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THE

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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Prime Minister Mark Carney has suggested that some level of tariffs will remain in any deal that is made with the Trump administration. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

August deadline could force Canada to sign a deal before courts rule on legality of Trump's fentanyl tariffs

Canada could gain added leverage in negotiations if the soon-to-be 35-per-cent tariffs are ruled unconstitutional by an American appeals court.

BY NEIL MOSS

With the clock ticking down to an Aug. 1 deadline for a potential Canada-United States trade agreement, there's a chance a deal could come ahead of a U.S. judicial ruling on the legality of the Trump administration's emergency tariffs—a ruling some observers say could give Canada some negotiating leverage.

Last May, the U.S. Court of International Trade ruled that U.S. President Donald Trump's International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs were unconstitutional as it found that the national security provisions didn't pave the way for "unlimited tariff authority."

Oral arguments at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal

Continued on page 14

NEWS

Senator Harder wants to legislate how the feds handle the notwithstanding clause—his colleagues have some concerns

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Progressive Senator Peter Harder's sights remain set on the use—and potential misuse—of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms' notwithstanding clause, and his

latest push to tackle the matter through legislative amendments to the Constitution Act is sparking the desired debate.

"I hope that these amendments to the Constitution can find favour in the Senate and

then be sent to the House and be, in a sense, a guide to future Parliaments [on] how the use by the Parliament of Canada of the notwithstanding clause could be tempered," said Harder (Ontario) of his bill, S-218.

Known as the notwithstanding clause, Section 33 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows federal and provincial legislatures to declare that an act, or provisions of one, can go ahead notwithstanding the fact that it

is seen to—or could be seen to, in the case of pre-emptive use before a court ruling—contravene Section 2, or sections 7 through 15 of the Charter, which enshrine

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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Ukrainian Ambassador Kovaliv to head home this summer



After three years in Ottawa, Ukrainian Ambassador Yulia Kovaliv's term is wrapping up this summer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Ukrainian Ambassador **Yuliya Kovaliv** will be heading home this summer. The 40-year-old diplomat has been in Ottawa since 2022.

"Farewell to a friend," German Ambassador **Matthias Lüttenberg** posted on X on July 17, noting "Kovaliv will leave Canada over the summer and it was a great honour to say goodbye" at a party for her hosted by Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita Anand** at Global

Affairs Canada. "Yuliya did an outstanding job for Ukraine all over Canada in most difficult times. Dyakuyu!"

Also on social media, Transport Minister **Chrystia Freeland** thanked Kovaliv for "her exceptional leadership and service. Canada's support for Ukraine is steadfast and unwavering," while Japan's Ambassador **Kanji Yamanouchi** expressed his "deep admiration" for his friend Kovaliv.

U.K.'s lower voting age inspires hope in Sen. McPhedran



Senator Marilou McPhedran arrives for the Senate sitting on June 25, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Last week, the United Kingdom lowered the voting age from 18 to 16 years, and a Canadian Senator thinks we should do the same.

Non-affiliated Senator Marilou **McPhedran** called it a "historic and hopeful step" toward strengthening democratic participation among youth in a July 17 press release.

"The U.K. has acted. The time is now for Canada to follow," said the Senator from Manitoba. McPhedran has been championing a lower voting age for many years, with her proposed legislation on this issue, S-222, currently sitting at second reading in the Senate.

"We know from the data: when young people vote early, they vote more often, they bring their families and communities with them. It's how we build a culture of participation," she said in the release.

"Young people are workers, caregivers, students, and taxpayers. They have a right to a say in the policies that shape their lives," she added, noting that including younger voters helps to "expand civics education, strengthen democratic resilience, and increase equity in political representation."

The new voting age will take effect at the U.K.'s next general election, which is scheduled for August 2029.

Senator Moreau named Red Chamber's new Govt. Rep

Prime Minister **Mark Carney** has tapped non-affiliated rookie Senator **Pierre Moreau** as the new government representative in the Senate.

Appointed to the Red Chamber last September, Moreau is a lawyer and experienced politician, having been a Quebec Liberal MNA for 15 years, notably holding cabinet posts in the governments of **Jean Charest** and later **Philippe Couillard** (to



Non-affiliated Senator Pierre Moreau. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

whom Moreau lost his bid for provincial party leadership in 2013). Moreau's final cabinet posts included Treasury Board president and energy minister before losing his seat in the 2018 election to CAQ candidate **Marie-Chantal Chassé**.

Moreau succeeds recently retired Senator **Marc Gold** as the Government Representative in the Senate.

Four men charged with breaking into MP Hussen's office in April

Four men were arrested and charged recently for allegedly forcing their way into Liberal MP **Ahmed Hussen's** constituency office back in April.

The four Toronto men between the ages of 21 and 41 were separately arrested between July 9 and 11, *The Canadian Press* reported on July 15.

"The four were part of a demonstration outside an MP's office in the area of Keele Street and Lawrence Avenue W. on the evening of April 24, Toronto police said. They allege

the group made its way into the office and occupied the area, causing staff to fear for their safety," according to the CP story.

The intersection of Keele and Lawrence Avenue West is within the riding of York South-Weston-Etobicoke, which is held by former cabinet minister **Ahmed Hussen**.

The four men were "charged with forcible entry, mischief interfering with property, unlawful assembly and unlawful assembly while masked."

Chrétien honoured by Mount Allison University

Former Liberal prime minister **Jean Chrétien** has added another feather to his cap as the recent recipient of an honorary degree from New Brunswick's Mount Allison University.

Chrétien, who served as Canada's 20th prime minister from 1993 to 2003 and as a Member

of Parliament for 18 years overall, was honoured by the school alongside its ex-chancellor, **Bea Crawford**, at special ceremonies held on July 14 and 15.

"Through public service, philanthropy, and deep personal commitment, they have both demonstrated the values that define Mount Allison University—community, leadership, compassion, and a drive to make a difference," reads a news release from the university.

Chrétien's time in Parliament included three years serving as the MP for Beauséjour, N.B.—the riding within which Mount Allison University sits. Canada-United



Canada-U.S. Trade Minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, right, applauds as his former boss, ex-prime minister **Jean Chrétien**, centre, receives his honorary degree. *Photograph courtesy of X*

States Trade and One Canadian Economy Minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, the current MP for Beauséjour and a fellow honorary degree recipient from the school, was in attendance to watch Chrétien get his accolades. LeBlanc previously worked for Chrétien during the former PM's time representing the New Brunswick riding.

"M. Chrétien has long been—and remains—a strong champion for Canada," wrote LeBlanc in a July 18 post on X. "I was honoured to attend the ceremony celebrating this well-deserved recognition. Félicitations, M. Chrétien!"

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Tory MP Jackson boosts petition to curb long ballots

Conservative MP **Grant Jackson** has backed a petition to help curb activists like the Longest Ballot Committee.

"Long ballots with placeholder names undermine trust," the rookie MP for Brandon-Souris, Man., posted on X on July 17. "One person should not act as agent for multiple candidates to exploit a loophole. Let's close it and protect fair elections."

The upcoming Aug. 18 byelection in Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta., already has 119 candidates listed as running, part of a protest effort organized by the Longest Ballot Committee, which was most recently responsible for the very long ballot—more than 90 candidates—in Carleton, Ont., in the April 28 general election.

"The group says it's aiming to get 'somewhere around 200' candidates on the list,"

The Hill Times' **Eleonor Wand** wrote in her July 19 story on the upcoming race in rural Alberta.

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** is expected to win next month's byelection, having lost his long-held seat in Carleton, Ont., in April to Liberal **Bruce Fanjoy**. Three-term MP **Damien Kurek** stepped down from his Battle River-

Crowfoot seat so the party leader could have a shot at returning to the House.

"We have to take action because this is a scam. It is unfair, it is unjust, and it must stop," Poilievre said of the long ballot protests during a town hall in Stettler, Alta., last week, the CBC reported. Jackson's petition, e-6573 (Democratic process), is open for signatures until Oct. 7. As of July 18, more than 1,120 people had signed it.



Manitoba Conservative MP Grant Jackson. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

COMMENT

Disconnect on Canada-U.S. trade as CUSMA eludes Trump menace

The continuation of the broad CUSMA exemption is still a significant positive development for this country in the context of the full-blown trade war the U.S. president is carrying out with the rest of the world.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—It doesn't make for good copy, as they say in the news business—at least not as good as the things-are-worse-than-you-think version of affairs.

Last week, the national media was dominated by Prime Minister Mark Carney's statement that some level of tariffs may be unavoidable as trade talks with Donald Trump approach the United States president's latest Aug. 1 negotiating deadline.

And there's no doubt that Trump's sectoral tariffs—including on imports of steel, aluminum, copper, and potentially other products—are devastating for Canadian companies and workers in those sectors.

But, beyond the headlines about the unjust import levies, there's another as yet little-recognized story after six months of negotiations between Ottawa and Washington, D.C.

And, with the bilateral talks at a crunch stage, the prime minister has only quietly mentioned in passing where things really stand between Canada and the U.S. after a half year of fencing over tariffs and counter-tariffs. On July 15, in a brief scrum, Carney acknowledged the obvious—that Canadians shouldn't expect an early return to the kind of full-scale free trade with the Americans that we have experienced for 45 years.

That's hardly surprising. In one of the few trade deals that the White House has thrown together since the tariff horror show began, the United Kingdom, for instance, had to settle for 10-per-cent across-the-board fees on its exports to the U.S.

While Carney's attempt to lower expectations on tariffs topped the news, few in the media paid much attention to the other remarks the prime minister briefly wedged into that scrum. He noted that under Trump's current tariff regime, Canada has "almost free trade" with the U.S., and that the "effective tariff" against Canada is among the lowest on the globe.

This has to be measured, as Carney said, against the damaging sectoral tariffs that the U.S. has imposed on key Canadian industries. But, in the overall scope of the

\$600-billion in exports going south of the border annually, Canada—for now—is indeed in much better shape on balance than most other countries on Trump's radar.

Carney was referring to the fact that the White House continues to say that Canadian imports that are compliant with the rules of origin in the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) will remain tariff-free.

Despite Trump's various threats, the continuation of the broad CUSMA exemption is still a significant positive development for this country in the context of the full-blown trade war the U.S. president is carrying out with the rest of the world.

Unsurprisingly, with Ottawa's negotiations with the U.S. taking place behind closed doors, Carney and his ministers aren't saying a lot about CUSMA's status. And it's certainly not drawing much attention in Canada. *The Globe and Mail*, for instance, ran a lengthy story on the prime minister's admission about coming tariffs with only passing mention of the relative break this country is benefitting from with CUSMA. Other than Canada's economists, most commentators wholly missed this important qualifier in the current Canada-U.S. trade struggle.

In another twist, it turns out that, four decades after Canada first signed a free-trade pact with the Americans, and five years after the most recent iteration—CUSMA—came into force, most Canadian exporters were not taking advantage of this tariff-free arrangement.

Facing very low tariffs under World Trade Organization Agreement rules, many Canadian companies had not been doing the needed paperwork for CUSMA,



Unsurprisingly, with Ottawa's negotiations with the U.S. taking place behind closed doors, Prime Minister Mark Carney and his ministers aren't saying a lot about CUSMA's status, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

so only 38 per cent of U.S.-bound exports from Canada accessed zero tariffs under CUSMA as of 2024, according to RBC Economics. But, after a rush by Canadian companies to qualify under CUSMA, estimates of the proportion of our exports now entering the U.S. duty-free run as high as 95 per cent.

This takes a lot of the sting out of the 35-per-cent across-the-board tariffs threatened for Aug. 1 with great fanfare by Trump on July 10, and economists expect that Canada can continue to avoid the economic damage faced by other countries that trade with the Americans.

"Our baseline view assumes that at a minimum, we continue to operate with our CUSMA carve-outs," Deloitte Canada chief economist Dawn Desjardins said recently, echoing other analysts. "Meaning, the vast majority of Canadian goods that we sell into the U.S. will continue to be tariff-free," she told *Yahoo Finance Canada*.

