a hole."

Instead, Caitlin, her parents, and the community partners and leaders who have worked tirelessly to make her dream a reality also planted a small cherry tree seedling—Bing cherries, in honour of Perry's character **Chandler Bing** from the NBC sitcom *Friends*—to leave behind a reminder that the new recovery home should be a sanctuary for rest and recovery, and somewhere for its tenants to "put down roots" in the surrounding community.

Grabbing a shovel alongside the Morrisons were the foundation's community partners: **Nyranne Martin**, The Royal's chief operating officer; **Mark MacAulay**, president and CEO of Ottawa Salus; **Anthony Esposti**, Community Addictions Peer Support Association CEO; and **Stéphane Giguère**, CEO of Ottawa Community Housing Corp. They were also joined by Liberal MP **Yasir Naqvi** and Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe**, the latter of whom was juggling his appearance at the event while awaiting the release of Ontario's budget, scheduled for just after the event began.

**Party Central** also spotted Ottawa city councillors **Theresa Kavanagh**, **Jeff Leiper**, and **Marty Carr**; the *Kitchissippi Times's* **Charlie Senack**; and Blackbird Strategies' **Maddy Eisenberg** among the attendees in the crowd.

Before the tree-planting, there were also remarks from Perry's family and the foundation's partners sharing their dream for the recovery home, as well as particularly touching remarks from Suzanne, sharing personal stories of the pain she and other mothers have felt trying to protect their children from the "monster" of addiction.

However, not everyone was pleased with the day's event.

A small contingent of neighbours—going by the Common Sense Planning Coalition—staged a peaceful, but rather loud, protest beside the nearby tennis courts, playing metal music and slamming tennis balls into the wooden practice boards on the court. The group has also been circulating petitions and flyers to protest the loss of what they view as valuable community green space, despite it being on private property.

Fortunately for the event, through the technological wonder of a microphone and speaker, the protest was only slightly more distracting than the mosquitoes emanating from the nearby ravine.

Once everyone's hands were a little dirty—thanks to Algonquin Elder **Verna McGregor**, president of the Algonquin Culture Institute, inviting guests to help sprinkle ceremonial tobacco around the site—it was over to Social Restaurant and Lounge on Sussex Drive for a post-planting reception with plenty of food and drinks, and live performances from establishment regular **Jeff Rogers**, along with a guest performance by **The Skydiggers**.

There was also an even livelier live auction, helmed by *An Hour to Give's* **Sam Laprade**, who helped raise \$13,000 for the foundation by auctioning off just five exclusive prizes, including an original **Nicole Allen** painting, Ottawa Senators' ticket packages, a stick signed by Sens' defenceman **Thomas Chabot**, a VIP vacation package to London, U.K., tickets for two to an Arsenal F.C. match, and a one-year membership to the Rockcliffe Tennis Club.

While the foundation's Rockcliffe-and-assorted-socialite supporters are not **Party Central's** particular forte, there were still a few notable guests at the reception, including Hockey Hall of Famer **Daniel Alfredsson**, the former Ottawa Senators' player and assistant coach. Crisis communications experts **Barry McLoughlin** and his wife, **Laura Peck**, also spotted **Party Central**, which is apparently a thing now, as several attendees approached this reporter to give their thoughts on the English federal leaders' debate drama.

In an attempt to lay low, **Party Central** kept his mouth shut with plenty of hors d'oeuvres on offer, including cucumber slices and smoked salmon, beef sliders, horseradish sauce-covered shrimp, and a few servings of parmesan fries. To wash it all down, there was also an open bar serving the usual, as well as a specialty *Spring Fling* cocktail with Campari, Nua Brut sparkling wine, passionfruit, and lemon.

As the party wound down just after 7:30 p.m., **Party Central** made a speedy goodbye to hightail it over to The Rainbow Bistro, where the **20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys** brought the heat with their annual spring concert. But that's a story for another column.

sbenson@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

### The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

**1.** Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada CEO Caitlin Morrison speaks at the ceremonial ground-breaking for the future recovery home on the The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre campus on May 15. **2.** Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi, left; Community Addictions Peer Support Association CEO Anthony Esposti; Suzanne Perry; Caitlin Morrison; Stéphane Giguère, CEO Ottawa Community Housing Corp.; Nyranne Martin, COO of The Royal Ottawa; Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe; and Mark MacAulay, president and CEO of Ottawa Salus grab a shovel for the ceremonial ground-breaking. **3.** Algonquin Elder Verna McGregor, president of the Algonquin Culture Institute, right, provides a blessing and land acknowledgement for the site of the future Matthew Perry House in Ottawa. **4.** After breaking ground, the MPFC friends helped plant a cherry tree sapling which will grow as the Matthew Perry House rises around it. **5.** MPFC partners Esposti; Dr. Mary Bertam, CEO of Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services; Giguère; MacAulay; and Martin also delivered remarks. **6.** Caitlin. **7.** Keith Morrison. **8.** *An Hour to Give's* Sam Laprade. **9.** Laura Peck, left, Barry McLoughlin, Blair Dickerson, and Axelle Dolan. **10.** Chelsea Laplante, left, Daniel Alfredsson, and Carol Malko. **11.** Suzanne Perry, left, and Keith Morrison. **12.** MPFC volunteers Simon Stewart, left, Tim Deloughery, Laplante, Maddy Eisenberg, Folio, Malko, and Chantal Lessard.





