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NEWS

‘Everybody loves a comeback’: Pollsters say Conservative Leader Poilievre needs to keep his focus forward, show what he’s learned

BY STUART BENSON

Before advanced polls opened in the Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., byelection last weekend, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre was already setting the stage ahead of his likely victory and return to Parliament. But to regain ground lost to the Liberals since the last election, pollsters say Poilievre will need to show what he’s learned and how he’ll be different to rebuild his brand and demonstrate to voters he is “prime minister material.”

Abacus Data CEO David Coletto said that while Poilievre is on track to win the upcoming byelection with ease—despite a projected 10-point drop in local support since the last election, now being split by more than 200 independent candidates—if and when he returns to Parliament, he will face a much more difficult task as opposition leader.

Voters will return to the polls in the rural Alberta riding on

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NEWS

GAC’s dissent channel offers partial anonymity, forbids undermining leadership: memo



Global Affairs Canada, overseen by Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand, approved the establishment of a dissent channel this past March. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

BY NEIL MOSS

The foreign ministry’s new dissent channel offers diplomats the option for partial anonymity when criticizing the trajectory of Canadian external relations, but bars users from attempting to “undermine leadership,” according to a departmental memo.

A dissent channel has been used by the United States’ State Department since the early 1970s. Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched its own version of the initiative in June 2024 following “extensive” consultations with Washington, D.C.’s Foggy Bottom, according to a March Global Affairs Canada (GAC) briefing note.

The note shows foreign affairs deputy minister David Morrison

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NEWS

Feds spent at least \$1.7-billion on defence contracts in the first half of 2025, about 16 per cent of which went to U.S. companies: data

BY IREM KOCA

The federal government spent more than \$1.7-billion on defence contracts in the first half of 2025, according to new data from the Department of National Defence and Public Services and Procurement Canada, the two federal departments responsible for military and related purchases.

New Department of National Defence (DND) data provided to *The Hill Times* on request shows that the department has awarded 58,619 defence contracts worth nearly \$789.4-million in the first half of 2025. This figure does not include small contracts valued at less than \$10,000.

Meanwhile, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC)—as the central purchaser for the government—has spent more than \$884-million on 92 defence-related contracts between Jan. 1 and June 30, according to new data requested by and provided to *The Hill Times*.

Those figures only cover contracts which DND and PSPC awarded separately under their own authority. The totals do not include the value of contracts awarded under the National Security Exception (NSE).

The NSE is a provision under most of the country’s domestic and international trade pacts which allows the government to bypass obligations

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# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Conservative strategist Jenni Byrne stands by election decisions, and Pierre Poilievre



In her first post-election interview on the *Beyond a Ballot* podcast, Jenni Byrne says she doesn't know who will succeed her as Conservative campaign manager, but that the party has 'got be ready' for the next election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"I think discipline is one of the biggest factors in winning campaigns," said Byrne, adding there were "no gaffes to speak of" in the 2025 election compared to past campaigns. "Pierre was extremely disciplined in the campaign; I'd say disciplined, and not distracted. We stuck to our message in terms of affordability, and we didn't get distracted in terms of [United States President Donald] Trump. Did we talk about Trump? Every single day."

Speaking of Trump, Byrne shared her concern with how the latest tariffs will affect Canada's economy: "I think everyone hopes there is some form of deal or some form of reprieve on that because ... if Ontario starts to teeter, then it's going to have a domino effect across the country," but—news flash—she isn't hopeful that Prime Minister Mark Carney will live up to his promises.

She's also watching the NDP, which she concedes was one of two factors—the other being Trump—that were beyond her control during the campaign.

"It will be interesting to see where they end up in terms of moving forward," she said of the party, musing that there may be a future "where the NDP is no factor" in Canada's federal political scene.

Byrne told Segal she has "no idea" who will succeed her as campaign manager, but that she'll be available to help prepare for the next election.

"I have heard there are rumours the Liberals want to go three-and-a-half, four years, and then you hear rumours they want to go earlier in terms of next year. I don't think they know, so I think all of it is just speculation, but we've got to be ready."

Byrne confirmed that while she's still advising the Conservative Party, she will not be leading its next election campaign, and sought to debunk some of the post-campaign analysis blaming her for the party's performance on April 28.

"If they think that I was a one-person machine who was making every decision about the campaign by myself like I was some *Rasputin* or *Svengali*, they don't know how campaigns are run, they don't know *Pierre [Poilievre]*," Byrne said, noting that, ultimately, all decisions rest with the leader, in whom she has "100 per cent" confidence.

She confirmed she still stands by most campaign decisions, including Poilievre's interview with *Jordan Peterson*, the lack of tour bus for journalists—"I predict most campaigns will go that way in the next [election]," she said—and the party's tight messaging.

"I am not that interesting of a person," Jenni Byrne stated at the start of her 60-minute interview on the *Beyond the Ballot* podcast last week.

Speaking with co-host *Rachael Segal*, the Conservative Party's now-former campaign manager gave her first post-election interview on Aug. 8.

A self-described homebody with a type-A personality who got her start on the Hill volunteering for then-Reform MP *Grant McNally* in her early 20s, and who prides herself on being loyal, Byrne dismissed the notion that she was once—according to *The Globe and Mail* in 2015—the most powerful woman in Ottawa.

"I don't think that is true," she told Segal. "I think that the chattering class within Ottawa love to gossip, love to talk about inside baseball. Nobody knows who campaign operatives are outside of the Beltway," she said, using a Washington, D.C., reference.

## Gander deputy mayor bumps into retired senator Baker

Deputy mayor of Gander, N.L., *Bettina Ford* bumped into former parliamentarian *George Baker* last week in her town.

"It was a casual parking lot encounter that turned into a meaningful conversation," Ford posted on Facebook on Aug. 2. Ford noted Baker has "been a mentor since I worked on [his] campaigns as a teenager," and thanked him for his "encouragement and wise advice to always focus" as Ford herself prepares to enter provincial politics as



Deputy mayor of Gander, N.L., Bettina Ford, left, and former senator George Baker. Photograph courtesy of Facebook

Gander District's Liberal candidate in the province's upcoming Oct. 14 election.

Baker served as a Newfoundland and Labrador MP from 1974 to 2002, was *Jean Chrétien*'s veteran affairs minister from August 1999 to October 2000, and was appointed to the Senate in 2002 by Chrétien. He retired in 2017. Still energetic, the now 83-year-old Baker reportedly walks around Cobb's Pond in Gander each morning—a 4.5-kilometre route.

## Is there a doctor in the House? Pollster looks at 124 years of MPs' pre-election jobs



Liberal MP Hedy Fry, left, is among 2021's election candidates who listed their job as 'physician.' Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, centre, was among the 270 who listed 'parliamentarian' as their job. Conservative MP Leslyn Lewis is among the many lawyers who were elected, based on Elections Canada data. *The Hill Times* photographs by Jake Wright and Andrew Meade

Pollster *Alex Kohut* recently dove deep into historical data on which jobs make for successful political candidates.

In an Aug. 6 Substack article titled "Does the Profession of a Political Candidate Matter at the Ballot Box?" the former Liberal staffer explained how he combed through Parliament's elections database, which is "not entirely comprehensive on the subject of occupation," noting the data is self-reported.

He found that lawyers have dominated ballots from 1900 to 2024, with about 10 per cent of all candidates for the past 124 years having "declared themselves to be either a 'lawyer' (3,305) or a 'barrister' (960)."

In second place are candidates self-identifying as "parliamentarian" or "Member of Parliament." Explains Kohut: "Parliamentarians (winning 80 per cent of the time) make the most successful candidates of any of the most common occupations because definitionally they are people who

have successfully won elections in the past. But that's not a useful finding when investigating what backgrounds lead candidates to have success when they first run for office." He noted that while there have always been incumbents reoffering, since the 1970s, "there are more self-identified 'Parliamentarians' running in elections than 'lawyers'."

Physician is the third-most successful pre-political career. "Polling regularly shows that physicians are the most trusted profession in Canada, so it's not shocking to see voters eager to back medical experts at the voting booth," writes Kohut.

On the flip side, the jobs that resulted in the least success at the ballot box were "students," with only 14 wins on 1,099 attempts; unemployed; truck driver; "very blue-collar jobs like steelworkers, factory workers and mechanics"; "political organizer"; artistic professions, and "a [zero] per cent win rate for professional wrestlers in federal politics."

## Sergio Marchi's forthcoming book a how-to guide to public life

Former Liberal cabinet minister *Sergio Marchi* has a new book coming out in November.

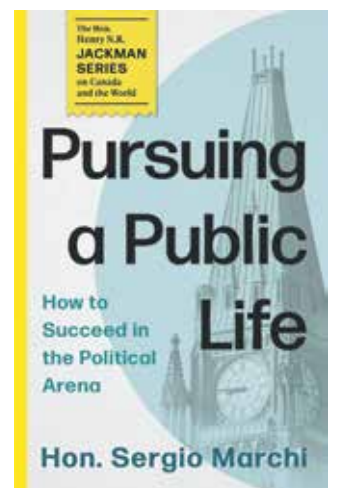
Published by Dundurn Press, *Pursuing a Public Life: How to Succeed in the Political Arena* is scheduled to be released in paperback and ebook on Nov. 4, and features a foreword by *Bob Rae*, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations.

"Do you relish the thought of serving in public life, but don't know where to start? With the honesty of experience, distinguished politician Sergio Marchi clearly spells out all the practical steps that you need to follow," reads the book description on the publisher's website.

Over 352 pages, Marchi "shares the adventures, policy decisions, and lessons learned" over his 30-year career in Canadian politics "in an effort to shed light on the inner workings of a public life, from nomination meetings, to campaigning, to governing, to make it easier for those interested in making a difference to take the plunge into an exciting, meaningful, and purposeful profession."

A Toronto-area Liberal MP from 1984 to 1999, Marchi served as *Jean Chrétien*'s minister of trade and later of immigration. He was later appointed as Canada's ambassador to the World Trade Organization.

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Sergio Marchi's book, *Pursuing a Public Life*, will be published this fall by Dundurn Press. Cover image courtesy of Dundurn Press

# ‘Everybody loves a comeback’: Pollsters say Conservative Leader Poilievre needs to keep his focus forward, show what he’s learned

As Poilievre cruises to a likely uneventful victory in the upcoming Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., byelection, Abacus Data’s David Coletto says his party faces an uphill battle in opposition so long as focus remains south of the border.

Continued from page 1



Now-former Conservative MP Damien Kurek, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre campaigning in Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., on June 22. Photograph courtesy of X

Aug. 18 to cast their votes in a race widely expected to result in a Poilievre win after his surprising defeat in his formerly held riding of Carleton, Ont., in this year’s general election when he was unseated by Liberal Bruce Fanjoy by a vote margin of almost 5.3 percentage points.

Now-former Conservative MP Damien Kurek was re-elected in Battle River–Crowfoot on April 28 with more than 80 per cent of the vote, but volunteered to resign his seat to allow Poilievre to try and claim it to return to Parliament. Advance voting for the byelection took place Aug. 8–11.

According to projections by 338Canada, Poilievre is expected to win with more than 70 per cent of the vote, with the majority of the difference attributable to a projected 11-percentage-point increase in the independent vote, split between the more than 200 candidates running for the seat. The majority of those candidates are associated with the Longest Ballot Committee, a protest group calling for electoral reform. The group was also active in Poilievre’s last race in Carleton, which saw 91 total candidates on the ballot, as well as the fall 2024 byelections in Toronto–St. Paul’s, Ont., and LaSalle–Émard–Verdun, Que., which both saw similarly lengthy candidate lists.

In response to the record number of candidates in the upcoming byelection, Elections Canada has modified the ballot, requiring voters to fill out a blank space with the name of their chosen candidate rather than mark an “X” beside a name on a list.