The current duty-free access to the U.S. market for the majority of Canadian

exports was confirmed a few days ago by U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. However, though Lutnick said CUSMA would continue to exist, he said the U.S. would demand significant trade concessions from Ottawa when the pact comes up for renewal next year.

With Trump, nobody knows what's coming from one hour to the next, and the chaos in Washington seems to be taking on colossal proportions, so anything's possible in a year's time. Canada's ongoing relations with Americans and the advantage CUSMA provides for this country's economy thus remain unknown. But, it's worth keeping in mind that the federal government has managed to sustain a situation in which, on balance, Canada has seemed to be in a considerably better position when it comes to Trump's trade war than most of the U.S.'s other trading partners.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

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NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

Dave Carey, President & CEO, CCA

The Canadian Coatings Association (CCA) appoints Dave Carey as President & CEO, effective June 2, 2025. CCA represents Canada's Coatings, Adhesives, Sealants, and Elastomers (CASE) industry, with \$20 billion in economic output and vital to multiple sectors.

Carey brings proven experience in government relations and regulatory affairs, most recently serving as VP, Government and Industry Relations at the Canadian Canola Growers Association. He is a five-time *Hill Times* Top 100 Lobbyist.

In his new role, Carey will lead the association's national strategy to advocate for a competitive, sustainable, and innovative coatings industry, one that is uniquely positioned to support the federal government's priorities including the economy and environment, housing and construction, strengthening supply chains, enhancing sustainability, and improving cross-border regulatory alignment.

"The coatings industry plays a vital role in Canada's infrastructure, manufacturing, and environmental performance," says Carey. "My priority is to ensure the sector remains a constructive partner in advancing public policy outcomes."

Early focus areas include deepening engagement with federal partners, aligning regulatory frameworks with U.S. counterparts, and enhancing sector readiness to meet national goals while providing value to members.

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NEWS



House Speaker Francis Scarpaleggia will take part in his first G7 Speakers' summit as its host. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

G7 Speakers to gather in Ottawa in September

Canada hosted the first Group of Seven summit of Lower House Speakers during its 2002 presidency.

BY NEIL MOSS

The Speaker of the House of Commons is set to host his Group of Seven counterparts in early September in Ottawa.

The gathering will be the first G7 Lower House Speakers' meeting for House Speaker Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.) since he was elected to the post on May 26.

The Speaker's office confirmed to *The Hill Times* that the summit will take place from Sept. 4-6 in Ottawa. The meetings are intended to bridge parliamentary action to geopolitical issues.

The meeting is the lone event that brings the legislative branch into the Group of Seven proceedings.

The other Lower House Speakers are Yaël Braun-Pivet, president of the French National Assembly; Julia Klöckner, president of the German Bundestag; Lorenzo Fontana, president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies; Fukushima Nukaga, Speaker of the Japanese House of Representatives; Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the United Kingdom House of Commons; Mike Johnson,



World leaders pose for the G7 family photo in Kananaskis, Alta. Photograph courtesy of the Government of Canada

Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and Roberta Metsola, president of the European Parliament.

Scarpaleggia has held a series of meetings with G7 ambassadors, including U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra, who posted on X that the two spoke about the upcoming summit.

"As a former Congressman, I really appreciate how valuable these kinds of gatherings are for

legislators to connect and collaborate," Hoekstra wrote on July 18.

Canada's G7 presidency has been marked by a reduced schedule amid a federal election and the new government of Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.).

Italy held more than 20 ministerial meetings during its G7 presidency last year. So far, Ottawa has only held two on Canadian soil—a foreign ministers' meeting in March, and a finance ministers'

and central bankers' meeting in May. It has also held a handful of other meetings on the sidelines of other events abroad.

Politico Canada reported earlier this month that Canada may add an additional defence ministers' meeting to its schedule.

The Leaders' Summit last month in Kananaskis, Alta., was disrupted after U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he would be departing after the first official day of the gathering.

In the end, the summit wrapped with seven joint statements, but none that dealt with the war in Ukraine, which was met with disappointment by the international community. However, Ukraine was addressed in Carney's chair statement.

The previous G7 Speakers' summit in Italy ended with a joint statement, which highlighted Ukraine.

"We therefore firmly reiterate our condemnation of Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, with which we stand in unconditional solidarity," the Speakers and presidents of G7 Lower Houses declared after a September 2024 meeting in Verona.

The statement also addressed the conflict in the Middle East, as well as critical mineral security, economic growth in Africa and the broader Mediterranean region, and artificial intelligence.

Past Speaker and current Liberal MP Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.) attended the gathering in Italy.

He said in an email that he and Scarpaleggia have discussed the upcoming September summit "at length."

Canada has held three G7 Speakers' meetings, including the first one, which was hosted by then-House Speaker Peter Milliken in his hometown of Kingston, Ont., in 2002.

G7 Research Group founder John Kirton, a University of Toronto professor, said the gatherings have evolved over the years.

"In the beginning, they spoke about things that they were immediately responsible for," he said. "But since then, their agenda has expanded to include a broader range of substantive issues ... [such as] the judicial system, democracy, human rights, [and] the rule of law."

Milliken hosted an additional gathering in Ottawa in 2010. The most recent meeting in Canada was in Halifax, N.S., hosted by then-House Speaker Geoff Regan in 2018.

Kirton said he has advocated for expanding the meetings to include a wide range of parliamentarians, including those on the opposition benches.

He said it is the legislatures that often have to implement and fund the commitments made by the prime ministers and presidents at the Leaders' Summit. He added that it would be beneficial for parliamentarians to take part in the process before they may have to vote on a piece of implementing legislation.

"It would deepen democracy in the operation of the G7, which was created for the distinctive purpose of protecting at home and promoting abroad open democracy," he said.

"The legislators are an essential part of that," Kirton said.

Kirton said the Group of Seven is trailing other organizations when it comes to bringing in parliamentarians, noting the example of NATO, which has an inter-parliamentary group.

"In that sense, the G7 is lagging behind because it is just confined to the Speaker," he said.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
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COMMENT

Standing on ceremony

With the current state of the Canadian Armed Forces, perhaps it is time to drop the historical re-enactment duties.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



From July 11-21, Canadian soldiers from Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) took over the duties from the United Kingdom's Household Cavalry in providing the mounted King's Life Guard.

This ceremonial duty involves a daily ride down London's Mall and then taking up station at the entrances to St. James and Buckingham palaces. The Household Cavalry consists of two regiments—the Blues and Royals, and the Life Guards—which both have a military legacy dating back to

1660, making them the senior regiments in the British Army.

For their part, the Lord Strathcona's Horse are celebrating their regiment's 125th anniversary this year, and providing the King's mounted guard is considered a highlight of those celebrations. This 10-day detail is only the third occasion in history that this ceremonial guard has been undertaken by a non-U.K. regiment.

There has been a ton of coverage of the Strathconas' stint as the King's Life Guard on social media posts, with many Canadian tourists basking in the reflected glory of a Canadian regiment taking centre stage in London, U.K.

To be fair, the sight of a troop of the Strathconas in their polished brass, plumed helmets, scarlet tunics, white crossbelts, and spit-polished riding boots with swords and lances is indeed a sight to behold. Many of those Canadians fortunate to witness this spectacle have gushed at how this showcases the professionalism of the Canadian Army.

I would beg to differ. Although the participating members are regular force soldiers, their unit is actually an armoured regiment equipped with Leopard 2 main battle tanks. No matter how impressive their horsemanship is, these

ceremonial duties have no bearing on their actual vocation, which is that of combat soldiers who wear camouflage and manoeuvre armoured vehicles.

The King's Life Guard tradition dates back some 400 years, and for the first 320 of those years, the British Household Cavalry still went into battle on horses. So it made some sense that regular army troopers would have a ceremonial duty to provide the King's guard.

However, to have modern professional Canadian combat soldiers parading on horses in Napoleonic-era uniforms to provide London tourists with selfie photo props seems like a misuse of scant resources.

No doubt countless hours of equestrian training was required for this mounted troop of the Lord Strathcona's Horse to take on this role. Then there is the travel budget for the troopers themselves (the horses involved are loaners from the Household Cavalry).

I fully understand that pomp and ceremony have long been a treasured cornerstone of Canada's military tradition. However, with the current state of the Canadian Armed Forces—namely that it's understaffed and under-

funded—perhaps it is time to drop the historical re-enactment duties.

We have been repeatedly warned that the world is increasingly unstable, and that we are on the brink of a Third World War. Canada has a forward-deployed battle group in Latvia, wherein we have a few of our remaining operable main battle tanks. All combat formations across the Army are understrength, and trades training cycles are dangerously backlogged.

Yet, somehow, ceremonial duties such as this are still being staged.

Now, before the Colonel Blimp brigade starts thumping their tubs in my general direction, I must confess that I'm a sucker for martial ceremonies, particularly those of a historical nature. One of the most impressive displays is the changing of the guard ceremony staged each year on Parliament Hill. It was halted during the pandemic, and is currently scaled way back due to current personnel shortages.

However, the Ceremonial Guard is comprised of two Canadian militia regiments: the Governor General's Foot Guards, and the Grenadier Guards. Few spectators who watch the precision drill of these guards in their black bearskin hats and

scarlet tunics realize that all of them are actually trained combat reservists.

Which begs the question: why do they need to be?

The Fort Henry Guard in Kingston, Ont., is a civilian organization that was founded in 1938. They re-enact British Army drill, musketry, and artillery firing to the delight of thousands of tourists each summer. They have zero affiliation with the CAF. Their ranks are filled with university, college, and high-school students. They are supported by Parks Canada, Saint Lawrence Parks Commission, and the Fort Henry Guard Foundation.

At the Citadel in Halifax is the 78th Highlanders and Pipe Band. They, too, are civilian re-enactors who demonstrate historical weapon skills and tactical drill for tourists each summer. Their funding comes from sponsors and corporate clients.

I think that the Changing of the Guard in Ottawa could be staged by civilian students trained only in drill (like a marching band).

Using regular force and reserve combat soldiers to parade in period costume is no longer necessary. Let our soldiers soldier, and let the re-enactors entertain.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION

We can't afford to misunderstand the temporary foreign worker program

Rather than imposing blanket refusals to process, and rigid caps on the number of foreign workers employers can hire, governments should work to build an immigration system that better meets the needs of local job markets.

Christina Santini

Opinion



It's open season on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. In the face of growing public

frustration over rising costs, and the lack of access to housing and services like health care, the program is under attack. Some call for its elimination; others want it significantly scaled back. But in doing so, they are missing the mark. It is the immigration program that is most tied to labour market needs, and these foreign workers do contribute to our economy.

If an employer turns to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), it is as a last resort. It is because labour was not available locally for the position. The TFWP requires that an employer pay \$1,000 per position to the government for a mere assessment of the labour impacts of bringing a foreign worker to fill it. The employer must also demonstrate that they have done all that they could to hire locally first. If the assessment is negative, the employer is out of luck and a thousand bucks. If it is positive, there is still no guarantee that they will ever see a foreign worker, as the worker needs to get their work permit approved and show up.

Recent changes, including a refusal to process any request for assessment in census metropolitan areas where the unemployment rate is six per cent or higher, means that many applications that may present a good case aren't even being looked at. This is a government workload management policy. It keeps employers who genuinely have had difficulty finding labour to fill a position from even being able to state their case.

Rural and remote areas have not been left unscathed. They are in turn affected by the reduced caps in the number of foreign workers they can bring. The caps were reduced from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, with some exceptions. This means that many employers will not be able to renew their existing foreign workers and will lose experienced labour, particularly since it has also become harder for foreign workers to secure permanent residence.

While the unemployment rate was 6.9 per cent this past April, up from 6.2 per cent the year before, there remained more than

519,000 vacancies in Canada in March. Part of the issue is that those who are available to work are not where the jobs are or have expectations around wages, responsibilities, and working conditions that do not align with the job on offer.

Some critics argue employers should just pay more. But small businesses do not have the deep pockets of large employers or deficit-spending capacity of government. Their margins are slim, and customers are already squeezed.

