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NEWS

PM Carney risks trouble without loyal 'palace guard,' say political players

Every new prime minister eventually faces turbulence, and that's when a strong and trusted palace guard is 'essential,' says political historian and former Liberal MP John English. But at a critical time in Canadian history, Carney's team is going to have to learn fast.

BY ABBAS RANA

Like other prime ministers before him, Mark Carney needs a loyal 'palace guard' within his office—a core team of trusted allies who can watch his back when, as with every government, controversy inevitably arises, say seasoned political observers.

"It's essential. You have to have it because you're the one where the buck stops, to use [former United States president] Harry Truman's famous words," said John English, a distinguished historian, author and a former Ontario Liberal MP, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "You have to have people that you can rely on, and not necessarily your

Continued on [page 16](#)



Unlike previous prime ministers, Prime Minister Mark Carney's independence gives him latitude, one senior Liberal source told *The Hill Times*. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Don Oliver gave it his best shot: 1938-2025

Former Nova Scotia Conservative Senator Don Oliver, who died on Sept. 17, said he was raised to 'work hard, be humble, love the Lord, and do all you can to help other people.' He gave it his best shot. See editorial on p. 8.

The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

NEWS

Canada Strong and Free fundraising emails using 'crisis rhetoric,' to stoke distrust in government and media, say comms experts, pollsters

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Recent fundraising emails sent by the Canada Strong and Free Network employ a polarizing rhetoric pushing a narrative of distrust in democratic institutions and mainstream media, similar to messaging currently coming from the United States and other right-wing populist movements around the world, say experts in political communications and pollsters alike.

The Hill Times obtained access to emails sent out by the Canada Strong and Free Network (CSFN) between September and October,

Continued on [page 19](#)

NEWS

Recent health spending comes from Trudeau era, but fits with current Liberal focus on health prevention, lowering costs, consultants say

The Nov. 4 budget and this week's health ministers' meeting are the Carney government's chance to communicate a distinct health policy agenda.

BY TESSIE SANCI

More than \$250-million for health initiatives, including those connected to health equity and health prevention, have been announced since Health Minister Marjorie Michel joined cabinet. Still, some consultants caution that this funding isn't a major signal of the current Liberal government's health policy direction.

Continued on [page 18](#)



Health Minister Marjorie Michel, pictured at a press conference in Ottawa on Oct. 2. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

It would be 'idiotic' for any party to topple government on budget vote only seven months after election, say some Liberal MPs

Interim NDP Leader Don Davies and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May recently met with Prime Minister Mark Carney, but won't comment on how they'll vote on the budget, saying they will decide after reviewing the document, which will be released on Nov. 4.

BY ABBAS RANA

Barely seven months after the last federal election, it would be politically unwise for any party to topple Prime Minister Mark Carney's government over its first budget, say Liberal MPs.

"It would be idiotic for any party to try to bring down the government at this stage," said Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay-Rainy River, Ont.), in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

"At this stage, any party that precipitates an election is going to be punished at the voting booth. I don't think it's in the interests of any of the opposition parties at this stage to bring down the government."

There is one precedent where a Canadian government was brought down soon after an election: Joe Clark's Progressive Conservative government was voted in following the May 1979 general election campaign and was then defeated on a budget confidence vote in December that same year. Canadians returned

Continued on [page 17](#)

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

MPs, Senators race to see who's the slowest in Bike Day on the Hill



Come ride with me: Liberal MP Jean Yip, left; ISG Senator Pat Duncan; Liberal MP Chi Nguyen; Mayor of Chelsea, Que., Pierre Guénard; Liberal MP Eric St-Pierre, and ISG Senator Marnie McBean took part in Bike Day on the Hill on Oct. 8. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Cycling advocates and enthusiasts cheered for parliamentarians as they mounted their bikes for a race on the Hill last week—not to be the fastest, but who would be the slowest of the lot.

The Secretary of State for Sports and Olympic gold medallist **Adam van Koeverden** won the contest, as he did last year, beating his Liberal colleagues Canadian Heritage Minister **Steven Guilbeault**, MPs **Jean Yip**, **Chi Nguyen**, **Eric St-Pierre**, and ISG Senator **Marnie McBean** who, like van Koeverden, is a former Olympian.

NDP MP **Gord Johns**, and Conservative MPs **Matt Strauss** and **Gabriel Hardy** also took part in a non-partisan spirit to promote the joy of cycling.

The slow-biking challenge was part of the Bike on the Day event organized by a volunteer-led cycling advocacy organization Vélo Canada Bikes.

Focused on the theme “cycling for Canadian prosperity”, it was followed by a reception where awards were handed out to cycling advocates. Environment Minister **Julie Dabrusin**, Bloc Québécois MP **Patrick Bonin**, Johns and Hardy spoke about being avid bikers themselves. Former Conservative MP **John Weston** was given a lifetime achievement award for his contributions to promote the sport and general fitness.

—Riddhi Kachhela

Three takeaways from Stephen Maher's portrait of Mark Carney

Journalist **Stephen Maher's** 5,000-word story headlined, “**Mark Carney Is a Very Demanding Boss**,” in *Maclean's* last week paints a portrait of a devoutly Catholic economist who's been eyeing the Prime Minister's Office for decades, and the piece has generated a lot of commentary.

Here are **Heard on the Hill's** three main takeaways:

Carney doesn't need a belt: The 60-year-old former hockey player is an avid runner who “wears Savile Row suits without belt loops—a style available only to those who are rich, trim and expensively tailored” and he expects his staff in the Prime Minister's Office to “dress as they would in a bank, with black shoes for the men.”

He's got a “prickly” management style: “Carney is said to be demanding and short-tempered with those who brief him, creating a much tenser atmosphere than existed under Trudeau, who ran the office like an encouraging teacher,” Maher writes in the article published on *Maclean's* website on Oct. 7. The author of *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau* spoke with one anonymous PMO



In his 5,000-word piece for *Maclean's* last week, journalist Stephen Maher, left, paints a portrait of Prime Minister Mark Carney as a serious, whip-smart person but with a short fuse. *The Hill Times* photographs by Cynthia Münster and Andrew Meade



staffer “who is worried about the way he [Carney] is running the office. It's taking them a long time to staff up. There is uncertainty about roles,” likely a reference to the recent tug-of-war between former MP **David Lametti** and **Tom Pitfield** over the role of principal secretary. Maher writes that during the election campaign, then-advisers **Pitfield** and **Gerald Butts** “regularly discussed candidate management, because Carney could be so prickly,” and that they're worried Carney could potentially find himself in his own version of the relationship breakdown that happened in 2019 between

Trudeau and then-minister **Jody Wilson-Raybould**.

His decisions are making progressive Grit MPs ‘miserable’: Maher describes the former Bank of Canada governor as “the smoothest of smooth operators,” but whose “imperial behaviour” worries those more familiar with how politics is done. Inside the Liberal caucus, “many of his decisions are also making progressive MPs miserable,” writes Maher, name-checking **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith** when he says “some caucus members believe that he made unsolicited promises of cabinet posts to several MPs and then failed to deliver.”

Top court judges debut new robes at rare opening event



This is a war on Christmas: The nine judges on the Supreme Court debuted their new black robes which replace the red-and-white ones inherited from the British legal tradition. **Malcome Rowe**, front left, **Andromache Karakatsanis**, **Richard Wagner**, **Suzanne Côté**, and **Sheilah Martin**, **Michelle O'Bonsawin**, back left, **Nicholas Kasirer**, **Mahmud Jamal** and **Mary Moreau**. Photograph courtesy of the Supreme Court Collection

“This is a war on Christmas,” posted menswear guru **Derek Guy** on X on Oct. 6, commenting on the Supreme Court of Canada's swapping of the old red-and-white **Santa Claus**-esque robes for new black ones with red vertical piping.

“I'm sorry but I really had no idea this is how Canada's supreme court dresses,” Guy added, who has 1.3 million followers on X. Guy, who has written for *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *Politico*, *Esquire*, and *Mr. Porter*, is an illustrious menswear writer. His post about Canada's Supreme Court justices' new robes attracted more than 515,000 views.

The nine judges' new made-in-Canada threads were officially debuted last week at a rare Ceremonial Opening event in Ottawa, where Chief Justice **Richard Wagner** said the new robes are “a modern and simple design that echoes our commit-

ment to openness and accessibility in a way that is distinctly Canadian.”

Further reaction to the judges' sartorial update was mixed.

Ben Woodfinden, a former communications director to Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre**, gave the new look a thumbs down: “These new robes are a perfect encapsulation of what the endless and unquestioned quest for ‘progress’ actually produces. We liquidate history and tradition on the altar of progress, but replace it with soulless banal objects and values devoid of meaning, symbolism and purpose.”

While lawyer and executive director of Animal Justice **Camille Labchuck** praised the new cruelty-free robes: “It's great to see the Supreme Court abandon their old robes that used fur from ermines killed at a fur farm. More proof that fur is dead—as a matter of both fashion & modernity!”

Mayor's chief of staff, Robyn Guest, has died

Robyn Guest, chief of staff to Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe**, died last week, aged 57, from peritoneal mesothelioma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer.

Sutcliffe said he “devastated and heartbroken” in his social media posts on Oct. 6, praising his late staffer as “brilliant, compassionate, and thoughtful and she was absolutely indispensable to me during our time together.”

“After doing policy work on Parliament Hill early in her career, Robyn joined the City of Ottawa and held many roles over her more than 20-year tenure,” reads her obituary. Past roles included policy director for Sutcliffe's mayoral predecessor, **Jim**



Robyn Guest died on Oct. 6. She was the mayor's chief of staff, and had worked at City Hall for 20 years. Photograph courtesy of X

Watson, and working in the office of then-city manager **Kent Kirkpatrick** until 2016 when he left that role.

“Incredibly tragic news,” posted City Councillor **Ariel Troster** on Facebook on Oct. 6. “Robyn Guest was a consummate public servant and a lovely person.”

“Ottawa is truly a better place, in many different ways, because of Robyn,” Sutcliffe said, expressing condolences to Guest's partner **Chris Swail**, her children **Devyn** and **Quinnlan**, her brother **Brian**, and her granddaughter **Elly**.

A celebration of Robyn Guest's life will be held at the Ottawa Art Gallery on Oct. 25 at 3 p.m.

Former CBC host Dennis Trudeau died, age 77

Former CBC reporter and host **Dennis Trudeau** died last week in Montreal, aged 77.

Over his lengthy career with the national broadcaster, starting in 1979, Trudeau

hosted CBC Montreal's *Daybreak* for eight years, and became a national radio host with *As It Happens* and *Cross-Country Checkup*. For the last 18 years, he owned Dennis Trudeau

Communications Inc., He also volunteered as vice-president of the Canadian section of Reporters Without Borders from 2006 to 2010. cleadlay@hilltimes.com *The Hill Times*

Middle East experts ‘cautiously optimistic’ over Trump’s Gaza peace plan, but see little role for Canada to play

‘Anything that stops the war’ is a net benefit, no matter who’s involved, says former Canadian ambassador to Israel Jon Allen.

BY STUART BENSON

As Israelis and Palestinians celebrate an agreement on the first phase of United States President Donald Trump’s 20-point peace plan just days into indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas began in Egypt this week, regional observers are allowing themselves a measure of “cautious optimism” as the West and the people of Gaza become increasingly desperate for anything to stop the bombs and rising death toll.

Foreign policy expert Thomas Juneau told *The Hill Times* that, although he is rarely optimistic about that region, Trump’s plan showed several positive signs for progress toward ending the current hostilities.

“The plan is a positive step, but it’s just a small, first step on an extremely difficult path in the best of cases,” explained Juneau, an associate professor at the University of Ottawa’s school of public and international affairs, and a former Middle East policy analyst for the Department of National Defence.

Juneau said that, strangely, one of the primary positive sources of his cautious confidence in the deal is Trump’s personal involvement, or—more importantly—his seeming personal investment.

“By putting his name on the plan, by being so involved himself, he’s attaching his name to it,” Juneau said, noting that while it may not provide any added credibility to the plan, it demonstrates the president’s level of personal investment.

On Oct. 8, two days after mediators from the U.S., Qatar, and Egypt began indirect negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, Trump announced that Israel and Hamas had taken another step on that path, and agreed to the first phase

of the agreement, which would include the release of hostages and Israel’s withdrawal to an agreed-upon line within the Gaza Strip.

As part of Trump’s plan, once both parties agreed, Hamas would be given 72 hours to return all remaining hostages—either alive or deceased—and, in exchange, Israel would release 250 life-sentence prisoners, plus 1,700 Gazans who were detained after Oct. 7, 2023, including all women and children.

CNN, Axios, and The Associated Press have all reported that Israeli government sources have said that all 20 living hostages that remain in Gaza could be released as early as Oct. 11 or Oct. 12.

In a post on Truth Social announcing the preliminary agreement, Trump called it “the first steps toward a Strong, Durable, and Everlasting Peace,” and “a GREAT Day for the Arab and Muslim World, Israel, all surrounding Nations, and the United States of America.”

In a statement released later that night, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) congratulated Trump for his “essential leadership,” and thanked Qatar, Egypt and Turkey for their tireless work to support the negotiations.

“I am relieved that the hostages will soon be reunited with their families,” Carney wrote. “After years of intense suffering, peace finally feels attainable. Canada calls on all parties to swiftly implement all agreed terms and to work towards a just and lasting peace.”

Trump announced the plan on Sept. 29, appearing alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit to the White House. The war was entering its second year following Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attacks, which killed nearly 1,200 Israelis and captured 240 hostages.

As of Oct. 1, more than 69,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel’s ensuing war on Hamas in Gaza, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Hundreds of journalists, health-care professionals, and humanitarian aid workers have also been killed in the conflict.

Trump’s plan aims to create a “deradicalized, terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbours,” and to redevelop the enclave “for the benefit of the peo-

ple of Gaza, who have suffered more than enough,” with promises that Palestinians will not be forced to leave Gaza.

The plan proposes that a “Trump economic development plan to rebuild and energize Gaza will be created” by a panel of experts, and a special economic zone would be established with preferred tariff and access rates to be negotiated with participating countries.

The deal would also include the rehabilitation of water, electricity, and sewage infrastructure, the rebuilding of hospitals and bakeries, and the resumption of much-needed aid to Gaza, “without interference” through the United Nations, the Red Cross, and other international aid agencies, with the opening of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

For its part, Hamas would be required to agree to play no role in the governance of Gaza “directly, indirectly, or in any form”; and destroy “all military, terror, and offensive infrastructure,” with the demilitarization of Gaza supervised by independent monitors. Hamas members who disarm and commit to “peaceful co-existence” would also be given amnesty as part of the agreement, and those wishing to leave Gaza would be provided safe passage to do so.

Hamas announced it had accepted several parts of the deal on Oct. 3, including the return of all remaining hostages, both living and dead. However, it expressed resistance to other elements of the plan, which it said would need to be “addressed through a comprehensive Palestinian national framework, in which Hamas will participate and contribute responsibly.”

In response to the partial agreement, Trump posted on social media that he believed Hamas is “ready for a lasting PEACE,” and called on Israel to “immediately stop the bombing of Gaza, so that we can get the hostages out safely and quickly!”

‘Anything that stops the war’ is a net benefit, says former envoy to Israel

Former Canadian diplomat Jon Allen, who served as Canada’s ambassador to Israel from 2006 to 2010, told *The Hill Times* he was “cautiously optimistic” about the

plan’s prospects for success, particularly given the consequences for its failure.

“Anything that could stop the war and release the hostages would be a net benefit,” explained Allen, now a senior fellow at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

“It’s not the deal of the century, but if it actually stopped the war, released the hostages, and started saving the lives of Gazans who are being murdered in the tens and hundreds every day, it’s a positive,” Allen continued, adding that regardless of how he feels about the merits of the plan, “the people of Gaza want this thing to work.”

However, while a ceasefire would bring much-needed relief to the Palestinians in Gaza, the ambiguity for Israel and the concessions required of Hamas could make that peace as momentary as the previous one from this past January, Allen said.

That ceasefire, which lasted less than six weeks, ended on March 18 after Netanyahu restarted offensive operations with surprise airstrikes on Gaza rather than proceeding with the second and third stages of the agreement.

Allen said that the withdrawal arrangement for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is “quite vague,” and provides a substantial amount of “wiggle room” for Netanyahu’s government to restart hostilities, even after the hostages have been returned.

Under the agreement, the IDF would withdraw from Gaza “based on standards, milestones, and timeframes linked to demilitarization” that will be agreed upon by the IDF, the U.S., and the proposed Internal Stabilization Force, and developed in collaboration with Arab and international partners. The IDF would progressively withdraw from the territory it occupies according to the agreed-upon timeframes, except for a security perimeter presence within Gaza that would remain until it is “properly secure from any resurgent terror threat.”

Allen said that while all three parties have their own self-interested motivations for proceeding with the deal, he believes Trump’s desire for personal success may be enough to pressure Israel to accept more than it would typically be willing to.

“Israel will likely resist withdrawal, and it’s unclear whether they even will, but Trump seems intent on getting the hostages released to the point that he is prepared to agree with Hamas to what was clearly not what he had proposed,” Allen said, adding that he was surprised by the “quite a bit of leeway” Trump provided to Hamas for the current talks to move forward.

Juneau said that while he doesn’t believe Trump would break with Israel on any of its major sticking points, including Hamas’ disarmament or its security guarantees, he is clearly beginning to break with Netanyahu.

On Oct. 5, Axios reported that Trump had asked Netanyahu why he was “always so fucking negative” on Gaza. Still, Juneau

noted that the staging of the official White House photographs of the visit—specifically the “humiliating images of Netanyahu’s apology call to Qatar for its strike on Hamas negotiators in the country—reminded him of another expletive-laden quote from then-U.S. president Bill Clinton following his first meeting with Israel’s prime minister wherein he is famously quoted as asking “who’s the fucking super power here?”

Juneau added that the support Trump’s plan had received from Qatar and the other Gulf states would also pressure Hamas to at least continue with the negotiations.

“If you want to be cynical, which is not inappropriate, Hamas may not have the intention of pursuing this seriously,” Juneau said. “But they’re under severe pressure to consider some kind of truce, or it will be costly for their standing with the Arab states.”

Recognition of Palestine ‘necessary’ pressure on peace process

While Canada has offered its support for Trump’s plan, with both Carney and Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) welcoming Hamas’ partial agreement, Juneau and Allen said Canada’s role going forward would be minor—but nonetheless necessary.

One negative of the peace plan—which arrived one week after Canada’s recognition of Palestine at the UN General Assembly alongside Australia, France, and the United Kingdom—is that it had allowed some of the international pressure that had been building on Israel to lessen, Allen said.

However, Juneau said that recognition of Palestinian statehood was another small step on the same path as Trump’s plan.

“There will be no serious peace process without a strong, reformed [Palestinian Authority]; that is a necessary condition,” Juneau explained. “Recognition is a signal that the international community will support them and that capacity building, but the next steps matter even more, and that’s actually to do it.”

While Canada could play a minor role in the stabilization force, Juneau believes it is building the Palestinian Authority’s capacity to govern, where Canada can make the most impact.

In an interview with The Canadian Press following her speech at the UN just hours before news broke of Trump’s plan last Monday, Anand said she had had “several conversations” with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio over the previous week, “about the way in which Canada can play a role in contributing to the peace process.”

“Secretary Rubio specifically asked me to help lead in bringing more and more countries on side.”