“The Conservatives are up against a Liberal government and prime minister with approval ratings we haven’t seen since 2015,”

said Coletto. “They have broad appeal, and even among people who didn’t vote Liberal in the last election, voters generally support many of the things the government is saying and doing, so that will make opposition hard to do.”

According to Abacus’ Aug. 10 survey results, half of Canadians hold a positive perception of the current Liberal government, and just under half (49 per cent) have a favourable view of Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.), compared to just over a quarter of Canadians who have a negative view of either.

In contrast, slightly more Canadians have a negative view of Poilievre—38 per cent positive compared to 42 per cent negative, according to Abacus’ findings—with higher net negatives among women, Quebecers, and those over the age of 60.

Based on that polling, Abacus projected that, if an election were held today, 43 per cent of decided voters would vote Liberal, compared to 40 per cent for the Conservatives—a slight, two-point gain for the Liberals since the beginning of the month. The NDP also rose slightly to eight per cent, while the Bloc Québécois sits just below that at six-per-cent support.

Coletto said that whether the Liberals are still enjoying a post-election honeymoon, or if the broad appeal among voters represents a more lasting approval for the direction of the Liberal government, Poilievre and the Conservatives are smart to be looking further down the road for a political comeback than looking for immediate polling gains.

Coletto explained that, in the current political environment when Canadians feel they are in a “collective fight” against United

States President Donald Trump’s tariff threats, the Liberals will continue to maintain an advantage. Where the Conservatives retain the advantage, however, are among those voters who are less concerned with Trump than they are with “day-to-day” economic issues, he said.

“Incumbents will always have a hard time making progress on those issues, and the Conservatives already have a significant advantage, which will only grow over time,” Coletto explained.

But while Coletto said he doesn’t believe the current byelection has had much impact on Poilievre’s brand, with most Canadians’ attention elsewhere for the summer, he’s also seen no evidence that Poilievre or his party believe anything needs to change in terms of strategy after the April general election loss.

“That tells me they believe their goal is to reinforce and solidify the voters who supported them in the last election, and hope the Liberals’ base will start to dissolve,” Coletto said. “The Conservatives may not believe they can grow their base beyond that 41 per cent, and when I look at the data and the political environment that we’re in, I’m skeptical that they can with Poilievre as leader.”

Coletto pointed to a recent survey asking what Canadians want in a prime minister, and which of the two main party leaders most exemplify those traits.

Of the traits identified, Abacus found nine “must haves” from respondents across party lines, including someone who puts the country’s interests ahead of political gain (74 per cent), understands the challenges faced by ordinary Canadians (72 per cent), has a clear strategy and plan

(71 per cent), open and transparent communication about their goals (68 per cent), prioritizes evidence-based decision-making over ideological rigidity (67 per cent), calm and steady during uncertain times (65 per cent), provides thoughtful answers (63 per cent), willingness to change one’s mind (59 per cent), and avoidance of unnecessary conflict (56 per cent.)

Across those nine qualities, Coletto found that more Canadians believe Carney embodies those traits than Poilievre, with “substantial and consistent” gaps across the board.

For example, 69 per cent of respondents identified Carney as “calm and steady during uncertain times,” compared to 45 per cent for Poilievre, with Carney also leading on “avoiding unnecessary conflict” and “providing thoughtful answers and communicating effectively” by double digits.

While Poilievre scores highly across the board with Conservative voters, among all Canadians there is a double-digit gap between their expectations for a prime minister and their perception of Poilievre. The most significant deficit appears between the 78 per cent of Conservative voters who say Poilievre puts the country’s interests ahead of political gain, compared to 48 per cent among all voters—a 26-point gap that’s seven points larger than Carney’s on the same subject.

Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist for Nanos Research, agreed that he doesn’t see much room for improvement on the Conservatives’ April 28 results, and that the party’s focus should be on recalibrating Poilievre’s brand while chipping away at Carney’s.

As of Aug. 8, Nanos Research’s weekly polling tracker projected the Liberals with 44.8 per cent of the vote, compared to the Conservatives at 31.9 per cent, the NDP at 11.5 per cent, followed by the Bloc at 6.1 per cent, and the Greens with 2.6 per cent.

“The big question that still needs to be answered is what Poilievre has learned and how he’s going to be different,” Nanos explained. “If he can come back to Parliament and demonstrate that he’s ready to move forward, then he could easily be back in the game.”

Ironically, however, while Nanos advised that Poilievre look forward rather than make excuses for his loss, he suggested the first step to doing so—if Poilievre should win in Battle River–Crowfoot race—could be by committing to return to Carleton.

“Poilievre needs to close the door on what happened last time and commit to retaking his old riding, or else he will always just be a parachute candidate,” Nanos explained. “Nobody likes a whiner or to hear excuses, but everybody likes a comeback.”

Until then, Nanos said that Poilievre’s recently pitched Canadian Sovereignty Act, which proposes concrete action the Conservatives want the Liberals to take and mirrors much of the party’s recent election platform, like repealing bills C-69 and C-48 and the industrial carbon tax, and setting a one-year timeline for results on specific nation-building projects, will be effective in holding the Liberals to account ahead of the next election.

Nanos said that focusing on whether the Liberals are delivering results and how their plans are being implemented will be far more effective for the Conservatives than complaining that Carney is stealing their ideas.

Coletto agreed that beginning to “plant seeds” to undermine the Liberals’ agenda in the future is the Conservatives’ best path forward, rather than attempting to obstruct or complain about stolen talking points—but that doesn’t mean there isn’t room for differentiation.

“If the Liberals are going to squeeze out some of your most effective wedge issues to neutralize those attacks, you’re going to have to differentiate on perceived performance and competence,” Coletto said, explaining that while the Liberals’ early progress report from voters remains positive, “the final report card is what matters.”

“Ultimately, it’s going to come back to whether people are feeling that Canada has moved in the right direction and their lives are improving,” Coletto said. “If the answer is ‘yes,’ then the Liberals will most likely win again, but if the answer is ‘no,’ that’s the opportunity for the Conservatives.”

As of publication, 338Canada’s federal polling aggregation projected the Liberals with an average of 45 per cent support, with the Conservatives trailing at 38 per cent, followed by the NDP at eight per cent, the Bloc at six per cent, and the Greens at one per cent.

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## NEWS

# GAC's dissent channel offers partial anonymity, forbids undermining leadership: memo

Between June 2024 and March 2025, IRCC only accepted three of 24 dissenting messages in a similar channel, according to a GAC memo.

Continued from page 1

signed off on the establishment of a channel at GAC on March 13. The memo was obtained by *The Hill Times* under the Access to Information Act.

Retired diplomats have backed the idea for the dissent channel, but have noted that implementation needs to be closely watched.

"The dissent channel provides a structured mechanism to share evidence-based, good-faith advice and/or recommendations on potential policy alternatives for the consideration of departmental senior leadership," the memo notes. "The channel is not intended to circumvent existing processes, undermine leadership, nor to provide a vehicle for employees to advance personal views or political agendas."

Former ambassador Artur Wilczynski said that is likely aimed at "skeptics" in the department who would use the channel for just that.

"DGs [directors general] and ADMs [assistant deputy ministers]—once they have made up their mind and provided advice to the deputy [minister], it really drives them nuts when someone, in particular a more junior [official], is seen to have disagreed to the advice that they're given," he said. "They do absolutely see that as undermining their authority and undermining their roles within the hierarchy."

Wilczynski said it is important to get information to deputies, but at the same time, it exposes a culture in which having dissenting views is "not always welcome."

He said he is "glad" that the initiative exists, but remarked that he is "skeptical that it would lead to change."

The U.S. State Department's instructions for its dissent channel notes that the agency encourages "open, creative, and uncensored dialogue on substantive foreign policy issues."

Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers president Pamela Isfeld said the idea that constructive dissent alone undermines leadership is not necessarily the case.

"This is to give people another place to go to be heard without becoming public," she said of the GAC's channel, remarking that



Foreign affairs deputy minister David Morrison signed off on his department's dissent channel on March 13. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Marco Rubio's U.S. State Department has used a dissent channel since the early 1970s. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Global Affairs Canada, which is headquartered in the Pearson Building in Ottawa, is following the model set out by IRCC after it consulted the U.S. State Department. *The Hill Times* file photograph

it could allow for criticizing the government internally.

"The definition of what does and doesn't undermine leadership is an important one," said Isfeld, noting that the U.S. has a more "robust culture of criticism."

One of the most scathing American dissent channel messages—commonly known as the Blood Telegram—was authored in 1971 by the then-consul general in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Archer Blood, and criticized the Nixon administration's backing of the Pakistan junta during the Bangladesh Liberation War. The memo, which was backed by other diplomats, called out the "moral bankruptcy" of U.S. policies.

Asked about the thin line between a policy position and a personal view, Isfeld said her union is keeping a "close eye" on the channel's implementation regarding which submissions are approved, and which are not.

Since the launch of the IRCC channel, few dissenting opinions—three out of 24—have been

deemed "appropriate" and transferred over to the IRCC's deputy minister as of March 13, with the others found to be out of scope of the submission policy or needing more work, the memo noted.

## Not aimed at Israel-Palestine conflict: former envoy

Sources have told *The Hill Times* that the new foreign ministry channel is currently in operation. A GAC spokesperson did not provide confirmation before publication deadline.

The channel may be used by current GAC staff, as well as local staff at missions abroad, according to the memo. Diplomats don't have to get permission or provide notice before submitting a dissent.

A submission must be sent from an active departmental email address to an inbox managed by the administrator of the channel. The administrator is to notify the official submitting the

note whether it has been accepted within seven business days. Afterwards, those using the channel can decide to be anonymous.

The entirety of the process should take between 30 and 60 business days, according to the briefing note, but could be accelerated if the matter is urgent.

The memo lists a series of hypothetical scenarios about which a dissent could be submitted: "arms export concerns linked to allegations of human rights violations; disagreement with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and its emphasis on certain priorities; [or] perceived bias in Canada's engagement with country X vs. country Y in context of a regional conflict."

The Canadian government has been under fire for allegedly sending arms shipments to Israel amid its bombardment of Gaza. The federal government has denied those allegations.

Past Canadian envoy to Israel Jon Allen—a supporter of the Canadian recognition of a Palestinian

state—said he doesn't look at the hypothetical scenarios as addressing the Israel-Palestine crisis.

Wilczynski—who has backed Israel's efforts in the media—also said he doesn't believe the policy emerged in response to the Middle East conflict.

The channel is part of GAC's transformation project. The initiative was noted by Morrison during a November 2024 appearance at the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, as *The Hill Times* reported the next month.

The March memo notes that dissent channel messages "may—in some circumstances—be exempt" from the Access to Information Act as advice to government.

Former Canadian diplomats told *The Hill Times* that secrecy is needed to promote internal transparency, but some suggested that such messages could be released at a later date for academic use.

## Dissent channel to require 'creativity': past senior GAC official

Former GAC assistant deputy minister Patricia Fortier described the initiative as "really interesting," but one that isn't guaranteed to be successful.

She said it could unleash "a lot of creativity," but that it's important for officials to stick with the policy provisions that the channel is for.

Fortier remarked that there is a paradoxical element to submitting a dissent that doesn't undermine leadership, but noted there is a question of whether the channel would undermine leadership if it was open to personal views and not just policy. She said there is "a lot of subjectivity" in the memo.

Fortier said administration of the channel will be "quite tricky" and will require the administrator to be someone with a high-level of discretion, noting that it could be a lonely position within the department.

"That dedicated administrator will know a lot that they just can't talk about," she said.

Former ambassador David McKinnon said the "openness" of the channel is "very welcome."

"I think it might be an opportunity for thoughtful dissent to be aired, and actually encouraged," he said.