Others argue that TFWs take jobs from Canadians. They overlook how TFWs complement Canadian labour. A recent Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey of TFW employers found that 52 per cent of them were able to keep their doors open and employ Canadians because of their foreign workers, while 61 per cent stated that their TFWs helped them grow their business, and 76 per cent were able to meet customers' demands thanks to their TFWs. Without foreign labour, many restaurants and cafés would operate at reduced

hours, hotels would reduce the number of rooms on offer, contractors would delay delivery of services, and manufacturers would reduce their outputs. The program isn't perfect. While there are some bad employers, they are in the minority. The government has tools at their disposal to identify them, and deal with them accordingly.

The TFWP is the one that the government can most easily adjust in response to labour needs. Rather than imposing blanket refusals to process, and rigid caps on the number of foreign workers employers can hire, governments should work to build an immigration system that better meets the needs of local job markets.

Employers deserve a fair chance to make their case—to renew trusted workers or bring in new ones—based on a transparent assessment of labour needs. That is what the labour market impact assessment is for.

Ultimately, the TFWP helps businesses meet demand, keep their doors open, retain Canadian staff, and grow. It is a vital tool—or Band-Aid—until Canadian labour is available and willing to take those jobs. To ignore this is to shoot ourselves in the foot.

Christina Santini is director of national affairs at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Why we must defend supply management



The end result of caving to the American president would not be an open market for dairy products, but rather copying the U.S. and Europe by providing subsidies to our dairy producers to the tune of billions of dollars a year, writes Andrew Caddell. *Unsplash photograph by Ryan Song*

If supply management were sacrificed to satisfy Donald Trump, life in rural Canada would be turned upside down.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—I promised myself I wouldn't write about United States President Donald Trump this summer, just to make my life easier and calmer. However, the American president raised my ire with his recent letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney. In it, he is threatening further tariffs, citing unproven Canadian fentanyl exports to the U.S., and singling out our supply management system of dairy, egg, and poultry production.

Trump writes, "Canada charges extraordinary Tariffs to our Dairy Farmers—up to 400%—and that is even assuming our Dairy Farmers have access to sell their products to the people of Canada. The Trade Deficit is a major threat to our Economy, and, indeed, our National Security."

Of course, all that is nonsense. First, our dairy producers are not creating a trade deficit in the U.S. Second, American farmers already have access to the Canadian market under the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). It amounts to 3.6 per cent of Canada's dairy market, with a 50,000 metric ton quota for fluid milk.

Only after this massive quota is reached do tariffs kick in, but the quota has never been exceeded. In addition, the quota increases each year for 13 years for cheese, cream, skim milk powder, and butter/cream powder from the U.S. As a result, American exports of dairy products have climbed by 67 per cent—US\$525-million in 2021 to US\$877-million in 2024.

Meanwhile, some Canadian economists have jumped on the Trump bandwagon, calling for the end of supply management. Never mind the dairy industry generates \$20-billion annually, employing more than 200,000 Canadians. Their argument is we are hurting other agriculture exports by restricting foreign access to dairy.

The result would not be an open market for dairy products, but rather copying the U.S. and Europe by providing subsidies to our dairy producers to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

This is the dirty little secret of the American dairy industry: while so-called "free marketers" extol "efficient" production

in the U.S., they fail to mention there are massive subsidies there to artificially lower the price of milk.

That US\$1.50 litre of American milk may look less expensive than here, but with the exchange rate and a 40-cent subsidy, it's about the same price. These billions in subsidies result in American consumers paying twice for dairy: at the checkout, and at tax time. Some American producers are calling for supply management there as it offers production quotas establishing a balance between supply and demand.

Tourism has boomed in Kamouraska this summer thanks to Canadians boycotting the U.S., but agriculture is the backbone of our economy. One of our farms won the prize for the best quality of milk in Canada this year, and calls for greater efficiency in dairy have led to technology being embraced by local farmers.

In 2017, our mayor, Mario Pelletier, expanded his farm and invested in a robotic operation. One of our friends is now spending millions on a robotic operation to improve his efficiency and reduce labour costs. Both operate with around 120 cows, which is the average size of a Canadian dairy farm, smaller than most U.S. operations.

If supply management were sacrificed to satisfy Trump, life here and elsewhere in rural Canada would be turned upside down. Socially, towns would empty out, small businesses would hurt, and families would suffer. Economically, there would be widespread bankruptcies as farmers struggled with their debt loads and capital investments.

Politically, the fallout would be even greater. The Bloc Québécois' Bill C-202 is intended to tie the hands of Canadian trade negotiators. But there is a trap: the Bloc knows if supply management dies, it would provoke a firestorm of separatism in Quebec.

As a former foreign service officer, I believe in empowering our trade negotiators. They worked out successful compromises on supply management in both CUSMA and the European Union free trade agreement.

With the policy, we have managed to secure dairy production, produce quality dairy products, ensure food security, and keep rural Canada prosperous. All of this would be toppled with the dismantling of supply management, combined with a huge rise in separatist sentiment in Quebec.

We have to fight Trump on this issue. If we don't, the consequences could be disastrous.

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

Where to begin: restarting a failed access-to-information system

We need a better deal that actively puts transparency back more fully into the picture, and we can start by changing the decades-old, decrepit Access to Information Act.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



It's rare that the kickoff of what to do about Canada's failing access-to-information system comes during a summer panel discussion.

That July 9 discussion hosted by the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC) was informative—even if somewhat disheartening—but full of challenges.

I was one of the panellists, along with Information Commissioner of Canada Caroline Maynard, Jim Bronskill of The Canadian Press, and Dean Beeby, an independent journalist and author.

The panel brought together many years of experience and advocacy.

Several things stood out in this hour-long interaction with CIPPIC host Matt Malone from the University of Ottawa's law faculty.

One was that all panellists, including Maynard, expressed a preference for an independent, credible review of access legislation rather than have—or place faith in—a Treasury Board-controlled review.

Maynard pointed out that her office was not consulted by Treasury Board in the development of then-Bill C-58, which became law in 2019. In the subsequent review, begun in 2020 and dragged out for more than two years, Treasury Board did not listen or even provide recommendations despite her office and others suggesting changes.

What also came out was that the independence of the commissioner's office would benefit from being funded through Parliament, rather than by government.

All panellists agreed that the government is a poor information manager, with a calcified, botched access-to-information system badly in need of change, and lacking in both independent evaluation and much accountability. This increasingly rigid, barrier-ridden system harms how access files are handled, and how records are kept and retrieved.

Highlighted, for instance, were the endless interdepartmental consultations that dragged getting access replies out the door. Dealing with such government obstacles—where such interdepartmental consultations are, after all, not mandatory—requires time limits, fines, and the documents released.

The problem has less to do with so-called monster applications or vexatious users, of which there are few.

Delay remains the No. 1 problem for getting data, especially for reporters with deadlines, which makes reporters not want to try to file access requests.

On the positive side, the use of artificial intelligence may speed up releases, but on the flip side, AI use can result in even more exemptions being applied.

Sometimes, too, the problem is that officials are simply not recording their operational activities and decisions, seeing no obligation or duty to document their public work.

While much time was spent on the act's administrative shortcomings, the reality of too many exemptions and exclusions was repeatedly raised by panellists.

The broad use of cabinet secrecy and policy advice in particular was highlighted, as was the very lengthy time exemptions that could be applied without any injury tests or public interest overrides. Panellists agreed that erring on the side of disclosure starts one on the path to a culture of openness.

Though long delays and excessive redactions are seen as breaking the usefulness of the access system, other factors threaten the very existence of access to information.

These include agencies having or wanting to suspend answering access requests, current government efforts at fast-tracking projects with less transparency, and the government increasingly putting out misleading summary data. The lack of access to solid information can contribute to corruption, public anxiety, and harm. For example, people need data on their waterways and health waiting times.

Solutions proposed for changing access legislation at the panel centred on getting quicker and more fulsome responses.

Suggestions for a better transparency system included making access a constitutional right and a vehicle for day-to-day tabling of data, and more frequent, informal release of records. It would help, panellists said, if transparency was not seen as a narrow reactive process, but one that is tied to timely and broad access to everyday issues that become a vehicle for public engagement.

But acknowledged and of concern were the current government's claims that more secrecy is needed in these tough times when there are greater security demands and tariff wars at play. This could mean we are entering a post-transparency, more-authoritative world where information is repressed.

Panellists concluded we need a better deal that actively puts transparency back more fully into the picture. That was their starting point to begin changing the decades-old, decrepit Access to Information Act.

Find the panellists' wide-ranging discussion on reforming how Canadians get their tax-paid data on the CIPPIC website under the Summer Speakers Series.

Ken Rubin writes about (and sometimes talks about) transparency issues as a long-time advocate for change and better disclosures. He is reachable via kenrubin.ca.

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DELIVERY INQUIRIES

circulation@hilltimes.com
613-688-8821

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Editorial

Editorial

U.S. politicians are barking up the wrong tree

A quartet of United States senators piled onto Parliament Hill on July 21 looking to bend Prime Minister Mark Carney's ear about Canada-U.S. relations.

Following the meeting, Republican Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, and her three Democrat colleagues—Oregon's Ron Wyden, New Hampshire's Maggie Hassan, and Nevada's Catherine Cortez Masto—said they discussed issues such as the recently scrapped digital services tax, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review, and softwood lumber.

Wyden, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee's point person on international trade, emphasized that the members of the delegation were "bridge builders, not people who throw wrenches."

The American lawmakers said they had a constructive conversation with Carney, as well as with Foreign Minister Anita Anand, and that they put forward "concrete ideas" to help "build more trust between the United States and Canada."

Members of the group repeatedly referred to the current rockiness of the Canada-U.S. relationship, and acknowledged that Canadians were turning their backs on their American neighbours.

Hassan brought greetings from her state, saying that "we know that the instability in our relationship right now means some Canadians have decided to stay away from their favourite American tourist spots, and we hope you will come back. And it's not just that we miss your business—which of course every good business person does—but we miss your friendship."

Down in Nevada, they're also feeling that impact, said Cortez Masto, noting that Canadians typically make up 30 per cent of the state's international visitors.

But, with very few exceptions, they danced around the reason for that instability.

Murkowski, as the lone Republican, was asked to address U.S. President Donald Trump's 51st state rhetoric, and she said she couldn't explain it.

"Certainly here in Canada you can sense that there is a direct hostility, if you will, to that suggestion. So my advice to the president—not that he will take it willingly—is that constructive dialogue is going to be what reinforces this long-standing relationship between these two countries where you have a 5,000-mile border, where you have shared interests, shared values," she said.

As Wyden highlighted, his country's founding document places international trade in the hands of Congress, so the group was visiting in their capacity to wave the flag that they're ready and willing to do the work necessary to "reinvigorate" the agreement that defines trade between the two countries.

Reviewing or renegotiating CUSMA was always going to be a factor—that's how it was written—and, obviously, the relationship didn't deteriorate to this degree when Trump blew up the predecessor deal, NAFTA.

None of the Californian ad campaigns or renaming of streets in Vermont are going to change that key factor that Murkowski very lightly touched on—that the U.S. president's words and actions struck a nerve among Canadians that no amount of run-of-the-mill trade talks are going to soothe.

So if Americans want Canadians to embrace them again with open arms (read: spend money), then it's not the Canadian choir that needs to hear the preaching.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor



Image courtesy pexels.com

The composition of Parliament shouldn't be based on a lucky bounce: letter writer

Re: "Carney Liberals missed winning majority by only 60 votes despite 19.5-million votes cast in last election, say pollsters," (*The Hill Times*, July 7, p. 3).

It is a little bit rich, not to mention ironic, to interpret the 60 votes that lost the governing Liberals a majority as reassurance that, in our "first-past-the-post" system, "every vote counts." It is nothing of the sort. In fact, it is indicative of the dysfunction in the system in which random events—which voters actually got out to vote at a handful of polls—determine the complexion of the Parliament just voted in. The "ground game" is of course vitally important, but in the end this result is like a fluke goal winning the Stanley Cup: the skill and determination of the players is vitally important, but sometimes a lucky bounce is the difference.