As of *The Hill Times*’ publishing deadline, no country has expressed opposition to Trump’s plan.

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NEWS

Easter Seals, CFIB lobbying



Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement Joël Lightbound, who recently announced reforms intended to modernize Canada Post, met with members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers on Oct. 8. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The strike by Canada Post workers has put a halt on mail and parcel deliveries nationwide since Sept. 25, but the union representing postal workers announced it would switch to rotating strikes on Oct. 11. The union will meet with the minister again this week.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Easter Seals Canada and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business are urging Ottawa to do whatever it takes to swiftly resolve the strike by Canada Post workers as the halt on mail and parcel deliveries nationwide is leading to big disruptions for small businesses, and for Canadians with disabilities in need of essential supplies.

Late last week, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers announced it would begin rotating strikes starting Oct. 11, switching from a nationwide strike, and start getting mail and parcels delivered again. The union made the announcement on Oct. 9, a day after meeting with Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.), *The Canadian Press* reported. The union said it asked Lightbound to



Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families Leslie Church, left, met with Rob Eatough, president and CEO of Easter Seals Canada, on Oct. 6 to discuss issues including how disabled Canadians are affected by the Canada Post strike. *Photograph courtesy of Easter Seals Canada*



Jobs and Families Minister Patty Hajdu, pictured Oct. 8, 2025, on the Hill. Easter Seals Canada communicated with Hajdu on Oct. 8. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

roll back the changes, CP reported, but he said they would remain in place. The union will meet again with the minister this week.

“Our concern is broadly with the impact with those with disabilities, of whom we serve from

coast to coast to coast,” said Rob Eatough, president and CEO of Easter Seals Canada, who was interviewed before the rotating strikes were announced.

“Our concern resides with those who may live in rural and

remote areas. Obviously, they don’t have the same access to not only receive communications, but things like medication and other really critical life [supplies] that they would normally receive through Canada Post.”

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) have been on strike since Sept. 25 when the federal government announced sweeping reforms intended to modernize Canada Post. The new measures, announced Lightbound, who oversees Canada Post, included lowering mail delivery standards by moving non-urgent mail by ground instead of air; lifting the moratorium on rural post office closures; and a phase-out of door-to-door service. The CUPW called the announced changes an outrage, saying they would undermine public service, and potentially result in major job losses.

Since the strike began on Sept. 25, Easter Seals Canada, a charitable organization that supports people living with disabilities, has been reaching out to public office holders to emphasize how the disruption in mail service is affecting some vulnerable members of the population, according to Eatough.

“You could think of somebody ... who’s in a wheelchair—they don’t have the same ability to go to other places to pick up mail, to get essential supplies, and really require that direct aspect of the mail delivery,” he said.

Canadians with disabilities, particularly those in rural and remote areas, rely on mail service to receive medication, as well as for the delivery of cards for the organization’s Access 2 Card program, he said. The cards allow people with permanent disabilities to receive either free or significantly discounted admission for their support person at member movie theatres, cultural attractions and recreation facilities across Canada. That program currently serves more than 100,000 Canadians, according to Eatough.

“The fulfillment of those cards and distribution requires mail because they’re a physical card,” he said.

Since September, Easter Seals Canada has filed five communication reports on the federal lobbyists’ registry listing the CUPW strike as a subject for discussion, based on a search of the registry on Oct. 8. The group communicated with Minister of Jobs and Families Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ont.) on Oct. 8. Easter Seals Canada also communicated with Conservative MP Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, Alta), his party’s mental health critic, on Oct. 7, and with Liberal MP Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul’s, Ont.), Hajdu’s parliamentary secretary, on Oct. 6.

“I think we understand the complexities involved with [the strike]. I think at this point, really, we’re communicating the impact ... and trying to provide a bit of a social consciousness to the conversations,” Eatough said.

“[We’re] really just wanting to keep these things top of mind for the government as they’re looking

feds to end Canada Post's strike

for solutions, and as the union and Canada Post look to resolving this particular issue.”

Easter Seals Canada is represented on the registry in house by Eatough, and by consultants Karen Moores and Patrick Muir of Town Advocacy.

Another organization that's been bringing its concerns to Ottawa during the strike is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB). Jasmin Guénette, the CFIB's vice-president of national affairs, told *The Hill Times* that his organization has reached out to Lightbound through letters urging for the federal government to immediately end the strike. Many small businesses across the country use Canada Post on a daily basis, and the current work stoppage is having a “considerable impact” on them.

“Many small firms send packages to their clients with Canada Post. They send promotional materials to clients or potential clients in their neighbourhood or a small town using Canada Post, [and] obviously sending invoices and receiving payments through mail,” said Guénette.

“No small businesses in Canada are able to receive payments at the moment. No small businesses in Canada can send out promotional materials, and so they cannot inform their clients the way they normally do on any promotion, sales, events and whatnot.”

Last November and December, Canada Post workers also spent 32 days on strike until they were ordered to return to work by the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

The CFIB warned that the current strike's potential effect on small businesses could be massive, since the last one cost small firms more than \$1-billion. It also released a report on Oct. 9 saying nine in 10 small businesses want to see Canada Post reformed.

“Obviously, Canada Post is not sending any packages, so some packages are stuck in the mail, and if any businesses want to send out packages ... they need to rely on other couriers. Often, those couriers are more expensive—that is if you have access to other courier services—because in rural or remote communities, very often Canada Post is the only service available,” said Guénette.

“It is having quite a bit of an impact on many small firms across the country, and we are hoping the federal government will intervene rapidly to end the strike.”

When announcing plans to overhaul Canada Post, Lightbound said that the institution is facing an “existential crisis,” with mail delivery dropping from 5.5 billion letters annually two decades ago, to only two billion annually. According to Lightbound, fewer letters are currently being delivered to more addresses, while fixed costs remain high, and Canada Post is on track to lose nearly \$1.5-billion in 2025. In September, Lightbound called the situation untenable, adding that the announced measures are intended to stabilize Canada Post's finances and enable its modernization.

Canada Post workers were joined by members of other unions, including the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), for a rally on Parliament Hill on Oct. 1. More than 500 people attended the event.

Siobhán Vipond, CLC's executive vice-president, told *The Hill Times* that Canada Post needs to be supported and adapted, and workers need to be respected.

“In this time of economic uncertainty in the world, we want to see investments done and not adding to job losses at this quite precarious time in Canada,” she said.

“This [rally] was the workers and the union saying, ‘We need to be heard and we need to be listened to.’”

Vipond said that Canada Post workers are “under attack” because it's been “so long since they've actually been able to negotiate an agreement at the table without government over-interference.”

The new measures announced by the government for Canada Post were informed by a May 15 report by the Industrial Inquiry Commission led by William Kaplan. The recommendations in the report aim to achieve annual savings of more than \$420-million once implemented, according to the government.

“The Kaplan report was just taking what the employer said, putting it in writing and saying, ‘Yeah, this is actually

the problem,’ [but] have they talked to the union? Have they talked to the workers that are on the floor because those persons aren't going to the negotiating table with unreasonable asks,” said Vipond.

“[Workers] have been sounding the alarm for a long time that they want to negotiate agreements, they want to protect these jobs, and they want to see investments in the post office that makes sense, so that it is viable and growing and keeping up with the times.”

Members of CUPW's national executive board and negotiating committees met with Lightbound on Oct. 8 to discuss the Sept. 25 announcement, and Canada Post's latest contract offers.

“While we want the meeting with the minister, there's no secret about

our position: the government's decision to announce its plans to gut the public post office and slash thousands of good jobs is the wrong approach and will make everything worse for Canadians, the public service, and bargaining,” said Rona Eckert, CUPW's first national vice-president in a CUPW statement on Oct. 7.

A spokesperson for Lightbound told Global News on Oct. 7 that Ottawa wants to see Canada Post “modernize and transform so it can keep serving Canadians for years to come,” and urged the two sides to “find a path forward at the bargaining table.”

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ADVERTISING

Pay attention to payments



**By: Donna Kinoshita, Chief Payments Officer
Payments Canada**

In today's digital economy, our need to securely move money is just as essential as moving goods, energy or information. Though we do not see money move when we tap to pay, make an online purchase or when we receive our wages, Canada's payment systems are the critical infrastructure that continuously support national prosperity and the financial well-being of people in Canada.

Every day, people in Canada rely on payment systems to carry out some of life's most essential transactions: paying employees and suppliers, sending money to family, buying groceries, receiving benefits or managing business operations. Behind each of these actions is a complex, highly coordinated network that functions safely, reliably and securely. In Canada, this infrastructure is owned and operated by us - Payments Canada - a public-purpose, non-profit organization.

As mandated in the *Canadian Payments Act* (CP Act), we run the country's national

payment systems, the underlying networks that clear and settle funds between financial institutions. In 2024, over \$420 billion travelled through our systems every business day - that's over \$107 trillion in one year. Our systems provide security, trust and reliability when people in Canada need to pay or get paid, and today's economy requires this money to move faster and in more ways than ever before.

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While most Canadians never see or think about the infrastructure that powers their payments, they feel the impact of it in their day-to-day lives. Getting paid and making payments - some small, some large - affect people's lives in big ways. At Payments Canada, we don't take this for granted. Our purpose has remained: To make payments easier, smarter and safer for Canada.

As the Chief Payments Officer, Donna Kinoshita brings more than 20 years of stakeholder and strategic product development experience. As payments continue to rapidly evolve, Donna and her teams work closely with all industry stakeholders to ensure the Canadian payment ecosystem is inclusive, enables fair competition and supports a thriving Canadian economy.



NEWS

Conservatives float electoral reform to combat ‘political prank’ protest group from flooding ballots with names

Conservative MP Tako van Popta says limiting voters’ signatures to supporting one candidate could counter the ‘belligerence’ and ‘obstinacy’ of the Longest Ballot Committee, whose efforts had over 200 running in August Alberta byelection.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Conservative MPs are slamming the efforts of a protest group that disrupted Leader Pierre Poilievre’s campaigns in the April federal election and subsequent Alberta byelection by adding hundreds of candidates to those contest ballots, dubbing the organization a “farce,” and calling for new laws to crack down on future protest efforts.

Conservative MP Tako van Popta (Langley Township-Fraser Heights, B.C.) took issue with Longest Ballot Committee’s (LBC) efforts, arguing protesters are “gaming the system” by signing multiple nomination sheets to unfairly disrupt elections. He advocated for changing election rules so that voters can only sign one nomination form, saying it’s time to “reform” the system by “making that one small rule change.”

Van Popta said the LBC’s actions are not leading “towards an intelligent conversation about electoral reform.”

“Why wouldn’t we counter this belligerence and this obstinacy and this political prank-making?” he said on Oct. 7 during the Procedure and House Affairs Committee’s study of the LBC’s efforts in recent elections.

There are currently no restrictions on how many nomination forms a voter can sign.

Tomas Szuchewycz, the LBC’s official agent, urged MPs to recuse themselves from decisions affecting elections, pointing out that it’s a conflict of interest.



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has called for increasing the number of signatures required for candidates to run for office, and limiting voters’ signatures to a single candidate’s nomination form. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

This is a core position of the protest group, which has been organizing versions of the “political prank” seen in the last election since 2019 to advocate for reform. The group believes elected officials shouldn’t be in charge of election rules, and wants to see a citizens’ assembly in charge of determining those rules instead.

The group helped present a record 200-plus candidates running in the Battle River—Crowfoot, Alta., byelection this past August, which Poilievre ultimately won. A few months before, in general election, LBC targeted Poilievre’s then-riding of Carleton, Ont., when the leader lost his seat to Liberal Bruce Fanjoy. There were 91 candidates on that ballot on April 28.

The group was also planning to target Prime Minister Mark Carney’s riding of Nepean, Ont., the LBC said at the time, but didn’t know in which riding the then-un-elected Liberal leader would be running early enough for them to organize.

The idea of limiting nomination signatures is not a new one. In November 2024, Canada’s chief electoral officer, Stéphane Perrault, suggested a change in election laws to discourage people from signing multiple nomination forms, telling the same House committee that there should be penalties for those who sign multiple nomination papers in an attempt to flood ballots with candidates.

At the time, the committee was studying Bill C-65, legislation that

died with prorogation in January 2025, which proposed a number of changes to the Canada Elections Act after the LBC’s efforts had resulted in upwards of 80 candidates in two byelections in Toronto and Montreal in 2024.

The committee considered the suggestion—and it’s an issue on which Szuchewycz was pressed. Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, Alta.) accused the LBC at the outset of the meeting of collecting signatures on blank nomination forms, and then later writing in candidates’ names.

Cooper pointed to an X post from the LBC where he said he could see a nomination form with signatures, but where the candidates name was blank. He also cited a YouTube video where he said Szuchewycz told prospective candidates that the committee had “already collected 100 nomination signatures” for them.

Szuchewycz denied the accusation repeatedly, saying the MP was misunderstanding the process, even accusing Cooper of presenting him with “AI-doctored images.”

The exchange prompted some strong remarks from Cooper.

“You’re testifying before a parliamentary committee, and you have an obligation to answer my questions truly and fully,” he said. “And if you fail to do so, sir, you can be held in contempt of Parliament.”

“I want to make clear to you that I will not hesitate in using all the tools available to hold

you accountable should you not provide truthful and accurate answers, which until now, you have not.”

At the end of the back-and-forth, Szuchewycz admitted to collecting signatures on nomination forms with “all candidates” written in the place of a candidate’s name.

The two were seen speaking after Szuchewycz was finished testifying, with Szuchewycz showing Cooper his phone. The two shook hands before Szuchewycz exited.

The LBC’s efforts were also criticized by Conservative MP Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, Man.), who pressed Szuchewycz on the effect the group’s actions had on accessibility.

“Those who were born with additional needs, and the seniors who built this country, should not have barriers put in their way by a political stunt that has no motivation or request from the public to change our electoral system,” Jackson said.

In the August byelection in Alberta, Elections Canada switched to a write-in ballot to limit excessive ballot lengths, as the long list of candidates had caused slowdowns and confusions in previous elections where the LBC ran a large number of candidates.

“What kind of an organization would try to prevent those most vulnerable in our society, and our seniors, from being able to access their constitutional right to vote?” Jackson asked, pointing to

testimony from Perrault on Oct. 2, where he told the committee that longer ballots, like those seen in Carleton, Ont., back in April, resulted in longer lines, increased count times, and made it more difficult for people with physical disabilities to “handle” the ballot.

In response, Szuchewycz noted the ballot’s design is the purview of MPs through the Elections Act, and said that he “wasn’t aware” of people being unable to vote because of ballot sizes, suggesting the committee field their questions to accessibility advocates instead.

Poilievre recently called for a change in election laws to prevent protest efforts like those of the LBC, too.

During a town hall in Stettler, Alta., on July 11, Poilievre said a number of things could be done to prevent similar protests, suggesting requiring 1,000 signatures to run for office, and limiting voters’ signatures to one nomination form. Currently, candidates need only 100 signatures from people living in the riding in which they are running who “consent” to their candidacy to run for federal office.

The LBC slammed the suggestion at the time, saying increasing signature requirements would “have a profound and negative impact on Canadian democracy.”

“In most of Canada it would turn every election into a two-party race, and in safe ridings, like Battle—River Crowfoot, we would likely see no election at all, races would simply be won by acclamation,” organizers said in a July 27 press release.

Lori Turnbull, a management professor at Dalhousie University, who also testified at the committee, said her “only concern” with legislative responses is that they could make it more difficult for genuine independent candidates to run.

Turnbull said people signing two nomination forms “in good faith” isn’t an issue that undermines democracy, as a voter could believe in the validity of multiple serious candidates. But she said she could “see the point” of a rule change when it comes to the actions of the LBC.

Bloc Québécois House Leader Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, Que.) questioned in French how to toe the line between “what is a little bit funny”—pointing to satirical candidates—and “what is unacceptable in the context of an election.”

She asked witness Peter Loewen, who is the Harold Tanner Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University if, instead of the running a long list of candidates as a protest, a electoral reform party could be created, and then run candidates to take “the pulse” of the public’s “demand” for electoral reform.

Loewen called it “great party platform” if people “think it’s an important issue.” He also said he doesn’t believe previous satirical candidates have ever significantly “impaired” voters, and that there is a difference between those candidates and protests efforts that deliberately “gum up” the electoral system.

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The Hill Times

Canada has not spoken to South Koreans about building new submarines at home, says embassy

The South Korean bidder says it ‘refrained’ from proposing domestic construction of Canada’s new submarine fleet after feedback from Canadian officials. Meanwhile, its German competitor has signalled ‘mutual interest’ in building future vessels in Canada.



Canada is looking to purchase a fleet of 12 submarines with two options on the table from Germany-Norway and South Korea to replace Canada’s aging fleet of Victoria-class vessels. DND photograph by Kenneth Galbraith

BY IREM KOCA

Canada has not discussed domestic production of its new submarine fleet with the South Korean bidder, one of two shortlisted for the multi-billion-dollar contract, says the potential supplier, despite their German competitors signalling “mutual interest” in building future vessels domestically.

“Domestic construction [of the submarines] has not been part of discussions” between Canadian and South Korean officials and Hanwha Ocean Co., Ltd., though there have been talks about domestic in-service support, South Korean chargé d’affaires Younggi Ahn told *The Hill Times* in an Oct. 8 email.

Ahn said domestic production of the submarines is “technically feasible,” but such an approach could “significantly extend the delivery schedule and substantially increase acquisition costs.” It would also mean additional costs associated with the prolonged maintenance of the existing Victoria-class fleet, according to Ahn.

In August, the federal government narrowed the options for the planned purchase of submarines to Germany’s ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)—jointly bid with Norway—and South Korea’s Hanwha Ocean Co., Ltd.

A spokesperson from the Public Services and Procurement Canada, the central purchaser for the government, told *The Hill Times* in an email that both options put forward by the firms “remain on the table.”

“Ensuring the best economic outcomes for Canada will be an essential factor in the government’s decision. As an active procurement process is underway,

additional details will be provided in due course,” reads the email, which did not include any further details.

German Armaments and Innovation Secretary Jens Plötner told the CBC last week that there could be “mutual interest” in building the first submarine in existing production sites in Germany, but that it would be possible to build production facilities and the subsequent vessels in Canada.

TKMS’s 212CD is a medium-size—roughly 73 metres, 2,800 tonnes—diesel-electric, quiet submarine. It is built with hydrogen fuel-cell air-independent propulsion technology that allows it to stay submerged for long periods without surfacing. It is pitched as being suited for under-ice, high-latitude operations. The German-Norwegian design is in production, but it is building on the 212A subs used by the German and Italian navies.

Hanwha’s KSS-III is larger—about 89 metres long, and 3,600 tonnes—and its design is in service. It combines fuel-cell air-independent propulsion with lithium-ion batteries to extend underwater endurance. It is built to launch heavyweight torpedoes and cruise missiles, and to carry out surveillance and special-forces missions.

Michael Coulter, president and CEO of Hanwha Global Defence, told *The Hill Times* in an Oct. 7 email that the company has not proposed a domestic build because Canada did not ask for it.

The company has “refrained” from proposing domestic construction of Canada’s new submarine fleet because the government and Navy officials have “repeatedly told us that [the Canadian



Secretary of State for Defence Procurement Stephen Fuhr has indicated that the winning bid for Canada’s next submarine will come down to economics. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Patrol Submarine Project] will not involve domestic construction, only domestic in-service support—an approach we fully support,” Coulter said.