McKinnon said there should be open distribution of the dissenting views within GAC. He said that group-think is a serious challenge within the department, and suggested that diplomats should put their names to any dissenting views.

"If you feel that your point is an important one and it is relevant and it is constructive, my inclination is to put my name on it," he said. "The default should be name, or names, go to it."

The March briefing document suggests that the dissent channel is being designed in a way that encourages open engagement, noting that a meeting with policy leads could be offered to the dissenter depending on the confidential nature of the submission.

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# Political commentary on convoy protest organizers Lich and Barber's sentencing 'corrosive' and 'dangerous,' say observers

Progressive Senator Andrew Cardozo says politicians shouldn't be telling judges what to do, as judges are only applying laws passed by Parliament.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Commentary from Conservative MPs denouncing the Crown's sentence submissions for convoy protest leaders Tamara Lich and Chris Barber "cross a dangerous line" in potentially swaying a judge's decision, says a Progressive Senator who lived in Ottawa during the 2022 protest.

The Crown is seeking a seven-year sentence for Tamara Lich and an eight-year sentence for Chris Barber—both on the upper end for the 10-year maximum sentence for the indictable offence of mischief, of which both Lich and Barber were convicted in April in an Ontario court. Barber was also convicted of counselling to disobey a court order.

Lich and Barber's defence teams are seeking absolute discharges, meaning neither would receive a criminal record.

Ontario Court Justice Heather Perkins-McVey is expected to decide on their sentences by Oct. 7.

Conservative MPs and Party Leader Pierre Poilievre have publicly denounced the Crown's desired sentence.

"Let's get this straight: while rampant violent offenders are released hours after their most recent charges and antisemitic rioters vandalize businesses, terrorize daycares and block traffic without consequences, the Crown wants seven years prison time for the charge of mischief for Lich and Barber," Poilievre wrote in a July 21 X post.

Deputy Conservative Leader Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.) called the Crown's submission "political vengeance" in her own X post on the same day, writing that "it's why trust in our institutions is dwindling."

But Ontario Senator Andrew Cardozo, a member of the Progressive Senate Group, said it's not a politician's role to provide their input in court proceedings.

"A judge has no option but to sentence within the law that Parliament has set out," Cardozo said. "If you don't like that law, then



The Crown is seeking sentences of seven years for Tamara Lich, left, and eight years for Chris Barber, organizers of the Freedom Convoy, who were convicted of mischief in April. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

change the law, but don't start telling judges what to do."

Parliamentarians "cross a very dangerous line if we start pressuring judges to give lighter or stiffer sentences," Cardozo said.

Three years after hundreds of big-rig trucks gridlocked downtown Ottawa for weeks starting in January 2022, Cardozo is among those seeking to pedestrianize Wellington Street in front of Parliament Hill, and officially expand the Parliamentary Precinct.

The Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association recently came out denouncing "attacks" on prosecutors from politicians, media, and members of the public.

Association president Donna Kellway said personal criticism of Crown lawyers threatens prosecutorial independence, and is an "affront to the rule of law." Such attacks won't affect prosecutors' decisions, she added.

## Political response 'doesn't make a lot of sense,' say legal experts

João Velloso, an associate professor of law at the University of Ottawa, said that the political reaction from Conservatives to the case is odd.

"The political motivation ... doesn't make a lot of sense, quite frankly," he said. "All the actors involved in this are not connected at all to the federal government."

Velloso pointed out that the case is being heard at a provincial court, presided over by a provincial judge, and that the police service is a provincial jurisdiction—meaning the federal government has no role in its proceedings.

Paul Champ, a lawyer representing plaintiffs in a proposed \$300-million class-action law-



Senator Andrew Cardozo says parliamentarians shouldn't tell 'judges what to do,' but instead work to change laws in Parliament if they take issue with decisions, as judges are only applying the law passed there. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

suit against convoy participants that is unrelated to the criminal proceedings, said provincial prosecutions are carried out independently by the Crown, and not guided by politicians at either the provincial or federal level.

"I find it really disappointing to see ... Conservative politicians making comments like that when they very well know better," Champ said, calling the comments "dangerous" and "corrosive" to political and legal institutions.

Still, Champ said the Crown's sought sentences of seven and eight years are "excessive" given Lich and Barber's lack of criminal records.

"These people came to Ottawa to protest an issue," he said, though the convoy "evolved" into criminal conduct. "I think federal penitentiary time is unreasonable."

The Crown is seeking sentences on the upper end of guidelines laid out in the Criminal Code.

Velloso said the sentences the Crown is pursuing are "inflated." He pointed to the sentencing of Pat King, another organizer of the convoy protest. The Crown had sought a 10-year sentence, with King ultimately receiving a

three-month conditional sentence in February for mischief, counselling to commit mischief and to obstruct a public or peace officer, as well as two counts of disobeying a court order. The Crown is appealing the sentence.

King spent nine months in pre-trial detention, and Velloso explained that this is considered by the judge during sentencing, making King's total sentence 12 months.

Based on King's case, Velloso predicted Lich's and Barber's sentences will likely be around one year, or even less. But, he added, these cases are unusual, as protest cases typically don't make their way to criminal court. Protesters typically plead guilty, or agree to certain conditions in order for charges to be withdrawn.

"These three particular people, they want to have some stage," he said of Barber, Lich, and King, saying it's a "way to keep pushing the narrative."

Lich and Barber are being used as a "test case" by the organization representing them in return for their free legal counsel, he said. Barber and Lich are being provided legal counsel

by the Justice Centre of Constitutional Freedoms, a charity that defends "the constitutional freedoms of Canadians through litigation and education."

## Convoy was 'our January 6,' says Cardozo

The Freedom Convoy brought Ottawa's downtown core to a standstill for four weeks before then-prime minister Justin Trudeau evoked the Emergency Act to clear it.

Like Cardozo, Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Ont.) wants to see Wellington Street closed to cars and handed over to the federal government. He the "occupation" of the convoy protest had a "profound and damaging impact" on the people who live in his downtown Ottawa riding.

"For weeks, residents were subjected to relentless noise, harassment, and a sense of lawlessness in their own neighbourhoods," he wrote in a statement to *The Hill Times*. "Local businesses suffered, frontline workers were targeted, and many in our community felt abandoned during a moment of real fear and uncertainty."

Naqvi declined to comment on the sentencing of Lich and Barber, saying it's a matter for the courts.

Cardozo, who was not a Senator during the protest but lived in Ottawa at the time, said he only went downtown once during the convoy.

"I found it so depressing. I could not take myself there another time," he said. "This was my capital city, and it was literally being blasphemed."

"What these guys were doing ... it was very much our January 6," Cardozo said, referring to when the United States Capitol was attacked by a mob on Jan. 6, 2021, attempting to derail the certification of the 2020 presidential election, which now-U.S. President Donald Trump lost to Joe Biden.

Cardozo has been protesting since he was a student, and said inconvenience is what makes protests effective. But he said that the actions of the convoy protest went beyond that, and were not good for "national pride and stability," nor Canada's "international reputation."

Many convoy protesters said they were protesting vaccine mandates and COVID-19 restrictions, some of which had been lifted by the time truckers from across Canada descended on Ottawa in January 2022. Some were calling for Trudeau to resign.

Cardozo said protesters had "bizarre" beliefs about recalling MPs, and some believed they could replace the government, installing their own Senate, Governor General, and opposition.

"[To] take over the city and demand that people do whatever zany idea you have, it's quite dangerous when they can take it over for such a long period of time," he said. "Imagine if group after group came every month, and did that for a month, and we said to every group, 'fine, that's okay.'"

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

## COMMENT

## Trump and his whooshing deadlines



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump at the G20 Summit in Japan in June 2019. With no leverage in Moscow, Trump's recent deadline for a Russian ceasefire in Ukraine passed unmentioned, writes Gwynne Dyer. *White House photograph by Shealah Craighead*

Whatever happens at the upcoming Alaska summit, U.S. President Donald Trump will go on setting deadlines and then missing them.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—“I love deadlines,” said Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. “I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.” United States President Donald Trump sets deadlines for more complicated reasons that purport to be tactical, but he, too, is addicted to the whooshing sound they make when he breaks them.

His latest display of disdain for the deadlines he sets himself began in mid-July when he gave Russia a 50-day deadline to agree to a ceasefire in its war against Ukraine. A week later, in an apparent fit of temper over President Vladimir Putin's relentless nightly attacks on Ukrainian cities, Trump moved the deadline up by a month to Aug. 8.

Russia's penalty for missing that deadline was allegedly going to be American “secondary tariffs” against other countries that continue to buy Russian oil, notably China, India, and Turkey. “I used trade for a lot of things, but it's great for settling wars,” Trump boasted—only to discover, not for the first time, that his intended targets were able to push back.

Trump declared, again before the actual deadline rolled around, that India's new tariff would be 50 per cent, not 25 per cent, if it didn't stop buying heavily discounted Russian oil. Prime Minister Narendra Modi immediately declared that he was ready to “pay a huge price” rather than let the U.S. dictate India's trade policies—and Trump didn't even try it on with China or Turkey.

So, with no leverage in Moscow, Trump's deadline for a Russian ceasefire passed unmentioned. Instead, he sent his favourite emissary, real estate developer Steve Witkoff, to make a new offer: a one-on-one Aug. 15 meeting between Trump and Putin in which the two men would make a deal without the Ukrainians, the European NATO countries, or anybody else present.

Putin jumped at the chance as it will be his first face-to-face meeting with a U.S. president since 2021. (He was being boycotted because of his invasion of Ukraine, but this is presumably one of Russia's rewards for agreeing to a “summit.”) However, what Trump hopes to get out of it is less obvious.

Although Trump is very much in thrall to Putin, whom he mistakenly believes to be his personal friend, he knows that a full Russian conquest of Ukraine would not look good on his record. His real goal is to win the Nobel Peace Prize in order to end the shame of having seen a Black American (Barack Obama) get one first. For that, Trump needs a longer-lasting “peace.”

This need not be a permanent peace settlement that includes an independent Ukraine. Trump really believes in “America First,” and Ukraine's long-term fate is of no interest to him. But he must persuade Putin to accept only a partial victory now—and maybe final conquest later—in order to portray himself to the Norwegian Nobel Committee as a plausible “peacemaker.”

This explanation sounds so stupid and ridiculous that people have difficulty taking it seriously, but it does explain why Trump has tried so hard to bully first one side (Ukraine), then the other side (Russia), and now back to Ukraine, into signing that kind of nothing-settled ceasefire.

If you still question that analysis, consider the fact that Trump regularly indulges in extended public rants about the sheer injustice of Obama getting a Nobel Peace Prize and leaving him still without one.

However, there will probably not be a complete sell-out of Ukraine in Alaska for two reasons. The first is that Putin—rightly or wrongly—is convinced that he is now winning the war by sheer weight of numbers, and that it is only a matter of time until Ukraine collapses. In that case, why would he now trim his maximal aspirations for the sake of a ceasefire?

The other reason to assume that the Alaskan summit is unlikely to end the war is the fact that if Trump does completely sell out Ukraine, the Ukrainians will go on fighting anyway. They would be fighting at a worse disadvantage and facing a bigger likelihood of eventual conquest, but they know that wars can have unpredictable outcomes until the next-to-last moment.

And whatever happens, Trump will go on setting deadlines and then missing them. Just like he did in the real estate business.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World's Climate Engineers*. The previous book, *The Shortest History of War*, is also still available.

*The Hill Times*

## OPINION

## Carbon removal technology is more than just a climate solution

This is nation-building that makes sense—economically, environmentally, and socially.

Catie O'Neal

Opinion



It's a busy time in Canada, with leaders at every level making grand plans for how we ought to transform our economy, but we shouldn't let nation-building projects distract from the incremental projects and technologies that are available to us today.