Don't talk to me about "voter efficiency." In what universe does 43.7 per cent of the popular vote deserve 49.3 per cent of the seats (which were the Liberal results)? It would be better to term that "voter extravagance" or "voter overreach." So we had a "voter overreach" in the 2025 election of 5.6 per cent for the governing party. Work that out in numbers and it is 19 seats the Liberals did not deserve, and more than one million votes that they did not get. With 60 more votes, that is still 43.7 per cent of the vote giving 50.1 per cent of the seats and majority control of Parliament; a "voter overreach" of 6.4 per cent; 22 "undeserved seats"; and 1.25 million "votes unobtained."

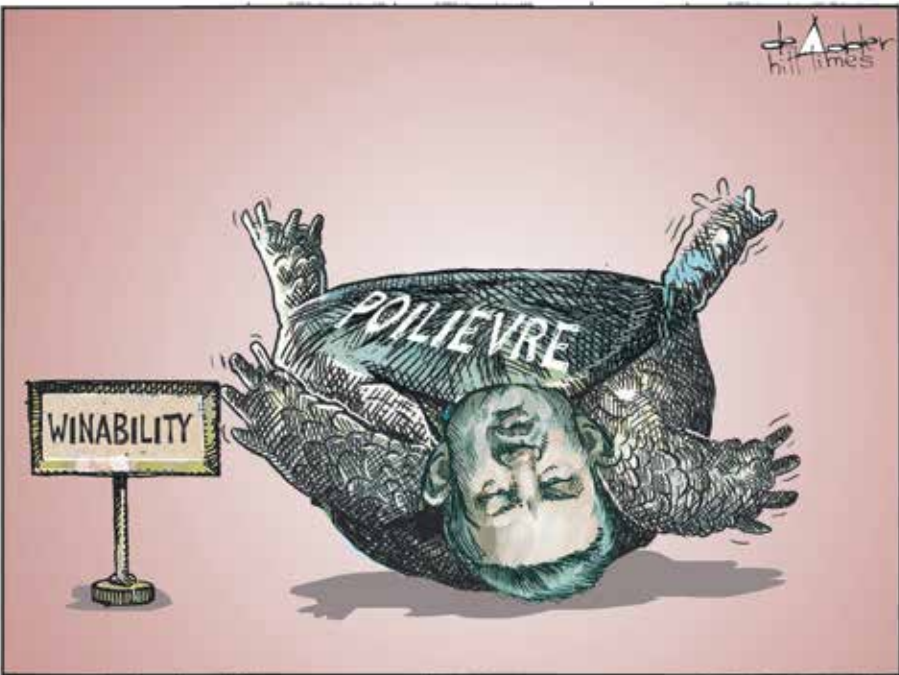
We came that close to another miscarriage of democracy.

In a crude way, however, the system has delivered sort of what Canadians in their collective wisdom voted for: no one has a false majority. And this is not a "one-off." In nine elections this century, three have been majority results (all false; the winning party got less than 50 per cent of the popular vote) for a total of 12 years, and six have been minority for a total of 13 years, and counting. Wow, Canadians like keeping their governments honest, which is doubly impressive considering our system. And look what it delivered in the last Parliament: dental care, pharmacare, and—over the last two Parliaments—universal childcare.

So spare a thought for proportional representation, where you get the number of seats that you deserve from the votes that you were able to harvest, where every vote really does count because everyone helps to elect someone, and where the wishes of the majority are well and truly represented in the makeup of Parliament and the formation of a government.

So, to all Canadians, keep voting for minority Parliaments until our political leadership finally throws in the towel, and accedes to a more democratic system. And then we will have a democracy more like Game 6 of this year's Stanley Cup final where a lucky bounce was not a factor, and there was no doubt who deserved to win.

Victor Foyle
Toronto, Ont.



OPINION

Canada needs to reset its free trade plans with Ecuador

Human rights, not corporate rights, should drive international trade relations under this new government.

Peggy Nash, Viviana Herrera & Caren Weisbart

Opinion

International relations today are rife with difficult challenges to peace, security, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and a healthy environment.

Prime Minister Mark Carney calls this a “hinge moment” for Canada—a chance to lessen our reflexive economic and security ties to the United States, and strive for wider and more equitable foreign and trade relations.

We could not agree more. Canada can and should transform the role it has played internationally, to meet sovereign nations on equal grounds and forge agreements that guarantee civil,



Indigenous leaders from Ecuador Zenaida Yasacama, left, Fanny Kaekat, and Hortencia Zhagüi called on the Canadian government to end trade talks with their country during an October 2024 visit to Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

political, social, economic, and environmental rights.

However, the recently concluded free trade agreement with Ecuador is the furthest thing from a “hinge.”

Canada must diversify its trade relations to buffer against risks emanating from the White House. The reset we need is one that ensures any new trade agreements undertake due diligence, in line with United Nations standards and recommendations, to ensure full compliance with human rights obligations, including the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples and the right to a healthy environment.

It is for these reasons Canada must not implement a highly problematic free trade agreement

negotiated with Ecuador by the Trudeau government in 2024.

The deal will have an insignificant effect on two-way trade flows, and is aimed more at protecting Canadian mining investment in the South American nation from democratic and Indigenous opposition.

Indigenous, subsistence farmer, human rights, and environmental organizations in Ecuador have repeatedly expressed deep concern that the trade deal will exacerbate a dire human rights situation and pose a threat to ecologically sensitive areas of the country.

In October 2024, we hosted a visit by courageous Ecuadorian Indigenous women and water defenders who met with govern-

ment leaders to share disturbing testimony of human rights violations linked to Canadian mining projects.

They called on Canada not to sign any deal unless Indigenous Peoples in Ecuador give their free, prior, and informed consent—a recommendation also made by the House of Commons Trade Committee in its June 2024 report to the Trudeau government.

The Ecuadorian defenders also expressed deep concern—as we have in Canada—about the inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) process that a majority of Ecuadorians rejected in a national referendum last year.

UN reports warn of the catastrophic consequences of ISDS for human rights and the environment. You only have to look at Panama and Peru to see how Canadian corporations are using ISDS to leverage government action that favours their investment over public interests.

In October 2024, the leaders of six Canadian labour unions asked former prime minister Justin Trudeau to halt the free trade negotiations, and for rights to be upheld. In June, the same unions, along with 23 other respected Canadian organizations, reiterated these demands in a joint letter to Carney, which expressed

concerns the government is moving to ratify the Ecuador deal at warp speed.

Equally disturbing, the Ecuadorian government has sent the military into communities speaking out about the negative impacts from Canadian mining projects. President Daniel Noboa has also enacted executive decrees to limit community participation in environmental decision-making processes. UN bodies have repeatedly called out these violations of international human rights standards. Canada should not be ignoring them.

Since 2023, more than 100 environmental defenders have been prosecuted with unfounded charges, and some have been jailed for peacefully protesting Canadian mining projects in Ecuador.

If the Canada-Ecuador free trade deal is ratified by the Canadian Parliament in its current form—with its excessive investor rights and unenforceable inclusive trade chapters—it will only exacerbate a human rights crisis affecting Indigenous Peoples and communities seeking to protect precious water and the right to a healthy environment.

It is imperative that the federal government hits reset on the Canada-Ecuador Free Trade Agreement. Trade with any country must not sacrifice human rights and the environment.

Peggy Nash is executive director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Viviana Herrera is co-manager at Mining-Watch Canada. Caren Weisbart is coalition co-ordinator at Common Frontiers.

The Hill Times

Fixing what isn't broken: why the CRTC should rethink broadband labels

Rather than enhancing transparency, a mandatory label risks becoming a costly distraction from the issues that matter most to consumers.

Mark Goldberg

Opinion

What started as a straightforward question—how best to measure and present broadband

speeds to consumers—has spiralled into a regulatory exercise in search of a problem.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's ongoing push to mandate standardized broadband labels is a solution that's not only unnecessary in the Canadian context, but one that has failed to deliver meaningful results elsewhere.

The CRTC's own consumer research tells a clear story: Canadians already find the information provided by their internet service providers useful and easy to understand. Consumers report being able to compare options and make informed choices based on what's available in the market. That should be the end of the story.

But it's not.

Instead of recognizing that the system is working well, the CRTC doubled down on the idea of

creating a standardized “nutrition label” for broadband services—mirroring an approach taken in the United States. The problem? There's no evidence the U.S. model works. On the contrary, data cited by Cogeco in its submission to the CRTC shows that only two per cent of customers of its U.S.-based services even look at the broadband label. For a public policy tool that's supposed to empower consumers, that figure should raise serious concerns.

In fact, the U.S. experience should be viewed as a cautionary tale. While standardized labels may seem appealing on paper, they haven't improved consumer outcomes in practice. Other countries, like the United Kingdom and Australia, have opted not to mandate such labels. Rather than micromanaging how companies communicate service information, they've recognized that companies should have the flexibility

to display product information provided it is accurate and not misleading.

The Canadian broadband landscape, while not perfect, is delivering results. Consumers are better informed than ever. Providers have every incentive to communicate clearly in a competitive marketplace where switching is relatively easy, and transparency is expected. Rather than enhancing transparency, a mandatory label risks becoming a costly distraction from the issues that matter most to consumers.

Complying with a prescriptive labelling mandate requires service providers to invest time, money, and ongoing IT system changes. These are finite resources that could be—and should be—spent on things that matter more to consumers: expanding rural coverage, boosting network speeds, and improved resiliency.

Instead, if the CRTC imposes a standard label requirement, we're likely to see a label very few Canadians will read, developed through a lengthy regulatory process that has only a self-congratulatory press release issued by the CRTC to show for it. For the average consumer, the impact will be negligible. Meanwhile, the opportunity cost will be very real.

This isn't to say the CRTC shouldn't care about consumer transparency. It absolutely should. But it needs to pick its tools carefully. When the existing approach is working, when international evidence points to the failure of labelling mandates, and when the cost of action outweighs the benefit, regulators should resist the urge to do something *for the sake of doing something*.

Canada's telecommunications future depends not just on investment and innovation, but also on smart, focused regulation. This is a moment for the CRTC to embrace pragmatism over performative policy. It should resist the temptation to fix that which isn't broken—and acknowledge that sometimes doing nothing is the best option.

Mark Goldberg (@mark_goldberg) is a telecommunications consultant with 45 years of international experience working with service providers, equipment manufacturers, policy makers, and regulators. He was co-founder of The Canadian Telecom Summit. In naming him as one of Canada's top 10 technology bloggers, iWorld Canada wrote: “No one does a better job of exploring, interpreting or criticizing telecommunications policy in Canada. Period.”

The Hill Times

NEWS

‘He’s using us’: independent byelection candidates say ‘frustration’ getting ‘louder’ over Poilievre parachuting into Alberta riding

Pierre Poilievre has chosen one of the safest Tory seats in the country to try to punch his ticket back to Parliament Hill, but his opponents say the Conservative leader is using their riding as a ‘political pawn’ and his win isn’t a sure thing.

BY ELEANOR WAND

The upcoming byelection in Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., is Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre’s potential ticket back into the House of Commons. But the competition says Poilievre is out of touch with the rural riding, and that his victory is far from guaranteed.

The byelection was called on June 30 after former Conservative MP Damien Kurek announced his resignation to make way for Poilievre to run.

Sarah Spanier, a first-time independent candidate, was compelled to run in the Aug. 18 contest after Kurek’s departure, saying it left people in her community feeling like pawns in a political game. She told *The Hill Times* “more and more people are getting very vocal about their frustration” over Poilievre parachuting in as an Alberta candidate after losing the Ontario seat he held for two decades in April.

“It’s honestly nice to hear that people are starting to realize that he’s using us,” she said, adding many were “angry” following Kurek’s resignation.

“Voters overwhelmingly supported Damien only to have that choice ripped away on a whim because Pierre got fired from his home riding, and now he feels he can use Battle River–Crowfoot as some type of political pawn, assuming that riding is a guaranteed win,” she said.

“I personally find that really insulting,” said Spanier, who has



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is hoping to secure a seat in the House this August, but his competition doesn’t think he should be so confident about his chances in the upcoming byelection. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

since told *The Canadian Press* she has stopped door-knocking due to death threats she attributes to her advocacy on trans rights.