Coulter said Hanwha has the capacity and capability to quickly pivot should the Canadian government decide that domestic construction is a requirement for the submarines.

Hanwha currently plans to build the submarines at its own shipyards, which it says have the capacity to construct up to five submarines simultaneously.

“Other options do not have this capacity, and perhaps are suggesting domestic construction in Canada to offset this production limitation,” Coulter said, referring to the German supplier it is competing with for the multibillion-dollar procurement project.

Valentina Goldmann, a spokesperson for the German Embassy

in Ottawa, said the first submarines would be built at TKMS shipyards in Germany in order to meet Canada’s desired delivery schedule but the company is “prepared to build complete submarines later in the series in Canada.”

“Canadian authorities are aware of the option to produce TKMS submarines in Canada, but it is up to the government to decide what their terms and conditions are,” she said.

TKMS offers all options from turn-key delivery out of Germany to complete local build in Canada, Goldmann said, adding that it will “react flexible and responsive to any requirements of the Canadian government.”

The German company has said if a contract is awarded by 2026, it could deliver the first submarine well in advance of 2035, while the Korean firm has said it can deliver the first submarine by 2032 and four by 2035. The Canadian Navy’s current Victoria-class submarines will remain operational into the mid- to late-2030s. To ensure a smooth transition without a capability gap, the Navy wants its first new submarine to be delivered by the mid-2030s.

Making new subs in Canada would be ‘expensive’, ‘risky’ say experts

While some experts say domestic production could bring long-term industrial benefits, others warn it could delay delivery and drive up costs.

Richard Shimooka, a defence procurement expert and senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, said conversations around the submarines domestic

production is part of suppliers’ efforts to try to “sweeten the pot.”

“I feel that’s mostly a German effort to try to make their bid sound more attractive, but it is outside of what [the Department of National Defence] actually wants, which is to get the submarine as fast as they can,” Shimooka told *The Hill Times* in an Oct. 8 interview.

Shimooka argued that building a number of submarines in Canada would lead to higher costs, delay the delivery of the project, and would require Canada to set up a production line that would likely have no customers after the project is done so it would be shut down.

“There’s no point to this,” he said.

Philippe Lagassé, an associate professor at Carleton University whose research focuses on defence policy and military procurement, said it would not be feasible to build the first few boats in Canada by the 2035 deadline, but it might be possible to build subsequent boats in a large fleet. Still, it would be “expensive and risky” according to Lagassé.

“A domestic build should not be a requirement, but it could be offered as part of the overall economic benefits package,” he said.

David Perry, defence procurement expert and president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, argued that it would be “very surprising” if there’s not been any considerations of Canadian involvement in the construction of the new submarine fleet given the government’s messaging and focus on industrial benefits in this procurement.

While the overarching objective for Canada is getting new subs as soon as possible, what the Canadian involvement can look like falls on a wide spectrum, ranging from assembling an entire submarine built in house to having some domestic components built into it, Perry said.

Perry said the government can explore having the first submarines built abroad then building the rest of the subs at home, which he said would offer Canadian industry more experience—but that would come with trade-offs.

“It is pretty logical to think that there would be some cost implications... It would likely take more hours of labour to do that here, with a less-experienced workforce.”

Canada’s new Defence Investment Agency, led by Secretary of State for Defence Procurement Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna, B.C.), is in charge of the submarine procurement.

Fuhr has previously indicated that both submarine bids meet the Navy’s military technical needs, and has signalled that the final decision will come down to economics including the cost of the purchase, industrial benefits, job creation, as well as the delivery timeline.

There have been estimates in the media around the total projected costs ranging from \$20-billion to \$60-billion, but the price tag for the major procurement remains unclear.

—With files from Neil Moss
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Editorial

Editorial

Don Oliver was a class act, and will be missed

Former Nova Scotia Conservative Senator Donald Oliver, who was Canada’s first Black man appointed to the Senate in 1990 by then-Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, died on Sept. 17 at the age of 86. He served in the Upper Chamber from 1990 until he retired in 2013, and loved Parliament Hill and federal politics, even after he left Ottawa. Senators paid tribute to him last month in the Upper Chamber.

A former trial lawyer, law professor, and a real estate developer, Oliver was also a big player in the former federal Progressive Conservative Party of Canada before he became a Senator. Once he was in the Upper Chamber, he became an influential Senator, a deputy Senate Speaker, and an advocate against anti-Black systemic racism. He led a massive research project on the barriers to the advancement of visible minorities in both the public and private sectors. He was a vocal advocate for hiring more Black public servants in Parliament and in the federal public service, and he became an advocate for equality, diversity, and pluralism. He helped create the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, and worked with the Writers’ Federation of Nova Scotia to establish the Senator Don Oliver Black Voices Prize for emerging Black Nova Scotian writers.

Oliver grew up in the only Black family in Wolfville, N.S., and lived through racism. His grandparents fled slavery in the United States, and Oliver

once told *The Hill Times* that he was raised to “work hard, be humble, love the Lord, and do all you can to help other people.” He gave it his best shot. In 2015, he was diagnosed with cardiac amyloidosis and given six months to live, but lived for another 10 years. He also wrote a book about his life, *A Matter of Equality: The Life’s Work of Senator Don Oliver*, published in 2021.

“Being a Black man in the Senate afforded me countless opportunities to promote tolerance, fairness, and equality, both in Canada and abroad, that I would not have otherwise had,” he told *The Hill Times* in 2021 when asked what was his greatest accomplishment and achievement for advancing the rights and equality for Black people in Canada, Parliament, and the public service.

Nova Scotia PSG Senator Wanda Bernard, who described Oliver as a mentor, said his mission was simple: to remove barriers.

“One of the greatest lessons I learned from him is that when you are a ‘first,’ especially as an African-Nova Scotian entering spaces our ancestors were once excluded from, it is never by accident. We are here because of their sacrifices. And with that legacy comes a responsibility to continue the fight for equality and justice,” Bernard said in the Senate on Sept. 24.

Oliver’s work in federal politics and on Parliament Hill will be remembered, especially in today’s world.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

With climate deniers in the White House, it’s up to scientists to stop the lies: McElroy

Politicians talk about red lines between countries and their armaments: how they’re going to deploy them, how the troops are going to behave, and how pugnacious they’re going to be. But is it really regulating society? We’ve always agreed to red lines between politics and science. Science; what is it? It is seeing the way the world is, and politics does not intrude into that. And as a result, scientists try very hard, even through the IPCC process, and other international bodies, to maintain that separation. It was a decision that communication from the influential science community might intrude into the democratic process. Information needs to be provided, but the voters must decide on the path forward.

But the current United States government, under President Donald Trump, has walked all over that red line, totally obliterated it, and gone

way into our territory where they should not have even stepped. Trump is a climate denier in the face of obvious climate change. Recent articles report that he has cancelled the Keeling measurements at Hawaii’s Mauna Loa that confirmed the rise of CO2 in the atmosphere. Well, if climate change is a scam, and it’s unrelated to carbon dioxide, why does he have to kill the measurements? The Keeling curve: lies and more lies. It’s incredible.

My mother always said you can catch a thief, but you can never catch a liar, they just tell more lies. And we’ve never seen a liar loose in the White House like this. It looks like it may come down to us, as scientists, to attempt to stop it.

Tom McElroy
Professor emeritus and senior scholar
York University
Toronto, Ont.

Singh pushed Liberals on pharmacare, dental care, childcare, and more: letter writer

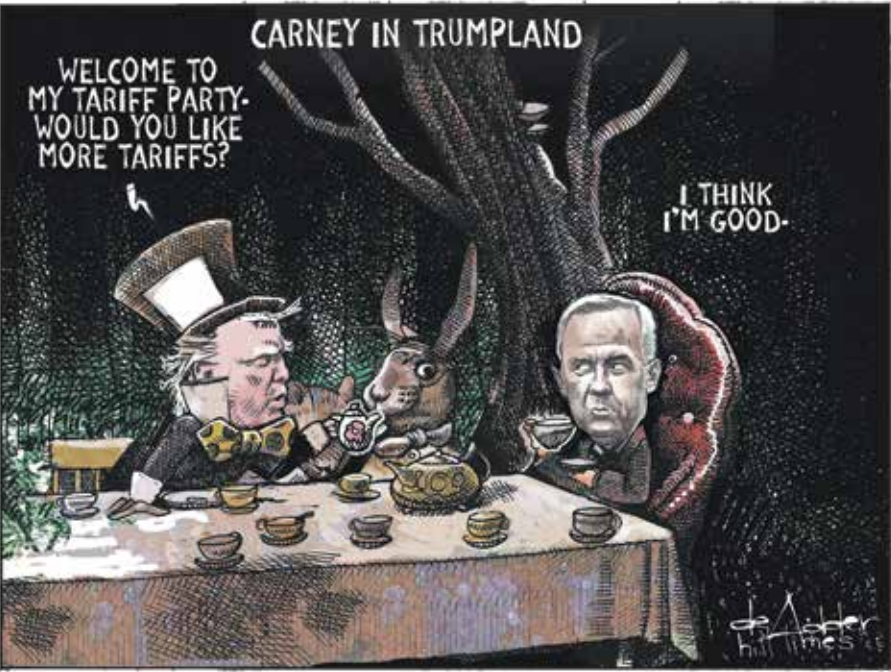
Re: “Finally, the left fights back,” (*The Hill Times*, Oct. 6). I read the opinion piece by Susan Riley regarding Avi Lewis. In the piece, she referred to a “hall monitor role” performed by former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, contrasting that with a potential return to a focus on social democracy by Lewis.

It is fashionable to pillory Singh given his recent shellacking at the polls. As “hall monitor”, Singh pushed the Liberals on a national dental care scheme; to start a national pharmacare program; to deliver on a 28-year old national daycare promise; to work toward massive greenhouse gas reductions; to provide up to 10 days of paid sick leave for federally regulated workers, and to prohibit the use of “scabs”; to make it easier to vote; to

move forward on the housing issue; and to push Indigenous reconciliation. The government of Justin Trudeau would have done some of this on its own. Nonetheless, with daycare, dental care and pharmacare, Singh pushed forward some of the most significant changes to the social fabric of this country in at least a quarter century.

The junior partner in any coalition government usually pays a heavy price in the subsequent election. Singh was no exception. But has any junior partner ever accomplished more? It is arguable that this man fell on his political sword, and millions of Canadians will benefit for decades to come. Some “hall monitor.” Keep up the great work.

Ronald Heale
Ottawa, Ont.



Politics



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, centre left, and U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on Sept. 29, 2025. Photograph courtesy of Official White House photographs

Trump's peace plan still has to fly

If Donald Trump had laid out a detailed plan for a two-state solution, complete with deadlines, he would have richly deserved the Nobel Peace Prize. There is no Nobel Ceasefire Prize.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—As United States President Donald Trump basks in praise for bringing “peace” to the Middle East and as some call for him to receive the Nobel Prize for his diplomatic exertions, the celebrations are at best premature, and at worst empty.

To be sure, there is a reason to feel joy that both Israel and Hamas have signed on to phase one of America's Middle East peace plan.

There is also reason to feel gratitude to Trump for using the power and prestige of his office to bring the warring parties to this point, as tentative and late-in-the-day as it is.

Thanks to Trump, there will be a prisoner exchange. If it comes off as planned, it will see all the remaining Israeli hostages snatched by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, released. In return, Israel will free 250 Palestinians serving life sentences for militant activity, and 1,700 Gazans held in administrative detention in Israel.

Thanks again to Trump, the bombs that have killed and maimed thousands of Palestinians during this horrendous, two-year war will stop falling. Israel will also pull back its troops from several cities, while still remaining within Gaza's borders.

It is worth noting that the release of the Israeli hostages is the only provision of Trump's peace plan that has a firm timeline. They must all be released within 72 hours of the ceasefire—a deadline that both Hamas and Israel have called unrealistic.

The rest of the proposed deal is emphatically, and purposely, vague. More to the point, if realized, it would deliver virtually all of the goals Israel set in going to war with Hamas in the first place. By comparison, the

Palestinians are left essentially empty-handed.

Consider the list of things delivered to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by the Trump plan: the unconditional surrender of Hamas; the exclusion of Hamas from any future governance role in the West Bank and Gaza; and the disarming of Hamas.

Netanyahu has made clear that Israel will not ultimately agree to any deal in which Hamas refuses to surrender its arms, as it has done in the past.

Netanyahu carried that vow all the way to a blunt threat: “This will happen either diplomatically, under Trump's plan, or militarily—at our hands. This will be achieved the easy way, or the hard way, but it will be achieved.”

Trump's vision for post-war Gaza calls for it to be temporarily governed by a so-called “Board of Peace.” He has even proposed himself as chairman of that group.

That is not likely to inspire much confidence in Palestinians. Trump had earlier mused about giving Gaza a makeover—removing its inhabitants and turning the place into the “Riviera of the Middle East.”

More importantly, Trump is also the U.S. president who supplied the weapons that Netanyahu used to flatten Gaza and kill an estimated 70,000 people, the

majority of them civilians. The United Nations has described the Israeli assault on Gaza as a “genocide,” and the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and others for war crimes.

Another member of the Board of Peace is former British prime minister Tony Blair. It would be difficult to make an appointment that would more clearly reveal the colonial nature of the board. Why no Palestinians placed on a body whose purpose is to oversee a conclave of Palestinians?

Reinforcing the sense of a colonial response to the situation in Gaza and the West Bank is Trump's plan to bring in an international security force to police the territories. Foreign leaders and foreign troops running the show? Really? Instead of a “technocratic” government for Gaza, as Trump has mused, how about a democratic one?

The entire tragedy of Gaza and the West Bank is the story of a people frustrated for decades in their bid to have their own country. The rise of Hamas and other militant groups is the direct result of no progress on that front since 1948. Territory seized by Israel in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur war only made things worse.

Trump's 20-point plan does mention a “framework” for a plan

for Gaza's long-term political future. But it is hopelessly vague where it needs to be precise, and totally lacking in any sense of urgency.

There is a very good reason for that. Both Trump and Netanyahu are firmly on the record as being opposed to what everyone else but them seems to realize: a two-state solution, with an independent Palestine, living beside a secure Israel is the only way to achieve real peace in the region.

Trump had a chance to make history here, but chose instead to make headlines—the man who got the hostages returned.

But if Trump had laid out a detailed plan for a two-state solution, complete with deadlines, he would have richly deserved the Nobel Peace Prize. There is no Nobel Ceasefire Prize.

That's because ceasefires are not peacemaking, they are just pauses in war. History makes the point. The most recent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came last January. But Israel broke the ceasefire and withdrew from the second phase of talks to end the war. Thousands of people died with that decision.

MSNBC has already broadcast a story reporting that one member of Netanyahu's hard-right coalition has advised the PM to get the hostages back, and then finish the job of wiping out Hamas. Now that Hamas has agreed to give up its only bargaining chip, there is nothing from stopping Netanyahu from doing just that.

Trump's peace plan may be flapping its wings. But it has yet to prove that it will fly.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Liberal government's decision to deliver all future budgets in the fall is significant

This one-off is much more than it appears to be. Along with finalizing the fall date on a permanent basis, the government is also restructuring how it determines spending.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Elections and budgets seem to stall governments. When it comes to an election, no one knows the outcome, so the bureaucracy must go into a holding pattern while they await the outcome.

As for budgets, bureaucrats are loath to make new commitments or policy changes until they know what impact the budget will have on their operating costs.

Last week's announcement that future budget dates will be

moved from the spring to the fall was met with a yawn by most Canadians.

While the business world needs financial certainty to make investment decisions, ordinary people don't really care whether the work is announced in the spring or the fall.

In the current circumstance, the government had to change the date this year to accommodate the delay caused by the April election, and the change in cabinet.

A new finance minister needs time to be briefed on all the issues, and to make financial decisions.

But this one-off is much more than it appears to be. Along with finalizing the fall date on a permanent basis, the government is also restructuring how it determines spending.

The intention is to make it clearer that long-term capital investments are a different line item than regular operational costs.

The Conservative finance critic Jasraj Hallan immediately attacked the announcement of this new approach. He claims that what the government calls "Modernizing Canada's Budgeting Approach" is merely another way of "cooking the books."

But the government is insisting that the new financing mechanisms are consistent with international guidelines. The autumn budget means that the bulk of the government spending decisions will happen after the April fiscal year end, which should bring spending habits closer to actual financial reality.

The insistence that the government differentiate between operational costs and long-term capital investments will help Canadians understand why, in some instances, current deficits build up long-term equity.

To the ordinary person, the analogy would be a mortgage. If you hold debt in order to build equity, such as in the owning of a house, you are investing in the future, not simply spending.

If the same amount of money is spent on disposable items like clothing or coffee purchases, they are obviously not appreciating assets and need to be viewed differently.

Just as a mortgage is worth holding for a family, national investment in housing stock, public transit, and major infrastructure projects can easily be understood as capital expenditures for long-term Canadian economic stability.

If we don't spend on capital expenditures, like housing, we

find ourselves in a housing crisis like the one that has thrown the country into turmoil.

For the past 30 years, the federal government transferred housing dollars to the provinces with no guarantee that housing would be built. And when it wasn't, we landed in a crisis of social housing that will take a decade to overcome.

A plan to treat that investment separately from general government-service spending may be better understood by the public, but not everyone agrees.

The interim parliamentary budget officer Jason Jacques says that the definition of capital expenditures is too broad, going beyond international standards. The former parliamentary budget officer disagrees, saying the new accounting is additional information to what will continue to be provided to Canadians.

Conservative MP Pat Kelly also attacked the changes, saying "Debt is still debt at the end of the day—doesn't matter how many columns you try to present to Canadians."

With the fall budget date, most departments will likely be changing the way they manage year-end spending. In the current climate, most departments try and spend all the money in their budgets

before the end of March, which is the fiscal year-end. If surplus funding lapses, their next budget could be reduced as a consequence.

With the government plans to reduce operational spending, the appetite to accelerate year-end spending will be blunted.

At the end of the day, most Canadians will pay little attention to these changes. In general, people don't even fully understand the difference between an economic statement and a budget. Departments will be following closely, as will the business world.

The separation between operational spending and capital investment will provide a better snapshot of government priorities, like mega-projects meant to stimulate the economy, or capital investments in public infrastructure.

The Finance Department is characterizing these decisions as generational investments.

But governments generally only get credit for what is happening in the short term. Long-term planning has never been a political strong suit.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister, and a former deputy prime minister.

The Hill Times

The power of photo-ops

Doug Ford's photo-op may have been a silly and overly theatrical stunt, but as someone once said, 'if it's stupid but works, then it isn't stupid.' And, make no mistake, this worked for Ford.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—Whoever dreamed up the famous adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words," understood the power of imagery.

Basically, humans are a visual species; pictures help us understand the world.

This is something political strategists need to keep in mind



Ontario Premier Doug Ford pours Crown Royal Canadian whisky on the ground in protest of Diageo's plans to shut down its local Crown Royal bottling plant in Amherstburg, Ont., and move jobs south of the border on Sept. 2, 2025. Screen shot courtesy of Global News

when putting together a persuasive communication plan.

Simply put, if you're trying to get across a complex idea, and if you do it in the form of a lengthy verbal or written description, you'll likely end up boring your audience; but if you put that same idea in the form of an interesting or eye-catching image, people will more likely pay attention.