This flurry of activity reflects a broader desire across the country to build something stronger, and more self-reliant—an economy less dependent on global supply chains and more rooted in Canadian innovation. Yet while politicians and policy-makers debate the path forward, a crucial opportunity remains largely absent from these conversations, one that could be part of the solution to growing our economy while reducing our emissions.

And, wouldn't you know it, British Columbia is sitting on a proverbial pulp- and paper gold mine.

When people think about permanent carbon removal, they often envision a far-flung future with giant fans sucking emissions out of the sky. However, the truth is that technologies exist, and are being deployed today, that can remove megatonnes of emissions, ensure our companies fit into a climate-conscious future, and create jobs in the process.

The technology is bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), and it can be manufactured and integrated into pulp and paper mills today. It uses sustainably sourced forestry and agricultural waste products to generate electricity, capturing the resulting emissions from the flue stack and storing them permanently underground.

This process creates no new emissions; better yet, it actually removes emissions from the atmosphere as the forestry and agricultural waste absorb carbon while growing. By capturing these emissions, we're creating electricity that removes more carbon than it produces.

There's another advantage worth noting: every tonne of forestry waste used for BECCS is a tonne that won't fuel the next wildfire. It's forest management that pays for itself while removing carbon from the atmosphere.

While pulp and paper mills operate across Canada, B.C. and Alberta excel in their proximity to geological sequestration sites where carbon can be stored safely

and permanently. This natural advantage means these provinces could produce carbon-negative energy much more easily than provinces like Ontario or Quebec that lack this access.

The timing also couldn't be better. Many pulp and paper mills across both provinces are already facing pressure to modernize aging infrastructure. BECCS technology offers a path to not just upgrade facilities, but transform them into next-generation clean energy hubs that generate revenue while removing carbon from the atmosphere.

Each tonne of carbon removed becomes a valuable environmental credit that can be sold to companies worldwide looking to offset their emissions. With carbon removal markets expected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars annually by 2050, the question isn't whether this opportunity exists—it's whether Canada will seize it while we still can.

Recently, CO280, a B.C.-based company, made headlines with a 12-year deal providing Microsoft with close to 3.7 million tonnes of carbon removal credits from a single American pulp and paper mill. CO280's project captures and stores carbon from existing mills, resulting in carbon-negative operations. This deal represents millions of dollars in economic activity, and supports jobs on both sides of the border.

We're also already seeing how this technology contributes to economic reconciliation elsewhere. Carbon Alpha, a Calgary-based company, has partnered with Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskatchewan to create Canada's first majority Indigenous-owned carbon removal project. Using waste from their sawmill, they will remove 70,000 tonnes of carbon annually, generate credits to sell, and provide power to the provincial grid.

Capturing this opportunity demands co-ordinated government support. Ottawa's carbon capture, utilization, and storage investment tax credit covers 60 per cent of installation costs, while Alberta sweetens the deal with an additional 12 per cent top-up.

B.C. could support this and other carbon removal technologies by setting specific carbon removal targets for 2035 and 2040 in CleanBC, which would mimic a commitment made by Prime Minister Mark Carney during the recent federal election. Alternatively, the ongoing CleanBC review could explore how to integrate carbon removal technology into existing major sectors, like forestry or mining, to decarbonize operations.

This is nation-building that makes sense—economically, environmentally, and socially. Instead of debating what the future economy should look like, we can start building it today, one mill at a time.

Catie O'Neal is the director of Western Canada at Carbon Removal Canada.

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT

# Poilievre expands his message playbook as party preps for Parliament's return

The Conservative defeat last election brings a new opportunity to move beyond the risk-averse messaging of a campaign, and seize the political moment.

Josie Sabatino

Beyond the Headlines



OTTAWA—It's the dog days of summer and most Canadians are soaking up the final moments of the break before back-to-school shopping ramps up, out-of-office replies disappear, and the

fall busy season officially kicks into high gear.

Political news has largely taken a back seat, including the byelection of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. For those not following closely, Poilievre is poised to return to Parliament to once again take his seat when the fall session begins next month, staging a comeback after his party's defeat in the last federal election that saw him also lose his own riding of Carleton, Ont.

What's been most notable about the byelection hasn't been what's expected to be a predictable outcome, but instead the shifting and sometimes surprising messaging Poilievre has delivered since the House adjourned for the summer. Rather than keeping affordability at the forefront of his messaging, and rehashing the policy pitches that helped the Conservatives pick up 25 seats in the last election, the party leader appears intent on expanding his focus in search of the next attack

line that will deliver the same political hurt that inflation and the carbon tax did on the previous Liberal government.

As a result, Poilievre and his front-bench leadership team have spent the barbecue circuit testing a slew of messages in legacy media and alternative platforms, focused on electric vehicle (EV) mandates, immigration levels, tariffs, and the Canada-United States relationship, while also signalling that a broader vision for Canadian sovereignty that would "legalize pipelines and major projects," amongst other initiatives, is on the way, and set to be introduced as a private member's bill this fall.

While some of these critiques of Liberal policy—such as opposition to Trudeau-era EV mandates, or getting resources to market—are low-hanging fruit and serve as political red meat that can be repurposed at the doorsteps of Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta., other issues like immigration have his-

torically been handled with greater caution by all political parties.

In the lead up to the last federal election, Poilievre shifted tactics, linking Liberal policies that drove rapid population growth to Canada's affordability crisis. He responded with commitments to reduce immigration levels, deport non-citizens who commit crimes, reform the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, and better align immigration with infrastructure capacity.

Notably, the election and the ballot-box question that followed were framed by the Liberals and Conservatives around issues of Canada-U.S. relations and affordability. Immigration did surface during the federal leaders' debates, but it ultimately failed to emerge as the dominant issue in the minds of voters.

Part of the reticence on the part of the Conservatives to elevate immigration as a central campaign issue may, in part, reflect caution inspired by political developments

in the U.S. There, President Donald Trump's hardline immigration stance and high-profile Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids have generated sustained international headlines, and significant public backlash. The Liberals have been quick to seize on any anti-"elbows up" rhetoric, and have not shied away from drawing comparisons between the Republicans south of the border and the Conservative Party here at home.

But with voters returning the Liberals to power, it's a new era, and the Conservative defeat brings a new opportunity to move beyond the risk-averse messaging of a campaign, and seize the political moment. Poilievre appears intent on closing this chapter after the Aug. 18 byelection, and turning his focus to the next pressure point for the Liberals.

With more time before the next federal election and less urgency to showcase marquee policy proposals on campaign-defining issues like affordability, Canadians can expect the Conservatives to spend the coming months mounting an offensive against the Liberals, particularly in subject matter areas where they perceive vulnerability.

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

The Hill Times

# The value of lifelong learning

People are realizing they must study to keep up with rapid developments in science, business, medicine, and technology.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



While Canada can boast one of the most educated populations on Earth, our system of education needs to adapt to new demands, writes Andrew Caddell. *Unsplash photograph by Felicia Buitenwerf*

had been working in the United Nations system in Geneva, beginning at the headquarters of the World Health Organization, and then worked in the field.

It had taken me forever to earn my undergrad degree at 34, through academic struggles, lack of financial support, and personal challenges. But I had found success as a reporter and consultant in Canada and abroad, and felt up to the challenge of the master's degree.

Over the five years I was in Europe, I observed a tendency by UN organizations to compete with each other for donor contributions through their media profile. This led to "mandate

creep" between organizations, and inefficiency. I gradually developed a plan for my five years abroad that would conclude with a thesis on the news media and its influence on the UN.

It is said that, "If you want to make God laugh, make plans." The great Scottish bard Robert Burns famously wrote, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men/Gang aft a-gley." So, it is a given that when one makes plans, they should not be hard and fast, inflexible, or too detailed. Nonetheless, I thought it was worth it.

I knew I was taking a risk in applying to Carleton at such an advanced age. So, I did what I used to do as a public servant and

ministerial adviser: I prepared a "question-and-answer" sheet, anticipating what the journalism school administrator would ask. I had read about how Montreal developer David Azrieli applied to study architecture at Carleton at the age of 73, and went on to get post-graduate degrees on the subject.

When the question was asked, I pointed out that Azrieli had been 25 years older than me when he applied. As well, I planned to work at least another 30 years, probably equivalent to most other applicants. The journalism administrator laughed, admitted I had a point, and I was in.

While the two years of studying and writing my thesis was no cakewalk, it allowed me to be a colleague to people much younger, it enforced a discipline to my writing and thinking, and despite an initial financial sacrifice, I was soon eligible for positions far more lucrative than those requiring a bachelor's degree.

Education should be a lifelong matter, and people are realizing they must study to keep up with rapid developments in science, business, medicine, and technology. While Canada can boast one of the most educated populations on Earth, many graduates have degrees that cannot be applied in today's world. At the same

time, the trades are desperate for people to fill positions in jobs that pay well. Meanwhile, we have a serious problem of Canadians who are functionally illiterate, and need training to improve their reading and writing for a knowledge economy.

The average Canadian is expected to have at least three different careers in their lives, and as we climb the ladder of success, we find greater challenges. Learning also extends life expectancy, and allows people to earn more income, which contributes to quality of life.

Our system of education needs to adapt to these new demands. As in many European countries, educational sabbaticals should be tax deductible, and grants should be available to adults returning to school. Institutions should adapt as well—a former elementary school near Kamouraska is now a daycare on the ground floor, and an adult high school on the second floor.

It has been 23 years since I graduated with my master's degree. I am enormously grateful to Carleton for admitting me. But I don't plan on slowing down, and I learn something new every day.

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.

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# Editorial

## Editorial

# Time is ripe to revamp federal budgeting processes

Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne’s post-election announcement that no federal budget would be tabled this spring, and would instead be delivered in the fall, set tongues wagging this past May.

Criticisms came from all corners of the House, but subsequent opposition attempts to force Prime Minister Mark Carney’s government to table a spring spending plan came to naught.

Jump forward to mid-July and the government’s launch of its pre-budget consultation process, feedback for which is being collected through to Aug. 28. The House of Commons Finance Committee got the ball rolling slightly earlier, putting out its call for feedback on June 20, with a now-passed deadline of Aug. 1 for interested individuals and groups to submit briefs.

Amid economic uncertainty wrought by United States President Donald Trump, rising defence spending, and a simultaneous push to find billions of dollars in budget cuts, the importance of the forthcoming fiscal plan can’t be overstated.

Summertime pre-budget consultations are a fairly regular occurrence, and this marks the fourth year in a row that the House Finance Committee has issued its call for input from Canadians in June.

But usually those consultations take place with more runway, feeding into a fall committee study, which—ostensibly—feeds into budget drafting efforts into the new year before the final document is presented sometime in the spring.