Poilievre is currently set to run against at least nine other candidates, not including those running as part of a protest effort organized by the Longest Ballot Committee. Along with Spanier, the other candidates are: independent Bonnie Critchley, United Party of Canada’s Grant Abraham, Libertarian Party of Canada’s Michael Harris, Christian Heritage Party of Canada’s Jeff Willerton, the Green Party’s Douglas Gook, New Democrat Katherine Swampy, Liberal candidate Darcy Spady, and the People’s Party of Canada’s (PPC) Jonathan Bridges.

More than 100 additional candidates listed as running are associated with the Longest Ballot Committee. The group says it’s aiming to get “somewhere around 200” candidates on the list after getting 91 candidates on the ballot in Poilievre’s former riding of Carleton, Ont., back in April.

Spanier said she’s running as an independent because her riding needs an MP who cannot be forced to step down because of party ties.

“It’s time that we listen to the people of Carleton. They did see who [Poilievre] really was,” said Spanier, who has lived in the riding for a year.

Critchley, a retired veteran, told CBC’s *Power & Politics* she’s running for similar reasons.

“We just had an election, and we spent all that money, and we elected the candidate of our choice who promptly turned around and said ‘no, I don’t want

that mandate I asked you for,’” she said in a July 15 interview.

“We’re spending another \$2-million to vote in the angry guy from Ottawa who doesn’t know jack about this area.”

Both Critchley and Spanier said they think it’s important that their MP is familiar with the riding and understands the community’s needs.

“It’s a whole different way of [living] than living in an urban area,” Spanier said of rural Alberta, noting that she has a lot of “quiet support” in her community that she thinks gives her “a good shot” at winning.

Poilievre’s margin of victory could affect leadership review, says professor

Battle River–Crowfoot is a riding with a strong Conservative electoral history, having voted blue since its creation in 2015. Kurek won the seat handily three times in a row. During the April 28 election, he secured the seat with a whopping 82.8 per cent of the vote, achieving the second-highest winning margin for a Tory candidate in the country.

Lori Williams, a political scientist and professor at Mount Royal University, said it’s likely Poilievre will win given the area’s strong Conservative support, and given that Kurek has been campaigning alongside him. But the leader’s winning margin could impact his future.

“The question is: will the margin of victory be diminished? Will all of this factor into people’s decisions about who they want

as leader?” Williams highlighted, pointing to Poilievre’s upcoming leadership review in January 2026, which will take place at the party’s convention in Calgary.

If Poilievre wins by a slimmer margin than Kurek, “it could raise questions amongst those who wonder whether he’s got the ability to carry them successfully through another election,” Williams said.

She also noted the support Critchley has amassed, which could cut into Poilievre’s vote share and decrease his margin of victory. Critchley’s critiques of both Kurek and Poilievre appear to be “really resonating in some circles,” Williams said, predicting the independent will come in second, and the PPC’s Bridges will gain votes compared to his results in the spring election.

Bridges finished fourth on April 28, with 1.6 per cent of the vote, and told *The Hill Times* he also expects his support to increase. Still, he conceded it’s a “safe bet” that Poilievre will win.

“I do feel like the People’s Party is poised to gain a lot in this election,” said Bridges, who has lived in the riding his entire life. “We are a conservative-based party, and a lot of people agree with our policies—a lot of people that are scared that if they don’t vote for the blue party, then the Liberals will win.”

The Green Party’s Gook is also running on Aug. 18 after finishing fifth in April, taking home only 0.7 per cent of the vote. Gook currently lives in British Columbia, but said he has “strong connections” to the riding and has worked with horse farms in the area.

Gook told *The Hill Times* he wants to “honour” Kurek, noting Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich–Gulf Islands, B.C.) “had a wonderful working relationship with him.”

“It must have been a very, very difficult choice for him, considering his popularity and his long-standing commitment to that riding,” Gook said. “To be usurped by the upper party brass [and] basically forced to resign. I think that is a tragedy in many respects.”

Kurek has previously said his decision to step down is only temporary, and that he will run again in the region, which calls into question where Poilievre might run in the future, should he secure a seat and remain the party’s leader.

Gook said he wanted to run in the byelection for Conservative Party members who want to see a leadership contest “as fast as possible.” The race also presents an opportunity for the riding’s voters to send a message that “Alberta is really concerned about the climate emergency,” he added.

Both the NDP and the Liberals are running new candidates. The New Democrats’ Swampy, a band councillor for the Samson Cree Nation and an Indigenous activist in the province, ran in Leduc–Wetaskiwin, Alta., in April, losing to incumbent Conservative MP Mike Lake, and placing third with a 6.1 per cent share of the vote.

A spokesperson for the NDP said Swampy was unavailable for an interview.

Spady, the Liberal candidate, is a local who grew up in the riding, and who works as a petroleum engineer.

A Liberal Party release from June 30 quotes Spady as saying “it’s time to build, to be bold and ambitious, and I’ve seen firsthand how our region can lead the way,” adding that he’s running to “build a stronger Alberta and Canada.” Spady could not be reached by *The Hill Times* by deadline.

‘Critchley comes well before Poilievre’ on the ballot: Williams

Poilievre has lashed out about the Longest Ballot protest efforts, saying he wants election laws changed to prevent ballots of the length seen in Carleton, and now Battle River–Crowfoot.

“This is a scam. It’s unfair, it is unjust, and it must stop,” the Conservative leader said at a July 11 town hall in Stettler, Alta., which is in the riding. He suggested changing the rules to increase the number of signatures required to run from 100 to 1,000, and only allowing voters to sign one nomination form.

The Longest Ballot Committee has denounced his suggested reforms. In a statement that wasn’t attributed to a group representative, it called the reform “dangerous,” as well as “ill conceived and self-serving.”

“[W]hen it comes to election law, politicians just have too much skin in the game to be calling the shots,” the statement reads, noting that requiring 1,000 signatures would turn “every election into a two party race,” and also claiming that elections “in safe ridings, like Battle River–Crowfoot, we would likely see no election at all.”

Williams said the group’s efforts have the potential to impact the byelection’s outcome, if only by virtue of the alphabet.

“It can make things a bit more onerous, more complicated,” she said. “That said, it’s going to take time to find anybody’s name on that ballot, but Critchley comes well before Poilievre. So, who knows? That could be a factor.”

But Williams emphasized that the primary factor in the byelection will be turnout.

“If somebody really captures the imagination of the voters here—that’s really the unknown quantity.”

ewand@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Senator Harder wants to legislate how the feds handle the notwithstanding clause—his colleagues have some concerns

PSG Senator Peter Harder's Bill S-218 follows a motion last Parliament that sought to foster reflection on use of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms' notwithstanding clause.



The potential handling of federal legislation that invokes the notwithstanding clause is a question that 'deserves more than a conversation,' says Ontario Senator Peter Harder. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

fundamental freedoms (including of religion, thought, and peaceful assembly), and legal and equality rights.

Amid then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau's push to patriate the Constitution and entrench the Charter of Rights within it, Section 33's inclusion in the latter document was agreed to as a political compromise to get all provinces—ultimately excluding Quebec—on side.

"Section 33 was seen as a safety valve to be used only on rare occasions, and it was expected that it would be used in relation to non-controversial issues," reads a Library of Parliament write-up on the clause.

Since 1982, it has been proposed or invoked more than 20 times provincially—largely in Quebec, but also in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, New Brunswick, and the Yukon—including eight times since 2018. It has yet to be used at the federal level.

During the previous Parliament, Harder introduced a motion on the subject proposing the "Senate express the view that it should not adopt any bill that contains a declaration pursuant to section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

At the time, Harder told *The Hill Times* his aim was to prompt debate and reflection, arguing that attitudes towards use of the clause have changed since the Charter was adopted, and that the handling of legislation that invokes it should, too. Top of mind for Harder were multiple instances of pre-emptive use of Section 33 by provincial governments in recent years, and comments by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre in April and September 2024 indicating his willingness to invoke the clause federally.

Currently at second reading in the Senate, Bill S-218 tackles

the matter from a different angle, proposing a series of amendments to the Constitution Act, 1982, to set out a new process by which Parliament would handle such bills.

"This question—which is very, very complex—deserves more than a conversation," said Harder on July 10, and introducing a bill gives the Senate "opportunity to further study all the implications and perhaps try to recommend some framework that could be useful to any government" looking to invoke the clause.

Harder said his already ongoing efforts to draft the bill during prorogation were accelerated following Poilievre's campaign commitment to restore—through use of Section 33—powers struck down by the Supreme Court in 2022 to enable judges to sentence multiple murderers to consecutive prison sentences beyond 25 years, without the possibility of parole.

Specifically, S-218 would require any legislation that invokes Section 33 to be introduced by a minister in the House, and only if the Supreme Court has already found—through a reference question or other ruling—that use of the clause would be required. That bill would have to include a preamble setting out reasons for use of Section 33, and the minister introducing it would have to table a statement setting out the potential rights and freedoms that would be infringed, and why such infringement can't be justified as a "reasonable" limit.

Harder's bill further sets out that, in consideration of such legislation, neither the House nor the Senate could adopt a time-allocation motion to limit debate, or consider it as part of a committee of the whole. Moreover, S-218

would require a bill using the notwithstanding clause to have support from two-thirds of the House, and from MPs from at least two recognized parties, in order to be passed at third reading in the Lower Chamber.

Asked why such stipulations only apply to the House, not the Senate, Harder said given the independence of the Upper Chamber, there "wouldn't be partisan imperative" in the handling of such legislation, and that he thinks it's important for the House to have "agreed processes for the manner and form in which" it would deal with such bills.

"I was around at the time of the repatriation, and I am devoted to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I believe that each generation must—in its own way—advance and protect the rights that were so hard fought [for] by earlier legislators," said Harder. "You don't need a Charter of Rights and Freedoms to protect the rich and the wealthy and the privileged, you need it to protect minority rights, and those who don't readily have available the levers of power."

An 'extremely high threshold'

Independent Senators Group Facilitator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.) has a number of questions, and some concerns, with Harder's bill as currently proposed, but overall wants to see it sent to committee for study—and amendment.

Saint-Germain said Section 33 should be used rarely and in exceptional circumstances, and she shares the concern over "the lack of criteria for parliamentarians to examine" bills that invoke it.

But among Saint-Germain's concerns are the "pre-emptive" restrictions S-218 would place on the House and Senate's ability to legislate as they see fit—including by using the legitimate forum of a committee of the whole, which she said can enable all members of a Chamber to benefit from witness testimony. She said the bill would also bring the Supreme Court "very close to the legislative process," and put it in a position of potentially "restricting parliamentarians' work."

"This, for me, deserves further consideration," said Saint-Germain.

She also highlighted the fact that, by requiring two-thirds of votes to come from members of at least two recognized parties in the House, S-218 would introduce "the notion of a political party, or partisan politics, in the Constitution ... for the first time."

While she said she understands the aim of disabling a majority government from passing such legislation unilaterally, the two-party requirement and super-majority vote are thresholds that would be "very demanding for Parliament," and would in effect make S-218 "an obstructive bill."

Saint-Germain also questioned how a federal bill that references provincial legislation that invokes the notwithstanding clause—like last Parliament's Bill C-13—would be handled under Harder's proposed scheme.

"This is why I do believe that this bill needs further consideration, more scrutiny, and, for me, the committee is the right place to do so," she said.

Saint-Germain said she believes S-218 "is amendable." Moreover, she said killing it at second reading would send the wrong message "that the Senate doesn't care about the use of the notwithstanding clause, which is not the case."

"We need a framework, we need criteria ... This is why I think [S-]218 is relevant, but not ready to be passed and certainly in its current form."

Conservative Senator Denise Batters (Saskatchewan), the official opposition critic for S-218, similarly highlighted the proposed super-majority vote requirement as an area of concern—including that it's a requirement only stipulated for the final vote in the House.

"His bill is silent on what vote percentage is needed in the Senate ... and I kind of wonder if maybe that's because he thinks he's made passage of such a bill using the notwithstanding clause so

utterly impossible in the House of Commons that it would never even come to the Senate," said Batters.