This is the reason political consultants spend a lot of time dreaming up clever photo-ops.

"Photo ops," of course, is short for "photo opportunities," a term which reflects their function, i.e., to give the media an opportunity to take a picture of a politician

doing something cool or interesting in the hopes that this will help generate free publicity.

And, yes, journalists, who also understand the power of visuals, are always on the lookout for colourful imagery.

Thus, for instance, a communications director will send out a news release to the media saying something like: "MP John Jones will be at the East Porcupine County Fair today, standing next to the world's largest kumquat. Great photo op!!"

Who could resist such a picture?!

Anyway, the reason I'm bringing all this up is because

Ontario Premier Doug Ford recently staged a visual event that deserves to be enshrined in the Photo Op Hall of Fame.

In case you missed it, Ford recently held a news conference where, in front of a battery of cameras, he dramatically poured a bottle of Crown Royal whisky on the ground to protest the Diageo company's decision to close its Amherstburg, Ont., bottling plant.

At the same time, a clearly angry Ford was calling for a boycott of the company.

Yes, this was a silly and overly theatrical stunt, but as someone once said, "if it's stupid but works, then it isn't stupid."

And, make no mistake, this worked for Ford.

In fact, the imagery of the premier pouring out that whisky flooded the media, providing him with tons of publicity.

Plus, the image perfectly conveyed to Ontarians Ford's toughness, his defiance, and his anger towards companies leaving the province.

Indeed, a recent Spark Insight poll indicates that a whopping 77 per cent of Canadians—not just Ontarians—support his stance that companies leaving the province should face consequences.

Mind you, to be effective, photo ops don't always have to be so flamboyant.

Take, for example, Prime Minister Mark Carney's recent European trip where he sought to open new markets for Canadian products.

While Carney didn't get any deals done, those trips were truly a success at least from a political perspective.

After all, if nothing else, they generated a multitude of images featuring Carney on the world stage, standing shoulder to shoulder with other world leaders.

Such visual imagery screams out: "I am an important leader, and I'm working hard to promote Canada's interests."

In other words, the trip helped create the perception that Carney is getting stuff done, even if he isn't.

That's the power of photo ops.

Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre likely understands what's going on, which is why he's trying to pull back the curtain on Carney's international jaunts to help create what might be called an anti-photo-op spin.

As Poilievre put it, the trips were "nothing but Liberal showbusiness."

But that's the lesson of politics; show business works.

Maybe I need to get that lesson across using a picture.

Gerry Nicholls is a communication consultant.

The Hill Times

COMMENT



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump at the West Wing entrance of the White House on May 6, 2025. Photograph courtesy of White House photographer Daniel Torok

Carney has an obligation to better define his priorities for the Canada-U.S. relationship

Meanwhile, we need much greater debate on our choices—and this is where Parliament is derelict in its duty.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—For many decades, Canada attempted to escape restrictive American trade and other economic initiatives designed to advantage the United States by claiming a “special relationship” which, we argued, should mean an exemption for Canada. Reaction to the Donald Trump shock shows the idea isn’t dead.

One can’t help feeling, after watching Prime Minister Mark Carney and U.S. President Donald Trump exchange pleasantries at the White House last week, that Canada is still relying on “special relationship” arguments to win exemptions from American protectionism, even if this means bowing too readily to their demands and offering “rewards” in exchange for special treatment. But when we argue “special relationship,” we are reduced to pleading.

The Prime Minister’s Office, in a statement following the visit, said negotiations are designed to build “a new economic and security relationship.” Clearly, preserving existing trade arrangements with the U.S., through CUSMA, are a priority.

But at what price?

This could mean quotas limiting steel and aluminum exports in exchange for lower tariffs, big Canadian taxpayer subsidies to the discredited Keystone XL oil pipeline to supply America with oil, accepting new constraints on the auto industry for higher U.S. content, participating in the Golden Dome defence project, dropping concerns over the one-sided F-35 contract with the U.S., giving in to American demands on the Columbia River Treaty, weakening plans forcing the big streamers to support Canadian programming, undermining food security by weakening supply management, or supporting U.S. efforts to weaken and isolate China.

We have already seen retreat with the cancellation of our digital services tax, with an estimated loss of \$7.2-billion in federal tax revenue between 2023 and 2027. In the June announcement, the government declared the decision was a concession “in anticipation of a mutually beneficial comprehensive trade agreement with the United States.” It was a costly concession, in revenue losses and in a surrender of Canadian sovereignty in

tax policy—with, so far, nothing in return.

Gone, for the time being at least, is the bold election campaign talk of a more independent Canada, with reduced dependence on and vulnerability to the U.S., with plans to diversify trade, eliminate interprovincial trade barriers, policies to boost domestic innovation and productivity, and measures to build innovative Canadian companies. We need greater clarity on the future goals for Canada.

We have been here before. In 1971, then-U.S. president Richard Nixon shocked the world with his New Economic Policy, a wide-ranging set of policies to realign world trading and monetary arrangements, and to bring American capital and manufacturing back to the U.S., realigning exchange rates to lower the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar relative to its trading partners, imposing a 10-per-cent tax on all U.S. imports and providing tax incentives to encourage American corporations to invest at home rather than in other countries. While Nixonomics was aimed at all U.S. trading partners, it had an especially damaging impact on Canada due to our high level of dependence on our neighbour. But it was not a total surprise.

In 1963, the U.S. introduced an interest equalization tax on dividends and interest earned by Americans on investments abroad. This created an imme-

diate dollar crisis in Canada, and only by citing the “special relationship” did we earn a conditional exemption. In 1968, Canada agreed to additional restrictions on its access to America’s capital markets after the White House introduced new measures to have foreign multinationals repatriate profits held abroad back to the U.S.

Canada lobbied hard for special treatment, with then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau travelling to Washington, D.C., in December 1971 for personal negotiations with Nixon.

While Canada emerged less harmed than feared, the experience underlined the vulnerability we faced because of our high dependence on the U.S.

At the same time, in an April 1972 appearance before Parliament, Nixon argued that “no self-respecting nation should accept the proposition that it should always be economically dependent upon any other nation.” Continuing, Nixon said, “the only basis for a sound and healthy relationship between our two proud peoples is to find a pattern of economic integration which is beneficial to both our countries, and which respects Canada’s right to chart its own economic course.”

It was a signal that the “special relationship” days were ending and that it was up to Canada to better manage its own future.

The Trudeau government responded, in October 1972, with

its paper outlining three options for future Canada-U.S. relations: continue the status quo; have a deeper integration; or pursue a long-term strategy to develop and strengthen our economy and other aspects of national life, such as culture and identity, and to reduce Canada’s vulnerability to unilateral American policies.

The government argued in favour of the third option. Key to this was an industrial/innovation strategy to develop Canadian-owned businesses with the scale and scope to succeed in world markets while creating jobs at home. But it was never effectively implemented—instead, out of fear, we got Fortress North America with free trade and deeper integration.

In the recent federal election campaign, Carney sounded as though he was an adherent to Third-Option thinking, though a Third Option for a different world with radical advances in technology and big new economic powers, not just China. Carney’s approach now is not so certain. The forthcoming budget will be a huge test of future direction.

Meanwhile, we need much greater debate on our choices—and this is where Parliament is derelict in its duty.

MPs should be holding hearings on the Golden Dome to see whether it makes sense for Canada, examining the Columbia River Treaty negotiations to ensure that new agreements with the U.S. make sense for Canada, and, more generally, examine the many issues that would better ensure a prosperous and sovereign nation. For his part, Carney has an obligation to better define his priorities for the Canada-U.S. relationship and Canada’s broader role in the world. A new Third Option paper would be a start.

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The Hill Times

OPINION

Here's the best Canadian strategy on the U.S. Supreme Court's review of Trump's potentially illegal global tariffs

Canada's focus should be on cementing new rules-based trading partnerships with the Latin American countries in the Mercosur trade bloc, seeking even closers with the European Union, and expanding trade with the 11 Pacific Rim nations.

Errol P. Mendes

Opinion



On Sept. 9, United States President Donald Trump obtained an expedited review by his country's Supreme Court of the so-called global emergency tariffs that he has imposed on many countries around the world. The



On Sept. 9, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump obtained an expedited review by the U.S. Supreme Court, pictured, of the so-called global emergency tariffs that he has imposed on many countries around the world. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

court's hearing on these tariffs that has shaken the global economy and trade will begin on Nov. 5. Trump seemed to issue a warning that if the court were to rule the tariffs are unconstitutional as the lower courts have found, it would require refunding of billions of tariffs payments. What is at stake for Canada is that the U.S. president had imposed a 35-per-cent tariffs hit on this country which, according to American trade officials, only applies to goods that are not compliant with the Canada-U.S.-Mexico trade agreement.

The U.S. Court of International Trade had ruled that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act emergency law invoked by Trump does not give him the

power to unilaterally impose such tariffs. Indeed, that power should reside with Congress, according to the first level court, a ruling which was upheld by the Appeal Court.

If the U.S. Supreme Court does rule the tariffs are illegal, it would be a major political set back to one of the president's central economic and indeed geopolitical priorities in his second administration. Canadian government officials should be strategizing on appropriate responses to whatever the U.S. Supreme Court decides.

First, our officials should already know that despite the view of many experts that Trump has usurped the role of Congress over such tariffs, a majority of the court's conservative judges,

appointed by Trump, may rule in his favour. In key rulings, they have already extended the executive powers of the president in other areas beyond most legal and historic understandings of the U.S. Constitution would permit.

Before the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the expedited review, Canadian officials and leaders should quietly support those that are contesting the illegality of the tariffs in the top court, but not openly call for it to declare their illegal foundation. As one pundit has stated, negotiating with Trump is like negotiating with a pirate leader on board his ship, knowing how to avoid the nearby plank on which many have been forced to walk overboard.

Anything could propel him in another fit of pique to making Canada again walk the plank on other economic fronts, including undermining our best hopes for having a renewed CUSMA agreement with the U.S. Another reason for advocating relative quiet is that Trump may seek to reimpose the tariffs under the national security exception under Sec. 232 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act if he were to lose on the global tariffs. That recourse, too, may well be contested as failure to follow the proper process to proceed under that trade exemption. This Trump reaction is most likely if he were to conclude

the ruling against his tariffs could impact on losing his MAGA voters in the upcoming mid-term elections.

If the U.S. Supreme Court were to rule the tariffs unconstitutional, Canadian officials and leaders should avoid any public rejoicing for the same reason of not triggering Trump's anger. He could apply the security exemption to even more Canadian exports. It is critical for our nation's leaders and officials to be fully aware of the American president's unpredictable and potentially vengeful reactions—as Brazil and India have already experienced.

The best strategy for Canadian leaders and officials—regardless of the result of the U.S. Supreme Court's review—is to stay relatively silent while working hard with all this country's provinces, business, and citizens on how to best survive the Trump administration's existing decisions, while also preparing how to lower our trade and economic dependence on the U.S.

The focus should be cementing new rules-based new trading partnerships with the Latin American countries in the Mercosur trade bloc, seeking even closer ties with the European Union, and also expanding trade with the 11 Pacific Rim countries who, along with Canada, have signed the massive the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The ultimate success and, hopefully, long-term stability in the global economy arising from such rules-based trade agreements will ultimately show the absolute folly of the unpredictable and potentially self-injuring practices of the Trump administration in the global trade and political environment.

Professor Errol P. Mendes is editor-in-chief of the National Journal of Constitutional Law; president of the International Commission of Jurists, Canadian Section; and teaches law at the University of Ottawa.

The Hill Times

Canada needs an agenda to end pollution from toxics and plastics

Voluntary measures for polluters will never measure up: we need rules that reduce pollution.

Cassie Barker & Elaine MacDonald

Opinion



Canada's national interest is clear: our infrastructure, health, and economy depend on breathable air, drinkable water and a liveable planet. Plastics and toxic chemicals pollute soil, air,

water, and our bodies, harming human and environmental health. Polluters are getting away with profiting from poison, and the red carpet treatment has to stop.

Our polling has found that an overwhelming majority—nine in 10 people in Canada—want to see federal action to tackle plastic pollution and forever chemicals like PFAS. With Health Canada finding that 98.5 per cent of people in Canada have PFAS in our blood, it's no surprise that people want safer products. These "forever chemicals" are allowed to be put into everything from clothing to personal care products, and decades of unchecked use have left some communities' drinking water forever contaminated.

Plastics companies continue to make millions of tonnes of plastic products every year, and

their microplastics are infiltrating our bodies, food, water and air. Polluters profited from this mess, and they continue to expect public subsidies to drive their toxic profits. If Canada is serious about protecting our health and well-being, it will make pollution reduction a top federal priority, phase out toxic chemicals from our products, and bring in stronger rules to curb the plastic pollution crisis across the country.

This new government should know that, after many years of campaigning, people across Canada finally won the right to a healthy environment, which is enshrined in our national environmental law. Every member of the new Parliament is responsible for upholding this right and must resist casting aside environmental protections as "red tape."

These rules that ensure cleaner air and water were the result of a multi-decade brawl between giant companies and fed-up communities who are the frontline of toxic exposure from chemical and plastic production in Canada. Regulations are critical guardrails that protect people and the environment we rely on, and create a level playing field for industry.

Eliminating toxic chemicals and harmful and unnecessary plastics, while investing in alternatives that create local jobs, would send a powerful signal from this government to their constituents: that we have smart leaders who understand that harmful pollution is costing us billions in illness and healthcare and impossible decontamination efforts. We're all left holding the bag when it comes time to clean up their costly

messes. Polluters will continue to insist that their toxic products are essential, yet people know that the cancers, reproductive harms and biodiversity crisis we see should not be the price we bear in the name of them doing business.

The smart move for Canada is to stop using public money to subsidize polluter profits, and instead clean up the economy and protect our health. If we gut any laws that polluters claim interfere with their ability to profit, it only benefits these dirty industries—the same companies that required these regulations to clean up their act in the first place. We must demand intelligent government leadership that ignores the polluters selling us their self-interested projects, stops adding fuel to the toxic disaster, and puts our money where we truly benefit. Canada cannot shy away from defending people from harm, and holding polluters accountable.

Cassie Barker is the senior program manager, toxics at Environmental Defence. Dr. Elaine MacDonald is the director of healthy communities at Ecojustice.

The Hill Times

OPINION

The North: different by design, essential by nature

Our governments are already moving together on the projects that matter most. But we cannot build them alone. The Northwest Territories and our Indigenous partners are ready. Now it's Ottawa's turn to match that readiness with firm, long-term commitments.

Northwest Territories
Premier
R.J. Simpson

Opinion



YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.—In the Northwest Territories, governments don't just consult with one another—we sit at the

same table. Through the N.W.T. Council of Leaders, the premier, cabinet ministers, and Indigenous governments meet as equals to set direction and make decisions together.

That model of partnership is what makes the North different. It's also what makes it essential to Canada's future.

This week offered two clear examples. We saw how work is advancing on a potential bilateral MOU on the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor between the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the Thchq Government. The initiative would link the Northwest Territories and Nunavut by road, open the mineral-rich Slave Geological Province, and connect it to tidewater through the Northwest Passage.

And recently Indigenous governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories co-hosted an information session on the Mackenzie Valley Highway, a project that will provide all-season access, safer supply lines, and stronger emergency response while opening up vast areas of Canada to responsible development.

These are not symbolic milestones. They show how Northerners and Indigenous governments are moving forward together on projects that matter not just to the North, but to the entire country.

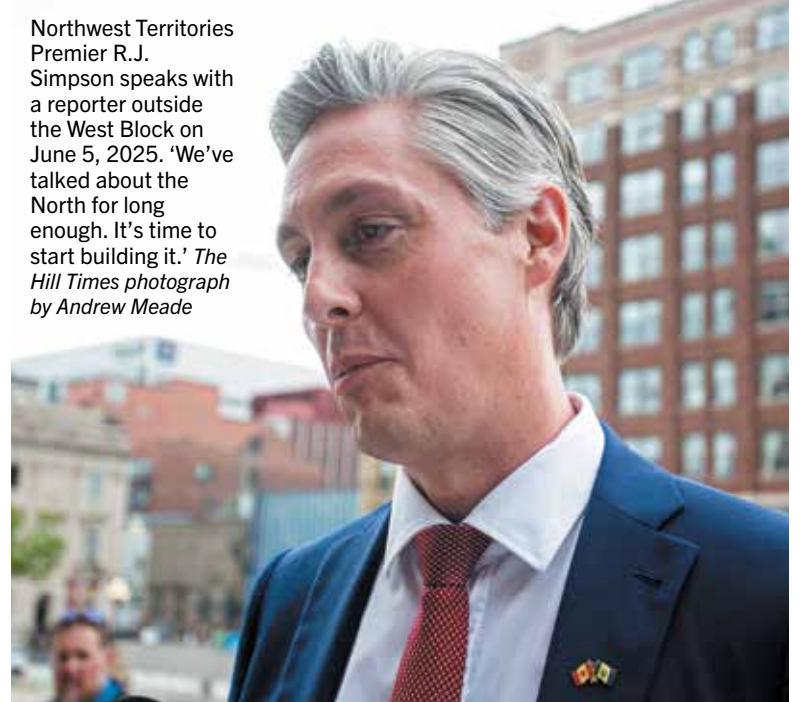
Along with the Taltson Hydro Expansion—which will deliver clean, reliable energy, cut diesel use, stabilize costs, and make mine development viable—these three projects form the backbone of a 21st-century nation-building agenda. Each is transformative on its own. Together, they are as significant to Canada's sovereignty, prosperity, and security as the railways were in the 19th century.

That may sound ambitious, but the North has always punched above its weight. We cover 1.3 million square kilometres—larger than Spain and France combined—with just 45,000 people. To put that in perspective, imagine if everyone in Ontario left except for the people in Timmins. That's the Northwest Territories: vast, open, and different.

Our difference has shaped how we govern. Consensus is our political system because collaboration isn't optional in a place like this. Partnership with Indigenous governments isn't symbolic; it's built into law through modern treaties and land claims. Indigenous governments are not stakeholders. They're governments. That is reconciliation in action.

It's also why the North matters so deeply to Canada. Sovereignty in the Arctic isn't a line on a map—it's the daily presence of Northerners. Climate change isn't

Northwest Territories Premier R.J. Simpson speaks with a reporter outside the West Block on June 5, 2025. 'We've talked about the North for long enough. It's time to start building it.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



a future debate—it's lived reality. And critical minerals aren't an abstract opportunity—they're deposits already here, waiting for the infrastructure to unlock them.

The Northwest Territories is not a province. We don't have the same authorities, population, or revenue base. Nor are we reserves under the Indian Act. We are something distinct. That means one-size-fits-all national policies don't work for us. If Canada is serious about sovereignty, reconciliation, and energy security, it has to start by recognizing difference—and investing in solutions that match it.

This past week's developments show that the North is not waiting to set priorities or build partnerships. Our governments are already moving together on the projects that matter most. But we cannot build them alone. The Northwest Territories and our Indigenous partners are ready. Now it's Ottawa's turn to match that readiness with firm, long-term commitments.

We've talked about the North for long enough. It's time to start building it.

*R.J. Simpson is the premier of the Northwest Territories.
The Hill Times*

The battery that can supercharge Canada's economic future

Energy storage already ticks every box for national interest: job creation, economic security, emissions reductions, and grid resilience. But so far, it has been left off the priority list. That needs to change.