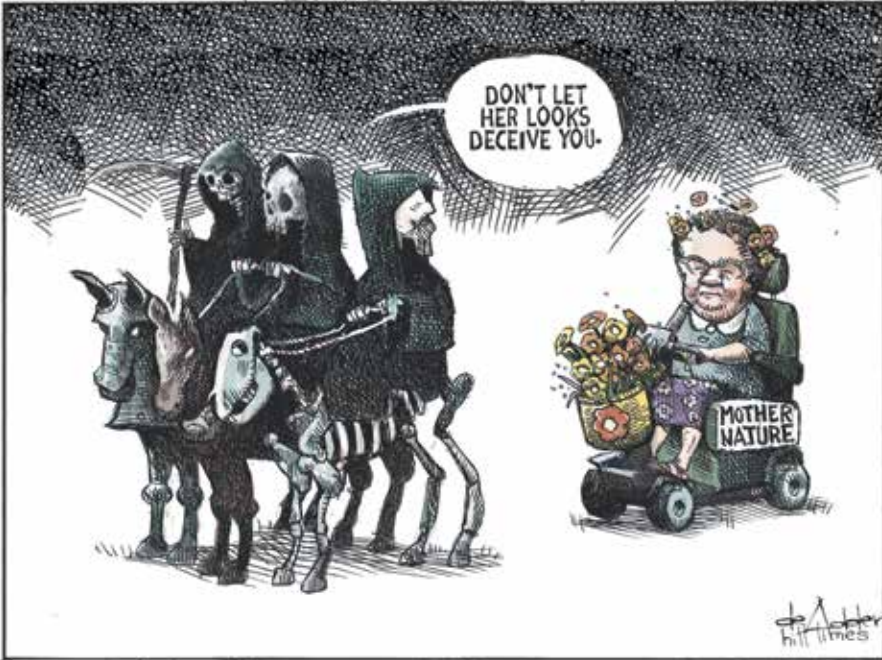
As The Hill Times’ Neil Moss recently reported, this year’s tight timeline for the House Finance Committee to weigh in has prompted even the committee’s chair to question how much its input will be taken into account in the document coming this fall—the exact timing of which remains unknown.

“We’re just going to have to figure out how we do this in a way that the input we receive helps inform the formulation of this year’s budget, but also could continue to work towards next year,” said Liberal chair Karina Gould.

Yet others—including Tyler Meredith, a former Liberal economic adviser involved in drafting recent federal budgets—have noted that, even with a spring budget, House committee feedback often comes too late to make much of an impact. Moreover, Meredith said past studies have amounted to an over-stacked collection of stakeholder recommendations lacking “qualitative input” from MPs, and suggested the time is ripe to reconsider the process.

Calls to revamp federal budgeting and spending processes aren’t new. But, as Meredith says, this year’s upending of the usual way of things presents a good opportunity to explore how to revamp it so that considered, helpful feedback is not just presented, but taken into real account when the government sketches out its annual spending plans. It’s an opportunity parliamentarians would do well to seize.

The Hill Times



## Letters to the Editor



# It seems we’ve learned nothing from history, says letter writer

United States President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to meet in Alaska to decide the fate an innocent country of which both had guaranteed the sovereignty. The situation is far too reminiscent of Adolf Hitler’s Germany and Josef Stalin’s Soviet Union dividing up Poland between them while the United Kingdom stood by and watched it happen—until it was too late.

The last 70 years of comparative peace were a gift to the world by the remarkable then-U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt in pushing

through the concept of the international rule of law, and the rejuvenated United Nations as a mechanism to make it happen. But diplomatic processes, lubricated by the existence of the United Nations and international law, have been flushed down the toilet by powerful nations and left us in a morass. Scottish poet Robbie Burns said it well: “the best laid plans o’ mice an’ men, gang aft agley, an’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain for promis’d joy!” The only thing we seem to learn nothing from history.

Tom McElroy  
Toronto, Ont.

# International aid funding saves lives, good for our economy: letter writer

As Canada prepares for difficult budget decisions, as requested by Prime Minister Mark Carney, we must not lose sight of our global responsibilities and the lives that depend on them. International assistance may not be among the cuts, but we cannot risk taking a step back in our mission to fight diseases including AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

I urge the federal government to continue understanding that the investments they are making to global health initiatives, such as the Global Fund, are not just

numbers—they are numbers that can save lives. These investments also help to strengthen our economy, and contribute to trade partnerships and global stability. International assistance must be protected and strengthened in Budget 2025.

Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand and Secretary of State for International Development Randeep Sarai: I strongly encourage you to safeguard international aid from proposed spending reductions.

Bernice Ko  
Vancouver, B.C.

## COMMENT

# It's time to strike back at Trump's tactics



There are downsides to cancelling the remainder of the F-35 purchase and operating a mixed fighter fleet into the future, but the savings may balance out, writes Scott Taylor. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Master Sgt. John R. Nimmo Sr.

Now that U.S. President Donald Trump has indeed whacked Canada with a whopping trade tariff, perhaps it's time to make sure that economic pain is felt on both sides of the border.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, with U.S. President Donald Trump at the G7 Leaders' Summit in Kananaskis, Alta., on June 16. Photograph courtesy of the Government of Canada

OTTAWA—At the end of March, Prime Minister Mark Carney was battling as the underdog in a federal election campaign to hang on to his job.

At that juncture, newly inaugurated United States President Donald Trump was threatening to annex Greenland, invade Panama to secure the canal, and to force Canada into becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> American state through economic pressure.

In response, Carney invoked the phrase “Elbows Up” and unequivocally proclaimed that “the old relationship we had with the United States based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military co-operation is over. It's clear the U.S. is no longer a reliable partner.”

Canada's defence spending—or lack thereof—was a particularly contentious issue for Trump.

In response, Carney vowed to drastically increase defence spending immediately with the goal of reaching the NATO alliance's target goal of two per cent of gross domestic product within the current fiscal year. More importantly for Canadian patriots, Carney additionally vowed to shift away from Canada's near total reliance on the U.S. for weapon platforms and instead seek European partners.

To put some gravitas behind his rhetoric, Carney also immediately ordered the RCAF to review the current project to replace the aging fleet of CF-18 fighter jets with U.S.-built F-35 Joint Strike Fighters.

As this lengthy saga began some 21 years ago, and spans a succession of Liberal and Conservative governments, allow me to briefly recap the story. In 2004, under the Paul Martin Liberal government, Canada signed up to

“CANADA, FOR ITS PART, COULD SIMPLY CUT A DEAL WITH SWEDEN'S SAAB TO BUILD THEIR GRIPEN FIGHTERS IN CANADA.”

be an early partner in the international development of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. At the time of signing, only a single experimental aircraft prototype was in existence.

Fast forward to July 2010 when the Conservative government of Stephen Harper announced that Canada would purchase 65 F-35s at a purchase cost of \$9-billion. The first aircraft was to be delivered to the RCAF by 2016. However, amidst a barrage of cost increases combined with teething troubles with the F-35s, the Harper Conservatives were forced to push the reset button on the entire project.

As a result, the Trudeau Liberals ran on an election promise in 2015 that, if elected, they would scrap the F-35 purchase once and for all. Trudeau won that election.

The newly elected Liberals subsequently faced backlash

from the RCAF leadership, and the compromise was to hold a competition to choose a successor to the aging CF-18 fleet.

We learned from whistleblower documents leaked to *National Post* columnist John Ivison in April 2024 that the RCAF evaluators were intent from the outset to acquire the F-35, and only the F-35.

In March 2022, the Liberals were thus forced to announce they were buying 88 of the F-35s for the purchase cost of \$19-billion. The first delivery is not expected until 2026. However, there is a loophole. In December 2022, a deal was signed to purchase the first 16 of an eventual fleet of 88 F-35As, at a contract value of \$7-billion. For those doing the math, that means that the subsequent 62 F-35s and roughly \$12-billion in the original purchase budget are not yet under contract.

Now that Trump has indeed whacked Canada with a whopping 35-per-cent trade tariff, perhaps it is time that Canada makes sure that economic pain is felt on both sides of the border.

India got hit with a 25-per-cent trade tariff, and has said it is no longer considering purchasing the F-35 and will instead invest in Russia's Su-57 stealth fighters. Switzerland was handed a 39-per-cent trade penalty by Trump, the harshest of any European nation. As a result, there are cries from all Swiss political parties to halt a planned purchase of 36 F-35s.

Spain, as part of the European Union, will face 15-per-cent U.S. tariffs, and they have chosen as a result to forgo considering a F-35 purchase. They will instead look to replace their F-18 fleet with Eurofighters or the New Generation Fighter from Future Combat Air Systems, a joint French and German venture.

Canada, for its part, could simply cut a deal with Sweden's Saab to build their Gripen fighters in Canada. That deal was the second place finisher in the RCAF's admittedly rigged competition to replace the CF-18 fleet.

There are downsides to cancelling the remainder of the F-35 purchase and operating a mixed fighter fleet into the future. However, if Saab wants to create Canadian aviation jobs and the cost to operate a Gripen fighter is one-fifth the cost of operating a F-35, the savings may balance out.

For the record, for all of those who point to the aviation jobs created by Lockheed Martin in Canada to support the F-35, Trump has already said he wants all of those jobs relocated back to the U.S. when they come due for renewal.

The review that Carney ordered into the CF-18 replacement project is expected to table a final report “at the end of this summer.”

Unfortunately for those hoping for a true “Elbows Up” recommendation, the RCAF brain trust remains the same recalcitrant bunch that have insisted on the F-35—and only the F-35—since the outset. Twenty-one years ago.

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

The Hill Times

# OPINION

## Delay is not an option when it comes to foreign interference

When there is political will—from the prime minister or from the responsible minister—things gets done. The real concern here is: why is that will absent?

Henry Chan

Opinion



I hadn't planned to write another article so soon. But as anyone who has been in politics knows, circumstances can change in an instant. Recent reports now suggest that the foreign influence transparency registry may not be implemented until next year. Once again, the Liberal government has let Canadians down on the critical issue of foreign interference.

As I wrote a month ago, the optics of failing to implement the registry and appoint a commissioner in a timely manner sends a dangerous message to hostile actors who are actively building infrastruc-



Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree. The federal government has not provided Canadians with a credible explanation for the delay in implementing its foreign influence transparency registry, writes Henry Chan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ture to undermine our institutions. It signals that we do not take foreign interference seriously. Every minute of delay is effectively a free pass for authoritarian regimes to chip away at our democratic way of life.

Worse still, the federal government has not provided Canadians with a credible explanation for the delay. Instead, it has offered the baffling excuse that more time is needed to "study" how other countries have implemented similar legislation.

Let's call this what it is: nonsense.

First, if other countries have already enacted comparable laws, we are not starting from scratch. We can draw from their experiences and tailor a framework to fit our system. Having models to learn from should speed up—not delay—implementation.

Second, this is not a new issue. Bureaucrats and ministers alike have had ample time to prepare. I personally began lobbying the then-Trudeau government for this legislation as early as 2020. Each time, the response was radio silence. It wasn't until public pressure became unavoidable that then-minister of public safety Dominic LeBlanc tabled Bill C-70.

Even if we give the government the benefit of the doubt and assume it wasn't prepared, it has now had more than a year since the bill passed through both Chambers of Parliament. If our public service cannot implement something of this importance within that time, it raises serious questions about their competence.

But I don't believe this is a bureaucratic issue. This is a

political one. The government, much like the one that preceded it under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, is dragging its feet—not because it can't act, but because it won't. The political will simply isn't there. And that deserves serious criticism because Bill C-70 is a vital safeguard to protect our democratic institutions.

When there is political will—from the prime minister or from the responsible minister—things gets done. The real concern here is: why is that will absent?

The answer, I fear, lies in political calculus. Foreign interference may be a hot topic in the Ottawa bubble, but it barely registers with most Canadians. On the doorstep during campaigns, people raise concerns about affordability, housing, and jobs. Foreign interference, while critically important, feels too abstract—especially for Canadians struggling with day-to-day cost of living issues.

For the major political parties, this is a topic they'd rather avoid. Not only does it fail to deliver votes, but if mishandled, it risks alienating voters in key ridings—especially among Chinese, Indian, and Iranian communities in the Greater Toronto Area and parts of British Columbia.

Let me be clear: I do not for a moment suggest affordability or tariff threats are unimportant.

But we need balance. We cannot focus solely on short-term political rewards while neglecting long-term democratic protections. Foreign interference is not going away. We must prepare ourselves accordingly to deal with it. Politicians should be able to have some foresight into the consequences of sweeping this under the rug.

And let's also be clear-eyed about geopolitics. Whatever disagreements we may have with the United States, we must not drift into appeasement or closer alignment with rival powers like China.