With the "extremely high threshold" set out, "it seems quite clear to me that Senator Harder's bill is designed to prevent the notwithstanding clause from ever being used," she argued, stressing that it's "a legitimate part of our Canadian Constitution."

Batters likewise noted the requirement for Supreme Court decisions, saying it would be "quite a major difference" to the legislative process, "and a problem."

She also challenged Harder's assertion that the proposed amendments could be enacted without requiring the support of at least seven provinces representing at least 50 per cent of Canada's population, in addition to the House and Senate.

Harder has argued that, since his bill only affects parliamentary machinations, the changes could be brought about through the Constitution's Section 44 amending formula, which allows Parliament to unilaterally pass changes related to the government, Senate, or the House. In his sponsor speech on S-218, Harder noted the latter formula has been used previously to increase the number of seats in the House, and to add a Senator for Nunavut to the Upper Chamber.

Batters contended that preventing the use of the notwithstanding clause is "a far cry from that kind of example," and said "some legal scholars and academics" have questioned whether Harder's bill could go ahead unilaterally as proposed.

That said, the first concern raised by Batters in speaking with *The Hill Times* on July 16 was her perception of partisan motivations, pointing to Harder's repeated reference to Poilievre's comments on potential pre-emptive use of the clause.

"To me, it's clear that Senator Harder's motivation in bringing this bill forward ... is primarily political," she said.

Batters also questioned the degree to which Harder has had support from the Liberal government in drafting his bill. "If this is really a government bill, it would be fair to put it forward to us as a government bill," she said.

Asked who he consulted in drafting S-218, and whether anyone from the Lower Chamber was on the list, Harder said he consulted with "our legal counsel" and the Canadian Bar Association. As to whether he's been in touch with anyone from the House, including Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.), the minister responsible for democratic institutions, Harder said didn't directly respond, but said "a number of Members of Parliament have contacted me to indicate their support for the bill."

"As we move forward, I will increase that effort, but I think at the present time, my focus is on getting appropriate debate in the Senate and getting it to committee," said Harder.

MacKinnon's office declined to offer comment.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

From chatbots to translation: how the public service is using AI

The Canada Revenue Agency, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Shared Services Canada are among the departments using the technology in their daily work, which they say helps with productivity.

BY MARLO GLASS

Long before Prime Minister Mark Carney made sweeping election promises of harnessing artificial intelligence to boost productivity in the federal bureaucracy, AI programs were hard at work in the public service.

Whether it's tax questions, addressing Phoenix pay issues, translation services, or drafting documents, it seems there's an AI bot for that.

In fact, the annual report about the federal public service itself was developed with the help of generative artificial intelligence. The July 16 Privy Council Office report for Carney (Nepean, Ont.) includes the disclaimer that the AI section was written using "a generative AI tool approved for use by public servants." The tool helped "with plain language" and to brainstorm while developing the narrative, but the generated content was reviewed and edited by humans.

Artificial intelligence is technology that enables computers to simulate human processes like logic, problem solving, pattern recognition, and more. Generative AI is based on machine learning models that create original content by mimicking the human-generated information that it's trained on.

The government's AI strategy for 2025 to 2027 has been in place since the spring, and numerous applications of the technology have been put in place throughout the public sector. The strategy requires public disclosure of which technologies are used and the tasks they perform, as both public and private sector surveys show mistrust about the use of artificial intelligence remains high.

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), and Shared Services Canada are among the departments making prominent use of these programs in their daily work.

Translation tool misses 'critical nuances,' warns union

Last month, PSPC's Translation Bureau launched an AI



Prime Minister Mark Carney made sweeping promises during the election to harness AI and transform productivity in the federal public service. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

translation tool prototype called PSPC Translate, spokesperson Jullian Paquin confirmed to *The Hill Times*.

The prototype was designed after a "noticeable decline" in translation request volumes, which suggested employees were using external translation tools like Google Translate and DeepL, an AI translation tool, Paquin said.

"To address this, the Translation Bureau sought to provide a secure, high-quality alternative that reflects Canadian linguistic standards and ensures data confidentiality."

The tool is not intended to replace human translators, but to support the day-to-day communication needs of employees, and to reduce reliance on "unvetted external platforms," Paquin said.

No jobs are being eliminated as a result of the prototype's launch, and it's designed to support Translation Bureau staff by handling routine internal content, Paquin said, allowing for translators to focus on more complex work.

"Their expertise remains also essential to ensuring quality, refining the tool, and updating the lexicon to reflect evolving language use and organizational needs," Paquin said.

Nathan Prier, president of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, one of the public service's largest unions, criticized the tool as undermining Canadian bilingualism, as "critical nuances are lost" when translations are performed by machines instead of humans.

"Current translation technologies are far from being able to independently translate complex legal or technical texts," he said in an emailed statement. "Errors in critical translations can create huge problems and cost more to resolve."

Federal translators are "very high-calibre and remain more nuanced and sophisticated than current AI products," he continued. "Their work can and is supported by emerging technologies but replacing them with AI in a rush is simply a direct attack on the standards Canadians should expect."

"We need to recruit more qualified people, give them the right tools, and consult them to find out what they need to do a quality job that puts both official languages on an equal footing

and ensures professional and first-rate translations."

Tax chat, document drafting, and more

As previously reported by *The Hill Times*, PSPC has also developed a bot to clear up the backlog of complaints related to the Phoenix pay system.

Speaking to reporters on June 23, PSPC associate deputy minister Alex Benay said an AI virtual agent, or "Ava," has been trained by compensation advisers for the past year, and is now tasked with clearing 160,000 backlogged cases of issues with the beleaguered Phoenix pay system, under the supervision of humans.

Benay said complex cases will be managed by humans, while "the lighter-touch stuff will be first passed by machines, reviewed by humans."

In March, the CRA launched its beta chatbot, billing it as available 24/7 to answer questions about charities, personal income tax, and information related to accessing a CRA account. But it's not without limits.

"Do not share any personal details like your name, address, social insurance number (SIN), date of birth, or financial information while using the chatbot," reads CRA's fact sheet about the product. "The GenAI chatbot beta is not designed to securely handle personal or sensitive information."

The disclaimer continues that the information provided by the chatbot beta is based on Canada.ca webpages, and should not be taken as professional, legal, or medical advice. It further warns information from the bot "may not be fully accurate," and ends with the advice to "use this information at your own risk."

CRA spokesperson Sylvie Branch said the department first began experimenting with AI in 2023, and the new chatbot was developed in-house. It helps reduce pressure on contact centres, but isn't intended to replace human agents.

"Instead, it enables taxpayers to find answers to basic questions independently, allowing contact centre staff to focus on more complex inquiries that require human expertise."

The CRA chatbot reflects the Treasury Board Secretariat's commitment to responsible, ethical, and

effective AI adoption in the public sector, Branch said, and "closely aligns" with the TBS's AI strategy and its guiding principles, including being human-centred, collaborative, ready, and responsible.

Shared Services Canada has an internal chatbot for its employees. Dubbed CANchat, the bot can assist with document drafting, content editing, summarizing information, research assistance, meeting preparation, and more.

"SSC is conducting a pilot to evaluate CANChat's value and potential for productivity," the department's webpage says. "The pilot aims to gather insights on integrating generative AI into daily workflows. This ensures employees have access to modern digital tools to improve their work experience and collaboration."

Making bureaucrats more efficient

Sean O'Reilly, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), says artificial intelligence is here to stay, and should be used as a tool to augment the work public servants do, allowing them to take on new and ambitious projects.

"It should be used to make the work we do better and more efficient, I don't think AI should be replacing public servants," he said. "I don't think any Canadian wants to get answers from a computer. It needs a human touch."

While the public sector is bracing for impact after Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champplain, Que.) called for a spending review and for departments to cut their budgets by 15 per cent over the next three years, there is a concern that AI will be used to replace public servants, O'Reilly said.

But, he added, as it stands, public servants are using AI to do their jobs better.

"It's removing that mundane work so they can actually use their skill that they train for to do the work, and they can do better work because of it," O'Reilly said.

As AI usage expands across the public service, those programs will need to be maintained, and will need someone to "actually care for them and nurture them," O'Reilly said, to make sure data models are working and biases are removed. Some PIPSC members are already working in that capacity across various departments, he added.

"You're going to need a human for that," he said. "Some researchers, their day to day job is AI."

O'Reilly said unions have been pushing for an AI register that shows all applications of the technology, not just in the government, as well as a regulatory body for the technology.

The Privy Council Office established an AI Secretariat in 2024 "to improve co-ordination and delivery of the government's significant AI agenda," including in the public

service to "drive service improvements and operational efficiency across government."

Better tracking of AI programs needed

Joanna Redden is an associate professor in Western University's faculty of information and media studies. She compiled a database of more than 300 applications of artificial intelligence in the federal government spanning from 2013 to present, many of them pilot projects.

The database was developed via information from documents tabled in Parliament, access-to-information requests, and news reporting. The database says just four per cent of the tools have publicly available government assessments on their impacts on the protected characteristics of individuals.

In an interview, Redden says the public isn't well-informed about how widely AI is being used in the public service, and more work needs to be done to make that information clear, noting the public service's AI strategy for 2025-27 mentions plans to develop an AI register for the government.

"I think the public doesn't know enough about where AI is happening. But not only that, I think even if you know AI is being used, you don't necessarily know how you've been impacted," she said. "That's a huge problem because in the research I've been part of, these systems are often not as accurate as they're expected to be, not efficient, they get things wrong."

What's more, she added, public trust in AI is also low, as people using generative AI tools have experienced firsthand their failures and shortcomings.

Aside from more transparency, more conversations are needed about the pitfalls of AI, Redden said, including risks to people and communities, as well as environmental harms.

AI systems can be deployed in ways that can "disproportionately negatively affect" people with low incomes, or people who face discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or religion, she said, in some cases leading to wrongful arrests and detainment, biases in hiring, and more.

Academics have developed an AI incident database to track some of the harms related to AI.

"The broad trend we see, and what I'm concerned about, is there's not enough attention being paid to the ways in which AI is already leading to harm, and the kind of work that we should be doing, urgently, to prevent that harm from happening in the future," Redden said. "There's a lack of oversight in the first place to ensure that AI harms don't occur."

Redden said Bill C-27, the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act, was the government's first crack at legislating and regulating AI, but it died on the Order Paper when Parliament was prorogued in January.

"We'd like to see that energy around regulating AI picked back up again," she said.

—with files from Irem Koca
mglass@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

OPINION

We're still here. We still say 'no'



Northwest residents rally against the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline in Prince Rupert in 2011. The proposal produced one of the greatest public outcries in northern B.C., uniting a broad cross-section of the region, writes Nikki Skuce. *Photograph courtesy of Nikki Skuce*

Many of us who fought for the oil tanker ban in northern B.C. to prevent future pipeline proposals are still here, and remain rooted in our love of the land and waters that sustain us.

Nikki Skuce

Opinion



It's hard to believe that an oil pipeline to cross through British Columbia's northwest is once again being pushed by the premier of Alberta and considered by the prime minister of Canada. Unlike when Enbridge Northern Gateway first proposed an oilsands pipeline that would introduce oil supertankers to B.C.'s north coast for the first time nearly two decades ago, today such a pipeline would depart from the rebuilt community of Fort McMurray, Alta., past the scorched iconic town of Jasper, Alta., passing north of the decimated town of Lytton, B.C., and crossing hundreds of salmon creeks and rivers facing drought. While much has changed, much remains the same—many of us residents are still here, and we still say “no.”

Enbridge's previous proposal produced one of the greatest public outcries in northern B.C. It united a broad cross-section of the region—First Nations and municipalities, loggers and tree huggers, and conservative and progressive voters. Wild salmon are what unites us in the northwest. It is pretty remarkable to be able to fish for and land a salmon or steelhead within the town boundaries of Terrace, Hazelton, and Smithers, as well as many of the Indigenous communities along the Skeena watershed.

British Columbians, especially in the northwest, love this place and the healthy freshwater ecosystems and wild salmon that sustain us. When these are threatened, we join forces and defend our assets, just like we did to stop Northern Gateway.