Merran Smith
& Justin
Rangooni

Opinion



Canada's first wave of nation-building projects will give our economy a meaningful boost. But if we want to maximize jobs, investment, and productivity

over the long term, we need integrated strategies, not just one-off projects. A national electrification strategy backed by energy storage fits that bill.

Canada's electricity grid is a competitive advantage. Investors and businesses are drawn here by reliable, clean, and affordable power. But to maintain that edge as demand surges, we need to prioritize energy storage alongside generation projects like small modular reactors and large-scale wind, and transmission infrastructure.

As PwC recently put it, "electricity isn't just a convenience anymore—it's a strategic asset able to shape economic growth." It will take immense amounts of electricity to build the very infrastructure Canada's growth depends on: AI data centres, new low-carbon homes, high-speed rail, electrified manufacturing and mining, and more. By some estimates, electricity demand in 2050 will be double today's levels.

So how do we meet rising demand without sacrificing affordability or reliability? It's not enough to only ramp up genera-

tion (although we need to do that too). We also need to build out energy storage at scale. Storage allows us to save electricity when supply is high and demand is low, and deploy it when we need it most. It makes all generation types more efficient and cost-effective, and it strengthens the reliability and resilience of our grid, which is especially critical as extreme weather associated with climate change increases the risk of disruptive, heat-driven brownouts.

The global energy storage business is booming, it's the fastest growing of all energy technologies. In Canada, we had 552MW of installed capacity at the end of 2024, with 12 projects under construction and another 27 approved. If all are built, our storage capacity could rise five-fold by 2030 to 2.8GW. But that's not nearly enough. Energy Storage Canada estimates our grid will require 10 GW of storage capacity by 2035 and 35 GW by 2050, creating a billion-dollar industry by mid-century.

To bridge that gap, Canada needs a co-ordinated, nation-building energy storage strategy.

The recently completed Oneida Energy Storage Project gives us a model to build on. As Canada's largest energy storage facility—and one of the largest in the world—it can store 250MW of electricity. Built in partnership between industry and Indigenous development corporations, Oneida created over 180 construction jobs and will provide long-term revenue to Indigenous equity stakeholders. Importantly, it was delivered ahead of schedule and under budget.

Of course, given the eight-gigawatt gap between what's proposed and what we need, we can't stop at one or two flagship projects. We need dozens of them across the country. And the potential benefits are massive: billions of dollars in savings for electricity customers, tens of thousands of direct construction jobs, and millions of dollars for Indigenous or municipal equity stakeholders. The proposed Ontario Pumped Hydro Storage Project alone would contribute nearly \$7-billion to the Canadian economy, \$4-billion of which would be wages.

Ontario gets this; 80 per cent of Canada's proposed storage projects are based in that province. Now we need to make this a national effort to keep up with Europe and China, who have embraced energy storage as a key economic priority.

Canada can do the same. A National Energy Storage Network—modelled on the build out of Canada's SMR capabilities—could pool investment, support storage deployment across provinces, and build out domestic battery supply chains. More immediately, the federal government could also use Budget 2025 to expand investment tax credits and unlock additional private capital. Achieving this will require creativity and coordination from public and private actors, but it's well within our grasp.

Energy storage already ticks every box for national interest: job creation, economic security, emissions reductions, and grid resilience. But so far, it has been left off the priority list.

That needs to change. We need to embrace the opportunity of energy storage—it's the battery pack that can supercharge Canada's economic future.

*Merran Smith is president of New Economy Canada. Justin Rangooni is president and CEO of Energy Storage Canada.
The Hill Times*

OPINION

Carney dresses for the job

Gone are the yoga pants and Birkenstocks that—somewhat unfairly—had come to epitomize Trudeau’s PMO. Prime Minister Mark Carney’s setting a new dress code on the Hill for serious times.

Jamie Carroll

Opinion



OTTAWA—“Manners maketh man.” That’s a line from the campy, but thoroughly enjoyable Sir Matthew Vaughn film *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, delivered by Colin Firth’s character Harry Hart. Hart spends most of the movie teaching the younger spy how to do the job, focusing especially on how to dress for the part and to act like a gentleman so he can blend in.

Camp notwithstanding, Harry has a point—a point of which I was reminded at the

recent Politics and the Pen gala in Ottawa. And perhaps it is the same point behind one of the more unexpected features of Prime Minister Mark Carney’s leadership style that has emerged so far.

While the spy stuff may have drawn people in, the focus on perfectly tailored clothes and the impeccable manners of those wearing them is what built a franchise. The online men’s retailer Mr. Porter even launched a *Kingsman* clothing line.

The closest this town gets to any triumphs of tailoring or fiestas of fashion these days is the Politics and the Pen gala. It’s the hottest ticket in town; Harry Rosen gets swamped with last-minute tux orders; a blow-out needs to be booked weeks in advance; and Zoe’s literally adds three extra bars.

And ya know what? It is one of the last remaining truly non-partisan events in town.



People from all across the political spectrum and all sides of the most contentious issues of the day hang out together and have a really good time. Polite debate replaces petty bickering—at least for one evening.

But what does this have to do with Carney? Well, maybe a lot.

So far, Carney’s PMO seems to be much less leaky than his predecessor’s, but one detail that has emerged is Carney’s insistence on a dress code—for himself, his staff, and, frankly, everyone else.

So, what’s the enforced sartorial selection? Black or grey suits, ties, and black shoes—not brown and definitely not this season’s go-to colour of oxblood! The

Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured Sept. 24, 2025, preparing to welcome Indonesian President Prabowo Sugianto to Parliament Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

English banker’s clearly made an impression.

That’s a long way from the yoga pants and Birkenstocks that—somewhat unfairly—had come to epitomize Trudeau’s PMO. And I am reliably informed that more than one deputy minister has been called out in a room full of ministers for wearing brown shoes, and the odd staffer has regretted a bold Friday sport coat choice when they unexpectedly end up meeting the boss.

But, to put it bluntly, who cares?

Not only why does Carney bother to care—doesn’t he have a country to run at a time of myriad challenges? But why should the rest of us care about what staffers and senior public servants are wearing to work?

Call me an optimist, but I wonder if it relates back to the aforementioned relationship between being well-dressed and using good manners.

Over my 25-plus years in and around Ottawa, I have seen much of the formality and rigour that once dominated this town slip away. I remember thinking it was a good thing at the time: democratizing institutions—not just Parliament itself—making sure they reflect the actual population more completely, and removing unnecessary artificial barriers to participation in decision-making are all positive, liberal goals.

But, in the process—as is often the case with significant change—we may have lost some of the good stuff too.

Ministers, MPs, Senators, staff and senior officials have incredibly serious jobs to do at a time of ongoing polycrisis: Western democracy is unquestionable under threat. The post-war order that ensured rule of law, trade, and mutual defence were possible is in tatters. The rise of new/old adversaries and an ongoing shooting war in Europe have raised the global stakes.

We need serious people to address serious problems and more than any other reason, we’re told by pollsters, that was why Canadians chose Carney over Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre: they believed Carney was the more serious leader, and that he would bring the more serious solutions to the very real problems Canada is facing.

So, if that seriousness means expecting the people providing advice and making decisions dress in a way that conveys the gravity of their work, I say more power to him.

And if one of the unintended benefits of those higher expectations is less partisanship and better manners, then I’m all for that, too.

Manners may maketh man, but let’s see if a man can us dress to maketh manners!

Jamie Carroll is a former national director of the Liberal Party of Canada, and is now an entrepreneur and consultant who mostly lives and works in Ottawa.

The Hill Times

Bill C-3 corrects inequalities, brings Citizenship Act into compliance with the Charter

The moral and legal imperative to enshrine equal rights in the Citizenship Act is clear. Equal rights cannot be optional. Bill C-3 is a necessary step in that direction.

Don Chapman

Opinion



Bill C-3, an Act to Amend the Citizenship Act, is not a

distant or theoretical concern. A challenge to democratic norms and equal rights is happening in Canada—and it affects us all.

On Dec. 19, 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that key provisions of the Citizenship Act are unconstitutional. The case focused on amendments made in 2008 under Bill C-37, passed by a previous Conservative government. Those changes stripped children born abroad to a Canadian parent(s)—of the ability to confer citizenship to their children.

The court found, rightly, that the provisions created unequal classes of citizenship, infringed mobility rights, disproportionately harmed women, and violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill C-3, which received second reading on Sept. 22 in the House and is now at House Immigration Committee, is the government’s

effort to correct these inequalities to bring the Citizenship Act into compliance with the Charter. One would reasonably expect that defending the principle of equal rights for all Canadians—regardless of birthplace—would draw support from across the political spectrum. And yet, the Conservative Party appears adamantly resistant. A legislative flaw of their own making, left uncorrected for more than a decade and now impacting thousands of families, still does not appear to command their full support.

For all parliamentarians, the duty is clear: to defend the rights of the citizens they represent, and to use their office to improve the lives of all Canadians. Elected officials are expected to serve not themselves, but the people.

Last week, I watched the committee discussion with concern as

the Conservative Party under Pierre Poilievre returned to a familiar, dogmatic and troubling playbook—one that elevates fear over fact, and partisan rhetoric over responsible governance. Dismissing expert analysis, disregarding a clear judicial ruling, and inflaming public sentiment may deliver short-term political gain. However, the long-term cost is steep: the steady erosion of the institutions that underpin our prosperity, our unity, and the rule of law itself.

Democracy depends not only on laws and courts, but on a shared commitment to uphold them. When a political party becomes comfortable with unequal treatment under the law, distorts public discourse, or refuses to acknowledge and correct its own mistakes—these are not isolated errors. They are signs of weakened accountability and declining leadership.

The moral and legal imperative to enshrine equal rights in the Citizenship Act is clear. Equal rights cannot be optional.

Canadians must be cautious not to follow the troubling path of democratic backsliding visible elsewhere. A decade ago, few would have predicted how quickly democratic norms in the United States would come under pressure. Institutional decline begins quietly—then accelerates. As with financial markets, trust builds slowly but can disappear overnight. And in politics, fear remains an expedient and dangerous currency—too often spent more readily than truth.

Leadership of any party—indeed of any party—must be about more than electoral calculus. It must be rooted in principle—be respectful of democratic institutions, guided by evidence, and committed to the rights, dignity, and equality of all citizens.

Bill C-3 is a necessary step in that direction.

Don Chapman is the leader of the Lost Canadians, and author of The Lost Canadians: A Struggle for Citizenship Rights, Equality, and Identity. He was stripped of his Canadian citizenship at age six due to Canada’s anachronistic and discriminatory laws. It took 47 years for him to get it back. His website is lostcanadian.com.

The Hill Times

OPINION



Chinese Premier Li Qiang, left, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney had a phone conversation and then an in-person meeting on Sept. 23 at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York City. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy Wikimedia Commons

China-Canada relations: setting sail toward a brighter future

I want to commemorate the 55th anniversary of China-Canada diplomatic relations and the 20th anniversary of China-Canada strategic partnership.

Wang Di

Opinion



On Oct. 13, 1970, China and Canada officially established diplomatic relations, making Canada one of the first Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China. In September 2005, the two countries established a strategic partnership, injecting new vitality into China-Canada co-operation.

Recently, both sides have taken practical and constructive

steps to improve and develop bilateral relations. Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney had a phone conversation and then an in-person meeting on Sept. 23, 2025, at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York City, reaching important consensus. Exchanges between the two sides at all levels and across various fields have continually increased, bringing a positive momentum to the China-Canada relations. This is widely welcomed by people from all walks of life in both countries.

At this new historic juncture, it is of great significance to review the past and look forward to the future, and draw experiences and lessons so as to promote sound, steady and sustainable development of the bilateral relations.

Let's advocate seeking common ground while shelving differences

As a Chinese proverb goes, "True friends always feel close to each other regardless of distance keeping them

apart." China-Canada relations have a solid historical foundation, and had long been among the best of China's ties with Western countries. Dr. Norman Bethune travelled thousands of miles to support the Chinese people in the War of Resistance against Japanese aggression. Canada was among the first to break through the Western embargo against China and export wheat to China. Then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau, with extraordinary political foresight, made the historic decision to establish diplomatic ties with New China. These stories have become lasting symbols of China-Canada friendship.

Given the differences in political and social systems, history, culture and stage of development, it is normal for China and Canada to have different views on some issues, but there is no fundamental conflict of interests between the two countries. China-Canada relations should not be hijacked by ideological biases nor dominated by differences. China has always regarded Canada as a friend and partner, and is willing to move forward with Canada, to seek strengthen dialogue

and exchanges, respect each other's core interests and major concerns, seek common ground while shelving differences in a constructive way, and ensure the steady and sustainable development of our bilateral relations.

Let's pursue mutual benefit and win-win co-operation

The highly complementary resource endowments and economic structures of our two countries provide enormous potential for mutually beneficial cooperation that we can unlock. China has long been Canada's second-largest trading partner. In the first eight months of this year, Canada's exports to China increased by 7.8 per cent year on year. After the Trans Mountain Expansion Project began operation last year, China has become the largest buyer of the pipeline's additional output. Since April this year, Canada has also begun exporting liquefied natural gas to China. Calls within Canada for strengthening pragmatic co-operation with China have been growing louder for some time.

These facts fully demonstrate that strengthening practical co-operation serves the interests of both peoples, with strong internal driving force and practical necessity. China and Canada can address each other's economic and trade concerns through dialogue and consultation, and further deepen co-operation in areas such as energy, green development, and tourism, bringing greater benefits to both peoples. We also hope that the Canadian side will provide a fair and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese enterprises in Canada.

The international landscape is undergoing profound changes, with unilateralism and protectionism on the rise. The international community should strengthen solidarity and work together to jointly tackle risks and chal-

lenges. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. The more turbulent the world becomes, the more important it is to remember history, resolutely defend the victorious outcome of the Second World War, and uphold the post-war international order.

In September this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Governance Initiative. China stands ready to work with Canada and the rest of the international community to jointly uphold multilateralism, safeguard a free and open international trading system, improve global governance mechanisms, and respond together to climate change and other global challenges.

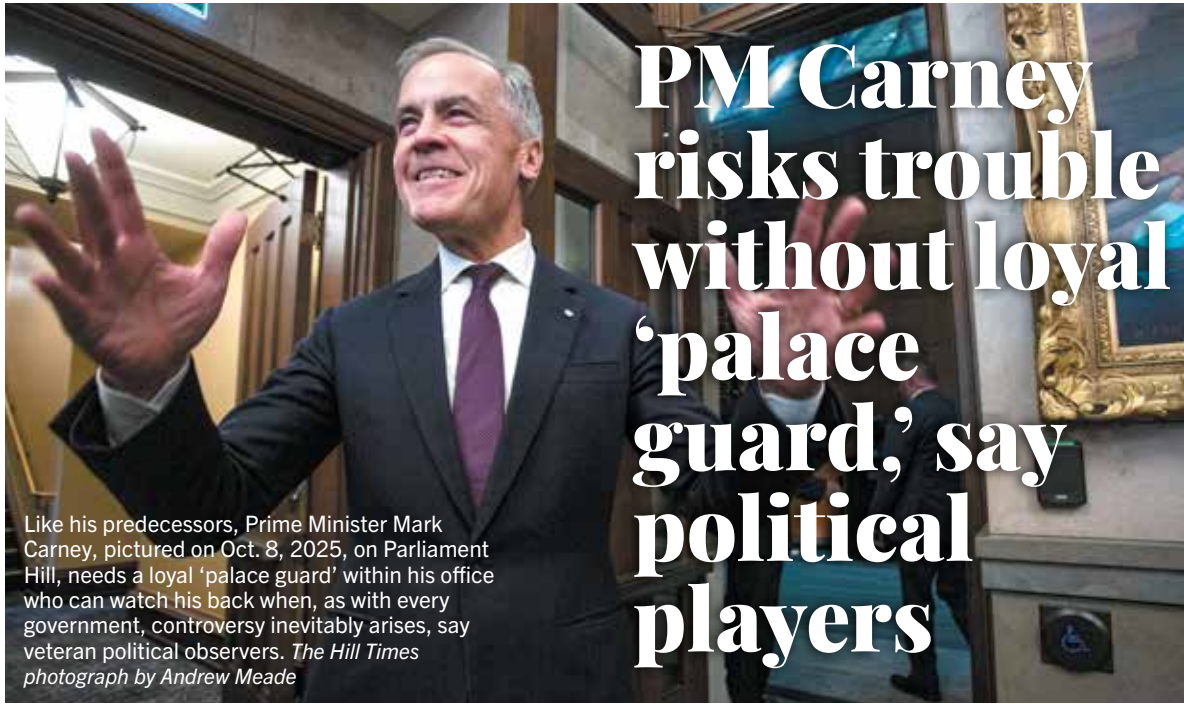
Let's set sail toward a brighter future

The 55 years of development in China-Canada relations has proven that as long as both sides adhere to the principles of correct perception, mutual respect, seeking common ground while shelving differences, and mutual benefit, our relations will move forward smoothly and yield fruitful outcomes. China is ready to work with Canada, taking the opportunities of the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties and the 20th anniversary of our strategic partnership this year to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, and to continuously advance bilateral relations, serving each other's national development and bringing more tangible benefits to both peoples. We are confident that with the concerted efforts of both sides, China-Canada relations will once again set sail and steer toward a brighter future.

Wang Di is China's ambassador to Canada.

The Hill Times

NEWS



Like his predecessors, Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured on Oct. 8, 2025, on Parliament Hill, needs a loyal 'palace guard' within his office who can watch his back when, as with every government, controversy inevitably arises, say veteran political observers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

PM Carney risks trouble without 'palace guard,' say political players

Every new prime minister eventually faces turbulence, and that's when a strong and trusted palace guard is 'essential,' says political historian and former Liberal MP John English. But at a critical time in Canadian history, Carney's team is going to have to learn fast.

Continued from **page 1**

friends, but people you know can be counted on to guard your back."

Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) early months as prime minister have been generally smooth since the Liberals' April 28 election victory. But every new prime minister eventually faces turbulence—a controversy, a scandal, or a political storm—and that's when strong and trusted political aides become "essential." Loyalists and seasoned advisers can steady the ship when others waver, said political insiders interviewed for this article.

In the last election, Carney came close to winning a majority government, but the latest polls show support for the Liberals has been weakening. Political insiders suggest the upcoming austerity budget—expected to announce major cuts to the public service, programs and services—could mark a turning point, as opposition parties prepare to test Carney's leadership.

"It's only when you're down in the mud that you start to find people that you want to work with, whose judgment you trust, which is the big thing," said Keith Beardsley, deputy chief of staff to former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper.

"Now that the word is out that he's going to start cutting the civil service, no one believes it will ever

be by attrition. I'm waiting for the civil service to respond and start leaking stuff, which is the way they always keep a minister or a prime minister sort of on their back heels, because they can leak anything they want," said Beardsley.

English, who has written several books on Canadian political history and sweeping biographies of former prime ministers Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Lester B. Pearson, warns that palace guards, while useful, also come with risks as they can become gatekeepers, filtering information and sidelining senior staff and ministers thereby creating tension within government. For any prime minister, he adds, maintaining balance is key: the inner circle must protect the leader, but also remain attuned to what the caucus, cabinet, and bureaucracy are saying, or risk alienating them and triggering internal unrest.