As we wait for Prime Minister Mark Carney to develop a backbone on foreign interference, and for Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree to learn how to manage his portfolio, I urge parliamentarians to step up, especially members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. They must not wait idly for Parliament to return in the fall. Parliament may be on break, but under Standing Order 106(4), committee members have the power to call a meeting and hold the government accountable for this national security failure.

To newly elected MPs: you may not yet be familiar with the Standing Orders, but your responsibility is clear. It's time to put aside pancake breakfasts and Instagram reels, and return to your core duty: holding the executive to account.

*Henry Chan is a former co-director of Saskatchewan Stands with Hong Kong. He has been invited multiple times to give expert testimony before Parliament concerning issues related to Hong Kong and Canada-China relations.*

*The Hill Times*

## Defence spending targets are only half the challenge facing Canada

In recent years, Canada's foreign policy has been heavy on the articulation of values, but light on the material commitments needed to advance and defend them.

William H. Richardson

Opinion



What do the two words "national defence" really mean in Canada? What are our core values and vital interests today, and how can we invest

responsibly in their promotion and protection going forward? These are core questions for all Canadians to debate. They speak to the security we must now strengthen at home, and the sacrifices that will be required to support these efforts. Our country needs a modernized strategic culture in which Canadians actively debate and decide upon national priorities.

NATO's two-per-cent—and now five-per-cent—defence spending targets serve as important rallying cries and imperfect benchmarks of military capability. But while they may complement national strategies and defence policy priorities, they cannot take their place, or, in the case of Canada, make up for their absence. This country's post-Cold War strategic culture, or general understanding of and approach to issues of security and defence, has rapidly become outdated in recent years and is now clearly inadequate for addressing the growing threats and complexity

in the global environment, including along our southern border.

We also owe it to our men and women in uniform to actively consider Canada's strategic future. Otherwise, for what exactly are we calling on them to serve? Helping to answer the questions of what it can and should mean to defend this country and advance Canadian values in our world today can strengthen civil-military ties, further the ongoing reform of our military's culture, and potentially even help address its perennial recruitment and retention challenges.

The seeds of a renewed and more ambitious Canadian strategic culture may already have been sown by our new prime minister in several recent assertions and decisions. We can be an "energy superpower" in a world facing ever increasing energy demand and growing energy insecurity. We could well be the "most European non-European nation" with a new strategic partnership with the European Union

and our participation in ReArm Europe. And perhaps most importantly, and certainly most strikingly, "the old relationship we had with the United States based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military co-operation is over." In a recent poll, a majority of Canadians identified the U.S. as the greatest threat facing the country today, a stark reflection of how rapidly the geopolitical landscape is shifting beneath our feet. The time for strategic renewal has arrived.

Canada is emerging from a comfortable and yet untenable strategic repose in which military spending was maintained at a low level, and strategic choices were largely delegated to the United States. Now is the time for us to respond to the changing world order and collectively shape our future, rather than watching from the sidelines and letting other nations take the lead.

It is widely recognized that a country's defence policy should

flow from its foreign policy, which in turn flows from its national security policy. In this way, the question of what defending Canada should look like today is closely linked to the questions of who we are and who we should be both around the world and at home. In recent years, Canada's foreign policy has been heavy on the articulation of values, but light on the material commitments needed to advance and defend them.

These are not easy issues to contend with, and there are no simple or expedient answers. But it is necessary work. We live in a multipolar world with little historical precedent, fraught with uncertainty, injustice, and danger, but also defined by huge opportunities in economic, technological, and social development.

As Canadians, we have much to be proud of and much worth defending. But we cannot be all things to all people, nor can we do everything. Now is the time to reflect, make clear choices, and get to work.

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*The Hill Times*

# Feds spent at least \$1.7-billion on defence contracts in the first half of 2025, about 16 per cent of which went to U.S. companies: data

U.S.-based companies received more than \$68.6-million in DND contracts between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2025, which is a 24-per-cent increase over the same period the previous year.

Continued from page 1

on procurement on grounds of national security.

## DND spent \$789.4-million in contracts, \$68.6-million went to U.S. entities

According to government records, approximately 16 per cent of the total defence procurement spending in the first half of 2025 went to American companies as the Liberal government tries to diversify suppliers away from the U.S.

U.S.-based companies received more than \$68.6-million in DND contracts between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2025, through 1,111 contracts, according to departmental data. This figure accounts for roughly 8.7 per cent of DND's total spending for contracts in the first half of the year.

This is an increase from the approximately \$55-million spent in the first half of 2024 that went to American companies, according to the federal government's public contracting data, which says DND spent approximately \$30-billion on defence contracts throughout 2024.

DND data provided to *The Hill Times* shows that \$104.8-million of that 2024 spending went to American suppliers, through 2,641 contracts.

While the DND data contains a breakdown of total defence contract spending in 2025—including federal money that went to U.S. companies—it does not include a full list of goods and services procured, nor suppliers.

DND also noted that the accuracy of the data provided is “subject to users throughout DND the Canadian Armed Forces entering the information into the Contract Data Management System (CDMS).” That means the DND data does not report sub-contracts.

David Perry, a defence procurement expert and president



A Royal Canadian Air Force CC-130J Hercules aircraft, designed and manufactured by American defence company Lockheed Martin, flies over the Kuwait desert on June 13, 2020. Photograph courtesy of the Canadian Armed Forces

of Canadian Global Affairs Institute, told *The Hill Times* that the National Security Exception is used often in some of DND's most significant and highest-value contracts. The lack of this data makes it harder to get a sense of how much departments have spent on defence contracts, he said.

Perry noted that the way the government presents contract data makes it difficult to track patterns over time, and to get a full and representative picture of exactly how and where federal money is spent.

## PSPC spent \$884-million on defence-related contracts in the first half of 2025

Of the 92 defence-related contracts awarded by PSPC in 2025 so far, more than half—52—were awarded on behalf of DND. The rest of the procurements were carried out for a dozen other departments, with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans having 14 contracts, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Coast Guard each having seven, and the Department of Transport procuring four.

PSPC did not provide a separate list to identify U.S. suppliers, but its data shows that, within the first half of 2025, more than \$200-million was awarded to known American companies or their subsidiaries such as General Dynamics and Mercury Systems, as well as U.S. government entities like the National Security



National Defence Minister David McGuinty says the government's defence procurement decisions will prioritize defending Canada and supporting domestic industries. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Agency and the Department of the Navy.

The largest contract awarded by PSPC—worth \$108-million—went to NATO Seasparrow Surface Missile System Project Office, a U.S.-based joint international military and industrial consortium, in February. Almost one-third of the total PSPC spending for defence contracts in the first half of 2025 went towards the same consortium, with seven contracts awarded for about \$306-million combined.

Government records show that over the past three fiscal years, PSPC has awarded an annual average of approximately \$1.3-billion to suppliers

located in the U.S., which does not include Canadian-based suppliers that are subsidiaries of American companies or contracts awarded under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. The FMS program allows foreign countries to buy defence goods and services and training through government-to-government agreements.

In 2024, PSPC awarded \$14.6-billion in defence contracts on behalf of government departments and agencies, including DND. About \$13.6-billion of this total was spent within the first half of the year.

The department procured a broad range of products and services mostly including ship and marine equipment, communications security equipment, guided missiles, warheads and explosive components, fleet management services, radar equipment, and rockets.

According to March briefing material prepared for the then-procurement minister Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Ont.), the department lacks complete data on where its suppliers and the goods and services come from. PSPC estimates that American suppliers are awarded approximately 10 per cent of the value of all Canadian federal procurement contracts, including those for defence.

## Carney pushes to reduce defence reliance on the U.S.

Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has pledged to overhaul Canada's long-troubled

defence procurement and reduce the military's “over reliance” reliance on U.S. suppliers amid the escalating trade war and the annexation threats from U.S. President Donald Trump.

In March, Carney ordered a review of the purchase of 88 F-35 fighter jets from major American defence manufacturer Lockheed Martin—one of the largest pending procurements between the two countries—which is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

“We will ensure every dollar is invested wisely, including by prioritizing made-in-Canada manufacturing and supply chains,” Carney said in June as he announced \$9.3-billion in additional funding for defence this fiscal year, with \$2-billion allocated to reducing Canada's reliance on the U.S. “We should no longer send three-quarters of our defence capital spending to America.”

The prime minister also pledged to increase defence spending to five per cent of the country's GDP by 2035, which he said would cost the government \$150-billion per year.

Defence Minister David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.) echoed that message on Aug. 7, saying, “In all defence procurement decisions, our government will prioritize defending Canada and Canadian sovereignty, while supporting Canadian industry wherever possible.”

David Pratt, a former federal defence minister and the principal of David Pratt & Associates, told *The Hill Times* that “the final disposition of Canada's trade relationship with the U.S. has yet to be determined,” and that it is very likely that no other source was possible for some of the goods and services PSPC procured from U.S. companies.

He suggested that until there is some indication of where things are headed between the two countries, “the military, for the most part, has to take a business-as-usual approach.”

Some of the big defence procurements pending between the two countries include the F-35 fighter jets, the Aegis Combat System on the River Class destroyers, the order of MQ-9 Reapers, and the P-8 aircraft.

“If these are cancelled, the big question is: how does the [Canadian Armed Forces] replace that capability?” asked Pratt who now works as a defence consultant, lobbying the government for multiple companies.

Defence procurement is overseen by McGuinty, Secretary of State for Defence Procurement Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna, B.C.), and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.).

It is yet unclear how the duties are shared between the three ministers, but a new Defence Procurement Agency in the works is expected to be the anchor of that structure. Meanwhile, the government's highly anticipated Defence Industrial Strategy, which is expected to shape Canada's defence procurement strategy, is still underway.

—with files from Riddhi Kachhela  
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*The Hill Times*

## NEWS

# Pride attendance may no longer be a litmus test for LGBTQ support, but absence still sends a message, say politicians

‘Pride is not necessarily welcoming to everyone anymore, and that’s the opposite of what it should be,’ says conservative commentator and transgender advocate Blaine Badiuk.

BY STUART BENSON

As organizers attempt to lower the temperature on this summer’s Pride season, the Liberal Party is trying to avoid last year’s controversial decision to withdraw from Ottawa’s official event while Prime Minister Mark Carney continues his predecessor’s tradition of parade participation.

Yet, as advocates and allies from across the political spectrum grapple with what Pride should be and how best to represent the LGBTQ community’s wide range of beliefs and perspectives, and as wider public attention moves toward economic-focused concerns, the expectation for politicians to march in the parade may be lessened. However, non-attendance still sends “a gigantic message,” says Liberal Dan Pujdak.

Organizers with the federal Liberal Party and Ottawa’s Capital Pride, who spoke with *The Hill Times* on background to comment freely, said attempts have been made to “lower the temperature” this year—with a greater focus on local LGBTQ+ issues—to try to avoid a last-minute decision by party officials and big-name sponsors to withdraw from the parade, as happened last year.

Last year’s controversy followed a statement by Capital Pride’s executive committee expressing solidarity with Palestinians, accusing Israel of “pink washing” and genocide, and committing to the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign.

In response, Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, the Children’s Hospital of Ontario, political parties—including the federal Liberals—and other big-name sponsors withdrew from the event, with many instead organizing or participating in separate



Capital Pride and Liberal Party organizers are attempting to ‘lower the temperature’ ahead of Ottawa’s annual parade on Aug. 24 to avoid last year’s turbulence. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

events, including local Ottawa-area Liberals. Following the party’s withdrawal, Liberal MPs and party officials were prohibited from officially attending the parade either collectively or individually last year.

On Aug. 10, *The Ottawa Citizen* reported that Capital Pride had removed its controversial statement just two weeks before this year’s parade on Aug. 24.