In March 2010, Coastal First Nations announced a ban on crude oil tankers in the Pacific North Coast under their Indigenous laws. Following this was the Save the Fraser Declaration in December 2010 that banned oil pipelines and oilsands projects from crossing the Fraser watershed. Well over 100 First Nations ultimately signed this Declaration. Between 2012 and 2013, the National Energy

Board heard from more than 1,400 northwestern B.C. residents who registered to express their views on the risky project, with only two voicing their support. Several municipalities, unions, and businesses opposed Enbridge's proposal in defence of the economies, cultures, and ecosystems we rely on.

In 2019, the federal government enacted Bill C-48, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, which prohibits oil tankers larger than 12,500 tonnes carrying crude or persistent oil from B.C.'s north coast—the same coast that is home to the Great Bear Rainforest, newly created and planned Marine Protected Areas, and coastal communities reliant on seafood and tourism. This bill solidified the 1972 moratorium on oil tanker imports, and the 1985 Voluntary Exclusion Zone that has kept large oil tankers off this part of the coast for decades.

What has changed since Bill C-48? The provincial and federal governments have enacted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Climate change has caused warming of more than 1.6 C in this region, with droughts and wildfires happening more frequently and severely. The Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline was built with tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to increase oilsands' exports, and is still not operating at full capacity. United States President Donald Trump has slapped tariffs on Canadian goods and energy, and threatens to take over our country spurring reckless fast-tracking legislation.

What has not changed? Hecate Strait was listed as the world's fourth most dangerous waterway and, along with Douglas Channel, can see frequent winter storms with wave heights of 20 metres. These waters are home to populations of humpback, gray, fin, and minke whales, as well as porpoises, orcas, and dolphins. Beneath the surface is an oceanic underworld of mollusks and crustaceans, plankton and seaweed, and, of course, salmon. B.C.'s tourism sector generates more than \$22-billion in direct revenue annually—with many visitors coming to experience the rivers and coastlines we hold dear. The risks and potential consequences of oil spills to our rivers and coast remain as high and unacceptable as ever.

The Moratorium Act followed years of communities fighting the Northern Gateway pipeline and tanker proposal that would have put our salmon watersheds and coast at risk of irreparable harm. Many of us who fought for this legislation to prevent future proposals are still here, and remain rooted in our love of the land and waters that sustain us. The answer to any oil pipeline or tankers through here is still “no.”

Nikki Skuce is the director of the Northern Confluence Initiative based in Smithers, B.C.

The Hill Times

FEATURE

CARICOM envoys host party

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



1. Joanne Alfred, chargé d'affaires at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, left; Marvin Brathwaite, first secretary at the Barbados High Commission; Jamaican High Commissioner Marsha Coore Lobban; Guyanese High Commissioner Keith George; Grenadian High Commissioner Sylvester Quarless; Bahamian High Commissioner V. Alfred Gray; and Saint Kitts and Nevis High Commissioner Samuel Berridge at the CARICOM reception hosted at the National Arts Centre on June 27. **2.** Sylvie Bedard, director general, Central America and Caribbean, at Global Affairs Canada, left; and Marie Françoise Suzan, chargé d'affaires at the Haitian Embassy. **3.** Berridge, left, and Kazakhstan Ambassador Dauletbek Kussainov. **4.** Coore Lobban delivers remarks.

Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania mark sombre occasion



1. Members of the Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian communities gather to commemorate the 1941 deportations from the Baltic States to Siberia at the Memorial to the Victims of Communism Memorial on Wellington Street in Ottawa on June 14. **2.** Lithuanian Ambassador Egidijus Meilunas delivers remarks. **3.** Estonian Ambassador Margus Rava looks on. **4.** Latvian Ambassador Kaspars Ozolins attends the inaugural event.

NEWS

August deadline could force Canada to sign a deal before courts rule on legality of Trump's fentanyl tariffs

Canada could gain added leverage in negotiations if the soon-to-be 35-per-cent tariffs are ruled unconstitutional by an American appeals court.

Continued from page 1

Circuit are scheduled for July 31.

A 25-per-cent IEEPA tariff was placed on Canadian goods—and 10 per cent for energy and potash—under the guise of addressing fentanyl and migrant crises. The Act was also employed to facilitate Trump's April 2 so-called "reciprocal" tariffs. Goods are exempt from the tariffs on Canada if they are compliant with the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA).

At the G7 Leaders' Summit in June, an initial deadline for completing talks was set for July 21. But in a July 10 letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.), Trump set a new deadline for Aug. 1, and announced that the tariffs would jump to 35 per cent. It has been reported the tariffs would continue to only apply to goods that are not CUSMA compliant.

International trade lawyer Robert Glasgow, a McCarthy Tétrault partner, said there are benefits and disadvantages to both waiting to sign a deal and getting one done by the deadline.

"It's difficult to say for sure where the court's going to go," he said. "If the Federal Court of Appeal ends up going with a determination that IEEPA tariffs are illegal, then that gives you a massive leg up in negotiating leverage ... the major tariffs against Canada outside of steel and autos just kind of disappear."

Glasgow noted that despite the current situation, Canada already has a leg up on other countries since the IEEPA tariffs are not targeting goods that are CUSMA compliant.

There hasn't been clear accounting over how much of Canada's exports to the U.S. fall under the North American trade pact, but analysts told *The Hill Times* that estimates are likely in the 60-80 per cent range.



Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc will be in Washington, D.C., this week to advance trade talks, according to the PMO. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Glasgow said that if the IEEPA tariffs are ruled to be illegal, it is likely that Trump would pivot to another tariff regime to advance his trade policy.

"One way or another, we have to plan for trade being tariffed in the long term," Glasgow said.

He said he anticipates Canada and the U.S. reaching some form of trade pact by the deadline, adding that it won't be a comprehensive trade agreement, but one that lowers tariffs and provides sectoral relief.

Carney has indicated that some levels of tariffs will be present in whatever agreement is reached with the U.S., telling reporters last week that "there's not a lot of evidence right now" that the Trump administration would conclude a pact without tariffs in place.

Glasgow said that achieving "some sort of deal" is a positive given the importance of having preferential access to the American market, but it won't alleviate concerns over continued trade threats.

"You can trust Trump as far as you can throw him, and I don't think I can throw him very far," he said. "At the same time, he has certain patterns and one of them is that—as we've seen in his letters with Vietnam and the like—is that he likes announcing deals and being seen to have closed deals."

He said even if Trump can't be trusted to adhere to any agreement in the long term, it would offer short-term protection where Canada can advance its work on diversification.



U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski was the lone Republican in a delegation that met with Prime Minister Mark Carney on July 21. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The case for waiting

Carlo Dade, director of international policy at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, told *The Hill Times* earlier this month that Canada shouldn't be signing up for a global tariff in the negotiations when it has the potential to be removed by the American judiciary.

"If the administration is trying to get deals done by August and the start of the appeal hearing is coming in July, do you want to rush to agree to tariffs that have already been declared illegal and unconstitutional and have ended, but that end has been put on hold [during the appeal]?" he said.

He added that it makes little sense to offer concessions to a Trump administration that has broken trade agreements it previously negotiated during its first iteration, such as CUSMA side letters and a 2019 pact on steel and aluminum tariffs.

Dade said the only good negotiation outcome is getting an exemption from the tariffs.

"If [Trump's] favourite and easiest tool for imposing tariffs is constrained and the current fentanyl and across-the-board tariffs are about to be revoked, then it's a whole new ball game and Canada needs to change its negotiating objectives and strategy," Dade wrote in a July 10 *Globe and Mail* op-ed.

International trade lawyer Lawrence Herman said that rushing into a deal with an "artificial deadline may not be the most prudent thing to do."

He said that an approach could be to delay signing a deal that would amount to a "handshake" with Trump and lack "any real binding force in international law."

A group of U.S. Senators—three Democrats and a Republican—were in Ottawa on July 21 to discuss the state of trade with Canada.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, chief of staff Marc-André Blanchard joined senior officials last week in Washington, D.C., to "advance negotiations," and Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) will head south of the border this week.

Court likely to be deferential to Trump: lawyer

International trade lawyer Mark Warner, who practices in both the U.S. and Canada, said the appeals court is unlikely to rule in a way that would favour Canada.

"The bottom line is American courts tend to be deferential to claims of presidential authority when presidents use their Article 2 inherent powers over things like national emergencies and national security," he said.

"As these cases go up the system, you're going to courts in any generation [or] iteration since World War Two [that] are likely to be deferring to the president," he said.

Warner added that a court ruling to overturn the trafficking tariffs could end up being questioned more than its judgment on the "reciprocal" tariffs.

The Court of International Trade ruled that those tariffs applied with the rationale of mitigating fentanyl didn't meet the test of "deal[ing] with an unusual and extraordinary threat."

Warner said that is unlikely to survive the upcoming appeals process.

"Unfortunately for Canada, the one part of the case that I think is most likely not to be affirmed on appeal is the part that most directly applies to Canada and Mexico—the trafficking tariffs."

Warner said Canada's strategy should be to strike a deal in the short term and not to wait out the legal cases, remarking that doing so could invite American retaliation.

"I don't think Canada would want to be the lead jurisdiction standing up to the man," he said, remarking that it may play well for a domestic audience, but it would be a "disastrous strategy" given the size of the Canadian economy compared to that of its southern neighbour.

Trade consultant Eric Miller, president of the Rideau Potomac Strategy Group, said he anticipates the courts "won't save free trade," remarking that the U.S. Supreme Court has been willing to allow for the expansion of presidential authority.

He said it is an "awfully big risk" to hope that a court decision will fall in Canada's favour, and the threat will dissipate.

"Even if the IEEPA process was ruled illegal at the highest levels, then Donald Trump [could] start a very broad Section 232 [tariff] problem and put tariffs on that way," he said.

Miller said many people are hoping to see a potential agreement to put the situation in the rearview mirror.

With open questions about the CUSMA review that is scheduled to occur in 2026, Canada is looking to move quickly to have increased clarity and certainty in the North American trading relationship, he said.

"But the challenge with Donald Trump is that Donald Trump is perfectly willing to open an agreement that he has made," he said.

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Environment Minister Dabrusin taps Matthew Paisley as policy director



Environment and Climate Change Minister Julie Dabrusin has hired ex-staffers from the offices of the prime minister, housing minister, natural resources minister, and more. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Plus, Kieran Steede has been named director of operations and international affairs, and former PMO spokesperson Jenna Ghassabeh is communications director.

Environment and Climate Change Minister **Julie Dabrusin** has introduced some fresh perspective to her file among the 17 staffers so far confirmed in her office, including with her choice of policy director, **Matthew Paisley**.

"We have a strong and experienced director team coming from across government," noted Dabrusin's director of communications, **Jenna Ghassabeh**, in an email to *Hill Climbers*.

As previously reported, **Caroline Lee** is chief of staff to the first-time minister.

Paisley was last working on the Hill as deputy director of infrastructure policy to then-housing, infrastructure, and communities minister **Sean Fraser**—a title he took on last September after a little more than a year as a senior policy adviser in the office. Paisley previously worked in Fraser's office as then-immigration minister, and followed him to housing in the wake of the July 2023 cab-

inet shuffle. Paisley first began working as a policy adviser in the immigration office under then-minister **Marco Mendicino** in early 2020, and is a former assistant to Mendicino as the then-MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.

Also currently tackling policy in the office are senior policy advisers **Isabelle Hurley** and **Brenna Walsh**, and policy and North regional affairs adviser **Natalie Woodland**.

Hurley was previously a policy and North regional affairs adviser to then-environment minister **Steven Guilbeault**, having first joined the office as a special assistant for the Atlantic after the 2021 federal election. Before then, she'd been a research associate with Dalhousie University's

Future of Marine Ecosystems Lab. Hurley holds a master and bachelor of science degree from the university.

Walsh was previously a policy and Atlantic regional adviser to then-energy and natural resources minister **Jonathan Wilkinson**, whose office she joined at the start of 2024 after almost a year and a half

working for the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax. Walsh is also a former project manager with SPARTAN, a global surface particulate matter network, among other past jobs.