English pointed out that Carney may not have deep roots in the Liberal Party, but he does have them in Canada's political and business establishment where he served as a senior official in the Finance Department and the Bank of Canada, building strong connections amongst government and the business elite. His political ambitions, English said, were apparent as early as 2012, when he was courted by then-Liberal MP Scott Brison to run for the Liberal leadership. It is also widely known that Gerald Butts, former principal secretary to former prime minister Justin Trudeau, served on Carney's transition team—and before that, helped him during this year's leadership race on strategy and messaging.

Carney served as governor of the Bank of Canada during Stephen Harper's Conservative government, a period when the then-prime minister reportedly offered him the position of finance minister.

Unlike past prime ministers Justin Trudeau, Harper, Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien, Carney rose to power under unique circumstances. His predecessors had spent years immersed in politics—some with long tenures in Parliament or deep involvement behind the scenes—and each surrounded themselves with loyal supporters—in some cases polit-

ical hit men—who had worked alongside them for years. Those loyalists often formed the backbone of their respective Prime Minister's Offices once in power.

Carney's path was markedly different. He entered electoral politics only after Trudeau announced his departure in early January. Many of his campaign advisers, both formal and informal, had previously worked for Trudeau in various capacities. When Carney won the leadership and formed government, he did so without the seasoned inner circle of political confidants or long-serving loyalists typically found in a PMO or cabinet.

By contrast, when Trudeau came to office in 2015, he had longtime allies such as Butts and Katie Telford by his side. Harper governed with trusted aides including Ian Brodie and Ray Novak. Martin's government was guided by a close-knit group of political friends—David Herle, Tim Murphy, Scott Reid, Michèle Cadario, Karl Littler, Ruth Thorkelson, Brian Guest, and Véronique de Passillé, amongst others—collectively known as "The Board." Similarly, Chrétien relied on senior advisers including Jean Pelletier, Eddie Goldenberg, John Rae, Jean Carle, Mitchell Sharp, David Smith, and now-Senator Percy Downe, among a number of others.

In contrast, Carney entered political office without a long-standing inner circle. His team is led by PMO chief of staff Marc-André Blanchard, and principal secretary Tom Pitfield. Before assuming his current role, Blanchard served as Canada's permanent representative to the United Nations, and earlier as chairman and CEO of McCarthy-Tétrault, a leading law firm. He also played a key role on Trudeau's transition team after the Liberal Party's 2015 election win, and served as president of the federal Liberal Party in Quebec from 2000 to 2008. Blanchard is widely respected by Liberal MPs and staffers.

Pitfield, son of the late Michael Pitfield, former Privy Council clerk and Senator, has emerged as an influential figure. The chairman of Data Sciences has played an instrumental role in Liberal Party's four back-to-back election victories between 2015 and 2025.

Before joining Carney's team, neither Pitfield nor Blanchard had any experience working as a political staffer. Pitfield's wife, Liberal MP Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grace-Westmount, Que.), now sits in Carney's cabinet as secretary of state for children and youth, and previously served as party president under Trudeau. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief of Staff Braeden Caley was formerly deputy chief of staff in the Liberal Party office under Trudeau, and the second deputy, Andrée-Lyne Hallé, served as a senior PMO adviser to Trudeau.

Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs who also served as director of policy in former prime minister Brian Mulroney's PMO, said that much of the political infrastructure Carney inherited was built during the Trudeau years. Bricker said that every prime minister needs a palace guard in the PMO, cabinet, and caucus. He said that Justin Trudeau's downfall stemmed largely from within his own caucus as self-preservation overtook loyalty once members began to see him as a liability.

"If [Carney] gets himself into serious trouble, will people cut and run fast? Probably," said Bricker. "Making it one step worse, it's the Liberal Party who are known for being as Machiavellian and power-oriented as anybody, and if he becomes a weight on the system—even Justin Trudeau, who completely resuscitated that party that was dead [after the 2011 election]. Who got him? Was it the opposition? No, his own party [caucus] members. It was like the Ides of March."

Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research who has in the past served for several premiers as a top staffer and strategist, said that Carney's team hasn't worked together for long, but it is expected to grow more cohesive with time as members learn each other's strengths and areas for improvement. There will be a natural learning curve, he said, as the group develops its rhythm and internal balance—ensuring that one person's strengths offset another's weaknesses. The real test, Lyle added, will be how quickly the team gels, and how effectively it responds when mistakes inevitably occur.

"That's the problem at a pretty critical juncture in Canadian history. You've got a team that hasn't worked together, that has to grow together as a team, and forgive and move on as people make mistakes," said Lyle. "You don't get everything right every day. Some of this is going to be because some people just aren't good at certain things, and so in the crunch, when people start making mistakes, are they going to be able to forgive each other and move on, or is the team going to start splitting over those issues?"

He said that Carney brings to the role a vast amount of experience as a central banker, and also in the private sector. He specifically pointed to Carney's tenure at the Bank of England as an example of his adaptability, saying that Carney worked with the team already in place in London rather than importing his own staff from Canada.

When asked whether Carney's experience in structured financial institutions would translate to the unpredictability of politics, Lyle countered that much of Carney's current team comes from the public service—led by PCO clerk Michael Sabia, a former Bank of Canada colleague whom Carney trusts deeply.

Lyle also highlighted the political experience of Pitfield, a veteran Liberal strategist and key member of the Trudeau brain trust, who has deep institutional knowledge of the party and its people. Likewise, Lyle said, Pitfield, with his business background and years managing crises that every business owner deals with, brings resilience and pragmatism to the table.

Lyle said Pitfield's most important contribution to the Liberal Party's success has been in voter efficiency—turning narrow ridings into red strongholds between 2015 and 2025. Ultimately, he said, while mistakes are inevitable, the measure of this leadership team will be how quickly and effectively it responds when challenges arise.

Similarly, Lyle said that Blanchard has led one of the country's largest law firms—an experience that he said will serve him well in managing the PMO. Law firms are highly competitive environments, Lyle said, and the PMO operates much the same way: a professional services hub tackling a wide range of complex issues every day.

"What I'm sort of more interested in is how does Carney deal with people like Sabia and Pitfield when they make mistakes? And how will they feel about Carney when everyone sits down, they all agree on a course, and then he goes out into a scrum or a meeting or whatever, and he calls an audible, and it doesn't work?" said Lyle. "How are they going to feel?"

A senior Liberal interviewed for this article said that one of the defining dynamics of the current administration, unlike previous ones, is that Carney doesn't owe his position to many people—perhaps a few, but not the networks that sustained past leaders. When Trudeau, Martin, and Chrétien each came to power, they did so with extensive national connections, and the backing of caucus members and cabinet allies to whom they owed political debts.

By contrast, the source noted, Carney's independence gives him latitude to act decisively: if ministers or senior officials fail to perform, he will replace them—and they know it. For now, the source added, those around him are still learning the prime minister's style: what he values, and what he won't tolerate. At the same time, they said that, like his predecessors, Carney needs a loyal 'palace guard' in the PMO who can watch his back and steady the ship if and when controversy strikes.

"This isn't going to be like the Trudeau years where they let a lot of stuff go," said this source. "He [Carney] seems like the type of guy, if he doesn't like something, he'll make change. I don't think he came into this job to just wait and see, and he seems to want to do everything quickly."

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It would be ‘idiotic’ for any party to topple government on budget vote only seven months after election, say some Liberal MPs

Interim NDP Leader Don Davies and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May recently met with Prime Minister Mark Carney, but won't comment on how they'll vote on the budget, saying they will decide after reviewing the document, which will be released on Nov. 4.

Continued from page 1

to the polls in the winter of 1980, bringing Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Liberal Party back to power.

The Carney government's Nov. 4 budget is expected to be an austerity plan that will test federal parties' resolve and the public's patience. It's likely to slash billions of dollars from programs, services, and public-sector jobs, which could make it difficult for opposition parties to back—especially the NDP and Bloc Québécois, left-of-centre parties who receive a significant level of support from public sector unions. Last month, interim Parliamentary Budget Officer Jason Jacques said he expects the annual deficit to be \$68.5-billion this year, up from \$51.7-billion last year.

Making matters more complicated for the state of the economy and the government is the threat of the fallout from United States President Donald Trump's tariffs that threaten thousands of jobs and could push Canada into a recession.

Meanwhile, to substantiate his point, Powlowski cited the example of the 2021 election when then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, leading a minority government, called an early vote hoping to capitalize on his post-COVID-19 popularity, but voters viewed the move as self-serving and unnecessary, which cost him the majority he sought. The Liberals won nearly the same number of seats in the 2019 election as it had in the previous one. In 2019, the Liberals won 157 seats and in 2021, they won 160 seats. At the time, the threshold for a majority was 170.



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne is set to table his budget on Nov. 4. Liberal MPs warn it would be a mistake for opposition parties to topple the government so soon after the last election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"If you look at what happened in the 2021 election, we thought we were doing well in the polls. We thought we'd go to a vote early on, and we probably lost like five per cent of our vote because people were angry at having an election when we didn't need one," said Powlowski.

"They'd [opposition parties] burn their hands on this one because a lot of people would say, 'What? We're having another vote this soon afterwards?' I do not think it would be well received in the public."

The Bloc Québécois has already signalled it's unlikely to back the budget, while other opposition parties have yet to say how they'll vote.

In the current Parliament, the Liberals have 169 seats, the Conservatives 144, the Bloc Québécois 22, the NDP seven, and the Green Party one. In the 343-seat House, the majority threshold is 172. In a minority government, it's customary for the incumbent governing party to reach out to opposition parties ahead of the budget to request their support. It remains to be seen which, if any, of the three opposition parties will back the government this time.

"That's entirely up to Mr. Carney," interim NDP Leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) told reporters last week.

"This is a minority Parliament, and there's three opposition parties in the House of Commons, and it's up to Mr. Carney, as prime minister and [a] minority

government to construct a budget that can win the support of at least one of those parties."

Davies confirmed meeting with the prime minister recently, but declined to share details, saying no specific budget requests were made. He described the discussion as "positive and constructive," adding it was their first meeting.

"It was substantive," said Davies. "It's the first of many conversations that we're going to have because, as I've said before, the minority Parliament leaders need to be talking to each other if we're going to be confronting the serious issues facing our country. We're going to need, I think, good ideas from all sides of the House. And as I've said many times, no party has a monopoly of good ideas, and it's going to require co-operation."

The Toronto Star, meanwhile, reported on Oct. 9 that the Liberals had closed-door talks to boost the NDP's parliamentary funding, but said it wasn't linked to the upcoming budget vote.

In the last Parliament, the NDP had a supply-and-confidence agreement with the government which kept the Trudeau Liberals in power for nearly four years. However, it factored into the New Democrats' downfall in the last election as the Conservatives successfully portrayed the NDP and its then-leader Jagmeet Singh as the reason that Trudeau was able to stay in power. The NDP was also hurt in the April 28 election by the fact that many

left-of-centre voters rallied behind the Liberals in response to Trump's divisive rhetoric and as a way to prevent Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Battleground, Alta.) from becoming prime minister.

After losing official party status, and with Singh losing his own seat in the House of Commons following the April 28 election, the party is now engaged in a leadership race.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* that she met with Carney on Oct. 2, and shared with him some of the priorities that she would like to see in the budget.

She also told *The Hill Times* that she sent a 13-page letter to Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) in late August outlining her party's ideas on how to generate new revenue for the government, and what her party would like to see in the budget. The letter cites seven priorities, including economic sovereignty; increased government revenue; a strong civil service; greater community resilience through a low-carbon economy; investing revenue in addressing social issues such as housing and health care; and investments in global responsibilities like peacekeeping, disarmament and development assistance.

Now, May is hoping that she will be able to meet with Champagne before the budget is released.

She declined to share the prime minister's response to her recommendations, saying it was a private meeting. May said that she would make a decision on how she will vote after she sees the budget document. May said that she has known Carney since he was the Bank of Canada governor, but this was her first conversation with him since the April 28 election.

"I'd say the conversation was cordial, friendly, [and a] full exchange of ideas on many things. I stressed reconciliation and how important it was that Indigenous values be considered in terms of the Indigenous worldview—not just tokenism towards reconciliation but real work," May told *The Hill Times*.

"[I suggested] removing subsidies from industries that can't put forward a good business case ... like subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, subsidies to the nuclear industry. Just cancel those subsidies."

Recent national polls suggest the Liberal government's honeymoon period may be over. A Nanos Research poll on Oct. 3 found the Liberals leading with 39.1-per-cent support, narrowly ahead of the Conservatives at 37.9 per cent, followed by the NDP at 11.5 per cent, the Bloc at 6.2 per cent, and the Greens at four per cent.

A Léger poll released last week suggested a similar trend, with the Liberals at 44 per cent, the Conservatives at 38 per cent, the Bloc at seven per cent, the NDP at six per cent, and the Greens at three per cent. The poll also found declining satisfaction with the government—down nine points since July—and a drop in Carney's personal approval rating to 47 per cent from 58 per cent.

Deputy Government House Leader Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.) and Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.), parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, declined to discuss behind-the-scenes conversations with opposition parties or indicate which party might support the government.

"We don't know that yet," said Kayabaga.

"Everyone wants a budget, and if they're calling for a budget, then they have to be prepared to vote in the House for the budget. So we are very excited to see the budget come forward."

Lamoureux echoed the same view.

"People should reflect on the last election, and we all have a role to play," he said. "This is a major presentation that the prime minister is going to be tabling, and every Liberal member will be voting in favour of it. How the opposition votes, I have no idea."

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, other Liberal MPs said they aren't concerned about the upcoming budget, which is almost certain to pass since political parties are unlikely to want to go into another election so soon. However, they noted that with minority governments typically lasting about 19 months, the next budget could pose a greater risk.

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NEWS

Recent health spending comes from Trudeau era, but fits with current Liberal focus on health prevention, lowering costs, consultants say

The Nov. 4 budget and this week’s health ministers’ meeting are the Carney government’s chance to communicate a distinct health policy agenda.

Continued from page 1

“It’s hard to necessarily tie a direct line between all of these announcements and Minister Michel’s priorities because most of these announcements or decisions are tied to previous budgets,” said Bill Dempster, president of 3Sixty Public Affairs.

Those budgets were delivered by former prime minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government.

“It’s mostly about delivery, not direction,” said Kevin den Heijer, a senior consultant at EnterpriseHealth about Michel’s announcements.

“So, these are programs that are shovel-ready ... Some of those [announcements], honestly, it might just be easiest to to announce some of the funding that has already been committed and actually get that out to stakeholders.”

Since winning the April 28 election, Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) government has not been as vocal about its health policy plans compared to its recent high-profile press conferences for announcements connected to the launch of the Major Projects Office on Aug. 29, and new economic measures including a “Buy Canadian” policy on Sept. 5.

This is even though the Liberals made significant promises in their platform, which include increasing the number of doctors in Canada’s health-care systems through a global recruitment strategy and other measures, and investing \$4-billion to construct and renovate community health-care infrastructure.

To understand what the Carney government may focus on going forward, *The Hill Times* reviewed all funding announce-



Bill Dempster, president of 3Sixty Public Affairs, says that stakeholders can begin to understand Health Minister Marjorie Michel’s priorities by reading her letter in Health Canada’s 2025-26 departmental plan. Photograph courtesy of Bill Dempster

ments issued since May 13, 2025—the date on which Michel (Papineau, Que.) and her cabinet colleagues were sworn into their roles—by Health Canada and agencies that fall under the department’s portfolio led by Michel.

Approximately \$256.29-million in funding has been announced through Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) or the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). (A full list divided by subject is available at the end of this article. Note that some of financial figures are not exact and have been rounded.)

Other health-related funding—\$3.5-million—has come through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. That was a June 25 announcement to help the Vector Institute, a research organization dedicated to artificial intelligence, with an initiative meant to fast-track AI innovation in health care.

Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada announced more than \$1.3-billion for research projects on July 9, with some of that funding being allotted for scholarships and fellowships through CIHR.

The Hill Times categorized the funding into different subject areas. Focusing on spending that came from Health Canada and its agencies, the areas that have



Kevin den Heijer, a senior consultant at EnterpriseHealth, says that recent health announcements focused on ‘shovel-ready’ initiatives. Photograph courtesy of Kevin den Heijer

received the most funding include health services for francophone communities (\$129.83-million), dementia (\$39.4-million), and mental health services for youth (\$30-million).

Although the funding had been promised by the Trudeau government, den Heijer and his EnterpriseHealth colleague Eshan Naik said there are some themes that correlate with Michel’s own interests in health policy.

“There’s a big prevention and health-equity spine throughout, I would say, at least half of those announcements,” said den Heijer. “From what we’ve heard and seen from this minister, I think she will be much more focused on prevention.”

“When you’re seeing announcements in research and innovation, or digital health, or health equity, or health prevention, or mental health and substance use, it’s very indicative of ... essentially her interests,” said Naik, life sciences lead at EnterpriseHealth.

Looking at health services for francophone communities, Naik said that funding is a “part of the bigger picture, which is health-care transformation.”

Naik added that the francophone spending in addition to announcements that designated funding for food security, physical activity, and sexual and reproductive health are connected to this government’s desire to empha-

size health prevention, which is meant to reduce system costs and improve efficiency.

Look to upcoming health ministers’ meeting, departmental plan for new priorities, consultants say

Den Heijer said he’ll be paying attention to the health ministers’ meeting taking place in Calgary, Alta., on Oct. 16 and Oct. 17 to further understand Michel’s health-policy direction.

The meeting’s agenda and the resulting communiqué that will be released is “probably going to be the biggest indicator of the focus” for the federal government, den Heijer said.

Dempster said “the first sign” of where Michel’s priorities lie are in Health Canada’s departmental plan that was released in mid-June. Acknowledging that work on the plan would have begun last year when the Trudeau government was in power, Dempster said stakeholders can still note the priorities that are included in the introductory letter signed by Michel.

The health minister’s letter “focuses right off the top on the marquee program, which is the dental care plan, and then goes on into other initiatives that are very significant outlays by the government, especially the health transfers to provinces, and what they’re hoping those are going to accomplish,” Dempster said.

The Canadian Dental Care Plan, one of the conditions of the supply-and-confidence agreement between the Trudeau Liberals and the NDP then led by Jagmeet Singh, is the first item mentioned in Michel’s letter, which touts the program’s high participation rate for both Canadians and dentists.

Michel made headlines on Oct. 2 when at a press conference to announce that more than 5 million Canadians are making use of the dental care plan, she also stated that the plan would not be subject to the spending cuts requested by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.).

A few of the other priorities listed by Michel in her departmental plan, in order of reference, include the Working Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians Plan, which is the \$25-billion set of bilateral agreements initially announced by the Trudeau government in 2023; Aging with Dignity agreements for seniors care; and pharmacare.

As for what the 2025 budget—scheduled for Nov. 4—might hold for health policy, both Dempster and den Heijer are tempering expectations.

“Health is not going to be a major focus of the upcoming budget. It’s going to be big projects; it’s going to be defence and defence procurement,” Dempster said.

“It’s about trade, economy and affordability and tariffs.”

Still, the Carney government could begin to move on its health-related promises from the

election campaign, according to Dempster. These include promises related to building hospitals, modernizing the public health care system, and adding doctors to the system.

These types of promises could be linked to the Carney government’s broad focus on improving access to primary care, digital health records and mental health, according to Dempster.

Den Heijer said that he doesn’t view Michel’s announcements thus far as an indicator that “something big” is coming up in the budget.

Naik said any health-related items in the budget are likely to focus on an “economic angle.”