# Parliamentary Calendar

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

## Open doors: MPs converge on the Hill as Parliament resumes on May 26



The 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament will get underway on May 26, with MPs filling the House of Commons Chamber for the first time since late 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

### 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, 18<sup>th</sup> floor, Ottawa. Details: [cgai.ca](http://cgai.ca).

**Moving the Needle Report Launch**—Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada host the launch of the report: *Moving the Needle: Reimagining Canada's Development and Humanitarian Engagement*. Wednesday, May 12, at 10 a.m. ET at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, 199 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

**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](http://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, Que. Details: [riverkeepergala.com](http://riverkeepergala.com).

### THURSDAY, MAY 22

**Scorecard Reporting Event**—The Coalition for a Better Future hosts the 2025 Scorecard Report, measuring Canada's progress towards inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Among the speakers are the coalition's co-chairs Anne McLellan and Lisa Raitt, as well as former Bank of Canada senior deputy governor Carolyn Wilkins, CPAC host Michael Serapio, and pollster Nic Nanos. Thursday, May 22, at 9:30 a.m. ET happening online: [canadacoalition.ca](http://canadacoalition.ca).

**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](http://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.

**Webinar: 'How Political Communications Strategies Shape Federal Campaigns'**—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a panel discussion, "Behind the Message: How Political Communications Strategies Shape Federal Campaigns." Participants include Adam Austen, former press secretary for the foreign affairs minister (Liberal Party of Canada); Fred DeLorey, former national campaign manager for the Conservative Party of Canada; Lucas Medernach, director of communications for the office of the Bloc Québécois leader; Mélanie Richer, former director of communications for the NDP; and Audrey-Ann Turcot, director of communications for the

Green Party of Canada. Thursday, May 22, at 2:30 p.m. ET happening online: [irpp.org](http://irpp.org).

**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 Kirtton, 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](http://billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca).

### FRIDAY, MAY 23

**Press Gallery Mugging**—Members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery are invited to a mugging in honour of Bruce Campion-Smith. Friday, May 23, from 4-7 p.m. ET (speeches at 5:30 p.m.) in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Ottawa.

### MONDAY, MAY 26

**Parliament Returns**—Parliamentarians are set to return to the Hill today.

**Launch of OECD Economic Survey of Canada**—OECD Chief Economist Alvaro 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 further improvements in medium-term resilience. Monday, May 26, at 8 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register: [cabe.ca](http://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](http://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 Throne Speech to officially open the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

## THE HILL TIMES CLASSIFIEDS

Information and advertisement placement:  
613-688-8821, [classifieds@hilltimes.com](mailto:classifieds@hilltimes.com)

### HOUSE FOR RENT



### FAMILY-FRIENDLY HISTORICAL HOME LOCATED IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN OTTAWA!

Experience quintessential charm in an updated four-story home nestled in the heart of Sandy Hill. Boasting four spacious bedrooms, four bath, office, and multiple living areas, this property offers unparalleled comfort. Recently renovated, the kitchen seamlessly blends modern convenience with historic appeal. The lower level provides a versatile space perfect for a teenager or in-law suite. A short stroll to Global Affairs Canada, Parliament Hill, and University of Ottawa. Surrounded by excellent schools, daycares, and outdoor recreational facilities. Perfect for families or professionals. \$4100/month, not including utilities. Outside parking for 2 vehicles. <https://www.sabbaticalhomes.com/rental/173350>

### CONDO FOR RENT



### FOR RENT A STUNNING & VERY NEAT CONDO

Stunningly gorgeous, immaculate, hardly lived in & spacious freshly painted one bedroom + den condominium upgraded to the hilt on the 20<sup>th</sup> floor, within walking distance to all amenities is available immediately, in the Mondrian. Unit # 2002, 324 Laurier West Ottawa, Ottawa. ON. K1P 0A4. Heating, water & condo storage fees included. Large floor-to-ceiling windows.

Is ideal and perfect for out of town/province members of parliament, minutes away from parliament. Spacious enough for occasional family visits, as living space is optimised with no pillars.

Businesses, embassies, Canadian military if you have several out of town employees staying temporarily in Ottawa, rent this spacious gem in lieu of hotels & save a bundle.

613-830-3416, 613-290-3195  
[mohammedsadiqal@hotmail.com](mailto:mohammedsadiqal@hotmail.com)

**GRIC Annual General Meeting**—The Government Relations Institute of Canada hosts its members-only annual general meeting. Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger will also take part in a Q&A. Tuesday, May 27, at the National Arts Centre, 8:30 a.m., at 1 Elgin St. Details: [gric-irgc.ca](http://gric-irgc.ca).

**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 CEP 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](http://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.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 28—THURSDAY, MAY 29

**CANSEC Conference**—The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries host the annual CANSEC conference, the country's largest defence, security, and emerging tech event featuring exhibitors, a networking reception, and an opening day keynote presentation from Mike Pompeo, former U.S. secretary of State, and former director of the CIA. Wednesday, May 28, to Thursday, May 29, at the EY Centre, 4899 Uplands Dr., Ottawa. Details: [defenceandsecurity.ca/CANSEC](http://defenceandsecurity.ca/CANSEC).





# Politics is Changing.

## Stay Ahead.

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE HILL TIMES**