Capital Pride did not respond to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment by publication deadline.

Despite the withdrawals and boycotts, more than 100 organizations still marched in the parade last year, including contingents from public sector unions like the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the federal Green Party and NDP, the National Arts Centre, and several members of Ottawa City Council.

One Liberal Party source told *The Hill Times* that while last year’s withdrawal had angered some party members who disagreed with the decision, it was made clear that, this year, attendance would be left to the discretion of individual MPs. They said it’s also been made clear that Carney (Nepean, Ont.) “is going to make his voice known.”

“Carney wants to make a statement with his first Pride season that he is as committed to these issues as [former prime minister Justin Trudeau],” the source said, noting that Carney’s recent attendance at Vancouver’s Pride parade marked him as only the second sitting prime minister to do so.

Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson (Vancouver Fraserview–South Burnaby, B.C.), Veterans Affairs Minister Jill McKnight (Delta, B.C.), and Liberal MPs Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, B.C.), Zoe Royer (Port Moody–Coquitlam, B.C.), Ernie Klassen (South Surrey–White Rock, B.C.), Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, B.C.), and Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, B.C.) were also in attendance alongside Carney on Aug. 10, as was Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanic–Gulf Islands, B.C.). NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.) also attended Vancouver’s “Dyke March” the day before.

In response to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment, the NDP confirmed that MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.) will be in attendance at Edmonton Pride on Aug. 23, while MP Gord Johns (Courtenay–Alberni, B.C.) will be attending the Comox Valley Pride parade on the same day.

Carney was not in attendance in Montreal on Aug. 10, and is not expected to be in attendance in Ottawa on Aug. 24 due to scheduling conflicts. However, the Prime Minister’s Office indicated that his itinerary has not yet been finalized, nor have decisions been made over attendance at future Pride events, including the Calgary and Edmonton Pride festivals on Aug. 23 and 31, respectively.

Although the political rift over Israel’s war in Gaza persists this year—highlighted by the decision by Montreal Pride to exclude two Jewish organizations, which

they later withdrew after intense political backlash and the resignation of the organization’s board chair—a significant number of Liberals still participated in the city’s parade. Of those, *The Hill Times* spotted Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier–Sainte-Marie, Que.), Secretary of State for Children and Youth Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce–Westmount, Que.), and MPs Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Que.) and Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Hochelaga–Rosemont-Est, Que.).

Pujdak, a former Liberal cabinet staffer, said that, with some exceptions, Pride events across the country have attempted mainly to refocus on local issues, pointing to Capital Pride’s theme this year: “We are the village,” a play on the “it takes a village” proverb.

Pujdak said the decision to focus on the diversity of local LGBTQ+ issues rather than divisive international politics has not only removed the hesitancy for politicians, community organizations, and sponsors to rejoin the event, but will allow it to refocus on giving voice to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole.

Liberal strategist Angelo Bakoulas told *The Hill Times* that while there remains an expectation for Liberal politicians to show up, the political calculation over whether that attendance is still beneficial has become increasingly complicated.

“There will never be complete agreement on what Pride should be, and there is always going to be controversial demands and positions people will want to

express through the parade,” Bakoulas said, but added that there also needs to be room for “consensus building” on either side.

“With all the controversy we’ve seen around Pride festivals, I think there’s an increasing appetite from people to see a varied and diverse festival where everyone can make their own choice around what Pride means to them and what participation and support looks like,” Bakoulas said.

However, while Pride attendance may no longer be seen as a significant litmus test for a politician’s support for the LGBTQ+ community, where someone ultimately shows up is still important.

“Even with LGBTQ rights and progress becoming less visible on the global stage and in Canada, it is always important to know who stands where,” Bakoulas said.

Pujdak told *The Hill Times* that “rightfully or not, Pride has increasingly become a progressive event first, and a[n] LGBTQ event second,” and that organizers will need to grapple with that to expand the movement.

However, while the public’s attention may have shifted to more economic concerns, and the expectation for social signalling has lessened, “not showing up still makes a gigantic statement,” said Pujdak.

Conservative commentator and transgender advocate Blaine Badiuk told *The Hill Times* that, as Pride events have become increasingly left-wing, it shouldn’t surprise organizers when the previous political consensus begins to break down.

“Pride is not necessarily welcoming to everyone anymore, and that’s the opposite of what it should be,” Badiuk said, noting that some of the more controversial photos of Carney with attendees in varying levels of undress and fetish gear, “show how far Pride has deviated” from its original goals of societal inclusion.

“This was never what Pride was supposed to be, and, as a conservative, I don’t think that’s appropriate, Pride event or not,” Badiuk said. “For a lot of LGBTQ conservatives, we don’t see ourselves represented at these events because of how radical and extreme they have become ... it would almost be a disservice for conservative politicians to show up.”

While Badiuk doesn’t expect Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre to march in a parade this year, she said attendance isn’t the “be-all-end-all” of support.

“I don’t need more photo-ops, I need to see better policies,” Badiuk said. “I still believe there is room for bold, common-sense Conservative leadership on these issues.”

The Conservative Party did not respond to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment as to whether Poilievre will be attending any Pride events this summer. However, Conservative Deputy Leader Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.) attended York Pride’s celebration at Vaughan City Hall on June 24, alongside Mayor Steven Del Duca and members of city council.

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*The Hill Times*

FEATURE

Egypt celebrates its national day

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



1. Egyptian Ambassador Ahmed Abdallah Ibrahim Hafez delivers a speech at a July 3 event to mark his country's national day—which falls on July 23—held at his official residence in Ottawa. 2. Liberal MP Rob Oliphant, parliamentary secretary to the foreign affairs minister, addresses gathered guests. 3. The event's spread included Egyptian baklava. 4. Swedish Ambassador Signe Fenja Burgstaler, left, and Finnish Ambassador Hanna-Leena Kortenieniemi. 5. Thai Ambassador Kallayana Vipattipumprates, left, El Salvador Ambassador Ricardo Alfonso Cisneros Rodriguez, Danish Ambassador Nikolaj Harris, and Kazakhstan Ambassador Dauletbek Kussainov. 6. Cameroon High Commissioner Ngole Philip Ngwese, left, Belgian Ambassador Patrick van Gheel, Congolese Ambassador Appolinaire Aya, and Senegal's Ambassador Gorgui Ciss.

Peruvians fête their air force



1. Peruvian Ambassador Manuel Talavera left, and his wife Heidyl Colunge, centre, with Peruvian Air Attaché Col. Fernando Huamán. Military, naval, air, and defence attaché from multiple embassies attended a July 17 event hosted at Talavera's official residence to commemorate Peru's Air Force Day, which falls on July 23. 2. Chief of Staff of the Royal Canadian Air Force Brig.-Gen. Leighton James delivers remarks at the event. 3. French Defence Attaché Col. Bruno Heluin, Huamán, and South Korean Col. Mickey Lee. 4. Canadian Armed Forces Capt. Milton Hoyos, left, Peruvian Gen. José López, Peruvian Col. Ronald González, and Mexican Navy Cmdr. Jorge Romero.

# Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

## A few familiar faces fill Minister Fraser's justice office

Morgan MacDougall-Milne continues as director of litigation to the federal justice minister, while Keiran Gibbs has returned to the file as director of policy.

Justice Minister and Attorney General **Sean Fraser** currently presides over an 18-member ministerial staff team led by chief of staff **Savannah DeWolfe**, and has picked up a few ex-aides from his portfolio predecessor.

As reported by **Hill Climbers** back in June, DeWolfe returned to the Hill to resume her role as chief of staff to Fraser, who is also the minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

**Morgan MacDougall-Milne** has been kept on as director of litigation. MacDougall-Milne has been with the justice office since 2020, starting under then-minister **David Lametti** as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs. She was later made a parliamentary affairs and litigation adviser, and was promoted again to her current director title after **Arif Virani** took over as justice minister in July 2023. MacDougall-Milne is also a past assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Julie Dabrusin**.

Also coming from Virani's former justice office are senior adviser **Keith Torrie**, senior policy adviser **Dahlia James**, operations and appointments adviser **Charlie Skipworth**, and Quebec regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary **Roméo Ntwari**.

Torrie is a former associate with Rotenberg Shidlowski Jesin in Toronto, and began working for the former Trudeau government in 2022 as a policy and legal affairs adviser to then-public safety minister **Marco Mendicino**. Torrie joined the federal justice minister's office under Virani in 2023 as a senior policy adviser. A former national director of the Young Liberals of Canada, during the recent election campaign, he lent

his efforts as an issues manager for the Liberals in Ontario.

James has likewise been with the justice office since being hired as a senior policy adviser to Virani in 2023. A past lawyer with John Mickelson Law Corporation in Vancouver, she first came to Ottawa to work on the Hill as a policy adviser to then-northern affairs minister **Dan Vandal** in 2021. James left Vandal's office in April 2023, and briefly worked as a senior policy adviser with the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities before returning to work for Virani that September.

Skipworth has been working on the Hill since 2022, starting as an assistant to Virani as then-parliamentary secretary to then-trade minister **Mary Ng**. Skipworth later became an Ontario regional adviser to Ng, but exited in September 2023 after Virani was named to cabinet as justice minister, to join his office as a parliamentary affairs assistant. Most recently, Skipworth held the title of deputy director of operations and Atlantic regional adviser to Virani.

Ntwari started out as a 2024 summer intern in Virani's justice office, and was hired full time as a Quebec regional adviser at the beginning of this year.

A former parliamentary guide with the Library of Parliament, Ntwari spent the recent election working on Quebec Liberal MP **Greg Fergus'** successful re-election campaign and is currently pursuing a doctor of law degree at the University of Ottawa. Liberal MP **Patricia Lattanzio** is currently parliamentary secretary to Fraser.

**Keiran Gibbs** has returned to the justice file as direc-



Dahlia James is a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

tor of policy to Fraser. An ex-associate with Hutchins Legal, Gibbs was most recently director of policy in the offices of then-Treasury Board presidents **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** and **Anita Anand**, having first been hired as a senior policy adviser to then-president **Mona Fortier** in early 2023. Before then, Gibbs spent almost two years as a policy adviser to Lametti as then-justice minister.

Fraser's policy team also includes **Michael Kurliak**, who will mark his first day as a senior policy adviser and West and North regional adviser to the minister on Aug. 18, and **Thomas Law**, policy and Ontario regional adviser.

Kurliak first began working for Fraser in June 2022, starting as a policy adviser in Fraser's office as then-immigration minister. He was promoted to senior policy adviser after following Fraser to the housing portfolio in the wake of the July 2023 cabinet shuffle, and has now taken on added regional responsibilities. A former assistant to British Columbia Liberal MP **Terry Beech**, Kurliak recently helped his former boss get re-elected for a fourth term.

Former PMO advisers **Albert Nolette** and **Julie Robinson** have joined Fraser's team as a judicial affairs and appointments adviser, and as an adviser for constitutional affairs and intergovernmental relations, respectively. Nolette is a former lawyer with Field Law in Edmonton,

Alta., and worked as a legal adviser and deputy director of human resources and appointments in **Justin Trudeau's** office as prime minister from 2022 up until earlier this year.

Robinson, meanwhile, is an ex-lawyer with Fasken Martineau DuMoulin and a past lawyer with the Quebec Court of Appeal, and worked in Trudeau's PMO as a senior human resources and legal affairs adviser and later deputy director for human resources between 2018 and 2022. She initially left on maternity leave, with Nolette replacing her on an acting basis—a change that was subsequently made permanent. Robinson returned to the Hill in 2023 as a senior policy adviser to then-justice minister Lametti. There is no indication of her having worked for Virani during his time as justice minister.

Tackling operations alongside Skipworth is operations adviser **Alex Derickx**. Derickx is a former special assistant and ministerial driver to Fraser as both immigration minister and later as housing minister.