“Are we attracting talent and retaining [a] new workforce in our health care system? ... Are we employing digital health tools and making sure that data can seamlessly move across systems, given that data currently is fragmented and siloed?” Naik said as examples.

“If you have data moving seamlessly, and you’re relying on innovation and AI, that means more cost savings to the health care system.”

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Health funding announcements since May 13, 2025	
The following are sorted by subject, date of the announcement, amount of funding, and the source of the funding.	
Dementia	
• July 28:	\$39.4-million for three projects through CIHR.
Access to care for Francophone communities	
• Sept. 11:	\$16.96-million for five post-secondary training institutions through Health Canada.
• Aug. 18:	\$33.21-million for four post-secondary institutions through Health Canada.
• Aug. 18:	\$1-million for the Government of Ontario’s Health Card Linguistic Identifier Awareness Project through Health Canada.
• July 22:	\$78.66-million for seven organizations through Health Canada.
Health prevention and health equity	
• Aug. 25:	\$10.16-million for seven projects through PHAC.
• Aug. 18:	\$3.13-million for 14 projects through PHAC.
• June 16:	\$5-million for PartiCiPACTiON through PHAC.
Health technologies	
• June 25:	\$3.5-million for the Vector Institute through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.
Mental health	
• Sept. 2:	\$30-million to expand the Integrated Youth Services Network through CIHR.
Research	
• Sept. 23:	\$19.99-million for the CIHR Centre for Research on Pandemic Preparedness and Health Emergencies.
Substance use	
• Aug. 29:	\$2.99-million for four organizations through PHAC.
• July 21:	\$2.8-million for four projects through Health Canada.
Sexual and reproductive health	
• Sept. 29:	\$13.15-million for 15 community organizations through Health Canada.

Canada Strong and Free fundraising emails using ‘crisis rhetoric,’ to stoke distrust in government and media, say comms experts, pollsters

Recent fundraising emails from the Canada Strong and Free Network tap into anxiety and pessimism and are ‘textbook dog whistle politics,’ says pollster Nik Nanos.

Continued from page 1

which cover topics ranging from free speech, freedom of religion, parental rights, and specific decisions by the Liberal government, and include links so readers can participate in polls, surveys, or donate money.

The Hill Times shared some of the emails with Nomi Claire Lazar, a professor in the graduate school of public and international affairs at the University of Ottawa where she teaches human rights, moral reasoning, and political thought. In an emailed statement on Oct. 9, she said the views in these CSFN emails are “Trump-adjacent,” but also that the rhetorical techniques are “characteristic of polarization through crisis talk, more generally.”

Similar styles of rhetoric are characteristic of political fundraising emails in the U.S. across the political spectrum, she said.

In an email sent on Sept. 25, the CSFN cited a recent issue involving the federal government asking for the Supreme Court to recognize limits on the use of the Constitution’s notwithstanding clause, and said that the Liberals are “playing a dangerous game with our country,” fearing that “this could spark a crisis and tear our nation apart!”

“Even the experts are warning this is a shocking move that could lead to a full-blown constitutional meltdown!” read the email, with the words “shocking” and “constitutional meltdown” written in all caps for emphasis.

The background for that issue is Quebec passed Bill 21 in 2019, prohibiting certain public sector staff from wearing religious symbols. The province then pre-emptively protected that bill from challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by invoking Sec. 33 of the Charter—the “notwithstanding” clause. Since

then, the Supreme Court has been asked by the federal government to rule on whether the notwithstanding clause can be used indefinitely to shield such laws from Canada’s Charter of Rights.

In a letter sent to Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) on Oct. 7, the premiers of Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia said they want Ottawa to withdraw its court submission, which they argue amounts to a “complete disavowal of the constitutional bargain that brought the Charter into being.”

In response, Justice Minister Sean Fraser (Central Nova, N.S.) said it would be “unimaginable” for a federal government to steer clear of a case affecting Charter rights that will have lasting impacts, adding that it would “be the court and not a federal or provincial government who will make the decisions,” as reported by Global News on Oct. 8.

The CSFN email asked if the “radicals” should “mess with our Constitution” and for the reader to vote in a poll.

In another email on Sept. 17, the CSFN asked readers if they trusted the mainstream media to report fairly, adding that trusted institutions have become “propaganda machines suppressing debate, silencing dissent, and advancing a single narrative that aligns with political power.”

The email includes a link to a survey so participants can vote on whether they trust the mainstream media to report “fairly and without political bias.”

Lazar said that data gathered in surveys such as these would be “severely biased.”

“A poll with reliable results must start with a sample that represents the population as a whole. For example, if I want to know whether Canadians think eating meat is ethical, but I only ask members of the Canadian Vegetarian Society, the answer I get in my survey is going to be biased,” she said by email.

She argued that biased survey data, which will overrepresent extreme views, could be less useful in finding out peoples’ views, and “more a tool to communicate back to people the extreme views they should hold if they want to stay ‘in-group.’”

“When people who share an identity or want to be identified with a group learn that others with their identity or aspirational

identity hold view X, they tend to migrate to that view to validate their ‘in-group’ status (even to themselves). This is true even when they may have had reservations about view X in other contexts,” she said in the email.

“Note that this happens across the political spectrum, just as much on the left as on the right. It provides a technique for political entrepreneurs to push views toward extremes, by communicating those views as ‘the norm’ for people with a certain identity or group membership, leading people to migrate to that more extreme view.”

Lazar said that the surveys create the experience of people “having their say,” which provides a sense of agency and inclusion, even if that data is not useable.

“Both of these elements are useful for fundraising and cementing commitment to a movement. By communicating extreme views, the authors of those emails aim to generate a sense of crisis, a now or never,” she said in the email.

“And crisis rhetoric, at least in the short term, can sometimes get people to do things they would not normally do, like give big sums of money,” said Lazar.

The CSFN is partnered with the C2C Journal, an online magazine offering political and economic news and commentary.

A former top federal bureaucrat, who was shown the emails and who asked not to be identified, argues that the purpose of the CSFN email about mainstream media is not to survey the readers, but rather is “a direct communication to cast doubt and lose their trust in the media” similar to the actions of U.S. President Donald Trump and his friends.

“[The purpose is] to undermine faith in the professional media, and drive readers to C2C itself and the right-wing social media as well,” said the former bureaucrat via email to *The Hill Times*.

“However, the information collected may well be tabulated and used as a pseudo-poll to encourage cohesiveness among the C2C followers and amplify the anti-media response.”

In a Sept. 19 email, the CSFN talked about parental rights, arguing that too often “government policies interfere in family decisions, forcing parents to choose between their values and compliance. This is a complete lack of freedom. It’s called control.”

The former bureaucrat said in an email to *The Hill Times* that, in

regard to the “bureaucratic” intervention of government in families, compared to the view that “parents know best,” there are “a couple of issues that declare this as nonsense.”

“Children learn most from their parents by example. One case is the familiar situation of generation after generation of families living on welfare, or children falling in with ‘bad gangs’ because of poor parental examples. There are some families that lack the basic knowledge needed to raise a family properly. And then there are destitute families who need support or intervention to give their children a fighting chance in life. These programs are hardly ‘bureaucracy,’” they said in the email.

“This is hard-right language leading to many forms of racism and misogyny.”

The Hill Times reached out to the CSFN to ask about the recent emails and for a response to criticisms of the language used, but the organization did not respond to an interview request.

The Hill Times also reached out to MPs including Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.), Liberal whip Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Ont.), Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) and Conservative Caucus Chair Scott Reid (Lanark-Frontenac, Ont.) to ask for reactions to the CSFN emails, but interviews could not be arranged before deadline.

In another email on Sept. 26, the CSFN referred to Carney’s Sept. 21 decision to recognize the state of Palestine, saying they were “furious, and you should be too.” The email called the decision a “gut punch to every Canadian who believes in freedom, safety and standing up to hate,” and encourages readers to “call out leaders like Carney who betray Canadian values and embolden hate.”

Nik Nanos, chief data scientist at Nanos Research, read the CSFN emails shared by *The Hill Times* and called them “textbook dog-whistle politics.”

“Whether you love it or hate it, it’s effective at raising money,” said Nanos.

“What it does is, it taps into anxiety and pessimism that exists in the public domain, and looks to motivate target audiences to open up their wallet to get the change that they want. This type of strategy is very effective at raising funds, even though there might

be some elements that are either uncomfortable or unsavoury.”

Nanos called the polls and survey links in the emails an example of “sugging and mugging,” which in the research industry refers to selling or marketing under the guise of conducting survey research.

“What they’re trying to do is to engage a target donor. And the thing is, as soon as they get them to click on some type of feedback mechanism, it basically gets them to start to have a relationship with a person and ... motivate [them] to give even more money and to give money on a regular basis,” he said.

When asked if the tone of the emails was similar to messaging from the Trump administration, Nanos said it would be more apt to say that the messaging is similar to that of right-wing populist movements all over the world.

The style of messaging in the CSFN emails can be seen not only from the Republican Party under Trump, but also from Nigel Farage, leader of Reform U.K., a right-wing populist political party in the United Kingdom; or from representatives of Alternative for Germany, a far-right populist party in Germany, according to Nanos.

“It’s almost part of the fundraising franchise for populist parties to tap into anger and to use that to try to get people to donate to their cause,” said Nanos.

“I think this has been around for a while. The only difference is the sophistication and the targeting and the ability to engage people has increased as there are more technology levers at the disposal of these fundraisers.”

Mélanie Richer, a communications and public affairs principal at Earncliffe Strategies who previously served as the NDP’s director of communications from 2021 to 2023, told *The Hill Times* that the CSFN emails are “driving that anger up,” which she called “disappointing and, frankly, a little bit dangerous.”

The emails, in her view, use language—such as “full-blown constitutional meltdown”—that is purposefully inflamed.

“When you see the tone, it’s hard to picture the goal of these emails being anything but to inflame anger,” Richer said.

“I think they’re trying to piss people off, not tap into the anger and propose solutions, but tap into that anger and use it for your own purposes, which I think is the difference, and can be a little bit dangerous,” she said.

Richer argued that the topics discussed in the emails should be seen as nuanced issues to be talked about delicately and carefully.

“The issues in the email [are] things that should be talked about with nuance, things that should be talked about carefully, things that should be done in a way, again, that puts people at the centre of it, instead of making us turn against each other,” she said.

“It’s the tactic to use, right? It’s the ‘pit people against each other to bring them to you,’ or ‘pit people against each other so they’re not necessarily taking a look at the things that you’re doing.’”

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Diplomatic Circles

By Neil Moss



‘Canada is getting more and more important for us,’ says visiting German Bundestag member



Johannes Winkel has been a member of the Bundestag, Germany’s federal Parliament, since last March. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In a wide-ranging interview, Johannes Winkel talks about a renewed Canada-German relationship, Trump shocks, European security, and the future of free trade.

A member of Germany’s Bundestag who was recently in Ottawa as part of a visiting delegation says that Canada is becoming increasingly important for his country.

German lawmaker **Johannes Winkel** led a delegation of the Christian Democratic Union’s (CDU) Young Union—which he leads—across Canada last month. “The message that we are trying to send—also with this tour, but in general in Germany—is that Canada is getting more and more important for us,” Winkel told *The Hill Times* during a Sept. 30 interview.

A member of the Bundestag since last March within the CDU ranks, Winkel has led the Young Union since 2022. The CDU holds



Then-German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock gave a strong defence of Canada’s sovereignty at the G7 foreign ministers’ meeting this past March in Charlevoix, Que. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

164 of the lower house’s 630 seats, and forms the governing coalition.

He said that over the last year much more focus has been paid on the relationship with Canada, remarking that Germany knows it has “very trustworthy friends” in the country.

The return of United States President **Donald Trump** to the White House has put increased focus on the Canada-Germany relationship as Ottawa has sought to diversify its traditional north-south trading relationship.

It was then-German foreign minister **Annalena Baerbock**

who was the most forceful voice defending Canadian sovereignty as top Group of Seven diplomats met in Charlevoix, Que., back in March amid Trump threats of absorbing Canada as a “51st” state.

The last delegation the CDU’s Young Union took was to the U.S. at the height of the presidential election campaign in 2024.

“It’s unbelievable to see what’s happened in a year’s time—it’s crazy,” he said.

“In terms of Trump, it has always been pretty difficult for us—especially German people—don’t really get the style of his

policies, and politics, and communication,” said Winkel.

He said Germany is currently looking at who are its allies, and who can it work with in a “trust-worthy way.”

“There’s no doubt with Canada [that] we can do that,” he said.

A course change

With the rising instability around the globe, there has been added pressure on NATO countries to boost defence spending.

Winkel said it was a mistake for Germany over the last 20 years to think an increase in

defence spending was not needed because the U.S. will be its backdrop.

“I think it is good that we are taking responsibility for ourselves because we see a U.S. president that is really not that clear about stepping up on NATO,” he said, referencing Article IV, which is a consultative mechanism when a member state feels that their security is threatened.

He said that Europe is in a grey zone of not being at war, but also not being at peace.

“We are in a weird position between warfare and peacetime. Of course, Ukraine is at war, but the rest of Europe is really threatened by [Russian President **Vladimir**] **Putin**,” he said.

German Chancellor **Friedrich Merz**—the leader of Winkel’s CDU—blamed Russia for an incursion of drones over his country’s airspace.

“People in Germany, unfortunately, think that Ukraine is far away from us, but the problem is that if Putin wins in Ukraine, I think, he won’t stop in Kyiv,” Winkel said.

He said Germans have a “big fear” that the war in Ukraine could spill over in Eastern Europe, especially following Trump’s August meeting with Putin in Alaska, after which Winkel said “basically nothing changed.”

“You just can’t do such a big show and nothing happens afterwards—that’s just kind of crazy,” he said.

He said that the CDU and the Young Union have always had the position that Putin is not willing to agree on any peace deal with Ukraine.

“Since Alaska, we have the proof,” he said. “If there’s one good thing about this Alaska show, that is the proof that Putin really doesn’t want to have peace.”

Hope for the free trading order

Winkel said the “ultimate goal” has to be to convince America that free trade is still beneficial, and that the tariff-centric attitude is not working.

“This would be my Utopian way of thinking,” he said, remarking that Canada and the European Union should continue their free trade focus while bringing in other parts of the world.

He said that Germany is going through a tough economic time.

“It’s, of course, really difficult if one of your main allies like the U.S. treats you in that kind of way,” he said.

“We are looking for good friends—for new friends—Canada has been a friend for a long time,” he said, remarking that there is a goal to deepen the Canada-Germany alliance over the coming years.

“This is the main goal of the German administration but also for us as a political youth organization,” he added.

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Party Central

By Stuart Benson

Taiwan's Birthday, a CMPA wrap-party, and a Prairie premier leave no vacancy at the Château

The Château Laurier was nearly booked solid on Oct. 7, as diplomats, politicians, parliamentarians, and staffers had their pick of receptions in almost every venue space at the hotel. However, for this reporter, the choices du-nuit were the Canadian Media Producers Association's CAN-CON celebration and Taiwan's swanky 114th birthday party.

To kick off the night, **Party Central** arrived just after 5:30 p.m. for the Canadian Media Producers Association's (CMPA) shindig to avoid the incoming crowds and navigated through the maze of check-in desks and receiving lines for the plethora of parties happening at Ottawa's iconic hotel, including an Embassy Connections reception in the Drawing Room, a Cement Association Canada end-of-summit rager at Zoe's, and the Canada Strong and Free "Prairie Leaders Reception," in the Adam Room, featuring an address by Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith**.

After arriving in the Laurier Room, **Party Central** grabbed a complimentary bag of popcorn fresh from the machine, filled both jacket pockets from the bowls of mini Nestlé chocolates, and headed inside for the CMPA's post-Hill day wrap party.

Similar to their last reception in May 2024, this year's party was packed with plenty of opportunities to get hands-on with some of Canada's most successful productions, from *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, and an *Ice Road Trucker*'s simulator that **Party Central** spotted Small Business and Tourism Minister **Rechie Valdez** take a crack at.

Identity and Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault** was also in attendance, and joked during his speech that he was impressed with Valdez's bravery, as he generally doesn't operate heavy equipment larger than an e-bike. However, Guilbeault did show off his snake-and-other-reptile-handling skills with the scaly creatures courtesy of The Zoo Crew. Guests could also get hands-on with **J.J. Johnson's** Emmy statuette, which he received for his children's show *Dino Dex*, or snag a complementary *Shoresy* "Funkopop" figurine.

Mingling in between the CAN-CON booths, **Party Central** spotted the entire CMPA board, a large contingent from Global Public Affairs, *The Lobby Monitor's* **Hunter Creswell**, *The Wire Report's* **Paul Park**, The Canadian Press' **Anja Karadeglija**, ISG Senator **Tony Loffreda**, Environment Minister **Julie Dabrusin**, Conservative MPs **Kerry Diotte** and **Laila Goodridge**, as well as Liberal MPs **Chris Bittle**, **Sean Casey**, **Ahmed Hussen**, **Buckley Belanger**, and **Caroline Desrochers**.

Alongside speeches from CMPA president and CEO **Reynolds Mastin**, and outgoing board chair **Damon D'Oliveira**, co-founder of Conquering Lions Production, Guilbeault also attempted to reassure the gathered producers and media executives that his government had their backs and that big international—read American—streamers and media firms "have a role to play in investing in their success and sustainability."

Guilbeault also attempted to assuage the concerns about Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** Oval Office meeting with U.S. President **Donald Trump** the following day.

"Let me be crystal clear: as Canada works out its new trade relationship with the U.S., culture is not and will not be on the table," Guilbeault said, receiving the loudest applause break of the night.

Once the speeches were over, just before 7 p.m., **Party Central** headed over to the Château's Ballroom for Taiwan's 114th National Day Celebration, hosted by the ROC's representative in Canada, **Harry Ho-jen Tseng**.

While **Party Central** missed Tseng's receiving line, *The Hill Times's* **Sam Garcia** was once again on-scene to pick up the slack before staking out a spot in front of the stage for the speeches. Unfortunately, this reporter was stuck near the entrance, behind a near-impenetrable mass of hundreds of diplomats, parliamentarians, staffers, journalists, and Taiwanese Canadians who had arrived on time.

Following a singing of the Canadian and Taiwanese national anthems and a welcome message from Tseng, there were also the usual messages of support from parliamentarians, including from Liberal MP **Judy Sgro**, Conservative MP **Michael Cooper**, and Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves-François Blanchet**, who, as a diplomatic olive branch, delivered just slightly more than half of his speech in English.

While not an exhaustive list, due to the size of the crowd and difficulty navigating through it, **Party Central** spotted Senators **Leo Housakos**, **Stan Kutcher**, **Rob Black**, **Kim Pate**, **Salma Ataullahjan** and **Michael Macdonald**; Liberal MPs **Marie-France Lalonde**, **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**, **Sameer Zuberi**, and **Helena Jaczek**; Bloc MPs **Andréanne Larouche**, **Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe**, and **Sébastien Lemire**; and Conservative MPs **Melissa Lantsman**, **Larry Brock**, **Shuvaloy Majumdar**, **Roman Baber**, **Andrew Lawton**, **Blaine Calkins**, **James Bezan**, **Frank Caputo**, **Garnett Genuis**, **Laila Goodridge**, and probably several others, bouncing back and forth between the birthday celebrations and the Alberta premier's event down the hall.

Once the speeches were over, the marquee draw of the event was unveiled: the food.