Woodland, meanwhile, first joined the environment office

under Guilbeault in December 2023 as an Ontario regional affairs adviser, starting a few months after the end of a year-long internship as a field organizer with Green Corps in Denver, Colo. According to her LinkedIn profile, she spent this past election managing communications for now Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeverden** in his re-election race in Burlington North-Milton West, Ont.

While Woodland is focused on the North, other regional desks in Dabrusin's office are covered by **Nicole Ellement**, senior regional adviser for British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan; **Alex Kondakov**, senior regional adviser for Ontario and Manitoba, and assistant to the parliamentary secretary; **Noah Fon**, Quebec regional adviser; and **Sarah Gingles**, Atlantic

regional adviser. Ellement spent the last year working as a regional adviser in the ministers' regional office in Calgary, one of 16 such offices across the country which support all of cabinet. Before then, from early 2022 until the start of 2023, Ellement worked on the Hill as executive assistant to both then-tourism and associate finance minister **Randy Boissonnault** and his chief of staff. Her

LinkedIn profile notes she was deputy campaign manager and field organizer for Calgary Centre, Alta., Liberal candidate **Lindsay Luhnau** this past election. Luhnau ultimately came second behind Conservative incumbent **Greg McLean** by a margin of roughly 4.4 percentage points. Outside of politics, Ellement has also previously worked for the Calgary Drop-In and Rehab Centre Society.

Kondakov previously worked as an Ontario and Prairies regional adviser to then-fisheries and oceans minister **Diane Lebouthillier**. Prior to joining Lebouthillier's team in the fall of 2024, Kondakov spent a little more than seven years working for Ontario Liberal MP **Sonia Sidhu**. He's also previously interned with the Manitoba Liberal caucus at the provincial legislature, amongst other past experience.

Fon just wrapped up his time as a 2024-25 Parliamentary Internship Programme intern, and brings some experience working at Quebec's national assembly for the province's education minister. Among other things, he's also a past intern in the Québec Government Office in New York, and with the Centre de solidarité internationale du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Fon is currently working towards a master's degree in public and international affairs at Université de Montréal.

Gingles is another ex-Guilbeault staffer, having first been hired as an executive assistant last fall after wrapping up a 2024 Liberal Summer Leadership Program internship in the office. She, too, spent this year's election on the campaign trail, in her case supporting a local race in Surrey, B.C.

Kieran Steede is director of operations and international affairs to Dabrusin.

Steede has spent the last four years working for Wilkinson, most recently as operations director in his office as then-energy and natural resources minister. Steede started out as an assistant to Wilkinson as the MP for

North Vancouver, B.C.—the riding has since been renamed North Vancouver-Capilano, B.C.—in the spring of 2021, and switched

offices to instead work as a ministerial aide to Wilkinson in the fall of that year. He was subsequently promoted to operations and communications adviser in 2022, and then to senior adviser for both files in 2023 before being elevated to director status in April 2024.

Steede spent this year's election as campaign manager to Wilkinson, who was re-elected with 59.8 per cent of the vote.

Also tackling operations for Dabrusin is **Richard Mavin**, senior operations and executive adviser. Mavin likewise comes from Wilkinson's old energy and natural resources team where Mavin last worked under Steede as a B.C. regional affairs and executive adviser. Mavin was first hired as an operations adviser and executive assistant to the parliamentary secretary and chief of staff to the energy minister in the fall of 2023, and before then had spent roughly a year as an assistant in Wilkinson's MP office.

Nyagua Chiek is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management. Prior to going on leave last fall, Chiek had done the same for then-women and gender equality minister **Marci Ien**. Chiek was first hired to the role under then-women and gender equality minister **Maryam Monsef** in April 2021, and before then was parliamentary affairs manager to

Mendicino as then-immigration minister. Chiek is also a former parliamentary affairs adviser to then-immigration minister **Ahmed Hussen**, and a past special assistant for outreach in the Liberal research bureau.

Jumping to the communications team, director Ghassabeh is a former lead press secretary for then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**, and was a Liberal campaign spokesperson during the recent election.

Ghassabeh first joined Trudeau's PMO as a special assistant for communications in December 2022, and was promoted to press secretary almost one year later. She was bumped up again to "lead" status at the end of last year. Ghassabeh is also a past assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Karina Gould**—in both Gould's Hill and Burlington, Ont., constituency offices—among other things.

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Matthew Paisley is director of policy to Minister Dabrusin. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Natalie Woodland is a policy and North regional affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Noah Fon is Quebec regional affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Sarah Gingles covers the Atlantic desk. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Kieran Steede is operations director. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

HILL CLIMBERS

Environment Minister Dabrusin taps Matthew Paisley as policy director

Continued from page 15

Supporting Ghassabeh is press secretary **Keean Nembhard**. Nembhard was last working on the Hill as press secretary to Wilkinson as then-energy minister, but exited for the start of the 2023 school semester after being awarded the Chevening Scholarship to study a one-year graduate degree, in his case, a master of environmental change and manage-



Jenna Ghassabeh is director of communications to the environment minister. Photograph courtesy of X

ment degree at the University of Oxford.

After completing his studies, Nembhard returned to the Hill at the start of this year, and until recently has been busy working in the Senate as a ceremonial and protocol co-ordinator in the office of the Usher of the Black Rod. Prior to being hired by Wilkinson back in early 2022, Nembhard had worked in the



Keean Nembhard is press secretary to Minister Dabrusin. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

office of then-Senate Speaker **George Furey**. He's also a past Senate page and former guide for both the Library of Parliament and Rideau Hall, among other things.

Emily Jackson is now a senior communications adviser to Dabrusin, coming fresh from the government House leader's office. Jackson first joined that office under then-House leader Gould as a special assistant for communications in August 2023, having earlier interned in Gould's MP office.

Jackson was subsequently promoted to digital communications adviser, then to senior communications adviser last fall.

Malachy Schwartz is senior digital communications adviser to the environment minister. Schwartz previously did the same for the federal health minister, having first been hired as a digital communications adviser by then-minister **Mark Holland** in September 2023. Before then, he'd spent roughly a year as a special assistant for digital



Malachy Schwartz is senior digital communications adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

media to then-heritage minister **Pablo Rodriguez**. Schwartz is also a former communications intern in the Liberal research bureau. According to his LinkedIn profile, he spent the recent election as a digital adviser and photographer for the federal Liberal campaign.

Finally, **Derek Felizarta** has been hired as executive assistant to Dabrusin. He spent most of the last year working as an assistant to Wilkinson as a Liberal MP, having been hired last September. Felizarta worked under Steede as part of Wilkinson's re-election campaign team this past spring, with his sights focused on field work and volunteer management.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Parliamentary Calendar

Elevate's Girls on the Hill program brings rising leaders to Ottawa on July 23

**MONDAY, JULY 21—
WEDNESDAY, JULY 23**

Council of the Federation Summer Meeting—Ontario Premier Doug Ford, chair of the Council of the Federation, will host the premiers' 2025 summer meeting. Monday, July 21, to Wednesday, July 23, at Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ont. Details: canadaspriemers.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

Elevate Girls on the Hill—Elevate International hosts a leadership forum that brings girls and young women to the steps of Parliament Hill for a day of leadership, empowerment, and celebration. Students, emerging leaders, Members of Parliament, educators, and changemakers will take part in keynote speeches, youth-led panels, and leadership workshops. Wednesday, July 23, at 9:30 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Room 100, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

SATURDAY, JULY 26

Canadian Multiculturalism Day 2025—Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi hosts "Canadian Multiculturalism Day 2025," a day full of celebrating the diversity of cultures that make up Canada through music, dance, food, and more, organized by Leading Ladies Canada. Saturday, July 26, at 3 p.m. ET at 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JULY 28

Webinar: 'Continuing the Fight for Pharmacare'—The Canadian Health Coalition hosts a webinar, "Continuing the fight for pharmacare, breaking the

grip of big pharma," featuring Dr. Joel Lexchin and Sharon Batt. Monday, July 28, at 12 p.m. ET. happening online: healthcoalition.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

Panel: 'Telecommunications in Canada'—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts a discussion on "Telecommunications in Canada," featuring Vicky Eatrdes, chair and CEO of the CRTC; and Rachelle Frenette, general counsel and deputy executive director, CRTC. Wednesday, July 30, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, AUG. 18

Byelection in Battle River—Crowfoot—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will be running in the byelection in Battle River—Crowfoot, Alta., which will be held today. Former Conservative MP Damien Kurek resigned his seat so that Poilievre could run here and get a seat in the House.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1

Senator Seidman's Retirement—Today is Quebec Conservative Senator Judith Seidman's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 3—
FRIDAY, SEPT. 5**

Assembly of First Nations' AGA—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual general assembly. Wednesday,

Sept. 3, to Friday, Sept. 5, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: afn.ca/events.

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 5—
SATURDAY, SEPT. 6**

CSFN Regional Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its 2025 Regional Conference. Conservatives will gather to discuss the unique needs and aspirations of Western Canadians within the Canadian federation. Friday, Sept. 5, to Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, SEPT. 15

Ottawa Centre September Trivia Night—The Ontario Liberal Party hosts an evening of trivia and fun downtown with fellow Liberals. Each ticket includes snacks and a drink cover, and new Future Fund sign-ups will be accepted at the door. Monday, Sept. 15, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: ontarioliberal.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16

Conference: 'Canada's Next Economic Transformation'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a day-long conference, "Canada's Next Economic Transformation: Industrial Policy in Tumultuous Times." Participants include Steve Verheul (former assistant deputy minister of the Trade Policy and Negotiations branch of Global Affairs Canada); Matthew Holmes (Canadian Chamber of Commerce); Emna Braham (L'Institut du Québec); Jim Stanford (Centre for Future Work); Jesse McCormick (First Nations Major

Project Coalition); Chris Bataille (Centre on Global Energy Policy); and Tim Hudak (Counsel Public Affairs). Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17

CUTA 2025 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2025 Policy Forum, bringing together some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts to discuss the industry's future. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 8 a.m. ET the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 19

First of 2025 CBC Massey Lectures—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." The next lectures will take place in Vancouver (Sept. 25), Edmonton (Oct. 1), Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador (Oct. 15), and Ottawa (Oct. 30). Friday, Sept. 19, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Details to follow: masseycollege.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

Senator Mégie's Retirement—Today is Quebec ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

Future Forward Summit—Canada 2020 hosts its annual policy summit on the topic "Future Forward: Shaping Public Policy in Canada." At a time when the world is shifting fast, this summit asks the question: how can Canada shape—not just react to—the forces defining our future? Tuesday, Sept. 23, at The Westin Ottawa. Details: canada2020.ca.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 24

Politics and the Pen Gala—The Writers' Trust of Canada hosts the Politics and the Pen Gala, its annual fundraiser where the \$25,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing will also be presented. Location to be announced. Details: writerstrust.com.

MONDAY, OCT. 6

An Evening with David Peterson—The Pearson Centre hosts an evening with David Peterson, celebrating the

40th anniversary of his becoming premier of Ontario in 1985. Monday, Oct. 6, at 6:30 p.m. ET at One King West, Toronto. Details: thepearsoncentre.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Senator Richards' Retirement—Today is non-affiliated New Brunswick Senator David Adams Richards' 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

TUESDAY, OCT. 21

The Regent Debate—The C.D. Howe Institute host the seventh Regent Debate, a marquee platform for serious discussion on policy issues essential to Canada's future. Speakers to be announced. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Register: cdhowe.org.

**WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22—
SUNDAY, OCT. 26**

Ottawa International Writers' Festival—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival fall edition takes place from Wednesday, Oct. 22, to Sunday, Oct. 26. Details to come: writersfestival.org.

THURSDAY, OCT. 30

Final CBC Massey Lecture—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver the final instalment of this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." Thursday, Oct. 30, at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details to follow: masseycollege.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 5

Vimy Gala—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute hosts its 33rd annual Vimy Gala. This prestigious black-tie event honours Canada's fallen heroes and celebrate exceptional Canadians who have shaped the nation's defence and security landscape. The 2025 Vimy Award Laureate will also be honoured. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at the Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Pl. Register: cdainstitute.ca.

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