With the West and North covered by Kurliak, Ontario covered by Law, and Quebec covered by Ntwari, **Ray Anjou** is expected to join Fraser's office soon to cover the Atlantic as a senior parliamentary affairs and regional adviser.

Anjou comes from Nova Scotia's political trenches where he previously worked for the provincial Liberal Party and for the governments of then-Liberal premiers **Iain Rankin** and **Stephen McNeil**.

**Zoe Romeo** has landed the role of director of parliamentary affairs to Fraser.

A former assistant to then-Liberal MPs **Deb Schulte** and **Tony Van Bynen**, Romeo



Albert Nolette is a judicial affairs and appointments adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

has been working for Fraser since 2023 when she was hired as a legislative assistant in Fraser's office as then-housing minister. Romeo was most recently a regional adviser for the Greater Toronto and

Hamilton Area, and assistant to the parliamentary to Fraser as housing minister.

**Jeremy Bellefeuille** is now director of communications to Fraser. Bellefeuille returned to the Hill at the end of 2024 after more than a year away—part of which was spent as director of

marketing communications for the airline Canadian North—to serve as communications director to then-veterans affairs minister **Darren Fisher**. Bellefeuille previously worked on the Hill between 2017 and 2023, starting as an assistant to then-Ontario Liberal MP **Andrew Leslie** and ending as director of communications to Fraser as then-immigration minister. In between, he also spent time as press secretary and later communications director to then-national revenue minister **Diane Lebouthillier**, and as communications director to then-rural economic development minister **Gudie Hutchings**.

Working closely with Bellefeuille is **Lola Dandybaeva** as manager of media relations, with **Dakota Burgin** expected to soon join the team as manager of digital communications.

Dandybaeva joined Fraser's team from the PMO where she'd been working since 2022, starting as a special assistant for public appointments. After working her way up to adviser and then senior adviser status, Dandybaeva most recently switched her focus to tour advance work, which, according to her LinkedIn profile, she similarly helped

tackle for now-Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** leadership campaign at the beginning of this year. A former Liberal staffer at Queen's Park and an ex-chief of staff to Toronto



City Councillor **Mike Colle**, federally, Dandybaeva is also a past assistant to then-Ontario Liberal MP **Valerie Bradford**.

Burgin has been working off of the Hill as a public

relations specialist with Evolve PR since 2023. He was last a senior communications adviser to then-labour minister **Seamus O'Regan** who Burgin had worked for since 2021, starting as a digital communications adviser. Burgin is also an ex-aide to now-Jobs and Families Minister **Patty Hajdu** as the MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont., and briefly worked as a special assistant for communications to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**, among other past jobs.

Finally, capping off the 18 staffers currently confirmed in Fraser's office is executive assistant and office manager **Kate Cotman**, who joined the justice team as of July 31.

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# Parliamentary Calendar

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

## Macdonald-Laurier Institute talks today's attention economy on Aug. 13



The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is hosting a webinar on Aug. 13 exploring the complex relationship between free speech, democracy, and today's attention economy. *Photograph courtesy of Unsplash/Robin Worrall*

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13

**Webinar: 'Breaking the Feed'**—The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a webinar, "Breaking the Feed: Does the attention economy undermine our democracy?" Beyond distorting public debate, the attention economy is undermining journalism, accelerating mental health crises, polarizing citizens, and opening the door to foreign influence operations. A panel of experts will explore the complex relationship between free speech, democracy, and the attention economy, and what can be done to foster healthier digital spaces. Wednesday, Aug. 13, at 1 p.m. ET happening online.

### SUNDAY, AUG. 17

**Summer Social with Liberal MP Chagger**—Liberal MP Bardish Chagger hosts her annual summer social event featuring an authentic Indian cuisine lunch. Sunday, Aug. 17, from 1-3 p.m. ET. Location to be confirmed, in Waterloo, Ont. Details: [liberal.ca](http://liberal.ca).

### 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 seek a seat in the House of Commons.

### FRIDAY, AUG. 22

**Minister Dabrusin to Deliver Remarks**—Environment and Climate Change Minister Julie Dabrusin will take part in a fireside chat on how Canada can adapt and mitigate climate change hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Friday, Aug. 22, at 11:30 a.m. AT at The Prince George Hotel, 1725 Market St., Halifax. Details: [business.halifaxchamber.com](http://business.halifaxchamber.com).

### SATURDAY, AUG. 23

**Corn Roast with Liberal MP Fanjoy**—Liberal MP Bruce Fanjoy hosts a corn roast meet-and-greet event. Saturday, Aug. 23, at 4 p.m. ET at 322 Duncan Drive, McNab/Braeside, Ont. Details: [liberal.ca](http://liberal.ca).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 1

**Senator Seidman's Retirement**—Today is Quebec Conservative Senator Judith Seidman's 75<sup>th</sup> 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](http://afn.ca/events).

### THURSDAY, SEPT. 4

**Susan Aglukark to Discuss Her Memoir**—Juno Award-winning Inuk singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark will discuss her new memoir, *Kihiani: A Memoir of Healing*, an uplifting story of an Inuk artist's journey to healing and self-discovery. Thursday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m. at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details: [writersfestival.org](http://writersfestival.org).

### 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. Speakers include Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, former Reform Party leader Preston Manning, and Lord Conrad Black. Friday, Sept. 5, to

Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: [canadastrongandfree.network](http://canadastrongandfree.network).

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8

**'Pole Possessions in International Relations'**—The University of Ottawa hosts a talk: "Pole Possessions in International Relations: Status and Geopolitics in the Scrambles for Polar Pre-eminence." Panelists will ask why states desire to possess the North and South poles, how this competition involves how states see themselves, how they desire others to see them, and how others respond to these desires. Wednesday, Sept. 8, at 12 p.m. ET at FSS 4004, 120 University Priv., University of Ottawa. Details: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

### TUESDAY, SEPT. 9

**Webinar: 'Canadian Northerners' Views about Arctic Issues'**—The University of Ottawa hosts a webinar, "Perceptions of Canadian Northerners about Arctic issues." Mathieu Landriault, director of the Observatory on Politics and Security in the Arctic, and Mirva Salminen, associate professor at the University of Tromsø, will share data from a survey conducted among Arctic residents in Canada and their opinions about Arctic security, economic development, and governance. Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 10 a.m. ET happening online: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

### TUESDAY SEPT. 9—FRIDAY, SEPT. 12

**Liberal National Caucus Meeting**—The federal Liberals will meet from Tuesday, Sept. 9, to Friday, Sept. 12, for their national caucus retreat in Edmonton to set their fall strategy.

### THURSDAY, SEPT. 11

**Panel: 'Strengthening Women in Diplomacy'**—The University of

Ottawa hosts a panel discussion on "Strengthening the Representation of Women in Diplomacy: Challenges and Policy Solutions," presenting the work of the LSE IDEAS Women in Diplomacy project. Participants include former Canadian ambassador Dr. Lilly Nicholls, uOttawa professor Rebecca Tiessen, London School of Economics professor Karen E. Smith, and Marta Kozielecka, co-founder and manager of the Women in Diplomacy Project at LSE. Thursday, Sept. 11, at 10 a.m. in FSS 5028, uOttawa campus, and via Zoom. Details: [cips-cepi.ca](http://cips-cepi.ca).

### SUNDAY, SEPT. 14—MONDAY, SEPT. 15

**Supreme Court Justices to Visit Yellowknife**—Chief Justice Richard Wagner and Justices Nicholas Kasirer and Michelle O'Bonsawin will visit Yellowknife, N.W.T., for the third in a series of five visits planned this year to celebrate the Supreme Court's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The judges will meet with members of the legal and academic communities, and engage with students, the public, and the media. Sunday, Sept. 14, to Monday, Sept. 15. Details: [scc-csc.ca](http://scc-csc.ca).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 15

**House Returns**—The House of Commons returns on Monday, Sept. 15, and it's expected to be a busy fall session. It will sit Sept. 15-19; Sept. 22-26; Oct. 1-3; Oct. 6-10; Oct. 20-24; Oct. 27-31; Nov. 3-7; Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. That's 11 weeks left before it breaks for the year 2025. In total, the House will have sat only 73 days this year. Last year, it sat 122 days, and in 2023 it sat 121 days. In 2022, it sat 129 days, and in 2021 it sat 95 days.

**Justice Malcolm Rowe to Deliver Remarks**—Supreme Court Justice Malcolm Rowe will deliver remarks in honour of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court of Canada. The lecture will describe the changes leading up to the current role of the court in the Charter era. Monday, Sept. 15, at 4 p.m. ET at Grant Hall, Queen's University Campus, Kingston, Ont. Details: [queensu.ca](http://queensu.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 from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce; Emna Braham from L'Institut du Québec; Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work; Jesse McCormick from the First Nations Major Project Coalition; Chris Bataille from the Centre on Global Energy Policy; and Counsel Public Affairs' Tim Hudak. Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: [irpp.org](http://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.

**AFN First Nations ISET Agreement Holders' Gala**—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a recognition gala for First Nations Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Agreement Holders. Under the theme "A Legacy of Excellence," this event will celebrate the achievements of individuals and First Nations ISET Agreement Holder organizations in their outstanding leadership and innovation in advancing employment and training for First Nations across Canada. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Que. Details: [afn.ca](http://afn.ca).

### 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, N.L. (Oct. 15), and Ottawa (Oct. 30). Friday, Sept. 19, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Details to follow: [masseycollege.ca](http://masseycollege.ca).

### SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

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

### MONDAY, SEPT. 22

**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. 22, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: [ontarioliberal.ca](http://ontarioliberal.ca).

### TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

**Senate Returns**—The Senate will return on Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 2 p.m., and is scheduled to sit Sept. 23-25, but could also sit on Sept. 26. It's scheduled to sit Oct. 1-2 (possibly Oct. 30); Oct. 7-9 (possibly Oct. 6 and Oct. 10); Oct. 21-23 (possibly Oct. 20 and Oct. 24); Oct. 28-30 (possibly Oct. 27 and Oct. 31); Nov. 4-6 (possibly Nov. 3 and Nov. 7); Nov. 18-20 (possibly Nov. 17 and Nov. 21); Nov. 25-27 (possibly Nov. 24 and Nov. 28); Dec. 2-4 (possibly Dec. 1 and Dec. 5); Dec. 9-11 (possibly Dec. 8 and Dec. 12); and finally Dec. 16-18 (possibly Dec. 15 and Dec. 19). And that will be it for 2025.

**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](http://canada2020.ca).

**Liberal MP Erskine-Smith to Deliver Remarks**—Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith will take part in "The Power of Animals: How animal welfare is key to a sustainable future for all" hosted by The Walrus Talks. Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m. ET at the Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St W, Toronto. Register via Eventbrite.

### 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](http://writerstrust.com).

### MONDAY, SEPT. 29—TUESDAY, SEPT. 30

**Couchiching 2025**—The Canadian International Council and the Aga Khan Museum host the two-day Couchiching annual conference on the theme "Securing Canada's Atlantic Future." This high-level strategic dialogue bringing together policymakers, thought leaders, and experts to provide insights into how to navigate Canada's role in an era of global upheaval. Monday, Sept. 29, to Tuesday, Sept. 30, at the Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr., Toronto. Details: [thecic.org/couchiching2025](http://thecic.org/couchiching2025).

### THURSDAY, OCT. 2

**Fireside Chat: 'Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future'**—Former cabinet minister Seamus O'Regan will moderate a fireside chat entitled "Compete or Retreat: Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future," featuring Greg Ebel, president and CEO of Enbridge Inc. Thursday, Oct. 2, at 11:30 a.m. ET happening in person and online. Details: [empireclubofcanada.com](http://empireclubofcanada.com).



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