Luckily for **Party Central**, which has spent the past year shouting—not singing—the praises of last year's spread, this year more than lived up to the hype.

Alongside the two stars of the show—the entire hip of Alberta beef at the carving station and the Taiwanese Kavalan single malt whisky—there were steamed pork buns; a seafood medley stir-fry; oyster pancakes; and a maple-glazed cedar-plank salmon, rounding out the star-studded culinary cast. Of course, there was also plenty of cake once the rest of it had been divided and brought over to the equally well-stocked dessert station.

After cleaning off several plates of the above, **Party Central** headed for the exits—and snagged one of the complementary orchid bouquets for good luck—to catch the final innings of the penultimate Blue Jays game against the New York Yankees. With the series now wrapped, this reporter can start spreading the good news: the Yankees are Built to Fall.

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The Hill Times
photographs by
Sam Garcia
& Stuart Benson

1. Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi, left, Senators Salma Ataullahjan and Michael Macdonald; representative Harry H.J. Tseng, Liberal MP Judy Sgro, and Conservative MP Michael Cooper cut Taiwan's 114th birthday cake at the National Day reception on Oct. 7 at Château Laurier. **2.** Seven24 Films' Tom Cox, left, Mastin, Irving, and IDEACOM's Josette Normandeau. **3.** J.J. Johnson, left, creator of *Dino Dex*, and Conservative MP Kerry Diotte with *Dino Dex's* Emmy. **4.** Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin, left, and Reynolds Mastin, CMPA president and CEO. **5.** Canadian Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault, left, Mastin, and Eagle Vision's Kyle Irving. **6.** Guilbeault shows off his snake-charming skills. **7.** MP Sean Casey, left, Global Public Affairs' Curtis O'Nyon, and MP Ahmed Hussen. **8.** Tseng delivers remarks. **9.** Tseng, his wife Yu-Ling Yu, and CSG Senator Rob Black. **10.** Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, left, Tseng, and Yu. **11.** Conservative MPs Shuvaloy Majumdar, left, and Blaine Calkins, with Tseng and Yu. **12.** Former Liberal MP Paul Chiang, left, with Tseng. **13.** Liberal MPs Marie-France Lalonde, left, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and Helena Jaczek.

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



Women fill most senior staff roles in WAGE minister Valdez's office

Carina Gabriele is director of policy to the minister, while Lauriane Songuissa-Moulangu is director of operations, and Aiman Akmal runs parliamentary affairs and issues management.

Juggling dual responsibilities as both the minister for women and gender equality, and secretary of state for small business and tourism, **Rechie Valdez** currently has a 16-member office at her back.

The team, as previously reported, is led by chief of staff **Kendra Wilcox**, who used to be acting chief of staff—and earlier, director of policy and stakeholder relations—to Valdez as then-small business minister.

After about half a year away, **Carina Gabriele** is back in the political trenches as director of policy to Valdez. A former adviser to then-Toronto city councillor (now NDP MPP) **Kristyn Wong-Tam**, Gabriele came to Ottawa to do policy work for then-housing and diversity and inclusion minister **Ahmed Hussen** in early 2022. Starting as a policy assistant, she was promoted to adviser roughly one year later. After the July 2023 cabinet shuffle, Gabriele was hired as a senior policy adviser to then-diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities minister **Kamal Khera**, who promoted Gabriele to director of policy the following summer.

Gabriele stepped away from the Hill amid the turnover at the start of this year, and until July had been working as director of public policy for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

She's supported by deputy director of policy **Alice Zheng**.

Zheng has been working on the women and

gender equality (WAGE) file since first becoming a ministerial staffer in 2020. A former assistant to then-Liberal MP **Omar Alhabra**, Zheng was first hired as an Ontario regional affairs adviser by then-minister **Maryam Monsef**. After then-Liberal MP **Marci Ien** took over the WAGE portfolio following the 2021 election, Zheng was kept on as a policy adviser, later adding "senior" to her title—her most recent past role.

Also focused on policy are advisers **Athusha Puvanendra** and **Fran-cine Pauvif**, and Atlantic regional affairs and policy adviser **Kaitlyn Staines**.

Puvanendra is another former policy adviser to Ien as then-WAGE minister; in Puvanendra's case, she joined that team in May 2024 after a little over half a year as executive assistant to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Gary Anandasangaree**.

Puvanendra worked on Anandasangaree's recent, successful re-election campaign in Scarborough-Guildwood-Rouge Park, Ont., and is also a former constituency assistant to Ien as the then-MP for Toronto Centre, Ont. Pauvif previously worked for then-tourism and Federal Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec minister **Soraya Martinez Ferrada**, starting as a special assistant for operations in January 2024.

She was later promoted to Ontario and Atlantic regional adviser in the office. A co-founder of the Canadian Youth Biodiversity Network, Pauvif is in the midst of a PhD in political science at the University of Ottawa, with

which she expects to graduate next year. Her CV also includes time spent as a biodiversity and sustainability program officer with the Sierra Club of Canada, and as a mobilization campaigner with World Animal Protection Canada, among other things.

Staines ran as the Liberal candidate for Fort McMurray-Cold Lake, Alta., ultimately coming second behind Conservative incumbent **Laila Goodridge**, and has been working for Liberal ministers since June 2023, beginning as a communications adviser to then-public safety minister **Marco Mendicino**. She's since been an Atlantic and operations adviser to Ien as then-WAGE minister. Amongst other past experience, Staines is also a former communications staffer tackling social

media for the federal Liberal Party, and a former marketing communications manager and chief operating officer for the Canadian Foundation for Development and Empowerment.

Lauriane Songuissa-Moulangu is director of operations to Valdez, continuing in the

role she last held in Valdez's office as then-small business minister. An outreach adviser for the Liberal Party during the 2025 and 2021 elections, Songuissa-Moulangu got her start as a staffer in 2018 as

an assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Greg Fergus**. At the start of 2020, she landed a job as a junior communications assistant and special assistant to the chief of staff to then-justice minister **David Lametti**. Songuissa-Moulangu worked there for about a year and a half in all, ending as a senior special assistant for issues management and parliamentary affairs, before joining then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office as an outreach adviser. She worked in the PMO until the fall

of 2024 when she joined Valdez's small business team.

Tackling Quebec regional affairs for Valdez is senior adviser **Nathanielle Morin**.

A former organization development adviser with CHU de Québec-Université Laval, Morin ran as the Liberal candidate for Louis-Saint-Laurent, Que., in the 2021 election, ultimately coming third in the race won by Conservative incumbent **Gérard Deltell**.



Senior Quebec regional adviser Nathanielle Morin, left, with Minister Valdez. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Morin came to work on the Hill post-election when she was hired as an adviser to then-health minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**. She continued in the role for a time after **Mark Holland** took over as health minister in July 2023, but late that fall switched offices when she was

hired as an adviser to Ien as then-WAGE minister—Morin's most recent role.

Also covering regional desks for Valdez is **Karla Atanacio**, an adviser for outreach and West and North regional affairs. According to her LinkedIn profile, her outreach is focused on the Filipino community. Atanacio previously worked in the ministers' regional office in Winnipeg—one of 16 such offices spread across Canada which

support all of cabinet—and lent a hand to Liberal MP

Terry Duguid's successful re-election campaign in Winnipeg South, Man., this past spring. She's also previously worked as a public servant in the province, including as a policy and program assistant with Manitoba Health. Atana-



Lauriane Songuissa-Moulangu is director of operations. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

cio's online CV also includes past internships at the House of Commons and Senate.

Sabah Khan is a senior special assistant and operations adviser. Khan is a past executive assistant to Ien as then-WAGE minister, and a former constituency assistant in Ien's old MP office.

Aiman Akmal is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Valdez.

Akmal is another Hill returnee; she was previously an issues manager and communications adviser to then-immigration minister **Marc Miller** before

exiting in 2024 to study at the University of Cambridge where she's now earned a master's degree in development studies and international development policy. Akmal is also a former constituency assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Yvan Baker**, and a former communications adviser with the Liberal research bureau, among other past roles.

Ruth Mekonnen is on board as a parliamentary affairs and issues adviser. She's a former special assistant for communications to Ien as then-WAGE minister, having joined that office late last fall.

Overseeing communications for Valdez is director **Chris Zhou**. Zhou is another carryover from Valdez's old team as small business minister. Originally hired as a senior adviser to Valdez in the fall of 2023, he was promoted to director of policy roughly six months later, and in August 2024



Chris Zhou is director of communications. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

was named director of communications to the minister instead.

A former adviser and later program co-ordinator with Global Vision, Zhou has been working for ministers since 2020, and was first hired as a special assistant for

parliamentary and Atlantic regional affairs to then-trade minister **Mary Ng**, for whom he worked until 2023, ending as a policy adviser and issues manager. Among other things, Zhou is also a former air cadet, as well as a past delegate with the Young Diplomats of Canada and adviser on then-PM Justin Trudeau's youth council.

While a press secretary had yet to be confirmed as of filing deadline, **Sarphina Chui** is in place as a senior digital and strategic communications adviser. Chui is an ex-aide to Ontario Liberal MP **Lisa**



Karla Atanacio is an outreach and West and North regional affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Hepfner, and more recently worked for then-emergency preparedness minister **Harjit Sajjan**, beginning in October 2023 as executive assistant to the minister and his chief of staff. According to her LinkedIn profile, she was promoted to special assistant for operations and communications at the end of 2024.

Finally, **Sana Rauf** is a special assistant in Valdez's office, and **Chris Troughton** is the minister's driver.

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Carina Gabriele is director of policy. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Policy adviser Athusha Puvanendra. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Policy adviser Francine Pauvif. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Alice Zheng is deputy director of policy. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Parliamentary Calendar

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

Chief of Defence Staff Carignan to speak at Ottawa Mayor's Breakfast on Tuesday, Oct. 14



Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carrignan, pictured, will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the *Ottawa Business Journal*, on Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, OCT. 13

House Schedule—The House of Commons will sit Oct. 20-24; Oct. 27-31; Nov. 3-7; Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. 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.

Breakfast with Conservative Leader Poilievre—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will take part in a party fundraising breakfast. Monday, Oct. 13, at 9:30 a.m. CT at Piazza De Nardi, Winnipeg. Details: conservative.ca/events.

TUESDAY, OCT. 14

Chief of Defence Staff at the Mayor's Breakfast—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carrignan will be the special guest at the Mayor's Breakfast, hosted by Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the *Ottawa Business Journal*. Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 a.m. ET at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Lunch: 'Reimagining Canada's Trade for a New Global Era'—Alison Nankivell, president and CEO of Export Development Canada, will take part in a roundtable luncheon hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Oct. 14, 12 p.m. ET at C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15—FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Toronto Global Forum—The International Economic Forum of the Americas hosts the 2025 Toronto Global Forum. Among the speakers are Congo's Ambassador to Canada Appolinaire Aya, Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, Canada Infrastructure Bank CEO Ehren Cory, Business Council of Canada CEO Goldy Hyder, National Aboriginal Council Corporation Association CEO Shannin Metatawabin, and former Canadian ambassador to China Dominic Barton. Wednesday, Oct. 15, to Friday, Oct. 17, in Toronto. Details: torontoglobalforum.com.

THURSDAY, OCT. 16—FRIDAY, OCT. 17

Vancouver International Security Summit—Communications Security Establishment chief Caroline Xavier will take part in the second annual Vancouver International Security Summit. Other speakers include former

CSIS director David Vigneault; Nicole Giles, CSIS's deputy director of Policy and Partnerships; Richard B. Fadden, former national security adviser to the prime minister (2015-2016), and Liberal MP Will Greaves. Thursday, Oct. 16, to Friday, Oct. 17, at the Coast Coal Harbour Vancouver Hotel, 1180 W Hastings St., Vancouver. Details: rebootcommunications.com.

FRIDAY, OCT. 17

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

MONDAY, OCT. 20

BDC President to Deliver Remarks—Isabelle Hudon, president and CEO of BDC, will deliver remarks in French on "SMEs and the 2025 Economy: Risks, Opportunities, and Growth Drivers," a lunch event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. Monday, Oct. 20, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, 900 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: ccmm.ca.

Lecture: 'Transnational Making of UN Peacekeeping'—Carleton University hosts this year's Shannon Lecture, "The Transnational Making of United Nations Peacekeeping." Brian Drohan, associate professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy—West Point, explores how Canada has shaped the course and conduct of peacekeeping beyond its commitments to individual peacekeeping missions. Monday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. ET at Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper St., Ottawa. Details: events.carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 21

Auditor General to Deliver Six Performance Audit Reports—Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver six performance audit reports to the House of Commons. The reports include: Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System, Canada Revenue Agency Contact Centres, Follow-up on Programs for First Nations, Housing Canadian Armed Forces Members, Recruiting for Canada's Military, and Cyber Security of Government Networks and Systems. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 10 a.m. ET. A press conference will follow at 12:30 p.m. ET in Room 200, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details: infomedia@oag-bvg.gc.ca.

Chrétien and Harper in The Regent Debate—Former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper will take part in the seventh Regent Debate hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. The topic of the debate is "Canadian Unity in a Fractured World." Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St., Toronto. Register: cdhowe.org.

Fireside Chat with Madelaine Drohan—The Canadian International Council's annual general meeting will be followed by a fireside chat with author Madelaine Drohan on her book, *Benjamin Franklin's Failure to Annex Canada*. Tuesday, Oct. 21 at 5 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800, Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Today's Famous 5 Ottawa Award—Famous 5 Ottawa will recognize four adults and one youth (up to age 35) who are blazing trails, challenging norms, and lifting others up in the Ottawa region. Tuesday, Oct. 21, at 5:30 p.m. ET in a location to be announced. Details: famous5ottawa.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22

We Grow to Build: FPAC's National Policy Conference—The Forest Products Association of Canada hosts its 2025 National Forest Policy Conference. This year's theme is "Canadian Forestry at a Crossroads: Navigating Turbulence, Unlocking Potential and Restoring Resilience." Wednesday, Oct. 22, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Contact rrogers@fpac.ca. Register via Eventbrite.

Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards—The Library and Archives Canada Foundation, and Library and Archives Canada host the 2025 Library and Archives Canada Scholar Awards honouring outstanding Canadians who've left an indelible mark on our country's cultural, literary, and historical heritage. This year's recipients are: author Danny Ramadan, historian Margaret MacMillan, poet Rupi Kaur, playwright Tomson Highway, and writer Gabrielle Boulianne-Tremblay. Wednesday, Oct. 22, 5:30 p.m. ET, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. By invitation only.

Psychedelic Medicine Soirée—PsyCan hosts a reception, Psychedelic Medicine Soirée. Join senior leaders, practitioners, and patients for refreshments and to chat about the future of psychedelic medicine in Canada. Wednesday, Oct. 22, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th floor,

99 Bank St., Ottawa. RSVP: admin@psychedeliccanada.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22—SUNDAY, OCT. 26

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

THURSDAY, OCT. 23

Getting Big Things Done 2.0—Canada 2020 hosts the second installment of "From Ambition to Action: Getting Big Things Done," a one-day summit focused on the realities of delivering transformational projects in Canada. Following up on the June edition, this event will convene top-level doers—developers, policymakers, Indigenous leaders, and industry builders—from across housing, infrastructure, energy, economic development, and trade. Thursday, Oct. 23, at 8:30a.m. ET at The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: canada2020.ca.

'Mining For a Resilient and Productive Economy'—Pierre Gratton, president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada, will deliver remarks on "Mining For a Resilient and Productive Economy: Strengthening Canada's Future," hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Thursday, Oct. 23, at 11:30 a.m. PT, at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 W. Georgia St. Details: boardoftrade.com.

Panel: 'Shaping the Future of the Ring of Fire'—Former Liberal MP now mayor of Sudbury, Ont., Paul Lefebvre will take part in a panel discussion, "Ontario's Critical Corridor: Shaping the Future of the Ring of Fire," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. He will be joined by Priya Tandon, president of the Ontario Mining Association; and Ashley Larose, CEO of Science North. Thursday, Oct. 23, at 12 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

Douglas Roche to be Awarded—Douglas Roche will receive the Canadian Leadership for Nuclear Disarmament 2025 Distinguished Achievement Award. He will also deliver a lecture, "Creative Dissent: A Politician's Struggle for Peace." A reception will follow. Thursday, Oct. 23, at 4 p.m. at the Centre for International Policy Studies, Room 4007, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, 120 University Pk., University of Ottawa. Contact: clnd@pugwashgroup.ca.

Ex-CBC Reporter Brian Stewart to Discuss New Book—Former CBC for-

eign correspondent and award-winning reporter Brian Stewart who will discuss his new book *On the Ground: My Life as a Foreign Correspondent*, part of the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Thursday, Oct. 28, at 6:30 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details: writersfestival.org.

FRIDAY, OCT. 24

Minister McGuinty to Deliver Remarks—Defence Minister David McGuinty will deliver remarks on "The Economics of Action," hosted by the Empire Club of Canada. Friday, Oct. 24, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

SUNDAY, OCT. 26

Alex Neve to Discuss 'Human Rights in a Fractured World'—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will sit down with Carleton University's Adrian Harewood to discuss this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World," part of the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Sunday, Oct. 26, at 8 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details: writersfestival.org.

MONDAY, OCT. 27

Book Launch for Bob Joseph—Perfect Books and The Other Hill host the launch of Bob Joseph's book, *21 Things You Need to Know About Indigenous Self-Government: A Conversation About Dismantling the Indian Act*. Monday, Oct. 27, at 7 p.m. ET at allsaints, 330 Laurier Ave. E., Ottawa. Details: theotherhill-lautrecoline.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 28

Conference: 'Canada's Next Chapter in the Indo-Pacific'—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a day-long conference on "Canada's Next Chapter in the Indo-Pacific." Among the participants are Malaysian High Commissioner to Canada Dr. Shazlina Z. Abidin; Japan's deputy head of mission Ishii Hideaki; Lisa Baiton, president and CEO, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers; Mark Maki, CEO of Trans Mountain Corp.; and various Canadian government officials. Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 8:30 a.m. ET at 150 Elgin St. suite 1800, Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

David Collette to Deliver Remarks—Former Liberal cabinet minister David Collette will deliver virtual remarks on "Navigating the Geopolitical Challenge of Canada's National Security," hosted by the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 11 a.m. ET. Happening online: balsillieschool.ca.

Michael Wernick to Deliver Remarks—Michael Wernick, former clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the federal cabinet, will deliver remarks, "Beyond Dogma: Rethinking State Capacity to Drive National Productivity," at the C.D. Howe's Patron Circle Dinner. Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

CFA Hill Day Reception—The Canadian Federation of Agriculture hosts its Hill Day reception, a chance to network with farm leaders from across Canada, industry stakeholders, politicians and decision-makers throughout the industry. Featuring cocktails and appetizers made with Canadian ingredients. Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 5:30 p.m. ET at Ottawa Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St. Register via Eventbrite.

Hill Day: 'Protecting Canadian Lungs'—Join the Lung Health Foundation and the National Lung Health Alliance in Ottawa for three days of education, advocacy, and impact. Leading clinicians, researchers, community leaders, and people living with chronic lung conditions will meet with policymakers to raise awareness and advance solutions to address Canada's respiratory health crisis. The National Lung Health Alliance will host a Respiratory Reception on Tuesday, Oct. 28, 6-9 p.m. ET, Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be provided. Details: nbennett@lunghealth.ca, 647-544-7314.

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